

Membership Committee Report July 5, 2007
Suzanne Koptur, Chair

Despite the initiative to increase the number of members (up to 2,817 from 2,017 the previous year) by offering inexpensive gift memberships for international colleagues and students, the society faces challenges to keeping membership up in this electronic age. With many libraries providing electronic access for their clientele to journals, and many modern scientists eschewing print versions of scientific publications, some of the benefits of society membership are no longer as attractive as they once were. 2,074 members are 'on-line only', with 725 print subscriptions, an indication of this change. Though the society had budgeted for 700 print subscriptions, no increase in dues is recommended at this time.

We see the need to make the membership aware of, and more involved in, the many potentially beneficial aspects of belonging to the Botanical Society of America: networking with colleagues about research interests, opportunities, and funding; sharing resources and materials for teaching and public education; getting together to share research findings, explore new places, and discuss botanical challenges of the new millenium. We have some suggestions for extending our reach and influence, and hopefully, our membership.

1) Increase our international outreach, considering that 'America' means more than the U.S.A. Canada, Central, and South America are all on the American continent, yet we have fewer publications from Latin America than Asian countries. We need to actively solicit colleagues in other American countries to join us, and nominate accomplished Americans for Corresponding Memberships. This will inspire their students and colleagues to get more involved with the society, for the benefit of all.

2) Increase student membership, fostering an alliance that continues with professional memberships after the terminal degree. To this end, our Executive Director suggests a discount for early renewal for students (\$15), to encourage renewals as well as first-time memberships.

Our recommendations are:

Recommendation 1: It is recommended membership rates for 2008 remain the same.

Recommendation 2: It is recommended we provide students an incentive to renew, with an "early renewal" rate for of \$15.

Recommendation 3: It is recommended we hold a new student/ foreign colleague membership drive beginning at the opening of classes in the fall of 2007 at a gift-rate of \$10 per student. In conjunction with this drive it is requested the sections waive fees to allow gift memberships to include sectional memberships.

