

AMS 2007 – Antwerp, Belgium  
15-20 July 2007  
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The American Malacological Society held its 73<sup>rd</sup> annual meeting in Antwerp, Belgium, July 15-20, 2007, as part of the next World Congress of Malacology organized by Thierry Backeljau, President of Unitas Malacologica. We were not joint organizers of the meeting (no AMS funds were contributed toward the meeting proceedings, by Dr. Backeljau's preference), but rather were guests holding our meeting concurrently along with three other malacological organizations. WCM provided all meeting rooms and some other provisions (e.g., audio-visual equipment, refreshments at Council meeting) at no cost to AMS.

Our venue was the Groenenborger Campus of the University of Antwerp, hosted by Thierry Backeljau, President of Unitas Malacologica. Campus facilities included dormitories, four auditoria, meeting rooms, a poster area, and a slide preview room, most of these conveniently under one roof. The conference began with an icebreaker late Sunday afternoon at the Antwerp Zoo. The scientific presentations were organized in four parallel sessions on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Lunches were provided during session days in the poster area. During the formal poster session on Tuesday evening, we enjoyed a selection of typical Belgian food, wine, and of course, Belgian beer. Wednesday was a free day during which participants joined one of the organized excursions, discovered the many historical and beautiful places in Antwerp, or visited one of the nearby European museum collections. A banquet and evening of lively dancing at a lovely facility in downtown Antwerp capped off the meeting on Friday evening.

The meeting was very well organized, with approximately 430 people in attendance (including 75 Americans, the largest contingent, and approximately 70 AMS members), good weather (although a little warm at times), good accommodations, good food, good papers, etc., etc. The organizers estimated that over 430 papers were presented, as were about 200 posters. Despite the lack of "joint organizer" status, AMS made its presence well known through AMS brochures inserted in the registration packets, opening and closing comments by President Mikkelsen, and through our sponsored events at the meeting.

There were six symposia presented at the Congress, including that sponsored by AMS. Our one-day symposium entitled "Molluscan Models: Advancing our Understanding of the Eye," was organized by Jeanne Serb (Iowa State University) and Laura Robles (California State University). An NSF grant (\$10K) was obtained by the organizers to supplement AMS Symposium Endowment Fund monies, and included travel support for three students. Proceedings will be submitted for publication in the *American Malacological Bulletin*.

On Thursday evening, we hosted the AMS Auction of molluscan books and paraphernalia (no specimens) for about 250 Congress participants. This annual event not

only raises the necessary funds for our student programs, it also provides a fun-filled evening for all involved (even if you don't buy a thing!). Paul Callomon returned as our auctioneer in superb form and kept the proceedings lively despite long beer lines and the warm summer (un-air-conditioned) temperature. Many members generously donated a wide variety of auction items and mailed them ahead to the Congress site. With additional donations brought to the meeting, we auctioned a total of 110 items (including Tucker Abbott's record and a stuffed blue-ringed octopus that sold for 60 euro!) for proceeds of slightly over \$3800. This figure is on par with the amount that we typically raise at a US-based meeting, and for that I am tremendously pleased. To all who participated in this entertaining and worthwhile event – my heartfelt thanks for supporting your society and helping AMS present its best face to the world!

The Student Awards & Education Committee awarded three student travel grants (\$1000 each) to defray costs to attend the meeting in Antwerp. The awardees were Marla Coppolino (Southern Illinois University), Meaghan Parker (University of Hawaii), and Andrea Walther (University of Michigan). The Constance Boone Student Award for best student presentation or poster was awarded at the meeting as part of the larger WCM student awards committee. AMS representative on this committee was Dan Graf, and several other AMS members were recruited at the meeting to assist. In the spirit of the Congress (and paralleling practice at previous AMS-UM meetings), the AMS membership requirement for this award was waived so that all student members of all participating societies were eligible. The award (\$500 plus one year of AMS membership) was presented to Kenneth Hayes, University of Hawaii, for his presentation entitled "Molecular systematics and evolutionary patterns of diversification in New World Ampulariidae."

Full details about the World Congress of Malacology in Antwerp are available at <http://www.ucd.ie/zoology/unitas/congress.html#content>.