

Pacific Division News

Fall 2007



From the President

Dear Pacific Division,

As we wind down 2007 and get geared up to begin a new year, I would like to thank you for your continued support of our division. The Pacific Division continues to be the largest in APS with 721 members. Our divisional meetings are regularly attended by 75-90 members with paper sessions usually lasting one and one half days. Special sessions were added to the format two years ago and have proven to be a success in stimulating interest in the meeting. Student attendance has averaged about 6 per meeting. However, at this year's meeting in San Diego, 11 students presented papers in the student paper competition. All did a great job and the caliber of research was high.

We would like to see an increase in both overall attendance and student involvement. This meeting is important for all of us but particularly so for students as attendance increases awareness of research and individuals. I would exhort all department chairs to commit to trying to increase their department's involvement in this meeting (cont. on page 2).

Alberta
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Saskatchewan
Alaska
Arizona
California
Colorado
Hawaii
Idaho
Montana
Nevada
New Mexico
Oregon
Utah
Washington
Wyoming



PRESIDENT
Walter D. Gubler
Univ. of California, Davis
wdgubler@ucdavis.edu

PRESIDENT-ELECT
Dennis G. Johnson
Washington State
University, Pulman
djohnson@wsu.edu

SECRETARY-
TREASURER
Chang-Lin Xiao
Washington State Univ.
clxiao@wsu.edu

COUNCILOR
Melodie Putnam
Oregon State Univ
putnamm@science.oregonstate.edu

MEDIA-EDITOR
Akif Eskalen
Univ. of California,
Riverside
aeskalen@gmail.com

Please Join us in Jackson Hole, Wyoming for the 2008 Pacific Division Meeting.

The APS Pacific Division annual meeting will be held at the Virginian Lodge in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, June 24-27, 2008 (arrival on 24th). The schedule includes two symposia, graduate student paper competition, research presentations, and a banquet. Please see brief descriptions of the symposia on page 3. Presentation will start on Wednesday morning, June 25 and end at noon on Friday, June 27. A complete schedule will be available later.

The Virginian Lodge is considered one of the more rustic lodges in Jackson. They are holding a block of rooms until May 25. Room rates are \$ 91.80/night and reservations can be made at 800-262-4999. Ask for room rates booked under the University of California.



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(From the president)



Doug Gubler presents Lyndon Porter with a plaque and thanks for his service to the Pacific Division as President for 2006-2007.

As you might remember from last year we thought we would be meeting in Alaska in 2008. Problems with dates for the meeting and hotel room rates prevented us from booking the meeting there. The 2008 meeting is now scheduled to be held in beautiful Jackson Hole, Wyoming. The program includes two special sessions that should be interesting to many (see page 3).

At the business meeting held in San Diego, Dennis Johnson (Washington State University) was welcomed as the incoming Pres-Elect of the division. Melody Putnam continues to serve as Pacific Division Councilor and Chang Lin Xiao continues to serve as Secretary/Treasurer. I wish to thank both for their service to our division.

I wish you all the very best for 2008 and look forward to seeing you in Jackson Hole.

Respectfully,
Doug Gubler

54th Annual Soil Fungus Conference March 26-28, 2008 Hansen Agricultural Center 14292 W. Telegraph Rd, Santa Paula, CA 93060

Local arrangements: James Downer, University of California, Cooperative Extension, Ventura County
ajdowner@ucdavis.edu

Program Chair: Timothy Paulitz, USDA-ARS, Pullman, WA. paulitz@wsu.edu

Come and meet with colleagues from the western U.S. working on various aspects of soilborne fungal pathogens and diseases- from the molecular to the applied. This meeting is very informal and loosely structured, allowing lots of time for discussions and interactions. We will have a field trip on Weds. March 26 to look at the diverse agriculture and diseases in Ventura County. Sessions will be on Thurs, March 27 and Friday morning, March 28.

For more information, see <http://soilfungus.ars.usda.gov/>

Members Elected as Fellows of AAAS

Pacific Division members Joyce Loper from USDA ARS-Corvallis, OR and Ole Becker from University of California, Riverside were elected as Fellows of AAAS. New fellows will be recognized for their contributions to science and technology at the Fellows Forum to be held on 16 February 2008 during the AAAS Annual Meeting in Boston.



Continued from Page 1 (Meet in Jackson Hole, Wyoming)

Symposium at the 2008 APS Pacific Division Meeting

A Consortium Approach to Advancing the Use of Weather Information in IPM: The Western IPM Weather Workgroup - organized by Carla Thomas, UC, Davis.

New weather-driven modeling technologies, if developed wisely, can address the needs of decision makers regarding management and control of new, invasive, and established pests as well as irrigation and other horticultural practices. Leading scientists in this field have joined together to form the Western IPM Weather Workgroup funded by the Western IPM Center, USDA CSREES. Their mission is to develop a science-based system that provides principles and procedures to access, synthesize, distribute, and use weather and climate data and forecasts to improve crop management decisions. They have been working together to develop improved methods and models that advance the science, adoption, and effectiveness of IPM. In the symposium, speakers will present novel approaches and results from collaborative multi-state projects. Speakers will include agricultural meteorologists, climatologists, plant disease epidemiologists, and modelers.

Using Molecular Techniques to Solve Practical Problems in Plant Pathology – organized by Tim Paulitz, USDA-ARS, Pullman.

Presentations and discussions will include: 1) “Quantification of soilborne pathogens in cereal cropping systems using Real-Time PCR and benefits for disease management” by Kurtis Schroeder, USDA-ARS, Pullman. 2) “Virus complexes: unraveling the mess and implications in disease management” by Robert Martin, USDA-ARS Corvallis. 3) “Use of molecular techniques in plant breeding to develop disease resistance” by Gilda Rauscher, USDA-ARS Salinas. 4) A fourth topic is to be determined.

ASAE0 (Afghanistan Sustainable Agriculture Education Organization) is a non-profit organization based in the US. ASAE0 is cordially willing to collaborate with the APS and other agencies for the purpose to enhance the technical support level of sustainable education for the Afghan nation towards a self sufficient way of life.

Nadir Sidigi, President, Afghanistan Sustainable Agriculture Education Organization (ASAE0)

P.O Box 218 La Verne, California 91750 Ph: (909) 568-4150 Sidiqi@asaeo.org

Website: www.asaseo.org

◆ Activities Around the Pacific Division

Report of Councilor

Melodie Putnam, Pacific Division Councilor

The following summarizes the activities of APS Council during the February, 2007 and July 2007 meetings. The meetings are organized around the five strategic goals of the organization. These goals, and the items discussed under them, are given below.

Goal 1: Promote highest quality research and professional standards

Culture collections

Jeff Jones (chair of the Working Group on Culture Collections Committee) made a brief presentation on activities related to preservation of culture collections. He will prepare a proposal for funding from government agencies (NSF, USDA, ARS, APHIS), work up a white paper for the Public Policy Board to use in Washington, D.C. on the importance of maintaining culture collections, and will get input from international organizations that already have experience in maintaining and safeguarding collections.

Publications board

The effort to get all journals digitized back to issue one is on track. *Plant Disease* should be nearly finished, *MPMI* is finished, and *Phytopathology* should be done by 2010.

Council voted to allow open access to *MPMI* after one year instead of two, and to provide authors with the option of paying \$2400 (on top of page charges) to allow immediate open access to their article. This would go down to \$1900 if the author's institution has a subscription to *MPMI*.

Goal 2: Maintain a strong, proactive and united professional organization

Finances

APS closed the 07 fiscal year (July 1– June 30) with a surplus of 4.8% (around \$210,000). Revenue from *Plant Disease* and *Phytopathology* has declined during the past two years. PMN is still operating in the loss, but as of August 30th the American Society of Agronomy (ASA) and Crop Science Society of America (CSSA) have verbally committed to join APS in ownership and steering of PMN. The two societies have pledged significant financial support, staff time, and increased advocacy for PMN. Manuscript contributions are expected to rise as more members of these two societies become aware of PMN. Profits from PMN will be either reinvested into PMN or shared between the three societies. Details are still being finalized.

Collaboration with Chinese Society for Plant Pathology

APS is interested in collaboration with sister societies in other countries to broaden the influence of APS globally. A delegation from the Chinese Society for Plant Pathology were at the annual APS meeting in San Diego to follow up on the summit that was held in Beijing earlier between APS and CSPP officials. APS/CSPP are considering co-publishing articles in Chinese journals, and perhaps publishing a Chinese journal in English (by APS Press). The membership of CSPP is just over 6,000.

Activities Around the Pacific Division

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Goal 3: Be premiere resource for plant health information & knowledge dissemination

Web presence

APS, via the Office of Electronic Communications, hired a consulting firm to help the society evaluate how to update APSnet. There are over 90,000 pages of static HTML on APSnet, which makes updating them extremely laborious. In addition, there is lack of consistency in navigation and not all APS related pages look the same, leading to some confusion. There are more efficient ways to update, but it means an extensive overhaul of the entire system and considerable expense (around \$350,000). The Executive Committee is obtaining additional information before bringing the issue to Council again in February.

Goal 4: Foster professional growth & development

An update on the Centennial Celebration was given. A one time increase in funds was granted to assist the Centennial Planning Committee. The funds are to be used to hire a PR firm to create and pitch stories on plant pathology for large media outlets.

Goal 5: Promote understanding and increase awareness of plant pathology

Public Policy Board

The priorities of the PPB were given, based on time devoted to each issue. They are: education (30%), genomics (20%), industry (15%), biosecurity (10%), permits (10%), general ag funding (10%), new and emerging issues (4%), and Plant Management Network (1%). The PPB solicited Council for input on prioritization of issues and percent effort to be placed on them.

Other actions

Council agreed to establish an Advisory Committee on Threatening Plant Diseases, develop a task force to revisit the strategic plan, and abolish the Private Practice committee, which has not been active for several years.

Membership survey

During the winter of 2006/2007 a survey was sent via e-mail to almost 4,000 members; there was a 46% response rate. Some highlights of this very detailed report are below:

Location of members: 66% from the US, 5% from Canada, 29% from other countries

Age: median = 49; this is of concern to Council

Gender: 69% male, 29% female (rounded down to nearest integer), but females represent 41% of the newest members (under 5 y) and 50% of regular members under age 35.

Affiliation: 54% land grant universities, 21% government agencies, 13%, other public colleges and universities, 10% industry (remainder = other)

Reasons for joining: 66% to keep current on scientific research, 51% for contact with colleagues, 49% to publish in APS journals, 46% to support the profession, 34% for career advancement, and 21% for discounts that come with membership

Value of membership: 74% agree membership is a good value, and membership value highly APSnet, the journals, and other offerings at the website.

The next meeting of Council will be in St. Paul during February 20-23, 2008. If you have any issues of concern that you would like me to present to council, please contact me at putnamm@science.oregonstate.edu.

Awards Around the Pacific Division

2007 APS Pacific Division Student Travel Award Winners

Four students received the 2007 Pacific Division Student Travel Award. Each recipient was awarded a travel grant of \$500 from the APS Pacific Division to attend the 2007 Annual Meeting held jointly with the APS Annual Meeting in San Diego. The winners are listed below.

José Ramón Úrbez-Torres

Department of Plant Pathology
University of California, Davis
Advisor: W. D. Gubler

Vihanga Pahalawatta

Department of Plant Pathology
Washington State University
Advisor: Hanu Pappu

Laura Gallegos

Department of Plant Pathology
University of California, Davis
Advisor: W. D. Gubler

Sridhar Jarugula

Department of Plant Pathology
Washington State University
Advisor: Naidu Rayapati

2007 APS Pacific Division Student Paper Competition Award Winners

The 2007 Pacific Division meeting was held jointly with the APS annual meeting in San Diego, July 28 – August 1, 2007. Eleven students participated in the student paper competition. Three awards were given. The monetary gifts were \$200 for the first place, \$150 for the second place, and \$100 for the third place. The winners are listed below:

First place winner

Nicholas Garber
Department of Plant Sciences
University of Arizona
Advisor: P. J. Cotty

Title of presentation: Sugarcane serves as a reservoir for non-native aflatoxin producing fungi in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas

Second place winner

Greg Crisp; Department of Plant Sciences, University of Arizona
Advisor: P. J. Cotty
Title of presentation: Tolerance of *Aspergillus flavus* to Copper Sulfate

Third Place winner

José Ramón Úrbez-Torres; Department of Plant Pathology, University of California, Davis
Advisor: W. D. Gubler
Title of presentation: Demystifying Botryosphaeria canker, an Important and Destructive Disease of Grapevines in California

Awards Around the Pacific Division cont.

Congratulations to the 2007 Student Competition winners!

Pacific division graduate students receive awards at "The 1st Annual National Viticulture Research Conference (NVRC)" held in Davis, CA



Left to right: **Martin Mendez**, 3rd place oral presentation; **Florent Trouillas (UCD)**, 2nd place oral presentation; **Jose Urbez-Torres (UCD)**, 1st place oral presentation; **Patricia Coelho de S. Leao**, 3rd place poster presentation; **Jeremiah Baumgartel**, 2nd place poster presentation; and **Melody Meyer (UCD)**, 1st place poster presentation. Thanks to all participating students

UC Davis graduate student Jose Úrbez Torres received three distinguished awards

- 1- First place in the student paper competition at the ASEV meetings in Reno in June.
- 2- First place in the student paper competition at the National Viticulture Research Conference in July.
- 3- Third place in the 2007 APS Pacific Division student paper competition held at the annual meeting in San Diego in August.



Left to right, W. Douglas Gubler, Jose Urbez Torres, Lyndon D. Porter

◆ People Around the Pacific Division

Dr. Deborah Matthews joins the Department of Plant Pathology and Microbiology at UC Riverside as Assistant Specialist in Cooperative Extension and Assistant Plant Pathologist. Her main focus will be diseases of ornamental plants and vegetables. Deborah's specialty is virus diseases, but plans to expand her research to include other pathogens as needed.



Dr. Akif Eskalen is joining the Department of Plant Pathology and Microbiology at the University of California, Riverside as assistant specialist in Cooperative Extension and assistant plant pathologist effective November 2007. His major responsibilities are diagnosis, etiology, and management of diseases of subtropical crops including avocado and citrus, as well as other Southern California crops.



◆ Classifieds

Position for Aflatoxin-Almonds 2007

DESCRIPTION OF DUTIES: The emphasis of this position will be to develop methods to reduce aflatoxin contamination of tree nuts (mainly almonds). The primary causal agents of aflatoxin contamination in tree nuts in California are *Aspergillus flavus* and *A. parasiticus*, fungi with no known sexual phase. *Aspergillus flavus/parasiticus* are very infrequent fungi, but because the tolerance of aflatoxins in tree nuts is very low (5 to 15 parts per billion), aflatoxin contamination problems have become very serious in the last decade or so. The sources of contamination have been studied in pistachios in California, but not in almond. The person accepting this position will use traditional and modern molecular approaches to increase our knowledge on the sources, infection, and contamination of almonds by the aflatoxigenic fungi. At the same time, the candidate will initiate experiments to develop data on the displacement of *A. flavus/parasiticus* in an experimental almond orchard by using the biocontrol *A. flavus* AF36 that has been registered in other crops. The ultimate goal of this position will be to understand the population diversity of aflatoxigenic fungi, sources, and conditions affecting infection of almonds, and biological control using the atoxigenic strain AF36 through research efforts. The results will be used by the Almond Board of California to expand the label and eventually get registration of AF36 on almonds.

This is a University of California postdoctoral position for which a Ph.D. earned within the last 4 years is preferred. This position is available immediately. UC is an AA/EO Employer.

QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS: Recent Ph.D. in Plant Pathology, or related Biological/Microbiological Science is required. Knowledge and experience with the filamentous fungi and/or utilizing molecular techniques in microbial ecology would be useful.

LOCATION: The position will be with the Department of Plant Pathology, University of California, Davis, but will be located at the Kearney Agricultural Center. This is the largest, off-campus Agricultural Research and Extension Center owned by the University. The Center is located about 2.5 hours away from the main campus.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES: This position is available immediately. Send curriculum vitae to: Dr. Themis J. Michailides, University of California, Kearney Agricultural Center, 9240 South Riverbend Ave., Parlier, CA 93648. Phone: 559-646-6546. Fax: 559-646-6593; or e-mail themis@uckac.edu.

For more information about the Kearney Agricultural Center and my research, please go to the following links:

<http://www.uckac.edu> and <http://tjm.uckac.edu/Default.asp>