



International Society of Hymenopterists

February 2009 NEWSLETTER

President's Report

This is my first report as the incoming President of ISH. I will spare you most of the platitudes that we often find in this sort of message. Suffice it to say that it is both an honor and an intimidating responsibility to take the helm of ISH for the next couple of years. We have some very real and very important challenges facing us.

Perhaps the most important challenge, and one that we must begin to address immediately, is the changing landscape for scientific publication, and the effect that this is having on the *Journal of Hymenoptera Research*. The rate of submission of manuscripts to *JHR* continues to drop, and we are in danger of falling below the critical mass necessary to publish a top quality journal. Each of us probably has a different theory for the causes of this trend, but clearly a changing paradigm to rapid, electronic publication has been happening for years, and the shift is accelerating. I plan to appoint a President's Committee on Publications to address this issue. I will ask the group to examine current trends and recent innovations in scientific publication, and report back to me within a year with a new strategic plan for *JHR* and a new business model for the journal. I will place as few constraints on this discussion as possible, so that they can consider all alternatives. Gavin Broad, Editor-in-Chief of *JHR* and Mike Sharkey, President-Elect, have agreed to co-chair this important committee.

Elsewhere in the newsletter you will find the preliminary announcement for the 7th International Congress of Hymenopterists, to be held June 20-26, 2010, in Kőszeg, Hungary. George Melika and his colleagues have done an outstanding job in setting up a spectacular venue and in preliminary planning for the meeting. We will be the sole occupants of the Hotel Irottkő for the duration of the Congress, and the organizers

have identified local hotels with cheaper accommodations, should those be a better fit to your budget. Kőszeg promises to be both an outstanding venue from a scientific point of view, and a charming and intimate setting for social and cultural activities. George facilitated a limited number of visits to the Natural History Museums in Budapest or Vienna after the Congress, and a post-Congress collecting trip has been organized, should that be of interest to you. Previous ISH Congresses have been important professional milestones for many of us, and this Congress promises to be the best yet. We urge all of you to participate in this fantastic opportunity.

The Executive Committee and Endowment Committee are continuing to work out the details of a new ISH Student Award, which will be announced soon. The ISH Endowment is continuing to grow, thanks to continued donations, Life Memberships, and the sales of books and CD's published by the Society. The Endowment Committee has recommended that up to half of the interest accrued annually to the Endowment be devoted to a new ISH Student Award to be used for travel to the ISH Congress or other scientific meeting to present results of research on Hymenoptera, or to initiate or facilitate research projects on any aspect of Hymenoptera. The award will be open to all student members of ISH, but preference will be given to students for which no funding or very limited funding is presently available. The Endowment Committee has indicated that the Endowment is presently generating sufficient interest income to support one award per year. The details will be announced soon.

Finally, with this newsletter you will find the call for 2009 membership renewal. Since we all seem to be at least slightly absent-minded, or in some cases, very absent-minded, I urge you to process your renewal forms as soon as you finish

reading this newsletter. Late renewals cost the Society considerable time and expense each year.

I send my very best wishes to each of you for a successful New Year, filled with the enjoyment of those particular Hymenoptera that are closest to your heart.

– Jim Woolley, president

7th International Hymenopterists Congress 20-26 June 2010 Kőszeg, Hungary

The 7th International Congress of Hymenopterists will to be held June 20-26, 2010, in Kőszeg, Hungary at the Hotel Irottkö. George Melika is soliciting ideas for symposia and hopes to get an idea of how many people will be attending. Hotel prices, which include three meals(!), are expected to be 28,000 forint per night (€94 or us\$120) and early registration fees might be close to 35,000 forint (€117 or us\$150) for regular participants and 25,000 forint (€84 or us\$107) for students. Prices may change as the date approaches. Contact George to get on the list to receive updates: melikageorge@gmail.com.

Prof. Dr. Alexandr P. Rasnitsyn awarded ISH Research Medal

On August 25, 2008, the fourth International Society of Hymenopterists Distinguished Research Medal Distinguished Research Medal was awarded to Prof. Dr. Alexandr P. Rasnitsyn for his life-long research on the evolution of Hymenoptera. Statement from the award committee (Denis Brothers, Gary Gibson, Norm Johnson, and Lars Vilhelmsen):

We have the pleasure to select Prof. Dr. Alexandr Pavlovich Rasnitsyn for the ISH distinguished research medal. During a career spanning almost half a century, Dr. Rasnitsyn has published almost 150 papers and several books or book contributions dealing directly with different aspects of the systematics and evolution of Hymenoptera. Despite being well past average retirement age, he is still as active as ever with publications, travels and conferences. His research reaches across the entire order, including numerous papers on fossil taxa. His

publications encompass systematics at all levels from species descriptions to higher-level phylogeny at the subordinal and superfamily level.

It is within the field of higher-level phylogeny that the work of Dr. Rasnitsyn has had the largest impact on the community of hymenopteran systematists. Most members of the community have had to consider his ideas at one time or another. His papers from 1969 and 1980 (in Russian, later translated into English) and especially the 1988 summary in English are widely cited and stand as landmarks in the development of hymenopteran phylogenetics. These papers represent the cumulative effort of decades of original research that has allowed Dr. Rasnitsyn to acquire an unsurpassed knowledge of the diversity of Hymenoptera, living and extinct. Furthermore, his hypotheses surfaced at a time when the field was dominated by ideas derived from compilations of extensive literature surveys but with little original input, and his efforts managed to inspire and give new direction to investigations into hymenopteran phylogeny.

For the wide and varied scope of his research, the profound impact of his ideas on hymenopteran phylogenetics, and his sheer industry, ‘Alex’ can be considered ‘the father of Hymenoptera phylogenetics’ and we consider him a highly deserving recipient of the highest honour the ISH can bestow on him.



Secretary's Notes

There have been several recent Web developments that are designed to simplify the way we communicate with one another and keep track of membership: 1) A Society blog has been

established to allow for the rapid communication of news about members, Society business, Hymenoptera, etc. to the Membership and other interested parties:

<http://blog.hymenopterists.org/>

2) Katja Seltmann and I are working on a new Web-based membership database similar in spirit to the existing database hosted by Allen Press. We have the database established in MySQL and are building the user interface this spring. Hosting our own membership will ultimately save us several hundred dollars per year.

3) I am looking into installing Mailman on our server, so that we can manage an email list for the Society. This will allow us to ask the membership Hymenoptera- or ISH-related questions or distribute news much more efficiently. In the meantime those of you with Facebook accounts can join our group!

I look forward to a productive and fun 2009. Please let me know if you have any questions or suggestions: andy_deans@ncsu.edu

– Andy Deans, secretary

ISH Business Meeting International Congress of Entomology Durban, South Africa; 10 July 2008

The meeting was convened at: 5:43 p.m. by President Mike Schauff and Past President Denis Brothers. 32 members in attendance.

President Schauff presented a plaque honoring Andy Austin with the ISH Service Award. He also announced the selection of Dr. Alex Rasnitsyn for the Distinguished Research Award given for 2008. Dr. Rasnitsyn was unable to attend the Congress and a presentation of his award will be planned. Lars Vilhelmsen summarized the nomination and selection process of the Nomination Committee, which he chaired. The Society extended it thanks to the panel members for a job well done.

Secretary's report. The newly elected Officers are Andy Deans, Secretary, and Joe Fortier, Treasurer. The Secretary notes that paid memberships are way down (only 210 as of the time of the report), and an effort will be undertaken to remind those delinquent members that they need to pay their dues.

Jim Whitfield allowed that perhaps people are too busy and forget. The suggestion was made that we offer multiple year memberships (maybe a 3 year?) to make it easier for folks. The Executive will address this as soon as practicable.

Editor's report. We have new subject editors Andy Deans (parasitoids and sawflies) and Jack Neff (aculeates). The Society thanks past subject editors Sydney Cameron and Donald Quicke. The April issue of JHR had 8 papers and 1 product review and the upcoming issue has nine manuscripts so far. The Society needs to explore the option of on-line publishing and take a fresh look at the issue of page charges, which are a major concern of a number of members. The Executive will consider how to proceed with this subject. President Schauff noted that compared to many North American journals the current JHR charges are quite low. Still this can be a problem for members in many countries. Page charges remain a significant source of Society revenue.

ISH Endowment. The endowment totals just over us\$33,000 in the main account and nearly us\$10,000 in the working account. Interest on both accounts has declined due to the drop in U.S. interest rates. Brad Vinson gave a short update on the status of moving the funds into the ESA foundation. We are still interested in pursuing this but it is on hold for now.

Student Awards. The Student Awards Committee (Andy Austin, Kees Van Achterberg, and Brad Vinson) will be calling for application as soon as guidelines are put in place. Those awards should be made before the next ISH congress in 2010.

New Business. The 2010 congress in Hungary is in the early planning stages. A date has not yet been set but the host institution indicates August as a likely time.

The Society will soon hold an election for President-elect. The nominating Committee will consist of Donald Quicke, John LaSalle and Andy Austin, all Past-Presidents of the Society. We expect to hold the election in early Fall.

John Heraty noted that the Entomological Society of America is moving to eliminate page charges over 3 years and will raise institutional

fees to cover the cost. Gary Gibson added that he likes the *Zootaxa* model, which is on-line and allows for inexpensive publication of color images. He urged the Society to investigate this model as a way to attract more papers to JHR. John Heraty followed up by noting that we need a strategy for increasing our impact factor.

Regarding the next ISH Congress, Lars Vilhelmsen mentioned that there will be two other Congresses in Europe in August of 2010 and we should take that into consideration in our planning.

**ISH Business Meeting
Entomological Society of America
Reno, NV; 16 November 2008**

The meeting was convened at: 3:00 p.m. by President Mike Schauff. 23 members initially in attendance.

News. Dr. Mike Sharkey was announced as our president-elect, to begin serving as president in 2010. Mike Schauff reported on the ICE business meeting. Andy Deans gave some updated figures regarding membership renewals, noting that at least 50 members renewed or joined since the ICE business meeting. The reiteration of Gavin's concerns for JHR brought on discussion of the journal's future.

Future of JHR. There is general agreement that we need to rethink the model for JHR, so Jim Woolley will appoint an *ad hoc* Committee on Publications, to report back to the President with both a strategic plan and a business plan, or plans, for JHR. Included so far are: Gavin Broad, Mark Shaw, Donald Quicke, and Matt Buffington. Other possibilities for committee members are: Bob Kula, John LaSalle, and Craig Brabant.

Student Awards. We need to announce that the Student Awards committee is ready to receive nominations. Andy Austin for organize this venture.

Credit Cards. We agreed that credit card payments are critical to retaining foreign members, and we need to establish a cheaper and user-friendly method for this. Joe Fortier will explore new options.



**The Hym Course
Dominican Republic; September 2008**

The second offering of THE HYM COURSE was recently presented as an eight-day workshop at the Punta Cana Ecological Foundation, Biodiversity Center, Punta Cana, Dominican Republic. The main purpose of the course is to provide participants with knowledge and experience in identifying parasitic Hymenoptera, stinging wasps (aculeates), and sawflies. Information on biology and behavior of these organisms is reinforced with formal and informal field work. Techniques commonly used in collecting (passive and active), rearing, preserving, and curating Hymenoptera is presented in a hands-on manner to allow attendees to learn directly by doing.

International Society of Hymenopterists

President: James B. Woolley, Texas A&M University
 President-elect: Michael J. Sharkey, University of Kentucky
 Treasurer: Joseph C. Fortier, Gonzaga College
 Secretary: Andrew R. Deans, North Carolina State University
 Archivist/Webmaster: Susanne Schulmeister, American
 Museum of Natural History

Visit us on the Web –

<http://hymenopterists.org>
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