

Mitchison Ponders ASCB's Future

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Research Flourishes in Hong Kong

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Question Results to Guard against Fraud

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A Place of Our Own The ASCB Arises, 1961

In truth, Chicago's once-glamorous Edgewater Beach Hotel was already slipping—"courting conventions" sniffed one Chicago architectural historian—in 1961. That's when a fledgling scientific organization booked the dates November 2-4, 1961. Whether cause or effect, the Edgewater closed in 1967 and was torn down three years later. The scientific organization, the American Society for Cell Biology (ASCB), is still going strong, convening this year in Philadelphia for its 50th Annual Meeting.

Officially there were 844 scientists in attendance at the first meeting, not including Gary Borisy. "You won't find my name in the list of attendees because I crashed," Borisy confesses. Borisy, who served as ASCB president in 2002, is now director of the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, MA. But on that cold November day in 1961, Borisy was a University of Chicago undergraduate. He was thrilled to be riding with his biology professor, Frank Child, in Child's sporty VW Kharman Ghia, heading for the Edgewater. Child sailed into the Edgewater lobby, warmly greeting friends, pointing out scientific celebrities, and quickly settling into an intense discussion with a colleague. Still talking excitedly, Child headed for the first session, dragging along an unregistered Borisy. There were no stick-on nametags or computer-printed badges. No one gave the undergraduate a second glance.

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Commemorative T-shirts, Mugs for Sale



Official ASCB Special Edition 50th Anniversary T-Shirt and 50th Anniversary Coffee Mugs are now available for purchase. The ASCB Booth, located

in the Exhibit Hall at the Pennsylvania Convention Center, will have a limited supply of t-shirts and coffee mugs available for sale.

Or, to purchase online anytime, visit www.Printfection.com/ASCB. ■

We Have a Winner!



David Sept

The science of life, the life of science. Like the phrase? We do! The ASCB Council and staff agreed that it will make a terrific tagline for the Society. We think that David Sept's tagline captures the importance of

our science *and* what brings our special community together.

Sept, a longtime ASCB member based at the University of Michigan, created the winning phrase at the Boston airport. His tagline speaks to the Society's commitment to advancing and showcasing discovery related to the fundamental unit of life: the cell. At the same time, the tagline points to

Winner!, continued on page 10

the front while the other faction held that the force pushed from the back of the amoeba. “I don’t know if anybody knows to this day who was right,” Goldman says with a laugh.

A typical ASCB “talk” was 15 minutes, including five minutes at the end for questions. Young researchers dreaded question time, recalls Satir. “One of the things that’s changed from the early years is that the questions used to be terrifying.” Session chairs tried to stir things up, making provocative comments from the platform or yielding the floor to figures known for high standards and blunt remarks. “The questions tended to be very tough from people who really knew (the field),” says Satir. “When you showed an electron micrograph, it had better be good.”

If today’s ASCB Annual Meetings are far larger and less bruising, there is one aspect of the good old days that no one misses—the smoke. Like in America as a whole in the 1960s, smoking was permitted everywhere at ASCB meetings, says a nonsmoking Goldman. The movie sessions were particularly bad, but the worst air was at the “socializer” session. “You would go into the room and all these old guys would be smoking cigars, pipes, and cigarettes,” says Goldman.

“One of the things that’s changed from the early years is that the questions used to be terrifying,” Satir recalls.

“There would be these huge clouds of smoke. Your eyes would be burning.”

For ASCB at 50, the smoke is out but the scientific fire burns on. ■

—John Fleischman



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what ASCB members have in common: the life of science.

To promote a successful and satisfying life in science, ASCB is an unparalleled resource. The Society provides community and networking opportunities as well as advocacy for research funding, career advice, mentorship, top venues to present research, and job assistance. A life in science isn’t always easy. That’s why ASCB’s long-time commitment to helping scientists at all career stages, and to furthering diversity and inclusiveness among our ranks in gender, geography, race, and ethnicity, is critical.

The Society thanks Sept for his creativity and commitment. He wins a one-year complimentary membership, ASCB Annual Meeting registration, and assorted “goodies.”

What do you think of the ASCB and its new tagline? We welcome your thoughts at ascbinfo@ascb.org. ■

—Joan R. Goldberg

ASCB Mission

ASCB is an inclusive, international community of biologists studying the cell, the fundamental unit of life. We are dedicated to advancing scientific discovery, advocating sound research policies, improving education, promoting professional development, and increasing diversity in the scientific workforce.