

A SPECIAL FLYER OF

NOVEMBER 15, 2001

ISSOL



THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF THE ORIGIN OF LIFE

ISSOL'02 SITE VISIT REPORT

(A Report from ISSOL's President)

READ THIS FLYER!

This flyer contains important information regarding Society business and the ISSOL'02 meeting. **Please read it carefully!**

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October 23-26, a team of five *ISSOLians* (Sara Acevedo, Frank Drake, Gerda Horneck, Jane Shen Schopf, and I) visited Oaxaca City, south of Mexico City, to evaluate arrangements for *ISSOL'02*. Our unanimous conclusion: ***Oaxaca City and its environs will prove a truly great site for ISSOL'02.***

The meeting will be held **June 30 through July 5, 2002, at Hotel Victoria** in the hills overlooking the beautiful volcano-rimmed valley encompassing Oaxaca City. Antonio Lazcano, (First Vice President of *ISSOL* and Chairperson of the *ISSOL'02* Local Organizing Committee), graciously hosted our visit and introduced us not only to the cultural and culinary delights of the Oaxaca region but, rather miraculously, managed also to have us meet with virtually all of the major personae of the entire region – every one of whom was wonderfully and quite obviously enthusiastic about *ISSOL'02* and the influx of distinguished scientists that our international meeting will bring their city.

General: Life in charming Oaxaca City (population ~245,000; elevation 1550 m) revolves around the *zócalo* (town square). Lining the streets are Spanish colonial-style buildings, draped with brilliant flowering bougainvillea. As best we could tell, the bustle of everyday life appeared to be offset by long, seemingly languid afternoons in the numerous cafés that ring the *zócalo* where the colorful markets nearby afford an opportunity to meet and buy directly from local artisans. Nestled in a volcano-rimmed valley, Oaxaca City and its environs enjoy what the locals rightly characterize as almost perpetual spring-like climate. The plants are chiefly tropical – bougainvillea, bananas, palms, tree ferns – with a smattering of more arid vegetation (agavas, cycads, cacti) depending on precipitation (for more info see: <http://oaxaca-travel.com/>)

Meeting venue: On the outskirts of Oaxaca City, Hotel Victoria (Lomas del Fortin 1, C.P. 68070 Oaxaca; tel# +52 951 526 33; fax# +52 951 524 11; hvictoria@datasys.com.mx; www.hotelvictoriaoax.com.mx) – the venue for **ISSOL'02** – spreads over a lush hillside garden of panoramic vistas and luxurious resort ambience – a clean, quiet, marvelously pleasant setting for our meeting! The hotel lobby extends to an upstairs "view bar" from which guests can enjoy a view spanning the entire Oaxaca valley and enjoy a sparkling fireworks display each evening for which the city is regionally famous. Just down hill past our meeting rooms, the terrace restaurant (extensive menu, good eats!), lawns and flower gardens is the jacaranda-decorated pool patio and bar (remember to bring your swimming suits!).

Rooms at the Victoria – ranked officially as a "five star" hotel – range, at the special *ISSOL* rate, from ~US\$70.00 to US\$140.00 per night, with even less expensive lodging available elsewhere in the town (as specified in the 2nd Meeting Circular). All facilities needed for the meeting will be available (an ample-sized auditorium, a fine room for poster sessions, an appropriately sized private lunch room for meetings of the *ISSOL* Council and the OLEB Editorial Board, a Press room, a work room for the LOC, and facilities for fax and e-mail communications). *A spectacular venue, Hotel Victoria will easily meet our needs.*

Costs: In comparison with most international scientific meetings, lodging costs in Oaxaca are low (as noted above). Similarly, costs of food and other items are appreciably less than is routinely encountered elsewhere. For example, even at Hotel Victoria (a top-of-the-line, five-star establishment), we found that filet mignon – one of the most expensive items on the menu – was priced at ~US\$10. *Costs to participants for lodging, food, cultural activities, or incidentals, will be notably low.*

Transportation: Those flying to the meeting will find security at the Mexico City airport (the hub leading to Oaxaca) appropriately tight as is that at the airport in Oaxaca – a small, friendly, and essentially hassle-free destination for large numbers of tourists (don't forget to bring your passport!). Signs in English at both airports are a welcome sight to those of us who need to brush

DATES TO REMEMBER

Executive Council Nominations Due	Dec 15 2001
Oparin Award Nominations Due	Feb 1 2002
ISSOL Fellows Nominations Due	Feb 1 2002
Travel Grant Applications Due	Mar 1 2002
ISSOL'02 Meeting	Jun 30 – Jul 5 2002

HAVE YOU SEEN IT??

ISSOL has a **new web site** with new and more convenient URL: **www.issol.org**

You can find up-to-date information about the **ISSOL'02** Meeting and Society business at this site.

Watch this website for additional information – including maps for the **ISSOL'02** Meeting.

CALL FOR NEW MEMBERS

ISSOL'02 is less expensive and possibly more fun if you are a member of the Society.

So if you have a colleague or student who is not yet a member of ISSOL, give them a copy of this flyer and assist them in completing the handy membership application form on the final page to **JOIN NOW.**

up on our Español. Air travel into and out of Oaxaca City is by all accounts quite safe, and there seem to be plenty of connecting flights from Mexico City, a scant 50 minute-flight away. *In short, we found that air travel into and out of Oaxaca City presented no problems at all.*

Cuisine: The cuisine of Mexico is known to many non-natives only from their acquaintance with the 'TexMex' mix proffered at "Taco Bell" and similar fast food establishments. But authentic Mexican cuisine is not at all TexMex (just as the cuisine of the USA is not just hot dogs and hamburgers). Actually, true Mexican food is old-fashioned, home-style fare requiring hours of preparation, rich in tradition, nutrition, and succulent flavors. We found that the familiar tacos, tamales, enchiladas, and burritos were readily available (a style of food known by the locals as *antojitos*). But the local fare is far more interesting and, in truth, more tasty. *Ceviche* (a spiced, chopped fish appetizer) can be superb; *pescado veracruzana* (red snapper smothered in a savory sauce) is a favorite everywhere; scrumptious shellfish dishes abound (oysters, clams, lobsters, crayfish); and the cocoa-based *molé* sauce is a local delicacy of this chocolate-producing region (used on chicken, not ice cream, as might be expected!). As we did, you will have an opportunity to sample tiny grasshoppers – *capulines* – a local speciality; and fresh, delicious, tropical fruits abound.

Cultural Attractions: The **ISSOL'02** Welcome Mixer (and concert of regional music!) will be held at Centro Cultural Santo Domingo. This huge, exceedingly impressive 16th century complex, once a religious center, houses the Museum of the Cultures of Oaxaca (and its excellent archaeological and art collections) and the Church and former convent of Santo Domingo. Our traditional half-day outing on Wednesday will be to Monte Albán. This vast site of fascinating historic ruins – featuring a great plaza, ball court, step pyramids, and observatory – on the outskirts of Oaxaca, was carved

out of a mountaintop between 600 and 500 B.C. by the Zapotec peoples.

The Awards Banquet on the last evening of the meeting will be held in the refined but relaxed atmosphere of Oaxaca's classiest hotel, the Camino Real. Renovated from the 16th century Convent of Santa Catalina, its magnificent ballroom with massive arched portals and soaring ceiling, is a suitable venue for our premier social event. The week-long program for Accompanying Persons (detailed in the 2nd Meeting Circular) will afford visits to other regional attractions – fine local arts and crafts, the museum's collections of modern art and archaeological treasures, and walking tours around the *zócalo* and the old city.

From local artisans to some of Mexico's finest modern art, from ancient archeology to the plazas, cathedrals, and colonial-style buildings of modern Oaxaca – *not to mention exciting new scientific reports and stimulating conversations with your international colleagues and friends – ISSOL'02 will be an educational, professional, and cultural bonanza!*

The Bottom Line: All is in order for **ISSOL'02** – our team found that each "i" has been carefully dotted, every "t" has been crossed. **ISSOL'02 will convene in a truly wonderful site.** Antonio Lazcano and his hard-working colleagues on the LOC have, on behalf of all of us in *ISSOL*, accomplished excellence. Thanks to them, the environment for this meeting will be special. It's now up to the rest of us to bring to **ISSOL'02** the very best science in the world!

For the International Overview Committee,

J. William Schopf
President, ISSOL

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR 2002 ISSOL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The process for election of Society Officers and Councillors has been initiated which according to the Society's By-Laws takes place every 3 years. The Secretary is now inviting nominations for officers and councillors from all voting members of the Society. Nominations must be submitted in writing and are requested for the following offices:

- President: Presides at all meetings of the members and Executive Council. When the Executive Council is not in session he/she shall have general management and control of the business and affairs of the corporation.
- First Vice-President: Monitors and coordinates planning for the triennial meeting on behalf of the EC. Also, in the absence of the President, performs the duties of the President.
- Second Vice-President: Serves as Editor and publisher of the Society Newsletter. Also, in the absence of the President and First Vice President, performs the duties of the President.
- Treasurer: Responsible for funds received and paid out, operating budgets, and dues invoices and receivables. Serves as Chairperson of the Travel Awards Committee.
- Secretary: Chairs Membership Committee, and maintains membership files; serves as Chairperson of the Election Nominating Committee and administers triennial Society elections; keeps minutes of the Executive Council and Open Business meetings; provides Oparin/Urey medallions and Fellows plaques.
- 12 Councillors: Advise the Executive Council; attend the meetings of Executive Council and vote on items placed before the Executive Council; serve on the Fellows Selection Committee.

According to the Society's By-Laws:

- Officers and Councillors are each limited to two consecutive three-year terms, except for the Secretary (this exception is to ensure stability and continuity in administration of the Society);
- In the case that a member is nominated as both an Officer and a Councillor he/she will be allowed to choose which of the two nominations he/she will accept.

In keeping with the By-Laws, the Election Nominating Committee will be named shortly by the current Executive Council and will be chaired by the Secretary. Once the nominations are collected, the Committee will prepare the final ballot which will be mailed on or about January 30, 2002 to all voting members who are *in good standing* at that time (i.e., all Full members, *who are current in their dues payments*, and all Provisional members are eligible to vote).

Please submit your nominations no later than Dec. 15, 2001 to the Secretary:

Dr. Gerda Horneck
Chair, Nominating Committee
DLR Inst. of Aerospace Medicine
Radiation Biology Section
Linder Hoehe
D-51170 Köln
GERMANY

tel#: 49-2203-601-3594
fax#: 49-2203-61970
gerda.horneck@dlr.de

Please confirm that you have received consent from any member you are nominating.

CALL FOR A.I. OPARIN AWARD NOMINATIONS

All voting (Full/Provisional) members of ISSOL are encouraged to submit nominations for the 6th A.I. Oparin Award that will be presented at the closing banquet of ISSOL'02 in Oaxaca, Mexico. In keeping with established procedure, the Chairperson of the 2002 Committee is Alan Schwartz (University of Nijmegen, The Netherlands) who was awarded the 2nd H.C. Urey Award at the ISSOL'99 in San Diego, USA.

The 2002 Oparin medal will be awarded "to the scientist deemed to have had the best sustained scientific research program in the origin of life field." The ISSOL By-Laws state:

"Any Full member of ISSOL may submit nominations. The nominations must be in the form of a letter (~250 words) describing the nominee's contributions to the field, and must be accompanied by a list of not more than ten of the nominee's major publications."

The A.I. Oparin and H.C. Urey medals are awarded at alternate ISSOL meetings but are awarded based on the same criterion. No single individual may be the recipient of both awards, therefore former recipients of either award are ineligible for nomination at this time. Our distinguished former recipients are:

1980	C. Ponnampereuma (USA)	Oparin #1
1983	S. Miller (USA)	Oparin #2
1986	J. Oró (USA)	Oparin #3
1989	J.W. Schopf (USA)	Oparin #4
1993	Leslie E. Orgel (USA)	Urey #1
1996	James P. Ferris (USA)	Oparin #5
1999	Alan Schwartz (NL)	Urey #2

Nominations must be received no later than February 1, 2002 by:

Dr. Alan Schwartz
 Chairperson, Oparin Medal Committee
 Laboratory for Evolutionary Biology
 University of Nijmegen
 Toernooiveld
 Nijmegen 6525 ED
 THE NETHERLANDS
 tel#: 31-24-365-2455
 fax#: 31-24-355-3450
 ALAN@SCI.KUN.NL

CALL FOR ISSOL FELLOWS NOMINATIONS

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2002 ISSOL Fellows Awards from all members of the Society.

Nominations for Fellows must describe the nominees' qualifications and must be accompanied by a list of major publications and/or accomplishments/contributions that show "exceptional and sustained contributions to the understanding of the origin of life through scientific research, educational activities, or service to the Society or this scientific community."

Each nomination must be in the form of a letter of ~250 words describing the nominee's contributions to the Society or the field. ISSOL's 12 Councillors will serve as the Fellows Nominating Committee. The President will name a chairperson of the Committee after the nominations are received. The Committee will then confidentially review all nominations received and select from these a number of Fellows corresponding to no more than 1% of the current membership count (~520). Members named as ISSOL Fellows in prior years were: A. Brack (France), G. Cairns-Smith (UK), S. Chang (USA), D.L. DeVincenzi (USA), S. Fox (USA), V. Goldanskii (Russia), K. Harada (JAPAN), and R. Young (USA).

Please send nominations by February 1, 2002, to ISSOL's President:

Dr. J. William Schopf
CSEOL
Geology Building
PO Box 95-1567
University of California, Los Angeles
Los Angeles CA 90095-1567
tel#: 1-310-825-1170
fax#: 1-310-825-0097
schopf@ess.ucla.edu

The new ISSOL Fellows will be announced at the ISSOL'02 Award Banquet in Oaxaca, Mexico.

ISSOL'02 TRAVEL GRANTS AVAILABLE

Funds are available, in limited amounts, from the ISSOL Travel Fund and the D.H. White Memorial Travel Fund for members to travel to the ISSOL'02 meeting.

Following previously established ISSOL guidelines, travel grants will be awarded to cover travel expenses for young scientists, including graduate students, to attend the ISSOL '02 meeting in Oaxaca. The awards are intended to offset transportation costs for travel to/from the meeting not accommodations, meals, or any miscellaneous costs incurred. Awards are restricted to members of ISSOL who are authors or co-authors on abstracts submitted for presentation at ISSOL'02.

To apply for travel funds, each applicant must submit:

- One copy of the abstract which has been submitted for presentation.
- An itemized budget estimating the funds required for travel (remember, funding will only be provided for transportation expenses, not meals or incidentals).
- A brief written statement (1 page maximum) from the applicant indicating why his/her attendance at the meeting would be appropriate or useful.
- A one page curriculum vitae (or resume) that summarizes your educational background, research interests, and examples of recent publications, if any.
- Additionally, for student applicants, a brief written statement (1 page maximum) from the student's faculty advisor supporting the student's application.

Please submit these materials no later than March 1, 2002 to ISSOL's Treasurer:

Dr. David Deamer
Chair, ISSOL Travel Grants Committee
Dept. of Chemistry and Biochemistry
University of California
Santa Cruz CA 95064
USA
tel#/fax#: 1-831-459-5158
DEAMER@HYDROGEN.UCSC.EDU

Award recipients will be notified, in writing, in early-May 2002.



OF LIFE

1. NAME (Family Name, First Name, Middle Initial) _____

2. ADDRESS (Please use the approved address format for your country's postal service, including country code or zip code).

3. TELEPHONE # _____ FAX # _____ E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

4. TITLE OR ACADEMIC RANK _____ 5. GENDER M F

6. AFFILIATION / PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT _____

7. DEGREE(S) HELD _____ SUBJECT AREA(S) _____ AWARDED INSTITUTION(S) _____ DATE(S) AWARDED _____

8. CURRENT SCIENTIFIC DISCIPLINE _____

9. NAME AND CITIZENSHIP OF TWO CURRENT ISSOL MEMBERS WHO ARE SPONSORING YOU (PREFERABLY ONE FROM YOUR OWN COUNTRY AND ONE FROM ANOTHER COUNTRY); PLEASE ATTACH THEIR LETTERS TO THIS APPLICATION.

10. PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR INTEREST AND ACTIVITY IN ORIGIN OF LIFE RESEARCH AND PROVIDE A LIST OF RELEVANT PUBLICATIONS (Please provide complete citations; continue on the back of this page or on other pages if necessary).

11. MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY (Select one):

FULL MEMBER (Includes voting privileges)
(U.S.\$35.00 per year)

12. SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

RETURN YOUR COMPLETED APPLICATION, AND THE DUES PAYMENT FOR ONE (INCLUDING SPONSORS' LETTERS) YEAR TO:

Dr. Gerda Horneck, Secretary
DLR Institute for Aerospace Medicine
Radiation Biology Section
D-51170 Köln
GERMANY

Payment must be in U.S. dollars and may be made as cash, personal check, travelers checks, money orders, or cashier's checks (made payable to ISSOL). In the event that your application is denied, your payment will be returned promptly and in full.

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY - PLEASE DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE

THIS APPLICATION: APPROVED _____ DENIED _____ INITIALS _____ DATE _____
NOTIFICATION SENT ON _____ BY _____ DUES PAID: CHECK/CASH/TRCHK/MO AMOUNT _____