



Society for Microbial Ecology and Disease

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SOMED NEWSLETTER

Society for Microbial Ecology and Disease

SUMMER

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear members, colleagues and friends,

Fortunately, we are living in a fine world of developing science. I'm very pleased to confirm that the previous SOMED presidents, as well as the officers and councillors, have put us on a solid path. The Society has a newly elected active Executive Council and a regular SOMED webpage (www.somed.nu).

Dr. Rial Rolfe, facing the new millennium in 2000, underlined the hopes for advancing understanding of the role of microbial flora in health and disease. Truly, this is ongoing work. Currently the host-microbial impact can be assessed by application of genomics and proteomics, metabolomics and the first bacterial cell with chemically synthesized genome is available. Application of the new biomarkers (cellular and metabolic blood indices) and gene expression tools for studying the functions of microbiota at different ages and in different environments reflect their tremendous impact on human health, but also their involvement in clinical situations such as cardiovascular disease,

metabolic syndrome, allergy, gastric and bowel inflammation.

Our Society has always tried to be on the forefront of these trends through its congresses and publications. Still, we need to communicate more extensively to the public, showing that human microbiota is essential for life, but also may concern important bioethical issues. Possibilities for special Commission of our Society for the public communication have to be discussed..

The seasonal NEWSLETTER bulletins have been useful for quick communication between the members of SOMED. . I suggest trying to use it for communicating research possibilities to determine new international teams within the frame of applications for different EU programs and other ways of fund-raising. . . Different research groups could propose 1–2 themes or collected materials to find interested partners experienced in the field. Let us start to discuss the creation of a particular web forum.

SOMED XXXIII Cruise Congress will be held in September, in spite of the complicated

financial world. I appreciate highly the efforts of Eugenia Bezirtzoglou and the organizing committee, and I look forward to the wide attendance and fruitful results. The sightseeing of ancient Greece surely will stimulate our discussions.. The provisional Program of both events can be found at www.somed.nu.

However, there are several concerns that do not allow the Society to feel too satisfied, mostly the same issues as defined during the last 15 years of SOMED existence. Particularly, the low numbers of membership and the uncertain fate of our journal, *Microbial Ecology in Health and Disease* (MEHD).

Membership and finances

Looking through the 10 years of newsletters, I have found several brilliant ideas that may be worth reconsidering. Prof. Lansing C. Hoskins (2007, 2010) has suggested attracting the current leaders in the field of microbial ecology and some international students to our meetings by establishing a separate fund in the SOMED treasury. Money for this fund would come from voluntary contributions by members and corporate members. At the 2008 St. Petersburg meeting there was great interest among young research fellows to join the society. We could attempt to attract more Chinese and Indian researchers, as their work has become very interesting and valuable..Global representation is increasingly important. A special appeal will be published in the next newsletter if approved by Council.

The possibilities for support from industries in molecular biology, diagnostic medicine, nutrition, and public authorities like the International Dairy Federation, European Food Safety Authorities and American Society of Microbiology might be sought by inviting their representatives to our next congress. Also the national microbiology and microbial ecology societies could be interested in joining our network. Please send me the necessary information to make an official co-working proposal. Any ideas are welcome!

The official journal of SOMED, published by Scandinavian University Press until 2007, then by Taylor & Francis, and recently by INFORMA HEALTHCARE (edited constantly by professor Tore Midtvedt) was discontinued in 2009 due to financial problems. One of my goals is to resume MEHD, or if that is not possible, to unite it with some existing journal, preferably in an electronic version. There are some vague opportunities from the US, UK and Russia, and also the Scandinavian publishers. The matter will be discussed with council members during the Greece conference, when we have all the necessary proposals or agreement details.

We will try to proceed with information on future meetings, courses, books and other publications, as well as short commentaries of max 1 page on hot topics in the field of microbial ecology. Please deliver the information to my mail address (marika.mikelsaar@ut.ee) or to that of the newly-appointed SOMED Secretary, Professor Veronica Lazar (lazar@botanic.unibuc.ro)

I'm looking forward to your support of my presidency, and I hope to see you all in Greece!

Yours,
Marika Mikelsaar