

Ecological Section Report – 2003

Our section awarded checks for \$150 to the winners of the Best Student Paper and Poster Awards at the Botany 2002 meetings in Madison.

R. Otfinowski (University of Western Ontario) won the best paper award for her presentation entitled “Gradients, patches, and microhabitats: Sand dune heterogeneity according to Pitcher’s thistle, and endangered species of the Great Lakes”. Elma Kay (St. Louis University) won the poster award for “Evolution of vertebrate pollination in *Passiflora* sp. Of the Greater Antilles”. Congratulations!

Thanks to judges Kathy Shea, Brenda Molino-Flores, Hudson DeYoe (posters); Diane Byers, Marty Lechowicz, Mark Schlessman (papers).

We received 35 contributed papers and 22 poster abstracts for the 2003 Mobile meetings, and Joe Colosi has organized these into 3 contributed papers sessions. Student papers have been placed in one session, to facilitate judging; this seemed to work well last year. We also scheduled the student papers long enough before the end to allow the judges some decision time!

Meeting participation in our section is lower than last year, apparently the lure of sultry summer weather was not enough for our largely temperate zone membership! We had 11 volunteers to judge papers, and more to chair sessions, and there are 11 student papers and 7 posters to be judged. Proportionally, volunteerism is alive and well in the Ecological Section.

This year our section is co-sponsoring only one symposium with six speakers (Transgenic Plants) and will present monetary awards and banquet tickets for best student presentations.

At our 2002 business meeting, we had a discussion of terms of office, the next elections, the benefits of staggering terms. Kathy Shea offered that previously the vice-chair became the chair, and there were shorter terms. Also the vice-chair organized a symposium, and was the “fiscal officer” (to better decide where our funds go). It was moved and seconded to change bylaws to have terms two years, with vice-chair becoming chair, and being fiscal officer. Since that time, conversation with Jim Quinn revealed that the current arrangement of three-year terms was to satisfy the BSA requirements of three-year commitments to the board. We will discuss these terms more this year, and put these potential changes to the section for a vote this coming fall, via e-mail, as business meeting attendance is not always representative of the entire section’s wishes.

We have a desire to have more of section history on our web page (past officers, major decisions, etc.) The chair will work with the new executive director to put these things on our section’s pages. Some members have communicated the desire to have the section take a more active role in environmental advocacy and linkages with other organizations. We will discuss these things at our business meeting this year and take some appropriate actions.

The Ecological Section now has a list-serve to promote the sharing of news, notices, and discussion of potential interest to members of the section. Please contact us with any ideas you have for ways in which the section can better serve the BSA.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne Koptur