

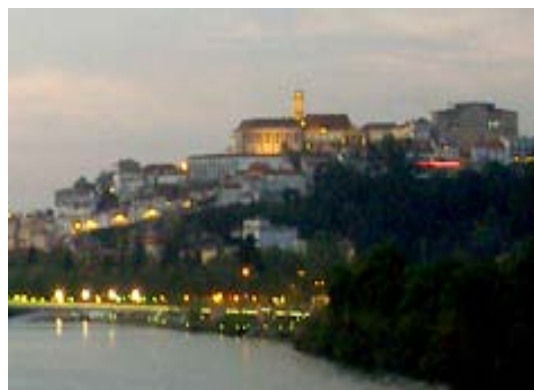
# ONTA NEWSLETTER

## Organization of Nematologists of Tropical America

ONTA web site: <http://www.ontaweb.org>

Volume 42, Issue 1

April 2011



**Coimbra, Portugal, site of the XLIII ONTA Annual Meeting.**



### **XLIII ONTA 2011 MEETING**

**September 4-9, 2011 ~ Coimbra, Portugal**

As announced in the previous issue of the Newsletter, the 43rd ONTA Annual Meeting will be held at the **University of Coimbra, Portugal**. The first part of the week 4-8 September will be dedicated to scientific presentations and an excursion day. Thursday (October 8<sup>th</sup>) will be reserved for a symposium on Pinewood nematode, an exotic nematode pest, which is causing serious pine decline in Portugal.

A concurrent short course on entomopathogenic nematodes, originally planned for September 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, has been cancelled. Details about the meeting can be found at the website <http://abis.upc.es/bionta/en>

The scientific sessions include an opening lecture on Ecology of Plant and Free-living Nematodes and the following scientific sessions: 1) Evolution, systematic and biogeography, 2) Plant-nematode interactions, 3) Nematode-other organisms interactions, 4) Chemical nature and function of phytonematode secretions, 5) Plant defenses against nematodes, 6) Molecular mechanisms of plant resistance and nematode pathogenicity, 7) Impact of nematodes on plant growth and yield, 8) Nematode epidemiology and modeling, 9) Novel strategies for management of plant pathogenic nematodes, 10) Root-knot nematodes, 11) New integrative approaches in nematode identification, 12) Entomopathogenic nematodes, 13) Pine wilt disease in Europe plus Posters.

Registration costs for the meeting are estimated at 380 Euros (= approximately US \$500). Registration covers lunches, coffee breaks, field excursion, banquet and welcome cocktail and attendance to all scientific sessions.

**Isabel Abrantes** (University of Coimbra) <Isabel.abrantes@zoo.uc.pt>, Chair of the Local Arrangements Committee is doing a great job in perusing the abstracts of the talks that will be given at the Meeting. She and her collaborators **Maria Teresa Martins de Almeida** (University of Minho), **Isabel Luci Conceição** (University of Coimbra), **Maria José Cunha** (High Agriculture School of Coimbra), **Manuel Mota** (University of Évora), post docs and students deserve the deep appreciation of ONTA members for preparing this meeting.

### **INSIDE THIS ISSUE**

- 1-2** ONTA 2011 Meeting, Coimbra, Portugal; Elections of ONTA Vice-President; Special Award to SON; Constitutional Amendments.
- 3-5** Profiles of Candidates for ONTA VP, Nematropica; Obituaries- B. M. Zuckerman, R. P. Esser.
- 6-9** ONTA Officers

### ELECTIONS OF ONTA VICE-PRESIDENT

**Patrick Quénéhervé**, chair of the Nomination Committee, reports that **Soledad Verdejo-Lucas** and **Emilio Fernandez** have been nominated candidates for the ONTA Vice-President position.

**Soledad** and **Emilio** are two outstanding scientists who have the qualifications and experience to lead the Organization. Ballots for this election are going to be emailed to all members by the Secretary, **Paola Lax**.

**ONTA members are requested to send by e-mail their vote to Paola as soon as possible.** Paola's e-mail address is : **<plax@efn.uncor.edu>**.

Biographies of the two candidates are reported in the following pages.

### ONTA SPECIAL AWARD OF APPRECIATION TO

### THE SOCIETY OF NEMATOLOGISTS

In March 2011, ONTA Executive Committee approved the initiative proposed by **Rodrigo Rodriguez-Kabana** to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Society of Nematologists (SON) with an ONTA Special Award of Appreciation. It was decided that this congratulatory plaque will be given to the President of the SON at the 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society, in Corvallis, Oregon, in July 2011. The plaque will be presented by **Rosa Manzanilla-Lopez** (ONTA Past-President) and **Lee Simmons**, who symbolize the young generation of scientists who will lead the Organization in the future. ONTA has longstanding ties with SON and, on occasion of this special anniversary, wants to extend warm congratulations and express gratitude to its sister Society for the support received.

### ONTA CONTITUTION AMENDMENTS

**Rosa Manzanilla-López**, **Patrick Quénéhervé** and **Patricia Stock** have been involved in the revision of ONTA's Constitution with the aim to make the old version better fitted to the changes that the Organization has undergone in the last decade. ONTA members will be asked to vote for the approval or rejection of the proposed changes. These changes include: i) a discounted membership for students; ii) an extended term in office for the President and Vice-President of two years rather than one year; iii) biennial meetings rather than annual; iv) inclusion of the website operators in the executive committee; v) official language of the organization; and others. **Rosa**, **Patrick** and **Patricia** are commended for the time and efforts spent on this important initiative. Some of the proposed changes involve operational procedures rather than Constitutional amendments.

## CANDIDATE PROFILE ONTA VICE-PRESIDENT



**SOLEDAD VERDEJO-LUCAS**

**Soledad Verdejo-Lucas** is Director of Centre de Cabrils, Institut de Recerca i Tecnologia Agroalimentàries (IRTA) and Director of the Plant Pathology Unit. She obtained a Doctorate Degree in Pharmaceutical Science from the College of Pharmacy, University of Granada, Spain, working with plant-parasitic nematodes. She spent five years conducting post-doctoral research at Rothamsted Research Station, United Kingdom, and at the University of California (UCAR), Riverside. After that, she transferred to UCA Davis when she was granted a Fulbright scholarship. In 1988, she joined IRTA to develop a new research line in Nematology in Catalonia. Soledad's main areas of expertise include plant resistance and biological control as tools for management of root-knot nematodes and the citrus nematode. She has lead and coordinated competitive research projects funded by public agencies and seed and chemical companies. She has authored or co-authored more than a 100 publications including scientific and technical articles and several book chapters. Recently, she has co-edited a book on plant diseases caused by plant-parasitic nematodes in Spain. She has been an invited speaker in several national and international events due to her expertise in nematode management. Her teaching activity includes the supervision of students preparing MS and PhD theses, and the preparation of invited courses in Nematology and Plant Pathology. Soledad is a member of several Plant Pathology and Nematology Societies. She has served as a member of ONTA Executive Committee, Editor of ONTA Nematology Newsletter and Editor-in-Chief of the Spanish version of Nematronica from 2001 to 2004.



**EMILIO FERNÁNDEZ GONZÁLEZ**

**Emilio Fernández González** studied at the College of Biology, Universidad of Habana, Cuba. After graduation, he started his activities in Nematology at the Laboratorio Central de Diagnóstico (Cuban Ministry of Agriculture), and founded, in 1977, the Instituto de Investigaciones de Sanidad Vegetal (INISAV), an internationally recognized institution in biological control of agricultural pests. In the mean time, he completed his Doctorate in Agricultural Science, in 1991, and became Head and Director of Research of the Laboratory of Nematology and Phytopathology, in 2005. At present, he is Researcher at INISAV. In Cuba, he has been a pioneer in the management of harmful nematodes using non-chemical methods, implementing integrated nematode managements on many tropical crops including those grown in the urban and suburban agricultural systems of Cuba. The promising results he obtained have received the recognition of the Cuban Academy of Science. He teaches undergraduate and graduate courses, supervises MS and Ph.D. students conducting projects in General Nematology and Integrated Management, and train agricultural specialists locally and abroad. Emilio is the secretary of several Plant Protection Committees, member of the Editorial Board of the Journal Fitosanidad (INISAV-Cuba), president of the Scientific Board of INISAV, and Nematology advisor for the Ministry of Agriculture and other Cuban Laboratories of Plant Health. He is a member of many Cuban and International Scientific Societies, including ONTA. He has participated in 165 scientific meetings and has published more than 92 articles in national and international journals.

## NEMATROPICA

**Pat Donald**, Editor-in-Chief of Nematropica, informs that the 2011, June issue of Nematropica, vol 41 (1), can be accessed at <http://palmm.fcla.edu/nematode> along with electronic versions of previous volumes. With the publication of this issue, Nematropica will no longer be printed for hardcopy and will be accessible only on-line. The June issue contains an obituary, 15 research papers and two research notes for a total of 153 pages. The cost of the on-line version of this issue was \$ 1,270.

**Pat**, as editor-in-chief, **Larry Duncan**, as editor of the electronic version, and the editorial board are commended for their success in transforming Nematropica to an on-line Journal.

## IN MEMORIAM...

### BERT M. ZUCKERMAN

Bert M. Zuckerman, a resident of Bay Square, Maryland, USA, passed away on March 5, 2011 at home after spending several days in the presence of family. He was 86 and had endured a series of illnesses over the past year.

Bert was born on March 26, 1924 in New York City, the son of Harry and Pearl Zuckerman. At age 17 he joined the Merchant Marines, and while out at sea, he saw the early stirrings of World War II. Upon return, he matriculated into the Forestry School at North Carolina State University, where he received his B.S. He subsequently studied for M.S. and Ph.D. degrees at Syracuse University and the University of Illinois, respectively, focusing on the field of plant pathology. His graduate work was interrupted by the draft. He served on a medic team in the Army while stationed in Germany, France and Switzerland during World War II. After completion of his doctorate, he joined the faculty of the University of Massachusetts in 1955. His early research centered on general plant pathology, but soon he directed his energies to the study of nematodes. Dr. Zuckerman became an international authority on the biology of these organisms and the scope of his research was wide, ranging from investigations of crop damage and population dynamics to the biology of aging.

**Continued in the adjacent column**

He was one of the pioneers who used nematodes as models for understanding basic biological processes, a strategy still being used in developmental biology and neuroscience to this day. The magnitude of these findings is reflected in more than 220 published research papers. He was a prolific scientific writer and editor, having been credited with 7 books, several laboratory manuals translated into Spanish, 3 patents for novel biopesticides, and numerous appointments to editorial boards for journals in nematology and plant pathology. He greatly enjoyed his Visiting Professorships around the world including those with: Polish Academy of Science, Warsaw; Rothamsted, England; Volcani Institute, Technion, Weizmann Institute and Hebrew University/Hadassah Hospital, Israel; Aegean University, Turkey; McGill University, Canada; Tokyo University, Japan; Lund University, Sweden; and the Autonomous University of Chapingo, Mexico. He also served as Agricultural Consultant to the government of Malawi through the United States Agency for International Development. A great supporter of the young state of Israel, and he hoped to spur international bridge building through scientific collaboration at a time when such aspirations were rarely expressed. Concerning nematological societies, his scientific paper contributions and other services led to his election as a Fellow of the Society of Nematologists in 1983. In ONTA, he became a frequent attendant to our meetings since the early 80s. He promoted and supported successfully young Latin American students and professional to embrace science. The last time he was with ONTA was in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico during our XXXVI meeting, 2004.

Beyond work, Dr. Zuckerman had a wide variety of interests. He was an avid birder who catalogued his observations over many years during travels around the world. He also took great pride in a magnificent collection of stereoscopic views of Palestine—once estimated to be the second largest in the world. He is fondly remembered for his eccentric comb-over hairstyle, quirky sense of humor, and flair for telling animated and imaginative adventure stories.

Prepared by: Nahum Marban-Mendoza  
Hans B. Janssen and Jonathan Zuckerman

## IN MEMORIAM.....

### ROBERT PAUL ESSER



Robert P. Esser was born in Hackensack, NJ November 8, 1924 and died peacefully at home, May 22, 2011. Bob was one of seven children born to Charlotte and James Esser. After serving in the U.S. Coast Guard for four years during the '40s, he joined his family in Tampa as a watch repairman in the family business, Esser's Ceramics and Watch Repair. Though he dropped out of school to join the Coast Guard at age 17, he went on to earn his GED, and then his BS and PhD in Entomology and Nematology at the University of Florida. He obtained his BS in 1955, when he joined the State Plant Board of Florida [later the Division of Plant Industry (DPI), Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services] in Gainesville, Florida, where he worked for 45 years. He began his scientific activity in nematology under the supervision of G. B. Chitwood, a founding father of the science of nematology. Under the guidance of Chitwood, Bob learned many aspects of Nematology including collection and processing of soil samples for nematode extraction, nematode anatomy, biology and taxonomy, all essential for nematode identification and description of new species. Bob was deeply involved in phytosanitary aspects of plant nematology as a dedicated member of the Florida State Plant Board, a regulatory agency.

**Continued in the adjacent column**

His experience relating to nematode parasites of citrus especially the burrowing nematode, *Radopholus similis*, the causal agent of 'Spreading Decline of Citrus', made him one of the most knowledgeable in this area of the science of nematology. He prepared and published regulatory and sanitation manuals adopted not only in Florida, but also in other states and countries. Nematode taxonomy was his major subject of study and research, which allowed him to obtain a Ph.D. in nematology at the University of Florida with a thesis on taxonomy of primitive forms related to cyst forming nematodes. Bob Esser expanded his interest to other aspects of Nematology including the preparation of a comprehensive nematode taxonomy data-base by encoding all the genera and species of plant-parasitic nematodes described during the time he worked. Bob had an insatiable curiosity about nature, e.g., he would catalog nematodes associated with all plant types in natural areas, and would also pick up road kill on way to work in the morning for examination of their nematode parasites. Although nematology was an integral part of Bob Esser's profession, he was involved in other aspects of regulatory and plant protection activities of the DPI such as the preparation of phytosanitary guidelines for composting plant waste in the state. His large number (160) of papers published in national and international journals includes very useful monographs and compendia for nematode identification that are used by specialists involved in nematode identification. Bob Esser was a very active member of nematological and agronomical societies such as the Society of Nematologists, the Organization of Nematologists of Tropical America, and the Soil and Crop Science Society of Florida. He served as associate editor of the Journal of Nematology (1971-1972), and co-editor of the Nematology Newsletter for three years. He received the Honorary Member award of the Soil and Crop Science Society of Florida in 1999. Esser attended a few ONTA meetings and published in Nematropica. Bob was married to Hannah Huehn from New Jersey in 1947. They were married for 61 years, when Hannah died in 2010. They had three daughters, one son, five grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Prepared by Renato Inserra and Don Dickson

## PASSING

We sadly announce the death of **John H. O'Bannon** on 29 July 2011. He was 84. **John** was a very active ONTA member. He served the Organization as President 1979 and received the Honorary Member Award in 1993. A complete biography of **John O'Bannon** will be published in *Nematropica*.

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