

## The 90<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Southern Division of APS

The 90<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Southern Division of APS was hosted by the Department of Plant Pathology and Crop Physiology at Louisiana State University from February 8-10, 2013 at the Hilton Baton Rouge Capitol Center in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. **President Raymond Schneider (Louisiana State University)** coordinated the meeting program, made local arrangements, and welcomed, along with **President-Elect and Program Coordinator Jason Woodward (Texas AgriLife Extension and Tech University)**, the group of 105 attendees who contributed 53 oral presentations and nine posters to the program.

Thursday night prior to the meeting, an Early Professional's Reception for graduate students and post-docs was hosted at the Department of Plant Pathology and Crop Physiology at Louisiana State University. Visitors were given an opportunity to visit faculty, staff, and graduate students, and to learn about the exciting research occurring at the host department.

The meeting started Friday with a session of contributed papers, presided over by **President Ray Schneider**, followed by the first of three sessions for the graduate student paper competition that extended into Saturday and Sunday, and were presided over by **President-Elect Jason Woodward**, who was joined on the judging panel by **Vice-President Tom Allen (Mississippi State University)** and **Nicholas Dufault (University of Florida)**. A special symposium, Plant Pathology 2.0: Considerations for the Future of our Discipline, was held Friday afternoon. The symposium consisted of invited speakers representing government, industry, academia, and APS and was well received. The keynote address was given by **Dr. Mike Strain, Commissioner of the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry**, and followed by other reputable speakers including **Harold Lambert (crop consultant, New Roads, LA)**, **Dr. Michael Boehm (APS President, Professor of Plant Pathology, and Vice-Provost for Academic Affairs, The Ohio State University)**, **Dr. Leland S. Pierson (Professor and Head of the Department of Plant Pathology and Microbiology, Texas A&M University)**, **Dr. Brad Minton (Syngenta Crop Sciences)**, and **Dr. John Russin (Director and Vice-Chancellor, Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station)**.

Another round of contributed papers and the second session of graduate student paper competition was held on Saturday. An extended lunch gave meeting participants a unique opportunity to enjoy the local Spanish Town Mardi Gras parade, with the theme "A Spanish Town Twinkie Ate My Ding Dong." **Nicole Ward (University of Kentucky)** gave a brief history lesson about the roots of Mardi Gras in the region and explained parade etiquette to meeting attendees. After the parade and ensuing festivities, participants were given an opportunity to mingle and discuss posters at the poster session just prior to the annual SD-APS banquet and Southern Division deBary Bowl, emceed by **Tim Brennaman (University of Georgia)**.

The meeting continued Sunday morning with an Industry-Student Breakfast sponsored by **Bobby Haygood (Dow Agrosiences)** and was followed by the industry session and the last session of the graduate student paper competition, presided over by **Immediate Past President David Langston (University of Georgia)**. Thirty-six students participated in this year's competition with participants representing Louisiana State University, North Carolina State University, Mississippi State University, Texas Tech University, the University of Arkansas, the University of Georgia, and Texas A&M University. The first place winner was **Rebecca Melanson**

(Louisiana State University; advisor **Jong Hyun Ham**) for her presentation “Genetic analyses of *ntpR* encoding a LysR-family transcriptional factor for its negative regulatory function for the virulence of the rice pathogenic bacterium *Burkholderia glumae*.” The second place winner was **Philip Vines** (Mississippi State University; advisor **Maria Tomaso-Peterson**) for his presentation “Identification of ectotrophic root-infecting fungi in association with ultradwarf bermudagrass *Cynodon dactylon* × *C. transvaalensis*.” The third place winner was **Abraham Fulmer** (University of Georgia; advisor **Robert Kemerait**) for his presentation “Characterizing the differences between early and late leaf spot epidemics in response to prescription fungicide programs.” Two additional presentations were given honorable mentions, including **Terry Spurlock** (University of Arkansas; advisor **Craig Rothrock**) for his presentation “*Rhizoctonia solani* AG11: Spatial analyses reveal strategies of a successful parasite” and **Andrew Lloyd** (North Carolina State University; advisor **Kelly Ivors**) for his presentation “Plant health risk associated with irrigating nursery crops with Phytophthora-infested water.” Winners received cash prizes and certificates.

After lunch on Sunday, the annual business meeting, presided over by **President Raymond Schneider**, provided the annual report on the state and activities of APS. **Secretary-treasurer Gary Vallad** (University of Florida) gave the membership, financial, and necrology reports for the division. **Vice President Tom Allen** presented five travel awards of \$300 each to **David Laughlin** (Texas A&M), **Rodrigo Olarte** (NC State), **Imana Power** (University of Georgia), **Suzette Arcibal** (University of Georgia), and **Thomas Ingram** (University of Georgia). The award checks (\$300 each) had already been sent to the awardees. **Jason Woodward** presented the Outstanding Plant Pathologist Award to **Dr. Donald M. Ferrin, posthumous** (Louisiana State University) for his numerous achievements in research and teaching. The inaugural Donald M. Ferrin Memorial Service Award, recognizing Southern Division members for their distinguished service to APS and the Southern Division, also was presented posthumously to **Dr. Donald M. Ferrin**. **Dr. Lawrence Datnoff**, Professor and Head of the Department of Plant Pathology and Crop Physiology at Louisiana State University, was present to accept both awards on behalf of Don’s wife, and to give a stirring eulogy about Don’s life and dedication as a plant pathologist and service to APS. Don will truly be missed, but never forgotten.

Following the reading of this year’s resolutions by **Kenny Seebold** (University of Kentucky), the program came to a close with the passing of the gavel from outgoing President Schneider to President-elect Woodward, who adjourned the meeting until next year. Meeting details for 2014 will be released shortly as the group will meet with Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists next year in Dallas, TX.

We wish to thank the corporate sponsors for their support of this year’s meeting: **BASF, Barnes and Noble at LSU, Cheminova, Dow AgroSciences, DuPont, Syngenta, and Valent**.

The officers for the Southern Division for 2013-2014 are **Jason Woodward, Texas AgriLife Extension and Tech University, President; Tom Allen, Mississippi State University, President-Elect; Nicole Ward, University of Kentucky, Vice President; Raymond Schneider, Louisiana State University, Immediate Past President; Kenny Seebold, University of Kentucky, Southern Division Divisional Forum Representative; and Gary Vallad, University of Florida, Secretary-Treasurer**.

To see the complete program, visit the Southern Division at <http://www.apsnet.org/members/divisions/south/Pages/default.aspx>.



Caption: **Dr. Mike Strain, Commissioner of the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry**, gave an insightful keynote address at the special symposium “Plant Pathology 2.0: Considerations for the Future of our Discipline.”



Caption: Winners of the graduate student paper competition (shown left to right) **Abraham Fulmer (third place)**, **Rebecca Melanson (first place)**, **Terry Spurlock (honorable mention)**. **Philip Vines (second place)** and **Andrew Lloyd (honorable mention)** were not available for the photo due to travel arrangements.





Caption: Recipients of the 2013 Student Travel Awards included (shown left to right **David Laughlin (Texas A&M)**, **Suzette Arcibal (University of Georgia)**, **Rodrigo Olarte (NC State)**, **Imana Power (University of Georgia)**, and **Thomas Ingram (University of Georgia)**).



Caption: Attendees quickly learned from the locals about how to collect gifts from passing floats during the Spanish Town Mardi Gras Parade in downtown Baton Rouge.





Caption: Attendees were given an opportunity to experience the thrills of collecting gifts during the Spanish Town Mardi Gras Parade in downtown Baton Rouge.



Caption: Some attendees were more industrious than others at obtaining gifts during the parade.