



The University of Western Ontario hosted the 2018 Eastern Regional Meeting, November 24, 2018 (photo credit: Susanne Kohalmi)

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## The Canadian Society of Plant Biologists La Société canadienne de biologie végétale

### In This Issue / *Dans ce numéro*

Message From The President / <i>Message du président</i>	2
Message From The Vice-President / <i>Message du vice-président</i>	4
CSPB Welcomes New Faculty / <i>SCBV accueille de nouveaux professeurs adjoints</i>	6
Get Involved / <i>S'impliquer</i>	7
Upcoming Annual Meetings / <i>Assemblées annuelles à venir</i>	7
Eastern Regional Meeting at UWO / <i>Réunion régionale de l'Est à l'UWO</i>	8
Reflections on my time with the CSPP/CSPB / <i>Réflexions sur mon temps avec le SCBV</i>	8
Postdoc Feature / Postdoc en vedette	11
A Message from the Student & Postdoc Representative / <i>Message du Représentant des étudiants et postdocs</i>	12
Plant Biology 2018 Meeting Report / <i>Biologie végétale 2018 Rapport de la réunion</i>	13
Treasurer's News / <i>Nouvelles du trésorier</i>	15
Ragai K. Ibrahim	16
CSPB Inside / <i>A l'intérieur de la SCBV</i>	17
Editorial / <i>Éditorial</i>	18

# Message from the President

Geoffrey Wasteneys  
University of British Columbia

It has been a busy year for CSPB/SCBV. We established two new major awards in 2018, introduced equity and diversity guidelines, and are in the process of amending our bylaws. Our AGM in Montreal this past summer had huge attendance, and our membership numbers are up. A new website is under construction, and preparations are underway for our next regional and national meetings.

I am very pleased to welcome three new members to the CSPB executive. Sherryl Bisgrove from Simon Fraser University is our new Secretary, David Bird from Mount Royal University in Calgary is our new Western Regional Director, and Ryan Eng, currently a post-doctoral fellow at the Max-Planck Institute for Molecular Plant Physiology in Golm Germany, is our latest student/postdoctoral representative. I am also very pleased to welcome, and look forward to working with, all of the many new members of our committees. The work undertaken by these committees, often behind the scenes, is critical for our operations and success.

Plant Biology 2018 was our joint meeting with ASPB and the International Society of Photosynthesis Research. After two years of planning, I was very pleased that our meeting attracted such a large and diverse delegation. Officially, 1629 plant biologists from 52 countries took part, of which 270 were CSPB members. There were 20 plenary speakers in 5 major symposia, 148 speakers in concurrent sessions, and over 1000 posters. In my welcome address I reflected on the excellent relationship CSPB has established with our American partner organization, ASPB, and commented on how this is particularly important at a time when other aspects of Canadian-American relations are under strain. In particular, I referred to the G7 meeting that had been held just few weeks prior to our meeting, also in Quebec. Specifically, I pointed out



that many of the aspirations that our Prime Minister articulated for Canada's presidency of the G7, including gender equality, women's empowerment, clean energy, and economic growth, were a close match to the work that our societies already do. And finally, I disclosed that hosting the 2-day G7 meeting cost the Canadian taxpayers \$600 million dollars, and pointed out that this amounts to 60% of the NSERC annual budget. More details on this successful meeting are given in the Past President Anja Geitmann's message.

As is customary for joint CSPB-ASPB meeting this year our Presidents Awards were restricted to student poster presenters. The results of this competition appear in the Vice President Daphne Goring's message. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all the award winners but also those talented few CSPB students who were selected to give seminars in the concurrent sessions.

After 5 years of consecutive joint meetings, our 2019 national



meeting continues that trend. Together with 6 other member societies, the meeting will take place from July 7th to 10th in Guelph under the Plant Canada 2019 Banner. Our theme is Communicating Innovation in Plant Science and CSPB has taken on the responsibility of organizing the program and

will celebrate the achievements and contributions of mid-career plant biologists. More details of this award, which was spearheaded by Vice-President Daphne Goring, and facilitated by Past-President Deep Saini, can be found in the Vice-President's Message. The other new award is the



### Plenary session at the Plant Biology 2018 Meeting in Montreal.

Left: Geoff Wasteneys at the opening of the meeting. Right: Plenary speaker Elizabeth Haswell (Washington University, St. Louis) at the symposium 'Integrating signals in plant cell biology and development'.

the local arrangements, the latter of which are in the hands of Barry. As the chair of the Scientific Program committee, I am working with representatives of the other six societies to put together an exciting program, which is now available on the CSPB / SCBV website. I welcome any suggestions that you might have for the meeting. As an added bonus, various field trips will be run on the first day (Sunday), and before our welcome reception on the Sunday evening, the meeting will be officially opened with a keynote address by journalist/biologist Dan Riskin.

One of the two new CSPB career awards alluded to at the start of my message is the Mary Spencer Award, which

Carl Douglas Prize, which will be awarded each year to an outstanding postdoctoral fellow. Named in honour of the late Carl Douglas, in recognition of his many years of service to CSPB, the prize recognizes the important contributions post-docs make to Canadian plant biological research. It is also my hope that this new competition will provide all candidates with experience in communicating their portfolios, which will enhance their success as they enter the job market for independent research and teaching positions.

**Geoffrey Wasteneys**  
**CSPB/SCVB President**

# Message from the Vice-President

Daphne Goring  
University of Toronto



University, Overview of thaumatin-like proteins in small grain cereals); and Ying Wang (tied for 3rd, Carleton University, Clade I TGA basic leucine zipper transcription factors mediate BLADE-ON-PETIOLE-dependent regulation of development in *Arabidopsis thaliana*),

Honorable mentions went to Camille Diaz (York University, Pokeweed antiviral protein's long leader intron enhances gene expression); Deirdre Khan (University of Manitoba, Making a better canola seed: methylome and transcriptome profiling of *Brassica napus* seed development); Emily Clayton (Western University, Determining the necessary sequences to piggyback AtADT5 into the nucleus); Gregory MacNeill (University of Guelph, Regulation of starch branching enzyme 2.2 by post-translational modifications); Michal Pyc (University of Guelph, Recent advances in plant lipid droplet biology: The role of LDIP in regulating lipid droplet size and neutral lipid homeostasis); and Musharaf Hossain (University of Saskatchewan, *Plasmodiophora brassicae* effector protein functions in a host during infection and clubroot disease progression).

At the July 2018 Annual Business Meeting, we presented several items that I would like to briefly draw your attention to (associated documents are posted on the CSPB/SCBV website Documents & Forms). We discussed the implementation plan for the CSPB/SCBV Diversity and Equity Task Force Recommendations, and I continue to work with the CSPB/SCBV executive on the implementation of these recommendations. The CSPB/SCBV Meeting Code of Conduct has now been completed and is posted on our website. The membership approved a number of By-Law Amendments that clarified the criteria, revised eligibility time frames and simplified the nomination requirements for the society awards. Finally, two new society awards were approved: the Mary E. Spencer Award for mid-career researchers and the Carl Douglas Prize for postdoctoral fellows. In the next few months, we will be sending out calls for nominations for our various

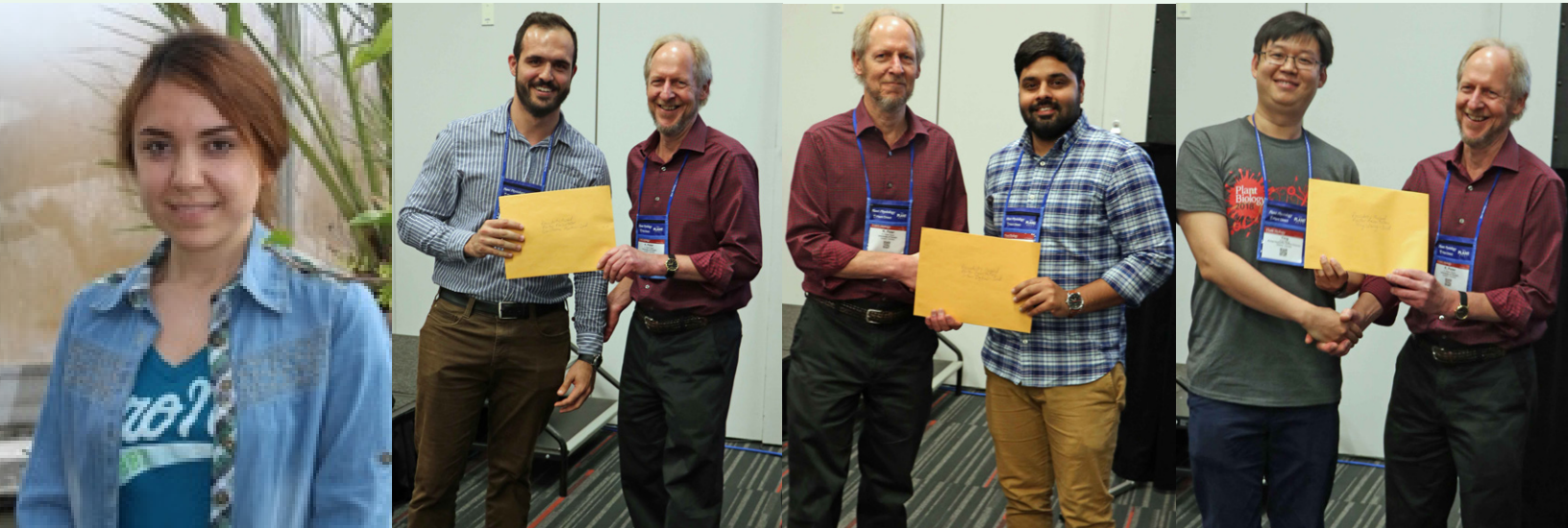
Our last annual meeting took place as a joint meeting with ASPB in July (Plant Biology 2018, Montreal), and we had a spectacular turnout of CSPB/SCBV members at this meeting. I would like to extend a very grateful thank you to President Geoff Wasteneys and Past-President Anja Geitmann who were very active in the joint program committee, ensuring that CSPB/SCBV contributions were well-represented at the meeting. Thanks also to François Ouellet who was very busy organizing local arrangements and promptly taking care of logistical issues throughout the meeting. I organized the CSPB/SCBV student presentation competition, and as with past practice at these joint meetings (where there are very limited opportunities for oral presentations), the competition was solely held for student poster presentations. There were 114 student members who entered this competition, and a panel of 36 judges who evaluated their presentations. Thank you to all the judges for participating, and congratulations to all the students for their excellent poster presentations! The Presidents' Award for the best poster presentations went to Mina Ghahremani (1st, Queen's University, A high-mannose glycoform of the purple acid phosphatase AtPAP26 interacts with a bisphosphorylated GNA-apple domain-containing lectin in cell walls of phosphate-starved *Arabidopsis thaliana*); Guilherme Martins (2nd, Université de Sherbrooke, Jasmonic acid regulates systemic defense against virus infection by repressing Argonaute 5); Irfan Iqbal (tied for 3rd, McGill

CSPB/SCBV awards, including our two new awards. Please consider nominating a colleague for one of these CSPB/SCBV awards.

For the new Mary E. Spencer Award, we are very pleased to announce that a fund has been established through a very generous donation from the Spencer family. This award was named after Professor Mary Spencer (Emeritus, University of Alberta) to honour two facets of her exemplary career: outstanding research contributions and distinguished public service to the plant biology community. We would like to continue to build this fund and ask you to consider supporting this award through a donation. Further information on Professor Spencer's career and a donation link can be found here: [The Mary E. Spencer Award :: Le prix Mary E. Spencer](#)

Finally, a brief membership meeting was called at the start of ERM2018 at Western University on Nov 24, 2018 (using By-Law 11b). There were two agenda items: 1) to propose by-law amendments which included changes to add gender-neutral language and adjust the terms of membership on the award committees, and 2) to present proposed members for the new Carl Douglas Prize committee and Mary Spencer Award committee. There were 91 Society members present, and the motions were passed unanimously (associated documents are posted on the CSPB/SCBV website [Documents & Forms](#)).

**Daphne Goring**  
**CSPB/SCBV Vice-President**



Former President K. Peter Pauls congratulating the winners of the CSPB Presidents' Award at the Plant Biology 2018 Meeting in Montreal. Left to Right: Mina Ghahremani (Queen's University), Guilherme Martins (Université de Sherbrooke), Irfan Iqbal (McGill University), Ying Wang (Carleton University).



# CSPB Welcomes New Faculty

Mehran Dastmalchi, Brock University

## Adam Mott

Adam joined the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Toronto – Scarborough in July. He received his PhD from Harvard University before moving to the University of Edinburgh as a Postdoctoral Fellow. Before moving to Scarborough, he was a Research Associate at the University of Toronto – St. George.

His research interests focus on plant cell surface receptors and how they guide the plant immune response. His work aims to understand what signals these receptors perceive, how the receptors interact to integrate the information that each one gathers, and how they evolved to perform these functions. The lab combines work in *Arabidopsis* with computational approaches to identify novel immune modulators. The ultimate goal is to translate discoveries into improved crop varieties to support local agriculture.



## Eliana Gonzales-Vigil

Eliana joined the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Toronto in Scarborough as an Assistant Professor in September 2018. The objective of the Gonzales-Vigil lab is to understand how plant specialized metabolites are synthesized, how enzymes specialize to produce new metabolites, and how an arms race between plants and their enemies leads to an escalation of metabolic diversity. Addressing these questions requires a systems biology approach that integrates genomics and metabolomics with molecular biology and phenotyping. Eliana completed her PhD at the Plant Research Laboratories at Michigan State University. She was a postdoc at Michigan State University and then at the University of British Columbia, where she started working on the cuticular waxes of *Populus trichocarpa*.

## Marina Cvetkovska

Department of Biology, University of Ottawa

Marina will join the Department of Biology at the University of Ottawa as an Assistant Professor in January 2019. She received her PhD from the University of Toronto in 2012, followed by an NSERC-funded postdoctoral position at Western University in 2014. Research in the Cvetkovska lab will focus on the non-traditional model organisms *Chlamydomonas* sp. UWO241, a polyextremophilic green alga that originates from the permanently ice-covered Lake Bonney in Antarctica. Using molecular and computational biology, Marina will study the mechanisms that have shaped this alga into one of the most extraordinary photosynthetic organisms known to date. She is especially interested in how proteins evolve and function at low temperatures, and how Antarctic algae survive extended periods of darkness during the 6-month long polar night. The long-term goal of her lab is to apply the insights obtained from extremophiles to improve stress tolerance in economically important algae and plants.





## Get involved in the CSPB/SCBV

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### Seeking candidates for director positions and several committees

The Canadian Society of Plant Biologists is seeking candidates to serve on its Executive Committee as Vice-President and Communications Director

In addition, the society is looking for motivated individuals to serve on several committees. Most of these committees recognize excellence in plant biology through awards such as The Society Medal and the C.D. Nelson Award.

The Canadian Society of Plant Biologists invites those interested in serving as member on one of its committees to please contact Jean-Benoit Charron, Senior Director ([jean-benoit.charron@mcgill.ca](mailto:jean-benoit.charron@mcgill.ca))

## Upcoming Annual Meetings

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### 2019

Plant Canada, University of Guelph July 7-10, 2019.  
Local Arrangements committee: Barry Micallef and colleagues.

### 2020

CSPB/SCBV Annual General Meeting, Saskatoon.  
Local Organizing committee: Raju Soolanayakanahally and colleagues at AAFC, NRC and the University of Saskatchewan.

### 2021

CSPB/SCBV Annual General Meeting, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia.  
Local Organizing committee: Sophia Stone and colleagues.

### 2022

Plant Biology 2022 (Joint ASPB-CSPB/SCBV), Portland Oregon.

# Eastern Regional Meeting at the University of Western Ontario

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The Eastern Regional Meeting was held Saturday, November 24th (2018) at Western University. As always, the meeting was a wonderful opportunity to catch up on the latest advances in plant science research and getting together with old friends and making new ones, and all in the beautiful setting of the Western University campus in the fall. The organizing committee, chaired by Danielle Way and including Mark Bernards, Norm Huner, Susanne Kohalmi and Sheila Macfiee, welcomed more than 125 participants. A detailed report will be available in the next Bulletin.

**Robert Mullen, Eastern Regional Director**

## Reflections on my time with the CSPP/ CSPB as member and Secretary

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Barry Micallef has been a member of the CSPB/SCBV for 31 years. Since 1987, when he was doing his M.Sc. with Barry Shelp at the University of Guelph, he has been involved with the Canadian Society of Plant Biologists.



It is hard to believe that 2018 is now my 31st year as a member of the CSPP/CSPB, starting in 1987 when I was doing my M.Sc. with Barry Shelp at the University of Guelph (in fact, I was Barry S's first graduate student). I've been on over 50 abstracts for oral or poster presentations at CSPP/CSPB meetings as a graduate student, postdoctoral fellow and faculty member. I have been on the CSPP Teaching Committee, I was the lead organizer for the 2009 ERM at Guelph (we set a record for attendance of 218 registrants), and I have been the



Secretary of the CSPP/CSPB Executive from 2010-2018. To be honest, I had not anticipated holding the Secretary position for 4 terms, and I thank Sherryl Bisgrove for her enthusiasm in taking over the role starting at the 2018 ASPB-CSPB Joint Meeting in Montreal. CSPB meetings have always been my favourite ones; they have a perfect critical mass, not too small and not too big. As evidence, even when I was doing my Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin with Tom Sharkey (I was Tom's 1st Ph.D. student), I still maintained my membership and attended CSPP meetings, and I still preferred them over the large ASPB meetings that I regularly attended during that period. Equally significant is that the CSPP/CSPB has always emphasized student and postdoctoral fellow participation in the scientific program at meetings, which is a bit atypical relative to other scientific societies. In many societies lead investigators get preference for oral presentations (in part this allows them to list these as invited talks in T&P documentation). I have always been impressed with the quality of CSPP/CSPB meetings, which is particularly significant when one considers that they are always organized voluntarily by members. The CSPB has always shown faith in our meeting organizers by using a hands-off approach, which is particularly significant when one considers that most of us are not professional meeting or event planners. Our meetings are never perfect, and why would we expect them to be? But, they are always informative, enjoyable and they certainly justify membership in our Society. Our meetings inevitably make some profit, which is used for travel grants for students and postdoctoral fellow. Again, the CSPP/CSPB has always emphasized participation by our future researchers and teachers in plant physiology and biology.

### **I worked for five CSPB Presidents as Secretary in the Society**

What about my time as Secretary in the Society? Owing to my tenure, I worked with 5 CSPB Presidents, including (in chronological order), the late Carl Douglas (after whom the new Carl Douglas Prize in Plant Biology is named), Bill Plaxton (our most recent Society Medal recipient), Vincenzo De Luca, Anja Geitman and presently Geoff Wasteneys. I greatly respect the dedication and time all these Presidents put into the Society, and they all have had a vested interest in our Society and its members, so I acknowledge all of them for their work and dedication

in that position. Keep in mind that becoming President dictates a minimum 6-year commitment to the Society as Vice President, President and then Past President. All of them also had other roles in the CSPP/CSPB prior to becoming Vice President. That's not to say that I always agreed with them, and I did get annoyed with them the odd time. A few significant developments occurred in the Society during my time as Secretary. Firstly, the Society did undergo a name change from the CSPP (Canadian Society of Plant Physiologists) to the CSPB in 2011 (approved by members at the Plant Canada 2011 ABM in Halifax, 82 votes in favour, 0 opposed). I had slight reservations about the name change, but it was time to make a change that more accurately reflected our Society membership. Note that I still consider myself a plant physiologist. Secondly, a change in the CSPB logo occurred during my tenure, and this was a more contentious issue up front. I acknowledge Anja Geitmann for her leadership in pursuing the CSPB logo change during her tenure as President. I also had some slight reservations about this change, but again I realized that we needed a logo that more accurately represents our Society membership. My reservations came in part because I appreciate the history of the CSPP/CSPB, and because I used the techniques represented in the old logo during both my M.Sc. and Ph.D. work. The original logo centered on the <sup>14</sup>C tracer methodology that was cutting edge during the time when the CSPP was established in 1958. These tracer techniques continue to be used today, but they now complement new techniques and methodology that have greatly facilitated our ability to study plant biology. The new CSPB logo was approved by membership at the 2016 CSPB Annual Meeting in Kingston (62 votes in favour, 0 opposed). Thirdly, we had to revamp the CSPB ByLaws owing to a change in the rules for non-profit organizations in Canada. I acknowledge Harold Weger, who was our long-standing Treasurer at the time, for taking the lead in those changes. Lastly, the Executive worked to establish two new CSPB awards, including the fore-mentioned Carl Douglas Prize directed to postdoctoral fellows, and the Mary E. Spencer Award directed to mid-career researchers, which again reflect the vested interest that the CSPP/CSPB has always had in our future and present researchers in plant physiology and biology, while at the same time acknowledging our past.

## Being part of the program made by the Society

What will I remember about being the CSPP/CSPB Secretary? Firstly, I will remember that it was a lot of work. As Secretary, you had to be aware of the duties for all Executive members and Committees, and much of the job entailed reminding other members of the Executive and other CSPP/CSPB Committees to follow through with their duties. Ironically, this was not stated in the CSPP/CSPB Duties Manual that I inherited when I began the role. However, I have revamped the Duties Manual as Secretary, and this is now stated as a duty for the CSPB Secretary. However, I do put a disclaimer for our Treasurer's during my tenure, including Harold Weger and Sheila Macfie, who have as many if not more duties than the Secretary, and who never needed to be reminded about their duties. Secondly, I found it fascinating to watch and be a part of the process and progress made while on the CSPB Executive. I won't miss doing all the Minutes from our meetings (I count 34 Minutes in total during the 8 past years). I am going to enjoy attending future meetings as a 'civilian', without needing to worry about details that require attention during the meetings (e.g. getting certificates made and signed for award winners). I have the odd interesting story in that regard. I acknowledge all members of the CSPP/CSPB Executive Committee over the last 8 years for their work and dedication. Lastly, I didn't get off 'scot free' once my tenure as Secretary finished at the 2018 Annual Business Meeting in Montreal. I am the lead organizer for Plant Canada 2019 that will occur at the University of Guelph from July 7-10, 2019. It promises to be an excellent meeting that includes all seven plant Societies in Canada, and ~700 registrants are expected. I look forward to seeing everyone in Guelph during the summer of 2019.

Best regards,

Barry

# Postdoc Feature

Susanne Kohalmi, University of Western Ontario

The CSPB has a long history of promoting science careers. Therefore, we decided to develop a new feature for the bulletin in which we give postdoctoral fellows a platform to describe their research interests and career choices. Our first introduction is Mehran Dastmalchi, whom we are lucky to have as a member of our communication team, followed by a portrayal of Vera Velasco from UofT.

## Mehran Dastmalchi



Mehran Dastmalchi is a research associate with an interest in the diversity of plant biochemistry and the metabolic machinery involved in the process. Mehran completed his HBSc at the University of Toronto (2009). He received his PhD (2015) from Western University, studying soybean isoflavonoid biosynthesis with Dr. Sangeeta Dhaubhadel at Agriculture Canada.

During his PhD, he provided evidence for the formation of an isoflavonoid ‘metabolon’ (enzyme complex) and he studied the transcriptomic regulation of isoflavonoid content in soybean varieties grown by Canadian farmers. He recently finished a 3-year postdoctoral position with Dr. Peter Facchini at the University of Calgary working on morphine biosynthesis in opium poppy. During his time in Calgary, Mehran focused on understanding the natural variation in enzyme families and how that might be used for metabolic engineering in plants or microorganisms. Mehran will begin a new research position this fall, with Dr. Vincenzo De Luca at Brock University. Beyond the science, Mehran has a long-term interest in education and outreach. Most recently, he joined the CSPB communications committee and he hopes to launch a feature on the CSPB website, where early-career scientists describe

their career trajectory. On a personal note, Mehran began long-distance running in Alberta and is excited to pursue this hobby in the beautiful Niagara region.

## Vera Velasco



Vera Velasco is a postdoc in the Department of Biology at University of Toronto in Mississauga with Dr. Ingo Ensminger. She is studying the responses to extreme climatic events on Douglas-fir plants grown in a climatic gradient

(<http://coadaptree.forestry.ubc.ca/>). She received her BSc in genetics and molecular biology from the University of the Philippines where she characterized the genetic differences among several accessions of *Canarium ovatum* under the supervision of Dr. Merlyn Mendioro. She received her PhD in Plant Biology at McMaster University and working with Dr. Elizabeth



Weretilnyk on investigating the molecular and functional responses of Arabidopsis and Eutrema to nutritional deficiencies.

Vera grew up in a small town in the Philippines where a career in science is unheard of. Her mother's ambition for her was to become a medical doctor. Therefore she took biology as a pre-med in university and fell in love with plant sciences in her third year when she started to take courses in plant molecular biology and biochemistry. Vera's undergraduate and graduate thesis advisors played a pivotal role in the development of her passion for plant sciences and as a plant physiologist.

Vera was always fascinated by how plants live in many different environments. She is particularly interested in plant responses to abiotic stressors such as nutrient availability, irrigation and temperature. Vera plans to continue studying how plants acclimate to our drastically changing climate. She hopes to contribute to the efforts to foster a healthy flora in an ever changing climate.

Next to research, Vera participated in workshops introducing plant molecular biology to high school students during her seven years in Hamilton. Dr. Weretilnyk's lab hosted this workshop at least twice a year. She enjoyed introducing high school students to hands-on experiences in the lab. Currently, Vera is a co-chair for the Board of Postdocs at the University of Toronto in Mississauga, a group dedicated to improve the status of postdocs in the university by raising issues postdocs are experiencing and to increase the participation of postdocs in community activities such as educational outreach.

Vera started her graduate career as a single mother. Her life, just like anyone else's, is hectic and challenging and requires serious time management. But she feels strongly that she could not have possibly achieved her accomplishments without this very understanding little boy on her side and the people around her who have cheered for her non-stop.

# New CSPB Student and Post-doctoral Representative

Ryan Eng  
Max Planck Institute for Molecular Plant Physiology

I was elected as the CSPB Student and Post-doctoral Representative for 2018-2020. One of my roles is to be the liaison between the CSPB and students/post-docs. The CSPB website has a comprehensive list of funding opportunities for grad students and post-docs from Canadian and international funding



agencies. I urge you to check out the website page (<http://www.cspb-scbv.ca/gradPD.shtml>) for links and detailed information about funding opportunities. The website also advertises job opportunities that you may find useful (<http://www.cspb-scbv.ca/jobs.shtml>). The CSPB offers annual grad student and post-doctoral awards so keep an eye out for my emails as I will be sending out the call for these awards.

CSPB's major goal is to increase student and post-doctoral participation within the CPSB as well at CSPB regional and annual meetings. Please feel free to contact me ([eng@mpimp-golm.mpg.de](mailto:eng@mpimp-golm.mpg.de)) if you have any ideas for workshops and round-table discussions you would like to see at future conferences and meetings. We're currently in the process of organizing the next CSPB meeting in Guelph, Ontario in 2019. Finally, contact me if you have any questions or great ideas on how CSPB can best serve the you!

# Plant Biology 2018 Meeting Report from the Past President

Anja Geitmann, McGill University

The 2018 Annual Meeting of the CSPB/SCBV was held as a joint event with the annual meeting of the American Society of Plant Biologists (Plant Biology meeting series of the ASPB) and the International Society of Photosynthesis Research (ISPR). The conference was held in the Palais de congrès de Montréal on July 14-18. I had the pleasure of serving on the joint organizing committee for the third time in eight years. My previous involvement with the ASPB pertain to the 2010 joint conference in Montreal and the 2014 conference in Portland, Oregon. The

four-year cycle of the ASPB-CSPB/SCBV is a longstanding and successful tradition that offers all our members the opportunity to meet across national borders at regular intervals.

The other CSPB members involved in organizing the 2018 joint meeting included CSPB President Geoff Wasteneys (UBC), with whom I served on the joint program committee chaired by ASPB Program Chair Andrew Bent. François Ouellet (Université du Québec à Montréal) organized local CSPB-specific logistics such as the CSPB

booth in the exhibit hall and the social mixer. Vice-President Daphne Goring (University of Toronto) coordinated the judging of CSPB student posters. Most other members of the CSPB executive were involved as well and interacted with their respective ASPB counterparts to ensure that the logistics and program of the conference respected the needs of all members of the respective societies.

Geoff Wasteneys and I met with the ASPB and ISPR program committees in September 2016, July 2017,



Plenary Speakers and CSPB organizers (left to right) **Karin Schumacher** (Heidelberg University), **Mark Estelle** (UC San Diego), **Elizabeth Haswell** (Washington University), symposium organizer and CSPB Vice-President **Daphne Goring** (University of Toronto), CSPB President **Geoff Wasteneys** (University of British Columbia).

**Karen Tanino** speaking at the joint CSPB-ASPB Plenary Symposium 'Opening research avenues through new technologies'

September 2017 and March 2018 to draft and finalize the scientific program including 5 major symposia with invited speakers and 30 concurrent symposia, largely composed from submitted abstracts. Among the 1622 participants from 53 countries, 332 participants had Canadian addresses and 270 self-identified as CSPB members. Among the 148 speakers presenting in concurrent symposia, 29 were from Canadian institutions. The immense

Urbana-Champaign), Karen Tanino (University of Saskatchewan) and Daniel Voytas (University of Minnesota). This symposium featured a cross-section of emerging technologies that have contributed to the rapid progress in the plant sciences, ranging from network modeling to phenotyping and high-end imaging.

During the conference, 17 workshops were held, including an off-site workshop

David J. Gifford Award in Tree Biology to Peter Constabel (U Victoria), and the Ragai Ibrahim Award for best student paper to Jiaqi Sun (McGill). Following the awards ceremony, the 2017 CSPB C.D. Nelson award winner, Marcus Samuel (Calgary) gave a dynamic and inspiring talk on “Stigmatic factors in mate selection in the *Brassicaceae*” and providing excellent representation of CSPB at this high profile joint event.



exhibit hall held 1093 posters and 43 exhibitors.

CSPB contributed heavily to the scientific program, with two of the major symposia being (co-)organized by our society. The CSPB President’s Symposium was organized and chaired by Geoff Wasteneys, the theme of which was ‘Integrating signals in plant cell biology and development’. The symposium featured Elizabeth Haswell (Washington University, St. Louis), Mark Estelle (UC San Diego), Daphne Goring (University of Toronto), Karin Schumacher (Heidelberg University). The joint CSPB-ASPB Plenary Symposium entitled ‘Opening research avenues through new technologies’ was organized and chaired by myself together with Phil Taylor (Monsanto). The invited speakers were Todd Mockler (Danforth Centre, St. Louis), Amy Marshall-Colon (University of Illinois

on “Data Carpentry/RNA-Seq Analysis/ Custom ePlant” organized by Nicholas Provart (University of Toronto) and Jason Williams (Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory), held at Université du Québec à Montréal, with 40 registrants. Other workshops organized with CSPB participation include six round table discussions covering current topics in the field of plant biology and career prospects, an education workshop on incorporating undergraduates into research co-organized by CSPB Education Director Steven Chatfield. Chatfield also co-organized exhibitors at the education booth.

The joint Awards Symposium was held on the first day of the conference and CSPB-SCBV President Geoff Wasteneys had the privilege to present the CSPB Society Medal to William Plaxton (Queen’s), the C.D. Nelson Award to Jaswinder Singh (McGill), the

On behalf of the entire executive committee, I would like to express my most heartfelt congratulations to all awardees. It is inspiring to see how successful Canadian plant scientists are at the world stage.

As is custom during joint meetings with the ASPB, only CSPB student posters (not oral presentations) were judged for the Presidents’ Award. 36 judges evaluated a total of 114 posters and the names of winners can be found in the report of Vice-President Daphne Goring.

The official joint conference party was organized on July 17 and took place on the roof top of the Palais des congrès, allowing for great views of the Montreal skyline and some serious celebrating and dancing. To allow CSPB members to also mingle ‘en famille’, the Society, organized a successful social mixer (ca. 160 attendees) held at Trois-Brasseurs



in the Old Port of Montreal on July 16. Rumors go that many of the participants did not only close down the bar at that event, but continued on to other venues to prolong what I am sure were stimulating scientific discussions and intellectual conversations.

In addition to organizing the Annual Business Meeting, the CSPB Executive held two board meetings during Plant

Biology 2018. The meeting of the Outgoing Executive was held on July 14 and the meeting of the Incoming Executive on July 18. At the Incoming Executive meeting, new executive members Sherryl Bisgrove (Simon Fraser University), David Bird (Mount Royal University), and Ryan Eng (Max Planck Institute) were welcomed to the team by President Geoff Wasteneys. As I embark on my last year on the CSPB

Executive, after having served on it for roughly a decade and a half (starting in my function as Chair of the Education Committee held in 2003-2005 and 2009-2013, followed by the offices of Vice-President in 2013-2015 and President in 2015-2017), I am delighted to see the Society in highly capable hands for the next decade.

## Treasurer's News

Sheila Macfie, University of Western Ontario



**Membership:** The meeting in Montréal last July triggered an increase in our membership at each of the student, postdoc, and full member levels, bringing our total to 470 members.

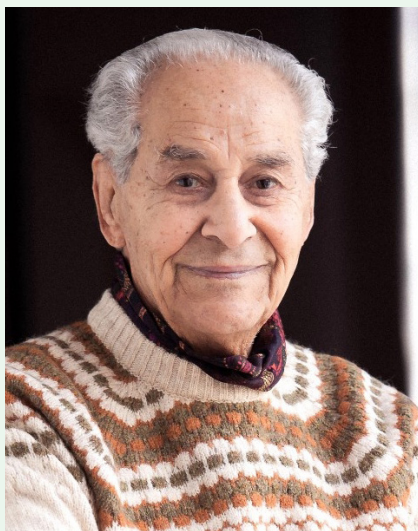
New members from any area of study within plant biology are welcome and I encourage current members to promote our Society to their colleagues. The annual membership fees are very reasonable and the application process is simple. Membership is currently

being processed on-line at [http://www.cspb-scbv.ca/membership\\_paypal.shtml](http://www.cspb-scbv.ca/membership_paypal.shtml) or by mail: <http://www.cspb-scbv.ca/documents/MembershipForm.pdf>. Membership renewal is equally easy and the forms can be accessed through the websites listed above. Des versions françaises des formulaires d'adhésion sont aussi disponibles (<http://www.cspb-scbv.ca/membership-f.shtml>). As soon as our new Society website is fully functional, memberships will be processed there. Be on the lookout for an announcement about the launch of our new site. Members with funds in a Canadian bank have the additional option of paying for membership renewal via interact e-transfer (contact me directly if you wish to choose this option; [smacfie@uwo.ca](mailto:smacfie@uwo.ca)).

**Donations:** At the bottom of the on-line membership form, you will notice an opportunity to make a donation to one of our charitable funds. A direct link to the donation page is currently

available at <http://www.cspb-scbv.ca/donate.shtml>, this URL will also change with the new website. Tax receipts will be issued for donations to any of our award funds: the Ann Oaks Scholarship Fund, the George Duff Travel Fund, the new Carl Douglas Prize Fund (for postdocs) and the new Mary E. Spencer Award Funds. While the Ann Oaks Scholarship fund is heavily supported by an endowment from the late Dr. Ann Oaks, our ability to support the other awards increases with the amounts of donations we receive from our members.

**Duff Travel Bursary:** The Society allocated over \$19,000 to Duff Travel Bursaries for the 2018 meeting in Montréal, providing partial travel support to 88 of our student and post-doc members. The application deadline for the 2019 meeting in Guelph will be announced in the new year. Keep your eye out for the e-mail announcement.



# Obituary

## Ragai K. Ibrahim

1929 - 2017

Professor Ragai K Ibrahim a highly distinguished faculty member for 35 years in the Department of Biological Sciences at Concordia University in Montreal, Quebec, passed away after a short illness on November 19, 2018. "RKI" as many of his close friends and colleagues knew him within Canada and internationally, was a pioneer and expert in the field of plant specialized metabolism and biochemistry.

Throughout his career he pioneered the study of plant phenolics and flavonoids through many collaborations and by training numerous undergraduate, graduate and postdoctoral students. Dr Ibrahim was born in 1929 in Egypt where he later obtained his BSc in 1949 (honours Botany and Chemistry). After spending several years in Industry, he initiated and completed his MSc in Plant Physiology at the University of Alexandria in 1958 and his PhD in Plant Biochemistry at McGill University under Professor Neil Towers in 1961. He returned briefly to the University of Alexandria as a faculty member before accepting a faculty position at Sir George Williams College that later became Concordia University in 1967.

His pioneering studies on flavonoids focused on the biochemical mechanisms involved in their methylation, sulfation, prenylation or glycosylation and that were responsible for their nutritional and medicinal value in food and for their biological roles as pigments, filters of ultraviolet light and as defense and signalling molecules in inter-organism interactions. RKI and his group published more than 170 research papers in refereed journal, 40

review articles and book chapters, and he trained over 30 graduate students and research associates who joined academia, industry or government to pursue successful and productive careers in various leadership positions. His outstanding contributions to plant biochemistry were recognized nationally and internationally and included an Alexander von Humboldt Scholar Award (1975), Groupe Polyphenol Medal (1992) and the Gold Medal award of the Canadian Society of Plant Physiology/ La Société Canadienne de Biologie Végétale (CSPP/SCBV) (2004). He was President of the Phytochemical Society of North America (1983-84) and he became Honorary Life Member of the Society.

Professor Ibrahim retired in 1997 and continued his research for several years as Distinguished Professor Emeritus at Concordia University. His generosity and dedication to research in plant biology and biochemistry is well recognized with donations to create the Annual Ragai Ibrahim Award for best research publication by a graduate student member of the CSPP/SCBV, the Biannual Ragai Ibrahim Prize for best research publication by a graduate student or recent postdoctoral fellow

member of the Groupe Polyphenols and the Ragai Ibrahim Award for Best PhD Thesis in the Biology Department at Concordia University.

Throughout his career, Professor Ibrahim was an inspiring teacher, researcher and mentor to his many graduate students who became collaborators in research and often became close friends after they moved on with their careers. He is fondly remembered by many for the lively daily lunches that we had as researchers in his group and for the animated discussions that took place about many different topics and included problem solving sessions for research problems being encountered. Throughout his career he was totally dedicated to his research and to his research team above all other considerations. Ragai is a gentleman who has made lasting contributions to all who interacted with him, with his smile, openness, intelligence and willingness to engage in open and friendly dialogue. I still miss him greatly after almost one year that he has left us.

Vincenzo De Luca  
St. Catharines

PS: Certain excerpts were obtained

# CSPB Inside

## CSPB / SCBV Executive Committee Membership 2018/2019



**TOP** President: Geoff Wasteneys, Vice-President: Daphne Goring, Secretary: Sherryl Bisgrove, Treasurer: Sheila Macfie, Communications Director/Bulletin Editor: Ingo Ensminger, Western Regional Director: David Bird

**BOTTOM** Eastern Regional Director: Robert Mullen, Senior Director: Jean-Benoit Charron, Science Policy Director: Owen Roland, Education Director: Steven Chatfield, Student/PDF Representative: Ryan Eng, Past President: Anja Geitmann

## Committee Members

### Ann Oaks Scholarship Committee

Harold Weger (Regina) Chair 2022  
Elizabeth Weretilnyk (McMaster) Co-Chair 2022  
Doug Campbell (Mt Allison) 2019  
George Espie (UT Mississauga) 2021  
Sharon Regan (Queen's) 2020  
Sheila Macfie (Western Ontario) Treasurer 2019

### Communications Committee

Ingo Ensminger (Toronto) 2019 Chair  
Kenneth Wilson (Saskatchewan) 2018-2021  
Sherryl Bisgrove (Simon Fraser) 2018-2020  
Michael Stasiak (Guelph) webmaster  
Susanne Kohalmi (Western) 2018-2019  
Mehran Dastmalchi (Brock) 2018-2019

### David J. Gifford Tree Biology Award Committee

Joerg Bohlmann (British Columbia) 2019 Chair  
Olivia Wilkins (McGill) 2020  
Uwe Hacke (Alberta) 2018-2021

### Nominating Committee

Jean-Benoit Charron (McGill) 2019 Chair  
Steeve Pepin (Laval) 2020  
Marcus Samuel (Calgary) 2018-2021

### Gleb Krotkov Award Committee

Jaswinder Singh (McGill) 2019 Chair  
Nicholas Provart (Toronto) 2018-2021  
Belay T. Ayele (Manitoba) 2018-2021

### Education Committee

Steven Chatfield (Toronto) 2019 Chair  
Jake Stout (Manitoba) 2019  
Tamara L Western (McGill) 2018-2021  
Joseph Colasanti (Guelph) 2018-2021

### Ragai Ibrahim Award Committee

Jean Danyluk (UQAM) 2019  
Jacquie Bede (McGill) 2019  
Cara Haney (UBC) 2020  
Ryan Eng (Max Planck) 2018-2020

### Society (Gold) Medal Award Committee

Peter Moffett (Univ. Sherbrooke) 2019 Chair  
Doug Muench (Calgary) 2017-2020  
Sophia Stone (Dalhousie) 2018-2021



# Contributors

The Bulletin is the official newsletter of the Canadian Society of Plant Biologists/Société Canadienne de Biologie Végétale (CSPB/SCBV).

## Contributors

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## Editorial deadline for Bulletin 27 is April 30, 2019

Please submit your contributions, comments, photos, suggestions for featured papers, new faculty bios and announcements before the editorial deadline to:

[communication@cspb-scbv.ca](mailto:communication@cspb-scbv.ca)

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