



# NEWSLETTER

## INTERNATIONAL HUMIC SUBSTANCES SOCIETY

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Number 39

Summer 2008

Dear IHSS Members,

We have recently completed our biennial elections and it is my privilege to announce that our Secretary, Gudrun Abbt-Braun and Board Member, Claudio Ciavatta were re-elected to second four-year terms and Ladislau Martin-Neto was elected as Vice President (see page 2 for details). A total of 288 members submitted ballots, which represents a very good level of participation in our election. Unfortunately our “double envelope” procedure that allows voters to remain anonymous, while allowing the election tellers to check submitted ballots against the list of eligible voters, is not working well. More than 20% of the ballots either were either submitted in a batch, without an outer envelope for each ballot, or did not have clear identification of the voter on the outer envelope. The IHSS Board is aware of the problem and has begun discussions about online voting for our next elections. This should increase participation and reduce errors in voting.

The capability to conduct online elections will likely evolve from the relationship we are developing with the Mineralogical Society of America (MSA). In the first stage we are working with MSA to use their server to host a website for online credit card sales from our Collection of humic substances. For more about online sales see the report on page 4. The MSA has a website that allows their members to pay membership dues online and to access a membership directory. They also conduct elections online. We will be looking at utilizing these capabilities for IHSS.

At our meeting this September in Russia I will turn over the presidency to Jerzy Weber. I thank the members of the IHSS Board and all of you for your cooperation and support during my time as President. However, I have not yet completed my duties because I still have two years to serve as Past President and I look forward to continue working with the great team we have on the Board.

Maria De Nobili, who over the last 6 years has been our Vice President, President, and Past President, will be leaving the board. I greatly appreciate her steady leadership, diplomatic skills, and hard work and ask you to join me in thanking her for her service to IHSS.

*Paul Bloom*  
*President IHSS*

## ELECTIONS

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### Nomination Committee:

Dr. Dan Oik, Committee chairman, Coordinator of U.S. chapter of IHSS, Ames, Iowa, USA

Dr. Jerzy Drozd, Coordinator of Poland chapter of IHSS, Wroclaw, Poland

Dr. Claire Richard, Member of IHSS, Aubière Cedex, France

Dr. Kaye Spark, Coordinator of Australia–New Zealand chapter of IHSS, Gatton, Queensland, Australia.

### Results:

New Vice-President

[Dr. Ladislau Martin-Neto](#)

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National Center for Agricultural  
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Ames, Iowa, 20 May 2008.

*Dan Oik*

## IHSS TRAVEL SUPPORT AWARD 2008

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As a response to the call for IHSS Travel Support Award 2008, the total number of 33 applications have been electronically submitted. The IHSS Travel Support Award 2008 Committee appreciated very much a great response of students to the call. After evaluation of all applications and discussion, the Committee stated that 28 applications were of very high scientific level and indicate a sufficient standard to be awarded, for both reasons: scientific level of abstracts as well as achievements of students. Due to that, the IHSS Board decided to increase the number of IHSS Travel Support Award up to 17. The following students have been selected for the Travel Bursaries 2008 to attend the conference in Russia:

|                          |                                 |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Amery, Fien              | Belgium                         |
| Bakajova, Barbora        | Czech Republic                  |
| Brigante, Maximiliano E. | Argentina                       |
| De Perre, Chloe          | France                          |
| Drosos, Marios           | Greece                          |
| Gaspar Andras            | Hungary (studying in Germany)   |
| Grinhut, Tzafrir         | Israel                          |
| Hilscher, André          | Germany                         |
| Kovacs, Krisztina        | Hungary                         |
| Podgorski, David C.      | USA                             |
| Shcherbina, Natalia S.   | Russia                          |
| Skokanova, Marianna      | Slovakia                        |
| Solarska, Sylwia Edyta   | Australia                       |
| Tercero Espinoza, Luis   | Nikaragua (studying in Germany) |
| Van Trump, Ian J.        | USA                             |
| Vicente Vilas, Víctor    | Spain (studying in Germany)     |
| Warchulska, Patrycja     | Poland                          |

Luis Tercero Espinoza from Nikaragua, as a top applicant, was selected as winner of the Malcolm Award.

*Jerzy Weber*

*Chair of IHSS Travel Award 2008 Committee*

## STANDARD AND REFERENCE COLLECTION

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### **IHSS Begins Online Sales**

Policy decisions by the University of Minnesota have forced the IHSS to join the world of e-commerce. For about 10 years our sales have been from the Department of Soil, Water, and Climate at the University of Minnesota and with the help of the University we initiated credit card payment six years ago. For these six years we have received credit card information at the University and used a University internet connection to communicate with the credit card processing company. However, the University has become more concerned about the security of credit card information, especially when non-University organizations use University information technology. They requested that IHSS not handle credit card information on campus and we have made an arrangement with the Mineralogical Society of America to use their server and software to conduct credit cars sales online. This will allow us to distribute samples from the University without ever seeing credit numbers. The online sales website should be operational by June 15.

The link to the sales website is from the IHSS website at [ihss.gatech.edu](http://ihss.gatech.edu)

*Paul Bloom*

## IN MEMORIAM

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### **Lenom Cajuste (1929 - 2008)**

*On May 16, 2008, our colleague and Coordinator of the Mexican National Chapter*

*Prof. Lenom Cajuste passed away. His death is a great loss for the humic substances community. We will always treasure his memory.*

Dr. Lenom Cajuste Jean-Philippe was born on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 1929, in the city of Jeremie, Haiti, son of merchant parents. In 1954, he graduated as a lawyer, and later as an Agronomist, at the University of Haiti. He obtained his Master Degree in Science at the Escuela Nacional de Agricultura in Mexico in 1962; in 1971 he obtained his Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin, in Madison.

In 1964, he began the establishment of the first network of laboratories dedicated to soil, water, and plant analysis to incorporate the area of influence of the Orinoco river to the agricultural production in Venezuela. Later, he became a Professor in the School of Agronomy of the University of Venezuela, in Caracas.

1972 he joined the Colegio de Postgraduados where he was a Research Professor in the Area of Soil Chemistry. As a professor he formed researchers in Soil Chemistry and Environmental

Contamination at all levels: Ph.D. (9), Master's (54), and Bachelor's (11), including among them people from other countries. As a member of the Academic Committee of Soil Science, he promoted the development of infrastructure, including the construction of the Soil Science and Water Science Building in 1987, as well as obtaining equipment for the Soil Chemistry laboratories with vanguard technology.

He was one of the founding partners of the Mexican Society of Soil Science. His accomplishments as a member of the SNI (National System of Researchers), evaluator for the CONACYT (National Council of Science and Technology), Reviewer for Journals, Coordinator of the Mexican Chapter of the IHSS, and member of ASA, SSA, and IUSS, among others, helped the Colegio de Postgraduados to be projected as an institution of international prestige.

His research includes studies on soil, water, and plants, working mainly on gramineas, fruit trees, and industrial crops such as sugarcane and gumtree. He wrote several articles and book chapters for national and internationally established publications on soil fertility, rehabilitation, and contamination. His book "Soil Chemistry with an Agricultural Approach" has been a basic course material for Undergraduate and Graduate studies in national institutions as well as in Central and South America.

In his more than 35 years of service, he participated in projects financially supported by the Mexican Presidency, the Tamaulipas State Government, National (SAGARPA-SAG, IMTA, INMECAFE, IMPA) and international (CIMMYT) institutions.

His wife, Anne-Marie Bontemps, is a nation-wide known medic-cytologist whose work is known for her labor against Cervix-Uterus Cancer. Their children, two women and two men, are all scientists like himself and committed to the nation that has seen them grow.

Dr. Lenom Cajuste Jean-Philippe and his memory will remain in the life and minds of all those of us who had the honor of knowing him and sharing with his experiences and his life.

*Alejandrina Ruiz Bello*

## LIFE HISTORIES OF HONORARY IHSS MEMBERS

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Russell Fabrique Christman  
Pioneer of aquatic humic chemistry



Who would not know Russell Fabrique Christman in the humcis world? He is one of the pioneers of the aquatic humics field. He has given clear impulses to this field of fundamental environmental sciences and to aquatic technology.

Russ – as we all call him – got his B.S. in Chemistry at the University of Miami, Tulane University, University of Florida in 1958, followed by an M.S. and a Ph.D. at the University of Florida. He was NSF Post Doctoral Fellow at the Oregon State University and at Harvard University. After an appointment as Research Assistant Professor in the Department of Civil Engineering at the University of Washington in Seattle (1963 – 1966), he became Associate Professor (1966 – 1969) and Professor (1969 – 1972) at that university. From 1973 to 2001 he was Professor and from 1973 to 1989 Chairman at the Department of Environmental Sciences and Engineering at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He continues his classical academic career by still teaching Chemistry of Humic Substances, Chemistry of Organic Materials in the Aquatic Environment and Planetary Mechanisms for Distribution of Materials and Energy.

The great places of his appointments brought Russ in contact with Presidents, Deans and Directors. Some of them – as he confesses – had a major influence in his life, and the association with them taught him that the most important behaviour for good scientists is to treat all others with dignity. In this Russ has become a fine example, even though there would have been good

chances to be misled by the numerous temptations of success: Russ' outstanding research is reflected in 80 refereed papers, in six trend setting books and in numerous editorials, reviews and other publications. He belongs to the league of most invited speakers, reviewers and wanted chairmen. Out of his many national and international activities, only a few should be mentioned here:

Awards as Major Advisor for Best Doctoral Dissertation (1987), Outstanding Educator of America (1972), American Water Works Research Award (1987), Editor Environmental Science and Technology (1974 – 1987), Member of the National Drinking Water Advisory Council, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (1975 – 1976, 1979 – 1982).

Chairman: Gordon Research Conference, Environmental Sciences (1976); Dahlem Research Conference on Humic Substances and Their Role in the Environment (1985 – 1987).

Russ was visiting scholar at the Faculty of Sanitary Engineering, University of Hokkaido, Sapporo, Japan (1982), at the Norwegian Institute of Public Health, Division of Toxicology, Oslo, Norway (1989) and at the Department of Water Chemistry at the Universität Karlsruhe, Germany (1996).

Most of all these activities centred – as his research did – around Humic Matter in Aquatic Systems. Therefore, it was a logical consequence that the IHSS appointed Russ Christman as Honorary Member in 2001.

Those who have and had the privilege to know Russ beyond his science are fascinated by his deep and honest personality. Egil Gjessing, one of the Scandinavian humic giants and companion of Russ for several decades, once called him “a helper”. In private conversations, Russel even confesses that he believes in love as the strongest force in human life and society. This needs no further interpretation. Those close to him know how sincere he is on that: a shining example in our foggy and dull world!

Instead of drifting more into emotions I want to share a story with you which is so typical for Russ:

On one of several occasions when he visited good old Europe, we went to Wien (Vienna). We wanted not only to sample the charm of that city between Western Europe and the Balkans, we also were curious to learn about the matrix of the genius called Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, where he lived and composed most of his masterly music. Russ, a well gifted musician himself playing piano and the guitar, was fascinated. This even held until he left Europe from the busy and unromantic airport in Frankfurt. When he entered the plane, his typically soft and friendly smile was

reflected in the eyes of the stewardess as she said: “Hallo Sir, where do you come from, you seem to be very happy.” “Yes I am”, said Russ, “I was visiting Mozart.” Short thinking, then spontaneous reply: “Oh, so follow me please”. Russ was led to the business class and seated – as it should be for a friend of Mozart. What can we learn of that event? Well, there are numerous professors travelling all over the world. Most of them squeeze themselves into economy seats. A few of them also book economy for modest reasons, but then it happens that they are upgraded for they are not just a professor, they are special. Russ is one of them.

With all our good wishes for healthy and happy years, we thank him for all the good guidance and fine friendship so far.

*Fritz Frimmel*

## **PAST CONFERENCES**

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The 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Italian IHSS Chapter was held in Catania on 31<sup>st</sup> May and 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2007, and organised by the Agrochemical Sciences Section research group of the Agronomical, Agrochemical and Animal Production Sciences Department (DACPA) of the University of Catania. A number of 65 scientists attended the event, and 16 oral papers and 10 posters were presented on the following topics: 1. The chemistry and biochemistry of humic substances; 2. Methods and instruments used in the study of humic substances; 3. Environmental and applied studies related to humic substances. The invited speakers were: Prof. Serenella Nardi (University of Padova, Italy), Dr. Ladislau Martin Neto (National Agricultural Instrumentation Centre, Sao Carlos, EMBRAPA, Brazil), and Prof. Irina Perminova (Lomonosov State University, Moscow, Russia). Great interest was raised by the round table on the topic ‘State of the Art Research on Humic Substances’ chaired by Prof. Teodoro Miano of the University of Bari (Italy), which provided an opportunity to discuss the work done up to now, and the perspectives for new research topics. The Italian IHSS Chapter supported the attendance of two young researchers, and a third grant was financed by IHSS. The general assembly of the Italian IHSS Chapter Members was also held during the Meeting, and Prof. Nicola Senesi, University of Bari, was confirmed as the Italian IHSS Chapter Coordinator for the next biennium (2008-2009). During the Assembly it was decided that the next meeting will take place in 2009 in Padova. An excursion to Mount Etna, the largest European volcano, took place at the end of the Congress with routes of great geological and panoramic interest with the expert guide of the Sicilian Region Forestry Guards.

*Nicola Senesi*

*Coordinator of the Italian Chapter*

## FUTURE CONFERENCES

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### WELCOME TO IHSS-14 IN RUSSIA

14<sup>th</sup> International Meeting of the International Humic Substances Society (IHSS) will be held on September 14-20, 2008 aboard the ship traveling from Moscow to Saint Petersburg, Russia. The conference is entitled "From molecular understanding to innovative applications of humic substances" and will be held under auspices of the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) .



The particular goals of this IHSS conference are to demonstrate the growing importance of humic substances in the context of global climate change, and to draw attention of industrial chemists to conversion of huge resources of humified biomass into alternative feedstock for bio-based products. To attain the latter goal, the satellite exhibition "Humic materials - resources for the 21st century" will take place during the conference.

**!!! NEW !!!**

***Deadline for registration,***

**The deadline for registration fee to the IHSS-14 is postponed until July 1, 2008. We also encourage you to submit the last minute result abstracts. The abstracts should be 1 page long and will be published as an annex to the proceeding book of the IHSS-14.**

#### ***Scientific Program***

**Available see: <http://www.ihss-14.humus.ru>**

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## Joint GSA-ASA/SSSA/CSA 2008 International Annual Meeting

Joint Meeting with the Geological Society of America and Gulf Coast Association of Geological Societies with the Gulf Coast Section of the Society of Economic Paleontologists and Mineralogists, hosted by the Houston Geological Society); [www.acsmeetings.org](http://www.acsmeetings.org)

**Houston, Texas, 5-9 October 2008**

Symposium on

**Black Carbon in Soils and Sediments: Formation, Stabilization, Abundance, and Environmental Function**

In the Joint Session: Carbon Sequestration: Methods, Markets and Policy

Symposium sponsored by Divisions S2, S11 and S7 of SSSA, the International Humic Substances Society, and the Geochemical Society.

**For further information see:**

<https://www.acsmeetings.org/programs/technical/>

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## Australian Organic Geochemistry Conference

***OIL, SOIL, WATER AND WINE***

**A combined national conference of the**

**Australian Organic Geochemists**

**International Humic Substances Society**

**& Natural Organic Matter Interest Group**

**8 - 12 September, 2008**

**National Wine Centre, Adelaide, South Australia**

Dr. David McKirdy, Chair, Organising Committee

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Dr. Michael H.B. Hayes  
 Dr. Ronald L. Malcolm †  
 Dr. Morris Schnitzer  
 Dr. Frank J. Stevenson

### **Distinguished Service Members**

Dr. C. Edward Clapp

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International Humic Substances Society on the World Wide Web

Visit our home page at:

**<http://www.ihss.gatech.edu>**

Dr. E. M. Perdue coordinates the updating of the IHSS WEB page which is located on the server of the Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, GA, USA.

Contributions, suggestions and comments regarding the content and organization of the WEB pages are welcome from all IHSS members.

E-mail: Dr. E. M. Perdue at **[michael.perdue@eas.gatech.edu](mailto:michael.perdue@eas.gatech.edu)**.

## IMPRESSUM

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Editor: INTERNATIONAL HUMIC SUBSTANCES SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER 39

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