



SOUTHERN SECTION AMERICAN SOCIETY OF PLANT BIOLOGISTS NEWSLETTER

2004 ANNUAL MEETING

The Hotel Acadiana in Lafayette LA was the site of the 2004 annual meeting. **Dr. Caryl Chlan** the local coordinator provided seemingly unlimited assistance in the coordination of the site events that made everything run smoothly. In addition, we would like to acknowledge all of our sponsors:

**Delta and Pine Land
Pioneer Hi-Bred International Inc.
American Society of Plant Biologists,
The University of Louisiana at Lafayette**

Without their generosity, this meeting would not have been as successful as it was.

FIELD TRIP

This year the SS-ASPB took a field trip to Lake Martin, Louisiana. About 40 scientists and friends of the Southern Section loaded up the University of Louisiana at Lafayette's "Hot Pepper" bus and headed over to the world famous nesting area of wading birds and cypress and tupelo forest. Three skillful tour guides helped us explore the area: Dr. Paul Leberg from the Biology Department of UL Lafayette acted as our ornithologist, Mr. Larry Allain from the USGS Wetland's Center in Lafayette was our expert on the local flora, and Ms. Arlene Billock from the Biology Department at UL Lafayette assisted with identification of flora and fauna as well as acted as our van driver. Many thanks to all these people for donating their time and special thanks to the UL Lafayette Biology Department and College of Sciences for sponsoring this field trip.



Field trip to Lake Martin

The weather was absolutely beautiful at Lake Martin. We were able to see a variety of egrets nesting as well as the roseate spoonbills. We were extremely lucky to see the spoonbills, since they had just arrived at Lake Martin the day before our field trip. The cypress and tupelo trees were impressive, but the big attraction of the field trip was the sighting of one of the many resident alligators!

After Lake Martin, we went to CEET (the UL Lafayette Center of Ecology and Environmental Technology) to tour a prairie restoration project. First we enjoyed snacks and drinks, and then Larry Allain gave a presentation about some of the work being done at the USGS Wetland's Center to study the Louisiana prairie. Following the presentation, he gave us a tour of the restoration project at CEET. At around 5:30 everyone loaded up the buses for a ride back to the Hotel Acadiana. It was a great afternoon! Thanks again to everyone for making this field trip so enjoyable.

MEETING

The meeting officially kicked off in characteristically grand style with the SSASPB evening mixer. It was an excellent opportunity to catch up with old friends and meet new people. One of the best things about the Southern Section Meeting is that it provides an opportunity to meet fellow scientists in your geographic region in a setting that is conducive to interactions. This year's meeting was no exception. On Sunday the 7th, the meeting started bright and early. We had **24** oral presentations and **19** poster presentations. There were **17** participants in the "Graduate Student Paper" competition, and **4** participants in the "Best Undergraduate Poster" competition. The day

concluded with an evening banquet. The Louisiana themed buffet was delicious, and again the Hotel Acadiana did an excellent job catering the event. At the end of the meal the awards were presented to winners of the graduate and undergraduate presentation contests.

GRADUATE STUDENT PRESENTATION AWARDS

The quality of student presentations seems to improve every year (which is surprising given the quality of past presentations). The judges had a difficult task with so many excellent talks. Two talks were recognized with cash awards. **Scott M. Pelitire** from the University of New Orleans for the presentation “Functional analysis, subcellular localization, and gene expression patterns of four cytochrome b5 isoforms cloned from developing tung (*Aleurites fordii* Hemsl.) seeds.” and **Ruby Ynalvez** from Louisiana State University for the presentation “Characterization of an insertional mutant of *Chlamydomonas reinhardtii*.”

Judges for the graduate student presentations were: Mel Oliver, Barbara Triplett, and Tim Sherman



*Scott Pelitire and
John Dyer*



*Jim Moroney and
Ruby Ynalvez*



*Jamie Hogan, Ron Butendieck, and
Paul Stephenson*

UNDERGRADUATE POSTER AWARD

We had several very impressive posters by undergraduates. This year’s award for best undergraduate poster went jointly to **Jamie Hogan** and **Ron Butendieck** from Rollins College for their coauthored poster “Enzymatic activity, cloning, and comparison of hydrolytic enzymes found in *Nepenthes burkei*.”

Judges for the poster competition were: Jay Mellon, Bill Outlaw, and Rickey Turley

2004 KRITON HATZIOS SYMPOSIUM

The 2004 Kriton Hatzios Symposium was organized by Caryl Chlan. The topic of this year's symposium was "Cotton Biotechnology" and three excellent presentations were made by Randy Allen (Texas Tech University), Candace Haigler (North Carolina State University) and Thea Wilkins (University of California Davis). The cost of the symposium was underwritten by a generous gift by Delta and Pineland Company. Thanks to the speakers and Caryl for another excellent symposium.



From left to right: Dr. Candice Haigler, Dr. Thea Wilkins, Dr. Randy Allen, and Dr. Caryl Chlan

MEETING SITE FOR 2005

East Carolina University in Greenville North Carolina was chosen as the site of the 2005 annual meeting. **The 2005 meeting has been tentatively set for March 12, 13, and 14** so pencil in the meeting now!

ELECTION RESULTS

The results of the 2004 elections were announced at the General Business meeting at the conclusion of the symposium.

- Dr. Caryl Chlan was elected Chair for 2004-2005
- Dr. James Mahan will serve as Vice-Chair for 2004-2005
- Dr. Dalton Gossett will be our new Secretary-Treasurer for 2004-2005.

The past chair, Dr. Ruth Grene was elected to serve on the Executive Committee.

AUBRY NAYLOR UNDERGRADUATE

POSTER AWARD

At the March 2004 Executive Board Meeting it was proposed that the Outstanding Undergraduate Poster Award be named in honor of the late Dr. Aubrey Naylor, who had been a staunch supporter and participant in the Southern Section throughout his long and illustrious career. The proposal passed unanimously and was ratified by the members in the subsequent business meeting. In accordance with the wishes of the membership I wrote to Dr. Naylor's two daughters for permission to honor Aubrey in this way, below is a copy of their reply. It is therefore with great pleasure that I announce that from this time forward the Southern Section Outstanding Undergraduate Poster Award will be named the "The Naylor Award for the Outstanding Undergraduate Poster".

Mel Oliver. Executive Board Member and Representative to ASPB.

May 24, 2004

Dr. Melvin J. Oliver
3810 4th Street
Lubbock, TX 79415

Dear Dr. Oliver,

It is with a great deal of pleasure that I respond to your letter of the Southern Section of the American Society of Plant Biologists planning to rename your Outstanding Undergraduate Poster Award in honor of my Father, Aubrey Naylor. My Father did indeed expend a lot of time and energy promoting the undergraduate student, and he would be so pleased and honored at this tribute to his memory. I can just picture his warm smile as I write.

Thank you and the Southern Section for doing this. You by all means have my endorsement. It is an honor for me to accept the Society offer to rename the award to honor my Father, and it is greatly appreciated.

It is almost a year now since my Father's passing, and as June 30 approaches and I wonder how I will get through that day, I will think of the Outstanding Undergraduate Poster Award in honor of my Father, and it will comfort me.

With warm regards,

Edith Naylor DeWitt

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NATIONAL ASPP NEWS

From Mel Oliver, Southern Section Representative

*Report on the ASPB Executive Committee Meeting
February 2004: Mel Oliver*

Members attending: Mary Lou Guerinot (President), Dan Bush (Past President), Roger Hangarter (President-Elect), Edgar Spalding (Secretary), Mark Brodl (Treasurer), Louis Sherman (Chair of Board of Trustees), Mary Tierney (Chair of Women in Plant Biology), Rob McClung (Chair of Publications committee), Nick Carpita and Linda Walling (Elected members), Lawrence Griffing (Chair of Education Committee), Dina Mandoli (Western and Chair of Membership Committee), Regina McClinton (Chair of Minority Affairs), Jon Monroe (Mid-Atlantic), Mel Oliver (Southern), Rakesh Minocha (Northeastern).
Absent: Steve Rodermel (Midwestern).

Highlights of the President's Oral Report

The president highlighted the successful meetings in both Hawaii and Utah (genetics) and the fact that both were in the black financially. The president spent most of her time discussing the successful search for a new Executive Director for ASPB and introduced Crispin Taylor to the committee.

Highlights of the Actions taken:

Selection of Boston, MA as the site for the 2006 meeting was unanimously approved. Toronto and Ottawa were considered but costs were higher and facilities inadequate. It was also pointed out that foreign postdocs and grad students would face immigration difficulties when leaving the country to attend the meeting, if in Canada.

Request to hold another Plant Genetics meeting in 2005 was approved by the board.

Rob McClung reported that the current ASPB article-posting policy allows authors to post PDF versions of their published articles on their own web site. This relatively liberal policy may be contributing to the decline in reprint sales experienced over the past few years. Rob asked that the committee approve a revised author posting policy and implement a \$100 (\$150 non-member) referrer-based toll-free link to the HTML/PDF of their article on the HighWire full-text online web site. This would allow authors to give colleagues barrier-free access to the fully searchable article, including linked references. In addition, the

modest fee would replace a small amount of revenue in an area where revenues have been declining.

Rob McClung discussed the Access to Global Online Research in Agriculture (AGORA) is an initiative to provide free or low-cost access to over 400 major scientific journals in agriculture and related biological, environmental, and social sciences to public institutions in developing countries. Countries on the list generally have an annual GNI per capita of US\$1000 or less. The Executive Committee approved participation of Plant Physiology and The Plant Cell in AGORA.

Rob McClung also submitted a list of Roles and Responsibilities for our Editor-in-Chief positions which were approved by the committee. Details are available should they be requested.

Regina McClinton of the Minority Affairs Committee moved that separate registration fees for undergraduates (\$50 for early, \$75 for regular) be adopted for the annual meetings. This was to encourage the participation of undergraduates at the Annual Meeting, especially those from minority serving institutions, many of which are primarily undergraduate institutions. This motion was approved.

Regina McClinton would like to conduct outreach by inviting participants, students and faculty, from nearby MSIs to attend the annual meeting for one day. Participants would be given free one-day meeting registration, and free tickets to the luncheon. Regina McClinton members would also interact with participants and orient them to ASPB and the Annual Meeting. The committee approved funding for this outreach.

Regina McClinton also requested funding for a new outreach initiative to provide 10 Recognition Travel Awards each year. These awards would bring students to the Annual Meeting who presented posters on plant biology at either SACNAS [Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science] and ABRCMS [Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students]. Mentors would also be encouraged to attend. This was tabled for discussion until a budget could be assessed.

Dan Bush presented a proposal for a new award in honor of Lawrence Bogorad. The award would be for research excellence and not restricted to field or career group. The Award would only be implemented if an endowment figure of \$25,000 is raised to support the award. This was brought to the society by the family and friends of Dr. Bogorad and it is hoped that it will be given triennially.

Journal Reports:

Plant Physiology

Submissions

2003 submissions increased 14% from 2002.

Published Articles

In 2003, *Plant Physiology* published 632 articles, a 12% increase from 2002.

In 2002, *Plant Physiology* published 564 articles, a 10% decrease from 2001.

Acceptance Rates

Year-end acceptance rates (total articles) for 2002 was 43% (38% for research articles) and in 2003 it was 39% (32% for research articles).

Bench to Press and Timing

Through 2003, time from submission to acceptance averaged 67.7 days. Through 2002, time from submission to acceptance averaged 72 days. In 2003, time to first decision averaged 33 days. In 2002, time to first decision averaged 37 days. Prior to Bench>Press, time from submission to acceptance averaged over 77 days.

The Journal Online

HTML and PDF Usage: In July 2003 Google began indexing full-text content from many of the journals on HighWire. We have noticed that since July 2003, HTML usage on the *Plant Physiology* site has increased dramatically, surpassing PDF usage.

For *Plant Physiology* June 2003 and months prior, HTML and PDF usage were relatively static; however, in July HTML usage was 55% and PDF usage was 45%. In August HTML usage was 60% and PDF usage was 40%. The numbers are similar for September through November.

In June 2003 and months prior, HTML and PDF usage remained flat, each averaging approximately 80,000 total hits per month. In July 2003, HTML usage rose to 98,206 hits per month and has continued to rise. In November HTML usage was 147,469 hits per month.

Impact Factor

Plant Physiology's impact factor increased in 2002 to 5.8 from 5.105 in 2001. The chart below lists *Plant Physiology*'s impact factors over the past 12 years. *Plant Physiology* is ranked 3rd among non-review plant journals, after *The Plant Cell* (10.751) and *The Plant Journal* (5.85).

Subscriptions

In 2003, *Plant Physiology* had 1665 individual subscribers, compared to 1803 in 2002. There were 1360 institutional subscriptions (an institutional subscription includes access to both journals) in 2003, compared to 1504 in 2002.

The Plant Cell

Editorial Board

The scope and size of the editorial board have been expanded under the leadership of Rich Jorgensen through the addition of editors with new expertise: Brandon Gaut (molecular evolution; evolutionary genomics), Joseph Noel (protein structure), and Rebecca Doerge (statistical genetics). Twenty-six coeditors currently serve on the editorial board. Recently approved to the board are Chris Bowler, Patricia Leon, Sebastian Bednarek, Jean Greenberg, and Ikuko Hara-Nishimura. These new members will replace outgoing members John Harada, Jonathan Jones, Alessandro Vitale, Venkatesan Sundaresan, and Sabeeha Merchant during the first six months of 2004.

Submissions

As of December 31, 2003, *The Plant Cell* received 811 research article submissions, 33 more than the same period in 2002. Of those, 33.7% were from U.S. authors and 64.8% were from non-U.S. authors; 1.6% were of unknown origin.

Acceptance Rates

For the year 2003, the acceptance rate for *The Plant Cell* was 28.5% (declines 71.5%) compared with an acceptance rate of 32.6% for 2002.

Turnaround Times

The average time from submission to first decision is now 28 days; the average time from submission to final acceptance (including a revision cycle) is 55.6 days (note: this includes manuscripts submitted for the supplement, so numbers are inflated by approximately 10 days). Numbers for 2002 were 30 days from submission to first decision and 65 days from submission to acceptance.

Published Articles

The number of published research articles was about the same in 2003 as in 2002.

Impact Factor

The 2002 impact factor for *The Plant Cell*, as calculated by the Institute for Scientific Information, was 10.751. This value represents an estimate of the number of times that each article published in the

journal in 2000 and 2001 was cited during 2002. The 2003 impact factor will be available in summer 2004.

Special Issue

The special issue on plant reproduction, guest-edited by Bob Goldberg, is approaching completion. At the time of this report, all but three of the manuscripts have been accepted and are beginning production (copyediting, typesetting, proofreading). Articles will be published online as they are ready and will then be published in paper this spring as a supplement to the journal volume.

Online Journal

Since August, we have seen an increase in online usage statistics for *The Plant Cell*, which we believe, can be attributed to Google now crawling our full-text articles. To date, 2,091 members have activated their online subscriptions along with 983 institutions. The complete archive of *The Plant Cell* is available online. Full text of *The Plant Cell* from 1989 to 1997 was added in searchable PDF. All articles are indexed in PubMed.

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