

Division of Comparative Endocrinology (DCE): 2003 Fall Newsletter

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Message from the Officers

Michael C. Moore, Chair; *Kyle W. Selcer*, Program Officer; *James A. Carr*, Secretary

Meeting News

Kyle just returned from the program officer's meeting in New Orleans at the New Orleans Marriott, site of the 2004 SICB meeting. It is a very nice hotel, perfectly located on Canal Street near the French Quarter, with more than adequate conference space for the entire meeting. All events and sessions will be within the hotel, and the meeting rooms are reasonably close together, allowing for easy movement between sessions. The city should be still hopping, due to the Sugar Bowl a few days before the meeting (when is New Orleans not hopping?).

Again this year the talks and abstracts were sorted by general theme, rather than divisional affiliation. We scheduled over 1100 abstracts for symposia, talks and posters. Most of the abstracts from DCE members will be under Regulatory Biology, for which there were about 125 abstracts. Oral sessions will include: comparative endocrinology (2 sessions); environmental endocrinology (2 sessions); stress and heat shock; and hormone binding proteins. Poster sessions will include: comparative endocrinology–vertebrate; comparative endocrinology–invertebrate; stress; regulation of reproduction, development and behavior; neuroendocrinology; hormone binding proteins; and environmental endocrinology and toxicology.

At the meeting, DCE will co-sponsor a one-and-a-half day symposium on "EcoPhysiology and Conservation: The Contribution of Endocrinology and Immunology." This interesting symposium was organized by Rob Stevenson and Shea Tuberty. It will be a rather unique program that integrates the perspectives of environmental/stress physiology with reproductive failure, population extinctions and habitat degradation. Speakers will attempt to bring endocrine physiology of vertebrates and invertebrates into the discussion of species distribution, environmental contamination, and conservation issues. In addition, there are two SICB-wide symposia that should be of interest to DCE members. These are: 1) Raymond B. Huey: Integrative Biology: A Symposium Honoring George A. Bartholomew and 2) Robert Dudley and Michael Dickinson: In Vino Veritas: The Comparative Biology of Ethanol Consumption.

The DCE Business Meeting will be on Wednesday evening. This will be followed by The Howard Bern Lecture, given by Dr. Yoshi Nagahama, entitled "The Plasticity of Fish Gender, An Evolutionary Basis for Sex Determination and Differentiation in Vertebrates". After the talk, the DCE social will be held.

The program officers also selected the symposia for the 2005 meeting in San Diego. DCE will be sponsoring a mini-symposium organized by Valentine Lance entitled: Zoo-based Research and Conservation. If you don't know already, the 15th International Congress of Comparative Endocrinology will be organized by Burk and Associates and will be held May 23–28, 2005 in Boston. Check the website (<http://www.bu.edu/ICCE15/boston.html>) for details.

Divisonal Officers

The results of the 203 DCE elections are in! Congratulations to Robert Denver as the incoming chair–elect and Kevin Kelley as the incoming DCE secretary–elect. We thank everyone who ran for office and everyone who took the time to vote. David Borst will become the new chair of the division at the beginning of the New Orleans meeting. Kyle Selcer continues as the program officer.

Aubrey Gorbman Remembered

We were all saddened by the loss of Aubrey Gorbman, one of the Founding Fathers of Comparative Endocrinology, on September 21, 2003. Howard Bern will deliver a special remembrance of Aubrey prior to the SICB Plenary talk in New Orleans and an upcoming issue of *General and Comparative Endocrinology* will be devoted to memorializing Aubrey. Below is the message sent to DCE members by Michael Moore remembering Aubrey and a copy of the obituary prepared by his daughter Claudia:

September 29, 2003

Dear Members of the Division of Comparative Endocrinology,

For those of you who have not heard, I am sorry to announce the passing of Aubrey Gorbman, of one of the founding fathers of our discipline. He passed away quietly in his sleep on Sunday, September 21 from complications of Parkinson's disease. Aubrey has been such a central figure in our discipline for so long that it will be hard to imagine carrying on without him. He will certainly be remembered for his remarkable, wide–ranging scientific achievements, including some of the very first comparative studies in endocrinology, his classic studies of the developmental anatomy of the pituitary gland and the ground breaking comparative studies of his beloved hagfish. However, I think he will be most remembered for his unwavering devotion to comparative endocrinology as a discipline and for the inspired leadership and focus he provided for the discipline for over six decades. No doubt Aubrey could be tough as nails when he had to be, but he was also warm and personable and reached out to everyone in the discipline. I think the greatest part of his incredible legacy will be this personal touch. I am certain that nearly all of you knew Aubrey personally and that you have your own special memories of him. I will always remember his forceful, intelligent criticism that pushed you to be better than you thought you could be and how it was always delivered with that characteristic twinkle in his eye that let you know that he was really doing this for your own good. All of us who knew Aubrey are clearly better than we thought we could be because of it. We hope that we can carry on his vision, leadership and energy to a new generation of comparative endocrinologists in a way that would live up to the high standards that Aubrey always applied to himself and expected of everyone around him.

I have appended an obituary prepared by his daughter Claudia with more details of Aubrey's life and a suggestion for where contributions can be sent in lieu of flowers. An upcoming special issue of *General and Comparative Endocrinology* will be devoted to memorializing Aubrey and his remarkable contributions and we will be planning something for the upcoming SICB meeting. Suggestions are welcome.

Michael Moore
Chair, Division of Comparative Endocrinology

Aubrey Gorbman, Zoologist, 88

Aubrey Gorbman, an eminent zoologist and emeritus professor at the University of Washington, died at home in Seattle on September 21 from Parkinson's disease.

Professor Howard Bern of the University of California at Berkeley writes, "The scientific community has lost

a giant figure. Aubrey Gorbman provided national and international leadership in his field of comparative endocrinology. He was principled and supportive in his collegiality with his fellow academics and with his students. He especially appreciated the need to be helpful to professional women of all ages; in academia he was a feminist par excellence, gratifyingly recognized as such not only by those who knew him well but also by the President of the United States."

Aubrey Gorbman was born in Detroit in 1914 to Russian immigrants, David Gorbman and Esther Kornblit, who built up a laundry business there. [He attended Fordson High School, now Dearborn, and was a star student.] He graduated from Wayne State University in 1935, earning a masters degree in the following year. He married Genevieve Tapperman while in graduate school, and received his Ph.D. in Zoology from UC Berkeley in 1940. Following fellowships at Yale and elsewhere, he joined the zoology faculties at Barnard College and Columbia University in New York, and served as chair of zoology at Columbia from 1951 to 1954. He and his family moved to Seattle in 1963, where he chaired the zoology department at the University of Washington for three years and remained a professor until retiring in 1985.

Grants from the National Science Foundation, and the Fulbright and Guggenheim foundations, allowed him to pursue research at the College de France (1950), the University of Hawaii (1956), and the University of Tokyo (1960). In addition to these year-long stays with his family, he taught and lectured throughout the world. He particularly welcomed young Japanese scientists to work in his laboratory, and thereby over the years he cultivated significant exchanges between western and Asian scientific communities. He worked with the American government on several occasions: studying effects of radiation on marine organisms at the Brookhaven National Laboratories in the 1950s and at the Eniwetok atoll of the Marshall Islands; and serving on panels of the National Science Foundation and participating in national reviews of biology education.

Dr. Gorbman was made a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1959; he served as president of the American Society of Zoologists in 1976. He was editor-in-chief of the journal *General and Comparative Endocrinology* for 31 years, beginning with its first issue in 1961. In 1998 he was recognized for his longstanding support and encouragement of the careers of women in zoology, receiving a Presidential Award for Mentoring in Science, presented to him by President Clinton. Toho University awarded him an honorary doctorate in 1999.

Retirement did not stem Dr. Gorbman's passion for research, which produced a total of five books and some 250 refereed articles. Continuing to work until weeks before his death, he took particular interest in the evolutionary roles of GnRH, or gonadotropin releasing hormone. Work he did at the age of 86 strongly suggests that in many invertebrate species, GnRH functions as a pheromone, stimulating simultaneous release of eggs and sperm by individuals of a population living in sea water, assuring successful fertilization and reproduction and thus the population's survival. His co-authored article on this hormone's functions in 500 million years of evolution will appear posthumously.

Aubrey Gorbman was an enthusiastic traveler, boatsman, and collector of clocks; mostly he will be remembered as a wonderful husband, devoted father, and deeply committed mentor and friend. His beloved wife of sixty years, Genevieve, died in 1998. He is survived by his sister Rose, of Detroit, by three daughters, Beryl, Leila, and Claudia, and one son, Eric, all of Seattle, and by four grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, the family encourages contributions to the Aubrey Gorbman Lecture Fund at the University of Washington. This endowment will annually bring distinguished scientists for lectures to the UW's academic and wider community. For information contact Paul Rudnick in the College of Arts and Sciences at UW, 206-616-1709, email prudnick@u.washington.edu.