

Notes from the Past President

Eike Jablonski, Luxembourg

The 5th Triennial International Oak Society Conference, held in Texas, U.S.A., was another full success in our Society's life. Some 80 participants from 15 countries and four continents attended the meeting and one or more of the attached pre- and post- conference tours. The immense work of organization was done by David Richardson alone, to whom we owe our deepest respect. Thanks for all the work connected with this conference organization, David! A number of participants expressed to me that the speakers program was extraordinary well chosen, both in subjects and in persons who presented their papers. Also the setting of the papers was mainly Dave's work.

For me as outgoing president, it was a pleasure to open the conference with some awards, which have been granted to members of the International Oak Society (see the following article). The awards show some of the many activities which members are undertaking behind the scenes.

The Triennial Conference is also the time for board elections. Board terms come to an end with the end of a Triennial Conference. I would like to express my deep gratitude to the entire board which served for the society from our Winchester Conference in September 2003 to the Texas meeting in November 2006. Three of the board members are not continuing their work on the new board, and I would like to write a few words about their outstanding work here:

First, I have to mention Dorothy Holley, from U.K., who was a busy board member for two consecutive terms from 1997 onwards. Dorothy organized many things behind the scenes, especially in Britain, and was busy in supporting the Oak Society in many different ways. In 2003, she was, together with her husband Ron, one of the main organizers of the 4th Triennial Conference in Winchester. Today, even if not a member of the board anymore, she is still busy with society matters and voluntarily working at the Sir Harold Hillier Garden and Arboretum herbarium, which serves as the International Oak Society's standard herbarium. Her beautifully arranged and mounted oak specimens are well known to visitors of the herbarium.

Further, Ana Mendoza, in Mexico, Professor of Ecology at the University of Mexico City, was our connection to Central and South America. Ana's knowledge of many oak enthusiasts in that part of the world was much appreciated, and she always contributed to the work of the board. She also arranged the recent work with the creation of our society's pin, which was highly welcomed by the participants of the Texas Conference.

And last, Thierry Lamant from France, board member since 1997, and Vice President of the IOS from 2000-2003, was also timelessly active with society's business. He arranged very many oak related events in France and nearby Spain, with his immense knowledge of people and of course, plants. Thierry arranged two Oak Open Days, in France and Spain, which have been very successful. Recently, he co-authored a new standard publication, which covers oaks worldwide.

My thanks do not go only to Dorothy, Ana and Thierry for their work. Despite that, I would like to express my deepest thanks to all board members with whom I have been so fortunate to work together the past three years.

A society is nothing without membership. The Oak Society has a very lively membership, with many members taking part at the various oak society events. They contribute in various ways to the society's life; and one of the aspects is what you can read here, as many members did contribute presentations at the Texas Conference.

This issue of our annual publication *International Oaks* is the special *Proceedings* volume which follows the Triennial Conference, containing all the wealth of information which was presented in Dallas. Many of the articles deal with oak genetics, which will indeed be a major subject of research in the future. Other papers treat various aspects of oak forestry and taxonomy. In all, you will find a lot of information about oaks in all aspects, due to the collaboration of those contributors who made a presentation in Texas. Thanks to our long term editorial team, Ron Lance and Guy Sternberg, who do the editing work in the excellent manner we know from them already.

It has been a privilege for me to serve as your president the past three years. Thanks for your continuous support of the International Oak Society. As I said, a society is only as good as its members. Dick Jensen's membership report in Texas stated that the number of members is on a slight decline. To maintain the quality of our publications and other IOS business matters, part of the Oak Society's work must increase its focus on promotion to get more members into the IOS - all of you can help by spreading the word to get more people interested in becoming members. This is essential if we want to keep our Society standard high.

My best wishes to all of you, the new board, and to our new president Allen Coombes!

Eike Jablonski
President
International Oak Society