



# NEWSLETTER

## INTERNATIONAL HUMIC SUBSTANCES SOCIETY

Number 40

Autumn / Winter 2008

Dear members of the IHSS,

Firstly, I would like to wish all of you a peaceful and enjoyable Holiday Season, and a really great and happy New Year.

It was a great pleasure for me to start my President's duty at the 14<sup>th</sup> International Meeting of IHSS, held on a ship traveling from Moscow to Saint Petersburg. First of all, I would like to express my sincerest appreciation and thanks to Irina Perminova and all organizers for bringing together a distinguished group of researchers and creating a stimulating and dynamic meeting. Organization was excellent, and all participants enjoyed sessions and discussions extended till midnight and longer. There were dancing, wine and other beverage each night, which made very special opportunities to exchange recent experiences and findings, while meeting new people created new friendships. Everybody realized, that study of humic substances is fascinating.

This kind of investigations have been initiated more than two centuries ago, when Achard published in 1798 on darkly colored solution obtained from base extraction of soil. A significant progress in research has been noticed from the last few decades, especially when the International Humic Substances Society was conceived and brought into being. From a small group at the beginnings in 1981, IHSS has grown to over 800 members in nearly 50 countries. The founders of IHSS provided a forum in which scientists from very diverse backgrounds and scientific disciplines could meet to discuss their common interests. Numerous contributions presented at the 14<sup>th</sup> IHSS International Meeting play a crucial role in enhancing the knowledge of the structure, function and reactions of humic substances. Nevertheless, we have only taken the first step on the long way towards unveiling all mysteries of humic substances. It is enough to say, that we are still not able to provide accurate definition of this very specific material, thus the IHSS Board adopted only one of possible descriptions, which is available at the IHSS website from this year.

The future of our science is in the young generation. Without them, the lines of investigation would disappear and much of the progress made in the last years would be dashed. The Society supports each year several students and young researches, enabling them to visit renowned laboratories. By this occasion I would like to remind, that December 15, 2008 is the deadline for application for IHSS Training Awards 2009.

Apart of scientific activity, the Society has also organizational challenges. The Standard and Reference Collection is in a very good shape, and a complete set of chemical, functional and structural data is provided by the Society together with the purchasing of each IHSS sample. However, a serious problem with online payment arose last year. Thanks to the great efforts of Paul Bloom, who cooperated with the Mineralogical Society of America (MSA), now we can use the MSA server to host a website for online credit card sales from IHSS Collection of humic substances. Furthermore, we are going to develop the possibility to pay online IHSS membership fees and to conduct online elections. I believe these goals will be reached next year.

Jerzy Weber

IHSS President

## BOARD ACTIVITIES

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The new Board of Directors of IHSS held several meetings during the 14th IHSS Conference aboard the ship traveling from Moscow to Saint Petersburg. The Board discussed several pending issues and examined new ones. A brief summary of which is given hereafter.

Jerzy Weber congratulated the Past President, Paul Bloom and thanked him on behalf of the Board for his excellent work, activities and initiative taken in promoting the society issues over the past two years, as President of IHSS during the Opening Ceremony at Lomonosov University Moscow.

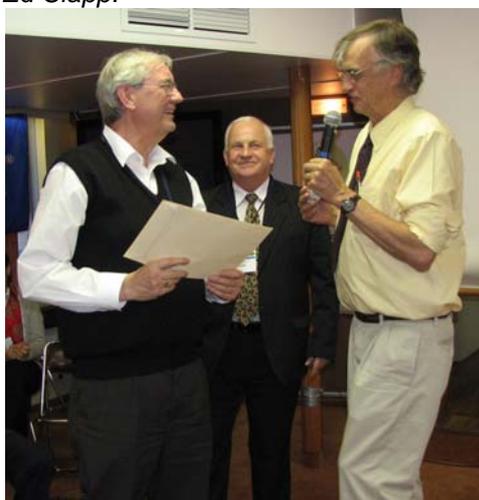
The President also thanked Maria deNobili, former Past President, for her excellent service to the Society and the Board during the Closing Ceremony.



*New Board of Directors (from left to right): Etelka Tombacz, Jerzy Weber, Paul Bloom, Claudio Ciavatta, Ladislau Martin-Neto, Gudrun Abbt-Braun, Ed Clapp.*



*Jerzy Weber and Maria deNobili.*



*The Honorary Membership and Certificate was awarded to Dr. Roger Swift (left) by the President, Dr. Jerzy Weber (center), and the Past President, Dr. Paul Bloom (right) during the Closing Ceremony.*

The IHSS proudly announces the honorary membership of this successful scholar Dr. Roger Swift.

*Gudrun Abbt-Braun*

## ROGER SWIFT MADE HONORARY MEMBER OF IHSS

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At the IHSS-14 business meeting Dr. Roger Swift, PhD was made Honorary Member of IHSS for his exceptional contributions to the understanding of humic substances and natural organic matter. He became only the 9<sup>th</sup> IHSS member who has been awarded this honor.

Dr. Swift has a long and varied history in research on humic substances and soil organic matter that began with his doctoral studies at Birmingham University, England, under the direction of fellow IHSS Honorary Member, Michael H.B. Hayes. After being awarded a PhD in 1968 he was a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Western Australia and a Research Fellow at the University of Manchester, England. In 1974 Dr. Swift was appointed as Lecturer in Soil Science at the Edinburgh School of Agriculture. In 1979 he left Edinburgh to become Professor and Head of the Department of Soil Science at Lincoln University in New Zealand, where he served as Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University from 1985 to 1989.

Along the way Dr. Swift became involved with the effort to organize the IHSS and after IHSS was founded in 1981, he was elected as the first Vice President (1982-85). In 1986 he became the second President of the Society. He helped organize the IHSS-2 meeting in Birmingham England (1984), contributed a chapter to the *Humic Substances I* book (1985) and was co-editor of the *Humic Substances II* book (1989). Dr. Swift was a very active participant in the project to establish the IHSS Collection of Standard and Reference humic substances and the preparation of the Elliott silt loam HA and FA was done in his laboratory at Lincoln University. His laboratory also prepared the Summit Hill soil reference HA sample.

In 1989 Dr. Swift left New Zealand and returned to England to become Professor and Head of the Department of Soil Science at the University of Reading where he was elected Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture. In 1993 he left Reading to join CSIRO in Adelaide, Australia, as Chief of the Division of Soils. In 2000 he left CSIRO to become the Executive Dean of Natural Resources, Agriculture and Veterinary Science, at the University of Queensland in Australia where he continues until today.

Dr. Swift has continued to be active in the IHSS and other scientific societies. He chaired the organizing committee for IHSS-9 in Adelaide, Australia, 1998, and was co-editor of the proceedings from that conference. In 1999 he was elected Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering. Recently he was elected President of the International Union of Soil Science and as Chair of the Executive Committee he is responsible for organizing the 19<sup>th</sup> World Congress of Soil Science in Brisbane, Australia in 2010

Dr. Swift has an excellent record of scientific publication. He has authored or co-authored more than 100 refereed journal articles plus numerous other reports. An ISI Web of Science citation analysis shows that on average his each of his journal publications has been cited 27 times, which indicates how influential Dr. Swift and his co-workers have been. In addition he has edited or co-edited 8 books and authored 14 book chapters.

*Paul Bloom*

# IHSS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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The general assembly of IHSS took place on Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2008. Jerzy Weber presented the President's report on societal and financial issues, and the which was followed by reports of the Secretary (Gudrun Abbt Braun).

## Training Awards:

Starting from 2005 the IHSS supported a limited number of training bursaries. In 2007 seven awards have been provided (see also Newsletter 37).

The call for Training Bursaries 2009 is open. For further details see page 7 in this newsletter or have a look on the IHSS webpage (further details: aim of IHSS training bursaries, eligibility guidelines, how to apply).

## Abstract from the Secretary's report:

The secretary, Gudrun Abbt Braun, gave her report about the membership situation in the last 4 years and its distribution around the world:

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Members, total	873	883	898	917	950	881	740*

*\* Members that had not paid membership fees for more than three consecutive years up to now are not listed in the year 2008*

726 members are belonging to National Chapters, and the members are belonging to 43 countries. The members are organized in 24 chapters.

## New national chapter coordinators since 2007:

Czech:	Miloslav Pekar
Slovakia:	Gabriela Barancikova
Brazil:	Deborah Pinheiro Dick
Poland:	Jerzy Drozd
Mexico:	Alejandrina Ruiz Bello
Ireland:	Corinna Byrne

## Financial Report:

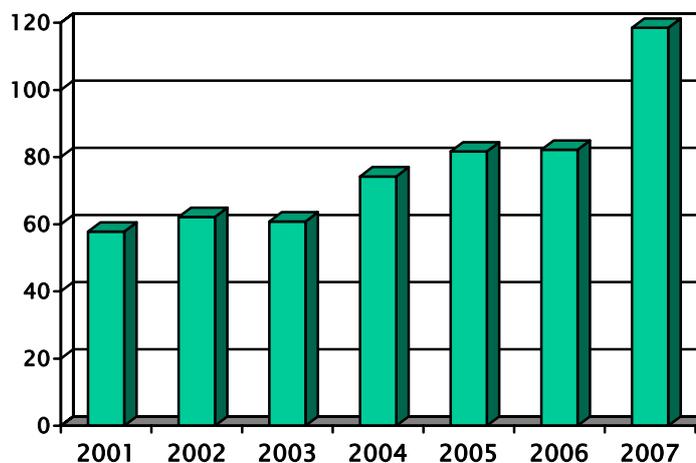
The report was presented to the assembly with a summarized description of actual balances, income, etc from the year 2007 and 2008 (up to now). IHSS is in good standing as far as membership, finances and collection activities are concerned.

## Standard and Reference Collection:

Paul Bloom, President and Chairman of the Collection Committee presented his report concerning annual HS sales for year 2007.

The total sales for humic materials, in 2007		\$ 118,475
aquatic materials	\$ 98,060	
terrestrial source materials	\$ 20,415	

The total sales 2001 – 2007:



The IHSS membership and Board officially thanked Irina Perminova and the Russian group and expressed their gratitude to the whole organizing committee for their effort and sincerity in organizing the 14th IHSS conference.

Meetings supported by IHSS:

- Summer School on Organic Matter  
Napoli, Italy, September, 2007, Alessandro Piccolo
  
- 7th Meeting of the Brazilian Chapter  
Florianopolis, Brazil, November, 2007, Bruno Szpoganicz
  
- AGU, session on „Dissolved organic matter”  
California, USA, December, 2007, Marc Benedetti
  
- Meeting of the Italian Chapter  
Catania, Italy, May, 2008, Mara Gennari
  
- 4th Workshop “Natural Organic Matter in Natural and Technical Processes”  
Maurach, Germany, September, 2008, German Chemical Society, Division of Water Chemistry, Gudrun Abbt-Braun

Meetings beyond 2012:

The IHSS Board invites all scientists interested in hosting one of the future IHSS meetings to apply, any group of scientists working in a field of humic substances are welcome. The organizers are encouraged to contact and cooperate with corresponding IHSS Chapter.

Draft proposals for 2012 are welcome till December 31, 2008

For further details, contact IHSS President, Jerzy Weber [jerzyweber@gmail.com](mailto:jerzyweber@gmail.com)

*Gudrun Abbt-Braun*

## MALCOLM AWARD AND TRAVEL AWARDS 2008

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Luis Tercero Espinoza from Nicaragua, as a top applicant, was selected as winner of the Malcolm Award. He and the students, receiving the travel awards were honored during the Closing Ceremony with a certificate and a cheque.

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



All of them gave either an oral presentation or presented a poster presentation of their work during the IHSS 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Awards are based primarily on the quality and originality of the scientific content of the manuscript and the applicant's record of scientific achievement. The IHSS awarded 17 travel awards in 2008, ten travel awards in 2006, and nine travel awards in 2004, including the Malcolm Award respectively. The increased number of awardees is very encouraging, our wish is that these awards may help students to pursue a career in a field in which NOM science is important.

*Gudrun Abbt-Braun*

# TRAINING BURSARIES 2009

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## CALL FOR IHSS TRAINING AWARDS 2009

Applications are restricted to students and young researchers that are either IHSS members or are working under the supervision of an IHSS member or wish to spend a training period under the supervision of an IHSS member.

They should be sent by e-mail to Jerzy Weber ([jerzyweber@gmail.com](mailto:jerzyweber@gmail.com)) and should arrive before the **15<sup>th</sup> of December 2008**. Proposals must be sent as 1 attachment only, in **Word, rtf** or **pdf**. All margins must be at least 3 cm and headers and footers not less than 2 cm. Font size must be no smaller than 12. Revisions to submitted proposals will not be accepted.

There is **no application form**. Read **carefully** the following guidelines and **comply** with the requirements. The proposal should be precise in terms of scientific objectives, timing and budget. Proposals must be in **English** and must provide the following information:

- **Full name and title of applicant**
- **Proposed dates and location of the training or research period, along with a brief description of the host institution**
- **Letter of invitation from the host institution**
- **Keywords relating to the research topic** (up to 5)
- **Abstract of the proposed research topic** (50-70 words)
- **Summary of the proposed research work or training program** (up to 1000 words)  
Explain the scientific background and rationale of the visit as well as its novel aspects.  
Provide a clear justification of the need for visiting the host institution. Outline the expected benefits of the training and /or outcome of the scientific work.
- **Preliminary program**  
Indicate briefly how the research work or training will be structured.
- **Estimated Budget**  
Indicate the breakdown for travel, accommodation, meals and any other expenses (in US dollars). Indicate (if applicable) any financial support awarded or foreseen from the hosting institution or from sources other than the IHSS.
- **Brief Curriculum Vitae of applicant**

Successful applicants will be notified by the 15<sup>th</sup> of February 2009. They will receive a cheque in dollars corresponding to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the total amount supported by the IHSS before the beginning of their visit. The remaining will be received after the applicant has sent to the President of IHSS a scientific report visit.

## NEWS

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### Professor Yona Chen received the title of Doctor Honoris Causa

The Senate of the Wroclaw University of Life and Environmental Sciences awarded Professor Yona Chen with the title of Doctor Honoris Causa. The ceremony of this highest academic degree nomination took place in Wroclaw, Poland, on October 2, 2008, at the graduation ceremony and opening of the new academic year of 2008/2009. Professor Yona Chen, President of the IHSS from 2002 through 2004, was awarded in recognition of his outstanding contributions in a field of soil and water organic matter research.



*Professor Jerzy Drozd, the supervisor of the honorary doctorate, awarding the diploma to Professor Yona Chen.*



*Professor Chen accepting numerous congratulations after the ceremony.*

Achievements of the prominent recipient were introduced by the laudator Professor Jerzy Weber, who justified honorable mention as follows: "Professor Chen belongs to elite circle of scientists, who's names are acting at conferences and congresses as a magnet to crowds of listeners of both younger as well as older generation.... Undoubtedly, he belongs to the most outstanding researchers of humic substances, which plays a crucial role in cycling of macro- and micro-elements in terrestrial and aquatic systems, as well as including them into the food chain. He has paved new avenues of research in agricultural and environmental research worldwide. This is proved by more than 3,800 citations of his papers registered in ISI Web of Science system, while his wide recognition and great scientific authority are confirmed by conferring the rank of fellow of prestigious scientific societies: *American Society of Agronomy* and *American Society of Soil Science*, as well as nomination for Ambassador of Von Humboldt Foundation in Israel... We are proud that the Institute of Soil Science and Environmental Protection of our University belongs to a long list of scientific institutions which Professor Chen cooperates with."

The ceremony was culminated by a lecture given by the distinguished guest: *Modern Agriculture and Environmental Quality: Is Harmonious Coexistence a Feasible Option?* As usually, the presentation of the prominent lecturer met an enthusiastic response from the audience. After the ceremony, a big number of attendees, including rectors of 10 universities of the region of Lower Silesia, congratulated an excellent presentation given by the recipient of the highest degree of the Wroclaw University of Life and Environmental Sciences. There was a long line of university staff and guests congratulating Professor Chen on his promotion for award.

*Jerzy Weber*

## PAST CONFERENCES

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

Houston, Texas, 5-9 October 2008, Symposium on

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

The International Humic Substances Society helped support a symposium on "Black Carbon in Soil and Sediments" that was held during the 2008 Joint Annual Meeting of Geological Society of America, Soil Science Society of America, American Society of Agronomy, Crop Science Society of America, and Gulf Coast Association of Geological Societies in Houston Texas October 5-9, 2008. The meetings attracted nearly 10,000 scientists from across the spectrum of earth sciences. The three-day symposium on black carbon (biochar) included 29 papers divided among four oral and one poster sessions. Speakers with backgrounds in engineering, chemistry, agronomy, soil and environmental sciences and economics discussed black carbon from widely differing perspectives. Topics included the nature of black carbon in soils and sediments, the role of black carbon in the global carbon cycle, analytical techniques for quantifying and characterizing black carbon in soils and sediments, how to make biochar industrially, potential environmental and agronomic impacts of applying biochar as a soil amendment, the economic viability of a biochar/bio-oil industry, and the potential impact of soil biochar applications on global climate change. Interest in the symposium was driven in large part by the growing recognition that pyrolysis of non-food biomass from diverse sources could be used as a simple scalable technology for producing bio-oil, a carbon neutral renewable energy product, and biochar a soil amendment that sequesters large amounts of carbon in soils. Extrapolated to a global scale this scenario has the potential to simultaneously improve soil quality hence agricultural productivity and food security, water quality by filtering contaminants, energy security through bio-oil production, and permanently remove large amounts of greenhouse gasses from the atmosphere. There were overflow crowds for all oral sessions and a large amount of excitement and enthusiasm was clearly evident. On Monday evening, over twenty participants continued discussions through an enjoyable dinner at a local Vietnamese restaurant.

The Soil Chemistry Division of the Soil Science Society of America expresses sincere thanks to the International Humic Substances Society for their support of the Black Carbon Symposium.

*David Laird*

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Workshop

### **Natural Organic Matter in Natural and Technical Processes**

29<sup>th</sup> September until 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2008, Maurach Lake Constance, Germany

Technical processes are most important concerning water treatment processes, where natural organic matter and humic substances are one of the most important substances which have to be considered.

The annual Late Summer Workshop of the Water Chemical Society of the German Chemical Society (GDCh) provided the opportunity to focus on "Natural Organic Matter in Natural and Technical Processes".

Since four years, the Water Chemical Society of the German Chemical Society (Wasserchemische Gesellschaft in der Gesellschaft deutscher Chemiker) holds the Late Summer Workshops. The workshop took place in Maurach, Lake Constance, Germany from 29<sup>th</sup> September until 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2008. The format of the Late Summer Workshop was of the Gordon Research Conferences. PhD students, young scientists, and leading international experts have had the opportunity to take part in intensive discussions on the most recent results in the field of natural organics covering aspects in natural and technical processes. Especially it was a very attractive issue of the workshop that natural scientists, engineers and young scientists in the field have been addressed.

Invited speakers were setting the scene and 20 young PhD students presented their research work by oral and poster presentations. Intensive discussions followed each presentations.

The following topics have been addressed by the invited speakers:

- NOM everywhere – setting the scene (Fritz Frimmel, Karlsruhe, Germany)
- NOM isolates: Origin and structure versus reactivity (Jean Phillippe Croué, Poitiers, France)
- Ultrahigh resolution mass spectrometry of NOM. A new view on NOM quality, properties and formation (Thorsten Reetmsma, Berlin, Germany)
- Causes and consequences of increased levels of humic substances in surface waters (Rolf Vogt, Oslo, Norway)
- Adsorption of humic compounds to mineral particles (Willem van Riemsdijk, Wageningen, Netherlands)
- The role of NOM in technical and natural sorption processes (Eckhard Worch, Dresden, Germany)
- Natural organic matter (NOM) profiling as a basis for treatment process selection and monitoring (Gary Amy, Delft, Netherlands)
- Formation of emerging and high molecular weight DBPs from NOM (Susan Richardson, Athens, USA)
- Disinfection byproduct formation from NOM and some key biochemicals (David Reckhow, Amherst, USA)
- The role of dissolved organic matter (DOM) in oxidation reactions and in the formation of oxidation by-products (Silvio Canonica, Dübendorf, Switzerland)
- NOM removal in drinking water by the OBM process" (TorOve Leiknes, Trondheim, Norway).

In addition, there was a visit to the water works of Lake Constance, Sipplingen. The plant is providing drinking water for the region of Stuttgart and the treatment includes preozonation, coagulation, filtration and disinfection.

The Late Summer Workshop was a success both in terms of knowledge transfer and in the strengthening of the cooperation with engineers and people involved in the water treatment issues. The Water Chemical Society of the German Chemical Society expresses sincere thanks to the International Humic Substances Society for the support.

*Gudrun Abbt-Braun*

### **12th Nordic-Baltic IHSS Symposium on Natural Organic Matter in Environment and Technology, June 14 – 17, 2009 Tallinn, Estonia**

The next, **12th International Humic Substances Society Nordic-Baltic Chapter Symposium** will be organized in Tallinn, Estonia June 14-17, 2009. The symposium will be hosted by the Tallinn University of Technology.

The scientific program will focus on all aspects of natural organic matter and humic substances in the environment as well as on technological applications. Symposium includes plenary and keynote lectures and poster presentations with the possibility for discussions and exchange of ideas.

Symposium topics are:

- Characterization, fluxes and functions of natural organic matter and humic substances in the environment;
- Analytical methods for studying natural organic matter;
- Technological processes and natural organic matter;
- Biological properties of natural organic matter.



For more information contact

Viia Lepane: [viia.lepane@ttu.ee](mailto:viia.lepane@ttu.ee)

<http://ihss2009.ttu.ee/>

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### **General Assembly of the European Geoscience Union (EGU)**

<http://meetings.copernicus.org/egu2009>

**Vienna, Austria, 19-24 April 2009**

**Soil Systems Science Division (SSS)**

#### **Session SSS28 “Soil organic matter supplies: impacts and implications”**

**Further information: Claudio Ciavatta, [claudio.ciavatta@unibo.it](mailto:claudio.ciavatta@unibo.it)**

Dept. of Agro-Environmental Science and Technology, *Alma Mater Studiorum* University of Bologna viale G. Fanin N. 40, I-40127 Bologna, Italy Tel.: +39 051 209-6201; Fax: +39 051 209-6203

**Deadline for the submission of abstracts: January 13, 2009**

**Deadline for support: December 07, 2008**

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2008

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## **Distinguished Service Members**

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Dr. Morris Schnitzer  
Dr. Frank J. Stevenson  
Dr. Roger S. Swift  
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 40

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