



BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

## President's Report, July 2003

The role of the President during the interim has evolved considerably since the last meeting and is continuing to evolve as we define the position of Executive Director.

**The Early Days of my Administration:** involved organizing e-commerce capabilities on the Internet, moving our web operations from the University of Oklahoma (which has generously been providing free services for almost 7 years now), hiring an Executive Director, and opening the BSA offices in St. Louis on the campus of the Missouri Botanical Garden. I also initiated a monthly set of e-mails from the President to the membership to help keep members informed with the progress of the Society.

**Bill Dahl Joins BSA Staff and Opens St. Louis Office on October 9<sup>th</sup>:** Among these initiatives, the addition of Bill Dahl to our staff was the most important. He has provided needed stability to the Botanical Society that will allow us to grow as a Society. He will allow us to more effectively fulfill our mission of promoting botany and meeting our objectives of sustaining and providing improved formal and informal education about plants; encouraging basic plant research; providing expertise, direction, and position statements concerning plants and ecosystems; and fostering communication within the professional botanical community, and between botanists and the rest of humankind through publications, meetings, and committees—a statement that closely corresponds with the Bylaws.

**BSA Open House at MBG:** Celebrating our arrival at the Gardens, Bill Dahl organized a very nice reception on Friday afternoon on October 24 that a majority of the EC was able to attend. This was very well received by Garden employees and we have gained some members. Judy and I joined MBG on our way out on Sunday, so we are hoping to cultivate botanical synergy at our new home.

**E-Commerce:** The secure web site finally launched on 27 November. Members may now make purchases at the BSA web site. This move paved the way for online memberships. The biggest part of the task that remains is integrating the renewals over a few databases that we manage (one database drives all of our membership activities, one drives AJB Online, and one drives our e-mail contact site listserv).

**Web developments:** After further investigating Missouri Botanical Garden's current situation, we decided to move more of the operation to Lanspeed Systems of Santa Barbara, California. As of November 15, almost the whole operation was set up at that site. On January 10, Bill Dahl officially replaced me as Webmaster to relieve the President of some of these tasks. In the next five months, he implemented the new meetings site and revamped the main BSA pages. He has implemented e-commerce at the BSA site, put the BSA database on the web so members can manage their own address and contact information, implemented JSTOR access and has made the site more user friendly. The movement of all responsibilities is a progressive task and has taken me about two years to phase out my involvement, which right now is continuing to fade.

**Bill's visit to Norman:** On January 7 and 8, Bill flew to Norman for a crash course on BSA online operations and to take over the web activities. He filed a formal report with the EC shortly thereafter. I passed to him a folder containing the relevant data. The key to success is organization and this was an attempt to organize the materials as best I could prior to his arrival.

**Wanda Lovan joins BSA:** On January 20, Wanda Lovan joined the BSA Business Office in St. Louis as Administrative Coordinator. Her background with the Nature Conservancy made her particularly attractive as a member of the BSA team. She will be overseeing many of the membership and subscription matters for the BSA and *American Journal of Botany*.

**Membership Efforts:** Major efforts were taken by Bill and Wanda to e-mail all of the past members of 2001 and 2002. I supported this through walking Bill through constructing a listserv, which is a portable solution that they will be able to use for the foreseeable future. Membership drives will be critical to the future of the Society. These will be addressed in the mission discussions and later in this meeting, but what seems evident is that we find out what BSA members find most important, what we could add, and how to sell it. Part of the assessment should also include a business look at how much each member *really* costs (this went up with e-commerce and with having a two-person staff since mid-January) and then plan dues increases consistently with costs, services, needs and mission. Discussions are underway to distribute a membership poster for distribution. To contain our costs, these will be sent to representatives for posting at their campus, institute or workplace.

**Migration of the BSA Business Office:** Beginning March 1, the business office operations were officially moved from Columbus, Ohio to St. Louis, Missouri. All web site pointers on BSA and AJB sites have been updated. Johanne Stogran continues to serve as Meetings Manager through the office Columbus, Ohio office. The future of this office has remained in some limbo as the department with which it is affiliated will be changing buildings and it has not been possible to allocate space in the new facility. Much of the work could be done off site, and Johanne spends more of her time working out of her home now that she is not the primary contact for BSA business.

**Letters:** Some of the most noteworthy letters were to:

- Professor William L. Stern to recognize his contributions to BSA at the occasion of his retirement, per request of Doug Soltis (November 11, 2003)
- Letter to Representative J.C. Watts, relative to Representative Hansen's bill to "restore the original intent" of the Endangered Species Act (November 19, 2003)
- Dr. Javier Francisco-Ortega (FIU), official letter of invitation to serve as Chair of Karling Committee (suitable for progress toward tenure documentation) (January 29, 2003)
- Dr. Bruce Alberts, President National Academy of Sciences, Invitation to serve as Keynote speaker at the Educational Forum, Botany 2003 (February 20, 2003)
- Dr. Charlotte Kuh (re: NAS/NRC Draft Taxonomy of Life Sciences (March 21, 2003),
- Special editor requests for AJB: Mark Chase (Kew Gardens), Toby Kellogg (USL), Jeff Palmer (U Indiana), Doug Soltis (U Florida), Karl Niklas (EIC, AJB) (March 7, 2003)
- Chancellor Harvey Perlman, University of Nebraska-Lincoln (March 20, 2003)
- National Science Board Nomination of Peter Raven for special recognition award.
- Membership award letters for Young Botanists Awards (through Business Office)
- Membership letters to Botany finalists at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair. One year complimentary BSA membership and subscription to *American Journal of Botany Online*

**Letters to the membership:** I have sent one email letter each month to the membership outlining changes at BSA, meeting updates, deadlines, as well as matters of public policy including excerpted reports from AIBS. I also sent a letter with the spring and fall mailing. Currently emails are sent to 2977 email addresses. There has been discussion about the length of these emails. For the most part, it has become more flexible, as emails from the President are complimented by emails from the Executive Director, Meetings Manager and Program Director. So far there have only been a couple of requests from members wishing to be deleted from the list.

**Copyright policy:** In response to a request from Editor-In-Chief Karl Niklas to develop a policy for copyright for American Journal of Botany. The EC referred this to the Publications Committee to look at copyright in a wide perspective as it affects all of the publications and intellectual property of the Botanical Society of America. A subcommittee consisting of Nancy Dengler as Chair, with Pat Herendeen, Mary Barksdale, Karl Niklas, Marshall Sundberg and Scott Russell. Separate copyright forms were developed for the American Journal of Botany, Plant Science Bulletin and electronic materials. These were approved by the Publications Committee and referred to the EC, which accepted it in November 2002.

**Electronic *American Journal of Botany*:** As we all recall, the AJB has been under access control since only the middle of June 2002. The renewal cycle has been difficult as has the whole issue of activations. It is hard to believe, but about one-third of our institutions pay for the online version, but do not activate. Another large group believes that they are entitled to receive it free. Working with Bill, I have aggressively pursued some of our non-activators. Bill and Wanda have aggressively (and very effectively) sold subscriptions to the online journal to librarians requesting free activation. We turn them on for them to try it and work out the financial details later! Here is the short progress report (download 7/7/03):

Activated Institutions: 230 Expired activated institutions: 26 Current active: 182 Activated Institutions: 79.13%  
Activated Members: 2303 Expired activated members: 204 Current active: 1500; Activated members: 65.13%

***American Journal of Botany* supplemental data:** The EC approved the expenditure to install the HighWire Press supplementary data in the AJB Online site. This provides links directly from the Table of Contents to the supplementary data, as well as links from the abstract and full text pages of the respective article. These attachments need to be in PDF or HTML format. The EC approved this motion in March and it was installed in April. Beth Hazen will upload material from 2000 to 2002. The current year material is available on the site already, and this is updated monthly as each issue is released. Material from 2000 through the end of 2003 that is archived at the AJB Supplements Site will continue to be archived at <http://ajbsupp.botany.org/>.

***American Journal of Botany* at JSTOR:** BSA members may now access all of the back issues of the *American Journal of Botany* through JSTOR, a non-profit service that archives selected journals for online access. Although many universities have JSTOR, some did not subscribe to the "Ecology and Botany series of journals. As a result, only about 20% of the membership or less could access the JSTOR archives. Members are authenticated through the BSA site. According to the model that BSA adopted, the Society pays for each article downloaded, subject to a maximum usage basis. This is anticipated to be an important part of our next membership drive as it is an attractive membership feature.

***American Journal of Botany* electronic abstract submission/manuscript tracking:** I appointed a subcommittee of Joe Armstrong, Karl Niklas, Bill Dahl and myself to examine manuscript submission and tracking software. We examined three vendors and are currently negotiating with Allen Press to provide this service, which they provide under the name of AllenTrack. We anticipate that implementation should occur within 2003.

***Special Issue of American Journal of Botany*:** In cooperation with the AJB Editorial Board, the EC approved funding for a special issue commemorating the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the AJB by organizing a special issue including contributions that focus on the origins of botanical life. The following were asked to serve as "Special Editors" for this issue: Mark Chase (Kew Gardens), Toby Kellogg (USL), Jeff Palmer (U Indiana), Doug Soltis (U Florida), Karl Niklas (Cornell University, Editor-In-Chief, *AJB*). All accepted except for Toby (sadly she had conflicts that could not be resolved) and the issue is now being organized. Karl believes that he can get this out by the meetings next year.

**American Journal of Botany** Editor-In-Chief search: With approval of the EC, I appointed the following to a search committee for the new EIC: Nancy G. Dengler, Patrick Herendeen and Gregory Anderson. An ad has appeared in *Plant Science Bulletin*, as well as on the web site, and nominees have been invited to apply. The committee has made a recommendation and the EC is considering it.

**HighWire Press Meetings:** I was unable to attend the meetings of HighWire Press this year (October 21-23, 2002 and April 28-30, 2003). BSA was not represented at those meetings, but new initiatives usually have a long gestation.

**Council of Scientific Society Presidents (CSSP):** Pat Gensel attended the Fall Meeting (Dec 7-10). I attended the Spring Meeting (May 3-6). A report is available from the CSSP representative.

**Botany 2003:** Professor E. O. Wilson accepted as Plenary Speaker for Botany 2003. He represents an outstanding choice and we are indebted to Wayne Elisens and Judy Jernstedt for their role in attracting him! Born and raised in Mobile, he was delighted to help us by speaking there. Dr. Bruce Alberts accepted as Keynote Speaker at the Educational Forum February 25, 2003. Many thanks to Jeff Osborne and to Pat Gensel for helping to make this possible

**Botany 2004:** Rita Colwell, Director of NSF, has accepted our invitation to be Plenary Speaker at Botany 2004. Her bio is at: <http://www.nsf.gov/od/lpa/forum/colwell/rrcbio.htm>. She is an outstanding choice and we are in Pat and Judy's debt for pursuing this!

**Botany 200X:** We have been discussing meetings from Botany 2005 through Botany 2008, including the possibility of a joint meeting hosted by the Canadian Botanical Association (ABC/CBA). Further details will be forthcoming after the meetings in Mobile.

**Corresponding Members:** We have lost three in the last year that I am aware of: Knut Faegri, Armando Hunziker and William T. Stearn. Many thanks to Peter Endress for informing us. Judy Jernstedt's report from the Corresponding Members Committee will address their replacements.

**Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF):** Scott Russell and Linda Graham were both asked by Intel, as President and President-Elect of BSA, to serve as special judges for botany entries for the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF), which will be held this year in Cleveland, OH from May 11-17. Special judges will attend Monday, May 12<sup>th</sup> through Wednesday evening, May 14<sup>th</sup>. I anticipate that BSA representatives may be invited in the future. The EC is still considering whether we should offer or sponsor a special award or recognition. On a one-time basis, the EC approved offering one year memberships (with online AJB) to botany finalists. This is largely a symbolic recognition, but could be an important one at this early point in their careers.

It has been a very busy year, but I am gratified with the support of the membership and thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott D. Russell