

February 9, 2006

**2<sup>nd</sup> Circular: Astrobiology Workshop: “Strategies for Life Detection”  
April 24-28, 2006, ISSI, Bern Switzerland**

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**Information about Wednesday trip to Basel and Workshop Dinner**

**Description:**

As a break in the middle of the workshop and as a chance to get to know each other outside the meeting, ISSI is organizing a trip to Basel on Wednesday afternoon, April 26, 2006. This will give you the opportunity to visit the second largest city in Switzerland, and one that is normally not on people’s tourist agenda. However, Basel has a very rich cultural life and a lot of charm in its own special way. The city is famous for its carnival and for hosting several world-renowned fairs.

As our first stop on the trip we will visit the museum Jean Tinguely. Tinguely was a very famous Swiss artist whose major work of art consisted of creating huge machines from scrap metal. So, you do not enter a quiet museum, but you can expect a lively place with a lot of sounds and noises. More information about the museum can be found here: <http://www.tinguely.ch>. We will organize a guided tour of the museum, but if you wish you can explore the museum on your own.

Weather permitting, we then take a stroll along the Rhine River for a while, and then cross the river on one of the ferries, which will give you another perspective of the city. Once on the other side, we will then walk on towards the Schiffflände area. In case of bad weather, ISSI will make plans for indoor activities.

The dinner will take place in an unusual setting. We will board an oldtimer streetcar at the station Schiffflände and enjoy a tour around the city for about two hours while eating dinner. The food will be catered by the restaurant Storchen. After the dinner, we will exit the streetcar at the main train station, where the bus will be waiting for us for the ride back to Bern.

**Trip sign up:**

To make sure that everyone who wants to go on the trip can go, and that we have sufficient capacity in the bus and for the dinner, it is very important that you sign up for the trip now. It will not be possible to add people at the last minute, and we are already making reservations.

There are several options for you to choose from:

- 1) Voyager Grand Tour (bus ride to Basel, museum, stroll, ferry ride, dinner)
- 2) Huygens (bus ride to Basel, explore Basel on your own, dinner)
- 3) Galileo (stay in Bern for the day and join us for dinner in Basel)
- 4) Ulysses (do something on your own)

Please contact Oliver ([botta@issi.unibe.ch](mailto:botta@issi.unibe.ch)) now to sign up and indicate how many people (including yourself) will be joining us (number of adults and children).

**Logistics:**

The details of the trip are still being worked out, and we will provide updates either before the start of the workshop on our website, or during the workshop. Generally, we will leave from ISSI with a chartered bus after the last talk on Wednesday morning. The ride will probably take us 1 h to 1 h 15 min. The bus will drop us off directly at the museum. After dinner, the bus will pick us up again and bring us back to Bern.

For the dinner, ISSI staff will choose a few set menus, and a vegetarian option will be available. Please let us know if you have any dietary constraints (including vegan and allergies). Dinner will be paid by ISSI for all workshop participants.

For those who will stay in Bern for the day and meet us for dinner in Basel, ISSI staff will help you finding the right trains to get there (ISSI will not pay for that train ticket, though). It will take you about 1 h 15 min to get from Bern to Basel, and you do not have to change trains. At the Basel main train station, you will have to board a tram (streetcar) (number 8 or 11), which will take you to the station Schiffflände, which is where we will board the oldtimer streetcar. The dinner tour will start at 6 pm, so you will have to leave Bern at 4.30 pm the latest in order to be on time at the station Schiffflände.

No special clothing is needed for the trip. Please note that the weather can be quite unpredictable in Switzerland during that time of the year, so it is wise to have something ready in case it would be raining. Normally, snow is not to be expected at the elevations of Bern and Basel in April.

## REMINDER FOR SPEAKERS

**Abstract Submittal:** As indicated to you in our invitation letter, we have asked each speaker to give a talk on a particular topic. It is of course up to the speaker how he/she wishes to address the provided topic, but we kindly ask you to prepare a presentation that fits into the “big picture” of the workshop theme. Also, please keep in mind that your audience will be scientifically diverse, so you should try to avoid using specialized language and expressions during your talk. The workshop program has been divided such that a) the *goals of the workshop* will be fulfilled, b) there will be *plenty of time for discussion* during the session, and c) that the *resultant book* sufficiently covers the workshop topic. So that the abstracts can serve as useful references, please submit a maximum of 2 pages (minimum of about 1) in 2 column, 10pt. font format. An abstract template can be found on the workshop webpage. ***Talk titles and abstracts are due by February 13, 2006.*** Please send them *in PDF format* to Oliver Botta at [botta@issi.unibe.ch](mailto:botta@issi.unibe.ch). Concerning the presentations, ISSI will provide a digital projector, a PC laptop, a Mac desktop, and an overhead projector (or 2) for talks. You are also welcome to bring your own Mac laptop to hook up to the projector. Please let our System Administrator, Mr. Saliba, know if you have any other needs for your talk (contact info provided above).

## REMINDER

**Travel and hotel arrangements:** Travel and lodging logistics are handled by our secretary at ISSI, Ms. Fasler. She has booked a block of rooms, paid by ISSI, at the nearby hotels La Pergola and Astoria within walking distance of ISSI and of the main train station in Bern. These rooms will have private shower/toilet, phone, and TV. You are free to make your own hotel arrangements, in which case ISSI will give you an all inclusive per-diem of 200 Swiss francs, *but only by wire transfer, not by check*. Addresses, telephone and fax numbers of the hotels, as well as a city map of Bern, showing the location of the hotels, the train station and ISSI can be found on our web site [www.issi.unibe.ch/hotel\\_info.html](http://www.issi.unibe.ch/hotel_info.html).

ISSI will not cover any transportation costs, but for your information: the closest airport is the Bern/Belp airport (BRN), but unless there is a sale, it is quite expensive to fly into Bern from overseas. The Geneva (GVA) and Zürich (ZRH) airports are only 1.5 and about 1 hour, respectively, by train from Bern, and cost much less to fly into. For more details regarding travel, in particular about how to get to ISSI from the airports, please refer to the workshop website ([http://www.issi.unibe.ch/workshops/Life\\_Detect/](http://www.issi.unibe.ch/workshops/Life_Detect/)).

***Please send your travel plans to Ms. Fasler by March 27, 2006, so that she can book a room for you for the appropriate nights.*** Once you have sent your travel plans and Ms. Fasler has made your hotel reservations, she will send to you more details on hotel location, etc. If you have any questions concerning travel, hotel arrangements, or visa issues please contact Ms. Fasler.

As indicated in your invitation letter, ISSI will reimburse you for food through a per diem of 70 CHF per day. Again, you will be reimbursed *only by wire transfer, not by check*. You will receive a reimbursement form during the meeting.

Information about Bern can be found here: <http://www.berninfo.com/en/welcome.cfm>.

## IMPORTANT DATES

<u>Now:</u>	Sign up for the trip!
<u>13. February 2006:</u>	Abstract submission
<u>27. March 2006:</u>	- Send travel plans to Ms. Fasler. - Apply for ISSI wireless network account to Mr. Saliba.

### CONTACTS

Questions regarding the scientific program: Dr. Oliver Botta, NASA GSFC,  
[botta@issi.unibe.ch](mailto:botta@issi.unibe.ch), +1 (301) 614 6380.

Questions regarding hotel, travel, directions to ISSI, etc.: Ms. Brigitte Fasler, Secretary,  
[fasler@issi.unibe.ch](mailto:fasler@issi.unibe.ch), +41 31 631 48 96.

Questions regarding computer & A/V issues: Mr. Saliba Saliba, System Administrator,  
[saliba@issi.unibe.ch](mailto:saliba@issi.unibe.ch), +41 31 631 32 51.

When in doubt: Oliver Botta.

Please note that all information in this circular will also be put on the workshop webpage located under "Workshop Schedule" on the ISSI home page (<http://www.issi.unibe.ch>) or directly at [http://www.issi.unibe.ch/workshops/Life\\_Detect/](http://www.issi.unibe.ch/workshops/Life_Detect/).