

September
2016



The SS-ASPB

TO ENCOURAGE AND PROMOTE THE GROWTH OF AND THE WELFARE AND GOOD FELLOWSHIPS OF PLANT BIOLOGISTS GENERALLY...

Inside this issue:

<i>Greetings from the Chair</i>	1
<i>ASPB 2016</i>	2
<i>SS-ASPB Elections</i>	2
<i>Candidate Biographies</i>	3
<i>SS-ASPB 2017</i>	4
<i>Better Know a Member</i>	6
<i>SS-ASPB Officer Listing</i>	8



Greetings from Dr. Ken Korth 2016-2017 SS-ASPB Chair

Greetings to all fellow Southern Section ASPB members. It was a pleasure to see so many of you in Denton for our annual meeting, and once again a special 'thank you' goes out to Dr. Nihal Dharmasiri and Dr. Becca Dickstein for organizing such an informative and fun meeting. I went back to Texas in July to attend the ASPB Plant Biology 2016 meeting in Austin. There I talked with several members, both student and faculty, that I have met over

the years at Southern Section meetings. This was a powerful reminder for me of what a strong and effective community we have in the Southern Section, nurturing exchange of ideas, networking, and professional development for students. Because our Section activities can be such a benefit to all members, and because they rely on a community effort, please feel free to contact me or any of the officers if you have questions, concerns or ideas for keeping the Southern Section strong. With all that in mind, I hope you will plan to attend the 2017 meeting, April 8th-10th, in Orlando, Florida. Dr. Shahid Mukhtar (Secretary-Treasurer) and Dr. Paul Stephenson (Executive Committee and local organizer) are planning a great meeting in a wonderful setting. Hope to see you there!

ASPB 2016

By Dr. Rebecca Dickstein, Southern Section Representative

The Plant Biology 2016 meeting was held July 9-13, 2016 in Austin, Texas – it was a great meeting! In case you missed it, the abstracts of the major symposia, concurrent-symposia and posters are available via <http://plantbiology.aspb.org/>. Among my personal favorite sessions among many others were the those on Developing Healthier Foods: Quality, Nutrition, and Molecular Gastronomy and on Plant Specialized Metabolism, both out of my area, and on Biotic Interactions in Roots which is in my area of research.

The Plant Biology 2016 conference also presented a venue to discuss the national ASPB society at both the Council meeting and the Membership committee meetings. Among the most exciting news is that ASPB is on-track to launch a third journal that will be jointly published with Wiley, the publishers of the Plant Journal. The target date for launch is in 2017, so stay tuned. The Sections are being recognized as one of the strengths of ASPB. In addition to our own Southern Section, there are four other geographical sections and one topical section. There are proposals to add one or possibly two international sections that would build on collaborations between ASPB members in the US and in other countries.

Plans are well underway for Plant Biology 2017, which will be held June 24-28, 2017 in Honolulu, Hawaii. Registration and abstract submission are expected to open soon, in Fall 2016.

SS-ASPB 2017-2018 Elections

It's time to elect the SS-ASPB officers for the 2017-2018 term. This year, the 2015-2016 Chair Dr. Rick Turley will step onto the Executive Committee, while Dr. Paul Stephenson will rotate off. The nominations committee (Drs. Jay Shockey, Ashlee McCaskill, Rick Turley and Ken Korth, Nihal Dharmasiri and Shahid Mukhtar) is putting forward Dr. Aruna Kilaru and Dr. Magaly Rincon-Zachary for the position of Secretary/Treasurer. Biographical sketches for Secretary/Treasurer candidates can be found on the following pages. Additionally, Dr. Ken Korth will run for Executive Committee, Dr. Nihal Dharmasiri will run for Chair and Dr. Shahid Mukhtar will run for Vice Chair in the upcoming election by the membership. Members will receive access to voting via email before September 30, 2016. The results will be announced in the next newsletter.



2017-2018 Secretary/Treasurer Candidate Biographies

Dr. Aruna Kilaru is an Associate Professor of Biology at East Tennessee State University. She received her B.Sc. degree in Botany, Zoology and Chemistry from Andhra University, and M.Sc. in Biotechnology from Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, in India. Aruna earned her Ph.D. degree in Environmental and Evolutionary Biology in 2005, from University of Louisiana at Lafayette (ULL), under the guidance of Prof. Karl Hasenstein. Her doctoral research was focused on understanding host-pathogen interactions between *Theobroma cacao* (The Chocolate Tree) and a basidiomycete, *Moniliophthora perniciosa*. Her subsequent postdoctoral work with Prof. Kent Chapman at the University of North Texas (2005-09) involved deciphering fatty acid ethanolamide-mediated lipid signaling in plants. At Michigan State University (2009-11), she worked with Prof. John Ohlrogge, to identify biochemical regulators for carbon partitioning in seed and nonseed tissues. Dr. Kilaru currently maintains a diverse research group and a host of national and international collaborations. Her current work is funded by National Science Foundation and is primarily focused on understanding the role of small lipid molecules in mediating abiotic stress responses, using moss as a model system. Her team also works on regulation of storage oil biosynthesis in nonseed tissues, such as mesocarp of avocado. Aruna's work led to more than 25 publications in high-impact journals and was recognized with numerous honors and awards including Sigma Xi Grants-in-Aid of Research Award (2001, 2005), The Arthur Neish Young Investigator Award from Phytochemical Society for N America (2011), New Faculty Award from College of Arts and Sciences, East Tennessee State University (2014) and Women's Young Investigator Travel Award from American Society for Plant Biologists (2015). Aruna has been an active member of ASPB, including southern section since 2001.



Dr. Magaly Rincón-Zachary is a Professor of Biology at Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, TX. She received both her M.S. and Ph.D. in Plant Physiology from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1985. Her doctoral thesis work focused on the control of calcium influx in corn roots in response to injury under the direction of the late John B. Hanson. From there, Dr. Rincón-Zachary began her postdoctoral work as a research associate in the Botany department at North Carolina State University under Dr. Wendy Boss's mentorship, and, later, with the Noble Foundation, studying aluminum partitioning patterns in wheat roots. In 1992, she accepted a faculty position in the Biology department at Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, Texas. Her research primarily focuses on plant physiology, and, in particular, the effect of melatonin on plant growth and development. She has published several articles on the role of calcium on the differential aluminum sensitivity observed in roots. Dr. Rincón-Zachary served as the Biology Graduate Program Coordinator from August 1999 until August 2013. She has advised and directed master's thesis work for 16 students, many of whom, have gone to pursue doctoral degrees. In 2011, Dr. Rincón-Zachary, along with Dr. William Cook, published a laboratory manual for a first-year General Botany course. In 2005, she spearheaded and directed an undergraduate research program titled Undergraduate Research Opportunities and Summer Workshop (UGROW) in the College of Science and Mathematics, which in 2013 became a part of the university's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). Currently, she serves as the Director for the Office of Undergraduate Research at Midwestern State University overseeing two programs, UGROW and EURECA (Enhancing Undergraduate Research Endeavors and Creative Activities), aimed at institutionalizing undergraduate research. As Director for Undergraduate Research, she developed a research course titled, "Creative Inquiry: Interdisciplinary Thinking," and continues teaching Biology at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. She has been a member of ASPB since 1982.

SS-ASPB 2017

April 8-10th

Orlando, Florida

Join us at the Doubletree Hotel Orlando Downtown. In addition to the talks, networking and student competitions, the meeting is an excellent opportunity to take in activities in the Orlando area. Come early or stay late to visit any of the other local attractions. Hope to see you in Florida!



- Papers covering all topics in plant biology are encouraged
- Student competitions at the graduate and undergraduate levels
- Watch your email and www.ss-aspb.org for registration details

A block of affordable rooms has been secured,
so take advantage and **register early!**

For more information visit www.ss-aspb.org or contact Dr. Shahid Mukhtar, Secretary//Treasurer, SS-ASPB, smukhtar@uab.edu, or Dr. Paul Stephenson, Local Site Coordinator, pstephenson@Rollins.edu

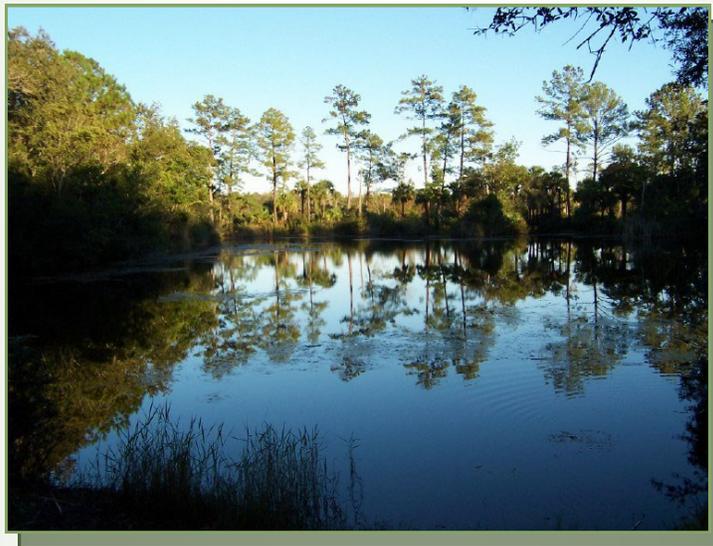
SS-ASPB 2017 Schedule of Events

April 8th: Field trip to Blue Springs State Park
Opening Night Mixer

April 9th: Oral and Poster Presentations
Banquet and Student Awards

April 10th: Kriton Hatzios Symposium

“Epigenetics in plant development and beyond”



The annual meeting in Orlando will offer attendees the opportunity to visit one of Florida’s most unique natural sites, Blue Springs State Park (pictured at right). Blue Springs is the largest spring feeding the St. John’s River. Blue Springs is classified as a first order magnitude spring, meaning that it releases over 100 cubic feet of water per second. Its actual output was recently measured as 124 cubic feet per second, or 3,420,093 gallons per hour. The spring is also a designated manatee refuge area. During the winter season (Nov.-March) hundreds of manatees shelter in its warm waters. We will offer a trip to the spring on Saturday afternoon 2-5 pm.

Better Know a Member

Susan John

Ph.D. Candidate, Biology

University of Louisiana

Lafayette

Faculty Mentor: Karl H. Hasenstein



What have been your favorite things about attending Southern Section ASPB?

Meeting students and professors from other institutions, getting to know them and their work and learning about new techniques and information.

Receiving valuable advices and suggestions about my research and helping me to decide about my future career.

Has attending the meeting impacted your research or professional plans? If so, how?

Yes, in a very positive way. I gave two presentations at the SS-ASPB (Denton) and they were from two different chapters of my dissertation. I received some good feedbacks and suggestions, which were not only encouraging but also gave me more ideas on carrying out additional experiments, which has been instrumental in making my research more comprehensive. Plants, research, finding ways to answer a question, and presenting my findings make me very happy. SS-ASPB has been a great platform to showcase my research and understand myself as a researcher.

If you have attended both the SS-ASPB and national ASPB meetings, what are some of the major differences in your experience?

There were so many people at the national ASPB meeting (in Austin) and so many sessions and workshops to go to and not enough time to digest massive amount of information. It was my first time attending a national conference and honestly I was overwhelmed but at the same time very excited to get to know about the amount of work that is being carried out around the world in the field of plant science and about new emerging techniques.

At the national meeting what I found really hard to do was to get in touch with other scientists and discuss any question I had because I either had to rush to another session or to a workshop. I was not able to manage my time or stick to my plan I had made for that particular day. I did not face such situation at the SS-ASPB.

What are some of the highlights of each meeting?

Highlights from national meeting at Austin-

The workshops were extremely helpful and informative. Majority of the workshops were geared towards providing helpful tips to students preparing for the next phase of their career such as applying for post- doctoral position or to industries.

I am grateful to Dr. Judy Callis, for taking out time to review my resume and in providing guidance to improve it further.

Additionally, it was exciting to see how students from different universities volunteered at the conference and organized special sessions. I took part in a mock interview to discuss how my life is in and outside the lab and also took part in practicing an elevator pitch about my research, which was showcased at the town hall meeting in Austin.

Highlights from SS-ASPB

I enjoy going to SS-ASPB because I feel comfortable to be surrounded by familiar faces, talk openly about my research and discuss any problems or questions. I made lot of friends at the southern section, with whom I am in touch with and it was a pleasure to meet and spend some time with them at the national conference.

Any other comments that you would like to add regarding your experiences with SS-ASPB?

The enthusiasm for plant science at the SS-ASPB is so invigorating that it definitely pushes me to become better researcher.

Plant Biology Trivia

The pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*) produces the largest fruit native to North America. The fruits produced by these small trees reach a maximum size of 500g.



Flower photo credit: Phyzome [GFDL (<http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html>) or CC-BY-SA-3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons

Fruit photo credit: Scott Bauer, USDA - USDA ARS Image Number K7575-8

We're on the web!
<http://ss-aspb.org/>



2016-2017 SS-ASPB Officers

Chair

Dr. Ken Korth

Professor of Plant Pathology
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, AR 72701
479-575-5191
kkorth@uark.edu

Vice-Chair

Dr. Nihal Dharmasiri

Associate Professor
Department of Biology
Texas State University
San Marcos, TX 78666
512-245-4911
md34@txstate.edu

Secretary/Treasurer

Dr. Shahid Mukhtar

Assistant Professor
Department of Biology
University of Alabama Birmingham
Birmingham, AL 35294
(205) 934-8335
smukhtar@uab.edu

Executive Committee Members

Dr. Rick Turley

Research Plant Physiologist
USDA-ARS, Jamie Whitten Delta States
Research Center
Stoneville, MS 38776
662-686-5268
Rick.Turley@ars.usda.gov

Dr. Ashlee McCaskill

Editor, SS-ASPB Newsletter
Associate Professor of Plant Biology
University of North Georgia
Dahlonega, GA 30597
706-864-1954
amccaskill@ung.edu

Dr. Jay Shockey

USDA-ARS, Southern Regional Research Center
New Orleans, LA 70124
504-286-4296
Jay.Shockey@ars.usda.gov

2014-2017 Southern Section Representative to ASPB Executive Committee

Dr. Rebecca Dickstein

beccad@unt.edu