



# INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EPIDEMIOLOGY

Website: [www.iseepi.org](http://www.iseepi.org)

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## *From the Past President's Desk -- March 31, 2008*



To ISEE members, friends and others,

I hope this newsletter will be a regular, helpful and informative dialogue between ISEE officers and members about the most recent activities, achievements, opportunities within ISEE. As immediate Past President, I write this inaugural newsletter at the President's request. The motivation came from your responses to the survey we conducted last year. Overwhelmingly, respondents requested a periodic newsletter from the President. Getting feedback on that and other issues was extremely helpful, so we thank you. The results of that survey are posted on our website ([www.iseepi.org](http://www.iseepi.org)) and we continue to seek your input on how we are doing, what we can do better and what else we can do, through whatever venue suits you best.

First and foremost, I write to thank each of you for your support during my tenure and for your efforts and enthusiasm in helping ISEE grow in size and credibility as the leading society of environmental epidemiologists worldwide. From discussions among a few dozen scientists meeting in Pittsburgh in 1988, ISEE has grown to a worldwide organization of more than 700 members spanning more than 50 countries, worldwide, an impressive feat. Our annual conferences also have grown by leaps and bounds. The 2006 joint conference with ISEA in Paris had more than 1,500 registrants, more than twice as many as any previous conference, and last year's conference in Mexico City also had an impressively large attendance with exciting new science.

My tenure as President was truly remarkable for me. I met so many of you, many whom I did not know previously, who are doing amazing work and keeping ISEE alive and vibrant. It was such a joy to speak with each of you. With your many suggestions and support, we initiated a variety of new activities, increased our professional profile, and charted an exciting path to further growth and influence.

For example, for our annual conferences, arguably our single most important activity, we introduced three new ways to enable ISEE to better connect with members and members to better connect with each other: (1) a new members' reception, in which officers and councilors welcome new members and explain a little about how ISEE functions; (2) an open discussion at the General Membership meeting about policy issues on which ISEE might consider advocating for or against; and, (3) support, both

financial and otherwise, for the independent New Researchers Network, to encourage our more junior members to meet, discuss and collaborate.

Mike Brauer, the outgoing Chair of our Annual Conference Committee, did an outstanding job with members of his committee, soliciting, reviewing and recommending for Council approval bids for hosting the annual ISEE Conferences through 2012, allowing substantial time for planning and coordination. Mike also brought to our attention the goal of Carbon Neutral Conferencing, and this will be available for all future meetings. We owe Mike many thanks.

Another new initiative is AuthorAID. Under the inspired guidance of Tony Robbins, Phyllis Freeman and Dick Clapp, we are enrolling ISEE members as mentors to assist self-identified scientists from less developed countries in refining and publishing peer-reviewed articles on their research. Often scientists from less developed countries have a harder time navigating that complicated process and our mentors are offering their experience even though, under the rules of the program, they cannot be co-authors or otherwise compensated. (See [www.iseepi.org](http://www.iseepi.org) for more details.)

Because our financial situation has improved over the past several years, and to stand by our commitment to increase our international presence, we have initiated a small grants program to fund our regional chapters in activities to help them grow and increase their visibility and influence. We really want to support them. Their applications for support will be reviewed by the Council and awarded based on merit.

We also have participated in and/or sponsored conferences in addition to our own, including: the First and Second East Asian ISEE Conferences in 2006 and 2008; the Summit on Reproductive Health and the Environment 2007; Citizens of the Earth Conference hosted by French President Chirac 2007; Central and Eastern European Chapter 2007 and 2008 ISEE International Conferences, and Environmental and Occupational Epidemiology meetings in the UK and Ireland.

Several Council members also collaborated on publication of an invited commentary to *Epidemiology* for the Council of Science Editors' [Global Theme Issue on Poverty and Human Development in November 2007](#)

Finally, we are trying to address the burdens of committee work through changes in our committee structure. To lighten the load for some committees, we are moving to a Task Coordination structure, in which we are identifying more narrow tasks for which individuals can take responsibility. For example, instead of a Communications Committee, we now have one person responsible for soliciting material for our "free" pages in each issue of *Epidemiology* and *Environmental Health Perspectives* (Jaymie Meliker) and someone else to oversee postings and changes to the ISEE website (Mark Nieuwenhuijsen). We are working on formulating other communications tasks for which we will solicit volunteers.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without the incredible efforts of Secretary-Treasurers Dean Baker (2001-2006) and Francine Laden (2007-2008) and, at

least as important, the Secretariat staffed by Carol Rougvié and Mary Gilbert, as well as our councilors and members. Thanks to all of you for your support and help in keeping ISEE strong and growing. I look forward to continuing to work with you in the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Wartenberg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dan" being more prominent than the last name "Wartenberg".

Dan Wartenberg