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President's Report

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It is an exciting time. As I write, International Association of Law Libraries (IALL) members are waiting for the latest news of the process to form the 2007/10 Board of the Association. Early in the year the Secretary announced the candidates proposed by the Nominations Committee and invited further candidates to come forward. The period for this part of the process has just expired. We shall soon learn the final list of candidates and discover if a ballot will be precipitated. Whoever stands and whoever is elected, we should thank all those who have been prepared to be considered. We should also thank the Nominations Committee. It is a demanding task to be tactful, encouraging and persuasive, while adhering to a tight deadline. It is also a challenge to provide recommendations for a balanced team drawn from many countries. We owe our gratitude to Lisbeth Rasmussen, Holger Knudsen and Blair Kauffman for their work for the future of the Association.

It is a great pleasure to announce the recent launch of the IALL's newly re-designed website at <http://www.iall.org/>. The new website was designed by Sasha Skenderija, under the direction of Claire Germain, Cornell University Law Library, and provides a clearer structure, simplified navigation and improved search functions. Petal Kinder, IALL Board member from the High Court of Australia, and the members of the Advisory Committee on Communications carried out a survey of member opinions on the former site and then successfully carried through this major improvement.

The International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) formed a Section of Law Libraries last year following representations by IALL and the American Association of Law Libraries. The first Chair of the Section is our own Immediate Past President, Holger Knudsen. Following the tradition of many years, there will be a session organized by IALL under the auspices of the new Section of Law Libraries, at the IFLA World Congress in Durban in August 2007. Amanda Barratt, IALL Board member from the University of Cape Town Law Library, has organized and will chair a panel session on "Open Access Law, Free Legal Information, Democracy, and Human Rights."

The IALL Annual Course in International Law Librarianship will take place this year from 1st to 5th December 2007 in Mumbai, India under the title, "Global Challenges and the Indian Legal System." I went to Mumbai earlier this year to inspect the arrangements and was both delighted and excited by the plans that have been made. I have met many of the speakers who include judges, senior advocates, a former government minister, and a

Vice-Chancellor of one of the city's universities. We are assured of a high quality program dealing with a range of international legal issues from outsourcing to the environment to international trade. Our hosts will also provide an introduction to aspects of the Indian legal system and its literature and libraries. Even the opening evening promises to be a wonderful event! There will be a traditional 'lighting of the lamp' ceremony, a cultural programme of Indian folk dances, and a buffet dinner. The inauguration of the conference will be presided over by the Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court (it retains the name of Bombay). The conference pages on the IALL website have recently been updated with a wealth of information about the Annual Course; registration will already be under way by the time you read this.

Through its annual conference the Association will again be offering a unique insight into another legal culture which will be educational in the fullest sense but also an experience to be enjoyed among colleagues and friends. The Association aims to assist law librarians to learn and to share their expertise as globalization and the growing interrelationship of legal systems requires all of us to broaden our knowledge and our network of contacts.

The IALL Annual Course is the Association's main educational event but, wherever it is held, it is also a catalyst for change and improvement in the recognition of the role of law librarians and of legal information itself. The most exciting developments in recent years have been initiatives to create new national and regional law library associations. There have already been moves to create an Association of Indian Law Libraries and there are proposals for a certificate course in law librarianship at one of the universities in Mumbai. I am sure the Association will find ways to celebrate and support these initiatives at its conference later in the year.

Finally, I should remind you of the Association's two programmes of financial assistance. There are three IALL Professional Development Bursaries each year which provide financial assistance to law librarians who could not otherwise attend the IALL conference. There is also a new programme of Grants to law librarians undertaking a placement or internship at an overseas law library. Details can be found on the IALL website. Please do recommend them to your contacts around the world. Applicants do not need to be members of the Association already; non-members who are awarded a bursary or grant also receive a free starter membership to IALL. I

should mention that the Local Conference Organiser this year, Mrs. Uma Narayan, Chief Librarian of the Honourable Judges' Library of the High Court in Mumbai, was an IALL scholarship holder in 2004.

Jules Winterton