between ASM, the European microbiology community, and beyond.

**Charles Dorman**  
ASM Ambassador to Western Europe

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**Branches: ASM Activities at the Local Level**

**Branches@ASM, The 2011 Forum in NOLA**

The 2011 ASM General Meeting (GM) in New Orleans, La., is now a fond memory. As in past years, the GM started for many of us with the Branch Officers’ Forum, where Branch officers met with the Branch Organization Committee (BOC) and other ASM representatives to network, share Branch success stories, and make plans for the coming year. The Forum agenda supported the past year’s theme—Come Join Us! Branch officers confirmed the theme was apropos, as more and more of you did just that—joined and enjoyed programming offered by our 35 Branches. The Forum reflected new ideas responsible for the increased attendance at meetings, a trend which must be continued.

First, Diane Citron, Southern California Branch President, gave an overview of programming and promotional incentives (such as reduced registration fees and cash prizes for poster presentations) offered by their Branch, which specifically targeted new technologists and students. The highlight of their outreach was a mentoring program, fostered by Janet Hindler, in which each student attendee was assigned a mentor who was available for questions and networking assistance throughout the Branch meeting. The particulars of the program are in the March issue of *Microbe* (Microbe, March 2011, p. 145).

Next, Omar Oyarzabal gave a presentation on activities of the Southeastern Branch (covering Alabama, Georgia, and northern Florida), particularly focusing on how their Branch supports and interacts with its affiliated Student Chapters. The common thread to each example was how programming sought to make the science of our discipline approachable. The highlight of his talk was the description of the “micro-smack down” held annually at their meeting. Read more about the activity in Don McGarey’s previously published article (*Microbe*, February 2011, p. 93).

The final presentation was from Irving Nachamkin, Eastern Pennsylvania Branch, who shared his Branch’s challenges and triumphs in designing a new, dynamic, modern website. This project was also summed up in a previous issue of *Microbe* (*Microbe*, April 2011, p. 202). The buzz in the room was “Cool—when can they redesign our site?”

Dave Westenberg, Chair, K-12 committee of the Education Board, also spoke at the Forum, encouraging Branches to take advantage of the offerings his committee is developing, including four activities with the provocative titles “ASM Presents: Microbes at Work.” “A Taste of Microbiology,” “Microbes go to School,” and “Build a Microbe Workshop.” In addition, he asked Branches to solicit volunteers to support involvement of the microbiology community in K-12 education. Given the general mood of attendees, he found a very receptive audience.

The Regional Planning Coordinators (RPCs), Nellie Dumas (Region I), Linda Beck (Region II), Kenneth Goodrum, (Region III), Daniel Lim (Region IV), Michael Sadowsky (Region V), Bob McLean (Region VI), and Terry Else (Region VII) expressed delight at the enthusiasm displayed by Branch officers, the quality of Branch programming, and the vitality of the Student Chapters. Everyone was encouraged to continue their fine work. The Forum ended on a bittersweet note when retiring RPCs Kenneth Goodrum and Daniel Lim, were thanked for their many dedicated years of service to ASM and its Branches. Both will be sorely missed.

We are all confident Branches will excel this year and are looking forward to hearing more success stories in San Francisco in 2012 when the Branch Officers’ Forum will again kick-off another successful ASM General Meeting. So as we close a great year and start anew—Come Join Us! You will be surprised at the fun you’ll have learning what’s new in microbiology and meeting new colleagues. To learn of your next opportunity to participate with an ASM Branch, go to http://www.asm.org/index.php/what-s-new/branch-meetings-calendar.html

**Michael G. Schmidt**  
Chair, Branch Organization Committee

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**Membership**

**Award**

The Waksman Foundation for Microbiology is pleased to announce the second recipient of the Byron H Waksman Award for Excellence in Life Science Communication: **Moselio Schaechter**, creative founder of the popular microbiology blog “Small Things Considered” (http://schaechter.asmblog.org/). The blog has been recognized with numerous awards, including a Hermes Award in 2007. The Foundation recognizes Schaechter for his innovative use of technology to promote microbiology literacy and to engage the large community of microbiology educators and researchers in communicating their passion for microbes and the microbial world to the public. After a distinguished academic career as an educator, administrator and research scientist, Schaechter is busy in retirement. In addition to the blog, which he cowrites with Merry Youle, he engages regularly with graduate students as an emeritus adjunct professor in the department of biology at San Diego State University and as a visiting scholar at the University of California at San Diego. He is also Chair of the *Microbe* Editorial Board.

The inaugural Byron H Waksman Award for Excellence in Life Science Communication was presented in 2008 to Dr. Martin Weiss of the New York Hall of Science for exhibits and activities that highlight microbiology and evolution. The Waksman Foundation for Microbiology is a private, charitable organization, established in 1951. Its purpose is “to promote, encourage, and aid scientific research in microbiology; to provide and assist in providing the funds and facilities by which scientific discoveries, inventions, and processes in microbiology may be developed . . . all to the end that the science of microbiology shall progress in the service of mankind.”

**Center for the History of Microbiology/ASM Archives**

**Donors for the 2011 Member Year**

The Membership Board, chaired by Toby K. Eisenstein, and the Center for the History of Microbiology/ASM Archives Com-