

Meet a New ASP Member

by Dr. Diane S. Swaffar

ASP continues to welcome many new members to the Society throughout the year. We are especially pleased to feature new member, Dr. Ryan Van Wagoner. He was recently appointed to oversee the research activities of Dr. Chris Ireland's lab at the University of Utah. After a very successful academic research career of over 30 years, ASP member and former ASP President Dr. Chris Ireland recently became the new Dean of the College of Pharmacy at the University of Utah. Dr. Van Wagoner is a former student of Dr. Ireland and is looking forward to helping Dr. Ireland maintain his productive research activities. We appreciate the opportunity to get more acquainted with him and also extend congratulations to Chris!

How did you hear about the ASP?

I have actually been aware of the ASP since I was a graduate student. My first interaction with the ASP was when I attended the 1997 conference in Iowa City which was organized by Jim and Kathy Gloer.



JASON REPPART

Dr. Van Wagoner by the Ireland group's mass spectrometer

Do you belong to any other scientific societies?

Yes, I am also a member of the American Chemical Society and the American Society for Mass Spectrometry.

Why did you join ASP?

The ASP has been a key organization in promoting natural product research through its various excellent meetings and its interactions with the *Journal of Natural Products*. As I started a new position with a focus on the core activities of pharmacognosy, I thought that joining the ASP would be a great way to link to a community that has been vital in raising the profile of natural products research.

What are your current research interests in pharmacognosy?

Our group focuses on the isolation and identification of natural products possessing biological activity with potential therapeutic benefit. In addition, we collaborate as part of an International Cooperative Biodiversity Group that explores plants used as traditional medicinals in Papua, New Guinea.

What is your scientific background?

I received my B.S. in Chemistry at the University of Utah, where I also stayed on for my doctoral studies under Dr. Chris Ireland in the Department of Medicinal Chemistry, studying marine natural products and

the structure and activity of conotoxins. I did my postdoctoral work with ASP Dr. Jon Clardy at Cornell University and later Harvard Medical School characterizing the structure and function of a protein encoded by a biosynthetic gene cluster from soil environmental DNA. I then joined the MARBIONC program at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington (UNCW) as a group leader working under Drs. Jeff Wright and Dan Baden. At UNCW I studied the structure and biogenesis of natural products from marine dinoflagellates in addition to helping to develop a marine biotechnology program based on a collection of culturable marine phytoplankton.

What would you like to achieve through your membership?

I hope to stay abreast of current developments in the study of natural products and to contribute however I can to the ASP's mission of keeping natural product research at the forefront.

What do you like doing in your spare time?

My hobbies include playing the guitar, computer programming, and reading wild conspiracy theories on the Internet.

What are you currently reading?

I am currently reading *Little Dorritt* by Charles Dickens and *C++ Primer*. I am also reading *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* with my daughter Sophie. ■