

The African Mycological Association (AMA) in 2009

The African Mycological Association comprises approximately 200 members from various African countries, as well as collaborators and ex-patriots from other continents. It has an active e-mail list server that links its members, and that is used to promote and share news on research, events and general observations. The AMA newsletter, *MycoAfrica*, was started in 2007 and serves to introduce research and institutes of members, with added features such as lists of African literature relevant to selected topics. All of these and additional information can be found on the AMA website (www.africanmycology.org).

In January 2009, AMA hosted the 6th AMA Regional Mycology Meeting jointly with the 46th Congress of the Southern African Society for Plant Pathology (SASPP) in Gordonsbay, South Africa. Talks relevant to African mycology were given in various sessions of the joint congress, but a full day session was reserved for the AMA, with a wide diversity of talks. Together with this meeting, an AMA workshop on "The conservation status of fungi using IUCN criteria" was presented by David Minter (UK). More information on our meeting can be found in *MycoAfrica* 3(1).

The AMA workshop on fungal conservation status led to the establishment of an African Workgroup on Fungal Conservation. This group comprises about 40 mycologists from various geographical areas in Africa. Besides the greater aim of adding African fungi to IUCN red data lists, the working group also serves



to link diverse mycologists working towards a common goal, and will lead to the establishment of valuable resources for African mycology. This will be done in close collaboration with David Minter and his activities to raise awareness for fungal conservation. The workgroup was represented at the international meeting on "Fungal Conservation: science, infrastructure and politics" in October 2009 (see above).

At the Regional meeting in January 2009, a new council was elected [*MycoAfrica* 3 (1)]. The new council has various goals [*MycoAfrica* 3 (2)] that include addressing the challenges African mycologists face and making use of the opportunities present on the continent. The Association would like to promote the AMA more to mycologists in Africa, but also to colleagues from other continents and

sister societies. Undoubtedly, its most important goal is to have meetings on regional and continental levels, and then to raise awareness of how important fungi are in the health of our planet—linking closely with mycologists from other continents.

All that has been achieved by the AMA thus far, and what can be done in the future, would not have been possible without the work of others before the current council. We are also grateful for support of the IMA on a number of levels, to help us build our programs. We hope we can repay all of these by building African mycology as much as we all can.

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Mycological Society of America (MSA)

The Mycological Society of America, which serves as the IMA Regional Committee for North America, had its 2009 annual meeting among the peaks of the Wasatch Mountains and the flowing waters of Little Cottonwood Canyon in the Snowbird Ski Resort in Snowbird, Utah. Just 30 miles southeast of Salt

Lake City, the venue featured an amazing mountain vista. This meeting was held in conjunction with the Botanical Society of America, the American Fern Society, the American Bryological and Lichenological Society, and the American Society of Plant Taxonomists. It was well attended with approximately 1100 participants taking

part in over 950 presentations, workshops, symposia and posters. There were



numerous pre-meeting workshops and field trips, many featuring local wildflowers and other higher plants. The MSA pre-meeting foray took mycologists to the high mountain meadows of the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest where recent rains made collecting an enjoyable, but strenuous, activity. The concluding banquet and MSA annual auction was attended by members of all five societies who enthusiastically bid on the many unusual items offered for sale.

Several prominent mycologists received highly prestigious awards at this meeting. These included: Tim Baroni, State University of New York – Cortland, Distinguished Mycologist; Andrew Methven, Eastern Illinois University, Weston Award for Excellence in Teaching; Brian Shaw, Texas A&M, Alexopoulos Award; James B. Anderson, University of Toronto - Erindale, MSA Fellow; and Gordon Beakes, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, UK, Honorary Member. Twenty-four students received awards for travel and research excellence. This



meeting was an excellent opportunity for mycologists to interact with other botanists and to explore mutual interests in a spectacular venue. Preparations are already being made for next year's annual meeting in the horse country of Lexington, Kentucky on June 28 – July 1, 2010. The meeting will be held in conjunction with the International Symposium on Fungal Endophytes of Grasses (ISFEG) and will feature the theme, "Symbiosis." This meeting will include a collecting foray in the Bernheim

Forest, a private educational facility dedicated to the restoration and preservation of Kentucky's native ecosystems, including forests, waterlands, and grasslands. The banquet will be held at the Kentucky Horse Park (<http://www.kyhorsepark.com/>) and will include local dishes and entertainment. More information on this meeting can be found throughout 2010 at <http://www.ca.uky.edu/msaisfeg/>.

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International Union of Microbiological Societies (IUMS)



IUMS is one of the 26 Scientific Unions of the International Council of Science (ICSU). It was founded in 1927 as the International Society of Microbiology, and became the International

Association of Microbiological Societies affiliated to the International Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS) as a Division in 1967. IUMS has 109 member societies and 16 associate members.

The scientific activities of the Union are conducted by three Divisions namely Bacteriology & Applied Microbiology (BAM), Mycology, and Virology, by six specialist international committees, eight international commissions, and two international federations (COMCOFs). Their major activities include the classification and nomenclature of bacteria, fungi and viruses, food microbiology, medical microbiology and diagnostics, culture collections, education, and biological standardization. For more information visit www.iums.org.

The Mycology Division, now chaired by Marianna Viviani (Milano, Italy), has six active commissions dealing with special topics, including Antigens & Molecular Diagnostics, Food Mycology, Yeasts, *Penicillium* & *Aspergillus*, and Indoor Fungi. These international commissions meet regularly in special symposia and workshops. For example, the International

Commission on Yeasts organizes very well attended meetings and has a congress programme planned for the coming four years. They also recently released a newsletter (<http://publish.uwo.ca/~lchance/YeastNewsletter.html>). The international Commission of Food Mycology meets every three years; its next meeting is in Freising (Germany) on 7-9 June 2010 (www.foodmycology.org). The International Commission on The Taxonomy of Fungi (ICTF) is a joint

commission under both IUBS and IUMS. IUMS Vice-chair Scott E. Baker (Richland, USA) is responsible together with the two other vice-chairs of the IUMS divisions for the scientific programme of its congresses. The next IUMS Mycology Congress will take place in Sapporo (Japan) together with the Congress of Bacteriology and Applied Microbiology from 6-10 September 2011 (<http://www.congre.co.jp/iums2011sapporo/data/general.html>). The topics

of symposia are mostly selected on the basis of applied aspects of mycology within a more general microbiological setting. These symposia are therefore often also of interest to bacteriologists and virologists as well as mycologists.

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International Association for Lichenology (IAL)

The International Association for Lichenology (IAL), formed in 1967 and with a current membership of 260, is the principal organization that promotes international dialogue between lichenologists. The IAL's two principal functions are to produce a biannual newsletter (the *International Lichenological Newsletter* – available on <http://www.lichenology.org/>) and to organize quadrennial congresses. The IAL also organizes occasional field excursions. The most recent IAL congress was held at Asilomar, California, in July 2008 in conjunction with the American Bryological and Lichenological Society, Northwest Lichenology (US), and the Californian Lichen Society; it was

attended by 240 delegates. The next (IAL7) will be in Bangkok in January 2012. The IAL has made significant contributions to past International Mycological Congresses, and at IMC9 in 2010, lichenologists will be co-convening 10 of the 45 symposia, and the IAL is organizing a pre-conference field excursion to the west coast of Scotland.

The Association makes two awards at IAL congresses and IMCs. The Acharius Medal for outstanding contributions to lichenology over the career of an individual; and the **Mason Hale Award** to recognise excellence in research by young lichenologists for outstanding work resulting from doctoral dissertations or similar studies (submission of work(s)).



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International Society for Human and Animal Mycology (ISHAM)



The Japanese Society for Medical Mycology (JSSM), with Professor Ogawa as Congress President, hosted a fantastic ISHAM Congress in Tokyo in May 2009. This congress will be remembered by all for excellent science, superb organization and wonderful hospitality. The JSSM has always been a strong supporter of ISHAM, and many Japanese members have served ISHAM with great distinction. All JSSM mem-

bers may be very proud of their outstanding contribution to ISHAM and to Medical Mycology worldwide. Congratulations also to Ruo-yu Li (Chairperson) and the Mycology Sub Society of the Chinese Society for Microbiology for hosting an excellent Satellite Symposium in Beijing also in May, 2009. The 18th ISHAM Congress will be held in Berlin, Germany 10–14 June 2012. The incoming ISHAM Council is as



follows; David Ellis (President), Neil Gow (President-Elect), Peter Donnelly (General Secretary; p.donnelly@usa.net), Sybren de Hoog (Past-President) and Arunaloke Chakrabarti, Bernard Hube, Flavio Queiroz-Telles, Aristeia Velegraki, Shinichi Watanabe (Vice-Presidents), and Ira Salkin as Chief Editor of *Medical Mycology*. All correspondence should be addressed to the General Secretary. I must take this opportunity to pay a special tribute to Sybren de Hoog for the outstanding job he has done as ISHAM President for the last three years. I sincerely thank Malcolm Richardson (UK) who has served as General Secretary for the past six years; Kathrin Tintelnot (Germany) who has served as Treasurer and Vice-President for a total of nine years; Yoshinori Nozawa (Japan) and Eva

Burger (Brazil) who have also served as Vice-Presidents for the past six years. All have provided ISHAM with outstanding service.

ISHAM now hosts 23 working groups studying various research and epidemiological topics relevant to medical mycology. These groups (see <http://www.isham.org>) are open to anyone regardless of whether they are an ISHAM member or not. One exciting new initiative to emerge from the Tokyo Congress was the formation of "Young ISHAM" a new working group convened by Michaela (Ela) Lackner and Ferry Hagen (<http://www.young.isham.org/>) – a new web-based networking platform for young scientists working in medical mycology to use to build up professional networks. ISHAM also publishes *Medical Mycology*,

and *ISHAM News*, a regular e-mail newsletter listing upcoming conferences and workshops, jobs for mycologists, and information about other research and education opportunities. The web site also provides a clinical case each month as part of a continuing education programme. In future we hope to partner other organisations like the Mycoses Study Group (MSG) to further enhance mycological education.

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