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**REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL, SEPTEMBER 30, 2014**

**Objectives**

The International Palaeontological Association (IPA) aims to promote and coordinate international cooperation in palaeontology and to encourage the integration and synthesis of all palaeontological knowledge. A detailed mission statement is published on the IPA web site at <**http://ipa.geo.ku.edu**>.

**Membership**

Corporate Membership is open to national, regional, and disciplinary palaeontol-ogical societies and sections of societies; as well as to other scientific societies, agencies, institutions, organizations, working groups, and informal associations

that support the aims of IPA. Corporate Members pay annual dues to IPA.

Organizations interested in palaeontology and in supporting the aims of IPA are

encouraged to contact the IPA Treasurer to become Corporate Members.

There are two classes of individual membership: Subscribing Members are those who subscribe to *Lethaia*, an international journal affiliated with IPA. A portion of the subscription covers their dues. Ordinary Members pay dues directly to IPA.

**Constitution**

The most recently revised Constitution was approved by the General Assembly of IPA at its meeting of June 20, 2006, in Beijing. The Constitution is published on the IPA web site at <**http://ipa.geo.ku.edu**>.

**Officers 2010-2014**

The officers of IPA for the term July 2010 through September 2014 have been:

President: Dr. Michael J. Benton (UK)

Secretary-General: Dr. Roger D. K. Thomas (USA)

Treasurer: Dr. Bruce Lieberman (USA)

Vice-Presidents: Dr. Lucia Angiolini (Italy)

Dr. Mikhail A. Fedonkin (Russia)

Dr. Hiroshi Kitazato (Japan)

Dr. Thomas Servais (Belgium)

Dr. Zhonghe Zhou (China)

Councilors-at-Large: Dr. Beatriz Waisfeld (Argentina)

Dr. Svend Stouge (Denmark)

The President, Secretary-General and Treasurer constitute the Executive Committee that conducts the day-to-day business of the IPA.

**Council of IPA**

In addition to the Executive Committee and other Officers, the Constitution provides that the Council shall include delegates representing the Corporate Members and the journal *Lethaia*, delegates charged with to carry out specific tasks on behalf of IPA, the Past-President and the Past-Secretary-General.

Current Corporate Members and all delegates now serving on the Council are listed in the Appendix to this report.

**Business Meetings**

The most recent Ordinary Meeting of the IPA General Assembly was held during the Third International Palaeontological Congress in London, on July 1, 2010.

Minutes of that meeting are attached to this report.

The next meeting of the General Assembly will be held at on September 30, 2014, at the Fourth International Palaeontological Congress, in Mendoza, Argentina.

**Selection of Site for the Fourth International Palaeontological Congress, IPC 4**

During the last months of 2010, proposals were solicited from potential hosts of the next International Palaeontological Congress, to be held in 2014. By mid-November, 2010, expressions of interest had been received from two groups, the German University of Technology (GUtech), in collaboration with Sultan Quaboos University in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, and the Centro Científico

Tecnológico – CONICET Mendoza, in Mendoza, Argentina.

These proposals were circulated to all members of the Council of IPA. Members of the Council reviewed the proposals and submitted questions and/or requests for responses to various comments from the potential organizing committees. These requests for additional information were compiled and sent to the two groups. Their responses were received by early January, 2011. This new information was circulated to the Council, together with a ballot by means of

which one or other of the proposals was to be accepted.

On February 1, 2011, the Secretary-General announced that the Council of the International Palaeontological Association had decided to issue an invitation to the group in Argentina, led by Dr. Claudia Rubinstein, Dr. Beatriz Waisfeld, and Dr. Claudia Marsicano, to convene the Fourth International Palaeontological

Congress in Mendoza, Argentina, in 2014.

This decision represented a broad near-consensus. Eighteen delegates, many of whom consulted with the leadership groups of their organizations, voted to accept the proposal from Argentina. Three delegates voted to accept the

proposal from Muscat, Oman, and two delegates abstained from voting.

A message of thanks and congratulations was sent to the group in Argentina. Regrets were conveyed to the group in Oman. Members of the Council noted that many aspects of the proposal from Oman were very appealing. This group was encouraged to submit a proposal to convene IPC 5 in 2018, with the proviso that the current Council of IPA could not make make any commitment on the site of IPC 5. That decision would be made by the next IPA Council, consisting of members elected in 2014 and delegates appointed immediately following the congress in Argentina.

**Planning and Development of IPC 4 in Mendoza, Argentina**

Planning for the IPC 4 has been undertaken entirely by the organizing committee in Argentina, with encouragement and a limited amount of logistical and financial support from the International Palaeontological Association.

Early in July, 2011, Dr. Beatriz Waisfeld distributed the first announcement of the 4th International Palaeontological Congress, IPC 2014, indicating that it would be held from September 28 to October 3, 2014, in Mendoza, Argentina. The three previous congresses had all been held in June or July, but the climate in Mendoza is such that a date during southern hemisphere spring was desirable, especially for the purpose of conducting and going on field trips.

Since then, the international palaeontological community has been kept well informed by a succession of circulars and newsletters that have been widely distributed electronically, and by an attractive, very informative website at <**http://www.ipc4mendoza2014.org.ar/**>

The organizing committee has worked hard and effectively to attract support

from sponsors for IPC 4. These include:

International Palaeontological Association

Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas (CONICET)

Agencia Nacional de Promocíon Científica y Technológica (AGENCIA)

Centro de Congresos y Exposiciones, Mendoza

The Palaeontological Association

The Paleontological Society

International Federation of Palynological Societies

Society for Sedimentary Geology (SEPM)

International Association of Sedimentologists

AASP – The Palynological Society

Fundación Williams, Buenos Aires

Asociación Paleontológica Argentina

STEPPE, U.S. National Science Foundation

The Geological Society of America

Society for Vertebrate Paleontology

Botanical Society of America

Springer

The Treatise on Invertebrate Paleontology

National Geographic

YPF Tecnología S.A. (Y-TEC)

Ministerio de Cultura, Gobierno de Mendoza

Taylor & Francis

JEOL Ltd., Tokyo, Japan

Cambridge University Press

Several sponsoring organizations have made significant commitments of financial support to subsidize participation in IPC 4 by students.

**Sponsorship by IPA of Conferences within the Scope of IPA’s Interests**

Over the past three years, IPA has joined in sponsorship, financially or otherwise, of the following conferences:

2012 EMPSEB18, 18th European Meeting of PhD Students in Evolutionary

Biology, held in central Finland. Provided support of $750.

2013 EMPSEB19, 19th European Meeting of PhD Students in Evolutionary

Biology, held in Cornwall, UK. Provided support of $750.

2013 International Palaeontological Congress, IPC 4, in Mendoza, Argentina.

Provided an advance payment of $1250 in support of start-up expenses.

2013 3rd International Conodont Symposium, held in Mendoza, Argentina,

July 15-19, 2013. No financial support, IPA logo provided to signify

IPA’s endorsement.

2013 International Palaeontological Congress, IPC 4, in Mendoza, Argentina. Provided $3750 in support of student travel and other expenses.

**IPA and *Lethaia***

*Lethaia* is an international journal of palaeontology and stratigraphy, published by Wiley Blackwell, with oversight from the Lethaia Foundation <www.lethaia.org> (Dr. Jan Audun Rasmussen, Chairman). The current editors of *Lethaia* are Peter

Doyle (Editor-in-Chief), David A.T. Harper, Alan Owen and Brooks B. Britt.

Members of IPA are eligible to purchase online and print subscriptions to *Lethaia* at discounted rates. Subscription at the IPA members’ rate **includes** the annual IPA membership fee (US$5.00). This is clearly explained on the inside cover of the journal, but is not obvious on the Wiley Blackwell website where orders may be placed: <**http://ordering.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/subs.asp?ref=1502-3931&doi=10.1111/(ISSN)1502-3931**>

The IPA and *Lethaia* have enjoyed a long and fruitful relationship. Members of IPA were influential in founding *Lethaia* in 1968 as an international journal of broad scope in palaeontology and stratigraphy, at a time when nearly all other journals were tied to national organizations or specialized scientific interests.

In 1970, IPA formally adopted *Lethaia* as its official journal and authorized the publisher to collect IPA dues from individual subscribers. The IPA encourages all palaeontologists to support *Lethaia* and IPA by subscribing and by submitting high-quality palaeontological manuscripts to the journal.

**The IPA Website**

The IPA web site at <**http://ipa.geo.ku.edu**> features general information about the association, its officers, constitution and by-laws, a link to the publisher of *Lethaia* and *Fossils and Strata*, information on palaeontological symposia, and

several databases.

The officers of IPA are grateful to the IPA web master, Michael Cormack, and to the host institution (the Paleontological Institute at the University of Kansas), for the development and efficient maintenance of this valuable resource.

The constitution prescribes publication of a **World Directory of Palaeontologists**. Since 2001 this directory has been published electronically on the IPA website. It is by no means complete, currently including 1941 records, and representation is very uneven among nations and subdisciplines. All palaeontologists are encouraged to submit their information to this database or to verify and update

information that is currently on record.

The IPA website also maintains and provides access to a **Directory of Fossil Collections** (107 records) and the **IPA PaleoLink Database** (306 records). The PaleoLink database allows users to specify search criteria and generate a dynamic list of links to websites related to palaeontology. Palaeontologists are likewise encouraged to submit information to this database or to verify and

update information that is currently on record.

The website also maintains links to **PaleoPortal**, the **Paleobiology Database**, and the **Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF).**

**PaleoParks: The Preservation and Conservation of Fossil Sites**

Development of an electronic directory of important fossil sites around the world that are protected, threatened, or endangered was initiated by holding three workshops sponsored by IPA, at the 32nd International Geological Congress in 2004, at IPC 2 in Beijing in 2006, and at the 33rd International Geological Congress in 2008. The objective of this enterprise, spearheaded by Dr. Jere Lipps, was to create a searchable on-line database to be used for research, education, recreation,

and especially to promote preservation of important sites.

By the time of the General Assembly of IPA in 2010, records of 33 significant sites had been entered in the database. In addition to this initial development on-line, an e-book, *PaleoParks – The Protection and Conservation of Fossil Sites Worldwide*, edited by J.H. Lipps and B.R.C. Granier (*Carnets de Géologie / Notebooks on Geology*: Book 2009/03) had been published in 2009. This book provides detailed accounts of efforts to conserve palaeontological localities and terrains in nine different countries, as well as articles of more general scope, based on presentations at the preceding workshops. Since 2010, records of four more localities have been added to the database. These include a park proposed to protect the Rajmahal Hills palaeobotanical site (important for rare Jurassic Pentoxylales in particular) in Jharkhand State, India, and the Santa Elena Peninsula in Ecuador, famous for its Pleistocene mammal megafauna. Both of these sites are critically endangered by

commercial and other development.

In July 2011, Jere Lipps visited the island of Santa Maria in the Azores, at the invitation of Professor Sérgio Ávila of the University of the Azores, to examine fossil localities ranging in age from Miocene to Pleistocene. They agreed that the island as a whole should be designated as a PaleoPark. Santa Maria is noteworthy for its fossil whales, marine invertebrates, microfossils and algae. In 2012, Sérgio

Ávila published a book on the proposed park:

Ávila, Sérgio, and Rodrigues, Jose Antonio.  2012.  PaleoPark Santa Maria.

Letras Lavadas Édiçoes.  Azores, Portugal.  120 pp.

In late 2013, President Michael Benton received a request from Sergio Avila for a letter of support for a proposal to be submitted to the Government of the Azores to designate the entire island of Santa Maria as a PalaeoPark (comparable to UNESCO’s Biosphere Reserves) that would be formally recognized by the International Palaeontological Association. President Benton wrote and transmitted a letter to Professor Avila, supporting this proposal in full, in January, 2014. Construction of a "Casa dos Fósseis" of Santa Maria has been authorized,

with substantial funding from the Secretaria Regional do Ambiente e dos Recursos

Naturais, Madeira. Formal governmental designation of the PaleoPark is pending.

Commitments have been made to contribute chapters to a second e-book reporting on PaleoParks, including some based on presentations given at the last workshop. This project has been delayed, but it is still expected to move forward.

**The IPA logo and its Use**

The IPA logo is available in two forms as high-resolution image files that are suitable for use on banners and in other printed materials. Corporate Members or other organizations wishing to obtain copies of these files for use in promotion of IPA-sponsored activities or publications should contact the Secretary-General.

**IPA Archives at the Smithsonian Institution**

In 1993 an agreement was reached with the Smithsonian Institution Archives (SIA) to deposit the IPA records there. Correspondence with Archivist Shawn Johnstone confirmed that one box of records was deposited in 1994, covering the dates 1973–1992. In January 2005, Dr. Roger L. Kaesler, IPA Treasurer, transferred correspondence and records accumulated during the years 1995–2002 to the Smithsonian Institution Archives. Other IPA officers for the period 1993–2002 were asked to transfer their IPA records to the SIA. IPA records for 2002-2010 in the custody of the Secretary-General Rosalie Maddocks were to be

transferred to the SIA following the end of her term in June 2010.

Anyone having information concerning the whereabouts of IPA records for any part of the period 1933–1973 is requested to contact the Secretary-General.

**Selection of Nominees for Election to Serve as Officers of IPA, 2014-2018**

The report of the Nominating Committee and the slate of candidates for election as 2014-2018 officers of IPA to be put before the General Assembly in Mendoza

is attached as a separate document.

**Roger D. K. Thomas, Secretary-General 30 September, 2014**

**APPENDIX**

**IPA: MEMBERSHIP AND DELEGATES TO COUNCIL**

CORPORATE MEMBERS 2013-14 AND THEIR DELEGATES (as of September, 2014)

Canada, **British Columbia Paleontological Alliance**; no delegate appointed

China, **Palaeontological Society of China**, Dr. Qun Yang

Czech Republic, **Geological Institute AS CR**; no delegate appointed

France, APF (**Association Paléontologique Française);** Dr. Taniel Danelian

France, **Staff of Carnets de Géologie** - Notebooks on Geology; Dr. Bruno Granier

India, **Palaeontological Society of India**; Professor M. P. Singh

IRGO **International Research Group on Ostracoda**; Dr. Finn Viehberg

New delegate, Dr. Gabriela Cusminsky, as of 9/02/14

Italy, Societa Paleontologica Italiana; no delegate appointed

Japan, **Palaeontological Society of Japan**; Dr. Kazuyoshi Endo

New Zealand, **The Royal Society of New Zealand**; Dr. James Crampton

Poland, **Polish Section of Palaeontologists**; delegate to be appointed

Spain, **Sociedad Española de Paleontologia**; Dr. Silvia Blanco Ferrera

Switzerland, **Société Paléontologique Suisse**; Dr. Jean-Pierre Berger, deceased 2012

No new delegate appointed to date

United Kingdom, **The Micropalaeontological Society**; Dr. M. Paul Smith

United Kingdom, **The Palaeontological Association**; Dr. Howard A. Armstrong

U.S.A., **Botanical Society of America, Paleobotanical Section**; Dr. Michael Dunn

U.S.A., **The Paleontological Society**; delegate to be appointed

U.S.A., **Paleontological Society of Washington**; delegate to be appointed

OTHER DELEGATES APPOINTED TO THE COUNCIL OF IPA

Dr. David A. T. Harper, Past-President, 2010-2014

Dr. Rosalie Maddocks, Past Secretary-General, 2010-2014

Dr. Jere H. Lipps, Delegate for PaleoParks Project, 2006–current

Dr. Jan Audun Rasmussen, Delegate for *Lethaia*, 2010-2014

INDIVIDUAL (ORDINARY) MEMBERS

As of January, 2014, the IPA had 74 ordinary members who had paid their membership fees directly to the Treasurer. As of May, 2014, 96 ordinary membership fees had been paid together with registration fees for IPC 4 in Mendoza. A few of the latter payments represent renewals. On the other hand, additional membership fees will have been received since May. Thus, including the *Lethaia* subscribers (see above), IPA appears to have at least 250 individual members. However, this is less than half the number of people who have registered for IPC 4, all of whom should be IPA members in one category or another. After IPC 4, it should be possible to establish a complete membership list, starting with registrants for the congress, and adding in known ordinary members and *Lethaia* subscribers who did not attend the congress.

*LETHAIA* SUBSCRIBERS 2013-2014

As of May, 2014 the IPA had 101 members who subscribed as individuals to the journal *Lethaia* in either 2013 or 2014, or in both years. Their membership fees, which are included in their subscriptions, are remitted to IPA by the Lethaia Foundation. This number of subscriber/members is 34 less than in 2010, certainly reflecting the general decline in subscription to print journals.