

President's Report, 2007

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In my address to the Society at the 2006 Annual Meeting in Chico, CA, I proposed a theme for the Botanical Society of America (BSA) of “**Growing Together.**” I proposed that we provide options for members to engage our fellow scientists, reaching across disciplinary boundaries and establishing opportunities for integration and innovation. I also proposed that the BSA should expand its contributions to the general public. Finally, I thought we should promote a “greener” future, promoting research and education involving plants, and reaching out to our neighboring scientific societies.

Through the year, this theme guided my activities and agendas. In December, I met in Washington, DC with Past President Ed Schneider, President Elect Pam Soltis, and Executive Director Bill Dahl, in conjunction with a meeting of the Council of Scientific Society Presidents. We all attended this meeting, and we used the opportunity to share ideas about the upcoming activities of the BSA. The action items that emerged from those discussions included:

- We should promote opportunities at our annual meeting for the governance of BSA to meet with their counterparts in our fellow societies
- An International Committee should be established (as proposed and chaired by Anitra Thorhaug) to foster outreach to botanists around the world
- A committee to promote BSA activities for Underrepresented Groups should be formed

As a result, we are meeting after this year's Council Meeting with available individuals representing the American Fern Society, American Society of Plant Taxonomists, and American Society of Plant Biologists. We will discuss how our societies can “grow together” to promote plant research and education, and how the BSA can foster the continuation of this agenda.

In March, 2007, I chaired the Executive Committee meeting in St. Louis, MO.

Recommendations from that meeting included:

- Accepting (unanimously) the report from the American Journal of Botany Printer Selection Committee to switch from Allen Press to Sheridan Press. The transition began in May, and a systematic plan for making the changeover seamless has been instituted.
- Continuing to enhance involvement of students in the future of the BSA. Several workshops are scheduled for the Chicago Annual Meeting on topics suggested by students as well as a continuation of the mentorship workshop/lunch sponsored by Sherwin Carlquist. For the future, a two year term, with staggered term limits, was recommended for each of two student representatives on the Executive Committee.
- Given the huge increase in symposia proposed for our Annual Meeting, and the scheduling problems for organizers and attendees that this increase causes (many members were frustrated by the large number of concurrent sessions that were necessary), opportunities for selecting from among those symposia submitted were proposed, including the development of a Symposium Screening Committee to review and recommend a fixed number of symposia.
- Coordinating the 2009 annual meeting (to be held at Snowbird, Utah) with the Year of Science commemoration of Darwin's and Lincoln's (he founded the National Academy of Sciences) birthdays, to celebrate science and raise public interest in and understanding of science.
- *Going Green:* the BSA is reaching out to other societies to provide services and coordinate activities. BSA staff are now providing help to the Society for Economic Botany, and the North American Phytochemical Association may be interested in a

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similar association. An association with the Center for Plant Conservation that will have offices adjacent to the BSA may be developed as well.

- Strategies are being entertained for enhancing the BSA development activities. Toward this end, a Legacy Society has been created and members have been contacted and encouraged to become part of this development program.
- *Planting Science* has successfully launched its next set of programs for high school and undergraduate students and has involved many BSA members. In May, Monsanto agreed to fund a grant proposal for *Planting Science* activities.
- The need for developing better and more prescriptive guidelines for BSA Merit Awards was discussed. A committee will be assigned the task of making recommendations for the future of these important awards.
- The need to update and streamline our Bylaws was discussed. A Bylaws revision committee will need to be formed, and discussions at the Council Meeting will finalize the process by which this will occur. Changing the Bylaws to reflect current practice is a minimum, and developing roles for officers should be considered
- The need for a strategic plan was discussed, and the value of meeting the needs of members should be part of that plan. Now that we have the benefit of professional management, interested members can make recommendations for how the BSA can serve its members as well as the national and international community in both research and education. To make this process representative, a representative and thoughtful group should be charged with making recommendations that can be shared with members for further refinement.

Thus, the results of this spring meeting have energized the activities for our Annual Meeting.

I look forward to the progress that will be possible at our Council Meeting and throughout the discussions at our Annual Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



Christopher Haufler
President