

The Potomac Division's 72nd annual meeting was held in Richmond, VA, from March 23 to 25, 2016. It had a higher than usual turnout with more than 80 registrants and 32 oral papers and 30 poster presentations. The APS Divisional Forum met at 9:00 AM on the first day with participation from interim Potomac Division forum representative Nicole Donofrio, Lawrence Datnoff (Southern Division), Ron French-Monar (DF chair), Natalie Goldberg (Pacific Division), Jim LaMondia (Northeastern Division) and Divisional Councilor Jay Pscheidt. Field trips to Maymont Park and Gardens, Richmond were organized by Michael Likins, Director, Chesterfield County Cooperative Extension, VA and kicked off the meetings. Twenty-two attendees visited Maymont's spectacular Italian Garden, Japanese Garden and Arboretum. Although there was a lot to enjoy, they had to return by 4:00 pm to attend the Division industry/extension meeting, chaired by Cassandra Swett. Approximately 35 attended the session. The meeting was more structured than in previous years and included three different categories, extension perspectives, new product updates and diagnosticians provided relevant disease updates. Other pathologists highlighted research results related to their priority areas. Interesting and significant discussions followed each presentation. Additional topics that generated discussion were landscape tree mortality due in part to stresses imparted by the winters of the 2014 and 2015. Of particular note was the predisposition of Leyland cypress to *Seiridium* canker in the Potomac region. Immediately after the industry/extension meeting, seven graduate students took the opportunity to attend the 2016 Potomac Division Career Skills workshop led by William Schneider of the USDA. The workshop consisted of in-depth presentations and discussions of CV and interview preparation. He emphasized presentation skills of candidates who will be seeking faculty or equivalent positions. The day concluded with a well-attended Division social.

Thursday's plenary session featured APS President Sally Miller who discussed her research and international experience with special emphasis on the APS theme "Science to Practice: Innovating to Improve Plant Health." Her work on *Clavibacter* diagnostics and management in the greenhouse production system was very well received by the audience. The first symposium of the meeting "Pathogen Power: Integration of Biological Agents in Agricultural Systems," was chaired by Donald Nuss and immediately followed the plenary talk. This symposium featured three speakers: Rose Hammond (USDA-ARS, Beltsville, MD), Dong-Xiu Zhang (University of Maryland, Rockville) and Matthew Kasson (West Virginia University, Morgantown) each addressing prospects, successes and potential challenges pertaining to the utilization of biological control agents to solve real-world plant disease problems or control of invasive pests. The second symposium featured "Advances in Plant Health" with a focus on legumes. Lunch and the business meeting followed with a welcome speech from APS-PD President JoAnne Crouch, a Divisional forum update from Nicole Donofrio, Careers 101 update from William Schneider and a Division budget presentation from APS-PD secretary Mahfuz Rahman. Divisional forum chair Ron-French Monar suggested more industry people be invited to participate in the meeting and help defray some of the costs. Many participants observed that a more cost-effective meeting venue could be selected to balance the budget and keep the money invested in profitable portfolios. Following the business meeting, the graduate student award competition commenced with 12 oral presentations in two concurrent sessions. A team of five judges, chaired by Mizuho Nita, selected two winners. The winning presentations were "Evaluation of nematicides for control of southern root-knot nematodes in lima bean" by Jake Jones and "Genetics of bacterial virulence in *Erwinia amylovora* and beyond" by Sara Klee. APS president Sally Miller then provided an update to membership on APS activities and future growth. Her presentation

was followed by a lively discussion on a range of topics relevant to the Division, with helpful and insightful contributions from members of the Divisional Forum. A poster session and social was held prior to banquet with record number of outstanding posters. A banquet dinner was served immediately after the poster session, Division President JoAnne Crouch presided during the banquet. A special guest speaker, Joan Bennett,” highlighted her own struggle, dismay and unimaginable experience with molds and mycotoxins that resulted from Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans and how it reshaped her career. Dr. Bennett’s vivid memories of the event saddened everybody but the attendees enjoyed the way she related Katrina, New Orleans and microbes (molds and mycotoxins) by references to fungal genomics and volatiles. Relationship of toxigenic molds to human health and the use of genetic engineering in medical science also was highlighted passionately by Joan. The banquet concluded with the awarding of the student paper winners, travel grant winner and transfer of the Division’s chestnut gavel to incoming President Mizuho Nita. The final session of the meeting on Friday began with a symposium featuring pro-active management of specialty crop pathogens using system-based approaches followed by a contributed paper session. The meeting ended with a thank you note to the attendees and Division officers from APS-Potomac president JoAnne Crouch.