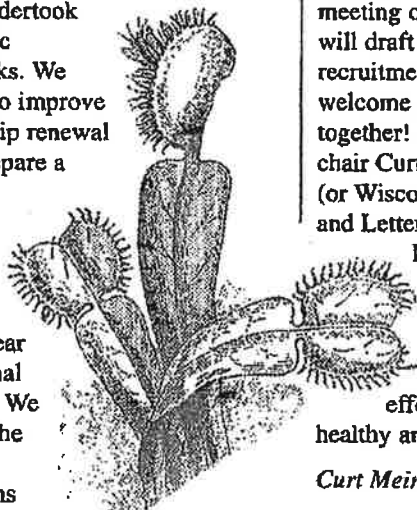


## Into the Future: New Initiatives for Building SCB's Membership

The SCB Board of Governors, recognizing the need for more attention to membership issues as the Society enters an important transitional phase, established in 2000 a Membership Committee. The mission of the committee is simple: to expand and retain membership in SCB. This work, though quiet, is critical to SCB's future. In the first ten years of its existence, SCB membership grew rapidly as students, scientists, practitioners, administrators, and other conservation professionals filled in the new "niche" that SCB represented and spoke to. SCB achieved a steady membership of 5000-6000.

Over the last five years this number has stayed more or less constant, although interest in SCB and its activities has continued to grow. There is a general sense that our membership is still far below what it might and should be, and that there are still many out there who would become members if provided with more information, incentives, and opportunities. All of this comes at a time when SCB is working through several key challenges simultaneously: hiring our first Executive Director, opening our Executive Office in Washington, D.C., forming international and marine sections, changing the membership dues structure, and developing *Conservation Biology In Practice*. All of these moves, and others that SCB is taking, intersect in the work of the Membership Committee. (In that sense, we might consider this a "keystone committee"!)

In its first year, the Membership Committee undertook several specific immediate tasks. We have worked to improve our membership renewal process, to prepare a new general membership brochure, and to revise the subscription cards that appear in SCB's journal and magazine. We have assisted the Board in defining options



for the membership dues structure. We have encouraged authors of papers in *Conservation Biology* to become members of SCB. And we have begun efforts to reach out to specific groups of potential members, including practitioners (in coordination with the marketing of *CBIP*), international members (in coordination with SCB's Internationalization Committee), marine conservation biologists (in coordination with SCB's new marine section [see page 13]), students, and botanists and others in under-represented disciplines.

The Membership Committee held an ad hoc gathering at SCB's 2001 annual meeting and identified a number of short- and long-term activities for ourselves. Beginning with the 2002 annual meeting, we will work more closely with the organizers of annual meetings to stimulate attendance and recruit new members at the meeting. We will continue development of the SCB membership brochure, with inserts targeted to specific audiences. We will work with Alan Thornhill to review and improve membership expansion and retention through the new Executive Office. Similarly, we will work more actively with other committees, local chapters, and others involved in SCB to reach our core of potential members (for example, by providing instructors with membership materials to share with students). We have also initiated discussion on "sponsored memberships" for those facing economic hardship (see sidebar).

In preparation for the next mid-winter meeting of the SCB Board, the committee will draft a more complete membership recruitment and retention strategy. We welcome your ideas as this strategy comes together! Please contact committee co-chair Curt Meine, [curt@savingcranes.org](mailto:curt@savingcranes.org) (or Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, 1922 University Ave., Madison, WI 53705-4099). We also welcome new members into the committee itself! Get in touch with your Inner Evangelist and join us in our efforts to keep SCB's membership healthy and happy.

Curt Meine

### Sponsored Membership Initiative

"I'd like to join SCB, but I simply can't afford it," a student told me. She groaned, "It's a Catch-22. The networking and newsletter would help me get a job. I feel cut off from the resources when I need them the most." My mind flashed back to my own difficulties between diploma and regular paychecks. Instinctively, I reached for my wallet and the words tumbled out. "How about a sponsored membership? You would be an asset to SCB. When you get a steady job, simply reciprocate by sponsoring someone else." Her eyes lit up and she reached for the membership form.

Colleagues report similar experiences in providing a supportive boost over hurdles. Won't you join us in reaching out to someone else? Please participate in our new membership initiative by becoming a sponsor. When you renew for 2002, look for the Sponsorship Program options in the Donations section. Choose the first option if you would like to sponsor a specific person. Choose the second option if you wish to donate to a general fund for sponsorships. On behalf of SCB, practice random acts of kindness (sponsorship)!

Jane Packard

### RENEW FOR 2002!

You can now renew your membership online at [www.conservationbiology.org](http://www.conservationbiology.org). If you cannot or prefer not to renew online, you will receive a paper renewal form in the mail. Or, contact [membership@conservationbiology.org](mailto:membership@conservationbiology.org) to request an email version of the form.

### Electronic Newsletter Option

When you renew for 2002, you may elect to receive the newsletter electronically or in print form. If you choose the electronic option, you may either retrieve the newsletter (upon email notification) from SCB's web site (in rich text, PDF, or HTML format) or request to have the newsletter sent to you via email (as a rich text format or PDF attachment or in the body of an email). Specify your delivery mode and format choices on your renewal form or by sending an email to [newsletter@conservationbiology.org](mailto:newsletter@conservationbiology.org).