



# PLANT BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

## NEWSLETTER

### SPRING SEMESTER 2007

FRANKLIN COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA, ATHENS, GA 30602-7271



### *Remembering Bruce L. Haines 1941-2007*

Bruce Lee Haines, a valued colleague and friend, passed away February 16, 2007 in Athens, Georgia. Bruce was a dedicated teacher and researcher in plant ecology. His research interests included sulfur cycling and production in roots, as well as forest succession and sustainable land-use. Bruce also maintained long-term studies of leaf-cutting ants at La Selva Biological Station in the lowland tropical forest of Costa Rica. More recently he measured long-term recolonization of formerly agricultural fields in areas near the Las

Cruces Biological Station in southern Costa Rica. His work took him to numerous parts of the world, including Costa Rica, Panama, Puerto Rico (Luquillo LTER), Venezuela, and the forests and watersheds of the Coweeta Hydrologic Laboratory (Coweeta LTER) in western North Carolina.

Bruce was born in Long Beach, CA, on April 26, 1941. He lived with his botanist parents Lee and Katherine Haines and sisters in Topanga Canyon, California. Bruce came by his interests in the tropics very early. His parents took the family on several field trips down the Inter-American Highway, camping along the way and botanizing in several countries in Central and

*Remembering Bruce continues on page 3*

### Generosity

Bruce left essentially his entire estate to the Plant Biology Department. His wish was to establish an endowment fund that would enhance field botany/ecology in the Department. The endowment is expected to provide funds for two Named Professorships and a travel fund to support field research for students and junior faculty. The "Haines Family" Professorships will focus on the belowground component of plant ecology (e.g. plant roots and their interactions with other plants, soil organisms and soil processes) and on the aboveground component of plant ecology.

Bruce also left his extensive library to the department. The books have been dispersed to the Herbarium, Odum Reading Room and several labs where students have easy access to the material.

Bruce's estate is still being processed so the funds are not official yet, but I wanted you to know the extent of his generosity to the department.

Lisa Donovan  
Professor, Plant Biology



# Where are they now?

Catching up with former graduate student Rob Alba and recently “retired” dynamic duo

Lee Pratt & Marie-Michèle Cordonnier-Pratt



## Meet Rob Alba

Rob Alba graduated from UGA in 1998. Lee Pratt was his major professor. Rob recalls that, “Lee expects a lot, but he is a great scientist and a very good mentor. I feel like he really prepared me for my research career in plant biology. Among other things, Lee

taught me how to write and organize manuscripts, what a good control experiment is, how to keep a good lab notebook, and most importantly, how to be a good research scientist. He always challenged me to be better. In the end, his high expectations very much paid off for me”.

Rob is now a research associate at the Boyce Thompson Institute (BTI) for Plant Research affiliated with Cornell University in Ithaca, NY. “BTI is a fantastic place to work and to do plant research. Great resources, great people, great plant science,” said Rob.

Rob’s interest in tomato fruit development started in Lee’s lab. “I have continued working on the role of fruit-

localized phytochromes ever since. I have also since learned some new technology and expanded into the area of phytonutrient biochemistry, plant genomics, gene expression profiling, and bioinformatics. For the most part, all my work still focuses on tomato species”.

On a personal note Rob says, “I am in a wonderful relationship with a great woman, who I cannot imagine being without. No kids yet, but I look forward to children sometime during the next five years. Together, we love to travel, ski, eat great food, read, practice our technophile tendencies, and enjoy our pets (1 cat and 1 dog)”.

*Rob recently returned to Athens and gave a seminar in the Department of Horticulture.*



Marie-Michèle Cordonnier Pratt and Lee Pratt are enjoying both work and play.

## An interview with Lee Pratt

**Q.** You recently retired from UGA - congratulations! I understand that you haven’t stopped working.

**A.** No, I haven’t stopped working. But, I have learned to take longer vacations and to profit in other ways as well

from having more time available for ‘selfish’ pursuits. We (here I include my spouse, Marie-Michèle) have enjoyed enormously the possibility to continue half-time. Doing so permits us to use our ‘work’ time for that part of our jobs that was most enjoyable. In essence, we have simply moved our research program from Plant Biology to the Office of Research Services. We are now located in what is called Riverbend North, the oldest building at Riverbend, adjacent to the original CCRC. From here we can now collaborate with others who might want to benefit from the equipment and expertise we have developed in the general areas of genomics and bioinformatics. In addition, we now supervise service facilities that provide DNA sequencing, genotyping, and related bioinformatics support.

**Q.** I know you had many students work in your lab. You mentioned that Rob Alba was one of your favorites (we are featuring him in the article with you). What made him one of your favorite students?

**A.** I have had several ‘favorite’ students during my career, each perhaps for different reasons. Rob Alba is definitely included among them in large part because of the maturity, self-motivation, enthusiasm and independence he displayed while in our laboratory. Of course, he came to our laboratory after spending considerable time elsewhere in the department. Nonetheless, it is still remarkable that he completed a de novo research project in a short period of time, and published it in highly respectable journals – all with little need for assistance from me.

**Q.** What are you doing for fun? Still dancing?

*Where are they now continues on Page 3*



*Remembering Bruce continued from page 1*

South America. A bromeliad discovered by Bruce and his father on one of these trips was named *Vriesea hainesiorum*.

Haines attended high school in suburban Los Angeles and obtained his B.S. degree at California State University in Northridge. He earned his M.S. degree in Plant Ecology with Cornelius Muller at University of California



*Dave Coleman tells a story about Bruce*

Santa Barbara in 1964, and went on to obtain a Ph.D. degree with Dwight Billings in the Botany Department at Duke University in 1970. After four years as a junior faculty member at Illinois State University, Dr. Haines joined the Botany Department (now Plant Biology) at University of Georgia in 1975 on a postdoctoral fellowship. Initially he worked on research at the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory and several research projects at the Coweeta Hydrologic Laboratory under the tutelage of Drs. Carl Monk and Dac Crossley. Bruce moved from Instructor to Associate Professor in Plant Biology during his tenure at the University of Georgia.

Bruce had an offbeat sense of humor, often remarking that most problems that a person faced could be solved by spending 8 hours at 500 degrees C in a muffle furnace, and frequently apologizing to bystanders for his bad habit of wanting a meal 2 or 3 times per day. He was indefatigable in his research and his quest to find out how ecosystems work. He mentored generations of graduate students, over 23 at latest count. He taught courses that were designed to make students question any and all concepts, particularly in his recent course on “The Rise and Fall of Civilizations”, noting the effects of lack of renewable resources on their failures in sustainability. Bruce’s enthusiasm for ecology enthralled many students, and his lunchtime discussions outside the UGA Creamery were lively and attracted a diverse group of students and colleagues. But Bruce was truly in his element out in the field and never happier than when in the midst of nature, regardless of weather or insect conditions, covering long distances along trails or no trails at all, wherever his curiosity and interests took him.

Dr. Haines published over sixty papers in refereed journals.

*by Chris Peterson, Dac Crossley & Dave Coleman*

- a modified version of a “*Resolution of respect*” from the *Bulletin of the Ecological Society of America*.



*Bruce’s brother-in-law Bob and his sister Carol attended the ice cream social & memorial service for Bruce on*



*March 30, 2007. A friend and colleague, Dave Wenner, is seen in the background.*

*Where are they now from Page 2*

A. A lot more of what we have always been doing, as well as a few things new. Naturally, we spend lots of time in France. Retirement began with a six-week vacation on the French Riviera and in the alps, something that would have been impossible while running a research lab and dealing with the other customary responsibilities of a faculty member. We enjoy visiting with our many friends in both places, with our favorite restaurants, and especially serious hiking or skiing in the mountains, depending upon the season.

We can also, of course, spend more time with family, both in California and in Paris, and can add in trips to places like Morocco, where we traveled from Casablanca to the end of the road and beyond into the Sahara Desert and, soon, Park City, Utah. And, we have finally managed to take the time to exercise at the Ramsey Center, complete with a trainer to get us started well.

Marie-Michèle would like soon to get back to her artistic pursuits (painting, sculpting) and I would like to think about finishing projects that have been waiting for 15+ years, such as installing hand-painted – by Marie-Michèle – tiles in our kitchen. And, yes, we are still ballroom dancing - waltz, tango, foxtrot, swing, rumba, etc.

Visit their Research Services laboratory on-line at <http://www.ors.uga.edu/lgb>.

# Faculty Awards



2006

**Barry Palevitz** received the Outstanding Faculty Advisor Award



2006

**Lisa Donovan** was awarded a growth chamber replacement grant funded by NSF



2006

**Steve Hubbell** received the Ecological Society of America Cooper Award



2007

**Sue Wessler** received the Southeastern Universities Research Association (SURA) Distinguished Scientist Award. This was the first such award given by SURA



2007

**Zheng-Hua Ye** received the Sandy Beaver Outstanding Teaching Award

## We got mail!

### News from our Alumni

Thanks a lot for keeping up with me. I really enjoy hearing from y'all.

I graduated with my MS in 1978, so there are probably few folks left who remember me -- possibly Marshall Darley or Bruce Haines, if they are still there. I was saddened to read about Wilbur Duncan. I remember traipsing through more than one bog in his course on aquatic plants!

My youngest child will graduate from high school next year, so I am preparing to re-enter the work force in the next year or so, probably as a writing teacher. My BA is in journalism, and I spent several years as a tech editor and writer before becoming a home-schooling mom, so I guess this is a natural career move.

Thanks again for keeping up with me.  
Regards,  
Rene' L. Hinds  
Gainesville, GA

I just got the latest Plant Biology Department Newsletter. Seems like so long ago that I was in Athens but the Newsletter helps reconnect me to that time in my life. I thought I would let you know where I am now - I can't remember if I did this before or not.

After finishing my degree in Athens with Rowan Sage I went to medical school in Augusta. It was a definite paradigm shift from plants but it was a good move for me. After finishing medical school I went to Brown for my residency in Ob/Gyn followed by a fellowship at the Cleveland Clinic. I'm currently an assistant professor at Dartmouth Medical School. Still ended up in academics but not in plants.

Thanks for the newsletter.  
Jim

James L. Whiteside, MD  
Assistant Professor, Dartmouth Medical School  
Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology

## Stay in touch!

Email us at [carla@plantbio.uga.edu](mailto:carla@plantbio.uga.edu)



# our evolution

## Celebrating Recent Faculty Retirees



David Porter and Marshall Darley retired at the end of the spring semester in 2006. David and his wife Jean moved to Maine. David is isolating thraustochytrids 1-2 days a week in Joyce Longcore's lab at the University of Maine in Orono. Marshall is still teaching and working on Project Focus - Fostering our Community's Understanding of Science. Barry Palevitz retired in January 2007. He is teaching Bruce Haines' class and still advising undergraduate students. Lee Pratt and his wife Marie-Michèle Cordonnier-Pratt retired after 27 and 15 years respectively in the department. Read their story on page two.

## & Welcoming New Faculty



John Burke

Plant Evolutionary Genetics



Kathrin Stanger-Hall

Biology Educ. & Animal Communication



Jim Leebens-Mack

Plant Systematics & Evolutionary Biology

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## Giving to the Department

We are grateful to Bruce Haines for his generous donation to the department! Your gifts create new opportunities for our faculty, staff and students. If you are interested in making a contribution to the department or learning more about estate planning please don't hesitate to contact me or visit our website [www.plantbio.uga.edu](http://www.plantbio.uga.edu) and click on "Make a gift". Thank you! *Russell L. Malmberg, Department Head*

# Student Awards

*Congratulations to all of our students!*



**Cara Gormally & Billy Duval**  
received the 2006 Jaworski Travel Awards

## GRADUATE SCHOOL AWARDS

**Ava Howard** - GRSC 7770 Assistantship - Fall 2006

**Jeff Lake, Steve Hovick, Lisa Kanizay** - UGA Presidential - Fall 06 - Spring 2007

**Tianle Chen, Linda Lee, Luanna Prevost, Scott Gevaert** - Graduate School Assistantship - Fall 2006 - Spring 2007

**Ava Howard & Beau Brouillette** - \$350.00 Graduate School Travel Awards - Summer 2006

**Tanya Kriangkripipat, Lifeng Lin, Rebecca Lindsey, Yainitza Rodriguez** - \$600 Graduate School Travel Awards - Dec. 2006



**Dawn Holligan** - 2006 Excellence in Undergraduate Research Mentoring Award



**Billy Duval** also received 1st place in the SREL Grad. Student Symposium for best oral presentation.



**Yainitza Rodriguez** - Amer. Soc. for Microbiology Robert D. Watkins Graduate Research Fellowship (2006-07)



**Rebecca Lindsey** - Diane C. Davison Scholar Award (2006-2007)



**Jim Kellner** -

- Student Travel Grant, International Biogeography Society & NSF, 2007
- Am. Society for Photogrammetry & Remote Sensing GeoEye Award
- Best Student Poster Award, Ecogeographic Rules Session / 3rd Biennial Conference for the International Society for Biogeography, Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain, 2007
- NSF Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant

## More Awards!

**Beau Brouillette** - \$600 scholarship from Summer Institute of Statistical Genetics

**Cara Gormally** - Marie Mellinger Field Research Award 11/2006 & NOAA's National Estuarine Research Reserve Program Graduate Research Fellowship

**Sarah Jardeleza-Winger** - Grad. School Teaching Portfolio Certificate, Spring '06

**Steve Hovick** - 2006 Pymatuning Laboratory of Ecology McKinley & Darbaker Grant

**Ava Howard** - 2006 Grants in Aid of Research

**Luanna Prevost** - Latin American & Caribbean Studies Institute Travel Award

**Jamie Estill** - 2006 - 1st place (tie) for best student poster presented at UGA's Plant Ecological Genetics Group Meeting



**Lisa Krueger & Rachel Spigler**  
Outstanding Teaching Assistants  
January 2007

April & Nov 2006

Plant Biology Department  
Palfrey Research Grants

April/06 - **Beau Brouillette, Xiaogang Gu, Jim Kellner, Lisa Krueger, Jeff Lake, Haibao Tang, Luanna Prevost, Rachel Spigler, Chris Topp, Megan Van Etten & Victoria Vazquez.**

November/06 - **Lifeng Lin, Thanyanuch Kriangkripipat, Rebecca Lindsey, Yainitza Rodriguez, David Wills, & Xiaolan Zhang**

## PLANT BIOLOGY GRADUATE STUDENT SYMPOSIUM AWARDS - FALL 2006

**Rachel Spigler** - \$200.00 1st place paper  
**Billy Duval** - \$75.00 2nd place paper - (tie)  
**Jamie Estill** - \$75.00 2nd place paper - (tie)  
**Yu-Yun Chen** - \$150.00 1st place poster  
**Beau Brouillette** - \$75.00 2nd place poster  
**Xuexian Li** - \$50.00 3rd place poster



# STAFF SPOTLIGHT:


*Andy Tull* is planning to retire in June 2007 and enjoy more time with his wife Karen and their two sons, Ryan and Geoffrey. He has been our greenhouse manager for the past 25 years. Andy said his interest in plants started at an early age. "I like to think that my interest in growing plants started with my grandparents who were small-time farmers and depended greatly on their large vegetable gardens. Spending time on the farm as a kid was like heaven. I came to UGA in the mid 70's to major in horticulture and plant pathology, and like many others, I wanted to stay in Athens if possible. After graduation and then working as a horticulture research tech for a few years, the greenhouse manager's position opened up. I was thrilled to get the job. I could stay connected to research, and use my degree to grow plants in this fantastic greenhouse facility."



While there are many wonderful aspects of the job there are always a few things Andy would change. "I was fortunate to get this job as it's been a nice fit for me. Practicing horticulture, managing a modern greenhouse facility, working in a university setting with scientists and students curious about plants, have all been a great experience. I've really enjoyed assisting the graduate students with their greenhouse projects. Greenhouse work is fairly routine, so the always-changing faces of new students and new projects helped keep the job fresh. And it's been enjoyable to grow all the unusual plants in the teaching collection, as well as the challenging research plants. The least favorite aspects of the job are easy. After working at one location for so many years, I feel like I'm rooted in like the plants. In horticulture, the term pot-bound is used when it's time for a larger container, so maybe that's me. Pest control has always been another least favorite aspect of the job."

Over 25 years Andy has seen many changes in the Greenhouse Facility. He noted, "the greenhouse facility has expanded a lot while I've been here. When I started in 1980, there were only 3 greenhouses, the growth chamber facility was located on the 4th floor of Plant Sciences, and I was the only full time employee. Some of our department's major greenhouse users at that time were Sam Jones, Bruce Haines and Dave Giannasi, and the greenhouse space was mainly used for systematics and ecology. Since then, our greenhouse space has more than doubled, and this spring, construction on the facility's 7th greenhouse will begin. And after taking care of an aging growth chamber facility for over 25 years, the department will have all new chambers by this summer. It's interesting that when I started this job, I also took care of the 'old' greenhouse facility that was used by our department. It was on the roof of Biosciences Building and was only about 1500 sq feet. So yes, I've seen a lot of changes."

His future plans don't involve growing and caring for plants except for the ones in his vegetable garden. And, he won't be starting his own plant nursery like many have suggested. Andy said, "I'm looking for a change from plant care. I do want to travel around some with Karen. I'm interested in the local history of northeast Georgia and would like to renovate an old building in Carlton, GA. My future plans are pretty wide open. I've really enjoyed working here with Melanie, Mike, and all the interesting people around the department, but look forward to something new."

We wish you all the best Andy! 



**Kim Decker** left the department to find a job closer to home in Milledgeville, GA.

The department welcomes new hire **Tonya Cox**. She will be at the front desk in the main office.

**Welcome Tonya!**

## Changes

**Rob Specker** has resigned as Lab Coordinator and Culture Collections curator. **Dr. Brigitte Bruns** will be stepping into that position for the next year.



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#### IN THIS ISSUE

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 Please visit [www.plantbio.uga.edu](http://www.plantbio.uga.edu) to learn more about Plant Biology at UGA 



### *Remembering Bruce L. Haines*

*Colleagues, staff, students, family and friends gathered in the Jaworski Amphitheater on March 30, 2007 for a memorial service to celebrate the life of Bruce L. Haines. Ice cream, cookies and lemonade were served and stories were told to honor and remember Bruce. A tribute to Bruce begins on page one.* 