

SS-ASPB

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

A Quarterly Newsletter

Summer 2005



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2005 ANNUAL MEETING

The Greenville Hilton in Greenville, NC was the host site for the 2005 annual meeting. **Dr. Cindy Putnam-Evans**, the local site coordinator, provided invaluable assistance in the coordination of events that made everything run smoothly. Also, the section would like to thank **Dr. Ronald Newton**, Chair of the Biology Department at East Carolina, for his assistance in coordinating the meeting. In addition we would like to acknowledge our sponsors:

Delta and Pine Land
Pioneer Hi-Bred International Inc.
The Bayer Corporation
American Society of Plant Biologists
East Carolina University

Without the generosity of these sponsors, this meeting would not have been as successful as it was.



Ron Newton and Cindy Putnam-Evans

MEETING SUMMARY

As has become our usual custom, the meeting started in grand style with the SSASPB mixer on Saturday evening. The mixer provided an excellent opportunity to catch up with old friends and meet new people. Traditionally, the Southern Section meeting provides an excellent opportunity to meet fellow scientists in our geographic region in a setting that is

conductive to interactions, and this year's meeting was no exception. On Sunday, March 13th, the meeting started at 8:30 am with the oral presentations. Although participation in this year's meeting was light with only 9 oral presentations and 4 poster presentations, the quality of the presentations in both categories was very good. The day concluded with the traditional Sunday evening banquet. The buffet styled banquet featured several delicious dishes, and the Greenville Hilton staff did an excellent job of catering the event. After the meal, the awards were presented to the winners of the graduate and undergraduate competitions.



Graduate student presentation awards

To encourage participation and promote the professional development of students, the Southern Section has created competitions for both graduate and undergraduate students. Winners of both student competitions receive a framed certificate and cash award. The American Society of Plant Biologists provides financial support for these competitions. Additionally, meeting registration and banquet fees are waived for all students presenting papers.

As has become a standard at the annual Southern Section meeting, the quality of the graduate student presentations was excellent. In fact, the quality of the presentations was so good, that the judges decided to award three runner up cash awards in addition to a cash award for the outstanding graduate student presenter. The runner up awards were presented to **Indrani Murkherjee** (University of South Carolina) for the presentation "*The FRO3 ferric reductase plays a vital role in iron homeostasis in Arabidopsis*", **Alicia Manfree** (Clemson University) for the presentation "*Characterization of a functional knockout in Arabidopsis thaliana Group 1 LEA, ATEM6*", and **Cecilia Vasquez-Robinet** (Virginia Tech) for the presentation "*Differential expression of heat shock proteins genes in preconditioning for photosynthetic acclimation in drought-stressed loblolly pine*". The outstanding graduate student presentation was awarded to **Jennifer Barwick** (University of South Carolina Upstate) for the presentation "*Functional Characterization of the nicotianamine synthase (NAS) gene family in Arabidopsis thaliana*".

Judges for the graduate student competition were: Stephen Banks, Mel Oliver, and Jay Mellon.



Indrani Murkherjee



Alicia Manfree (left); Cecilia Vasquez-Robinet (right)



Jennifer Barwick

The Aubrey Naylor Undergraduate Poster Award

Although the number of participants in the undergraduate poster competition was small, the quality of the poster presentations was very good. Again, the judges decided to award a runner up as well as an outstanding undergraduate presentation. The runner up award was presented to **Sarah Murray** (Louisiana State University – Shreveport) for the poster "*Cotton boll growth in genetically engineered strains under saline conditions*". The Aubrey Naylor Outstanding Undergraduate Poster award was presented to **Peter Aspesi** (North Carolina State University) for the poster "*Is InsP3 signaling involved in plant defense responses to pathogens?*"

Judges for the undergraduate poster competition were: Kent Chapman, Caryl Chlan, and James Mahan. (Peter Aspesi was unavailable for a photo.)



Sarah Murray and Kent Chapman

2005 Kriton Hatzios Symposium

At each yearly meeting, the Vice Chair of the Southern Section organizes a symposium of three speakers on topics of current interests. The proceeds of these talks are then published as mini-reviews in an issue of *Physiologia Plantarum*. (Last years have just been published and are available at: <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/toc/ppt124/3>)

The was organized by James Mahan. The topic of this year's symposium was "Whole Plant Physiology" and three outstanding presentations were made by **Thomas R. Sinclair** (Agronomy Physiology Laboratory, University of Florida), **Robert E. Sharp** (Professor and Chair, Department of Agronomy, University of Missouri-Columbia), and **Tom Kerby** (Vice President of Technical Services, Delta and Pine Land Company, Scott, Mississippi).



The cost of the symposium was underwritten by a generous gift from **Delta Pine and Land Company**. Thanks to the speakers and James for another excellent symposium.

Meeting Site For 2006

The 2006 site for the annual meeting will be **Daytona, Florida**. The dates for the meeting will be February 25-27, 2006 at the Plaza Ocean Club. Please mark you calendars. Additional details will be available in the Fall newsletter.

Election Results

The results of the 2005 elections were announced at the General Business meeting at the conclusion of the symposium

Dr. James Mahan was elected Chair for 2005-2006

Dr. Dalton Gossett was elected Vice-Chair for 2005-2006

Dr. Kent Chapman was elected Secretary/Treasurer for 2005 – 2006.

The past chair, Dr. Caryl Chlan, was elected to serve on the Executive Committee.

National ASPB News

From Mel Oliver, Southern Section Representative

At the February meeting of the Executive Board several reports and motions were presented that are of potential interest to members of the Southern Section. The meeting took place at the ASPB Headquarters in Rockville Maryland and was attended by all standing members as well as staff and our President Elect Mike Thomoshow. The following is a report on the highlights of the meeting and some of the action items that will receive a final vote and funding at the Executive Board meeting in Seattle this July.

In his report President Hangarter reported that the Managing Editor positions for the two journals have been joined to form a Super Managing Editor. A new committee for strategic planning has been established with members from both within and outside of ASPB to help us prepare for the future in a fast shifting landscape, especially in the publishing arena. He concluded his report by saying that with the good news ASPB is in strong financial shape. Crispin Taylor, ASPB Executive Director, expanded on the membership of the Strategic Planning Committee stating that the membership would consist of Machi Dilworth, Sabeeha Merchant, Ken Keegstra, David Stern, Mary Lou Guerinot, Roger Hangarter, Mike Thomashow, Donna Gordon, Brian Hyps, Jean Rosenberg, Kim Snell, Nancy Winchester, and himself. He also reported that enhanced cross-training of staff in different positions was the goal of the changes in the publications department at ASPB.

The results of an email vote to elect the next Editor-in-Chief of *Plant Physiology* was reported and Don Ort was unanimously approved for that position and will take up the position on July 1st 2005.

Tony DePass reported that the Minority Affairs Committee (MAC) decided during their meeting that funds approved last year would be used to support visits of approximately 20 high-profile plant biologists to minority-serving institutions in an effort to increase our outreach into this community.

In our discussion/action items at the meeting we discussed the revitalization of the Education Foundation Board of Directors under the chairmanship of Jim Seidow. Other members of the board would include Sally Assmann, Christine Flannagan, Peggy Lemaux, Eric Sachs, and Paul Williams. The board will eventually grow to twelve members.

We also discussed and agreed to promote the Membership Committee to the full status of a Standing Committee of ASPB. This would greatly facilitate service for our membership and allow for a stability and commitment within the committee that has been lacking in the past, with the noted exception of our past chair Dina Mandoli. The Chair of the Membership Committee would now become a full member of the Executive Committee instead of ex officio. A vote to accomplish this was approved unanimously. In a similar motion, which passed with only one vote against, the Chair of the International Affairs Committee (IAC) will be considered for full membership to the Executive Committee in order to represent international members.

In an ongoing discussion there was general agreement that recognition should be given to members who have done more than their share to help ASPB and plant biology, the establishment of A Fellow of ASPB Award. The motion that "The President appoint an ad hoc committee to develop a proposed plan for establishing a Fellows of ASPB Award to be presented to the Executive Committee at the July meeting in Seattle." This amended motion was unanimously approved.

The site selection for future annual meetings was discussed at length. For 2007 the approved site for the meeting was the Chicago Hilton Hotel and the 2007 meeting will be a joint meeting between the Botanical Society of America and ASPB. The site for 2008 is still under consideration but following a startling offer by the Honolulu Convention Center the Executive Committee voted unanimously to approve Hawaii as the site for the 2009 annual meeting.

The Program Committee presented a proposal to provide logistical support for a specialty conference on the general topic of water movement

that would bring together fields that generally do not meet together (e.g., cell biologists and atmospheric scientists) in 2006. Sally Assmann, Keith Mott, and Stephen Long would organize the scientific aspects of the meeting. The model for the meeting would be the successful Plant Genetics specialty meeting. The motion to facilitate the conference was passed unanimously.

The Executive Committee also discussed the establishment of an experiment to give authors the opportunity to have their Plant Physiology or Plant Cell paper published as an open access paper (i.e. free immediately upon publication to any online reader) for an additional fee of \$1000. This mechanism would test the receptiveness of the plant biology community for the concept of the author bearing the financial burden of hav-

ing their work made freely available. There is no significant financial risk to this experiment. ASPB journals would be among those eligible places to publish for scientists obliged to publish in open access journals.

ASPB Support for Sectional Societies was a major topic for debate this February but simply in the spirit of defining the relationship with no votes or binding decisions being made. Some of the topics included whether or not ASPB should charge the sections for helping them organize their annual meetings (not a problem in our section as we do this ourselves). Should some of the \$5000 that ASPB offers to each of the sections each year go toward the costs of setting up websites and abstract management (again the Southern Section does this in house)? Another issue

discussed was what ASPB could reasonably expect in return for the financial support it offers to sections. For example, can ASPB expect Sections to help recruit members by facilitating contact with members of sections who are not ASPB members? All felt that this was reasonable. Also discussed was the goal and the raison d'être of the ASPB-sectional relationship. One view expressed is that sections would ideally take care of local needs of plant biologists (e.g., organization and logistics required to bring plant biologists together) while funneling new members to ASPB, thereby serving as a membership foundation. Ways to achieve this goal were considered important things to explore in the future.

2004-2005 SS-ASPB OFFICERS



A few of the folks who have volunteered their time and efforts to make this meeting was a success: Dalton Gossett, Jay Mellon, Ruth Grene, Stephen Banks, James Mahan, and Mel Oliver

Chair

Dr. Caryl Chlan
Univ. of Louisiana at Lafayette
Department of Biology
PO Box 42451
Lafayette LA 70504
(337) 482-5916, cchlan@louisiana.edu

Vice-Chair

Dr. James Mahan
USDA/ARS
3810 4th Street
Lubbock, TX 79415-000
(806) 749-5560, jmahan@lbk.ars.usda.gov

Secretary/Treasurer

Dr. Dalton R. Gossett
Department of Biological Sciences
Louisiana State Univ. at Shreveport
One University Place
Shreveport, LA 71115
(318) 797-5085, dgossett@pilot.lsus.edu

Secretary/Treasurer elect

Dr. Kent Chapman
Department of Biological Sciences
Division of Biochem. & Mol. Biol.
University of North Texas
Denton, TX 76203-5220
(940) 565 2969, chapman@unt.edu

Executive Committee Members

Dr. Jay Mellon
jmellon@srcc.ars.usda.gov
Dr. Tim Sherman
tsherman@jaguar1.usouthal.edu
Ruth Grene
grene@vt.edu

Southern Section Representative

Dr. Melvin J. Oliver:
moliver@lbk.ars.usda.gov

Southern Section Historian

Dr. Joyce Foster:
joyce.foster@ars.usda.gov