



PSNA News

Phytochemical Society of North America
Sociedad Fitoquímica de América del Norte
Société Phytochimique de L'Amérique du Nord

Volume 58, Number 1

Spring 2020

Message from Argelia Lorence, PSNA President



Dear colleagues,

I write this message wishing you and your loved ones are healthy and safe.

In early March the PSNA leadership and I had to make a difficult decision, postponing the PSNA meeting in Kelowna, Canada until 2021. As you can imagine this was not an easy decision to make, but we are convinced it was the best course of action at this time for the health of our members and our extended communities.

In early April I consulted with members of the Executive and Advisory Committees regarding the best way to transfer responsibilities between me and Dorothea Tholl, our Elected President. Several of the past PSNA presidents including Fred Stevens, Mark Berhow, and Deyu Xie advised Dorothea and I to continue serving in our current positions for the coming months to make sure all operations continue as planned. We will do the official transfer of responsibilities between the current and elected president at the 2021 meeting in Kelowna. As soon as we have a final date for the annual meeting, we will widely announce it.

I am honored to report that Prof. Da-neel Ferreira, an Emeritus Professor of Pharmacognosy from the University of Mississippi will receive the Phytochemical Pioneer Award at the 2021 meeting. We look forward to honoring a giant in our field.

As you may know the Plant Journal is sponsoring the PSNA Early Career Award for postdocs/research scientists who are ready to start an

independent position in an academic/research institute or government laboratory. The PSNA Awards Committee has reviewed applications and soon will made announcement of the winners of this important award. The winners will give an oral presentation at the 2021 meeting and will contribute a paper to be published in the Plant Journal.

I look forward to see all of you at the 2021 meeting in Kelowna. For the ones of you who like to plan in advance please make plans to travel to Blacksburg, VA in 2022 and to East Lansing, MI in 2023.

I want to close wishing you the best for the coming months. Paraphrasing a quote I love I wish each of us choses to plant seeds of happiness, hope, success, and love as that usually comes back in abundance as a law of nature.

Stay safe friends

Argelia



In this issue:

Award Updates
2020 Meeting in Kelowna, BC Canada rescheduled to July 26-30, 2021

The web PDF version can be downloaded from the website: www.pсна-online.org.



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Past PSNA Presidents

The Phytochemical Society of North America

The Phytochemical Society of North America (PSNA) is a nonprofit scientific organization whose membership is open to anyone with an interest in phytochemistry and the role of plant substances in related fields. Annual membership dues are U.S. \$60 for regular members and \$30 for student members. Annual meetings featuring symposium topics of current interest and contributed papers by conference participants are held throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico. PSNA meetings provide participants with exposure to the cutting-edge research of prominent international scientists, but are still small enough to offer informality and intimacy that are conducive to the exchange of ideas. This newsletter is circulated to members to keep them informed of upcoming meetings and developments within the society, and to provide a forum for the exchange of information and ideas. If you would like additional information about the PSNA, or if you have material that you would like included in the newsletter, please contact the PSNA Secretary or visit our website at www.pсна-online.org. Annual dues and changes of address should be sent to the PSNA Treasurer. Also check the PSNA website for regular updates.

The PSNA is an all volunteer organization which depends on its membership to run the organization. We appreciate the time and effort these volunteers are putting in to keep the organization up and running. As a member, please consider volunteering to serve on one of these committees. The PSNA can always use more help!

PSNA EXECUTIVES

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2020 Plant Journal- PSNA Early Career Awards

The PSNA is pleased to announce the first recipients of The Plant Journal-PSNA Early Career Awards. These new awards were established between PSNA and The Plant Journal to foster the careers of postdoctoral researchers and research scientists, who are ready to start their own independent position in academia, research institutions, or government labs.

This year's recipients are **Armando Alcazar-Magana**, **Lucas Busta**, and **Mehran Dastmalchi**.

Each recipient will receive \$1000 and present their research at the 2021 PSNA Annual Meeting at the University of British Columbia in Kelowna, Canada. The PSNA and The Plant Journal are delighted to support these exceptional early career scientists as they continue to build up their careers.

Congratulations to all of them!

Bjoern Hamberger (Chair, Awards Committee), Argelia Lorence (President), Dorothea Tholl (President Elect, *Plant Journal* Editor), Lee Sweetlove (*Plant Journal*, Editor in Chief)



Armando Alcázar-Magana



Armando Alcázar was born in Chandío, a rural town located in western Mexico. He developed his passion for chemistry after winning the gold medal at the Mexican National Chemistry Olympiad twice. Five years later, Armando received his bachelors in Mexico and earned the highest GPA of his class.

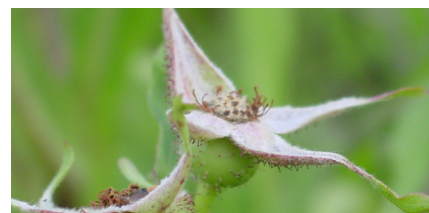
In 2016, Armando received his Ph.D. degree at the University of Guanajuato in Analytical Chemistry and graduated summa cum laude honorable mention with five published research articles and worked in two research labs in Australia and Japan during this time.

In October 2016, Armando joined Oregon State University as a postdoctoral researcher under the direction of professors Claudia Maier and Fred Stevens. His research focuses on the development of analytical methods for in-depth chemical characterization of plant extracts, botanicals and other biological samples. Since 2017, Armando joined PSNA and has attended all subsequent meetings. In 2019, Armando received the Young Investigator Award for recognition in scientific excellence presented at the Linus Pauling Institute International Conference, in the same year he was honored to serve as PSNA's Chair of the Young Members Committee.

Lucas Busta



I am fascinated by the unique chemistries that biological systems use to survive harsh environments. My research uses informatics to unite classical analytical and organic chemistry with emerging high-throughput DNA sequencing technologies to understand the molecular structures, biosynthesis, bioactivities, and physical properties of plant chemicals, polymers and composites. My goal is to use this approach to develop and apply new knowledge about chemical biology to sustaining and improving human life. You can read more about phytochemicals and the important roles they play in our daily lives and the global economy on my phytochemistry blog (plantsarechemists.blogspot.com) and Twitter feed (@PlantsRChemists). I am currently focused on the surface chemistry of diverse plant species and coordinate a citizen science project aimed at cataloging the chemical composition of plant exteriors. If you or anyone you know would like to participate, please contact me via the project website (lucasbusta.github.io/citizen_science).



Mehran Dastmalchi



Postdoctoral Fellow

De Luca lab at Brock University
St. Catharines, Canada

*Starting a new position as Assistant Professor at McGill in 2020, Fall

Brief bio: I am interested in the diversity of plant biochemistry and the metabolic machinery involved in the process. Thus far, I have studied the biosynthesis of valuable natural products in soybean, opium poppy, and Madagascar periwinkle. My research career began in the lab of Dr. Dhaubhadel at Western University (2010-2015), and my work culminated in the discovery of a *metabolon* (enzyme complex) in the isoflavonoid pathway. From there, I joined Dr. Facchini at the University of Calgary, as a postdoctoral fellow (2015-2018) to investigate morphine biosynthesis in opium poppy. We found a gene encoding an unexpected catalyst for an assumed spontaneous reaction; this discovery, along with that of an alkaloid transporter, has facilitated the modular assembly of opioid production in engineered microbes. Since 2018, I have been working with Dr. De Luca at Brock, tackling specialized metabolism in Madagascar periwinkle, known for its production of the anti-cancer bisindole alkaloids vinblastine and vincristine. I have been very interested

in the compartmentalization of the different branches of this convoluted pathway. In the Fall of 2020, I will be starting a lab in the Faculty of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences at McGill University, focusing on specialized metabolism in legume species.

The Plant Journal- PSNA Early Career Awards

Deadline for application:

15th January, 2021.

Amount of the award: \$1000/
award

Numbers of awards to be given each year: up to three awards (The number of awards will depend on the availability of funds).

Any unused funds will be used for the following year's award.

Eligibility:

The applicant must be a current and active member of the PSNA for at least one year. Active participation in PSNA meetings and activities will be an important evaluation criteria of the applications.

This award is for postdocs/research scientists who are ready to start an independent position in an academic/research institute/government labs.

The applicant should have at least 3-4 peer-reviewed paper published as first author preferably in the field of phytochemistry or a related area.

The applicant should not have received an award from PSNA in the same category.

The awardee will not be eligible for the PSNA travel award and the poster award.

Application package:

Applicants will apply directly (no nomination) and provide the following information with their application package.

Current membership in the PSNA.

The number of PSNA meetings previously attended.

Copy of relevant publications.

Letter of support from the postdoc advisor/s confirming that the applicant is ready to start their own lab.

Abstract of the oral presentation for the potential topic for the invited review.

Research Statement (limit three pages) describing their significant contributions to date, future goal, and perspective on phytochemical research.

Expectations from the awardee:

The applicant must give an oral presentation (30 min).

The awardee should acknowledge the support of sponsors of the award in their talks.

The *Plant Journal* will extend an invitation to the awardee and their supervisor to contribute a TPJ Focused Review for publication.

The outcome of the application:

The PSNA awards committee will be responsible for all the decisions related to the awards.

All applicants will be notified about the outcome of their application by **5th March, 2021**.

Job Listings

<http://www.psna-online.org/jobs.html>

Research Chemist, Hops Extract Corporation of America (HECA), Yakima, WA www.hopsteiner.com
Send Applications to stimmermans@hopsteiner.com Posting expires: 5/31/2020. Posted May 6, 2020.

Lab Analyst Full Time, SteepHill.com. This is an analytical position responsible for advanced laboratory support functions. Apply to: Corrina Blackbill, Human Resources, 717-557-1844, corrina.brackbill@pa.steephill.com. Posted May 6, 2020.

Assistant Professor, One-Year Term Faculty Position Chemistry - Plant Biochemistry Northern Michigan University. To apply for this position please visit: <https://employMe.nmu.edu>. Posted April 30, 2020.

PhD student at York University in Toronto, Canada in Dr. Nik Kovinich lab studying cannabinoid gene regulatory networks (GRNs) and bioengineering Cannabis sativa using the CRISPR/CAS9 system. Contact Dr. Nik Kovinich at kovinich@yorku.ca. Posted Jan 21, 2020.

For more details visit the PSNA webpage at <http://www.psna-online.org/jobs.html>.

PSNA Newsletters Back Issue Catalog

Dr. John Romeo, a Past PSNA President and a Life Time Member of the PSNA, sent his collection of back issues of the *PSNA Newsletter* dating back to 1976 to the current editor. These have now been scanned to PDF digital format and have recently been posted on the PSNA website. This expands our collection of back issues that had only gone back to 2000 or so.

This is a unique collection that catalogs the events and proceedings of the PSNA meetings as well as providing some interesting articles on the state of phytochemical research over the years. If you get a chance go to the PSNA website and click the publications link, download some of the newsletter sets and enjoy!

Future Meeting Committee

Dorothea Tholl (Chair),
Sangeeta Dhaubhadel (Vice Chair),
Philipp Zerbe (member),
Denisse Atenea de Loera Carrera (member)

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Dhirenda Kumar (Chair),
Daniel Owens (member)

Young Members Committee

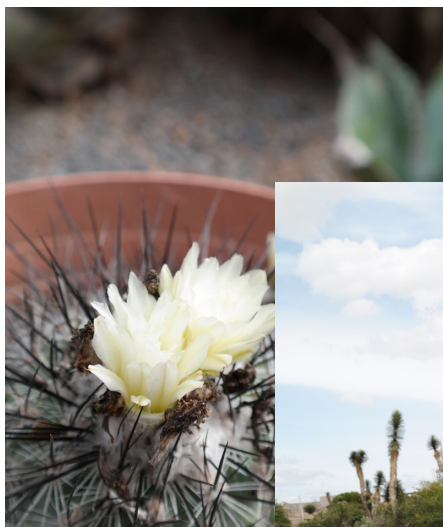
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Armando Alcazar (Co-Chair OSU),
Cody Bekkering (member, UC-D),
Lucas Busta (member, UN-L)
Monica Borghi (Max Planck Inst.)
Aaron Birchfield (ETSU)

Awards & Recognition Committee

Björn Hamberger (Chair),
Argelia Lorence (member),
Deyu Xie (member)
Aruna Kilaru (member)
Hiroshi Maeda (member)

Website Updates and Newsletter

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PSNA
2020
2021

KELOWNA
CANADA
July 26-30, 2021

PHYTOCHEMICAL SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA
SOCIÉTÉ PHYTOCHIMIQUE DE L'AMÉRIQUE DU NORD
SOCIEDAD FITOQUÍMICA DE AMÉRICA DEL NORTE

UBC Okanagan Campus, Kelowna, BC
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Phytochemical Society of North America
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Soci  t   Phytochimique de L'Am  rique du Nord
New Member Application Form

Please fill in the following application and return to the Treasurer with your dues payment. Once your application has been processed, you will receive newsletters and special mailings. You are also eligible for PSNA member discounts on the Recent Advances in Phytochemistry series (See Website).

Payments should be made by one of the following: check drawn on a US checking account, US travelers check, or US money order, International Money Order, Credit Card on the PSNA Website or Paypal payment to psnatreasurer@gmail.com. Please make check or money order payable to the Phytochemical Society of North America.

Credit Card Payment: Paying membership dues online via credit card has now been established. Please select the link from the PSNA homepage to pay by credit card. A paypal account is NOT required but will expedite the process. If using a paypal account, send directly to psnatreasurer@gmail.com

Advance Payment: It is now possible to pay dues in advance. If you wish to take advantage of this feature, please indicate above the years for which you would like to pay in advance.

Dues schedule: Regular member - \$60.00 per year
 Student member - \$30.00 per year

Return this statement along with your payment to: Dhirendra Kumar, Ph.D.
 423 Brown Hall Box 70703
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Name (Dr., Mr., Mrs., Ms.):

Mailing Address: Line 1: _____

Line 2: _____

City: State/Province: Zip/Postal Code: _____

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E-Mail: _____