



**2018 Potomac Division 74<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting**  
**The American Phytopathological Society**  
**March 21 - 23, 2018**  
**Ocean City, MD**

**MEETING MINUTES**

Matt Kasson, West Virginia University, Secretary-Treasurer

The Potomac Division's 74<sup>rd</sup> annual meeting was held in Ocean City, MD from March 21 to 23, 2018. The meeting had 73 registrants, and the theme was "Healthy Plants-Healthy People". There were a total of 16 contributed oral papers, 10 poster presentations, and 15 graduate students oral papers scheduled, several of which were canceled due to travel issues associated inclement weather. The pre-meeting field trip to Assateague State Park on March 21 were canceled due to heavy snow. On the first day of the meeting, The Industry/Extension meeting, chaired by Kate Everts (University of MD) was held later that afternoon and included disease updates from several university extension plant pathologists and a new product update from Sudeep Mathew from Syngenta. The theme of the Industry/Extension meeting was "Healthy Plants Healthy People – Emerging Issues and New Approaches to Disease Control". The CAREERS 101 Workshop, chaired by Rachel Melnick, National Program Leader, USDA- NIFA, was canceled due to attendee travel issues associated with inclement weather. The day concluded with a Division social in which the attendees were able to interact and discuss the snow.

On Thursday, in line with the meeting theme, the first two symposia focused on healthy plants. The first symposium topic was "Etiology/ Epidemiology /Ecology of Plant Disease" and included a presentation by Tofazzal Islam, a Fulbright scholar from Bangladesh. The two other scheduled speakers, Dr. David McCall from Virginia Tech and Dr. Emily Pfeufer from University of Kentucky could not attend the meeting due to inclement weather. Dr. Tofazzal Islam's talk was very well received, not only because he was present, but his talk was a very interesting perspective on an emerging pathogen, a new pathotype of *Magnaporthe oryzae* causing devastating wheat blast in multiple continents and impacting global food security. He discussed how open access science allowed for rapid dissemination of his findings. The topic of the second symposium was "Sensitive Methods of Plant Health Assessment" and it included presentations by Matt Kasson (WVU), standing in for his post-doc, Dr. Greg Boyce, who couldn't attend the meeting on account of the weather, Chris Clarke (USDA ARS), and Chuanxue Hong (VT AREC).

Following the morning symposia, lunch and the business meeting occurred with a welcome address from APS Potomac Division President Mahfuz Rahman. Secretary-Treasurer Matt Kasson provided a budget update, and financial issues facing the Potomac Division were discussed. The efforts to



curve declining revenues were presented and numerous members including Tom Evans, Anton Baudoin, Nina Shishkoff, and others provided historic perspective on costs, financial issues, 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 16 oral presentations. Following the graduate student competition, 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 Jose Garcia Gonzalez from the Virginia Tech AREC who gave a presentation on “Suppression of Southern Blight in Potato through Cultural Practices in the Mid-Atlantic Region.” The second place winner was Long Tian from Virginia Tech who gave a presentation on “Development of a Web tool for fast and precise genome-based identification of bacterial plant pathogens.” The undergraduate poster competition had two first place winners, Danielle Mikolajewski from Penn State University who presented on “Disruption of the genome of Rice Blast to identify genes involved in production of Reactive Oxygen Species” and Adam Ginn from University of Delaware who presented on “Analysis of Resistance to Mefenoxam in Isolates of *Phytophthora phaseoli* from the Mid-Atlantic Region.” The recipient of the Travel Award was Charlotte Oliver from Virginia Tech. Nicole Donofrio from University of Delaware received the Distinguished Service Award. Christopher Clarke from USDA ARS was announced as the winner of the election for the incoming Secretary-Treasurer. Delaware was selected as the location for next year’s 75th Anniversary Divisional meeting, and Tom Evans agreed to be the Chair of the Local Arrangements Committee. The banquet speaker, Dr. Robert McDuffie, Professor Emeritus, Virginia Tech, gave a presentation on “Plants in Paradise: garden ideas from across the globe.” His talk was very well received. The banquet concluded with the transfer of the Division’s chestnut gavel to incoming President Hillary Mehl.

The final day of the meeting included a Plenary talk by APS President Dr. Mary Palm, who discussed "What does the Nagoya Protocol to the Convention on Biological Diversity Mean for You?" as well as provided an update on membership. A special symposium session that focused on “Emerging plant disease problems in the Mid-Atlantic region” followed the Plenary talk. Speakers included Nina Shishkoff from USDA ARS who spoke on “Understanding the life cycle of the Impatiens downy mildew and its implications”, Andy Wyenandt from Rutgers University, who spoke on “*Dickeya dianthicola* in potato in the mid-Atlantic region” and Nicholas LeBlanc from USA ARS who spoke on “Investigating host microbiome variation in the boxwood blight pathosystem.” The meeting concluded with a contributed paper session including seven speakers followed by departing comments from Potomac



Division President Mahfuz Rahman. Closing remarks included a thank you to the attendees and Division officers and encouragement to attend the 2019 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Potomac Division meeting in Delaware.