

### From the President's desk

Dear colleagues,

May 2005 be a happy and prosperous year for all of you!

In preparing this last issue of Notepad for which I am writing the presidential note, I have browsed through the notes of the past two years. This final letter is more personal than programmatic, because first and foremost I want to thank those who have worked with me. Being responsible for a multi-national network one encounters different scholarly and institutional cultures, and works with senior and junior scholars of both genders. Tensions are unavoidable in such a network. When they are productive, they can bring energy into a group of people. But they are a challenge for those in charge of the overall structure. The board members with whom I co-operated, above all treasurer Ulrich Koppitz, secretary (and webmaster) Jan Oosthoek and vice presidents Christian Pfister, Sverker Sörlin and Poul Holm have been truly great to work with and have eased out many such tensions. I have enjoyed the interaction with all members of the board and the members of our committees, many of whom have shown great concern about the future of ESEH and have helped me time and again with advice and counseling. I am grateful that they shared their experience with me.

The people who bore the brunt of the ESEH conferences, the local committees, have been wonderful. Let me first thank Fiona Watson who jumped into the ice-cold waters of Scotland to do the first conference ever, aided by Nicola Jeffress. Under the able coaching of Ivan Bicik, Leos Jelecek and his team made the Prague conference an unforgettable experience, and Mauro Agnoletti is doing the same in Florence, with Valentina Marinai as his assistant. They all were truly supportive of ESEH's aims and goals.

Together we have changed the scholarly world in Europe profoundly. Students and scholars nowadays can link to a network providing them with services and an opportunity for the exchange of ideas. I hope that ESEH can provide even more assistance to young scholars in the future, by setting up summer schools and workshops to present their results.

I have chosen to serve ESEH in a committee rather than as member of the Executive Board from February, 2005, onwards and declined to be a candidate for a board position. This was done in the firm belief that those who found an institution are well advised to let it grow beyond their own horizons. I felt it was time for a change. I am sure that ESEH will flourish under the able leadership of my colleagues, and hope that they will enjoy their work as much as I did. It is heartwarming to see how much a dedicated group of people can achieve, and it is in that spirit that I wish all ESEH members success with ongoing projects and good luck!

Yours sincerely  
Verena Winiwarter  
ESEH president

## Contact person for South East Europe

Professor Borna Fuerst-Bjelis of the University of Zagreb has recently agreed to act as contact person for South Eastern Europe. In this role Dr Fuerst-Bjelis will help to establish environmental history more firmly and to increase the number of members in this part of Europe. The board welcomes Professor Fuerst-Bjelis and looks forward working with her. Professor's Fuerst-Bjelis contact details are:

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## A Latin American Society for Environmental History

During the second "Simposio Internacional de Historia Ambiental Americana", held from 24 to 30 October 2004 in Havana, Cuba, the 'Sociedad Latino americana y Caribeña de Historia Ambiental' was established. The meeting was part of the "Coloquio Internacional Jose Marti, por una cultura de la naturaleza", a larger conference organized by the Nunez Foundation . Mauro Agnoletti of the University of Florence attended this meeting and delivered a message from the ESEH board to the founding assembly of the 'Sociedad Latino americana y Caribeña de Historia Ambiental'. This meeting was attended by the members of the future executive board, for now only a temporary board for setting up the society that will produce the final statute to be approved by the general assembly. The only European with an official role in the board is Manuel Gonzales de Molina, the regional representative of ESEH for Spain. There is the intention to keep very close relations with Spain which is considered as "mother country" by most of the participants. A notable symbolic expression of this intention is the decision to hold the first conference of the Society not in Latin America, but in Seville (Spain) in 2006. Manuel Gonzales is also been indicated as the person who should represents the new society in ESEH.

Most of the discussion during the first meeting was spent on deciding the name of the society and who could be a member. There is a clear disappointment for the name chosen by the ASEH that in fact is always named as North American Society..... "that cannot represent also Latin America, as the name seems to suggest". However, it was felt that the final name should not indicate a geographic boundary for research activity, but rather the expression of a cultural approach of Latin American culture to E.H. The final decision to include "Caribena" in the name marks the recognition of a specific cultural area represented by the Caribbean region, a decision obviously welcomed by the Cuban representatives.

The society will probably be based in Panama because of local legislations facilitating the creation of the society, and also because the foundation "Ciudad del Saber", represented by Prof. Guillermo Castro, has offered to host a office of the society in their facilities ( a former US military base).

The welcome letter of the ESEH was read on the first day during the opening ceremony, followed by the one of ASEH, represented by Paul Sutter. The environmental history meeting, was attended by almost a hundred participants (presenting papers), who also participated to the general assembly of the last day.

The assembly has ratified the decisions concerning the name, the membership and of the temporary board and the place of the first conference (Seville 2006). All decisions were accepted by the large majority of the assembly. ESEH wishes the Latin American Society the very best for the future.

## European Society for Environmental History

### Executive Board:

President: Verena Winiwarter, *University of Vienna*  
Vice-President: Christian Pfister, *University of Bern*  
Vice-President: Poul Holm, *University of Southern Denmark*  
Secretary: Jan Oosthoek, *University of Newcastle upon Tyne*  
Treasurer: Ulrich Koppitz, *University of Düsseldorf*

### Ex officio:

Mauro Agnoletti, *University of Florence*

### Regional Representatives:

Benelux, **Petra van Dam**, The Netherlands  
British Isles, **Fiona Watson**, Scotland  
Czechia & Slovakia, **Leos Jelecek**, Czechia  
Francophone Countries, **Geneviève Massard-Guilbaud**, France  
Germanophone Countries, **Andreas Dix**, Germany  
Hungary, **Lajos Racz**, Hungary  
Iberian Peninsula, **Muanuel Gonzáles de Molina**, Spain  
Italy, **Marco Armiero**, Italy  
Nordic Countries, **Eva Jakobsson**, Norway  
Russia & additional Eastern European Countries, **Daniel Alexandrov**, Russia

ESEH aims to promote environmental history in Europe, by encouraging and supporting research, teaching and publications in the field. The ESEH maintains their web site at <[www.eseh.org](http://www.eseh.org)>.

**Notepad Editor:** Jan Oosthoek

**Items for the next Notepad should be sent by 1 April, 2005 to the address shown below.**

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