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## 05) President's Report

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### Topic:

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**Topic author:** aoren

**Subject:** 05) President's Report

**Posted on:** 17 Jan 2013 23:14:59

**Message:**

In the President's report I posted during last year's board meeting I expressed my pessimistic feelings about the society, and not much has happened in the past year to make me more optimistic:

- Publication of the proceedings of the Mar Chiquita symposium was not further advanced.
- The web site is not active; the last posting was of April 4 by Peri Coleman (in memory of Carol Litchfield and Warren Bonython).

As I wrote in last year's President report, I had been invited to participate in a conference on "Solar Salt, Sustainability and Biodiversity" - Sevilla, Spain, - 22-23 May 2012, but I could not attend as I was teaching a field course in the same period. The intention was that Carol Litchfield would present a lecture there, and represent ISSLR. Nikos Korovessis remembered Carol in his opening words. I understand that the meeting was attended by Mark Coleman, Bindi Datson, and Diogenes Costa, so that the ISSLR board  $\frac{1}{2}$  current and past  $\frac{1}{2}$  was well represented. The proceedings of the event can be found online at:  
<http://www.eusalt.com/pages/press-corner/presentations.html>

I have attended the Extremophiles 2012 symposium in Sevilla, Spain in September 2012 and distributed ISSLR flyers there. Extremophiles 2014 will take place in the summer of 2014 in St. Petersburg (organizer: Elizaveta Bonch-Osmolovskaya from Moscow).

Unfortunately I could not accept invitations to come and talk at the ASLO 2013 meeting in New Orleans; it coincides with the annual meeting of the Israel Society for Microbiology, of which I am this year the organizer.

I understand that the third CEISSA symposium (International Conference on the Ecological Importance of Solar Saltworks) will be held in Beijing in October 2013. I have no further information yet. The earlier symposia were held in Santorini, Greece in 2006 (where I could not be present) and in Merida, Mexico (a meeting that I attended).

Another upcoming meeting of interest is Halophiles 2013, to be held in June this year in Storrs, CT, USA. I am a member of the organizing committee, and the symposium web site is:  
<http://www.regonline.com/builder/site/Default.aspx?EventID=1155364>

Also in the past year I have had interesting interactions with the Spanish Asociaci3n de Amigos de las Salinas de Interior ([www.salinasdeinterior.org](http://www.salinasdeinterior.org)) and I regularly contribute to its newsletter El Alfoli (papers in 2008, 2011, and another one to be published in the summer of 2013). I recently received the following interesting and somewhat unusual message from Katia Hueso-Kortekaas of that association:

$\frac{1}{2}$  I am involved in an ambitious art project our organisation is coorganising. Our association is cooperating with Marta Gil, a renowned public artist ([www.martagil.com](http://www.martagil.com)) who wishes to do a land art project in some salt lakes along the Transsiberian rail route and its branch lines. The purpose of the project is to disseminate the environmental and cultural values of central Asian salt lakes. By linking the rail route to the salt lakes, she stresses the idea of a common heritage and a

common wish to preserve it, that is, the universality of salt and its values. To this end, we would need to locate local cultural and environmental entities in order to perform together with them an art installation in each of the lakes. The final design of each installation will depend on the degree of implication of the local community. So far we have located four lakes that could be a target of this art project: Lake Chany in Russia, lake Issyk-Kul in Kyrghyzstan, lake Alakol in Kazakhstan and Ebinur Hu in western China. We would very much like to develop the project in the early summer of 2014, so that we can present the results at the next ISSLR conference in China. Hence, do you have local contacts who could be interested in participating in this art project? If not, do you know anyone who could help us locate them? If you have suggestions for other salt lakes that may (relatively) easily be reached by train, please let us know. ï¿½

I have forwarded this message to Egor Zadereev, Andrey Degermendzhi, Mianping Zheng, Fanjing Kong, and to another Chinese colleague who is involved in salt lake research but not active in the ISSLR. Egor has already sent an enthusiastic positive reply, and I hope that there will be some interesting follow-up that may advance the interests of the ISSLR as well.

To make me an optimist again, what we need is a really successful symposium in China next year. For me the test of success will be whether or not the meeting will be attended not only by many Chinese (there can be no doubt about that ï¿½ the Chinese have always been very active in this area of science) and by the ISSLR board members, but also by many others from all over the world who have participated in earlier ISSLR symposia. An international society that will attract only the locals to its symposia is not a viable society. I just received a letter from Mianping Zheng, also in the name of Fanjing Kong, added to a beautiful New Year's wishes card, with the following text:

"The 12th International Conference on Salt Lake Research will be held at Yuncheng, China, May 2014. This conference will bring international specialists in salt lake research. This conference is in the planning stage, and any of your suggestions for this conference will be welcomed and seriously considered. Thank you in advance."

I am glad to see that progress is being made with the organization of the next ISSLR symposium, and I am looking forward to hearing more details from Mianping and Fanjing on this board meeting forum.

Next year, linked to the Yuncheng conference, we will have elections for a new board. As determined by our statutes, I will then end my term as President and board member of the ISSLR. I hope to end then my involvement in the board in an optimistic mood.

## Replies:

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**Reply author:** pcoleman  
**Replied on:** 17 Jan 2013 23:28:03  
**Message:**

Mark Coleman and Bindy Datson attended CEISSA in Sevilla, Spain

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**Reply author:** aoren  
**Replied on:** 17 Jan 2013 23:57:24  
**Message:**

The correction was made and the question mark removed.

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**Reply author:** pcoleman  
**Replied on:** 25 Jan 2013 20:34:14  
**Message:**

Thanks!

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**Reply author:** aoren  
**Replied on:** 28 Jan 2013 21:01:16  
**Message:**

I just learned that information on the CEISSA 2013 meeting (Beijing, October 31 - November 2) is available on <http://ceissa2013.gnest.org/>

I will not be able to attend as this is in the middle of my busy teaching semester and I cannot travel in that period. Does anyone of the other board members plan to attend?

This event will be a good opportunity for the organizers of next year's ISSLR symposium to announce our meeting.

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**Reply author:** Egor Zadereev  
**Replied on:** 28 Jan 2013 21:31:06  
**Message:**

As I understand from the announcement in the Facebook group Diogenes Costa is planning to attend the meeting. This meeting is indeed nice opportunity to announce both our next year meeting and to distribute the information about the ISSLR

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**Reply author:** pcoleman  
**Replied on:** 28 Jan 2013 21:34:59  
**Message:**

Agreed. It is unlikely that I will be able to attend both, and am planning on attending the ISSLR conference next year, but I agree that this year's CEISSA is a great opportunity to notify others of the upcoming ISSLR conference.

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**Reply author:** Egor Zadereev  
**Replied on:** 12 Feb 2013 21:26:52  
**Message:**

It seems that the pessimism of the President infected other board members and everybody keeps silence in frustration (or may be just because are overloaded with other more important duties). I definitely expect reports or starting words in other important topics (web, conference) to have possibility to discuss our situation. But it seems that some impetus is needed. Thus, I will try to respond to the President report.

I agree that we have only two major functions by now: 1) to organize conference and 2) to have some on-line activity.

I agree that the conference in China is very important for the society. To avoid situation with conference publications that are not published (which is the case with Mar Chiquita symposium) the board should require from the conference organizers to have/demonstrate an agreement with journal where the selected papers will be published. I hope that our Chinese colleagues (we are waiting details from Mianping and Fanjing) will do there best to have a good journal for publications and the information about it will be announced in advance at the conference web site and information letters.

We should use all opportunities to distribute the information about the conference. But to do this we need information about exact dates, location and other general info. I hope that somebody from the board member will take part in International Conference on the Ecological Importance of Solar Saltworks (Beijing, October 2013) and will distribute information about the next ISSLR conference and about the society. I am planning to attend SIL meeting in Budapest (August, 2013) and will also use this opportunity to distribute information about the conference (of course if it will be available at that time).

The web site is not active and this is the point we, definitely, have to solve. We have several others on-line activities which can be used to support web-site but these activities are definitely

not the substitution for the web-site. About year ago I started the blog SaltLakeScience (<http://saltlakescience.com>) which should be updated more frequently (its my fault) but still it generates 1-2 news per month. We also have a Facebook group where we have 57 members (it should be more but as Facebook allows to add to the group only friends the progress is slow – probably we can ask members of the group to think whether they have salt lake scientists as friends to add them to the group). Nevertheless, there is some news (1-2 per months) in the group also. News are most often links to web pages where salt lakes or science around salt lakes is somehow mentioned. Well, posts in my blog and news in the Facebook group generate at least 1-2 news about salt lakes that can be used to update newline in the web-site of the society. If the board is fine with this option I can easily use mentioned above sources at least to update the news. The only problem I face is that I am not native English speaker and the web-site of the international society with bad English is something not very attractive.

Final remarks.

As we don't have a lot of money to support people or journal with high impact factor to publish people what we can do is to create atmosphere. We can (have to) collect and generate news about salt lakes and science around. The perfect experience was joint thematic paper on salt lakes for the Lake Basin Management Initiative

(<http://www.worldlakes.org/uploads/Salt%20Lakes%20Thematic%20Paper%2022Jun04.pdf>). It would be great to have a look for similar opportunities to involve society.

Salt lake science is usually considered as a marginal scientific area of aquatic ecology. Actually it has strong links with astrobiology (often speculative but...), biotechnology (many people consider salt lakes more as mineral or bio-resource factories than as a ecosystems) and I think many more attractive topics. We need to make these links stronger (while I have no idea how to do it).

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**Reply author:** pcoleman

**Replied on:** 12 Feb 2013 22:10:29

**Message:**

Re the WEB SITE, I am the one at fault here - I started to migrate the web site to Google Sites, ran into some initial hiccups, left a question or two for Bob and never managed to get back to it. Essentially, I need the database of members from the old web site converting to a spreadsheet, then I should be able to set up the new Google site. Once we have the basic pages up and running, I can add any new functions that people want.

I set up a Google Site for a local university here, and they are using the Google Forum, accessed through the Site to manage ongoing discussions. There is also a news feed etc. Maybe Bob can look over what I started and get back to me?

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**Reply author:** aoren

**Replied on:** 13 Feb 2013 00:12:38

**Message:**

Thanks to Egor and to Peri for their comments. I am still waiting for Bob Jellison to add his reports and his further input. I have sent him several reminders (27/1, 5/2, 10/2), as yet without result. I hope he is doing OK.

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**Reply author:** rjellison

**Replied on:** 24 Feb 2013 12:19:59

**Message:**

As you know I have argued strongly and repeatedly for folding back into SIL as the most appropriate course of action for our society and forum for our salt lake interests. There we could maintain some autonomy as one of the most active working groups while benefiting by collaborations, networking, infrastructure, etc. associated with SIL. This argument seemed to be soundly rejected at the 2008 annual member meeting in Salt Lake City, but little has changed my opinion on this topic since then.

My personal situation has also changed this past year. I have accepted a full-time math teaching position in our local school, allowed my current research grants to expire as scheduled, and am

not seeking further grant funding at present, so that I can devote all my energies to teaching. While I am still affiliated with the university, my new position requires all my energies this first year and perhaps next, too.

It is clear to me that if ISSLR is to remain viable it needs a more active and committed secretary. Therefore, I respectfully resign as secretary-treasurer. As the society is largely inactive between meetings, I am willing to stay on until the next election (2014) if board members prefer or that would enable a smoother transition. I can also continue to file taxes and other filings required of a non-profit corporation.

Of course, I'm still interested in salt lakes. I also treasure the friendships and collegiality within our small group of researchers, and will remain a member and supporter. I plan on attending the Yungcheng conference if held during summer.

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**Reply author:** pcoleman  
**Replied on:** 24 Feb 2013 14:13:08  
**Message:**

Bob, could we continue our discussion of the web site problems I needed help with?

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**Reply author:** aoren  
**Replied on:** 24 Feb 2013 21:02:18  
**Message:**

Bob, many thanks for posting your updates. I ask you to remain on duty as secretary until the 2014 China meeting. There we need to have an important business meeting (for all members, not only the board) to decide about the future of the society. As I stated earlier on several occasions I am not an optimist. I know little about SIL, I am not a member of that organization, but I trust that, in case we will need a different framework to continue our activities, SIL may be the best option. If we continue as an independent organization, we will need both a new President and a new Secretary/Treasurer who are willing to advance the interests of our society and have the energy and the time to do so.

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**Reply author:** dcosta  
**Replied on:** 25 Feb 2013 07:05:25  
**Message:**

Dear colleagues, apologies for my gap in communication because I'm in validation process in Brazil of my certificate of the PhD in Portugal and I did need that to travel for another state. I Confirm that I will go to China for CEISSA.

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**Reply author:** NikolayAladin  
**Replied on:** 04 Mar 2013 23:20:09  
**Message:**

Dear All,

this year, I shall try to study more Caspian Sea and Balkhash Lake.  
I shall take part in HYDROLARE meeting in St-Petersburg July 2-5 in Russian Hydrological Institute.

Next year I shall try to participate in Extremophiles (organizer: Elizaveta Bonch-Osmolovskaya from Moscow). Members of my Lab and I would like to report about drying and refilling bays of the Aral and Balkhash Lakes.

Also next year will be World Lake Conference of ILEC in Italy September,1-7

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**Reply author:** aoren  
**Replied on:** 19 Mar 2013 21:57:35

**Message:**

Thanks for all these comments.

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