



SOUTHERN SECTION

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF PLANT BIOLOGISTS

NEWSLETTER

From the Chair: Ruth Grene

Preparation for the annual Southern Section meeting is underway, as is customary for the season. The Section's Secretary-Treasurer, Dr. James Mahan, and Vice-Chair, Dr. Caryl Chlan, have been very busy since the last meeting in an effort that will culminate in Lafayette, LA this coming March. We hope to see lots of you there!

Highlights of the upcoming meeting:

Kriton Hatzios Symposium: Each year's symposium attracts top-flight speakers to address current topics of interest. The theme of this year's symposium will be "Cotton Biotechnology": (More detail of the symposium is available later in this newsletter.) Check the website for updates on meeting events! (www.ss-aspb.org).

Location: Lafayette, Louisiana is the home of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (formerly the University of Southwestern Louisiana). Lafayette is a city of around 110,000 people and is internationally known for its Cajun culture. In Lafayette, you can find traditional Cajun and Zydeco music as well as culinary delights that are as tasty as they are spicy. Located in the heart of French Louisiana, there are many attractions nearby. Lafayette is easy to reach by car – it is just south of I-10, about 50 miles west of Baton Rouge and about 120 miles from the New Orleans Airport. Lafayette also has its own regional airport that is serviced by Continental, Northwest and Delta Airlines. Dr. Caryl Chlan will coordinate the local arrangements.

Collegiality: This is a wonderful venue to meet with old friends and to make some new ones. Faculty members from primarily undergraduate institutions (PUI), find that these meetings are a great way to meet with folks from similar institutions. In addition, because attendance from PUIs tends to be regional, you will tend to meet

people in your area of the country, with whom you may well strike up convenient collaborations.

Opportunities for students: This is a unique opportunity for students, both undergrads and graduate students, to participate and learn about scientific meetings firsthand. For the graduate students, this is the perfect venue for you to give your first formal talk, and, also, to compete for the three prizes that the Society awards to what are judged to be the best student presentations of the meeting. For the undergraduate participants, you have the chance to compete for an award with a poster. Because of the small size, the meetings are not so overwhelming as the national meetings, yet students will get an opportunity to interact with established scientists, making connections that might lead to opportunities for graduate school, post-docs, or summer research internships. For those of you at PUIs, this meeting offers a different and complementary environment to that of meetings like those sponsored by the Council for Undergraduate Research (CUR).

Opportunities for the rest of us: Don't like the way things are being handled? Got some good ideas that you would like to see put into action? This is your chance to make your voice heard. The Section encourages you to get into the thick of it. Attend the business meeting (held immediately after the symposium on Monday) and speak your mind or throw your hat into the ring to run for office. It's not an exclusive club and it's not really that much work. Personally, I have found it remarkably satisfying to know that I've done something of service to students and other plant biologists in the region. The sectional meetings are definitely worth your time. I look forward to seeing you in Lafayette! You'll be glad you made the effort to attend.



National ASPP News

Report on the ASPB Executive Committee Meetings in February and July: Mel Oliver, Southern Section Representative

Members attending: Dan Bush (President), Vicki Chandler (Past President), Mary Lou Guerinot (President-Elect), Roger Hangarter (Secretary), Mark Brodl (Treasurer), Wendy Boss, Nick Carpita, Becky Chasan, Adrienne Clarke, Eric Davies, Dina Mandoli, Regina McClinton, Jon Monroe, Mel Oliver, Carol Reiss, Steve Rodermel, Mary Tierney, John Lisack (Member Ex-Officio).

Highlights of the Executive Director's Reports.

John Lisack discussed the high quality of the sites for the Plant Genetics Meeting in Snowbird and the Plant Biology Meeting in Hawaii. The program for the Plant Genetics Meeting is being received well. *The Arabidopsis Book* (TAB) is moving along but slower than desired. John also summarized some of the steps being taken by the ASPB staff to cut costs for Society operations. He also mentioned possible efforts to identify future revenue sources, such as placing web banners on the ASPB web site, increasing the charge for color pages in the journals and shifting printing of our journals to one printer.

Following the Hawaii meeting John Lisack gave notice that he would be resigning his position at the end of the year. A search for a new Executive Director will be announced in the coming months.

Highlights of the Actions taken:

Selection of Seattle, Washington as the site for the 2005 meeting was unanimously approved. Changed from Vancouver because of costs and the fact that the meeting would have to be split between two venues.

The Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) program was supported for the 2004 calendar year.

The Executive Committee approved a plan to increase the number of awards given each year to outstanding scientists by ASPB. The Shull Award and the Hales Prize will be given yearly, a new

early career award will be established, and a new Prize will be established to honor a plant biologist whose research benefit agricultural policies or practices in developing countries. This last award would be named in honor of Dr. Norman Borlaug who received a Nobel Prize in 1970 for his work on reversing food shortages in the 1960s in the Indian sub-continent. See the Membership Committee report for other highlighted actions.

Finance and Administration.

The society received a clean audit for 2002. The financial status of the Society remains strong despite the losses incurred as a result of the poor Stock Market conditions. The staff predict a small surplus for 2003 with our investments showing a modest 8.5% gain as of the end of June. Administratively, the IT aspects of the society have been greatly improved and the upgrading of the web hardware and webpage itself is ongoing and extensive.

Public Affairs.

Brian Hyps has been very active this year and his work has been detailed on the webpage over the last year. Please visit the website for details.

Journals.

In 2004, both Journals will move to Dartmouth Journal Services. This move to one supplier offers both financial advantages and increased flexibility. Dr. Rich Jorgenson has now taken over the Editor-in-Chief duties for *The Plant Cell*, replacing Ralph Quatrano who finished up a very successful five-year term. Institutional subscriptions are down approximately 10%, much of which is due to problems the Society has encountered with our subscription agent. This has been remedied and hopefully things will improve. On-line subscriptions are steadily rising however.

The Arabidopsis Book is now live on BioOne and should be completed within the coming year.

The acceptance rate for *The Plant Cell* was 26.6% this last year with a turnaround time to

final acceptance of 43.3 days. The impact factor for The Plant Cell is now 10.751.

The acceptance rate for Plant Physiology was 43% (33% for research articles only) this last year with a turnaround time to final acceptance of 6.74 weeks. The impact factor for Plant Physiology is now 5.8.

Report of the Membership Committee Meeting: Mel Oliver

While 2002 was a great year for membership recruitment; we will need to focus on membership retention for 2003. We brought in many new members but also failed to retain a lot so the net gain was relatively small. We will especially closely monitor the renewals and retention rate for the 'free post-doc' memberships that were awarded in early 2002. If the cost/benefit ratio looks worthwhile, we will implement this campaign again in 2003/4. Membership as of Jan 2003 was at 6123 up from 5972 in 2002.

At the Executive Committee meeting on February 15, after much discussion it was decided to rescind the motion to combine the 'section dues' with the 'national dues'. This decision was ratified at the meeting in Hawaii.

The agenda request at the Executive Committee meeting to change the \$2500 per year section grant from ASPB from a 'request transfer' to an 'automatic transfer' was passed unanimously. We discussed the need for some of the sections to quantify their needs. This information could be used to justify a request to raise the amount from \$2500 (at this level for 15yrs) to \$5000. For the Southern Section we felt that the increase would allow us to offer greater assistance to students and perhaps faculty to attend our annual meeting. In Hawaii it was decided that the grant would be raised to \$3,500 in 2004 and to \$5000 in 2005.

The Executive Committee accepted the offers to allow ASPB members to receive discounts on subscriptions to 'Plant, Cell and Environment' and 'Comparative and Functional Genomics'.

A request to increase the ceiling for the number of 'Corresponding Members' to 2% of the Society's members was approved at the Exec Committee meeting, along with changing the 'free' subscriptions from print to on-line. This was intended to enable more bright young scientists

from developing nations to participate in the Society.

Other discussion centered on the success of the 'free' memberships and the importance of collecting good retention data. The most recent statistics showed that out of the 252 'free postdoc' memberships awarded, only 62 renewed.

With the focus on retention, the committee outlined questions that should be included in a short survey to be emailed to all non-renewing members. This is to track the reasons why people let their membership lapse and to identify possible areas where we could improve retention. We also discussed recruiting new members from related disciplines e.g., the Botanical Society of America and the Ecological Society of American. As a starting point, we could exchange mailing lists with these Societies. Active sections and their meetings could also draw members from related disciplines. Ideas for future new membership campaigns were discussed. John Lisack suggested we offer membership for the first year at a 2/3's discount, the second year at a 1/3 discount, and the third year at full price. This model gives an incentive to a member to renew after that first critical year, and gives the Society more time to prove its value to the member. The 'Get-a-member' campaign with awards will be repeated 2 years from now with another big push. The web campaign will continue.

We also discussed the notion that there should also be more information on the web page about 'volunteering' opportunities within ASPB. Dan Bush's President's Letter's also focused on this.

While there might not be a lot of 'governance' volunteer opportunities, the membership should be aware that the Education Committee and others have many outreach projects that members can participate in. This is also critical for the new NSF 'Broad Impacts' requirements. Dina Mandoli and Larry Griffing co-chaired a workshop on this subject at the Hawaii meeting (I hope you took advantage of this). It was suggested that ASPB could become a clearinghouse for members to network about 'broad impact' opportunities. It was also stressed that it is important that there be more volunteer opportunities for the younger

members. Also, we are working hard at improving the ASPB website for members and, in particular, pointing out the substantial benefits for members of the society. We have been actively soliciting discounts from major vendors for members of ASPB to make membership more appealing.



Other news...

By James Mahan Secretary/Treasurer

2004 Southern Section Meeting to be held in Lafayette Louisiana

March 6-8 2004.

Schedule of events

- March 6 Afternoon tour/workshop, Mixer
- March 7 Student Paper Competition and Contributed Papers*
- March 8 Kriton Hatzios Symposium

* The society pays registration and banquet fee for students who participate in the paper or poster competition.

The **2004 Kriton Hatzios Symposium** will have the theme "***Cotton Biotechnology***"

Invited speakers will include

Thea Wilkins, UC Davis

Cotton Fiber Genomics: Manipulating the Fiber Transcriptome

Randy Allen, Texas Tech University

Strategies for modification of fiber quality and abiotic stress tolerance in cotton

Candace Haigler, Texas Tech University

Biotechnological improvement of cotton fiber maturity

The meeting will be held in Lafayette, Louisiana on March 6-8, 2004. Lafayette is the home of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (formerly the University of Southwestern Louisiana). The university has about 15,000 students in undergraduate and graduate programs. The Biology Department has over 30 faculty and 65 graduate students. Plant biology is well

represented in the department, with research conducted on the molecular biology, cytology, physiology, ecology and evolution of plants. Lafayette is a city of around 110,000 people and is internationally known for its Cajun culture. In Lafayette you can find traditional Cajun and Zydeco music as well as culinary delights that are as tasty as they are spicy. Located in the heart of French Louisiana, there are many attractions nearby. You can visit the Tabasco Factory or Jungle Gardens on Avery Island, take a tour of the Henderson Swamp, whirl on the dance floor at Mulate's, or go alligator watching at the man-made lake located on the campus of UL Lafayette. There are also local folk life museums that demonstrate the traditional lifestyles of the Cajuns. As we say in Louisiana, Laissez le bon temps rouler!

Lafayette is easy to reach by car – it is just south of I-10, about 50 miles west of Baton Rouge and about 120 miles from the New Orleans Airport. Lafayette also has its own regional airport that is serviced by Continental, Northwest and Delta Airlines. Dr. Caryl Chlan will coordinate the local arrangements.

The meeting will be held in Lafayette Louisiana at the Hotel Acadiana. Twenty rooms have been "blocked" for the meeting. The cost is \$65/night (single, double, triple, quad you decide). Rooms not reserved by February 5, 2004 will be released. Call 337-233-8210 for booking (refer to Southern Section ASPB for the blocked rooms).

The Best Western Hotel Acadiana (in their own words) is Lafayette's premier full service hotel catering to the sophisticated, corporate and leisure traveler alike. Centrally located to Lafayette's business district, fine Cajun cuisine, shopping, and arts district. Experience the ambiance of the true Cajun culture and the many festivals throughout the year.

The hotel offers over-sized, deluxe rooms with interior corridors, electronic locks, remote-controlled cable television, coffee/tea maker, refrigerator/wet bar, hairdryer, two vanities, iron with ironing board, voice mail, dataports, AM/FM alarm clock radio and work area. Connecting rooms are available. Children 12 and under may stay free.

Directions

The Best Western Hotel Acadiana is located at the intersection of Interstate 10 and Interstate 49. Take Interstate 10 to Exit 103A and continue onto 167 south. Continue 2 miles and turn right at the 11th light onto Pinhook Road. The Best Western Hotel Acadiana is 2 miles on the left.



NOMINEES FOR SS-ASPB OFFICES AND 2005 MEETING SITE

Candidates for the Position of Secretary/Treasurer

We have two excellent candidates for the position of Secretary/Treasurer. Last year electronic voting was so successful, that it will be the standard method from now on. You will be receiving an email with the URL for the electronic ballot sometime in first week of November. Please read the following descriptions, and remember to **vote** for the candidate of your choice.

Ed Etxeberria

Dr. Etxeberria (Echeverria) is currently Professor of Plant Cell Physiology at the University of Florida, Citrus Research and Education Center (CREC), in Lake Alfred. Studies in his laboratory focus on the mechanisms of sucrose (photoassimilates) uptake into the vacuole of heterotrophic cells and its mobilization at times of metabolic demand. Studies also focus on citric acid synthesis and uptake in Citrus juice cells. He received his B.S. from the Botany Department at U. MASS, Amherst, and his M.S. and Ph.D. from the Department of Botany at the University of Florida, Gainesville. After 2 years as a post Doctoral associate at the Department of Horticulture, he came to CREC in 1985. He was co-organizer of the First Symposium on Sucrose Metabolism and has spent several sabbaticals in Argentina and Spain. He is currently Associate Editor of the Journal of the American Society for Horticultural Sciences and Editor of the Florida State Horticultural Society. He has served as a judge in the student competition as a number of SS-ASPB meetings.

Dalton Gossett

Dr. Gossett received his B.S. in Biology, 1968, from Southwest Texas State University; M.A. in Biology, 1970 from Southwest Texas State University; Ph.D. in Plant Physiology, 1973 from Texas A&M University. After graduating from Texas A&M, he conducted post-doctoral research at the University of Kentucky. In 1975, He joined the faculty of the Biology Department at Newberry College in South Carolina where he served as Department Chair from 1980 until 1987. In 1987, he accepted the position of Professor and Chair in the Department of Biological Sciences at Louisiana State University - Shreveport. His earlier research efforts centered around the study of calcium nutrition in crops such as cotton, tobacco, soybeans, and tomatoes. His recent research endeavors have been associated with the study of the biochemical, molecular, and physiological changes in the antioxidant system that occur during environmental stress, with particular emphasis on salt stress in cotton. He have been an active member of the Southern Section of ASPP since 1971 and served in numerous judging committees.

Candidates for other Officers Positions

Candidate for Chair of SSASPB

Dr Caryl Chlan (current Vice Chair)

Candidate for Vice-chair

Dr. James R. Mahan (current
Secretary/Treasurer)

Candidate for Southern Section Executive
Committee

Dr. Ruth Grene (current Chair)

Site Choices for the 2004 Meeting: East Carolina University and Berry College

East Carolina University

Greenville, a city of 60,000 people located in the coastal plain of North Carolina, is home to East Carolina University. ECU has grown to become an emerging, national research university with an enrollment of more than 20,000. East Carolina is a constituent institution of the University of North Carolina and offers more than 100 bachelor's degree programs,

nearly 80 master's degree programs, and 13 doctoral programs. The Department of Biology (40 faculty) conducts plant research in the following areas: photosynthesis; drought stress; conifer transformation (plant biotechnology); self-incompatibility; evolution of red algae; ecology of rare plant species.

Greenville has a wealth of amenities in a pleasant southern atmosphere. You can dine at a trendy bistro or enjoy a relaxing meal at an outdoor cafe. Or, feast on what this area is known for--Eastern North Carolina barbecue. We have several challenging golf courses and over 20 public parks. You can spend time in local art galleries, museums, and antique shops. Atlantic Beach, Historic Fort Macon, and the NC Aquarium are an easy drive (1.5 hrs), as is the quaint, seaside town of Beaufort, home to the NC Maritime Museum

Pitt/Greenville Regional Airport is serviced by U.S. Airways. We are located approximately 80 miles from Raleigh/Durham International Airport. Amtrak stations are located close by in Wilson (35 miles) and Rocky Mount (45 miles).

<http://www.ecu.edu/>

Berry College

Rome, a city of roughly 30,000 located in Northwest Georgia, is the home to Berry College. Berry College is a small (ca. 2000 students), independent, coeducational, liberal arts college ranked among the outstanding comprehensive-colleges of the South (US News and World Report). Our campus is the largest in the world at 28,000 acres and hosts a broad range of representative ecosystems overseen for education purposes by the Educational Land Management Committee. This acreage is used as an outdoor classroom for not only our science majors but other studies as well. We offer primarily undergraduate degrees (with 32 BS, BA, and B Music programs and 2 dual degree programs in association with Universities in Atlanta) and 3 masters degree programs. The 10 Biology faculty members are also in the School of Mathematics and Natural Sciences that contains 5 departments (Biology, Chemistry, Animal and Plant Sciences, Physics Astronomy and Geology, and Mathematics and Computer Sciences) and a total of 49 faculty. Our

biology faculty conduct research in forest ecology and restoration of mountain long leaf pine stands, hybridization in various groups of plants, fructivory and secondary compounds in the Solanaceae family, and physiology and metabolism in oak species seedlings. We have recently added a molecular biologist who will help us with population dynamics of the remaining scattered populations of long leaf pine.

Rome is approximately equidistant from Atlanta GA and Chattanooga TN (ca. 70 miles) and 114 miles from Birmingham Alabama. It is easily assessable via Interstates 75, 20, and 59. Rome boasts numerous eating establishments of various cuisines and types along with amateur theatre groups and other cultural events (museums, galleries). The area is a center for Cherokee Indian historical sites as well as civil war battlefields; we even have our own "Paul Revere story associated with the Civil War. There are numerous parks throughout the city and county as well as several golf courses, and other recreational activities (fishing, boating, tennis, baseball, etc.) We are home to the Rome Braves, a AAA team for the Atlanta Braves. Of course numerous facilities are hosted in both Chattanooga TN and Atlanta GA.

Rome is serviced only by a small, local airfield. However, Hartfield National Airport in Atlanta is a major hub airport serviced by virtually all the major airlines. Chattanooga Metropolitan Airport is serviced by American, Delta, US Airways, and Northwest airlines. Both cities also have Amtrak stations. Shuttle service as well as rental cars are available from either location.

<http://www.berry.edu/>

2003-2004 SS-ASPB Officers

Chair

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Ballot

Please mail a printout of your completed ballot to

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Candidates for Secretary-Treasurer

Please vote for one

Dalton Gossett -----

Ed Etxeberria -----

Candidates for Vice Chair

Please vote for one

James Mahan -----

Write-in -----

Candidates for Chair

Please vote for one

Caryl Chlan -----

Write-in -----

Candidates for SS-ASPB Executive Committee

Please vote for one

Ruth (Alscher) Grene -----

Write-in -----

Location for the 2003 meeting

Please vote for one

East Carolina University, NC – Local Coordinator, Cindy Putnam-Evans -----

Berry College, Rome, GA – Local Coordinator, Pat Tomlinson -----