

# SPOREPRINTS

*Department of Plant Pathology & Environmental Microbiology*

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2015

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

**WELCOME... / FAREWELL... / THANK YOU...**



The PPEM Department welcomes Dr. Carolee T. Bull, as the new department head and professor effective September 1, 2015. Previously, Dr. Bull was a research plant pathologist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service at its Crop Improvement and Protection Research Station in Salinas, California. Carolee will be replacing Dr. David Geiser, who has served as Interim Department Head since Dr. Fred Gildow retired, August 2013.

As of August 31, Gary Moorman retired after 32 years and 8 months in the Department. He and Fran plan to stay in State College and have no 'big plans' other than to do a little travel, a little volunteer work, and whatever else comes to mind. Gary taught Plant Disease Diagnosis to nine graduate students, August 10-21 and plans to do that in upcoming summers just before the semester starts, if there are enough students. Gary thanks everyone associated with the Department, past, present, and future, for making Buckhout Lab such a great place to work.



Carol Boring joined the PPEM Department, effective August 10, 2015, as the Administrative Support Assistant – Graduate Program. Carol comes to the department with approximately 15 years experience working with graduate students...most recently within the Dept. of Biomedical Engineering.

A "special" thank you is extended to Dr. David Geiser for stepping up to the plate and taking on the role as our "Interim Dept. Head" thru August 31, 2015.



## NOTEWORTHY NEWS...

### ***Congratulations – Scott Isard!***

Scott received an award from the USDA AFRI Food Security Challenge Area for the Integrated Pest Information Platform for Extension and Education (iPiPE). This 5-year, \$7 million Cooperative Agricultural Project (CAP) is aimed at promoting a new culture of sharing pest observation data. Its mission is to: (i) Contribute to our nation's infrastructure for food security; (ii) Build local and regional capacity to respond to food security problems involving crop pests; (iii) Reduce adverse environmental effects from pest management practices; and (iv) Enhance farm profitability. The iPiPE is comprised of Crop-Pest Programs that incentivize growers and consultants to submit observations on target and endemic pests by providing tools and information for timely management decision-making. Coordinated by extension professionals from across the nation, programs address a variety of crops and pests and provide undergraduate students with hands-on extension and diagnostic experiences. Risk-based research will prioritize detection efforts for target pests and direct in-field scouting for endemic pests. Observations housed in a national pest observation depository will enable future research using geographically extensive, multi-year databases.

***Congratulations to Sara Klee (PhD candidate)*** who passed her PhD comprehensive exam on Monday, August 17th. Sara is a student of Dr. Tim McNellis and is starting her second year with the PPEM department.

***Graduate Student Competitive Grants Program*** – All doctoral candidates advised by CAS faculty are offered the opportunity to participate in this program. The program provides a \$2,500 award for dissertation research – all candidates must have attended the Graduate Student Competitive Grant Program workshop offered. Over the past three years the PPEM department has received awards – Sara May – 2013, Laura Ramos – 2014 and Bastian Minkenberg – 2015. Congratulations to past and present recipients!

On August 20<sup>th</sup>, prospective graduate student, ***Gabriela Anasi Castillo***, from Ecuador visited and provided a presentation on her research to PPEM graduate students and faculty. During this summer she worked with Carla Garszon at Oklahoma State University. Dr. Gretchen Kuldau met Gabriela at the APS meeting and had an opportunity to interact and invite her to come to PPEM.

The “Mushroom Crew” got together for a luncheon on May 15, 2015, celebrating Fabricio Vieira's birthday and to say good bye to Dr. Xiao Li. Dr. Li returned to China, after spending a year studying mushroom technology at PPEM.



### ***WELCOME ...***

to the following graduate students joining the Plant Pathology & Environmental Microbiology Department in Fall 2016...

- **Edelio Rivera Bazan**, Ph.D. student, adviser... Dr. Marilyn Roossinck
- **Melissa Finley**, M.S. student, adviser ... Dr. Timothy McNellis
- **Md Tariqul Islam**, Ph.D. student, adviser... Dr. Seogchan Kang
- **Garrett Morrison**, M.S. student, adviser ... Dr. John Pecchia
- **Matthew Wheatley**, Ph.D. student, adviser ... Dr. Yinong Yang

## NOTEWORTHY NEWS CONTINUED...

### Welcome Breakfast Held

The annual PPEM Welcome Breakfast was held on Friday, 9/25 in Room 208A. During the event the newest members of the department were introduced. In addition, the summer birthdays were recognized.

### 2015/16 – PPA Officers

- President: Rob Harvey
- Vice President: Laura del Sol Bautista Jalón
- Secretary: Jennie Mazzone
- Treasurer: Anita Behari

### **PPA News...from President Rob Harvey**

2015 has been a very busy year for the Plant Pathology Association! Penn State was well represented at the 2015 APS National Meeting in Pasadena this year, with five graduate students going, as well as various faculty and postdocs. Freddy Magdama and Sara Klee both received student travel awards from the Caribbean and Potomac divisions respectively, and Sarah Bardsley received the Roger C. Pearson Student Travel Award. When not at the meeting, you could find the students exploring downtown Pasadena, as well as meeting and reconnecting with past graduates from the program. PPA would like to thank Carolee Bull for providing us with some great food while at the meeting, as well as showing off her dance moves!

PPA's monthly movie night has also become a hit for students and other members of the department. Once a month we will show a movie in 208A based on department suggestions. We have adapted a potluck format, and encourage all members of the department to provide suggestions and attend! Several outdoor events have also been held. This past August we had a great turnout for a canoe trip down Spring Creek which was a great success (props to the two canoe groups that never had a flip!). October 10<sup>th</sup> we will be traveling to the PA Grand Canyon for a leisurely hike to take in the beautiful fall foliage. Finally, keep an eye out for some PPA fundraisers that will be starting in a month or so. Your continued support is what allows us to remain active! If anyone is interested in learning more about our activities, or would like to be added to the listserv we use for them, please contact Rob Harvey (rjh346@psu.edu).

**Dr. Yinong Yang** presented an invited talk titled "**Crop genome engineering and precision breeding with CRISPR-Cas9**" at the **Workshop on New Breeding Technology and Safety Assessment**. This workshop was organized by USDA Foreign Agricultural Service and Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences and held in Beijing, China during June 12-13, 2015. During his trip to China in June, 2015, Dr. Yang also presented invited seminars on plant genome editing and precision breeding at China Agricultural University, Chinese Academy of Sciences (Institute of Botany and Institute of Genetics and Developmental Biology), Beijing Normal University, Huazhong Agricultural University, and Zhejiang University.



**Dr. Beth Gugino** presented a keynote speech titled "**One Size Doesn't Fit All: The Challenge of Optimizing Cropping Sequences for Improved Plant Health**" at the 25th Annual Soilborne Disease Symposium in Stellenbosch, South Africa on 9-10 September. This meeting is organized by the Agricultural Research Council, South Africa is attended by government and university researchers as well as industry representatives. She also had the opportunity to present as part of the graduate student seminar series at the Department of Plant Pathology at Stellenbosch University. Her travel was sponsored by Z22, a large farming conglomerate operating across SA so she also had the opportunity to visit several production fields in the Western Cape Province.