



# NEWSLETTER

## A TRIBUTE TO HERMAN PHAFF

Herman Jan Phaff, Professor Emeritus of Food Science and Technology at the University of California, Davis, died suddenly on 24 August while on vacation in the Caribbean. Dedicated and modest, Professor Phaff possessed an encyclopedic mind, and the loss to his family and friends, to his university, and to the worldwide scientific community is immeasurable. His was a truly rich, lustrous life, and he touched many with his quiet warmth and boundless intellectual curiosity.

Born in Winschoten, the Netherlands, in 1913, Herman Jan Phaff spent his

childhood in the environment of his family's winery, which stimulated his interest in microorganisms and consequently had a strong impact on his later life. He attended the Technical University in Delft, where he earned a B.S. degree in chemical engineering with a thesis on the elaboration of extracellular pectin-hydrolyzing enzymes by fungi—a subject of importance to the wine industry.

In 1939, at the recommendation of renowned microbiologist, A.J. Kluyver, Phaff came to California to pursue graduate study at the University of California (UC), Berkeley in the Division of Fruit Products—later known as the Department of Food Technology. His initial research was done with Emil Mrak (later chancellor at UC Davis), and in his Ph.D. studies he worked under the direction of Maynard Joslyn and H.A. Barker. His research focused on yeast taxonomy, ecology, and physiology. Phaff was studying in the United States during World War II. His brother, who fought in the Dutch Resistance, was lost to the Nazi forces.

In 1943 Phaff accepted a faculty position at UC Berkeley, and he moved to UC Davis in 1954, when the Food Science Department was transferred. In all, he was an active member of the

University of California faculty for 58 years. During that time, he published two books and hundreds of research papers and was the recipient of numerous awards, including being named as University of California Davis Faculty Research Lecturer in 1969. In 1985, Professor Phaff coauthored a definitive bibliography of viticulture and enology publications with the distinguished professor Maynard Amerine.

Although he officially retired from full-time research in 1983, Phaff maintained a very active research laboratory. He continued daily study and work on a collection of over 6,000 yeast strains, representing over 400 of the 700 known yeast species—many of which are available only from his collection. The collection contains the strains Phaff collected on global expeditions throughout his research career and also includes several hundred yeast strains collected in the 1930's by Mark and William Cruess. Few microbial culture collections of this size and diversity have been collected and maintained by any institution, let alone by a single researcher. This collection is utilized by academic and industrial researchers throughout the world.

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**Contributors to this issue:**  
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**Gina Koenig**

*Herman Phaff Tribute*  
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On 4 October 1996, the California Institute of Food and Agricultural Research within the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Davis, California held a symposium presented in Phaff's honor at which the Herman J. Phaff Culture Collection: Yeasts and Yeast-Like Microorganisms was formally dedicated to an official biological collection of the University of California. The culture collection is online at: <http://www.phaffcollection.org>

Phaff was also noted for his professional skill as a cellist and his passion for the arts and culture. He was a founding member of the Davis Comic Opera Company and the UC Davis Symphony Orchestra—playing at its inaugural concert in 1959—and a dedicated player in chamber music groups in the Bay area and Davis for five decades. He was chairman of the Committee for Arts and Lectures at UC Davis and in 1960 was made an honorary member of the UC Davis Music Department.

Phaff and his wife, Diane, shared a love of music and the arts, and the couple sponsored visiting musicians on campus, hosted performances in their home, and were longtime supporters of UC Davis Presents and other community cultural events.

As a fitting bookend to his illustrious life, Phaff was awarded the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Award of Distinction for 2001. Sadly, notification of the award arrived only on Monday, 27 August. His wife will accept the award in his honor.

Herman Jan Phaff never stopped learning and seeking to enrich the scientific community, and the Phaff Culture Collection is the culmination of his life's work as a scientist. The family asks that gifts in his honor be directed to the Herman J. Phaff Culture Collection, UC Davis Food Science Department, Cruess Hall, Davis, CA 95616.

Phaff is survived by his wife, Diane; his sister, Resina Phaff, of London, England; his nephew, Japp Phaff, wife Madelon, and their three children of Breda, the Netherlands; his niece, Helma Phaff and her son, of Heemstede, the Netherlands; his nephew, Frans Frederik Wethmur of Amsterdam, the Netherlands; his stepdaughters, Kim Rowland and Correy Rowland Cavanaugh; his son-in-law Paul Cavanaugh; and his granddaughters, Maggie and Julia Horowitz. He is also survived by his cat and two beloved terriers.

A memorial service for Phaff was held on 29 October at the Buehler Alumni Center on the UC Davis campus. His family invited all his students, colleagues, and associates to attend and celebrate the life of a great scholar, teacher, musician, family man, and friend.

*Reprinted with permission from the November 2001 issue of ASM News, the News Magazine of the American Society for Microbiology*

NOTE: Dr. Phaff was the recipient of the 1984 J. Roger Porter Award. The Phaff Yeast Culture Collection maintains an excellent website with a searchable database. The URL is <http://www.phaffcollection.org>

## Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness Act HR 3448

Congress has given final approval to the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness Act HR 3448. The bill is intended to improve the US public health system's ability to respond to bioterrorism, protect the nation's food supply and drinking water from bioterrorist attacks, speed the development and production of new drug treatments and vaccines, address shortages of specific types of health professionals, improve coordination of federal antibioterrorism activities, increase investment in federal, state and local preparedness and expand controls over the most dangerous biological agents and toxins.

Important new provisions for the possession, use and transfer of select agents include the following:

Requires facilities which possess, use or transfer select agents to register with the Secretary of Health and Human Services and be subject to reasonable safety and security requirements, including access controls, screening of personnel determined by the facility to have legitimate needs to handle or use select agents, and inspections to ensure compliance with the requirements. See: <http://www.cdc.gov/od/ohs/Irsat/42cfr72.htm>

President Bush signed this Act on June 12, 2002. The August 6 Federal Register contains notification of requirement to register select agents. This notice details the Act, the requirements and contains the necessary forms. You can access the Federal Register document from the ASM website ([www.asmusa.org](http://www.asmusa.org)).

*Source: ASM Public Affairs announcement. See the website of the American Society for Microbiology for frequent uptakes on this topic.*

## USFCC Workshop

Vice-President Micah Krichevsky organized a culture collection workshop for the Annual Meeting of the Society for Industrial Microbiology (SIM). The workshop, sponsored by SIM's Education Committee, was held at Drexel University on Sunday, August 11, 2002. The program, entitled "Concepts for establishing and operating a microbial culture collection," covered the topics of growing and preserving cultures, patent cultures, biosafety, culture distribution, information management and sources of information on culture collections. The latter two topics had hands-on practice. The faculty for the workshop included USFCC members Micah Krichevsky, Martha Beyazova, Gina Koenig and Marianna Jackson.

### CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS

The USFCC gratefully acknowledges the contributions of the following Society Members:

Kyria L. Boundy Mills  
Douglas Eveleigh  
Kenneth D. Fisher  
Hubert & Mary P. Lechevalier  
Marianna Jackson  
Marcia C. Shearer  
Ellen M. Simon  
Robert E. Stevenson  
Joseph G. Tully

## 2003 Porter Award Nominations

Nominations for the 2003 J. Roger Porter Award are being solicited. Nominations must consist of a completed nomination form, curriculum vitae including a list of publications and two supporting letters. (Form and more details are available from the ASM website under Academy.) Send the original and five (5) copies to Awards Committee, American Academy of Microbiology, 1725 N Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036-2904.

## News from AIBS

- The AIBS website now has a new section that provides resources and information about bioterrorism, at [www.aibs.org/bioterrorism/index.html](http://www.aibs.org/bioterrorism/index.html)
- The 2003 AIBS Annual meeting (March 2003, Washington, DC theme is "Bioethics for a Changing World"), will include in its program the relevant topics at that time.

## Business Meeting for Members

The USFCC held its Annual Business Meeting on May 20, 2002 in Salt Lake City. Members had previously attended the Porter Award Lecture at the ASM General Meeting. President Jay Grimes led the discussion. A more extensive report of the business meeting will be given in the next issue.

## Prokaryotes Online

The Prokaryotes, a four-volume compendium containing much of what you want to know about microorganisms, is going online to become "an evolving electronic resource for the microbiological community." Trial access for 30 days is available. Register online and receive a user ID and password to log in to the Preview Edition. You can register with LINKAlert to receive email notices when new chapters are published.

Subscription rate for the online version is \$495.00 per year. (The 1992 hard-cover edition is \$2,885.00) For more information, to subscribe or to register for the trial see the website: <http://www.prokaryotes.com>

## New Journal

In 2002 the American Society for Microbiology started publication of Eukaryotic Cell. This new journal is a forum for the advances in eukaryotic microbiology, such as fungi, algae, protozoa and amoebae. It covers topics of molecular and cellular biology, developmental pathways, cellular architecture, population dynamics, physiology, ecology and comparative genomics. The Editor-in-Chief is C.C. Wang from the University of California, San Francisco.

## SUSTAINING MEMBERS

Baxter BioScience  
DSM Gist-B.V.  
Genencor  
Lallemand Inc.  
Pfizer, Inc.  
Roche Molecular Systems, Inc.  
Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation

## A Calendar of Relevant Events

Contact Codes: T - Telephone; F-Fax;  
E-E-mail; O-Online



**September 27-30.** 42nd Interscience Conference on Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy.

**Contact:** Meetings Dept., American Society for Microbiology, 1752 N Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036-2904 T: 202-942-9248 F: 202-942-9340 E: meetingsinfo@asmusa.org O: http://www.asmusa.org

**October 27-30.** Biotechnology of Microbial Products (BMP 2002). Renaissance Ilikai Waikiki, Honolulu, HI. **Contact:** SIM, 3929 Old Lee Highway, Suite 92A, Fairfax, VA 22030-2421 T: 703-691-3357 F: 703-691-7991

**Various dates July to November.** Response to Bioterrorism II. Laboratory Methods for the detection of Microbial Agents. A one-day program focused on practical methods for laboratories to remain alert for agents of bioterrorism. **Contact:** National Laboratory Training Network, 2121 W. Taylor St., Chicago, IL 60612. T: 312-793-3306 F: 312-793-3304



**May 18-22.** ASM 103rd General Meeting. **Contact:** Meetings Department, American Society

for Microbiology, 1752 N Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036-2904 T: 202-942-9248 F: 202-942-9340 E: meetingsinfo@asmusa.org O: http://www.asmusa.org

## COLLECTION DESTROYED

In the wake of anthrax bioterrorism events of last fall the staff members at Iowa State University's College of Veterinary Medicine in Ames, Iowa, destroyed the college's collection of *Bacillus anthracis* on October 12, 2001. The decision to destroy the collection came after Iowa Governor Tom Vilsak ordered police officers to stand guard over the Iowa State laboratory and other labs in the state with anthrax. These events were a result of the anthrax terror that began in Florida with the death of Bob Stevens, an employee of American Media Inc. The college dean, the lab director and the safety group decided the collection was a liability. Approval to destroy was received from the FBI and the Centers for Disease Control. The procedure for the destruction was to place the cultures in an autoclave overnight. The next day, as an added precaution, the bacilli were incinerated.

The Iowa State University collection of *Bacillus anthracis* contained strains dating back to 1928. In 1978 a professor opened one of the fifty-year old vials and was able to culture the bacillus. The exceptionally virulent strain known as "the Ames strain" came from a sick cow, probably in the western area of Iowa, about 1929. A veterinarian sent a specimen to the College of Veterinary Medicine. It is likely that the original culture of "the Ames strain" was sterilized and incinerated with the rest of the Iowa State collection.

*Reported by Peter J. Boyer in The New Yorker, November 12, 2001*

## USFCC Porter Award Winner 2002 Erko Stackebrandt

Dr. Erko Stackebrandt was selected for the 2002 J. Roger Porter Award. Dr. Stackebrandt heads the German Collection of Microorganisms and Cell Cultures (DSMZ) at Technical University in Braunschweig, Germany. The Porter Award honors an outstanding effort by a scientist who has demonstrated the importance of microbial biodiversity through sustained curatorial or stewardship activities for a major resource used by the scientific community. Such resources may include collections of cells or microorganisms, databases or tools, or major reference works or services. The recipient will have aided other scientists by demonstrating the fundamentals of culture collections and related resources and the rich biodiversity that such collections preserve. The Porter Award is sponsored by USFCC and administered by ASM.

Dr. Stackebrandt delivered the Award Lecture on May 20 at the ASM General Meeting in Salt Lake City. His talk was entitled "Research: From Culture Collections to Biological Resource Centers."

## AFFILIATE MEMBERS

Carolyn Babcock, Canadian Collection of Fungal Cultures

Robert G. Coon

John S. Wilkinson, GlaxoSmithKline

# REMINDER

## USFCC 2003 MEMBERSHIP DUES

**PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN THE USFCC FOR 2003.**

Check the appropriate box below and **SUBMIT FORM (OR A COPY OF IT) WITH PAYMENT**  
 To: Mary Meeker, USFCC Treasurer, Baxter Hyland Immuno, CCI Laboratory, 1700 Rancho Conejo Boulevard, Thousand Oaks, CA 91320.

### MEMBERSHIP

- Individual Membership \$25.00
- Affiliate Membership \$45.00
- Emeritus Membership \$12.00  
(for retired members)

- SUSTAINING** \$200.00  
(USFCC TAX ID #371022549)

### CONTRIBUTORY

- DONATIONS - General \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- DONATIONS - Porter Award \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- DONATIONS - In Memoriam \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### COMMITTEES

Check if you are interested in serving on a specific committee.

- Archives
- Auditing
- Culture Databases
- Culture Transport
- Editorial
- Membership
- Porter Award Nominations
- Program
- Publicity

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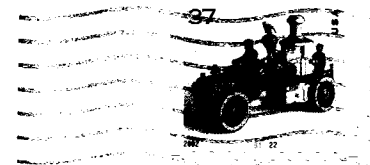
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E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Questions concerning your membership may be directed to Mary Meeker at the address below, by telephone: 805-375-6728, by fax: 805-375-6820 or e-mail: [Mary\\_Meeker@baxter.com](mailto:Mary_Meeker@baxter.com)

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