

AIBS news

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AIBSnews

JANUARY 2009/VOLUME 59 NUMBER 1

2009 AIBS Board of Directors Takes Office

The 2009 AIBS Board of Directors, led by President May R. Berenbaum (Department of Entomology, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), takes office this month for the calendar year 2009. Joseph Travis (Department of Biological Science, Florida State University) joins the Board as President-Elect. Robert R. Christian (Department of Biology, East Carolina University) and Eric S. Nagy (Department of Biology, University of Virginia) have been reelected to the Board. AIBS thanks Douglas Futuyma (Department of Ecology and Evolution, State University of New York) for his service to AIBS as he rotates off the board, having served as president in 2007.

For the full 2009 board roster, go to www.aibs.org/about-aibs/board.html.

2009 AIBS Annual Meeting on Sustainable Agriculture: Greening the Global Food Supply

The 2009 AIBS annual meeting, on "Sustainable Agriculture: Greening the Global Food Supply" will be held 18–19 May at the Westin Arlington Gateway Hotel in Arlington, Virginia. Registration, poster submission forms, and the preliminary program are online at www.aibs.org/annual-meeting. The program chair is 2009 AIBS President May R. Berenbaum, of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

The meeting will bring together plenary speakers, panelists, and discussion groups from the basic and applied life sciences to examine the topics of food sustainability, supply, and security. The two-day program is geared toward the science-policy interface for an audience of scientists, educators, students, representatives of nongovernmental organizations, members of Congress, and the media.

The rest of the meeting's program will be rounded out by, among other events,

a contributed poster session, AIBS awards, a teachers' workshop organized by the Biological Sciences Curriculum Study and the National Association of Biology Teachers, and a workshop led by the AIBS Public Policy Office on *Communicating Science: A Primer for Working with the Media*, an AIBS publication.

The meeting is taking place during Year of Science 2009, a year of activities aimed at engaging the general public in the nature and value of the scientific enterprise. Year of Science 2009 is co-organized by AIBS and the Coalition on the Public Understanding of Science, and involves more than 450 organizations. Recordings of the plenary lectures from the meeting will be available online in the AIBS Media Library (www.aibs.org/media-library) about two months after the meeting. The meeting's confirmed speakers and the topics of their presentations, if available, are listed below:

- Bruce Alberts (Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics, University of California, San Francisco; editor in chief of *Science*)
- May R. Berenbaum (Department of Entomology, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)
- Fred Gould (Department of Entomology, North Carolina State University); biotechnology and resistance management
- Hans R. Herren (Millennium Institute, Arlington, Virginia); sustainable practices for food production
- Taylor Ricketts (Conservation Science Program, World Wildlife Fund); agriculture and conservation

- Scott Swinton (Department of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics, Michigan State University); agriculture and ecosystem services
- Robert Tauxe (National Center for Zoonotic, Vectorborne, and Enteric Diseases; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention); foodborne diseases

Breakout discussion sessions

- Public understanding of agriculture, the food supply, and genetically modified foods

I N S I D E

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Year of Science 2009 Begins

AIBS Past-President Rita Colwell to Give NAS Gilbert White Lecture on Climate, Oceans, and Human Health

NAS Arthur Sackler Colloquium: In the Light of Evolution III—Two Centuries of Darwin

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AIBS and NESCent Cosponsor the Fifth Annual Evolution Symposium and Educator Workshop at NABT

AIBS at FAST

Recent Executive Director's Blog Entries Online at www.blogs.aibs.org/richardograpy

Recent Education Reports Online at www.aibs.org

Recent Articles Online at www.actionbioscience.org

Recent Public Policy Reports Online at www.aibs.org

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- Biofuels
- National Academies report on agriculture and undergraduate science education
- Year of Science 2009 discussion

Workshops

- National Association of Biology Teachers/Biological Sciences Curriculum Study
- AIBS Public Policy Office:
Communicating Science: A Primer for Working with the Media

Year of Science 2009 Begins

Participants in the Coalition on the Public Understanding of Science (COPUS) are leading the way in a national celebration of science, the Year of Science 2009, to celebrate “how science works, why it matters, and who scientists are.” COPUS is a grassroots network of universities, scientific societies, science centers and museums, government agencies, advocacy groups, media, schools, educators, businesses, and industry; it recently welcomed its 450th participating organization.

The Year of Science 2009 will launch in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology (SICB) on 3 January 2009 at the Westin Boston Waterfront Hotel. The SICB meeting will include plenary presentations emphasizing the benefits of an engaged public, a workshop that focuses on science communication, and several science cafés in the Boston community. The following are brief descriptions of the meeting's events:

- Ira Flatow, host of National Public Radio's *Talk of the Nation: Science Friday*, and Sean Carroll, of the University of Wisconsin–Madison, will spotlight Year of Science 2009 with plenary presentations emphasizing the importance of public understanding of science and evolution.

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BioScience

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ActionBioscience.org:
editor@actionbioscience.org

Education Office:
smusante@aibs.org
202-628-1500

Executive Director: rogrady@aibs.org
202-628-1500

Meetings and Conference Services:
sburk@aibs.org
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703-674-2500

- John Durant, director of the MIT Museum; Ben Wiehe, of the WGBH Educational Foundation; and Carl Zimmer, a science writer, will share their expertise in a session to highlight communicating science in 2009, through science festivals, science cafés, and blogs about science.
- Science cafés in surrounding Boston neighborhoods will bring cutting-edge science from the meeting to the Boston public.

A special component of the meeting is the much-anticipated 6 January unveiling of the Web site *Understanding Science*, with its new paradigm for portraying the process of science. Prominent textbook author and Brown University professor Ken Miller will join forces with Natalie Kuldell, of the MIT Department of Biological Engineering, to officially launch the site at the Boston meeting. High-school science teacher Kathleen Gorski from Wilbraham, Massachusetts, was one of the first educators to preview the site and implement it in her classroom. She wrote: “The materials have had a huge impact on my classes this year; I’ve been told ‘that makes more sense [than what was learned earlier]’ and the kids seem to understand how one does science at a much deeper level. It is still the early days of the course, but I am thrilled with their response!”

To keep apprised of the activities and events of the Year of Science 2009 as they unfold, register your organization to become a participant in COPUS by completing the online form at www.copusproject.org. By becoming a part of this communication and collaboration network, adding Year of Science logos to your Web site and marketing materials during 2009, and spreading the word to others, you are helping to promote these important educational efforts.

For more information about COPUS and the Year of Science 2009, please visit www.copusproject.org, www.yearofscience2009.org, or <http://blogs.aibs.org/copus>.

AIBS Past-President Rita Colwell to Give NAS Gilbert White Lecture on Climate, Oceans, and Human Health

The Geographical Sciences Committee of the National Academy of Sciences will hold its third annual Gilbert F. White Lecture in the Geographical Sciences at the Keck Center of the National Academies in Washington, DC, on 18 February 2009. AIBS Past-President Rita Colwell, of the University of Maryland, will deliver the lecture, titled "Climate, Oceans, and Human Health: The Saga of a Cholera Chaser."

The Gilbert F. White lecture series focuses on connections between the geographical sciences and society. It honors White and his career as an inspiration for scientists to share their work on the connections between science and society.

Please visit <http://dels.nas.edu/besr/lecture.shtml> for more information.

NAS Arthur Sackler Colloquium: In the Light of Evolution III—Two Centuries of Darwin

The year 2009 marks the 200th anniversary of Charles Darwin's birth and the 150th anniversary of his most influential publication, *On the Origin of Species*, in which he developed the revolutionary concept that a natural but nonrandom process—natural selection—yields biological adaptations that otherwise can give a superficial impression of intelligent conscious design.

Organized by John C. Avise and Francisco J. Ayala, this Arthur Sackler Colloquium of the National Academy of Sciences will be held 15–17 January at the Beckman Center of the National Academies in Irvine, California. The meeting will bring together leading evolutionary biologists and science historians to reflect upon and commemorate the "Darwinian Revolution." One goal of this symposium is to canvass modern scientific thought and research approaches regarding the three main categories of selection (natural, artificial, and sexual) that Darwin addressed during his career. Although Darwin is associated most often with his elucidation of natural selection in *Origin*, he also wrote extensively about artificial and sexual selection, as reflected in two other books, *The Variation of Ani-*

mals and Plants under Domestication (1869) and *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* (1871), respectively. Other goals of this colloquium are to place Darwin's seminal contributions in historical perspective and to celebrate Darwin's ongoing scientific legacy.

To see a preliminary program, visit www.nasonline.org/SACKLER_Darwin_program.

Arachnologists Support the AIBS Public Policy Office

The AIBS Public Policy Office (PPO) is pleased to announce that the American Arachnological Society (AAS) is the newest scientific society to become a supporter of the PPO. The AAS's financial contribution to the PPO will help AIBS maintain staffing and access to the resources and tools necessary to continue to build a policy program that represents the interests of the biological sciences.

The AAS was founded in August 1972 to promote the study of arachnids, to achieve closer cooperation and understanding between amateur and professional arachnologists, and to publish the *Journal of Arachnology*. The society also sponsors annual meetings and cooperates with other professional societies. Membership is open to all people interested in the society's objectives.

"There was overwhelming support from the executive committee to join this effort and to send a contribution to support the AIBS Public Policy Office," said Paula Cushing, of the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, and president of the AAS.

Robert Gropp, director of the PPO, said: "We are thrilled to have the arachnologists joining as a new supporter of the PPO. They join 15 other leading biology societies and research organizations in providing targeted funding to help support the myriad of policy and media activities that AIBS conducts each day."

The AIBS PPO welcomes the opportunity to partner with other AIBS member societies. For information about how your society may become a supporter of the AIBS PPO, please contact AIBS by e-mail (publicpolicy@aibs.org). Individuals may also support the efforts of the PPO by making a targeted contribution

when renewing their individual AIBS membership. For details, please visit www.aibs.org.

AIBS and NESCent Cosponsor the Fifth Annual Evolution Symposium and Educator Workshop at NABT

AIBS and the National Evolutionary Synthesis Center (NESCent; www.nescent.org) cosponsored the fifth annual evolution symposium and educator workshop in October 2008 at the National Association of Biology Teachers (NABT; www.nabt.org) professional development conference. Douglas J. Futuyma, an AIBS past-president, invited four researchers to provide scientific updates to the NABT conference attendees and describe how evolution has informed and impacted their research. The speakers were Joram Piatigorsky, of the National Institutes of Health National Eye Institute; Robert Blankenship, of Washington University in St. Louis; Patricia Wittkopp, of the University of Michigan; and Georg Striedter, of the University of California, Irvine. A workshop that took place the following day provided hands-on classroom activities to teach about phylogenetic-based whaling conservation efforts, and information about ways in which systematics has been used to select biocontrol agents. For more information about the 2008 symposium and workshop, including a link to educator resources to teach these topics, visit www.aibs.org/special-symposia/Illuminating-Biology.html.

AIBS at FAST

AIBS was an exhibitor at a conference of the Florida Association of Science Teachers (FAST), held in Orlando, 22–25 October 2008. The conference theme was "Centering on Science," in recognition of Florida's focus on the "next generation of standards" to enhance student learning in an ever-more-complex technological world.

FAST is Florida's largest nonprofit professional organization dedicated to improving science education for students from preschool through college. The association's membership includes science teachers, science supervisors, administrators, scientists, representatives of business and industry, and others

interested in science education. FAST members believe that “quality science education is important for all students facing a world where everyday decisions depend more and more on a sound knowledge of science.”

The society’s annual conference is held each October. The emphasis is on excellence, outstanding programs, innovative teaching techniques, research findings, new materials and equipment, and providing make-and-take workshops. Key speakers this year were Ellen Prager, a marine scientist and author, and Edward J. Petuch, an expert on paleoecology. One of the workshops, “Why Teaching Evolution is Essential: Critical Pedagogy,” was conducted by members of the Florida Citizens of Science; its aim was to help clarify why the teaching of evolution is integral to the new Florida science standards.

Next year’s conference will be held in conjunction with a regional conference of the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) in Fort Lauderdale, 12–14 November 2009. Session proposals can be submitted on the NSTA Web site (www.nsta.org/conferences); the deadline for proposals is 15 January.

Recent Executive Director’s Blog Entries Online at www.aibs.org/blogs. aibs.org/richardogrady

- Understanding Science Web site preview launches—AIBS endorses

Recent Education Reports Online at www.aibs.org

- Evolution teaching and learning resources online from 2008 symposium and educator workshop at NABT
- NABT’s 2008 Evolution Education Award presented to Randy Moore
- New educator portal at ActionBioscience.org
- Call for applications: Diversity Scholars Award and Diversity Leadership

Award; Pi Lambda Theta scholarships, grants, and awards; Research Residency Program

- EPA’s 2008 Environmental Education grants
- Knowles science teaching fellowships
- Understanding Science—beta site launched

Recent Articles Online at www.actionbioscience.org

Original interview

- “How is Development Connected to Evolution?” with Patricia Wittkopp, assistant professor, molecular, cellular, and developmental biology, University of Michigan

“Technology: An Educational Issue?” blog post

- Science Glossaries for EL Students

Recent Public Policy Reports Online at www.aibs.org

Public Policy Report for 12 December 2008

- Employment opportunity: AIBS Public affairs associate
- Supreme Court rejects DOJ wetlands request
- Texas and science education: Here we go again
- Hollywood science
- Graduate student opportunity: 2009 AIBS Emerging Public Policy Leadership Award
- New in *BioScience*: “The Cost of Conservation: The National Wildlife Refuge System”
- From the *Federal Register*

Public Policy Report for 24 November 2008

- Natural science collections and the economy: Preliminary survey results
- Obama administration to review Bush administration rules
- Supreme Court rules for Navy in marine sonar case
- Groups want Congress to reauthorize migratory bird conservation program
- Graduate student opportunity: 2009 Emerging Public Policy Leadership Award
- From the *Federal Register*

Public Policy Report for 10 November 2008

- Washington prepares for transition
- Election trends from across the nation
- Arachnologists join the AIBS Public Policy Office
- EPA reopens libraries
- From the *Federal Register*
- New in *BioScience*: “The Sound of Silence at the Environmental Protection Agency”
- In the AIBS Bookstore: *Communicating Science: A Primer for Working with the Media*