

# Division of Evolutionary Developmental Biology (DEDB): 2003 Fall Newsletter

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## Message from the Chair

*Günter Wagner*

Dear Member of the DEDB,

In this letter I wish to focus on a single issue, which affects the life of the Division and I therefore want your full attention drawn to it. At the last meeting of SICB the issue came up that some divisions have a problem attracting the participation of their members to sustain normal operations and societal functions. Fortunately this does not apply to our division, thanks to the dedication of you and your colleagues. One of these divisions is the Division of Developmental and Cell Biology. In Toronto the chair of that division, Patricia Glas, and I discussed how to help the DDCB live through this bottleneck of member participation. We came up with the idea that our divisions could associate and perform some of their functions together. The intention is to be able to maintain a formal presence of Cell Biology in SICB. At the same time this will streamline processes and functions such that DDCB is not paralyzed by the lack of officers to perform these functions. Over the summer Pat and I drafted a Memorandum of Understanding that describes the details of the agreement between our divisions. This memorandum was then vetted by the President of the Society, John Wingfield, and the executive committee and is now posted on the divisional website:

<http://www.sicb.org/divisions/dedb.php3>

Please consult this website for details and bring up any objections you may have against this move by sending an email to me ([gunter.wagner@yale.edu](mailto:gunter.wagner@yale.edu)) or our secretary, Frietson Galis ([galis@rulsfb.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:galis@rulsfb.leidenuniv.nl)). Pat and I will bring this document, and your reactions to the next business meeting of our division and ask for a vote. In order to be prepared for this vote, please read this document and send your reactions before we come to New Orleans. At the meeting I will only consider comments that were submitted by December 15th 2003.

Thank you for your continuing enthusiasm for the division. I am looking forward seeing you at our next meeting.

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## Message from the Program Officer

*Eduardo Rosa–Molinar*

¡Que tal! I hope that the year has been good to you. I have exciting news regarding the scientific program of the 2004 Society of Integrative and Comparative Biology (SICB) annual meeting scheduled for the 5<sup>th</sup> through the 9<sup>th</sup> of January in New Orleans as well as for the 2005 annual meeting in San Diego.

The divisional program officers, SICB Program Officer, past, SICB Program Officer elect, and Meeting Director and Assistant Director (Burk Associates) converged at the New Orleans Marriott Hotel September 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> to finalize a comprehensive scientific program for the SICB 2004 New Orleans meeting and the SICB 2005 San Diego meeting.

**2004 SICB Annual Meeting: <http://www.sicb.org/meetings/2004>**

This year SICB members submitted 1115 abstracts, almost 400 more than last year. The 2004 scientific program looks outstanding, thanks to all who submitted abstracts. Your efforts are critical to the survival of the division and the society. Below is a listing of the topics, divisional sponsors, and number of abstracts submitted.

- A. Development: DCDB and DEEB; 80 abstracts
- B. Ecology and Behavior: DAB and DEE; 120 abstracts
- C. Environmental Biology: DCE, DEE, DSEB and DCPB; 69 abstracts
- D. Evolution: DSEB, DEEB, DVM, DEE; 166 abstracts
- E. Integrative and Comparative Issues: DIZ and DNB; 21 abstracts
- F. Morphology: DVM and DIZ; 200 abstracts
- G. Physiology and Behavior: DCPB; 167 abstracts
- H. Regulatory Biology: DCE, DCPB, DNB; 106 abstracts
- I. Mini–symposia: 14 abstracts
  
- J. Symposia: 172 abstracts

The DEEB's broad program representation in New Orleans promises an exciting and productive meeting. DEEB, DCDB and DVM, and DEE will have joint oral and poster sessions.

I particularly encourage you to stay for the *Evolutionary Innovations* symposium organized by Gerd B. Müller and Stuart A. Newman. "This symposium will provide insight into organismal formative processes that extend beyond the genetic level, physical/material properties, architectural constraints, and the dynamical properties of reaction–diffusion systems embodied in genetic and developmental networks. A group of impressive speakers has been assembled to describe experimental and theoretical analyses that illuminate scenarios of morphological innovation in a variety of vertebrate and invertebrate systems."

Gerd and Stuart have funding from the National Science Foundation to hold this symposium. We need good attendance for this symposium and support for all DEEB activities.

DEEB is also co–sponsoring the *Model Systems for the Basal Metazoa* symposium organized by Neil Blackstone, Hans Bode, Cliff Cunningham, and Rob Steele. "Developing a clearer picture of character evolution in the metazoans requires both robust phylogenies and well–documented character states. These issues have attracted considerable attention recently (e.g., at the following recent SICB symposia: Evolutionary Relationships of Metazoa phyla [Jan '98], HOX Clusters and the Evolution of Morphology [Jan '00], The Lesser Known Protostome Taxa [Jan '01], New Perspectives on the Origin of Metazoan Complexity [Jan. '02]). Analyses of character evolution crucially depend on the character states of basal taxa. There is a

strong consensus that the basal metazoans are represented by sponges (which may be paraphyletic), placozoans, cnidarians, and ctenophores. Character evolution in metazoans can thus be illuminated by developing well-studied "model systems" in these basal groups. At this time, sponges seem deserving of an entirely separate treatment, in part because they exhibit several primitive features and in part because their systematics is in a state of flux. Here the focus will be on the possibly more derived basal metazoans – placozoans, cnidarians, and ctenophores. By virtue of their greater diversity and, correspondingly, greater scrutiny particularly at the molecular level, cnidarians will receive the bulk of the attention."

Keep checking the SICB website and DEDB newsletter for updates regarding this symposium and others that DEDB will co-sponsor. The SICB website should soon have a link to the DEDB/DCDB webpage that will be up in the near future.

### **2005 SICB Annual Meeting:**

**<http://www.sicb.org/meetings/2005>**

At the September 2003 meeting we also reviewed and approved the symposium for the 2005 meeting scheduled for January 4–8, 2005 in San Diego.

The DEDB is the primary sponsor for the following 2005 symposia:

***WormNet: Recent Advances in Annelid Systematics, Development, and Evolution*** organized by Kenneth M. Halanych, Ph.D. This symposium will be sponsored by DEDB, DIZ, and DSEB.

***Terminal Addition, Segmentation, and the Evolution of Metazoan Body Plan Regionalization*** organized by Nigel Hughes, Ph.D. and David Jacobs, Ph.D. This symposium was selected as a society-wide symposium for the 2005 SICB meeting in San Diego because of the breadth of the topic and the general interest that we expect it to generate.

Encourage your graduate students and colleagues to join SICB and the DEDB and keep sending your original research papers and/or symposia to ***Evolution and Development*** (Blackwell Science, Inc.), ***Molecular and Developmental Evolution***, or to ***Journal of the Society of Integrative and Comparative Biology***, journals sponsored by SICB.

### **¡Mira! The 2004 SICB Annual Meeting Hotel**

The 2004 SICB Annual Meeting will be held at the New Orleans Marriott, 555 Canal Street, New Orleans, Louisiana. Our hotel is on the edge of the French quarter and fully equipped with audio visual equipment, lounges, bars, and beverages of your choice. I am hoping that New Orleans will promote exciting and productive discussions and collaborations.

I hope to see you in New Orleans.

¡Saludos de Puerto Rico!

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### **Message from the Secretary**

*Frietson Galis*

Dear members of the DEDB,

We are continuing to improve the website of our division with the much appreciated help of our webmaster, Ruediger Birenheide. Conferences and symposia in our field are now listed on the website. A list of divisional members is also included and for each member there is a link to the contact information. Please mail me if you have an announcement of a conference or symposium, or if you have other news that is of interest to our members ([galis@rulsfb.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:galis@rulsfb.leidenuniv.nl)).

The program of the upcoming meeting in New Orleans looks promising, especially for our division. I am looking forward to seeing you there.

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### **Message from the Student Representative**

*Brad Davidson*

Hello,

Looking forward to seeing you all in New Orleans! I have begun to organize a student/post-doc invitational symposium for the 2005 or 2006 meeting and you should soon receive an email asking for your nominations. Whether or not you receive the email, please feel free to send me your nominations directly. I have included a description of the symposium below.

### **Innovative Research in Developmental Biology and Evolution**

What is it?

This is a student/post-doc invitational symposium. So you decide who to invite. Is there a student or post-doc in your department who is conducting extraordinary research? Have you recently seen a talk or read a paper that shifted your understanding of a core developmental concept? This is your opportunity to recognize ground-breaking research in comparative development.

How to make a nomination.

Just send a list of up to three nominees directly to [bandl@uclink.berkeley.edu](mailto:bandl@uclink.berkeley.edu). Include a minimum one sentence description of the nominees research. You do not need to be a SICB member to participate. Nominees may include grad students, post-docs or professors. You may also include a more detailed description of the nominee's research and why you think they should be invited, but this is not required.

What next?

Nominations will continue until sufficient numbers have been received (a minimum of 50 for the 10 speaker slots). I will compile all nominations and send them out for a vote. The top 10 will be invited to participate in the symposium to take place in either 2005 or 2006. Invited speakers' registration fees will be waived and we intend to cover their travel and lodging costs as well. Speakers will also write up their talks for publication in

the SICB Journal.