

## Report of the TIAFT–SFTA–SoHT 2008 meeting

Schoelcher- Martinique June 2 to 8, 2008

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To organise a good meeting, it is like ‘punch’, one needs excellent ingredients. In June 2008, a new cocktail was tested and the result was remarkable.



The recipe? Mix TIAFT with the SFTA for their annual meeting, and add a good dose of SOHT. Heat the whole with the sun of Martinique and sprinkle with a few downpours... Taste without moderation!

The serious things began in the morning of Tuesday, June 3 after the arrival, by especially chartered boat, of the congress participants who stayed at the other side of the bay. The reception committee was in the starting blocks to distribute the congress bags to more than 250 congress participants in record time and to start the scientific presentations at the scheduled time.



The SFTA (21 communications) and SOHT (20 communications) sessions proceeded in parallel throughout the day. In the opinion of French-speaking congress participants, the choice to attend one or



the other session was difficult taking into account the scientific quality of the presentations. Indeed... how to divide oneself between two actual topics like environmental toxicology and the interpretation of toxicological analysis of hair? The day finished on the beach with a traditional “Welcome Reception”, feet in the sand, at the edge of a turquoise sea bordered by palm trees. The temperature of water was



pleasant (29 degrees) but that of rum even more (45 degrees?). The bar was a certain success and many congress participants were cheerful enough to dance swinging “biguines” (a style of music that originated in Martinique in the 19th century).

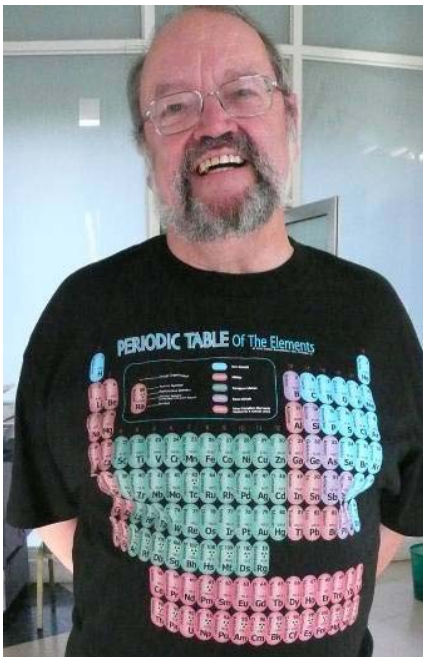
The official start took place on the following day with the opening ceremony of the 46<sup>th</sup> international TIAFT meeting. Pascal Kintz, Patrick Mura and Carmen Jurado welcomed the 380 congress participants.



Afterwards funny interventions in French followed. The room was packed, attentive, and it was shaken by salvos of hilarity! Among the many courageous actors who played the game, for a long time we will remember Marilyn Huestis, superbly dressed in creole clothes for a presentation without moderation on her friend Pascal Kintz, or Hans Maurer shod with flip-flops, who revealed the secrets of the French way of organising meetings (and announced the one organised in Germany in Bonn in 2010...) or of Marc Lebeau, praising the virtues of the “French kiss”.



To get serious again, two introductory conferences were entrusted to eminent toxicologists. Robert Wennig, former President of the TIAFT, presented an excellent retrospective of the life of TIAFT, which constitutes an essential memory of this association.



As for Jean-Pierre Anger, he had the challenge to answer the following question: Is rum toxic? For those who could not attend this brilliant and extremely well documented intervention, it will be published in the congress proceedings, a special issue of the Annales de Toxicologie Analytique.

The scientific part of the meeting thus was well launched to connect quite naturally with the 68 oral communications and the 119 posters distributed among the traditional topics of TIAFT: postmortem toxicology, analytical aspects, occupational toxicology, clinical toxicology and pharmacology (joint session with IATDMCT), new trends in DUI detection, alternative specimens, drugs of abuse and seized material and free topics.



To this quite heavy program, let us finally add the 8 workshops organised by various vendors, which were all well attended!

This report would be incomplete without evoking the Zouk lesson of Wednesday evening on the beach or the relaxed end of the afternoon on Thursday, organized for all congress participants, a visit of the Clement Rum distillery, followed by a creole evening at the Habitation Reunion. These are a few privileged moments engraved in our memory...





The congress ended with the traditional gala dinner in the splendid surroundings of the Bakoua hotel in Trois Islets. It was a particularly solemn moment for the French since it marked the end of the 3 years term of office of Pascal Kintz as TIAFT president. The relay was passed to Olaf Drummer, from Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, for the presidency. The flags were transmitted to our Swiss friends, Christian Staub and Marc Augsburg, for the organization of the next TIAFT meeting in Geneva as well as to Veronique Dumestre-Toulet and Patrick Mura for the next SFTA congress in La Rochelle. Many TIAFT, SFTA and SOHT awards were distributed during the evening: we address our congratulations to the award winners.



In conclusion, this congress was a success.  
Thanks to the many participants who made the trip to the Antilles,  
Thanks to the Transazur team for their professionalism,  
Thanks to the sponsors without whom this meeting could not have taken place.  
And who knows? See you soon maybe, for new adventures...