A word from the editor

**Editorial** 

# ANY EXCUSE FOR A PARTY

ext year EUSJA celebrates its 30th birthday. I have already started collecting material to be used in a special commemorative booklet charting the association's first 30 years but any more anecdotes, papers and recollections are warmly welcomed

Mind you I sometimes feel that asking EUSJA members for contributions is a little like flogging a dead horse. Those of you not familiar with this British expression it means, and perhaps a little harsh in this context, that no amount of beating or cajoling is going to make a dead horse move.

This past year I have asked on numerous occasions for material, feedback and even names for places on trips and most of the time have only received a... turn to page 3

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# Yes, we are growing

he year 2005 was a very important one in the history of EUSJA because our membership increased significantly. Our family enlarged with four members, including three old associations, re-joining. The science journalist associations from Belgium, Norway and Portugal were former members with the Belgians being original founder members. After many negotiations and representations from these countries during the GA in March we were able to vote for their renewed membership. And to mark their entry, the Belgian Association together with the Joint Research Centre organised a successful study trip to Geel and Brussels.

Our totally new member association is based in Prague. The Czech Science Journalist Association has just formed and hopefully will take part in EUSJA's future activities.

This year we had another success, namely we joined with two European non-profit organisations, active in the field of science communication in applying for a European Commission Project. The Project called Wonders (Welcome! Observations, News & Demonstrations of European Science) consists of special activities during the traditional national, regional and local science weeks, festivals or science days in 2006. Our consortium achieved 27 points of a maximum of 30 points, well above the threshold of 21 points. EUSJA's role in the project is clear. In one of the main parts of the Project - "Carousel of Science" - science cafes will be held in 20 different places throughout Europe. EUSJA's national associations in these countries will be able to nominate science journalists to moderate these cafes and prepare reports on the results. There is money available for these journalists, associations as well for EUSJA, and I hope the success of the project will lead to continuing co-operation in the future. Further details will be published following a meeting of the management team of the Project in which I will be representing EUSJA's interests.

We hopefully will have held a successful study trip in Budapest, scheduled to take place during the World Science Forum when colleagues from member associations have been invited to participate in a workshop organised by the World Federation of Science Journalists. Here two panels were organised - Knowledge, Ethics and Responsibility in science journalism and Narrative Science Journalism).EUSJA has also organised a session - Is Science Journalism a luxury? - in the Communication of European Science



Istvan Palugyai.

Conference being staged in Brussels. At this meeting EUSJA will have a large exhibition stand containing material of our association and its activities. Board members will be present to speak with visitors and it is hoped our presence will further add to the rising reputation and profile of EUSJA and maybe attract even more member countries on board.

Istvan Palugyai EUSJA president

**EUSJA News** 

Autumn 2005

## Do it yourself

A chance to get your hands dirty

ou spend your working life writing about laboratory-based research. Now you can do some yourself. The European Initiative for Communicators of Science (EICOS) is once again offering journalists from any European country the chance to take part in research, working alongside researchers. It is being organised out of the Max Planck Institute for Biophysical Chemistry in Go[umlaut]ttingen.

EICOS Fellowships provide financial support for up to three weeks, including travel, housing and food. And they also give the opportunity to meet other European journalists.

The idea is to help develop a dialogue "in which journalists gain a deeper understanding of the scientific endeavour and attitudes of scientists, while scientists learn how science is reported to the public...".

The "Hands-on Laboratory", as it is called, takes place June 10th to June 17th 2006 at a number of German biological laboratories and the Pasteur Institute in Paris. The research areas covered include the cancer, plants, biochemistry, disease, molecular biology, and environment and health.

After the Hands-on Laboratory, you can also take up the option of spending one or two weeks on an extended laboratory assignment.

Eligibility is fairly straightforward. You need to be reasonably competent in English, have at least two years' experience and, preferably, have a staff or freelance writing position (though scientific illustrators and photographers will be considered). But since the idea is to offer journalists a new outlook on their work, people with recent advanced degrees in biology or with extensive laboratory training are not encouraged to apply.

Application forms and further information is available on the web at <www.eicos.mpg.de>; or from the ABSW International Representative, Pete Wrobel, at Nature, 4 Crinan Street, London N1 9XW (e-mail p.wrobel@nature.com). You can also obtain more information and an application form by writing to:

#### FICOS

Max-Planck-Institut für Biophyikalische Chemie Am Fassberg 11 D-37070 Göttingen Germany

tel: +49 (0) 551-201-1636 fax: +49 (0) 551-201-1075 e-mail: iecos@gwdg.de

Deadline for application: March 15th 2006.

Pete Wrobel, ABSW <peter.wrobel@sciencebusiness.net>

# SCIENCE JOURNALISTS WILL PLAY A LEADING ROLE AT ESOF2006

## The second EuroScience Open Forum is going ahead next year and EUSJA will again be taking part.

And we are not only there for the beer!

lecture and hopefully practical testing of research results in the science of beer brewing will end the study tour for science journalists immediately after the ESOF meeting. This huge European science show is being staged in Munich, July 15th-19th, 2006. The EUSJA event, organised by TELI and following in the footsteps of the successful EUSJA trip to ESOF 2004 in Stockholm, will be open to the members of the World Federation of Science Journalists, as both TELI and EUSJA are WFSJ-members. There will also be an opportunity to meet members of the other German science journalists' association, the WPK, which has applied for membership of EUSJA.

#### Not only story-telling:

We will fix the exact title for our EUSJA lecture early next year. However, under the theme "The Fabric of Science" we proposed a seminar along the lines of "Reading the minds of scientists - how science journalism really works". It should give some insight into the thinking and working conditions of science journalists, and how they try to present independent, balanced and ethical reporting.

The following questions will be asked: What kind of research results are worth public news? Journalists are they the most rigorous peer-reviewers? Do journalists really get the point? Who is right (The role of journalists in scientific controversies)? What comes into, what comes out of the media? How do journalists filter the contents (What is worth publishing, what is worth a news story what is worth a feature)? What are the constraints journalists are working under and how do they influence their work? These limitations include the public perception of science (time, length, language and style); advertising; publisher's policy and the interests of their audience. How can the relationship between scientists and journalists be improved?

The seminar will cover three main issues - Unfrocking the scientific clergy; Opening the doors to the labs and Turning the rocks of science - what's underneath?

# So far we are proposing the following speakers: Prof. Dr. Peter Weingart, Institute for Science and Technology Studies, University of Bielefeld/Germany; Prof. Dr. Hans Peter Peters, Forschungszentrum Jülich/Germany; Bill O'Neill/Kaianders Sempler, and Dr Lionel Milgrom.

#### YOUNG SCIENTISTS LOOK OUTSIDE THE LABS

But that's not all: ESOF provides a career centre for young scientists as science journalism and science communication are increasingly, for many, an attractive alternative career option. We are therefore offering a seminar on "Bringing Science to the People". It will inform young scientists about careers in these fields, provide insights into practical work, and outline the skills needed. We may also be able to present results from the seminar of the French association earlier this year which looked at "Science Journalism without Frontiers".

The program of ESOF can be found at http://www.esof2006.org. The registration form for the Bavaria science tour will be included in the official press pack. Put the dates in your diary now and be assured of a warm welcome to Munich!

Hajo Neubert



Hajo Neubert having a beer with Carl-Johan Sundberg, organizer of Esof2004 in Stockholm.

#### Continued from page 1

...deafening silence. EUSJA is your association. Your board works hard on your behalf but we are not mind readers. Unless members let us know what they want, expect, or are looking forward to we are working in the dark.

Please give us some indication of what you think, for example, of this edition of EUSJA News. We can easily add more articles, letters and photographs. And what do



Editor celebrating.

you think of holding some sort of celebration for EUSJA's 30 years existence? This is only a suggestion and will depend on funding. But there's nothing stopping member associations holding their own parties. Let us know!

Barbara Drillsma <absw@absw.uk.org>

# Four days in the European Jungle!

# Journalist's tour to the heart of the European Union

t started at the train station: The ICE had been in time. But nor the ticket neither the guide in the pocket of the seat of the high speed train said anything about the track of the connecting train in Brussels. The squeaking loudspeaker on the platform just knew two languages: French and Flemish. No service personal could be found to give advice either: Welcome to the outer rim of the jungle.

So I bethought of my profession: Investigative journalistic research and asked a person with obviously the same problem. The woman was a professional working several years for the EU and suffering these hurdles of transportation regularly. Together we found a hint for a connection train. But it did not appear on the track expected. So we had to take an even later one driving in the desired direction.

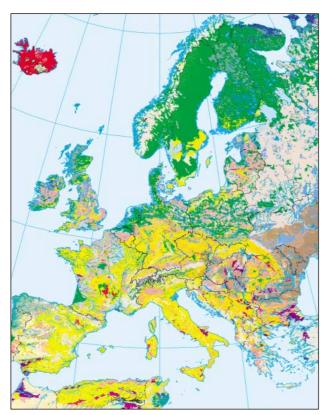
Finally I met my waiting colleagues from Italy, Portugal, Swiss, Hungarian, Italy, the Czech Republic, Finland, Russia and other European countries as well as Aidan Gilligan. As a media officer of the European Joint Research Centres he turned out to be our scout through one of the most impenetrable jungles on earth: the institutions and directorates of the European Union. Together with president Karin Rondia of the newly (re)founded Belgium science writer organisation he organised this several days long expedition.

ue to a number of conferences in the capital of Belgium all hotels were booked. So the organisers arranged accommodation about hundred kilometres north of the city close to the first place of our visit: the Joint Research Centre IRMM in Geel.

"Founded in 1957 to develop facts and references data for the use of nuclear power nowadays the Institute for Reference Materials and Measurements IRMM concentrates on food safety and environmental pollution", explained Doris Florian who is responsible



Elke Anklam, food security expert at the IRMM.



From the new European soil atlas.

for institute's development and programme management. "Today some of the main fields of research are to develop measures to determine the amount of gene modified ingredients in food or the existence of prions (proteinaceous infectious particles) in the meat of cows to detect BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy)."

he IRMM is one out of seven European Joint
Research Centres which are spread all over
Europe to serve as scientific and technical
reference centres for European policy makers to provide
them with data as a basis for legislation. The Joint
Research Centres concentrate on research topics like
biotechnology, health, energy and environment. Crosssectoral priorities range from technology foresight as well
as cyber security and industrial risks.

In the evening we entered the heart of the European jungle: the very new building of the European Parliament. Here Janez Potocnik, European Commissioner for Science & Research, inaugurated an exhibition of the whole ensemble of the Joint Research Centres and we got the chance to meet senior scientists of all institutes.

Next day Potocnik and European Parliament Vice President Alejo Vidal-Quadras Roca presented the very first



Commissioner Janez Potocnik



Karin Rondia, head of the Belgian association, and in the background Aidan Gilligan of the JRC.

soil atlas for Europe — one special example of work of a Joint Research Centre named the Institute for Environment and Sustainability. "Soil resources of Europe are limited and need to be protected for future generations", said Potocnik at the press conference to the EUSJA journalists. Together with the partners of the European Soil Bureau Network the scientists identified over 10 000 different types of soil in Europe and displayed them in the atlas, which can be ordered free of charge from Aidan Gilligan

<aidan.Gilligan@cec.eu.int>

fter so many facts and figures the EUSJA members were happy to visit the most attractive exhibition "Visionary Belgium" at the Palais des Beaux Art. This exhibition was mainly arranged by Harald Szeemann on behalf of the celebrating of the proclaimed independence of Belgium in 1830 and as a federal state in 1980. Unfortunately Szeemann could not finish his work because he died just a few days before the opening.

In several rooms he arranged different kinds of extremes connected to the Belgium history. Fans of René Magritte were also satisfied as those of very modern art. For example Kaianders Sempler's favourite piece of art was the shit machine "Cloaca Quattro", a tower of three washing machines connected each other with lots of pipes and wires. With the help of enzymes and other chemicals, this device produces some kind of black stuff — fortunately not smelling! — if you put food into the top machine.

he last day of the EUSJA tour belonged to two institutes of the Université Libre de Bruxelles ULB in the south of the Belgium capital. Oberdan Leo, head of life sciences of the ULB introduced the Institute of Molecular Biology and Medicine IBMM. This centre gathers more than 200 biologists, chemists, physicists, computer scientists, veterinary surgeons and physicians to decipher genes and to try to identify their functioning.

Another field of research at the ULB is the tolerance of transplanted organs. In a very qualified talk Michael Goldman of the Institute of Medical Immunology IMI descript the very frontier of transplanting livers and



Cloaca Quattro - the shit machine by Belgian concept artist Wim Delvoye.

possible ways to overcome rejection not forgetting to mention ethical and economic aspects as well. The talks were rounded up by visits to the laboratories and face to face talks with scientists in charge.

hanks to our guides Karin and Aidan we never got lost in the deep jungle of European research organisations and we felt very comfortable all the time. I knew what I had with them as I stood alone in the train station again trying to find my train back: The map on platform 3 told that the ICE train will leave on platform 5; and the one on platform 5 told, that the train will leave on platform 3...

Nevertheless I got home safe, and I hope all my colleagues did as well.



Gerhard Samulat, Teli

Gerhard Samulat Freelancer and member of the German journalist's association TELI <www.GerhardSamulat.de>

# New chairman at ABSW

had no idea, when I stood in for my predecessor Toby Murcott at the recent meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science at Trinity College Dublin, that a few weeks later I would be doing the job full time. Toby decided to resign for personal reasons, shortly afterwards, and the ABSW Committee asked me to step in – which it has been an honour to do.



Ted Nield - geologist, science writer and new president of the Association of British Science Writers.

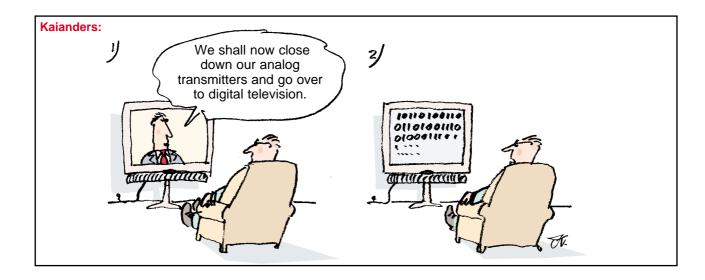
The Dublin BA was one of the most successful I can remember – and that is saying something, because I have

been covering those annual science jamborees now for about 20 years, and can even remember a few from my previous life as a scientist. One of the (many) things that made it so particularly successful was the involvement of a particularly stimulating group of EUSJA representatives, whose attendance at the BA always adds a new perspective to life in the press room (sorry, "Media Suite").

During my Chairmanship of the ABSW I aim to ensure that the organisation reaches out in three directions – to the increasing number of science writers who are not, in the strict sense, journalists (always previously the main membership group of the ABSW); to writers working in the regions of the UK (we have always been, like our business, very metropolitan in focus); and to colleagues in the wider world – through EUSJA and the World Federation. Although our numbers are rising worldwide, we are still a small profession, and sharing experience as media diversify and news becomes ever more immediate, has never been more important. I look forward to strengthening and deepening our collaboration in the coming years.

Ted Nield ABSW <ted.nield@geolsoc.org.uk>

To subscribe to the EUSJA-L e-mail discussion list send the message: subscribe eusja-l firstname lastname (don't forget to substitute your own name!) to the address: stserv@listserv.rl.ac.uk>



# The science of Kung Fu reveiled

# Physicist kicks ass at the BA-festival in Dublin

ichelle Cain looks so slender and ladylike but she is a potential killer as she demonstrated so spectacularly to EUSJA visitors at the BA's Festival of Science in Dublin.

Michelle broke blocks of wood and slabs of concrete with her bare hands as part of the Institute of Physics' mission to reveal the physics behind the power of Kung Fu moves, part of its Einstein Year project.

Apparently the perfect Kung Fu strike requires an intuitive understanding of Newton's law of motion. In any collision, as any of us prone to pranging cards will know, the body with the greatest speed and mass will come off better (or worse!)

Martial artists target their strike well beyond the board so that their aim is moving at the maximum possible speed at the point of impact. They also lower their body as they strike to maximise the amount of their body mass involved. Fearless ABSW member Michelle, who used to be external communications officer at the Institute is now



Michelle Cain, physicist



embarking on a new challenge - a PhD in Atmospheric Physics at the University of Reading.

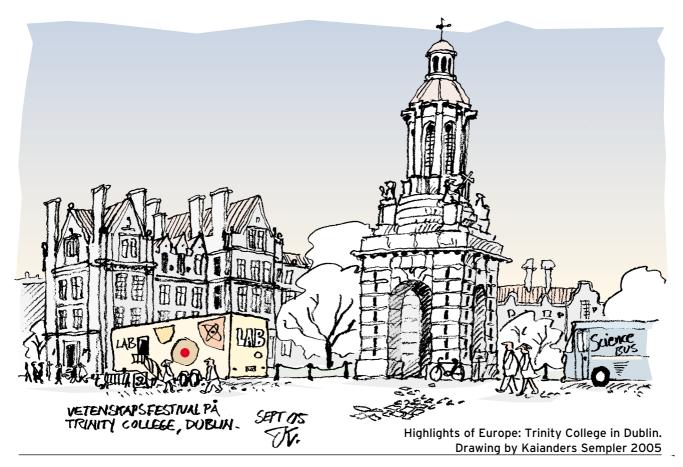
Barbie Drillsma

# Germany closes down science reporting

he "Deutsche Welle", which is the international German radio and TV station sending all over the world via satellite, internet, medium wave and short wave, terminates its science and technology reporting. The radio program "People, Environment, Technology" will be closed down. The contributions to the programme have been frequently translated into many languages and have been used for the international broadcastings. This means, no science and technology reporting from Germany any more.

Although this might be a German problem, international reactions on the decision might help the Germans not to discontinue even more S&T reporting.

Hajo Neubert Teli



#### **Dublin Trip**

### Praise for Dublin

My trip to Dublin has been one of the most thrilling and pleasant EUSJA journeys. It has been exciting because I found the BA Festival of Science really interesting.

here are also outings organized in Hungary which try to develop dialogue between science and public opinion, but they are much more authoritarian in style. Less show elements are used, and therefore the discussion is not as lively as it has been in Dublin.

The topics were interesting for a wider public. I have made a half-an-hour programme of the festival for the Hungarian National Radio.

The interviews which did not fit in that programme have been broadcast separately. While still in Dublin, I gave a telephone interview about my experiences from Dublin to one of my colleagues. The trip has been very pleasant because ABSW and the ISTJA gave us sufficient free time, so we did not feel stressed. I usually suffer from not having enough time for individual interviews, as working for a radio I cannot make much use of press conferences, but this time I could work freely.

The programs: visiting the Irish Academy of Science and the Irish Science Foundation have been very useful and interesting, as well. And the Irish pub was unforgettable. *Julia Gimes, Science editor, Hungarian Radio, Budapest* 



Last dinner in Dublin.

Editors for this issue of EusjaNews has been Barbara Drillsma <absw@absw.org.uk> and Kaianders Sempler <a href="mailto:kaianders.sempler@nyteknik.se">kaianders.sempler@nyteknik.se</a>

## NOW THIS MEETING SOUNDS **FUN - BUSINESS CARRIED** ON IN THE STREET

EUSJA members were among the visitors to the Alpbach Technology Forum, held in August in a tiny village in the Tyrol Mountains. It was organised by the Austrian Club of Education and Science Journalists.

his congress was an opportunity for discussions amongst scientists, several Nobel laureates, economists, leaders of great enterprises, politicians and journalists from across Europe. Eusja guests were surprised at the high quality of the event which went under the title "Location, Shift and Technology Push -Consequences for Europe". It was possible to carry on discussions and to question speakers whilst strolling in the picturesque streets or whilst relaxing at the evening events.

Our Club's aim was to acquaint our EUSJA colleagues with all aspects of this international event, connecting the fields of science, technology and economics.

Unfortunately, next time this event is held we will not be able to pay the hotel bills of our guests, but we will make arrangements that EUSJA members be exempt from the 500 euro participation fee. More information is on our web page <a href="http://www.alpbach.org">http://www.alpbach.org</a>

Erich Witzmann

### News from the WFSJ

ollowing the successful 4th World Conference of Science Journalists held in October 2004 in Montréal, the World Federation of Science Journalists has developed a project to support science journalism in the developing world.

The project would put in place a network of peer-to-peer relationships to provide journalists in developing countries with opportunities to improve their skills in communicating complex scientific information to a general public. It will also provide services and support to associations at the national, regional and international levels.

Peer-to-peer learning is a well-established means of on the job training for journalists. The project will extend the concept to associations through the twinning of wellestablished ones with nascent associations of science journalists.

Initially, the project will focus on Africa and the Middle East. Donors in Canada, Sweden and the United Kingdom have expressed interest in funding the threeyear project that would start at the beginning of 2006.

The World Federation of Science Journalists is looking forward to the participation of its member associations and of many experienced science journalists to make a success of this promising project.

> Jean-Marc Fleury, Executive Director Visit <www.wfsj.org>

The leporello, the Eusja information leaflet, folds twice. It can be ordered from Eusja secretariat.



### What is Eusja?

Eusja is a not-for-profit umbrella organization for national science journalists' associations tor national science journalists associations in Europe. Eusja has today (October 2005) 23 member associations. The Eusja secretariat is situated in Strasbourg, France, where the national delegates meet once a year at the general assembly.

You will find our website with contacts, resources, mailing-list etc at will also find links to the member http://www.eusja.org

## What do we do?

Eusja acts as a network between science cusia acts as a network between science journalists throughout Europe. Our aim is to facilitate gathering of information, promote discussions on topics related to journalism and to open a forum for broader reporting on European science.

# Study trips in Europe

The national associations in co-operation with Eusja regularly organize international study trips in their countries for science journalists. The aim is primarily to visit interesting science and research institutions that would otherwise be closed to journalists, but also to bring science journalists from different countries together. Four to five events take place every year, where one or two journalists are invited from each country.

## East-West exchange

Eusja also promotes and finances exchange between science journalists from eastern and western Europe.

## Who finances Eusja?

Eusja is financed by its member associa-Eusja is infanced by its member associations, but receives website and secretariat facilities from ESF – the European Science Foundation – in Strasbourg, France. Eusja is fully independent of any political and/or



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