

Director's Note

As I hope most of the IU Axolotl Colony's regular users will agree, the Colony is doing well. The general health of the animals is good, and the frequency of spawnings is high. Shipments continue unabated. Virtually all of that good news is, of course, due to the efforts of Susan Duhon and Sandi Borland. Their conscientious and diligent work habits and "can-do" attitude generate the gains in productivity the Colony experiences year in and year out.

All of us associated with the Axolotl Colony are contributing to the organizational tasks associated with the October 13-16 (1993) International Workshop on the Molecular Biology of Axolotls and other Urodeles. This meeting will be organized around a set of specific questions, including the following:

Which molecular markers should be identified and exploited for under-

standing the molecular mechanisms which regulate patterning during epimorphic regeneration?

What molecular biology problems could best be approached using urodele *in vitro* systems?

Are there any single markers, probes, or libraries which would benefit many different laboratories if they were to be prepared soon?

In addition, practical aspects of the molecular biology of the axolotl will be considered during a one-day "hands-on" workshop. All axolotl workers are encouraged to attend. Further information is included in this issue.

George M. Malacinski
Director, IU Axolotl Colony

Axolotl Colony Update—1993

Susan T. Duhon

IU Axolotl Colony
Department of Biology
Indiana University
Bloomington, IN 47405

The Axolotl Colony has continued to be very busy this past year. So far this season we have obtained nearly 400 spawns, and we have shipped over 100,000 embryos.

Larvae Availability. With all this activity, you can imagine that we have many, many larvae. We want to encourage those of you who use larvae and juveniles in your work to get them small (< 3 cm) and raise them to the size you need in your own lab. Our limited space makes it difficult for us to raise extra larvae to sizes larger than 3-5 cm.

On the other hand, any time you need larvae, even big ones, please call. Many times we will have what you need.

International Workshop. We are all looking forward to the International Workshop

on the Molecular Biology of the Axolotl and other Urodeles this October. Response has been enthusiastic, and we anticipate a great meeting. It will be very rewarding for Sandi and me at the Colony to meet many of the people that we have dealt with only by phone, fax, or email. Many thanks to all of you who have responded to our flyers.

Early Interventions. Occasionally, people have been interested in procedures that require very early eggs—much earlier than we can get them to you by mail or Federal Express. During this past year, with the help of Mark Parker, a technician in the Malacinski lab, we have been able to provide a limited number of embryos injected with fluoresceinated dextran (Fidx) prior to first cleavage. We ship the injected embryos as blastula.

We have also tested our ability to induce triploidy in embryos using a French Press (using the method of L.L. Gillespie and J.B. Armstrong, 1978, *Axolotl Newsletter* 5:12) with positive results.

Anyone who may be interested in obtaining injected embryos or triploids should contact me, Susan Duhon, so that we can discuss specifics.