

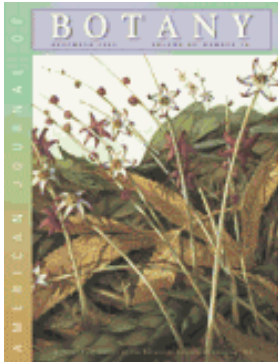
Botanical Society of America

Annual Report 2002 – 2003

Business Manager, Botanical Society of America

**To be presented to the Botanical Society of America Council Meeting
July 27, 2003 – Mobile Alabama**

1. Introduction



The report to follow provides an overview of the activities of the Botanical Society of America's business office. As I begin, I would like to start by thanking and acknowledging the Executive Committee for their support and direction over the past nine months. I need also mention Johanne Stogran and Wanda Lovan and, on behalf of the Executive Committee and the Society, thank them for their effort and dedication to the Botanical Society of America. Well done! We've accomplished a great deal over the past nine months.

2. Thank You

Thank you to those among the membership who donated gifts to the various BSA funds. I'm pleased to report the funds raised totaled over \$11,000. It is also important to note that the Past Presidents of the BSA, in an effort to encourage donations, gifts and giving, have established a Past Presidents Fund. It is to be used to support the endowment and BSA activities. This year the Past Presidents raised over \$13,000. Thank you all for your support!

3. Strategic Development

In October the Executive Committee and staff met to establish some base concepts for moving the society forward under a new model of management. A few key themes came forward that run through the report to follow. We felt it was important that we:

- a. Ensure all efforts undertaken by the society go in some way towards furthering our mission, promoting botany.
- b. Support active committees & sections in establishing, developing and accomplishing specific mission-related goals/targets.
 - i. Educational support & development,
 - ii. Scientific support & development,
 - iii. Sharing expertise/advice,
 - iv. Communication with fellow scientists and the public in general.
- c. Build and support the BSA membership.
- d. Work in partnership with other organizations with similar aspirations.
- e. Continue to develop services and systems to support our membership and institutional subscribers.

The business team now looks to the mission as a key component in the decision making process. Acting as a center for the society's activities, over the next few months we will ask and help committees and sections to establish goals/projects that will further the BSA mission. We have set up our support systems to ensure we have the capability and capacity to develop relationships & programs with other organizations, as well as meeting the needs of our membership and institutional subscribers.

4. Web Developments

It is important to bring web development into this report early in an effort to ensure later content is in context. The web is a tool that allows us to communicate, exchange ideas and transact business in an efficient and timely manner. This is particularly important for us as a diverse group both in terms of location and specialization. The establishment of the BSA website in 1997 ensured we would have a platform for future development on all three points. It is noted that this venue does not fit the needs of everyone but, if we get it right, it will allow us to serve everyone more effectively.

At present we have three main groups using the site: professional botanists & graduate students/non-graduate college students, K-12 students and the general public seeking information (including amateur botanists).

Over the past nine months we focused on continued development for members and institutional subscribers by adding the following features to the website, many of which had been in the planning for some time:

- a. Introduced online payment of dues, subscriptions and the purchasing of BSA merchandise. <http://www.botany.org/newsite/membership/join.php>
- b. Created a place for donations/gifts that ensures all BSA funds are available at: <http://www.botany.org/newsite/membership/donate.php>
- c. Established a new BSA database and connected it directly to the website as a platform for development.
- d. Provided access to the archives of the *AJB* through the JSTOR. http://www.botany.org/newsite/publications/jstor_login_botany.asp
- e. Revised the Membership Look-up function and connected it to the BSA database. <http://www.botany.org/newlook/membersearch.asp>
- f. Established a "Review & Change Your Details" component. This will hopefully eliminate data entry errors (at least the ones we make). <http://www.botany.org/newlook/login.asp>
- g. Along with all of the above we have also created a secure section of the site so that we can share information with members only rather than in the public domain. For example, we can establish billboards where we are able to discuss and debate issues that impact the society.

It is requested that sections and committees become involved in projects & create concepts for development as we move forward in our efforts to reach the other two groups, K-12 and the general public. We have the opportunity to create significant impact if we are focused on specific goals with the right programs/projects aimed at reaching specific groups.

5. Financial Report

As of 7-10-03 the Botanical Society of America's total cash position in the St. Louis and Columbus accounts was \$435,865.87. This was comprised of \$4,278.94 in St. Louis checking, \$400,597.86 in the Money Market Account, \$35.50 in Petty Cash and \$30,953.57 in the Huntington Account in Columbus.

Income for the month of June was \$23,268.50 with expenditure of \$57,276.82. Based on anticipated expenditure and income projections we are showing a surplus through December. At that time new subscription and membership fees will begin to fill the accounts again.

6. E-Commerce

The establishment of the BSA website as a means of paying for membership, subscriptions, sales items and the giving of gifts/donations is proving a good means for doing business. From the business office's perspective we are now able to process requests within a few days and with much greater accuracy. All web orders/purchases, once cleared, now feed directly into the BSA database. This has the added bonus of ensuring the member look-up function operates in real time. If a membership has been processed, that person can be found. Money goes directly into the bank and it must be noted we do not hold, store or have access to credit card information over this system. Please promote the use of this system, as it is very efficient and effective for the society.

E-Commerce Summary

	Transactions
Visa	258
Mastercard	436
Total	694
Income	\$ 44,190
Fees	\$ 1,428
Total	\$ 42,762
Cost/Trans	\$ 2.06
Ave Trans	\$ 61.62

7. Membership Activity

Initially the drop in membership numbers from December 2002 to January 2003 was quite a worry. The cyclical nature of membership caught us off guard. I'm pleased to report we are now tracking ahead of the 2002 year.

Membership Numbers

	Domestic	Non - US	Total
Mar-02	1377	561	1938
Jun-02	1599	643	2242
Sep-02	1667	693	2360
Dec-02	2057	735	2792
Mar-03	1428	547	1975
Jun-03	1693	692	2385

The membership committee is involved in the development of a membership drive planned for the fall of 2003. A poster is being designed for mailing to campus representative around the country. A first mock-up of the poster can be viewed at: www.botany.org/membership/

8. Institutional Subscriptions

We started the year with notification that our second largest subscription agency had gone into liquidation. In doing so 127 libraries lost funds they had paid for 2003 subscriptions to the *American Journal of Botany*. We contacted all and offered immediate access to the online version of the Journal while matters were sorted out in the courts. Approximately half responded and most took up the offer.

Subscriber numbers remain below 2002 levels. We are currently working with subscription agencies and customers promoting the 2004-year. We have placed a quarter-page advertisement with the EBSCO Subscription agency featuring the Journal in a visual way.

Subscription Numbers

	Domestic	Non - US	Total
Mar-02	1261	337	1598
Jun-02	1318	383	1701
Sep-02	1344	399	1743
Dec-02	1363	411	1774
Mar-03	1161	311	1472
Jun-03	1240	360	1600

We will continue to take steps to build relationships with all agents. We are working with them to improve the subscription and claim process. We hope to shortly move to an online format in an effort to speed transactions, improve record accuracy and just plain save on paper and mail cost.

We have altered our price structure for institutional subscribers in an effort to reflect the trend of groups moving to online services. We have discontinued the “print only” option and will offer “print” & online or “online” only. In terms of our mission it ensures greater access to botanical information. It also increases the need for developing and maintaining a strong membership base.

9. BSA Conference Planning

In May we held a “conference planning summit” in Kirksville, Missouri and began developing the conference schedule through 2010. This will be covered by the Program Director.

10. Relationships & Collaboration

Over the past year the BSA has continued to develop its role in the wider community. As such we have moved on several projects that fit well with our mission and take serious botany to the wider world. Several of the efforts are listed below.

- a. In early 2003 the BSA signed on as a partner organization to the Health InterNetwork Access to Research Initiative (HINARI) program. The *Health InterNetwork* was created to bridge the "digital divide" in health, ensuring that relevant information - and the technologies to deliver it - are widely available and effectively used by health personnel: professionals, researchers and scientists, and policy makers in the worlds poorest countries.

Launched by the Secretary General of the United Nations in September 2000 and led by the World Health Organization (WHO), the *Health InterNetwork* has brought together public and private partners under the principle of ensuring *equitable access to health information*. The core elements of the project are *content*, *Internet connectivity* and *capacity building*.

As the first phase of making vital health content available, the *Health InterNetwork* provides a vast library of the latest and best information on

public health: more than 2,000 scientific publications, one of the world's largest collections of biomedical literature. This collection is available through the efforts of WHO together with the 6 biggest biomedical publishers: Blackwell, Elsevier Science, the Harcourt Worldwide STM Group, Wolters Kluwer International Health & Science, Springer Verlag and John Wiley. It has been described by WHO Director-General Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland as "perhaps the biggest step ever taken towards reducing the health information gap between rich and poor countries."

Read more about the program at: <http://www.healthinternet.net/>. Please note the Botanical Society of America is listed as an HINARI Partner.

- b. We are currently working with the Missouri Botanical Garden and the WHO partners from HINARI to provide excess American Journal of Botany stock to libraries in developing countries.
- c. As our systems develop we will be seeking closer alliances with botanical groups (and others that support our mission) from around the country and the world.

11. BSA Office Functions

As indicated early on, we have gone through significant changes as the BSA office has taken shape. Our goal is that your service requests are dealt with as close to immediately as possible. In some instances we will ask the membership for help when it makes sense to do so. As an example, I present the "Review & Change Your Details" function. If you can view and ensure your name, address and email are correct, we can communicate easily. It would be extremely difficult for us to check everyone's information.

We will work over the next few months to establish a system for disseminating information online. At some point we will ask who of the membership wishes to communicate online. Those who do not respond we will assume require mail.

We also ask that you, as leaders of the organization, promote the use of the online features. Renewing membership should be a snap this year, as your information will mostly be filled in for you. And please, put out the message that if people are having problems, they should contact us. We can fix just about anything if we are aware of it.

On behalf of the BSA office team I can tell you we look forward to the year to come. Thank you for your time and support.

Sincerely

Bill Dahl
Executive Director
Botanical Society of America