



# INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EPIDEMIOLOGY

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## ***President's Newsletter, November 2009***

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Dear ISEE Member,

This is my last newsletter as President. Dean Baker (University of California, Irvine) takes over as President on January 1, for 2010-2011. Some related good news is that Francine Laden will continue as Secretary-Treasurer for the year 2010. (Dean, who 'knows the ropes' of ISEE well, as an ex-Councilor, Officer and Conference Organizer, may not need to rely on her advice and knowledge as much as I did. Thanks Francine!)

We all get too many emails these days. So I am glad not to have received a deluge of responses to my newsletters. And, while hoping that the newsletter has not unduly cluttered up your electronic in-tray, I hope that various items have been of interest to some members.

If you are not yet persuaded by me (and others) that human-induced climate change is real, proceeding faster than predicted a decade ago, a great threat to environmental conditions and human health, and an essential part of the ISEE research and policy agenda, then I suggest that we review the state-of-play over a cup of coffee in a year or two's time. For the moment – with most national governments committed to national self-interest, electoral self-preservation, and general procrastination – the situation will continue to worsen.

So, some of ISEE's research-based members should be on the climate change and health case: (i) detecting attributable effects, (ii) quantifying current and likely future health burdens, (iii) estimating the 'co-benefits' to local population health of basic and necessary mitigation actions (alternative power sources, new transport systems, improved urban and housing design, and reduced production of meat), (iv) evaluating adaptive actions to lessen now-unavoidable health risks, and (v) explaining to all and sundry the fundamental significance of this extraordinary human-induced weakening of Earth's life-supporting systems.

## **2009 ISEE Conference, Dublin – and next year's conference**

This year's ISEE Conference in Dublin, August 26-29, was a well-attended and widely enjoyed event. The feedback received from participants has been very positive. So: great thanks to co-organisers Anthony Staines and Tony Fletcher – and to the cast of dozens that assisted – including members of the Planning and Program Committees, Scientific Advisory Board, and Conference Organisers Ltd. (for the logistics). Thanks, also, to our co-hosts, University College Dublin; Dublin City University; and the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine; and to our sponsors, listed below. <sup>1</sup>

In addition to the overall well-structured program of presentations, the plenary sessions were deemed to be generally of high quality, and relevant to the big themes of the day (especially in relation to food systems, environmental conditions, climatic influences, food yields, food safety and health).

Then, of course, there were the official Welcome event and the Conference Dinner. An opening welcome in the splendid environs of historic Dublin Castle and a dinner in the fascinating and vast Guinness Brewery will prove hard to beat. Those events were a real treat for all non-Dubliners.

The ISEE conference abstracts have been published as a supplement to the November 2009 issue of *Epidemiology*. The two awardee presentations made by Allan Smith of University of California, Berkeley (John Goldsmith Award for contributions to environmental epidemiology) and Steve Wing of University of North Carolina (Research Integrity Award) have been condensed in written form, by Allan and Steve, and they will appear soon in ISEE's free journal pages in *Epidemiology*.

**Next year's conference:** Seoul, South Korea, August 28-September 1.

([www.isesisee2010.org](http://www.isesisee2010.org)) This conference will be jointly run with the International Society of Exposure Science. So, start preparing your abstract ideas (you know what I mean) and symposium proposals.

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<sup>1</sup> The following organizations and federal and state agencies generously co-sponsored the 2009 ISEE Conference: Safefood; Failte Ireland, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Ireland Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, Science Foundation Ireland, and the Health Effects Institute.

## Impending election for two new councilors

At year's end we say farewell Marie O'Neill (University of Michigan) and How-Ran Guo (National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan) as Councilors. Our thanks to Marie and How-Ran for their three years of service and inputs.

You will soon be receiving, by email, the electronic ballot for the two replacement councilor positions, one from North America, one from the rest of the world. There are two candidates for each position. The information will be succinct and informative, and the voting process is easy. So strike a blow for democracy, please.

## Opportunities for ISEE members

The ISEE Council is keen to make members more aware of ways in which they can participate actively in some of the Society's affairs between annual conferences.

A few suggestions include the following:

1. Recruiting new members (e.g., introducing the society and its website ([www.iseepi.org](http://www.iseepi.org)) to your students and colleagues; posting ISEE flyers in your departments).
2. Becoming involved as a mentor in AuthorAID (for researchers in under-resourced developing countries). ([www.iseepi.org/about/authoraid.html](http://www.iseepi.org/about/authoraid.html))
3. Serving on committees (the Ethics and Philosophy Committee, or the Capacity-Building committee). ([www.iseepi.org/about/committees.html](http://www.iseepi.org/about/committees.html))
4. Joining *ad hoc* task groups (e.g., help with development of the Society's webpages and the free journal pages; identification of policy positions and development of policy statements).
5. Getting involved in the planning for the next annual conference, either as an abstract reviewer or on the various program committees. ([www.isesisee2010.org/](http://www.isesisee2010.org/))
6. New researchers are also encouraged to get involved in the New Researchers Network, which facilitates interaction between members and encourages the spread of ideas and issues particularly relevant to students and researchers in the early stages of their careers. ([www.new-researchers.net](http://www.new-researchers.net))

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Meanwhile, I wish all members a soft landing at the end of 2009. Season's Greetings and, for those in the southern hemisphere, enjoy your summer break.

Tony McMichael

(Incipient Lame Duck President)