

SS-ASPB

Newsletter of the Southern Section of the American Society of Plant Biologists

A Quarterly Newsletter

Fall 2005



2006 Annual Meeting

Call for Papers will be released in early November.

2006 Symposium

"Signal Transduction Mechanisms in Plant Physiology"

Nominees for offices and 2007 meeting site

Get ready to vote

Hurricane aftermath:

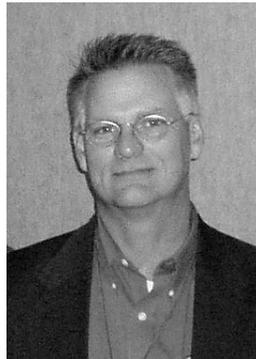
a personal account from John Dyer



Letter from the Chair:

It is difficult for me to believe that 2005 is already more than 3/4 complete. Time does indeed fly when you are having fun (and perhaps exceeds the speed of light when you are behind). Planning is well along for what is expected to be a very successful annual meeting of the SSASPB on February 25-27, 2006 in Daytona, Florida. As I think about a successful meeting several characteristics come to mind. From a personal standpoint a successful meeting in some way meets my "needs". Not too expensive, a focus that matches my interests, a nice location and a chance to interact with fellow scientists. From the viewpoint of the SSASPB a successful meeting is, above all, one that is successful in the view of the attendees. If we provide what the members want and need then we will have succeeded. What we hope to provide at the meeting in Daytona is an opportunity for students (both

graduate and undergraduate) and their faculty advisors to interact in a setting that is less formal and of shorter duration than many meetings. The inclusion of the annual Kriton Hatzios Symposium provides an opportunity to hear first rate presentations by researchers relating to a specific topic. Let's face it. It is expensive to attend any meeting. Time and money both have to be invested. We hope that our meeting format provides an experience that is worth your time and money. We try to vary the meeting location so that every so often it will be a "local" meeting for a good portion of our member-



ship. If it is in your area this year attending the meeting might even be a bargain.

This year, as in the past, the society will provide financial support for students who wish to make a presentation at the meeting. Additional support is available for minority student attendance. Information on student financial support is available at the SSASPB web-site and/or directly from me ([jmahan@cox.net](mailto:jmahahan@cox.net)). I encourage you to add the 2006 meeting of the SSASPB to your schedule for 2006.

Remember the longer you delay registering for a meeting the more likely you are to miss it outright.

James Mahan
2005-2006 Chair

**2006 Southern
Section Meeting
to be held in Daytona Beach, FL
Feb 25-27, 2006**

Schedule of events:

- Opening night mixer, Sat Feb 25th
- Oral and poster presentations*, Sun Feb 26th
- Banquet with Student Awards, Sun Feb 26th
- Featured Symposium on Signaling Mechanisms in Plant Physiology, Mon Feb 27th

*The society pays registration and banquet fee for students who participate in the paper or poster competition. Also, this year the first 30 student presenters will have their lodging paid for!

Call for Papers will be released in early November.

The 2006 Kriton Hatzios Symposium will have the theme "Signal Transduction Mechanisms in Plant Physiology"

Invited speakers include:

Dr. Alice C. Harmon, Professor of Botany and Graduate Programs in Plant Molecular and Cellular Biology, University of Florida - "Calcium-Dependent Protein Kinases - Structure, Function, and Roles"

Dr. John M. McDowell, Assistant Professor in the Fralin Biotechnology Center and the Department of Plant Pathology, Physiology, and Weed Science, Virginia Tech - "Unraveling Defense Signal Transduction Networks in Arabidopsis"

Dr. Daniel F. Klessig, Senior Professor at the Boyce Thompson Institute for Plant Research and Adjunct Professor in the Department of Plant Pathology, Cornell University - "Salicylate mediated Defense Signaling in Plant Disease Resistance"

The meeting will be held in Daytona Beach FL at the Ocean Plaza Hotel. Fifty rooms have been "blocked" for the meeting. The cost is \$85/night (single, \$10.00 extra per additional person). Rooms not reserved by January 26, 2006, will be released. Please reserve your rooms early and tell them you are with the Southern Section ASPB to get the negotiated rate. **The SS-ASPB has decided to purchase 15 rooms for student presenters this year. Students will be paired up on a first-come-first serve basis, so encourage your students to submit their registration materials early.**

NOMINEES FOR THE SS-ASPB OFFICERS AND 2007 MEETING SITE

Candidates for the Position of Secretary/Treasurer

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

Kelly Major

Dr. Major received her B.A. in Biology and Education (minor Botany) from Elmira College, Elmira, NY in 1990 and Ph.D. in Biology with a concentration in algal physiological ecology from the University of Maine, Orono in 1995. After graduating from the University of Maine, she worked as a postdoctoral research associate at the University of Texas Marine Science Institute (1996-1999) and Oklahoma State University (2000). In 2001, she joined the Biology faculty as an Assistant Professor at the University of South Alabama. Past research endeavors have included investigations into the characterization and mechanisms of thermal- and photoacclimation in algae and seagrasses, as well as, salinity and temperature tolerance in stress-tolerant green algae. At present, research in her laboratory focuses on aquatic plant and algal physiology and ecology. These studies include investigations into: tolerance to salinity and herbicide exposure in algae and aquatic plants, impacts of exotic/ invasive organisms on native plant communities, physiological adaptations of exotic/ invasive plants and the use of biological indicators to assess aquatic ecosystem health. She has been an active member of the American Society of Plant Biologists – Southern Section since 2001.

Stephen Banks

Steve Banks graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Science with Honors in Plant Biology from the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, U.K in 1976. He received his Master of Science degree from the University of Reading U.K. in 1977 and completed his Ph.D. in Pharmaceutical Science at the University of Nottingham, U.K in 1982. His thesis revealed the biosynthetic pathway to the 6a-hydroxypterocarpan phytoalexins synthesized in pea plants and soybeans. The major professor for his doctoral work was Dr. Paul M. Dewick and the external examiner was the late Professor Jeffrey B. Harborne FRS. Following post-doctoral work in fungal pathology at the University of Kentucky and on the Agrobacterium system at the University of Toledo, OH, he was appointed to the faculty of the Department of Biological Sciences at the Louisiana State University, Shreveport in 1992. He was promoted to Associate Professor in 1997 and Professor in 2002. Since 1992 Dr. Banks has been a member of the LSUS Cotton Stress Physiology Research Team led by Dr. Dalton R. Gossett. Funded by the Louisiana Board of Regents Industrial Ties Program, this team has worked for the last fourteen years on the physiology and biochemistry of the salt-induced oxidative stress response in cotton. The team has involved numerous undergraduate students in their research, graduated fifteen students with their masters degrees and published ten papers in refereed journals. Dr. Banks has taught twenty six different courses at the undergraduate and graduate level at LSUS, and is the faculty advisor for Phi Kappa Phi and Omicron Delta Kappa.

Candidates for other Officers' Positions**Candidate for Chair of SS-ASPB**

- Dr. Dalton Gossett (current Vice-Chair)

Candidate for Vice-Chair

- Dr. Kent Chapman (current Secretary / Treasurer)

Candidate for Southern Section Executive Committee

- Dr. James Mahan (current Chair)

Candidate for SS-ASPB representative to the ASPB Executive Committee

- Dr. Caryl Chlan

Dr. Mel Oliver, our current sectional representative to the ASPB National Executive Committee accepted a new position that lies outside of the states encompassing the Southern Section of ASPB. Consequently he has chosen to step down from this position. Our many thanks are due to Mel for his extraordinary service to the southern section in this and other roles, and we wish him much success in his new position in Missouri. The nomination committee recommended, and the Executive Committee of SS-ASPB concurred, to put forth Dr. Caryl Chlan, Dept. of Biology, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, LA as its nominee to replace Dr. Oliver. Dr. Chlan has happily agreed to serve as our representative to ASPB National if elected by the membership of the Section. Dr. Chlan has a long record of service to the Section and will be an excellent spokesperson for us in the parent society's Executive Committee.

Site Choices for the 2007 Meetings: Mobile, Alabama and Shreveport, Louisiana**Mobile Alabama**

Mobile has a metro-area population of 400,000 and is home to the University of South Alabama, fourth largest university in the state with a student population of about 13,000. Mobile itself was founded in 1702 as the original capital of the Louisiana Territory. The correct pronunciation of the city's name is "Mo-beel", given the soft emphasis on the second syllable by its French founders. It came from the Maubilla Indians. Mobile is the Azalea Capital of the World, thanks to Fife Langlois who first brought the bright pink blossoms here from his father's garden in Toulouse, France in 1754. Blooms peak in late March. Mobile is also home to the original Mardi Gras in this country, instituted in 1704, sixty-two years before

New Orleans adopted the celebration. Mobile Bay was the first body of water in the New World to be accurately charted. This was done by the Spanish explorer Pineda in 1519. Mobile is located at the intersection of I-65 and I-10. Four airlines (Continental, Delta, Northwest, U.S. Airways) service Mobile via the Mobile Regional Airport and offer non-stop jet service to Atlanta, Dallas, Houston, Memphis, and Charlotte.

Nearby attractions:

Estuarium at Dauphin Island Sea Lab – this facility features exciting interactive and visual displays on the animals, plants, resources, and ecology of the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta, Mobile Bay, its Barrier Islands, and the Gulf of Mexico. After touring the Estuarium, you can walk the trails of the 164-acre Audubon Bird Sanctuary or visit historic Fort Gaines.

Bellingrath Gardens - Surround yourself with beauty, history and ecology in a year-round floral paradise with 65 landscaped acres within a 905-acre semitropical forest.

Boat Tours - Mobile is also home to five boat tours: Alabama Cruises-Southern Belle, Tensaw Eco-Tours: Delta Outdoor Guide Service, Cotton Blossom, Delta Explorer and Wildland Expeditions. Each boat tour provides informative sightseeing and discovery cruises. Swamp tours offer a view of the unique natural resources of the Mobile-Tensaw Delta, where you can learn about the more than 250 species of birds, 230 species of fish, alligator, bald eagle, black bear, and other wildlife inhabiting this area.

Shreveport

Shreveport Louisiana is centrally located in the southern states. It is well served by the following airlines, Delta, Continental, Northwest Airlinck, American Eagle, American Connection, ASA and Continental Express. By road, Shreveport is on Interstate 20 (East-West) and Interstate 49 (North-South). Shreveport has a downtown area containing casino's which are on boats on the Red River, night clubs and numerous other attractions.

Plant Biology in the Hurricane Aftermath

Our best wishes go out to the many of our colleagues that were affected seriously by the hurricanes this year. For example, Jay Mellon is living in Stoneville, MS, and Caryl Chlan has two USDA-ARS scientists from New Orleans working in her lab for the foreseeable future. I asked John Dyer to put his thoughts down on paper after seeing images of the devastation to his research lab at the USDA-SRRC in New Orleans. I know there are many stories along the coast with similar themes and I thank John for sharing his.

"Hurricane Katrina has changed my life forever. Like many of us that grew up in the Southern United States, hurricanes have always been part of life, and as with any common occurrence, there is a sense of normalcy and complacency that becomes associated with these types of situations. As the storm approached I went through my normal routine of plugging essential lab equipment into emergency outlets, chatted with friends about the football games that weekend, then packed up my family and headed north to McComb Mississippi to ride out the storm. Little did I know that the storm would be so huge and fierce that it would not only destroy my lab in New Orleans, but it would also run us out of Mississippi all together. As the storm roared through the area, you could only marvel at the strength of nature as huge trees bowed down and snapped under the intense winds. After a few hours, I was sure that the worst had hit, only to find that the winds blew harder for another 2 hours. The devastation was severe, swift, and complete. Without electricity and water, living conditions rapidly became unbearable and we fled to Houston to live with 20 other people (and 8 dogs, 3 cats, and a guinea pig) in a single house. We watched in horror as the levees of New Orleans were breached. Days began to run together, and yet time stood still, stuck in a continuous barrage of merciless news coverage.

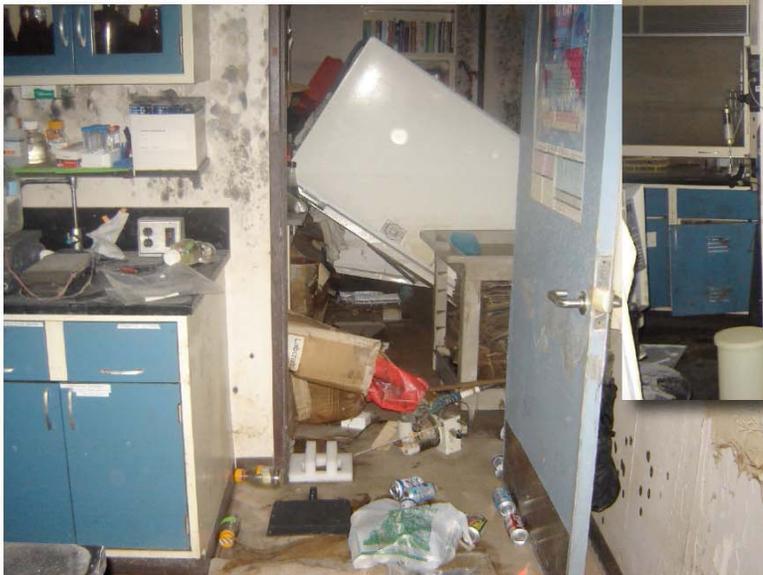
Desperate scanning of satellite images from the internet confirmed that many of our houses were flooded, but pictures did not prepare me for what I would encounter when I went back to the city. Words cannot easily describe the feelings you get when seeing entire subdivisions nearly destroyed by water and downed trees, thousands of twisted power lines, or smelling the rotten food that lined every street. While I was very fortunate that my house made it through the storm, my entire lab was destroyed. Six feet of standing water caused all the freezers and refrigerators to topple, and what the water didn't destroy, the mold did. Aside from a few boxes of plasmids, I lost everything. In these very difficult times, I am so grateful to have friends and

colleagues that have offered to help out. Although the forces of nature can easily destroy the physical parts of our lives, they can never touch the relationships that we have with friends and family, and for that I am extremely grateful."

John M. Dyer

Research Chemist

USDA-ARS



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