



# THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF PHARMACOGNOSY

THE ASP NEWSLETTER VOLUME 45 ISSUE 1

## Changing Face of ASP: Underrepresented Minorities

During the past two score years our American Society of Pharmacognosy (ASP) has evolved in many ways. The annual meetings enjoy a large draw of national and international participants, the *Journal of Natural Products (JNP)* represents one of the crown jewels, there are a steady stream of annual honors and awards, and a rich program exists to support young investigators.

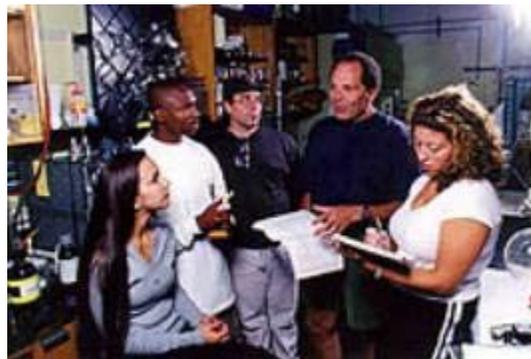
As a counterpoint to these developments, can we confidently evaluate the progress in having a past and current ASP membership with ethnic diversity? This is not an easy point to evaluate and the goal of our analysis below is to present some observations that should stimulate further thought by ASP members and leadership.

### What is Underrepresented?

We need to begin by laying out the focus for this brief commentary. It is important to note that ASP is an international organization with a membership of over 1,200 professionals and

*continued on page 3*

by Ms. Karen Tenney and Dr. Phillip Crews



Dr. Crews and NIH-funded Bridges to the Baccalaureate Program Grant discuss the next steps in a marine natural products project.

## ASP Annual Meeting Early Registration Ends April 27<sup>th</sup>

### IN THIS ISSUE

#### Spring 2009

##### Features

Changing Face of ASP	1
ASP History Book	1

##### Announcements

Interview with Dr. Josephine Briggs	10
NCCAM in the News	11
Norman Farnsworth Endowment	12
ODS Course Announcement	13
ODS Invites Public Comment	13
50 <sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting Announcements	13
Natural Products Mapping Tools	19

##### Departments

Editor's Corner	2
Contributor's Information	2
Conference Calendar	15
New Members of ASP	16
Meet a New ASP Member	17
Behind the Scenes in Pharmacognosy	18
Brief News from Washington	19
From the Archives	20
Membership Information	21

## ASP History Book for 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

by Dr. Gordon Cragg

In honor of ASP's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, over 100 ASP members and some supporters have been preparing short contributions on various aspects of our society and the development of pharmacognosy, particularly over the past 50 years. This collection will be distributed to all current ASP members in time for the annual meeting. Aspects featured are:

- ◇ Evolution of our Society over the past 50 years, starting from the 'conversion' of the last Plant Science Seminar to the first ASP meeting in 1959, and advancing to the grand 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration being planned in Honolulu, Hawaii.
- ◇ Profiles of Past Presidents, Honorary Members, Research Achievement Award and Tyler Prize recipients.
- ◇ Pharmacognosy in Action - an overview of the practice of pharmacognosy at major United States academic, research and government institutions, as well as the progress of our discipline in the many countries and regions where our more than 400 'overseas' members reside.
- ◇ Major Milestones - brief reviews of the discovery and development of important classes of drugs where our members played a significant role in either their discovery and/or development.
- ◇ Expanding Horizons - brief overviews of six areas where there have been exciting developments in our discipline which will ensure that natural products remain at the cutting edge of drug discovery.
- ◇ Other sections include summaries of the activities of the ASP Foundation, and the history of ASP publications, including *Lloydia* and the *Journal*

*continued on page 7*

## Editor's Corner



In this issue of the *Newsletter*, we continue our efforts to prepare society members for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the American Society of Pharmacognosy. Drs. Roy Okuda and John Cardellina wish to remind everyone that early registration ends on April 27<sup>th</sup>, and that the Sheraton Wakiki reservation deadline is May 27<sup>th</sup>. Please see our freshly designed website for full meeting details.

This issue of the *Newsletter* continues our "Changing Face of ASP" series with a second installment on underrepresented minorities in ASP. As you may recall, our last installment focused on women of ASP in issue 43(4). What are the many experiences that our minority members have to share about their scientific careers? What can ASP do to further support our minority membership? These questions and more are posed to many of our members, and addressed in our lead article by Dr. Philip Crews and Ms. Karen Tenney.

This examination of underrepresented minorities in ASP is of special interest to me since I have worked for more than a decade at Lehman College, CUNY, a federally designated Minority Institution and Hispanic-Serving Institution. On a daily basis, I see a great wealth of talented, young, underrepresented minority science students who have the potential to add to the field of pharmacognosy and other biomedical-related sciences.

In honor of the Society's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Dr. Gordon Cragg has been editing a book on ASP history. We feature a brief excerpt detailing ASP's first days in this issue of the *Newsletter*, with more excerpts to follow in upcoming issues.

Our recurring article, "From the Archives," returns in this issue to salute a vintage natural products extractor, headed for the Lloyd Library and Museum. We also feature Dr. Georgia Perdue's interview with Dr. Josephine Briggs, head of the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, in addition to her column, "News From Washington."

Other highlights in this issue include a news flash from the laboratory of Dr. Nicholas Oberlies, a discussion with enthusiastic new member Ms. Laura Sanchez, and an in-depth look at Dr. Esperanza Carcache de Blanco's exciting work on medicinal mushrooms in "Behind the Scenes in Pharmacognosy."

As always, please contact us with any comments, suggestions, or anything you wish to see in the *Newsletter*. The *Newsletter* wishes everyone a productive and healthy spring season as we gear up for our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary meeting in Hawaii this summer!

## EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

The Society offers a placement service to aid our members in seeking positions or employees. This service is available only to ASP members and is free to both the applicant and the employer. For more information see the services website.

[www.phcog.org/employment.html](http://www.phcog.org/employment.html)

## NEWSLETTER STAFF

Edward J. Kennelly, Ph.D.  
Editor-In-Chief

Amy C. Keller  
Assistant Editor

James T. Lyles  
Layout Editor

The contribution deadlines are:

Spring Issue	Feb.	15
Summer Issue	May	18
Fall Issue	Aug.	18
Winter Issue	Nov.	17

Please send information to:

Edward J. Kennelly, Ph.D.  
Editor In Chief, *ASP Newsletter*  
Department of Biological  
Sciences  
Lehman College, CUNY  
250 Bedford Park Blvd. West  
Bronx, NY 10468  
718-960-1105

[asp.newsletter@lehman.cuny.edu](mailto:asp.newsletter@lehman.cuny.edu)



## Changing Face of ASP

*continued from page 1*



The ASP welcomes natural products scientists from all different backgrounds and by providing travel awards, small research grants, and poster awards, the ASP has supported the careers of a number of individuals from underrepresented groups.

Dr. Phil Proteau

students from fifty or more countries. Thus, defining the term “underrepresented minorities” on an international level is layered with additional complexity. In countries outside the United States, blacks, Hispanics, and Pacific Islanders are not necessarily underrepresented in the sciences. For example, in Mexico, our ASP members who are Latinos are in the majority of scientists, and the issues are quite different. This situation is generally true for ASP members of color from many developing countries. To sharpen the discussion and make headway, we will deal only with the status of United States-based ASP members. Interestingly, it is possible to identify a few United States institutions rich in underrepresented minority ASP members or that are dedicated to providing pathways to develop such future professionals.

Prior to 2004, the American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC) defined underrepresented minorities (URMs) as blacks, Mexican Americans, Native Americans (including American Indians, Alaska natives, and native Hawaiians), and mainland Puerto Ricans. At the University of California Santa Cruz, URM is defined as Hispanic/Latino, African-American, Native American, and Pacific Islanders. More recently, the NIH expanded this definition to include Appalachians. In addition to the broader definition of URM, an individual

who is even 1/16 American Indian is considered by some organizations to be Native American.

We propose terminology for URMs in the ASP. It should use the broadest definition outlined above and employ the term “underrepresented in pharmacognosy” (UIP). The next step would be to conduct a census to verify that these racial and ethnic populations are underrepresented in the overall profession relative to their numbers in the general population.

### Pharmacognosy Informed by Minority Knowledge

Pharmacognosy as a discipline is deeply rooted in traditional and/or indigenous medicine and folklore. Many relevant bioactive compounds have been isolated from natural sources based on indigenous or tribal knowledge regarding historical remedies passed down through the generations. Triptolide was isolated from root extracts of *Tripterygium wilfordii*, Celastraceae, which has a long history of therapeutic use in traditional Chinese medicine. Prostratin, a protein kinase C activator found in the bark of the mamala tree of Samoa, was identified from *Homalanthus nutans*, Euphorbiaceae. For centuries, traditional healers in the Falealupo village of Samoa used a tea made by steeping ground-up stems from the mamala tree to treat yellow fever virus and hepatitis. The Samoans, working with ethnobotanist Dr. Paul Cox, introduced western scientists to the plant’s healing capacity and the National Cancer Institute (NCI) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) used the plant to isolate prostratin, which has potential use as an HIV retroviral, and is currently being developed by the AIDS Research Alliance (ARA).

Also, taxol, obtained from *Taxus brevifolia* (Pacific yew tree), originally discovered in the course of investigations of botanicals used by Native Americans for medicinal purposes, was discovered by ASP members Dr. Mansukh Wani, himself born in India, and the late Dr. Monroe Wall. This study also yielded etoposide phosphate, a derivative of podophyllotoxin, a constituent of *Podophyllum peltatum* (May apple or American mandrake).

Yet another well-known example of the value of traditional knowledge, even if indirectly, is the discovery of the anticancer agents, vinblastine and vincristine, from *Catharanthus roseus*, a plant used in Madagascar, Jamaica, the Philippines, and other countries in the treatment of diabetes.

As evidenced by the above examples, the inclusion of URM scientists in pharmacognosy is both essential and mutually beneficial. In an ideal world,



I guess I am an underrepresented minority but this has never comes to mind when I think of my colleagues and friends at ASP. The society serves as a catalyst in support and advancement of careers by providing a platform for service, education, and research. In the area of research, younger researchers can present their research and receive one to one evaluation, constructive critique, and mentoring from leaders in the natural products field. In my case, I have been given the opportunity to do a mini-sabbatical to the University of Illinois at Chicago labs headed by Drs. Kinghorn and Pezzuto and to visit the National Cancer Institute facilities at Frederick headed by Dr. Gordon Cragg. For service, there are many committees in which to serve and I have served and chaired several. Service on national committees is highly valued in an academic institution. In my case, I have also served as a member of the organizing committees which hosted the Puerto Rico (1989) and Phoenix (2004) meetings. Finally, under service, I am presently secretary to the ASP Foundation. The education element is also important because it keeps us up to date on new developments in the field of natural products education. Topics (during and pre-meeting) such as the future of pharmacognosy, NMR, MS, bioassays, herbal products, biotechnology, and herbal medicines all provide new information and knowledge for mental growth and development of teaching material.

In conclusion, thank God for ASP.

Pedro Chavez

*continued on page 4*



## Changing Face of ASP

*continued from page 3*

racial and ethnic considerations will become both less of an issue in terms of limitations upon individual scientists and perhaps more visible in terms of the wealth of undiscovered potential therapeutics for treatment of human diseases.

### Pioneering Minority Pharmacognosists

It is important to briefly identify just a few inspirational figures that highlight the role that URMs have played in making groundbreaking discoveries relevant to the intellectual activities of ASP. One such African American is the late Dr. Percy Julian. Though he was not a member of the ASP, Dr. Julian engaged in discovery combined with a fundamental understanding and practice of medicinal chemistry and natural products discovery. The subject area known as “zoo-pharmacognosy” has been popularized by the work of a Hispanic ASP member Dr. Eloy Rodriguez (Cornell University). Two Hispanic faculty members at the University of Puerto Rico, Drs. Abamael Rodriguez and Nestor Carballeira have been educating and motivating URM students for many decades. This has also been a goal and focus at University of California Santa Cruz. One of us, Dr. Phil Crews has been a part of programs such as those funded by the NIH to engage URMs in research with beneficial outcomes. The discussion depicted in the front page photo represent one element of this activity.

It appears that URMs, while engaged in vigorous research, contribute a very small percentage of papers published annually in *JNP*. In 2008, there were a total of 430 full papers, notes, communications, and reviews. The obvious reason is that the total number of URM investigators is still quite low.

### Call to Action

In the Society's 50<sup>th</sup> year, we believe it is now time to take steps to build on the points mentioned above. Here we mention some actions to consider. First, the current status of underrepresented minorities in the ASP needs to be assessed. Secondly, a plan should be formulated to increase representation and diversity in ASP. A working group should be appointed to document the many examples in chemotherapeutic discovery and development based on natural products research from traditional Native American tribal knowledge or insights obtained from indigenous Pacific Islanders. Lines of communication should be opened between ASP and United States. URM professional organizations, especially Society for Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) and National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers (NOBCChE).

We believe that the first steps will be easy to implement. It would be ideal to initiate surveys and data gathering at regional and international ASP meetings. As connections develop with URM student members, they can be directed to programs aimed at increasing diversity, especially those of the National Institute of General Medical Sciences, such as the Minority Opportunities in Research Division, headed by Dr. Cliff Poodry. Finally, the ASP executive committee might consider the assembly of an ASP or *JNP* bibliography of articles on drugs discovered from traditional medicines and issue a call to ASP members to provide specific examples and further documentation.

*Dr. Gordon Cragg contributed to this article.*



The ASP provides an important outlet for minority scientists involved in pharmacognosy research to network and to showcase their work in the form of scientific presentations and publications. This has clearly had a positive impact on the career development of a number of minority scientists within the ASP, who through their own success are able to inspire, motivate, and serve as well-needed role models. By providing other opportunities for participation, the ASP can continue to play a significant role in the professional advancement of minority scientists in the field. In this regard, the provision of competitive travel awards and research grants for students and faculty in underrepresented demographic groups will help to enhance their involvement and contribution within the society and beyond.

Dr. Wayne Harding



ASP has played an important role by providing me, an assistant professor with Hispanic descent, a research starter grant in 2009 to generate preliminary data to support further National Institutes of Health and National Science Foundation grants proposals.

Dr. Angela I. Calderon

*continued on page 5*



## Changing Face of ASP

continued from page 4

Relevant organizations and websites for further information:

SACNAS (Society for the Advancement of Hispanics/Chicanos and Native Americans in Science)

[www.sacnas.org/](http://www.sacnas.org/)

NOBCChE (National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers)

[www.nobcche.org/](http://www.nobcche.org/)

Bridges to the Baccalaureate Program sponsored by the National Institute of General Medical Sciences

[www.nigms.nih.gov/Research/Mechanisms/BridgesBaccalaureate.htm](http://www.nigms.nih.gov/Research/Mechanisms/BridgesBaccalaureate.htm)

MARC (Minority Access To Research Careers)

[www.nigms.nih.gov/Minority/MARC/default.htm](http://www.nigms.nih.gov/Minority/MARC/default.htm)

MBRS (Minority Biomedical Research Support)

[www.nigms.nih.gov/Minority/MBRS/default.htm](http://www.nigms.nih.gov/Minority/MBRS/default.htm)

<http://marcmbrs.ucsc.edu/marc.html>

ACCESS

[www.chemistry.ucsc.edu/projects/access/index.html](http://www.chemistry.ucsc.edu/projects/access/index.html)

Percy Julian - "Forgotten Genius"

[www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/julian/](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/julian/)



ASP was very supportive during our initial academic years by helping us move forward our research efforts by giving us a chance to make key presentations at annual meetings and publishing our results in the *Journal of Natural Products* in a timely fashion.

Dr. Néstor M. Carballeira



The *Journal of Natural Products* publishes over 400 papers a year from countries all over the world. We welcome submissions from authors from all ethnic groups. One of the pleasures of being an Editor is to see the career progression of young natural products scientists, inclusive of those who are under-represented minorities. Also, at the very top of the career ladder, we have had numerous excellent submissions for many years from one particular African-American colleague, Dr. Phil Crews, of the University of California-Santa Cruz. In the most recent issue of the *Journal* (March 2009), which was dedicated to Dr. David G.I. Kingston, Phil favored us with an absolutely superb review co-authored with Koneni V. Sashidhara and Kimberly N. White, entitled "A Selective Account of Effective Paradigms and Significant Outcomes in the Discovery of Inspirational Marine Natural Products" (*J. Nat. Prod.* 2009, 72, 588-603). This article is based on the presentation Phil gave in Athens, Greece last year as the 2008 winner of the "Norman R. Farnsworth Research Achievement Award" of the American Society of Pharmacognosy, and offers an in-depth look into the strategies that have been used by Phil and his colleagues as well as the outstanding progress they have made in the discovery of new biologically active compounds. I am confident this review will be very highly cited by others in the future.

Dr. A. Douglas Kinghorn

## Underrepresented Minority Recruitment for Annual Meeting

by Dr. Roy Okuda

ASP has been awarded a National Institutes of Health grant for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Meeting in Hawaii. As part of this application, the following description of how the Society would inform minority scientists about the conference was presented:

In order to attract a diverse audience to attend our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Meeting, as well to learn about the ASP, information on the ASP and our meeting was sent to appropriate departments or divisions of 59 Historically Black Colleges and Universities throughout the US. In addition, details about the ASP and the meeting flyer were sent to several professional organizations which involve underrepresented groups in sciences including SACNAS (Society for the Advancement of Hispanics/Chicanos and Native Americans in Science), NOBCCHE (National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers) and WISE (Women in Science and Engineers). We hope that among the faculty and students at these universities, and among the members of these professional groups, colleagues working in related fields will be interested to attend our special meeting, and to learn about (and hopefully join) the ASP.

continued on page 6



## Changing Face of ASP: President's View

*continued from page 5*

by Dr. Guy Carter

I heartily endorse the insightful message from the lead article by Dr. Phil Crews and Ms. Karen Tenney regarding the roles of underrepresented minorities in the ASP and the field of pharmacognosy in general.

The science of pharmacognosy relies heavily on biological diversity for the production of wonderfully complex natural products with significant biological activities. Such diversity, of course, is directly related to evolutionary path of species and the nature of the environmental conditions that lead to the selection of desirable traits. In natural products screening programs, a goal has often been to enhance the spectrum of biodiversity that is available for evaluation in order to achieve the greatest potential outcomes.

Correspondingly, the commitment to enhance the diversity of scientists involved in ASP as members, officers, and key opinion leaders is fundamental to the Society, and stands as a core value of ASP.

As Karen and Phil so clearly articulate, the knowledge of indigenous people regarding the use of the biota of their native environment for health care has led to advanced medicines of significant benefit to society. The United States, as a nation largely of immigrants, has a wealth of human diversity that has historically been a major factor in our economic and political success.

The following quote from Karen and Phil nicely captures the philosophy of ASP:

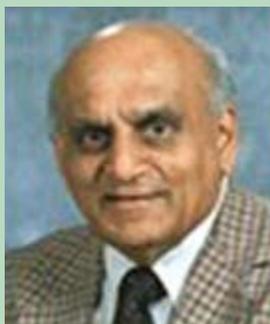
“ the inclusion of underrepresented minority scientists in pharmacognosy is both essential and mutually beneficial. In an ideal world, racial and ethnic considerations will become both less of an issue in terms of limitations upon individual scientists and perhaps more visible in terms of the wealth of undiscovered potential therapeutics for treatment of human diseases.”

Our challenge as an organization remains to promote the science of pharmacognosy to a broad range of budding scientists. Underrepresented minorities may have unique access to insights derived from their heritage, be it in North America or elsewhere that could provide the foundation for significant research. The “Call for Action” articulated by Phil and Karen provides initial steps that ASP will take to enhance the inclusiveness of our Society.



My current position is at North Carolina Central University, an Historically Black College or University with an increasing presence in biomedical research. Together with my colleagues at nearby Research Triangle Institute, I am empowered to bring the excitement and vitality of pharmacognosy and natural products pharmacology to our African American, Hispanic, Chicano, and Native American students who may have encountered traditional remedies in their respective cultures and are now motivated to study the chemistry and pharmacology behind them. I am honored to do my part on behalf of ASP.

Dr. David Kroll



I am gratified to note that current efforts are underway at ASP to recognize and publicize the minority institutions contributions to teaching and research in the areas of pharmacognosy and natural products. I believe that the underrepresented minority students at the Howard University College of Pharmacy deserve support from ASP through travel grants to attend its annual meetings. Additionally, I recommend that an honor of the late Percy Julian, an esteemed African-American natural products scientist, be organized at a future ASP annual meeting. Finally, ASP should encourage and support the academic aspirations and careers of the underrepresented minorities by organizing visits to other prestigious pharmacy schools and tours of the pharmaceutical industry in the United States.

Dr. Govind J. Kapadia



In addition to being a valuable resource for information and scientific developments in the area of natural products research, the ASP also provides access to information and resources for career development. When I was a young natural products chemist starting out, the ASP provided a forum for interactions with established scientists in the field, through both scientific exchanges and social connections, leading to many informal mentoring experiences. Intellectually stimulating discussions with a diverse array of scientists furthered my appreciation of the breadth of natural products research. The opportunities to engage in scientific citizenship and to take on leadership roles, important aspects for the development of a scientist, are available to all. I still remember vividly my first meeting in Rhode Island in 1987 when I was seeking out a mentor and graduate advisor. I felt that the individuals that make up this organization accepted me as an individual, just someone who was very interested in pharmacognosy. That feeling has never changed. Looking forward, I see the ASP continuing to serve the professional needs of its diverse membership, all of whom share a passion for natural products research.

Dr. Leonard A. McDonald

# Excerpts from the ASP Anthology

*continued from page 1*

## ASP HISTORY 1959-1975

David P. Carew<sup>a</sup>, Norman R. Farnsworth<sup>b</sup>, and Gordon Cragg<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup>College of Pharmacy, Univ. of Iowa, <sup>b</sup>College of Pharmacy, Univ. of Illinois at Chicago, and <sup>c</sup>Natural Products Branch, NCI-Frederick, Maryland 21702-1201

### 1923-59 In the Beginning. The Plant Science Laboratory Seminars

While the American Society of Pharmacognosy had its official origin at a meeting at the Univ. Illinois in Chicago (UIC), College of Pharmacy in 1959, the organization had existed on a very informal basis since 1923. On August 20, 1923, a group of 39 men met at Univ. Minnesota to found an organization known as the "Plant Science Laboratory Seminar". The prime mover was Edwin L. Newcomb, Professor of Botany and Pharmacognosy at Univ. Minnesota. He was elected the first Chairman of the Seminar. It was a unique gathering of pharmacognosists, plant chemists, botanists, pharmacologists and others interested in medicinal plants, vegetable drugs and food products. Part of the first program included laboratory work. The second Seminar was held at Buffalo, NY, in 1924 and the third returned to Univ. Minnesota in 1925. This meeting included discussion of methods of teaching botany, pharmacognosy and materia medica. During the sixth Seminar in Boston in 1928, Chairman Heber W. Youngken, Sr. restated the objectives of the organization: "The objectives of the Seminar have been first, the bringing together annually of the professional contemporaries alike for the social contacts and the mutual ex-change of ideas and methods; second, opportunities for the acquisition of new facts by members through field trips in various sections of the country, and by laboratory practice and demonstration in which everyone is invited to take part; third, stimulation of research in connection with pharmacognosy and plant chemistry."

The Seminar adhered to the objectives and continued to hold annual meetings of about a week's duration, except during the years of World War II and some postwar meetings. The organization had remained a very informal one, but at the 1947 Seminar in Chicago, Elmer Wirth made a proposal to reorganize the group and to formalize its operation as a scientific society. However, shortly after this meeting Dr. Wirth died and his proposals were never implemented. At the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Seminar at the Ferris Institute, Big Rapids, Michigan (1958), Chairman Arthur E. Schwarting, Professor of Pharmacognosy at Univ. Connecticut, again proposed reorganization of the Seminar to be called the American Society of Pharmacognosists. He circulated a proposed constitution and by-laws for this Society, and asked that a committee be appointed to study and receive relevant comments and suggestions, and to present a revised constitution and by-laws for adoption at the next meeting. This committee, consisting of Norman Farnsworth (Chair), Jack Beal and Egil Ramstad was appointed by Edson Woodward, Chairman of the 36<sup>th</sup> Seminar.

Detailed information on the history of the Plant Science Seminars was recorded by Anna Koffler Wannamaker of Ohio Northern University School of Pharmacy. She gave pre-sentations on "The History of the Plant Science Seminars" for the periods of 1923-32, 33-47 and 48-59 at ASP meetings in 1965, 1966 and 1967, respectively. Copies of her presentations were deposited with the ASP Secretary and with several university libraries.

### 1959 - The Birth of the American Society of Pharmacognosy

At the Seminar's business meeting at UIC on August 10, 1959, after much discussion and some revision, the Constitution and By-Laws organizing the American Society of Pharmacognosy (ASP) were unanimously approved. The purpose of the Society was stated as: "to promote the growth and development of pharmacognosy, to provide the opportunity for association among workers in the science, to provide opportunities for presentation of research achievements, and to promote the publication of meritorious research." It would continue to meet annually in the summer months. Following election of a Nominating Committee, a slate of nominees was presented. The Constitution also called for election of three members of the Executive Committee, each to serve a three-year term on a staggered basis so, in the future, one new member would be elected each year. The following officers were announced in November, 1959, to serve for **1959-60**:

**President**

Varro Tyler

**Vice President**

Norman Farnsworth

**Secretary**

Frank Mercer

**Treasurer**

Frank Crane

**Executive Committee:** Edward Claus (1yr.); Carl Johnson (2 yr.); David Carew (3 yr.)

President Tyler immediately reviewed the Constitution and By-Laws. The latter required standing committees of Membership, Program, Awards and Funds, and Nominations. The **Program Committee**, comprising three members, one of whom was the ASP Secretary, with the other two appointed by the President, is responsible for planning the program for the next Annual Meeting whose format included a meeting of the Executive Committee on the day prior to the start of

*continued on page 8*

## Excerpts from the ASP Anthology

*continued from page 7*

the Annual Meeting, and concluded with the Annual Business Meeting. The **Awards and Funds Committee** consisting of the ASP Treasurer as Chair and two members appointed by the Executive Committee, is responsible for funds presented to the Society, as well as determining the policy for disbursement. The **Nominating Committee**, elected each year at the Business Meeting, is responsible for presenting the names of at least two candidates for each elective office at the Annual Meeting. The Constitution provided for **four categories of membership**: Active, Associate, Honorary, and Patron. The annual dues for Active members were \$5 and for Associate members, \$2. Patron memberships were open to any person or organization contributing \$100 annually, and the selection of Honorary Members would be determined after approval of an amendment to the Constitution by the membership.

President Tyler also appointed an **ad hoc Publications Committee**, noting that “one of the purposes of the ASP is to provide publication of meritorious research”. He named Norman Farnsworth as Chair, along with Arthur Schwarting and Egil Ramstad. Interestingly, Schwarting, when initially proposing formalization of the Plant Science Seminar in 1958, envisioned the Society having a highly respected scientific publication in its future, and the committee spent considerable time in an effort to determine the feasibility of a Society journal. Also in late 1959, the President and the Program Committee initiated plans for the First Annual Meeting which would be held at Univ. Colorado, Boulder, in June, 1960.

### 1960 - First Annual Meeting in Boulder, Colorado. June 30-July 2

On June 29, the Executive Committee held its first meeting. The *ad hoc* Publications Committee, in presenting an extensive 34 page report recommended: 1. “The Society should undertake publication of a scientific journal with the first number to be issued as soon as possible.” 2. The “ASP should endorse the editorial management and publication of the journal *Lloydia* provided that a suitable financial arrangement be agreed on with the Board of Directors of the Lloyd Library and Museum.” 3. “The Executive Committee should be empowered to conduct negotiations with *Lloydia*”. It also called for a constitutional amendment to allow creation of a Publications Committee to be comprised of an Editor and 15 additional members to be known as the Editorial Board; Arthur Schwarting was appointed as Editor, subject to approval of the above amendment. However, since no issue of *Lloydia* had been published since December, 1959, due to the illness of Editor Theodore Just, Schwarting worked diligently to complete publication of Volume 23 (1960). Another amendment to the By-Laws called for “Annual Membership dues of \$8.00 payable in the last quarter of the fiscal year for membership in the following year, and this should include a subscription to the official journal of the Society”. An *ad hoc* Committee considering **incorporation** of the Society, formed as a result of concern about possible liability to the Society and particularly to its officers, recommended that the Society become incorporated. As of July 2, 1960, Secretary Mercer reported a membership of 137 with 131 active and associate members and 6 patron members, and the Executive Committee directed that all individuals who joined before July 3, 1960, be considered **Charter Members**. Rolf Westby was appointed to re-place Secretary Mercer who had resigned, and Heber W. Youngken, Sr., Earl B. Fischer and John Seybert were selected as the first Honorary Members (approved Jan, 1961)

On June 30, the first Annual Meeting of the Society opened, and following greetings by President Tyler, the morning session continued with presentations on pharmacognosy in the undergraduate curriculum, and members were informed about the proposed Journal. An afternoon panel discussion titled “Types of Research Appropriate to Pharmacognosy” was followed by an extensive tour of Rocky Mountain National Park by attendees and their guests. On July 1, there were individual presentations by members speaking about their current research, and the first Annual Business Meeting followed with President Tyler presiding. In his report on “One Year of Activities” he explained what transpired as the Society formed and experienced its first year. Several committee reports were presented, and a Nominating Committee was elected to present a slate of nominees for election later in 1960. The Business Meeting ended late in the afternoon, and it was a happy occasion as members realized what had been accomplished in a fairly short period of time. After the meeting the Executive Committee met and approved an invitation from Dean Noel Ferguson of the Univ. Houston Pharmacy School to host the 1961 meeting.

The Office Bearers to take office at the end of the 1961 Annual Meeting were announced in November, 1960, and are named in **Table 1**. Under approved amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws, the Constitution now stated: “**Active membership** shall be open to pharmacognosists of all nations and others elected to membership”; “**Honorary members** shall be selected by the Executive Committee on the basis of meritorious service to pharmacognosy and shall be exempt from payment of dues. Honorary members will be eligible to vote but will not be eligible to hold either appointed or elected offices”; and that a **Membership Committee** be created with the Vice-President as Chair, thus making Norman Farnsworth the Chair, with two other members, Bryce Douglas and Finn Sandberg, appointed by President Tyler.

*continued on page 9*

## Excerpts from the ASP Anthology

continued from page 8

### 1964 - Fifth Annual Meeting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. June 22-23

The Annual Meeting started on June 21 when the Executive Committee met in the School of Pharmacy at Univ. Pittsburgh. President Svoboda presided. The Awards and Funds Committee announced that its recommendations for the Newcomb Memorial Award had been approved by the American Council on Pharmaceutical Education, and the Constitution and By-Laws Committee submitted an amendment to change the By-Laws to read: "The Secretary shall receive nominations for membership endorsed by at least one active member in good standing in the Society". Also approved was a change to make "the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee one and the same", and the Committee ruled that "Patron members shall have no voting rights".

On July 22, the Annual Meeting started with a "Symposium on the Chemistry and Biological Activity of *Catharanthus*, *Vinca* and related Alkaloids" set in Scaife Hall auditorium, with the large, curved stage ringed with pots of flowering *Vinca* plants making an impressive sight, and clearly reflecting the efforts of the Local Program Committee (Dean Joseph Bianculli and Ralph Blomster). Some 29 nine scientists were invited to participate in this outstanding symposium which was organized by Chairman Norman Farnsworth and his Scientific Program Committee. In addition, there were 19 other natural products research presentations. All attendees were taken to the "Gateway Clipper" for an evening cruise on the Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio Rivers, featuring an onboard bar which initiated the serving of an alcoholic beverage called the "Vincatini". Next morning President Svoboda conducted the Business Meeting, and reported the loss of two distinguished members, Heber W. Youngken, Sr. and Marin S. Dunn, since the last Annual Meeting. The Treasurer reported treasury balances of \$1513 in July, 1963, and \$2571 on May 15, 1964. Editor Schwarting announced that the papers from the Pittsburgh Symposium would appear in the December issue of *Lloydia*. Membership Committee Chair, Melvin Gibson, reported 344 members and 23 Patron Members. The meeting ended with the installation of officers.

In February, 1965, it was announced that the Sixth Annual ASP Meeting and the Spring Meeting of the Society for Economic Botany (SEB.) would be held jointly at Univ. Rhode Island, Kingston, in June, 1965. The Program Committee would include Leonard Worthen (Chairman), Daniel P.N. Tsao, Heber W. Youngken, Jr. and Rolf Westby.

### 1965 - Sixth Annual Meeting in Kingston, Rhode Island. June 15-18

The Executive Committee met at the Univ. Rhode Island on June 14, with President Gibson presiding. Positive comments about the *ASP Newsletter* reflected well on the work of the Editor, Melvin Gibson, and approval was given for the Newsletter to be a permanent publication of the Society. Also approved were dues increases for US and Canadian members to \$15.00 and foreign members to \$10.00.

The Annual Meeting opened on June 15, and several pharmacognosists from Europe were in attendance for the first time. A significant part of the scientific program was a "Symposium on Chemotherapy". With financial support from the NIH, the Society was able to attract outstanding symposium speakers, including Ralph Alston, Darnley Gibbs, Robert Hegnauer, Kurt Mothes, Tony Swain and G.H.N. Towers. One evening included a clambake on the beach at Narragansett Bay. President Gibson presided over the Business Meeting, and announced that Arthur Schwarting had agreed to serve another five year term as Editor of *Lloydia*. He thought the most serious problem facing the Society was appropriate financing, and Gordon Svoboda, Chair of the Patron Membership Committee, reported that his committee, in consultation with the Executive Committee, recommended that three levels of Patronage, Benefactor, Sustaining Member, and Patron, be established. Treasurer Crane announced a treasury balance of \$5429. As of June 1, the membership totaled 320, not including Patron members. The Meeting ended with the installation of the officers for 1965-66.

The Executive Committee met briefly after the Business Meeting, and decided to hold the Seventh Annual Meeting at Univ. Minnesota in July, 1966, with a proposed symposium on "Natural Products in Mental Health". Based on a thorough study of the existing Constitution and By-Laws during 1964-65, the Constitution and By-Laws Committee, chaired by Lynn Brady, recommended many changes which the Executive Committee placed before the membership on the ballot in the 1965 Fall election. As a result of this election, a revised and updated Constitution and By-Laws was approved and published, and new office bearers for 1966 were announced. In July 1965, 17 individuals recommended by Editor Schwarting for new 5 year terms on the *Lloydia* Editorial Board, were approved by the Executive Committee. In early 1996, the Committee accepted with regret the resignation of Frank Crane as Treasurer after having served superbly since the formation of the Society, and approved Len Worthen as his successor.

# An Interview with Dr. Josephine Briggs

by Dr. Georgia Perdue

*Dr. Josephine Briggs, a talented, accomplished and highly respected nephrologist and researcher, was appointed last January as Director of the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM). She received her A.B. degree from Harvard-Radcliffe College, cum laude, and her M.D. from Harvard Medical School. She held many positions in academia and later at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) where she was Director of the Division of Kidney, Urologic and Hematologic Diseases at the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK). In 2006, she accepted the position of senior scientific officer at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. In late January, Dr. Briggs sat down with Dr. Georgia Perdue to discuss NCCAM.*



**Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) is such a controversial field even now; why would you want to take on this position?**

This is a job that really is shaping an area of NIH support that in many ways is still new. I am old enough to think about what am I going to do for the next 10 years where I will really have a personal impact. I am not new to controversy. I have led NIH programs before that had great detractors, but I really feel that the challenges of this job are ones where I personally can have an impact. I view NCCAM as an area where the NIH leadership has enormous impact. I think [the late] Dr. Stephen Straus had enormous impact in showing that rigor can be brought to this area. And I feel that rigorous science brought to the questions in this area is very important. The public is extremely interested in this area and the evidence is often just not there. The controversy is occasionally uncomfortable, but is no reason to not do the job well.

**When the late Dr. Stephen Straus became director he made it clear that herbals and other botanicals would be subjected to rigorous clinical trials, and that the American people would have to accept the results, effective or not effective. Do you agree with that?**

I would slightly modify that. I would acknowledge that no single trial ever gives all the answers. But I do believe rigor is the way to go. I think we have learned from the first set of large trials that in order to do herbal trials one has to answer a number of questions before one can design the absolute optimal and definitive scientific clinical experiments. I think it is problematic to go into a trial of an herbal without the hypothesis of what the biological target is, without ideas about what the probable active components are and ways to assess their bioavailability and pharmacokinetics. In thinking about our herbal portfolio and other natural products we need to move back a bit to some of these fundamentals. I know many herbs are used in combinations and ultimately we may be in a position to study some of those but we are in trouble if we don't have some good biological data as we go into the studies. Echinacea is a good example of this. It has an interesting set of bioactive compounds, but how you prepare the extracts very much determines what is there. There are a number of things that we have to pay more attention to in the preliminary phase before we move into clinical trials.

**“We have really benefited enormously from the expertise in the pharmacognosy community...”**

**Standardization of botanical products has been a concern.**

We have benefited enormously from the expertise in the pharmacognosy community on how to characterize the product and how to make sure it is stable. The products in the United States are not as regulated as in some of the northern European countries which means available products are more variable. But the products in our studies have to be very well characterized and we have been insisting on that for some time. We have made great progress in the standardization of products in our own work and I anticipate continuing to strengthen those standards. We have just added to our staff a young pharmacognosist, Dr. Craig Hopp. He has substantial experience in these areas and he will be overseeing our Product Integrity Working Group and helping us think about the issue[of standardization].

**NCCAM has funded several centers including botanical ones. Will funding for new centers continue?**

Right now we are recompeting the botanical centers (it is a corporate venture with the Office of Dietary Supplements). In addition to the botanical centers, we have International Centers, centers that focus on the development of CAM practitioners, and Centers of Excellence for Research (CER) on Complementary and Alternative Medicine. We have a commitment of \$16.6 million to the CERs. We have decided to hold our level of commitment to centers over all at approximately a constant percent of our budget. So we compete for new CERs every other year.

*continued on page 11*

## An Interview with Dr. Josephine Briggs

continued from page 10

**NCCAM has funded more small exploratory grants, R21s than R01s. Do you intend to shift by putting more money into R01s?**

The R01 and R21 success rate has been pretty comparable in the last several Council rounds. I, like everyone else across the NIH, feel that the R01 is our strongest grant mechanism and one that really builds strong programs. I will talk with the Council as to how best to use the R21 mechanism which is for pilot and feasibility projects and not for permanent program support. And yes, we are interested in having a robust R01 program.

**Do you think that perhaps in the next couple years Congress might give NIH a sizable increase?**

Actually, both the Senate and the House have given NIH a small increase in the initial markup of their Fiscal Year 2009 appropriation bills.

**Explain what you mean by “CAM Real World Effectiveness” that you mentioned at the September Council meeting.**

This has to do with emphasis in the mind-body arena. For example, the addition of massage by CAM practitioners may help in control of pain management. These interventions are being used in the real world and we need to figure out if they, indeed, help in the real world. I see that need as more applicable to the broad mind-body part of our portfolio.

**NCCAM is 10 years old. What do you believe have been some of its greatest achievements?**

I think we have established that rigorous science can be brought to bear on a variety of health practices and we are contributing steadily to the real building of a cumulative evidence base that the American public deserves because people are turning to these practices. I think the rigorous trials of herbals have really set the standard for how this kind of work should be done. I think we have established that these products can be studied. And, many still show promise in spite of trials that did not demonstrate that. There is still a lot left to be done.

## NCCAM in the News

by Amy Keller

On Tuesday, March 17, 2009, the *Washington Post* printed an article by David Brown entitled, “Critics Object to ‘Pseudoscience’ Center.” This article summarized a largely online conversation about closing the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine.

Many vocal opponents to NCCAM’s existence voiced their opinions on an online bulletin board, set up by an Obama transition team after the presidential election. Among the points raised were criticism about negative results of NCCAM-funded studies, particularly with homeopathy, acupuncture and therapeutic touch. Some opponents to the Center feel that investigators wanting to study complementary and alternative medicine should simply submit their proposals in direct competition with more traditional medicinal projects, instead of providing funding to a specialized center.

However, NCCAM proponents mention the main goal of the Center as bringing hypothesis-driven investigation to the study of complementary and alternative medicine. NCCAM’s director, Dr. Josephine Briggs, stated, “We are not advocates for these modalities. We are trying to bring rigor to their study and make sure the science is objective.” Natural products researchers and complementary and alternative medicine investigators have been largely absent from the conversation.

Interested readers may wish to visit a blog by Dr. Steven Novella, a neurologist supporting the idea of NCCAM’s closure, at [www.sciencebasedmedicine.org](http://www.sciencebasedmedicine.org)



## UIC Announces the Norman Farnsworth Endowed Professorship

by Dr. Colleen Piersen

The College of Pharmacy at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) has received its first endowed professorship, made possible by generous gifts from Dr. Norman R. Farnsworth, Distinguished Professor and Director of the Program for Collaborative Research in the Pharmaceutical Sciences in the Department of Medicinal Chemistry and Pharmacognosy, and Tom Chappell, founder and former CEO of Tom's of Maine, a natural care company whose products are made without artificial or animal ingredients or chemicals.

The Norman R. Farnsworth Professor of Pharmacognosy endowed professorship will be used to recruit and support a world-class pharmacognosy professor to the College of Pharmacy. The successful candidate will have a broad-based research interest in the scientific study of higher plants with regard to their chemistry, pharmacology, and toxicology.

Dr. Farnsworth, in whose honor the endowed professorship was created, is an international expert in natural drug discovery and one of the most highly recognized faculty at UIC. His career has been unique in its breadth and attention to both the chemistry and biology of natural products. As the first vice-president (1959-1961) and then the second president (1961-1962) of the American Society of Pharmacognosy (ASP), Dr. Farnsworth helped shape the modern field of pharmacognosy. Over the years, he has contributed to



Dr. Norman R. Farnsworth

national policy through membership on such groups as the National Research Council's (NRC) Committee on Comparative Toxicity of Naturally Occurring Carcinogens (1993-1995), President Clinton's Commission on Dietary Supplements Labels (1995-1996), and the NRC Committee on the Framework for Evaluating the Safety of Dietary Supplements (2001-2004).

In the international arena, he has been a member of the World Health Organization (WHO) Expert Advisory Panel on Traditional Medicine since 1979 and has acted as Director of the WHO Collaborating Center for Traditional Medicine Programme at UIC's College of Pharmacy since 1981. One of Dr. Farnsworth's most valuable contributions to pharmacognosy has been the creation and growth of the NAPRALERT (Natural Products Alert) Database, an on-line, relational database containing information extracted from more than 200,000 scientific papers and reviews. Today, as his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday approaches, Dr. Farnsworth remains very active in research as Director of the UIC/National Institutes of Health Center for Botanical Dietary Supplements Research, one of six research centers established by the NIH Office of Dietary Supplements and the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine.

According to Dean Jerry Bauman, "Norm has brought so much recognition to the college through his research and educational programs. It is very appropriate that our first endowed professorship should be named after him. It should cement the legacy of pharmacognosy in the college permanently. There are many people to thank—in particular, lead gifts from Tom Chappell of Tom's of Maine and the Farnsworth family, along with those from friends and colleagues of Norm, allowed this to happen."

UIC is actively soliciting applications from qualified candidates and interested parties are directed to the ASP Employment Service site. According to Dr. Judy Bolton, Head of the Department of Medicinal Chemistry and Pharmacognosy, the Department is seeking "candidates with outstanding collaborative potential and a strong vision of pharmacognosy into the future. We are extremely grateful that this endowed professorship will help us recruit an individual who can strengthen our position as a premiere, interdisciplinary pharmacognosy training center."

# UIC

**The University of Illinois  
at Chicago**

## Course Announcement from the Office of Dietary Supplements

The Office of Dietary Supplements (ODS) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is offering a one-week educational opportunity to provide fundamental knowledge of dietary supplements to teachers and their doctoral or post-doctoral students/fellows with a serious interest in this subject. The course will be held from June 1-5, 2009, at the Natcher Building on the NIH campus in Bethesda, Maryland.

This 5-day intensive practicum will provide a thorough overview and grounding about issues, concepts, unknowns, and controversies about dietary supplements and supplement ingredients. It will also emphasize the importance of scientific investigations to evaluate the efficacy, safety, and value of these products for health promotion and disease prevention and treatment as well as how to carry out this type of research.

## NIH Office of Dietary Supplements Invites Public Comment

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Dietary Supplements (ODS) is seeking comments from the public on its programs and goals as it prepares to revise its current five-year strategic plan for 2010-2014. ODS welcomes the public's participation to identify both new opportunities and emerging needs for incorporation in its programmatic efforts.

The mission of ODS is to strengthen knowledge and understanding of dietary supplements by evaluating scientific information, stimulating and supporting research, disseminating research results, and educating the public to foster an enhanced quality of life and health for the United States population.

"Working in collaboration with others is an important part of our operation," says Dr. Paul M. Coates, ODS Director, "We look forward to receiving your comments on the issues, initiatives and priorities of ODS."

ODS is accepting comments through March 31, 2009. For more information about how to participate in the ODS planning process see the Web site: <http://ods.od.nih.gov/strategicplan>.

The site includes A Report to the Public which reviews the work and plans of the office, information on public meetings which will be held via webinars, enabling live participation without travel, and how to submit comments to ODS via e-mail and regular mail.



OFFICE OF  
DIETARY  
SUPPLEMENTS

## 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Meeting Deadline Updates and Announcements

by Drs. Roy Okuda and John Cardellina

Aloha! Our historic meeting is about four months away! We hope you are planning to join us for a memorable celebration for the ASP. Note that a special program on the history of the ASP will be held at 5:00 pm on Saturday, June 27, 2009, at the Sheraton Waikiki. There will also be other optional activities that same Saturday afternoon. Please check the meeting website to learn about these events as they are posted, let your colleagues know about our meeting and encourage them to join.

The deadline for abstracts for contributed papers for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Meeting of the ASP was extended to March 27, 2009. Any abstracts received after that date may be considered, but for poster presentations only, and they will not be included in the abstract book or online abstracts. They may be included in a printed supplement. We are expecting a large number of abstracts, so please send your abstract as soon as possible to assist the Scientific Review Committee!

Other important deadlines (these deadlines will not be extended!):

Early Meeting Registration: April 27, 2009 (\$100 more after this date)  
Sheraton Waikiki Reservation: May 27, 2009

Links to these items are found on the meeting website:

[www.phcog.org/AnnualMtg/Honolulu.html](http://www.phcog.org/AnnualMtg/Honolulu.html)

The link to our final meeting poster is:

[www.phcog.org/AnnualMtg/ASP50posterTara2.pdf](http://www.phcog.org/AnnualMtg/ASP50posterTara2.pdf)

See you soon in Waikiki!



# The 50th Anniversary Meeting of the American Society of Pharmacognosy

June 27 - July 1, 2009 ♦ Honolulu, HI

## *Fifty Years of Natural Products and Beyond: Celebrating the Golden Anniversary of the ASP*

### *Confirmed Speakers:*

Hye Sook Yun-Choi (Seoul National Univ.)

Justin DuBois (Stanford)

Franz-Josef Marnett (Univ. Cologne)

Bradley Moore (UCSD / Scripps)

Tomas Hudlicky (Brock Univ.)

Valerie Paul (Smithsonian)

P.Y. Qian (Hong Kong Univ. Sci & Tech)

Rosario Rojas (U. Peruana Cayetano Heredia)

Daisuke Uemura (Keio Univ.)

Shengmin Sang (N. Carolina Central Univ.) - ASP Suffness Young Investigator

K.H Lee. (Univ. N. Carolina) - ASP Farnsworth Awardee

Adolf Nahrstedt (Univ. of Muenster) - ASP Tyler Award

**Check the ASP website for updates [www.phcog.org](http://www.phcog.org)**



Photo Credits: (1) Hawaii Tourism Authority/Joe Solem, (2-3) Hawaii Tourism Authority/Tor Johnson, (4) Hawaii Tourism Japan

# Conference Calendar

The *Newsletter* is pleased to announce the following upcoming conferences and meetings. The events portrayed here reflect what listings and notices the *Newsletter* has specifically received. For a more extensive calendar, please visit the ASP website at [www.phcog.org](http://www.phcog.org). If you have a conference or event you would like mentioned, please send us relevant information, including any graphics or appropriate fliers, at [asp.newsletter@lehman.cuny.edu](mailto:asp.newsletter@lehman.cuny.edu).

## 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Oxford International Conference on the Science of Botanicals

The University of Mississippi, Oxford, Mississippi  
April 6-9, 2009

[www.oxfordicsb.org](http://www.oxfordicsb.org)

## 9<sup>th</sup> International Herb Symposium

Wheaton College, Norton, Massachusetts  
June 19-21, 2009

[www.internationalherbsymposium.com/index.html](http://www.internationalherbsymposium.com/index.html)

## North American Research Conference on Complimentary and Integrative Medicine

Hilton Minneapolis, Minneapolis, Minnesota  
May 12-15, 2009

[www.imconsortium-conference.org/index.php](http://www.imconsortium-conference.org/index.php)

## 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Meeting of the American Society of Pharmacognosy

Honolulu, Hawaii  
June 27 - July 2, 2009

[www.phcog.org/AnnualMtg/Honolulu.html](http://www.phcog.org/AnnualMtg/Honolulu.html)

## Society for Economic Botany: 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

College of Charleston, Charleston, South Carolina  
May 31 - June 4, 2009

<http://2009.sebconference.org>

## 57<sup>th</sup> International Congress & Annual Meeting of the Society for Medical Plant Research

Geneva, Switzerland  
August 16-20, 2009

[www.ga2009.org](http://www.ga2009.org)

## New Members of ASP

ASP would like to welcome the current new members of 2009. The Society's main objectives are to provide the opportunity for association among the workers in pharmacognosy and related sciences, to provide opportunities for presentation of research achievements, and to promote the publication of meritorious research. New members include 16 domestic full members, three international full member, and 18 associate members. We look forward to meeting you and learning more about you and your work.

### Full Members

Dr. Jennifer R. Anthony  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Dr. Carole A. Bewley  
Bethesda, Maryland

Dr. Laura M. Bystrom  
South Dartmouth, Massachusetts

Dr. Peggy S. Biser  
Accident, Maryland

Dr. Sarot Cheenpracha  
Hilo, Hawaii

Dr. Sunita Dalal  
Kurukshetra, India

Dr. Patricia M. Flatt  
Corvallis, Oregon

Dr. Ah-Reum Han  
Columbus, Ohio

Janine M. Harvey  
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Dr. Min He  
Pearl River, New York

Dr. Mohammad Khasawneh  
Al-Ain, United Arab Emirates

Dr. Joann M. Lau  
Louisville, Kentucky

Dr. Fulgentius Nelson Lugemwa  
York, Pennsylvania

Dr. Glenroy Dean Martin  
Pensacola, Florida

Dr. Sylvie Michel  
Paris, France

Dr. Ranjala Ratnayake  
Frederick, Maryland

Dr. Yulin Ren  
Upper Arlington, Ohio

Dr. Shengmin Sang  
Concord, North Carolina

Ms. Qi Shen  
Chicago, Illinois

### Associated Members

Mr. Sandipan Datta  
University, Mississippi

P. Matthew Joyner  
Noble, Oklahoma

Mr. Lukasz M. Kutrzeba  
Oxford, Mississippi

Mr. Kevin Lewellyn  
Oxford, Mississippi

Miss Theresa Meickle  
Jupiter, Florida

Mr. Brian Morgan  
Oxford, Mississippi

Mr. Ifedayo V. Ogungbe  
Huntsville, Alabama

Mr. Larry C. Okpako  
Bradford, United Kingdom

Ms. Lisa T. Pan  
Atlanta, Georgia

Ms. Kelly Corbus Peach  
Santa Cruz, California

Alejandro B. Preciado  
Honolulu, Hawaii

Mr. Daniel J. Puckett  
Athens, West Virginia

Mr. Feng Qiu  
Chicago, Illinois

Kathyrn E. Roege  
Atlanta, Georgia

Laura M. Sanchez  
Santa Cruz, California

Katharine R. Watts  
Santa Cruz, California

Priscilla Winder  
Fort Pierce, Florida

Mr. Huaping Zhang  
Clemson, South Carolina



# Meet a New ASP Member

by Dr. Diane S. Swaffar

ASP continues to welcome several new members to the society during this new year. We are pleased to feature our newest associate member, Ms. Laura Sanchez. She is a second-year doctoral student in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at the University of California at Santa Cruz (UCSC), California. Ms. Sanchez is pursuing a Ph.D. in organic chemistry, with a focus on marine natural products. We are grateful to Ms. Sanchez for giving us the opportunity to get more acquainted with her.

## Why did you join ASP?

I was interested in connecting my research with pharmacognosy. I did not want to do chemistry without understanding and delving into the biological implications of my research. Also, my advisor, Dr. Roger Linington, is an active ASP member. This is the first time I am joining a scientific society or organization as a graduate student.

## How did you hear about the ASP?

I first learned of the society last summer upon Dr. Phillip Crews' return from the 49th Annual ASP Meeting in Athens, Greece. He was the recipient of the 2008 Norman R. Farnsworth Research Achievement Award, which was presented to him at that meeting. I found out about it at a "Happy Hour" celebration for Dr. Crews attended by the Crews and Linington laboratories.



DR. BEN CLARK

Ms. Laura Sanchez in her scuba gear with Dr. Crews' graduate student, Eric Mejia, taken aboard the Kona Aggressor II on a recent collecting expedition last November in Kona, Hawaii. Ms. Sanchez, Dr. Roger Linington, and Indonesian collaborators were getting ready to scuba in search of secondary metabolites from bacteria that live in the sediment.

## What was your background before joining Dr. Linington's lab?

I obtained a B.A. in Chemistry from Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington. During the summer before my senior undergraduate year in 2006, I was awarded a summer undergraduate research fellowship (SURF) at UCSC in Dr. Crews' lab through an National Science Foundation Research Education for Undergraduates grant. The project I worked on involved isolating products from the sponge *Plakortis quasiamphiaster*. I would also like to add that my undergraduate advisor, Dr. Leroy "Skip" Wade, Jr., was very influential in my decision to pursue graduate school.

## What are your current research interests in pharmacognosy?

I am currently working on a project in which libraries based on a natural product scaffold are being tested for activity against the neglected tropical disease, leishmaniasis. I am also working on turning these compounds into probes for mode of action studies.

## What would you like to achieve through your membership?

I would like to be able to acquire a broader understanding of the biological impacts of the synthesis that I am working on.

## What do you like doing in your spare time?

I enjoy kickboxing, bowling, and I like to play softball and dodgeball.

## What are you currently reading?

I am currently reading *Angewandte Chemie* and *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, and if I'm not reading a science journal, then I am reading "The Winter of Our Discontent" by John Steinbeck.

## What is your favorite movie?

That would be "The Sweetest Thing."

# Behind the Scenes in Pharmacognosy

## Magic Mushrooms!

by Amy Keller

In summer of 2008, the article entitled, "NF- $\kappa$ B Inhibitory Activity of Compounds Isolated from *Cantharellus cibarius*" by Jeong Ah Kim, David Tay, and Esperanza Carcache de Blanco, appeared in *Phytotherapy Research's* 22<sup>nd</sup> volume. The *Newsletter* interviewed last author and ASP member Dr. Esperanza Carcache de Blanco, who took time out her busy schedule to give us insight into medicinal mushrooms.

### How did you become interested in the medicinal properties of mushrooms?

Since my research is focused on cancer chemoprevention, I usually choose edible species to work with. Mushrooms are, in particular, part of our regular diet, but most of the time they are unnoted. Mushrooms have been shown to have many medicinal properties and these properties can be exploited to benefit particularly risk-prone individuals.

### Who in your laboratory carried out the research?

Dr. Jeong Ah Kim did most of the experimental work.



DR. A. DOUGLAS KINGHORN

Drs. Kim and Carcache de Blanco

### Could you provide a brief explanation of the work and results in your own words? In what way are the data in your paper new?

This publication includes isolation, identification, and biological evaluation of the isolates in two NF- $\kappa$ B assays. The whole cell assay confirmed the effect exerted by the active metabolites. Three compounds of the ergosterol type exhibited significant activity in the NF- $\kappa$ B p50 assay. This is the first time that these compounds were reported to show activity against NF- $\kappa$ B p50 unit.

### What impact does your research have on the research of inflammatory pathways and medicinal mushrooms? How does it influence the science?

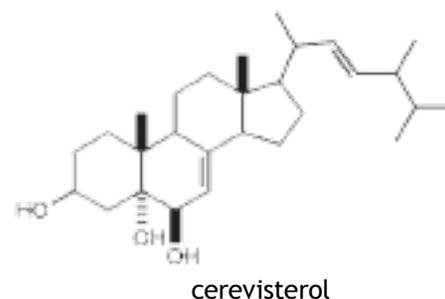
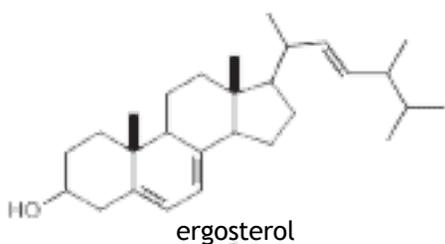
The most common Rel/NF- $\kappa$ B dimer in mammals contains p50/p65 heterodimers and is an attractive target for potential therapeutic in human inflammation and certain other diseases. NF- $\kappa$ B p50, particularly, has distinctive functions in regulating immune response and inflammation. Since the chanterelle species studied in our lab was found to act on NF- $\kappa$ B p50 subunit, the results of the research are in agreement with previous reports that edible mushroom constituents are suggested to modulate immunity. So, our findings could have great impact on the use of mushrooms in the diet.

### What is a favorite nonscientific activity of your lab?

Our lab group loves to go out for lunch together and talk about the potential cancer chemopreventative properties of the items selected for a meal.

### What is your lab's motto? Is there one idea or overall theme you like to promote, like hard work, or perseverance?

Researchers in my lab are driven by an entrepreneur spirit to search for the unknown.





## Brief News From Washington

by Dr. Georgia Perdue

- ◇ At the National Cancer Advisory Board (NCAB) meeting in February, Dr. John Niederhuber, director of the National Cancer Institute (NCI), said that the Stimulus Bill contained money for grants, **two-year Challenge Grants of \$500,000 each**, for comparative effectiveness research, as well as money for grants for facility construction and repair and improvement in the research community funded through the National Center for Research Resources.
- ◇ Dr. Niederhuber mentioned at the NCAB that the **CEO Roundtable on Cancer**, founded in 2001 by President George H.W. Bush, is very helpful to NCI. Its purpose is to “**do something bold and venturesome about cancer.**” It consists of 28 members and 20 honorary members. The Life Sciences Consortium, a part of the round table, made up of 11 companies and chaired by Dr. Gregory Curt of AstraZeneca, is also very helpful to NCI and its clinical trials system. Dr. Niederhuber says that these organizations, NCI, Food and Drug Administration, and academia must work in partnership. He mentioned, “we are a safe harbor for private industry to come to us.”
- ◇ Here are some highlights from an update on peer review changes presented to the NCAB by Dr. Lawrence Tabak, Director. Starting this year, to **improve reviewer retention**, “reviewers will be given additional flexibility regarding their tour of duty.” There will be **formal training for reviewers** to bring them up-to-date on changes made in the system. Improvements in **scoring transparency** begin in May with a **criterion score of 1-9**. Reviewers will use a **uniform summary statement** and focus on key elements of the review. The number of grant application resubmissions (**amendments**) will **decrease from two to one**. Starting in **2010, R01 applications will be 12 pages** ( a compromise between eight pages and 15 pages suggested by the scientific community). **New Early Stage Investigators** will be more easily identified. More details can be found at <http://enhancing-peer-review.nih.gov>
- ◇ Indications are that **NIH will get a funding increase** in the Senate and House appropriations bills for Fiscal Year 2009, being worked on now. The NIH has been operating since October on a continuing resolution.
- ◇ Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA), a cancer survivor, indicated on February 3, 2009, that he would like to add \$10 billion to the NIH budget over the next two years.
- ◇ Dr. Eric Lander and former NIH director Dr. Harold Varmus, have been chosen by the new administration to be co-chairs of the President’s Council of Advisers on Science and Technology (PCAST).
- ◇ Legislation introduced by Senator Russell Feingold (D-WI), (S. 177), “*Strengthening Our Economy Through Small Business Innovation Act of 2009*,” provides incremental increases for the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and the Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs.

## Mapping Tools Designed for the Natural Products Researcher

by Dr. Nicholas Oberlies

When you collect samples, do you acquire the longitude, latitude, and elevation of the sample collection site, possibly via a GPS unit? Have you ever wondered how you can take such information and use it to make detailed maps? The tools of geographic information systems (GIS), which deal with the geospatial relationships of data, can be quite valuable, especially for planning collection trips or documenting past endeavors.

However, these tools may be out of reach of the average natural products researcher. For this reason, myself and colleagues at Research Triangle Institute (RTI) recently developed a simple, open access software program that can be used to take GIS data and incorporate it into GoogleEarth. This works for data that were acquired recently and are still stored on a GPS device, allowing one to plug the device into a computer and quickly generate GoogleEarth-readable data. It also works for legacy data, where one formulates tables of previous data that are then translated into a format for GoogleEarth.

The complete details can be found in the manuscript that was published in *Phytochemistry Letters* ([www.elsevier.com/locate/phytol](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/phytol)), article citation: Oberlies, N. H., et al. (2009) Mapping of sample collection data: GIS tools for the natural product researcher. *Phytochemistry Lett.* 2, 1-9), and the supplemental materials section of the journal’s website has a link to the software, which can be downloaded and used for free. The RTI team envisions that open access software like this can be used, modified, and improved upon by and for the natural products community, particularly as the technology for creating maps improves over time. If you have any problems or questions about the manuscript, feel free to contact me directly ([nicholasoberlies@gmail.com](mailto:nicholasoberlies@gmail.com)).

# From the Archives

## Historical Extractor Headed to Museum

by Stephen Smith

The first extracting device at Research Triangle Institute (RTI) at Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, a piece of both institute and chemical and pharmacological history, is headed for Cincinnati, Ohio, home of the Lloyd Library and Museum.

For more than two decades, RTI scientists used the extractor, a large assemblage of blown-glass tubes and chambers, plus support scaffolding, to obtain extractions of natural products for investigations of their anticancer potential. These included bark and stems from the Pacific yew and *Camptotheca* trees, from which the anticancer compounds paclitaxol and camptothecin were derived, and hundreds more. In later years, even collards and broccoli were “cooked” in it.

A behemoth by today’s standards, the extractor was the first major piece of equipment purchased by RTI for Dr. Monroe Wall and his team of natural products researchers. It was last used 16 years ago, as far as anyone can recall.

The vintage 1950s and 1960s equipment first resided in RTI’s Bacon Street laboratories, and then was moved to the main campus some time around 1970. Sitting unused since the early 1990s, it had become a bit dusty and rusty. Now, though, it has been taken apart, cleaned and carefully packed up for shipping to the museum.

According to a letter from the museum, the extractor bears a resemblance to the “cold still” extractor patented by pharmacist John Uri Lloyd in 1904 and used in the drug manufacturing industry for several decades. As soon as the museum can make space, it will put the RTI extractor on display, with a plaque noting its historic role in the development of natural products-based pharmaceuticals.

“They are quite excited to be getting this, and for our part, we think it’s the perfect home for it,” Dr. Nicholas Oberlies, director of the RTI Natural Products Laboratory, said.



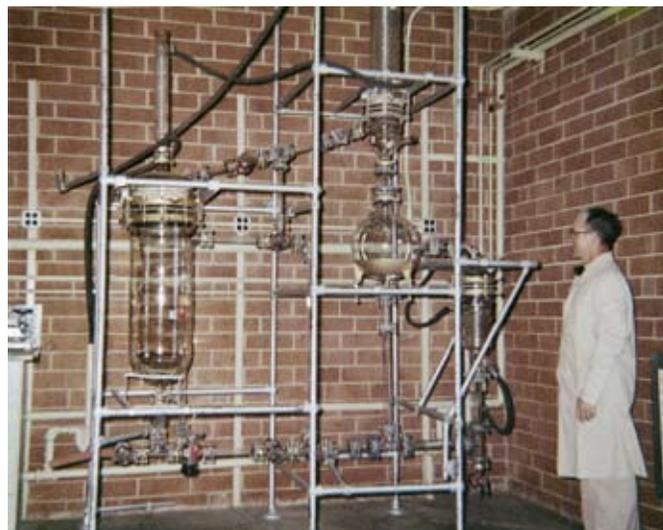
Fred Cole and the RTI Extractor

Built in England, the extractor is something of a hand-crafted marvel. Dr. Oberlies said a professional glass blower appraised the glasswork in it as “easily worth \$100,000.”

In basic terms, operation of the device involved placing an aliquot (sample portion) of dried plant material in one chamber, perhaps as much as 20 kg of material. The device then percolated alcohol solvents through the material, distilling the solvents for re-extraction and concentrating the extract in the process. These days, scientists are able to work with much smaller quantities of substances, often less than 0.5 kg, one of the factors rendering such a large extractor obsolete.

The taxol and camptothecin breakthroughs resulted from work to find natural products capable of fighting cancers already growing in a person’s body. On the other hand, many of the thousands of samples put through the extractor over the years were chosen for their potential cancer preventive effects. That is how such food plants as collards and broccoli found their way to the laboratories of Dr. Wall and colleagues, particularly in the 1980s.

Lyle Retzlaff, a Facilities Support staff member who has provided laboratory technical support to RTI’s researchers for some 38 years, remembers those experiments well. “Those collard greens would really stink up the place,” he says with a laugh.



David J. Slatkin, Ph.D, Treasurer  
The American Society of Pharmacognosy  
3149 Dundee Road, #260,  
Northbrook, Illinois 60062

## ASP Membership

### Full Membership

Full membership is open to any scientist interested in the study of natural products. Current membership dues and *Journal of Natural Products* subscription rates can be found at [www.phcog.org/meminfo.html](http://www.phcog.org/meminfo.html).

### Associate Membership

Associate membership is open to students of pharmacognosy and allied fields only. These members are not accorded voting privileges. Current membership dues and *Journal of Natural Products* subscription rates can be found at [www.phcog.org/meminfo.html](http://www.phcog.org/meminfo.html).

### Emeritus Membership

Emeritus membership is open to retired members of the Society who maintained membership in the Society for at least five years. Current membership dues and *Journal of Natural Products* subscription rates can be found at [www.phcog.org/meminfo.html](http://www.phcog.org/meminfo.html).

### Honorary Membership

Honorary members are selected by the Executive Committee of the American Society of Pharmacognosy on the basis of meritorious service to pharmacognosy.

#### Present Honorary Members are:

- Dr. Arnold R. Brossi, National Institutes of Health • Dr. David P. Carew, University of Iowa
- Dr. John M. Cassidy, Oregon State University • Dr. Geoffrey A. Cordell, Natural Products, Inc.
- Dr. Gordon C. Cragg, National Institutes of Health • Dr. Norman R. Farnsworth, University of Illinois at Chicago
  - Dr. Harry H.S. Fong, University of Illinois at Chicago
  - Dr. James E. Robbers, Purdue University • Dr. E. John Staba, University of Minnesota
- Dr. Otto Sticher, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology • Dr. David J. Slatkin, Chicago State University
- Dr. Hildebert Wagner, University of Munich • Dr. Mansukh Wani, Research Triangle Institute

Additional information about membership may be obtained by writing to the Treasurer of the Society:  
David J. Slatkin, Ph.D, Treasurer, The American Society of Pharmacognosy,  
3149 Dundee Road, #260, Northbrook, Illinois 60062. Email: [asphcog@aol.com](mailto:asphcog@aol.com)

