

## In Memoriam:

### Maria José L. Boavida who died on the 30<sup>th</sup> of August, 2012, aged 64.

Maria José, or Zé as she preferred to be called, was the national representative of Portugal for the SIL: we profited from her great efforts in keeping us up to date with the latest developments in limnology, and for organising the bureaucratic aspects of SIL membership.



Zé Boavida in Portugal, August 2011.

After graduating in Biology at the University of Lisbon (Portugal), she continued her studies at Kent State University (Ohio, USA). It was at the end of her first year at Kent that she became fascinated by a paper published by Ramon Margalef in 1951, concerning the production of phosphatases by *Daphnia* (Boavida, 2010). This interest led to her choosing this subject for Master thesis topic (Boavida, 1981) and later to her Ph.D. studies. She demonstrated that zooplankters were really producing their own phosphatases and not only releasing those ingested with their algal food (Boavida and Heath, 1984). The role played by phosphorus, phosphorus regeneration and zooplankton interactions in lakes was a fundamental part of her scientific research, which contributed to the development of limnology studies in Portugal.

As a teacher, Maria José was well known for her carefulness in preparing her class lectures and guiding students, to whom she imparted her interests in the various phenomena shaping the dynamics of lakes. Many students and colleagues became interested in aquatic ecology through her inspiration and guidance. In order to encourage the learning of limnology by students, she translated into Portuguese the well known book *Limnology* by the famous limnologist Prof. R.G. Wetzel, who was Zé's personal friend. The book was famously used by Zé as a syllabus in her course of "Limnologia" at the University of Lisbon. Her curiosity and scientific knowledge, further developed in cooperation with researchers both at the University of Lisbon and at several research centres throughout the world, granted her the esteem from co-workers and students alike.

As Prof. R.T. Heath recalls, Zé also had an impish sense of humour

that made her an excellent companion in the laboratory. When she was studying in the US, she once made a Secchi disk from a button on a thread so the American students could compare the difference in strength between American coffee and European strength coffee. Everyone got a good laugh and she made her point.

Her enthusiasm for science required great dedication and discipline from her part, and often others felt she demanded a similar level of attention and dedication from them. Although the demand for scientific honesty and human decency was a requirement in her deal-

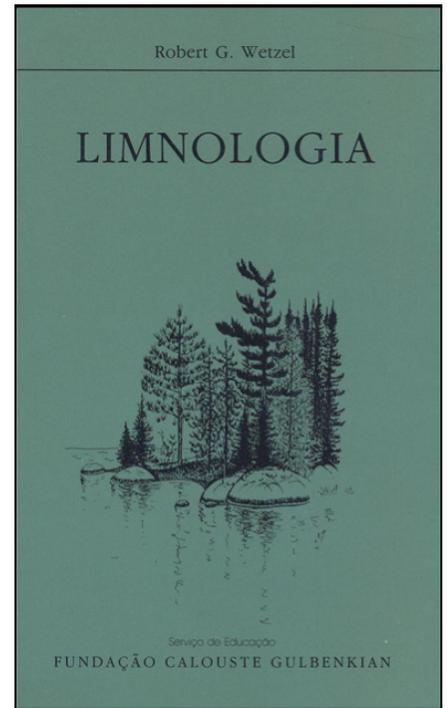
ings with students and co-workers, she was generous with those in need of help, and often brought out the best in them. Allying her drive to help and her characteristic fight against scientific inaccuracy, she recently wrote a book "Scientific Glossary of Limnology" in a small format so that "students may use it in the field or poster sessions in conferences, where often doubts arise and there is nobody to ask" (Boavida, 2011). Considering her prolific career, it is fitting that her last book can be carried in the pocket as a protection against embarrassment and error.

She was a member of several professional associations, and was appointed to several important positions at her home institution - the Faculty of Sciences, University of Lisbon - which included Vice-President of the Scientific Council, general coordinator of the European Programmes Socrates/Erasmus and Leonardo da Vinci, and coordinator of various teaching programmes. Such duties she performed with a very strong commitment until her retirement in August 2011.

She was always very fond of the time spent in collaborating with friends in the scientific community, and considered that the responsibility for the wellbeing of the others and friendship were all important aspects of the human character. Her passing is a great loss for limnology, yet, for those who had the privilege to know her personally, it is the loss of a loyal and generous friend.

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Cover of R.G. Wetzel's "Limnology" translated into Portuguese (*Limnologia*) by M.J. Boavida (Wetzel, 1993).

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*With thanks to Prof. R. T. Heath for his kindness in sharing his thoughts about Zé.*

## **Addendum to Obituary of Boavida**

Zé, or Maria José Lemos Boavida, was known and loved in many places from Beira (Mozambique) where she was born, through Kent (Ohio) where she made her most meaningful discovery on *Daphnia* role in phosphatase production, to Lisbon (Portugal) where she had lived most of her academic life. She shared her life with many people in other places, though. I am only one of many whom Zé had made her friends for life. I met her first as Bob Heath's Ph.D. student at Kent State University (Ohio) in 1981. She became my guide in the world of Portuguese culture and Mozambican geography that led us thorough research projects on Zambezi, Cahora Bassa and Lake Niassa during 1982-83. A few years later, she joined us for a field course on aquatic ecology on the shores of Lake Mikolajskie (Poland). In 1993, I joined her in Lisbon as a Gulbenkian fellow, and we made an intense study on zooplankton and fish of lakes of Estrela Mountains: our



*Zé Boavida (second from right) with me and two other Polish friends flanking us at one of experimental lakes, Mazurian Lake District, Poland, July 1995*

joint paper on the contrasting effects of cyclopoid and fish predation on *Daphnia* clutch size fetching 28 citations to date . We also submitted a joint proposal for research work to the European Commission, which was funded. Zé joined our group in 1995-97

for exacting field studies on the possibility of mediating the effect of planktivorous fish on water quality in lakes by large doses of alarm substance to scare fish away from their zooplankton prey. She mastered some Polish words, but we all preferred her flexibility of often switching between Portuguese, English and French. We shall miss Zé greatly. I am sure others will miss her as much in other places in Africa, North America and Europe, perhaps on other continents as well.

## **References**

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