



# SOUTHERN SECTION

## AMERICAN SOCIETY OF PLANT BIOLOGISTS

### NEWSLETTER

#### *From the Chair: Tim Sherman*

Here it is September again, and with it comes the onset of a new cycle of the preparation for the annual Southern Section meeting. That is to say... preparation by the attendees. The Section's Secretary-Treasurer, Dr. Caryl Chlan, Vice-chair, Dr. Ruth (Alscher) Grene, and local site coordinator, Dr. Kent Chapman, have been very busy since the last meeting in an effort that will culminate in Denton, TX this coming March. We certainly hope that you partake of the fruits of their labor.

If having a wonderful time weren't enough, perhaps you still need reasons to attend. Here are a few:

*The talks:* Each year's symposium attracts top-flight speakers to address current topics of interest. The theme of this year's symposium will center on Bioinformatics for Comparative Genomics. Two of the speakers will be addressing the topic of what bioinformatics can do for you, and the third will be speaking specifically on the application of these principles to solve agricultural problems. (More detail of the symposium is available later in this newsletter.)

*The workshop:* This year we are adding a workshop on Saturday afternoon. Details are limited at this point, but you can learn more later in the Fall by visiting the "Meetings" area of the Southern Section's web site ([www.ss-aspb.org](http://www.ss-aspb.org)).

*Location:* This year's meeting, associated with the University of North Texas, will be the first meeting in Texas in many years and as such brings an opportunity for "westerners" of the section to have easier access to the meeting. While it may seem like too far to travel, Denton, lying just north of Dallas-Ft. Worth, should make for cheap airfare for those more distant to the site and is easy driving distance from Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, and even a good chunk of Texas!

*Collegiality:* This is a wonderful venue to meet with old friends and to make some new ones. As a faculty member from a primarily undergraduate institution (PUI),

I have found that these meetings are a great way to meet with folks from similar institutions. Also, 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, especially undergrads, to participate and learn how scientific meetings really work. 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 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). [Make note that the Section pays registration and banquet fees for all students that participate in the graduate oral or undergraduate poster competitions and offers funds to offset the costs for minority students to attend.]

*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 (speaking from the standpoint of having served in the toughest two positions at this point). 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.

I hate to come off like a salesman, but I think that the sectional meetings are definitely worth your time. If you have doubts, contact someone who has attended

recently and get their take on it. (If you'd like names, I'll be happy to provide some.) I think that you will be pleased by the feedback.

I look forward to seeing you in Denton. You'll be glad you made the effort to attend.



### Southern Sections Archivist

In the spring newsletter and call for volunteers was made to find an archivist for the Section. We are happy to announce that **Dr. Joyce Foster** is stepping up to the task. Dr. Foster has been active in the section for many years and will undoubtedly do an excellent job in the post. We are greatly appreciative of her generous donation of time and effort in this endeavor.



### National ASPP News

#### ASPB Executive Committee Report - 8/2002

Joyce G. Foster, Southern Section Representative

The ASPB Executive and Membership Committees met in August during Plant Biology 2002 in Denver, Colorado. Actions of particular interest to Southern Section members are summarized below.

**Plant Physiology:** The Executive Committee voted to retain the existing name of the journal. The journal's impact factor increased in 2001 to 5.105 from 4.831 in 2000. *Plant Physiology* is ranked third among non-review plant journals, after *The Plant Cell* and *The Plant Journal*. Beginning in January, Natasha Raikhel is introducing a new section in *Plant Physiology* on Bioinformatics. She also plans to publish three special issues annually: Legumes in March, Arabidopsis in June, and Grasses in December.

**The Plant Cell:** The 2001 impact factor for the journal, as calculated by the Institute for Scientific Information, was 11.081, slightly lower than its 2000 ranking of 11.093. The March issue of *The Plant Cell* featured two articles on mapping the rice genome, and staff arranged for cross-linking between the *Science* feature on the genome and *The Plant Cell* articles. An advertising exchange with *Science* was also arranged for the 2002 *Plant Cell* supplement on signal transduction. *The Plant Cell* is participating in CrossRef, a service that links articles in the reference list to other participating journals outside the

HighWire system. Links to the ISI Web of Science have also recently been added to references in *The Plant Cell* so that links to major references databases now include PubMed, HighWire, CrossRef, and Web of Science.

**Electronic Journal Initiatives:** All of *The Plant Cell*, back to Volume 1 (January 1989) and *Plant Physiology*, back to Volume 101 (January 1993) are now online as searchable PDFs. HighWire sent data to PubMed in July to fill in any gaps for these back issues. Staff are working with the vendor for this project, Document Solutions, and PubMed Central about digitizing the rest of the back content for *Plant Physiology* at no cost to ASPB. Both journals are part of HighWire's new Library of the Sciences and Medicine Portal which allows free access to more than 430,000 free, full-text research articles published by the 330+ HighWire journals, making it the world's largest collection of free, full-text science articles. The portal searches more than 12 million articles from 4,500 Medline journals. An introduction to the portal appears in the May/June 2002 issue of the *ASPB News*. Subsequent issues will each highlight one or two portal features.

**Journal page charges:** Starting with papers accepted for the January 2003 issues, ASPB will no longer collect a handling fee for papers published in *The Plant Cell* and *Plant Physiology*. Rather, corresponding authors will be assessed a per-page charge of \$55. Corresponding authors who are ASPB members will receive a \$10 per page discount.

**Biochemistry and Molecular Biology of Plants** is now distributed by Wiley. Sales are picking up, and more than 1,000 units were sold between March 1 and August 1, 2002. The fourth printing of the paperback version has been completed at ASPB expense to expedite the process and to maintain the society's 60% royalty, which was based on sales of "existing" stock. Wiley and ASPB held a focus group during Plant Biology 2002 to discuss the proposed outline for the first Wiley/ASPB joint project, the "junior" version of the book, a scaled down, updated version geared specifically to upper-level undergraduate and graduate students.

**Arabidopsis Online Book:** The Executive Committee approved additional funding needed to put the book on the web and increased the budget of the

Publications Committee to cover costs of posting revisions of the book.

**History's Harvest: Where Food Comes From:** The Education Foundation film was distributed free to Plant Biology 2002 participants. Because TV stations want premiere rights to items they broadcast, ASPB is currently limiting distribution of the film to ASPB members and specific non-profit organizations working on world food issues and other related issues. Once agreements with a distributor are finalized, distribution plans for K-12 schools and larger audiences will proceed.

**Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowships (SURFs):** Funding for eight SURFs was approved for 2003. In addition, up to \$4,000 has been budgeted to support travel of SURF recipients presenting results at Plant Biology 2003.

**Changes to ASPB newsletter:** Job announcements will no longer be included in the newsletter, but will be a dynamic component of the society's web site. Beginning with the new year, newsletters will be distributed to members electronically. Membership renewal forms will allow members to opt to receive a paper copy of the newsletter. The membership committee has recommended that a similar strategy be used for the membership directory. These actions are expected to result in cost savings that can be used to offset declining revenues from the society's investments.

**2002 Membership recruitment:** Initiatives to increase membership in the society have resulted in recruitment of 731 new members, as of August 5, 2002. The *Get-A-Member* marketing web campaign, created by Kelley Noone and implemented by Wendy Sahli, has been awarded the Standard of Excellence Web Award in the 2002 Web Award Competition, sponsored by the Web Marketing Association. The annual awards competition is designed to judge corporate and non profit Web sites against marketing internet standards and against peer sites within their industry.

**2005 Meeting site:** The Executive Committee has selected Seattle, Washington as the site of Plant Biology 2005. With the help of the Seattle Convention and Visitors Bureau, ASPB acquired very competitive and guaranteed hotel and convention center rates. Inexpensive university dorm housing is also available for students and post-docs. The congruity of the meeting, poster, and exhibit space at the Washington State

Convention and Trade Center will assure good attendee flow at the meeting.



## Other news...

*By Caryl Chlan, Secretary/Treasurer*

## 2003 Southern Section Meeting to be held in Denton, Texas March 15-17

### Schedule of Events:

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <i>March 15</i> | <i>Afternoon Workshop, Mixer</i>                        |
| <i>March 16</i> | <i>Student Paper Competition and Contributed Papers</i> |
| <i>March 17</i> | <i>Symposium</i>  |

**The Annual Symposium** will have a general theme of "Bioinformatics for Comparative Genomics "

### *Invited speakers will include:*

**Dr. Andy Baxevanis**, National Human Genome Research Institute, Bethesda, MD: **Title:** "Role of Bioinformatics in Biological Discovery"

**Dr. Christoph Sensen**, Dept. of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Univ. of Calgary: **Title:** "4D Bioinformatics"

**Dr. Tom Osborn**, Program in Cellular and Molecular Biology, Dept. of Agronomy, Univ. of Wisconsin (Madison): **Title:** "Polyploidy and Duplicate Gene Function in Brassica"

*[Links to the speaker's home pages are available on the section's web site – [www.ss-aspb.org](http://www.ss-aspb.org)]*

The meeting will be held in Denton Texas at the Radisson Hotel and Eagle Point Golf Course. The hotel is adjacent to the University of North Texas, and is conveniently located just 30 miles north of the Dallas Fort Worth International Airport on Interstate 35. The conference rate is \$99 per night for one or 2 people, with an extra fee of \$10 per night for each additional person up to 4 persons per room. Although the hotel does not provide transportation to the DFW

airport, several shuttle services are available such as The Denton Airport Shuttle (1-800-6343-6231).

The Radisson Hotel is located within minutes of downtown Denton and close to shopping and historic sites. It is a full service hotel with an 18-hole Championship Golf Course (with a putting green, driving range and Pro-shop), a 24 hour fax and copy service, complimentary USA Today newspapers, an exercise facility with a full range of equipment and an outdoor pool for exercising or just relaxing (but it is not heated – so it may not be an option in March).

More information will follow in the Winter Newsletter with the call for papers. The local coordinator for the meeting in Denton is Dr. Kent Chapman, an Associate Professor of Biology at UNT. He is working hard to ensure that the 2003 meeting is a success. The SS-ASPB provides financial support for the student competitions, and the meeting registration and banquet fees are waived for all students that present papers in the oral competition for graduate students or the poster competition for undergraduate students. Now is the time to start planning to have a talk ready for the meeting. This is a great opportunity for students and faculty to meet fellow scientists in the Southern Section and we hope to see everyone in Denton!



## VOTING

### ***Candidate for Section Representative to ASPB Executive Committee:***

#### **Melvin J. Oliver**

Dr. Oliver is employed as a Plant Physiologist /Molecular Biologist with the Agricultural Research Service (USDA). His research interests are focused on the physiological and genetic mechanisms by which plants deal with water stress. Mel has served in the following Southern Section officer positions: Secretary/Treasurer (1997-8); Vice-Chair (1998-9); Chair (1999-2000). He has served as a member of the Executive Committee (Southern Section) from 2000 until the present. Mel has also served on the Site Selection Committee, and as a judge on the Student Presentation Award Committee, as well as Chair of the Distinguished Service Award and Constitution Revision Committees. He is currently serving as Chair of the Minority Travel Awards Committee. In his

own words, “I joined the Southern Section following an invitation to speak in the annual symposium at the Knoxville, TN meeting (1995), after being an active ASPB member since 1985. What impressed me about the Southern Section and caused me to become an active member was the dedication of its officers and members to enriching the professional experience of graduate students. A dedication that is as strong now as it was then. I am and will remain a dedicated member of the Southern Section and am fully committed to the fulfillment of its charter.”

### ***Candidates for the Position of Secretary/Treasurer***

We have two excellent candidates for the position of Secretary/Treasurer. The ballots will be distributed by email again this year. This year, we will vote electronically. You will be receiving an email with an electronic ballot sometime in October. Please read the following descriptions, and remember to **vote** for the candidate of your choice.

#### **Kent O. Burkey**

Dr. Burkey has been employed as a Research Plant Physiologist with the USDA-ARS Air Quality Research Unit since 1983, and has a co-appointment as an Associate Professor in the Dept. of Crop Science and Botany at North Carolina State University. His research interests focus on the identification of physiological and biochemical mechanisms that account for genetic variation in plant responses to the environmental pollutant ozone. Kent earned his B.A. in physical sciences in 1977 from Warren Wilson College, and obtained his Ph.D. in biochemistry in 1981 from Ohio State University. He completed postdoctoral studies on the use of spectroscopic techniques (IR, NMR) to assess base-pairing in purified rRNAs. Dr. Burkey served as the Local Coordinator for the 2001 Southern Section ASPB meeting in Raleigh, NC.

#### **James R. Mahan**

Dr. Mahan is employed by the Agricultural Research Service (USDA) as a Research Plant Physiologist. His research interests center on

effects of temperature and water stress on plant enzyme function. James obtained his B.S. degree from Southwestern Oklahoma State University and his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in plant physiology from Texas A&M University. He completed postdoctoral studies under the direction of J. Burke in Lubbock, TX. James has been a member of ASPB (national) and Southern Section from 1978 to the present. He has served as Chair of the Student Competition Award Committee in 1994 and was an invited speaker for the Annual Symposium at the Athens, GA meeting (2002). Dr. Mahan also currently serves as President of the Texas Chapter of the American Society of Agronomy.

### ***Other offices***

For each of the following positions the Section is nominating the following individuals. It will be possible for you to write in a candidate of your choice when voting takes place.

#### ***Candidate for the Position of Vice-chair***

Dr. Caryl Chlan (*current Secretary/Treasurer*)

#### ***Candidate for the Position of Chair***

Dr. Ruth Grene (*current Vice-Chair*)

#### ***Candidate for the Position of Southern Section Executive Committee***

Dr. Tim Sherman (*current Chair*)

### ***Site Choices for the 2004 Meeting: Auburn Alabama and Lafayette Louisiana***

The site selection committee has chosen Lafayette, Louisiana and Auburn, Alabama as possible sites for the 2004 Southern Section meeting. A brief description of each of the meeting sites follows. Please read the information, and be sure to vote when you receive your electronic ballot sometime in October.

#### ***Auburn, Alabama***

Auburn University Hotel & Conference Center is a medium size convention center complex immediately adjacent to Auburn University in downtown Auburn, AL. Centrally located three miles from Interstate 85 between

Atlanta and Montgomery, the Auburn University Hotel & Conference Center is situated in a charming university campus environment, within safe walking distance to many shops and restaurants in the quaint, historical downtown Auburn area, "The Loveliest Village On The Plains." We are a convenient destination from Atlanta's Hartsfield International Airport (95 miles), Columbus, GA (35 miles), and Montgomery (65 miles).

Chewacla State Park is just a few minutes away and has great walking and hiking trails. Three major golf courses are located within 8 miles of the Auburn University Hotel & Conference Center, which was the host hotel for the 1997 Nike Tour Championship and the 1998 LPGA Tournament of Champions. Dr. Robert Locy will coordinate the local arrangements.

#### ***Lafayette, Louisiana***

Lafayette, Louisiana 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.

## **2002-2003 SS-ASPB Officers**

### **Chair**

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