



MICROCOMM



Newsletter of the Florida Branch, American Society for Microbiology

Fall 2005 Vol. 48 No. 1

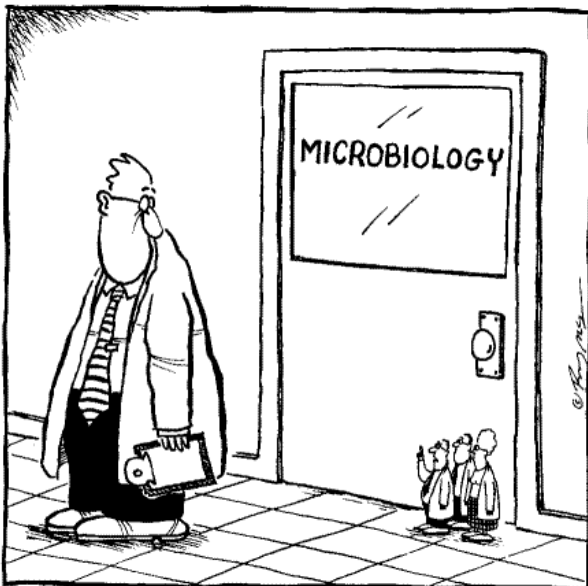
OFFICERS

President.....	Dale Griffin US Geological Survey
President elect.....	Theresa Slifko Orange County Utilities
Secretary.....	Christina Kellogg US Geological Survey
Treasurer.....	William Safranek Weusthoff Labs
National Councilor.....	Peter McCarthy Harbor Branch Oceanogr. Inst.
Alt. National Councilor.....	Steven Specter University of South Florida
Councilor.....	John Lisle US Geological Survey
Councilor.....	George Lukasik Biol. Consulting Serv. N. Fla.
Councilor.....	Nwadiuto Esiobu Florida Atlantic University
Councilor.....	William Self University of Central Florida
Councilor.....	John Whitlock Hillsborough Com. College
Student Councilor.....	Vasanta Chivukula University of South Florida

MESSAGE FROM OUR INCOMING PRESIDENT

Dear Members and Students,

It was 1996 and I was very nervous about giving my very first public presentation. I prepared a talk for the Florida Branch ASM Annual Meeting about our recent research findings that I was conducting for my Master's degree at the University of South Florida. I was wearing my new suit. It was the first suit I had ever owned and I bought it on sale earlier that week since as a full time graduate student, I had to keep within my budget. My shoes were uncomfortable and my knees were shaking so badly I could hardly stand. I don't remember the moderator introducing me or even the first five minutes of my 10 minute talk, but I do remember how the audience murmured when the 35mm slide projector advanced to the epifluorescent photomicrograph of the bright fluorescent green life stages of *Cryptosporidium parvum* against the dark background of the host tissue culture cells. This was the first time an immunofluorescent assay was used to detect infectious *Cryptosporidium* in-vitro. What was so neat about the presentation was that the audience members were fully reclined in the comfortable seats of the Broward Community College Planetarium and those *Cryptosporidium* life stages looked like stars in a galaxy. Maybe that was why I won first place in the student competition that day, but it did make for the most memorable presentation I have ever given. The monetary award more than covered the cost of the suit and helped pay for dinner and the celebratory beer that evening with my professor Joan Rose and the rest of the students.



"Excuse me, sir, would you mind getting the door for us?"



Time for a flashback photo from the Griffin photo archivesTerri Slifko and Pam Cochran (at the time this photo was taken both were graduate students at USF's Dept. Marine Sc.), BCC Planetarium, Florida Branch meeting 1996

As the incoming President of the Florida Branch ASM, I am looking forward to the 2005 Annual Meeting in Fort Lauderdale in April. I hope to become a part of some good memories for those student microbiologists that will present their research.

The 2005 Annual Meeting will be the kick-off of my term as President and I've put together some goals to achieve while in the position. The first and foremost goal is to help organize excellent meeting venues that will benefit the scientists that attend the meetings by providing opportunities to meet new colleague, students, and friends. It goes without saying that networking is essential in our careers as scientists by providing direct interactions with each other, dialogue, and feedback about our work. The Annual Meeting is typically a day and a half of presentations by members and students and gives us an opportunity to network and exchange new information about our work. We designed the forum to allow students to present their research, sometimes for the first time, with the intention that the experience will help prepare them for their thesis defenses and future professional presentations. We present awards to the most outstanding presentations in both the undergraduate and graduate divisions.

The second goal as incoming President is to increase membership, particularly in the Central and South Florida areas. While our members include microbiologists from academia, government, and private industry, our expertise covers a wide spectrum of interests such as public health

microbiology, ecology, oceanography, water pollution microbiology, among others. We encourage a diverse venue and hope to see more abstracts submitted this year than any other year.

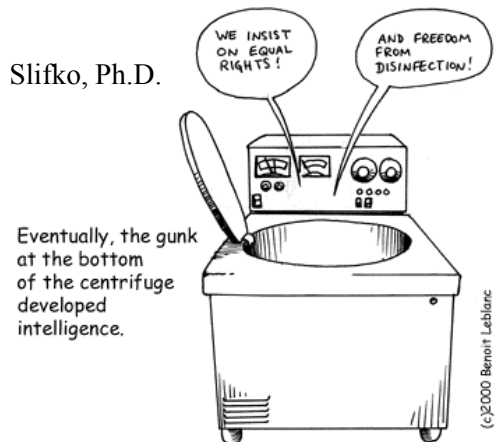
I would like to stress and encourage student participation in the Florida Branch ASM. My mission is to increase the number of full members and student members by maximizing the advertisement of the Annual Meeting and encouraging participation by university microbiology clubs. The Florida Branch will continue to keep our registration dues and conference fees low and affordable as an incentive for meeting participation. Partial undergraduate student travel support will continue to be offered this year and I encourage early requests.

Finally, my mission as Florida Branch President is to keep up with emerging issues. As we face the continuing challenges of research funding, it is important to stay alert about topics such as emerging pathogens, new methods, biotechnology, nanotechnology, security issues, certification requirements, and many others. By keeping an eye on emerging issues, we will be better equipped to address the advances in our research fields which will subsequently reflect on the quality of our work. Thus, I hope to update our Florida Branch website with an emerging issues section that our members can use to post links to new research, papers, websites, and other useful information.

I look forward to my term as Florida Branch ASM President and embrace this opportunity to make a positive difference in the field of microbiology.

Sincerely,

Theresa R. Slifko, Ph.D.



**MESSAGE FROM THE OUTGOING
PRESIDENT**
....time to give up the ship



An appropriate photo.....being tossed overboard.....by my treacherous wife.....offshore of Fort Jefferson in the Dry Tortugas National Park...

Hello All.....it is time for me to hand over the bridge to Terri Slifko after 2 years as Branch President. I have enjoyed the appointment and appreciate all the help from those who have assisted in moving our Branch forward. While I am stepping down as President, I plan on continuing to serve the branch in some capacity (grants, organization of meetings, etc.). It is nice to see that efforts by our members have led to a steady increase in meeting attendance and membership over that last few years. Terri Slifko in particular has been quite successful in this regard. I'm confident that the branch will continue to grow and prosper under her leadership.

As one of the fastest growing states in the nation, the demand for expertise in clinical and environmental microbiology will continue to grow in our region. In addition we are the only ASM affiliate that holds all of its meeting within state boundaries. This provides an environment of education (current research, learning to present data, etc.) that minimizes cost of attendance....the Florida Branch should have a bright future.

...OK, enough of that.....on to something else...

.....I attended a meeting at Foundation Merieux's Les Pensieres Conference Centre, Veyrier-du-Lac,

France, which was titled "Emergence and control of respiratory diseases".....



Les Pensieres Conference Centre, Veyrier-du-Lac, France...located on Lake Annecy in the French Alps...

....interesting meeting.....to make a long story short just take this advice.....a virulent strain of influenza is expected soon.....(does 1918 ring a bell?).....get vaccinated when the vaccine becomes available...every year....and remember.....it's the young and old that are the most susceptible to aggressive infectious agents so make sure your children and elders are vaccinated.....oh, and then there is the story of vaccine availability.....ask me at the meeting.....

...now on to some good news...our meeting...

The 2005 ASM Florida Branch Meeting will be held at the Best Western Rolling Hills Resort – 3501 West Rolling Hills Circle, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33328, on April 1st and 2nd. We have blocked rooms for the meeting for Thursday and Friday nights (\$75.00/night). The phone number for reservations is 1-800-327-7735. Be sure to mention that you are attending the ASM Florida Branch meeting when making reservations. If you have any problems making reservations or need directions please give Terri Slifko (407-836-6950. Phone numbers for all officers are available at our Branch website - www.asm.org/branch/brFL/index.htm) a call or contact her via elm. The Best Western Rolling Hills Resort website is <http://book.bestwestern.com/bestwestern/productInfo.do?propertyCode=10310>



Best Western Rolling Hills Resort.....

On Friday afternoon our ASM Waksman Foundation speaker will be Dr. Ralph Tanner of the University of Oklahoma who will present ‘A funny thing happened on the way from the sewage plant.’ Additional guest speakers for Friday’s session include: 1) Dr. James Hickman of the University of Central Florida who will present ‘The creation of cellular circuits and their integration with silicon-based devices for biological applications’ 2) Dr. Helena Solo-Gabriele of the University of Miami who will present ‘The effect of environmental factors on indicator microbe levels within marine subtropical waters and future efforts to evaluate relationships with human health,’ and 3) Mike Gray of the U.S. Geological Survey who will present research conducted in Carlsbad Caverns with last years ASM Waksman Foundations speaker Diana Northup of the Univ. of New Mexico, titled ‘People, caves and floating bugs.’ On Saturday (after lunch) our guest speaker will be Dr. Christina Kellogg of the U.S. Geological Survey who will present ‘Deep-sea coral microbial ecology.’

The registration desk for the meeting will open on Friday at noon and presentations will start at 1:00pm. Undergraduate (yes, undergraduates can present research at our meetings...we encourage it) and Graduate student presentations will be held on Saturday (the sessions will start either 8:00 or 8:30am...to be determined). Each student presentation is limited to 10 minutes with an extra 5 minutes for questions. Keep this in mind as this is one of the areas used to judge talks.

Last years speaker awards went to: *Graduates*...1st Place, Mike Gray, USF, 2nd Place, Claudia Romero, UCF, and 3rd Place Amy Gilliam, Univ. of Arizona. *Undergraduates*...1st Place, Rachel Gatcombe, UCF

and Orange County Utilities, 2nd Place, Tim Borden, Canterbury, and 3rd Place Amal Hamdi, UCF. Very nice work everyone!

The Branch will sponsor a Friday night mixer from 6:00 to 7:30pm, which will be held in the Pool-side/sun room. There is also rumor of a golf game on Sunday if anyone is interested.



Sunset, February 21st, 2003, Taken during the Florida Branch meeting Friday mixer, Sirata Beach Resort, St. Petersburg Beach.

Once again Florida Branch ASM funds are available to support undergraduate attendance (registration and hotel costs). The National Organization has again provided funding in support of our initiative to promote undergraduate participation in ASM. Please spread the word to any colleagues who may be interested in sending undergraduates to our meeting. Support is offered to all undergraduates regardless of whether they are presenting or not. Any members who plan on bringing or sponsoring undergraduates should contact Terri by phone, (407-836-6950) or e-mail (Terri.Slifko@ocfl.net) prior to the meeting.

Registration and abstract forms (abstracts should be sent to Dr. Slifko by March 18th. 350 word limit,

MSWord, 12font – Times New Roman) for our meeting are available on our website. Thanks again to Chris Kellogg for keeping our website up to date (contact Chris at micocean@aol.com with any suggestions for improving our webpage) and for putting together this years meeting announcement.

Again, I've enjoyed serving as President and I'll see everyone at the Rolling Hills Resort....take care.

Dale W. Griffin

NEWS FROM THE WHO AND THE CDC

If you're interested in outbreak news from a global perspective - check out the World Health Organization - <http://www.who.int/csr/don/en/>. Some recent news from that site is pasted below.

Disease Outbreak News

Most recent news items

2 February 2005

Avian influenza – situation in Viet Nam and Cambodia - update 8

[Full text](#)

31 January 2005

Acute haemorrhagic fever syndrome in East Timor

[Full text](#)

28 January 2005

Meningococcal disease in Chad - update 2

[Full text](#)

28 January 2005

Meningococcal disease in the Philippines - update 2

[Full text](#)

Archives

- [Disease outbreaks by year](#)
- [Archive by disease](#)
- [Disease outbreaks by country](#)

22 October 2004

Surveillance for Waterborne-Disease Outbreaks Associated with Recreational Water US, 2001-2002. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss5308a1.htm>

Surveillance for Waterborne –Disease Outbreaks Associated with Recreational Water – US, 2001-2002.

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss5308a2.htm>



"Emergency hospital during 1918 influenza epidemic, Camp Funston, Kansas"

www.vaccineinformation.org/photos/flu_afp001a.jpg

Courtesy of the National Museum of Health and Medicine, Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, Washington, D.C., Image NCP 1603

News from the Centers for Disease Control -

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/>.

Weekly Report: Influenza Summary Update

Week ending January 22, 2005-Week 3

The following information may be quoted:

Synopsis:

During week 3 (January 16-22, 2005)*, influenza activity continued to increase in the United States. Five hundred ninety-three (18.5%) specimens tested by U.S. World Health Organization (WHO) and National Respiratory and Enteric Virus Surveillance System (NREVSS) collaborating laboratories were positive for influenza viruses. The proportion of patient visits to sentinel providers for influenza-like illness (ILI) is above the national baseline and the proportion of deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza is below the epidemic threshold. There have been three influenza-associated pediatric deaths reported to CDC this season. Fourteen states and New York City reported widespread influenza activity, 17 states reported regional influenza activity, and 10 states reported local activity. Nine states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico reported sporadic influenza activity.

Laboratory Surveillance*:

During week 3, WHO and NREVSS laboratories in the United States reported testing 3,214 specimens for influenza viruses, of which 593 (18.5%) were positive. Of these, 49 were influenza A (H3N2) viruses. 481 were influenza A viruses that were not

subtyped, and 63 were influenza B viruses. Since October 3, WHO and NREVSS laboratories in the United States have tested a total of 52,174 specimens for influenza viruses and 4,017 (7.7%) were positive. Among the 4,017 influenza viruses, 3,458 (86.1%) were influenza A viruses and 559 (13.9%) were influenza B viruses. Nine hundred thirty (26.9%) of the 3,458 influenza A viruses have been subtyped; 925 (99.5%) were influenza A (H3N2) and 5 (0.5%) were influenza A (H1N1) viruses. The largest numbers of specimens testing positive for influenza virus have been reported from the New England (924) and Mid-Atlantic (991) regions. The percentage of total isolates that are influenza type A virus is the highest in these same regions: 98% in the New England region and 97% in the Mid-Atlantic region. Influenza A viruses represent a smaller proportion of positive results in the other seven regions, ranging from 91% in the East North Central region to 60% in the Mountain region.

ASM MEETINGS

Calendar of Meetings and Workshops

ASM ANNUAL MEETINGS

For information about General Meeting and ICAAC, contact the Meetings Dept., American Society for Microbiology, 1752 N Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036; fax: (202) 942-9340; E-mail: MeetingsInfo@asmusa.org; WWW: <http://www.asm.org>.

20-23 March 2005. *ASM Biodefense Research Meeting*. Baltimore, MD. <http://www.asmbiodefense.org>

3-5 June 2005. *ASM Conference for Undergraduate Educators (ASMCUE)*. Emory University, Atlanta, GA. <http://www.asmcue.org>

5-9 June 2005. American Society for Microbiology General Meeting (105th). Atlanta, GA. <http://www.asm.org>

21-24 September 2005. Interscience Conference on Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy (45th). New Orleans, LA. <http://www.icaac.org>

Information on a variety of national and international meeting/workshops can be found in the ASM web site - <http://www.asmusa.org>

ASM MISSION

The ASM is the world's largest scientific society of individuals interested in the microbiological sciences. The Society's mission is to advance microbiological sciences through the pursuit of scientific knowledge and dissemination of the results of fundamental and applied research. ASM will:

- Support programs of education, training and public information;
- Publish journals and books; convene meetings, workshops and colloquia;
- Promote the contributions and promise of the microbiological sciences;
- Recognize achievement and distinction among its practitioners;
- Set standards of ethical and professional behavior.

MICROCOMM is published as an annual newsletter of the Florida Branch ASM. Besides meeting announcements, we will endeavor to bring you local branch news and items of interest. We welcome contributions to the newsletter from our members. Anything that you feel would be of interest to other microbiologists in Florida is welcome.



Please send your input to: Dale Griffin, US Geological Survey, 600 4th St. South, St Petersburg, FL 33701 or e-mail to dgriffin@usgs.gov