

S P R I N G 2 0 0 8

# SS-ASPB

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



Dr. Kent Chapman, Professor of Biochemistry, Director of the Center for Plant Lipid Research at the University of North Texas and Chair of the Southern Section of the ASPB introduces the symposium speakers at this year's annual meeting.



## Letter from Dr. Kent Chapman, Chair of the SS-ASPB

The 2008 Annual Meeting of the ASPB-Southern Section took place this year at Diamond Jacks Casino and Resort, Bossier City, Louisiana 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> of March. The meeting provided an opportunity to renew contacts and make new ones, and offered a terrific venue for the presentation of excellent plant science. The 2008 annual meeting was attended by delegates from South Carolina, Arkansas, Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi and Texas representing ten universities and four USDA-ARS facilities. Thirteen students competed in the graduate student oral presentation competition. Four posters were entered in the Aubrey Naylor undergraduate poster competition and two students competed in the new undergraduate oral competition. In addition there were four non-competition oral, and a further twenty poster presentations.

## Symposium

This year's Kriton-Hatzios Symposium was entitled "Photosynthetic Intermediates" and featured presentations by

Professor Richard Leegood, Robert Hill Centre, University of Sheffield, U.K.

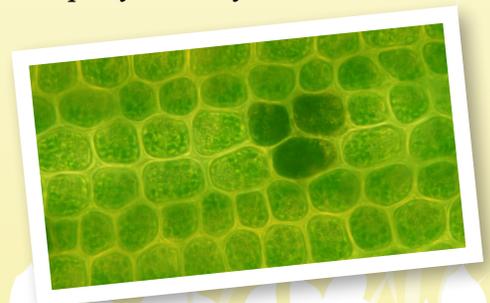
*"Are diatoms C<sub>3</sub>-C<sub>4</sub> intermediates?"*

Gerald E. Edwards, Regents Professor of Biological Sciences, Washington State University, Pullman, USA.

*"Features of single-cell C<sub>4</sub> photosynthesis in terrestrial plants"*

George E. Bowes Professor of Botany, University of Florida, Gainesville, USA.

*"C<sub>4</sub> photosynthesis in aquatic organisms. What can we learn from that pesky weed Hydrilla?"*





Dr. Stephen W. Banks, Professor of Biological Sciences, Louisiana State University in Shreveport and Secretary Treasurer of the ASPB-SS presents, from left to right, **Parag Sevak** from the University of Texas at Austin, winner of the Aubrey Naylor undergraduate poster competition, **Jonathan Torres** from the University of Texas at Austin, winner of the undergraduate oral presentation competition and **Vijay Singh** of the University of North Texas, winner of the graduate oral presentation competition with their awards.

At the Sunday night banquet, three certificates and checks were awarded for the outstanding presentation in each of the three student presentation categories.



Graduate student presentations were made by from left to right, Abhijit Karve, Rucha Karve, Vijay Singh, Molly Mintz, Angel Geraci, Elizabeth Marie Henaf, Katherine Van Deven, and Zhong-Yu Xie



Graduate student presentations were also made by, from left to right Daniel Holtz, Wayra Navia-Gine, Fan Jia, and Vijay Chigharapati



Undergraduate oral presentations were made by Jonathan Torres and Brian Comer

## Other events

### Kriton-Hatzios Symposium

Speakers for this year's symposium on "Photosynthetic Intermediates" were from left to right, George Bowes, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL, Richard Leegood, University of Sheffield, U.K. and Gerald Edwards, Washington State University, Pullman, WA.



### Crispin Taylor speaks on careers...

Dr. Crispin Taylor, Executive Director of the American Society of Plant Biologists addressed the 2008 Annual Southern Section meeting and drew attention to the importance of career development for those involved in the natural sciences. Dr. Taylor described a European Science Foundation Policy Briefing entitled "*Towards a new paradigm for education, training, and career paths in the natural sciences*". The article contains a career tree, which illustrates the need for a broadening of the training received by young scientists to meet what is described in the article as "the increasingly complex global, social and interdisciplinary landscape of 21<sup>st</sup> century natural sciences".

You can download a PDF document of the European Science Foundation Policy Briefing on this subject here:

[http://www.esf.org/typo3conf/ext/naw\\_secured1/secure.php?u=0&file=fileadmin/be\\_user/CEO\\_Unit/Science\\_Policy/ESPB16.pdf&t=1205181836&hash=dbdf2b3197888afb694f1e90bd36991b](http://www.esf.org/typo3conf/ext/naw_secured1/secure.php?u=0&file=fileadmin/be_user/CEO_Unit/Science_Policy/ESPB16.pdf&t=1205181836&hash=dbdf2b3197888afb694f1e90bd36991b)

This theme is further developed in an article by Dr. Taylor entitled "*Fruitful Pursuits: Research Careers in Plant Science*" which can be found at:

[http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/career\\_development/previous\\_issues/articles/2006\\_02\\_10/fruitful\\_pursuits\\_research\\_careers\\_in\\_plant\\_science/](http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/career_development/previous_issues/articles/2006_02_10/fruitful_pursuits_research_careers_in_plant_science/)

Thanks to all participants for an excellent meeting. Special thanks to Stephen Banks and the LSUS team for coordinating this great event and to Dalton Gossett and Stephen for constructing poster boards in Dalton's garage. See you next year and Please Vote!

## Elections

Each year we fill four positions on our executive committee and vote for the site of our next year's annual meeting. This year we will also elect a new representative from the Section to serve as our representative to the ASPB Executive Committee.

### The candidates...

Our executive committee nominates a candidate for each position from within the current executive committee. This allows for continuity in these important offices. You can vote for the person that we have nominated or a write-in candidate of your choice.

This year we are nominating

**Dr. Kent Chapman** to our Executive committee

**Dr. Kelly Major** to Chair

**Dr. Stephen Banks** to Vice Chair

### Secretary-Treasurer

For this position we recruit volunteers from the membership at large to serve.

The Two Candidates for Secretary-Treasurer- 2008-09

**Dr. Paul Stephenson**, Rollins College, Winter Park, FL

**Dr. Paxton Payton**, USDA-ARS, Lubbock, TX

### Dr. Paul Stephenson

He earned a B.A. degree in Biology in 1984 from Hartwick College in Oneonta, NY. He completed a Ph.D. degree in Plant Biology in 1998 under Bernard Rubinstein at the Univ. of Massachusetts, Amherst. From 1998 through 2000, he held a position as a visiting Assistant Professor of Biology at Rollins College. After briefly teaching at Ohio Wesleyan University (2000/2001) he returned to Rollins College in 2001 and was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor in 2007. His current research interests include investigating the regulation of hydrolytic enzyme secretion in carnivorous pitcher plants (particularly *Nepenthes ventricosa*), cloning and characterizing candidate enzymes, and using fluorescent *in situ* hybridization to localize their expression. In 2007 he began a new research project in collaboration with researchers at the Florida Institute of Technology. This investigation studies the hydrolytic enzymes involved in mixotrophic metabolism of toxic algal bloom causing dinoflagellates. He has also worked on projects studying programmed cell death during floral senescence and vascular tissue differentiation, and is particularly interested in proteolytic mechanisms that are involved in cell death in plants. He is the recipient of a major research instrumentation grant from the NSF and has been awarded grants in aid of research from the Sigma Xi, the Univ. of Massachusetts, Ohio Wesleyan Univ., and Rollins College. Paul teaches the following courses at Rollins: genetics, botany, general biology, molecular biology, and a variety of biology courses designed for undergraduate non-science majors. Dr. Stephenson has been a member of ASPB since 1996.

### Dr. Paxton Payton

He earned a B.A. degree in Biology from The University of Texas at Austin in 1993. He completed his Ph.D. in Biology in 1999, investigating plant reactive oxygen scavenging mechanisms, under the direction of A. Scott Holaday at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, TX. From 1999 to 2002 he worked on functional genomics of tomato fruit ripening under James Giovannoni at Texas A&M University and later at the Boyce Thompson Institute for Plant Research at Cornell University. In 2002, Dr. Payton moved to the USDA Cropping Systems Research Laboratory in Lubbock, TX to accept the position of Plant Physiologist. His primary research focus is the molecular and physiological response to abiotic stress in production agriculture and the integration of biotechnology and new crop management strategies in water-limited environments. His research is currently funded by the USDA Ogallala Aquifer Initiative and by the USDA-NRI Competitive Grants Program on Environmental Stress. As an adjunct professor in the department of Biology at Texas Tech University, Dr. Payton has taught courses at the graduate and undergraduate level, including Plant Physiological Ecology and Functional Genomics Data Mining and Analysis. He has been a member of ASPB since 1995.

## Southern Section Representative to ASPB

Every three years we elect a new member of the Southern Section to serve as our representative to the parent society. This representative acts a voice for our section in the ASPB Executive Committee.

This year our nominee is **Dr. Tim Sherman**, Dept. of Biology, Univ. of South Alabama. He has served on the SS-ASPB for 7 years, as Sec-Treas., Vice-Chair, Chair, and as an executive committee member for 4 years, has been appointed to the newly recreated position of SS-ASPB Communications Officer. He is familiar with our history and will be happy to give ear to any concerns you that you feel should be presented to the national ASPB executive committee.

On the ballot, please vote for him or any write-in candidate that you feel will be willing and able to serve in this position.

## Site selection for the 2008 meetings

### Austin, Texas

One proposed site for the 2009 meeting is Austin, Texas. There are several choices for the conference, both urban and rural. The newly opened Austin-Bergstrom International Airport has service to major cities across the country. Austin is the Live Music Capital of Texas, the home of The University of Texas, and Willie Nelson. Local attractions include the LBJ Presidential Library and the Harry Ransom Center, which holds one of five complete examples of the Gutenberg Bible. We believe Austin will also attract a number of active ASPB members from Texas' major universities, including UT, Texas A&M, Baylor University, and the USDA-ARS laboratories.

### Winter Park/ Orlando Area

The Orlando/Winter Park area has been proposed as a site for the 2009 SS-ASPB meeting. Several choices are available for the conference site, including Rollins College (provided that the 2009 meeting date corresponds with spring break for the college). Both

Winter Park and downtown Orlando have hotels that could accommodate the conference. Orlando International Airport provides service to all major U.S. cities and is located within a 30 minute drive of both Winter Park and Orlando. In addition to the major attractions in the region (Disney, Sea World, Universal and MGM studios), the Orlando/Winter Park area has numerous other local attractions that may be of interest to ASPB members such as the Harry P. Leu Botanical Garden, the UCF Arboretum, Big Tree State Park, Wekiva State Park, The Morse Museum of Fine Art, as well as many restaurants and shops. The Orlando/Winter Park venue may also attract ASPB members from the University of Florida, University of Central Florida, Florida State University, and the local USDA-ARS laboratories.

All current of SS-ASPB can vote for officers and the upcoming meeting site. If you are also current member of the ASPB national, you can vote online at: <http://www.aspb.org/sections/southernvote.cfm>

If you have paid dues to only the Southern Section, you will have to vote via email. Please contact Stephen Banks ([stephen.banks@lsus.edu](mailto:stephen.banks@lsus.edu)) and he will email you a ballot that you can use to vote.

**The voting deadline is April 1<sup>st</sup>, so don't wait!**

# Current officers



## **Chair**

### **Dr. Kent Chapman**

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(940) 565 2969, [chapman@unt.edu](mailto:chapman@unt.edu)

## **Vice-Chair**

### **Dr. Kelly M. Major**

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University of South Alabama  
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## **Secretary/Treasurer**

### **Dr. Stephen W. Banks**

Department of Biological Sciences  
Louisiana State Univ. at Shreveport  
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## **Executive Committee Members**

### **Dr. Dalton R. Gossett**

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## **Executive Committee Members**

### **Dr. James Mahan**

USDA/ARS  
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## **Southern Section Representative to ASPB Exec. Comm.**

### **Dr. Caryl Chlan**

[cchlan@louisiana.edu](mailto:cchlan@louisiana.edu)



For more information and updates on meetings, student award, and officers elected, visit our website:

[www.ss-aspb.org](http://www.ss-aspb.org)