



**2017 Potomac Division 73<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting**  
**The American Phytopathological Society**  
**March 22 - 24, 2017**  
**Morgantown, WV**

**MEETING MINUTES**

Hillary L. Mehl, Virginia Tech, Secretary-Treasurer

The Potomac Division's 73<sup>rd</sup> annual meeting was held in Morgantown, WV from March 22 to 24, 2017. The meeting had 65 registrants, and the theme was "Changes in Hosts and Pathogens". There were a total of 20 contributed oral papers 16 poster presentations which included 13 graduate students in the oral competition and 5 undergraduates in the poster competition. On the first day of the meeting, a field trip to a maple syrup production facility was led by Matt Kasson of West Virginia University, and participants had the opportunity to learn about maple diseases, maple syrup production, and sample syrup. The Industry/Extension meeting, chaired by Hillary Mehl, was held later that afternoon and included disease updates from four university extension plant pathologists and a new product update from Sudeep Mathew from Syngenta. The theme of the Industry/Extension meeting was "Changes in Hosts and Pathogens: Emerging Issues and New Approaches to Disease Control". Concurrent with the Industry/Extension meeting, Bill Schneider led a professional development workshop for graduate students and postdocs. The topic was "Professional Presentation" and there were 13 participants. The day concluded with a Division social in which the attendees were able to interact.

Thursday's plenary session featured APS President Dr. Tim Murray from Washington State University who gave a presentation titled "Resistance to Eyespot in Wheat and its Wild Relatives." In line with the meeting theme, the first two symposia focused on changes in hosts. The first symposium topic was "Breeding for Plant Disease Management" and included presentations by Jay Norelli from the Appalachian Fruit Research Station, Jose Santa-Cruz from Monsanto, and Jared Westbrook from the American Chestnut Foundation. Each of the speakers provided their perspective and work in plant breeding, and hosts included apple, corn, and chestnut. The topic of the second symposium was "Genetically Modified Crops" and it included presentations by Paul Vincelli from the University of Kentucky, Nicolas Champouret from Simplot, and Jennie Schmidt from Schmidt Farms. As in the first symposium, speakers from a variety of backgrounds (academic, industry, farmer) and with different perspectives and areas of expertise were featured.

Following the morning symposia, lunch and the business meeting occurred with a welcome address from APS Potomac Division President Mizuho Nita. Nicole Donofrio provided a Divisional Forum update and emphasized the importance of engaging early career professionals, technicians, post-



docs, graduate students, undergraduate students, and high school students. Secretary-Treasurer Hillary Mehl provided a budget update, and financial issues facing the Potomac Division were discussed. The Division has been losing money over the past three years, so it was agreed that meeting registration fees would be raised in the future and a greater effort would be made to obtain industry sponsorships. Approaches to reducing meeting costs were also discussed including finding less expensive venues and reducing costs associated with bringing in speakers from outside the Division. Meeting minutes and the budget were approved and the business meeting was adjourned.

After lunch and the business meeting, the graduate student competition was held with 13 oral presentations. Following the graduate student competition, APS President Tim Murray gave an update to the APS members, and then a poster session and social commenced. The poster session included an undergraduate poster competition.

A banquet was held in the evening for all meeting attendees, and the graduate student and undergraduate student winners were announced. The first place winner for the graduate student oral competition was Terence Mhora from the University of Delaware who gave a presentation on “Management of downy mildew of lima bean: chemical control.” For second place there was a tie, and the awarded presentations were “Survey and identification of wine grape rot (*Colletotrichum acutatum* and *C. gloeosporioides* complexes) in Virginia vineyards” by Charlotte Oliver from Virginia Tech and “Identification and characterization of a novel ice nucleation mechanism in bacteria” by Kevin Failor also from Virginia Tech. The undergraduate poster competition first place winner was Elena Christian from Pennsylvania State University who presented on “Identification and characterization of virulence genes in *Erwinia amylovora*” and the second place winner was Stephanie Arnold from West Virginia University who presented on “Roles of alternate alleles of the gene *cloA* in ergot alkaloid biosynthesis.” The recipient of the Travel Award was Dylan Lynch from Delaware State University. Boris Vinatzer from Virginia Tech received the Distinguished Service Award via Skype. Matthew Kasson from West Virginia University was announced as the winner of the election for the incoming Secretary-Treasurer. Maryland was selected as the location for next year’s Divisional meeting, and Kate Everts agreed to be the Chair of the Local Arrangements Committee. The special guest speaker, Dr. Sue Tolin from Virginia Tech, gave a presentation on “Women’s Roles in Re-shaping APS” and gave a history of women in the society and reflected on her own personal experiences. The banquet concluded with the transfer of the Division’s chestnut gavel to incoming President Mahfuz Rahman.

The final day of the meeting included a symposium session that focused on “Changes in Pathogens: Fungicide Resistance.” Speakers included Anton Baudoin from Virginia Tech who spoke on fungicide resistance of grape pathogens, Tyler Harp from Syngenta who discussed fungicide resistance management, and Guido Schnabel from Clemson University who presented on mechanisms of resistance



in *Botrytis cinerea*. The meeting concluded with a contributed paper session including seven speakers followed by departing comments from Potomac Division President Mizuho Nita. Closing remarks included a thank you to the attendees and Division officers and encouragement to attend the 2018 Potomac Division meeting in Maryland.