

JUNE 2003



SOUTHERN SECTION AMERICAN SOCIETY OF PLANT BIOLOGISTS NEWSLETTER

2003 ANNUAL MEETING

This year's meeting at the Radisson Hotel in Denton, Texas was a tremendous success. We would like to thank everyone who helped, especially our local host Dr. Kent Chapman. Kent was instrumental in setting up the arrangements with the Radisson, getting the poster boards (kindly provided by the Noble foundation) and organizing a fantastic field trip to the Botanical Research Institute of Texas (the BRIT). Thank you Kent, the people at the University of North Texas, and the Radisson Staff for being such super hosts!!

More than forty intrepid plant biologists boarded the Mean Green Environmental Machine (kindly supplied by the University of North Texas) at 1:30 in the afternoon on Saturday March 15. After a short, environmentally friendly ride to the BRIT, everyone was treated to a very interesting and exciting presentation by Dr. Barney Lipscomb.



The BRIT is located in a historic turn-of-the-century warehouse at 509 Pecan Street in Ft. Worth was restored to house library and plant collections. and

BRIT was opened to the public in October 1991. In October 1997, Vanderbilt University donated its herbarium of over 360,000 specimens to BRIT, and due to continuing additions, the institute now houses more than one million specimens. If you missed this opportunity to visit the BRIT, it is open to the public. Information is posted on the website: <http://www.brit.org/>

In the evening, everyone gathered at the Radisson for the traditional 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.

The next day, the meeting started bright and early since we had 24 oral presentations and 19 poster presentations. There were 17 participants in the "Best Graduate Student Paper" competition, and 4 participants in the "Best Undergraduate Poster" competition. The day concluded with an evening banquet. The Italian buffet was delicious, and again the Radisson did an excellent job catering the event. At the end of the meal, thank you gifts (botanical prints by Joseph Neigel) were given to Dr. Chapman for his tireless work as our local coordinator, UNT for their assistance in sponsoring the meeting, and to the Noble Foundation for donating the use of the poster boards. In addition, we would like to acknowledge all of our sponsors:

Pioneer Hi-Bred International Inc.
The University of North Texas
American Society of Plant Biologists
Alfred Noble Foundation
The Botanical Research Institute of Texas
The University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Without their generosity this meeting would not have been possible.

SYMPOSIUM

Dr. Andy Baxavanis, Dr. Christoph Sensen, and Dr. Tom Osborn were the speakers for our symposium on “Bioinformatics for Comparative Genomics”. All three speakers gave excellent presentations that provided insights into the current applications and future potential of these approaches to our understanding of plant biology. A special thanks to **Dr. Ruth Grene** for organizing this symposium.



From left to right: Dr. Tom Osborn, Dr. Andy Baxavanis, Dr. Ruth Grene, and Dr. Christoph Sensen

SPECIAL AWARDS AND COMMEMORATIONS

In honor of **Dr. Kriton Hatzios**, who recently passed away, we have decided to designate the symposium at the Southern Section Meetings the “Kriton Hatzios Symposium”. Dr. Hatzios was an active member of the Southern Section, and was instrumental in helping the section to regain its membership and momentum. Dr. Hatzios has many friends in the Southern Section, and he will be sorely missed.

STUDENT PRESENTATION COMPETITION RESULTS

The quality of student presentations seems to get better every year. The judges had a difficult task with so many excellent talks. Two awards were presented for graduate student talks. One award went to **Stephen Stout**, UT Austin, for his presentation entitled “Polarity Development in *Ceratopteris richardii*” and the other oral presentation award winner was **Collene Jeter**, UT Austin, for her presentation entitled “ATP and ADP function as extracellular signals in plants: induction of the secondary messenger calcium”.



From left to right: Collene Jeter, Dr. Stan Roux, and Stephen Stout

We had a number of really impressive posters by undergraduates as well. This year’s award for best undergraduate poster went to **Kimberly Wilson**, UNT for her poster entitled “Spatial and temporal gene expression characterization in nodulation mutants of *Medicago truncatula*”.



From left to right: Dr. Stephen Banks, Kimberly Wilson, and Dr. Rebecca Dickstein

We would like to specially thank the Student Presentation Judging Committees (**Drs. Stephen Banks, Ellison Blancaflor, Cyndy Galloway, Dalton Gossett, Jay Mellon and Pat Tomlinson**) for making the tough calls!

NATIONAL ASPP NEWS

From Joyce G. Foster, Southern Section Representative

The most recent ASPB Executive Committee Meeting is posted on our web site (www.ss-aspb.org).

MEETING SITE FOR 2004

After a very close vote, it was determined that this coming year's meeting will be held at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. The tentative dates for the meeting are March 6-8, so pencil in the meeting now! As the local coordinator for the 2004 meeting, I would like to personally invite everyone to join us next year in Lafayette.

In 2004, we will continue to provide financial help to graduate students who make oral presentations, undergraduate students who present posters, and additional money will again be available to minority students to offset costs of attendance. Application Information for these awards will be available later in the fall on our web site.

ELECTION RESULTS

Elections results were announced at the General Business meeting at the conclusion of the symposium. **Dr. Ruth Grene** was elected Chair of the Southern Section, **Dr. Caryl Chlan** will serve as Vice-Chair, and **Dr. James Mahan** will be our new Secretary-Treasurer for 2003-2004. Our current chair, **Dr. Tim Sherman** has graciously accepted a position on the Executive Committee.

SOUTHERN SECTIONS ARCHIVIST!

Much has happened and many individuals have passed through our sectional rolls since our charter in 1940. We would like to make available information on the history, lists of officers, and award winners for the Southern Section through our website. Traditionally a few individuals have taken an active role in documenting such things, with the last compilation made by Drs. Jim Henderson, Fred Wolf, and Clanton Black about 10 years ago. **Dr. Joyce Foster** has kindly offered to pick up where they left off as the new *Southern Section Archivist*.

THE SS-ASPP WEB SITE

Remember that the web site for the Southern Section is up and running. (www.ss-aspb.org). It also can be accessed via the national ASPB site. The site contains information about meetings (past, present, and future), current officers (contact info, brief bio, and picture),

current and past newsletters, news of interest to society members and students, and links to relevant sites (e.g. ASPB, regional university's departments with plant biology programs, etc.). The site is also used for registration and title submission for each year's meeting. As mentioned above, we are in the process of adding historical records and now have online voting.

ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

With the advent of easy electronic publication and widely available access to the Internet, we are now delivering your Southern Section Newsletters and Call for papers to you electronically. As a member, you are notified by email of the availability of the newsletter. This substantially cuts the Section's mailing costs and allows us to use those funds to offset the costs of student subsidies provided at each year's meeting.

2003-2004 SS-ASPP OFFICERS

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