

REPORT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL OFFICE – 2006 ACTIVITIES

The year 2006 was a year of evolution for IPPS in many areas. After twenty years of service as International Secretary-Treasurer, Dr. John Wott retired from that position. He provided continuity, history, and unwavering dedication to the organization over those twenty years, and his service was recognized during the International Tour in the Scandinavian Region in September. With many IPPS friends on that tour, he was honored at an informal dinner with a special award of appreciation and stories about his adventures as part of the International Board of Directors. During the year, John continued to provide assistance in the transition of the management function, transferring files, inventory of past issues of books and CDs of the *Proceedings*, and other IPPS materials to the new office in Pennsylvania.

The new International Secretary-Treasurer officially began the transition in January of 2006. Patricia E. Heuser heads a team of professionals who now provide contracted management services to IPPS through her company. Pat is known to many among IPPS as the wife of International Editor, Dr. Charles Heuser; but few are aware that she has been involved with horticulture and agriculture as an organizational manager of state, national and international trade groups for more than twenty-five years. Having traveled with Charles for International Board meetings over the years, her familiarity with IPPS made it easy to assume responsibility for the variety of management functions the group requires.

On another level, the International Board granted full regional status to the Southern African Potential Region, effective January 1, 2007. Unfortunately, the Society lost a region – the Scandinavian Region – which voted in September, 2006 to merge with the Region of Great Britain and Ireland as an area of that region.

MEMBERSHIP

The following reflects membership in IPPS for 2006, based on numbers reported by the Regional Secretary-Treasurers midway through the year:

Region	2006 Members	2005 Members	Change
Australia	242	221	+21
Eastern	607	630	-23
Great Britain & Ireland	275	306	-29
Japan	62	60	+2
New Zealand	209	211	-2
Scandinavia	60	85	-25
Southern	351	336	+15
Western	351	360	-9
So. African Potential	76	67	+9
TOTALS	2,233	2,276	-43

COMMUNICATIONS

As part of the transition, the IPPS website was moved and updated. A new database of members was created for each region to maintain, with updated listings on the website every three months. The "Members Only" area of the website includes those regional listings of members as well as a "Message Board" for members to post inquiries and responses.

Regional Secretary-Treasurers rose to the challenge of assisting in the transition of the website database to new Access database files they would control. Over the first half of 2006, working with the new database manager and consultant provided through The Heuser Group, they learned how to use the new database to maintain records and transfer data to the central database housed in Pennsylvania, USA. They will continue to utilize new

features of the database for their regional management over the next few years. Their contributions to the Society, its regional leadership, and its members continue to form the backbone of the organization's structure and strength.

Dr. Charles W. Heuser, Jr., International Editor, mounted three of the four segments of the 50-year index of *Proceedings* – the subject index, the author index, and the contents index – on the IPPS website. The plant index for these volumes is progressing toward mounting on the website in 2007. Dr. Heuser's continued dedication, remarkable knowledge, and persistence in pursuing a high standard of excellence in the publication of the Society's wealth of shared knowledge remains a vital part of the IPPS prestige in today's horticultural world.

INTERNATIONAL BOARD ACTIVITIES

In preparation for the International Board of Directors' meeting in September of 2006, the international office prepared a CD of governance documents for each Officer, Director and Alternate Director, including policies and procedures and information that remains static from year to year. The CD, sent in advance of the International Board Meeting, allowed review before the meeting, and condensed the materials needed to support the meeting itself. For 2007, these reference materials will be available on the website for review and downloading at any time of the year.

Highlights of the International Board of Directors' meeting, presided over by International President Jorgen H. Selchau of the Scandinavian Region, included the following:

- Financial reports and investments performance were reviewed and the overall excellent financial health of IPPS was confirmed.
- Directors were reminded to encourage their members to be sure to report any changes in their personal contact information to their Regional Secretary-Treasurers, so that the website listing of members can be kept up to date. Also encouraged is reporting email addresses so Regional offices can communicate via broadcast emails.
- The use of the Directors Reference Materials CD was discussed, and the International Office will also mount these organizational documents on the IPPS website in the members' area for access by leadership and members as desired.
- Discussion was held on ways to make use of the inventory of past *Proceedings* on CDs and in books, and suggestions will be passed along to Regional offices.
- A Task Force was created to review the Society's operating procedures for the International Office with the change in management systems from one individual to a contracted management firm.
- The group agreed to conduct an orientation session on the next and subsequent tours for directors and alternate directors who are attending the tour and meeting for the first time, to provide them with more information about how the International Board operates.
- A decision was made to reimburse the International Office's management company for funds spent to complete the new database system, beyond the funds previously budgeted for that purpose this year.
- Membership reports were reviewed, noting that overall membership has dropped by 400 members in the past five years – current membership worldwide is 2,233.
- A report on those receiving five-year membership plaques was reviewed, with 95 plaques sent to members in various regions for 2006.

- The report on orders for the production of Volume 55 of the Combined Proceedings was reviewed, with 1,650 books and 700 CDs ordered. Also reviewed were plans to use an international mailing service to provide time-efficient and cost-effective mailing of books and CDs to countries outside the United States. Two-week delivery time is expected.
- With some regions selecting their samples of papers to be posted on the website for this year, we now have three years of sample *Proceedings* papers on the website.
- The 50-year index of the *Combined Proceedings* is posted on the website with the paper titles, authors, and subject indices completed – the plant index is still being prepared.
- Regional Editors in New Zealand, Australia, and Southern Africa were encouraged to post the .pdf files of their papers on their own regional websites.
- Production costs for Volume 56, with no cost increases, as well as page allocations by regions, were reviewed and accepted.
- The declining numbers of papers submitted for publishing was discussed at length, with Directors encouraged to discuss this matter within their regions to identify possible causes and ways in which more papers might be included.
- The Southern African Potential Region was approved for full regional status, effective January 1, 2007.
- The effort to promote IPPS within Continental Europe was reviewed and recognized as ineffective, probably because of cultural differences and the nature of the nursery industry in those countries.
- A potential category of membership for “at-large” members – individuals from countries around the world not associated with a particular region, was discussed. A committee will further discuss this possibility and bring recommendations to the Board.
- Jorgen Selchau of the Scandinavian Region was selected as the Award of Honor recipient for 2006.
- The Finance Committee provided a number of recommendations regarding financial reporting, investments, and bill-paying authority -- all approved by the Board -- and the committee was approved to be a Standing Committee of the Board for the future.
- Work will proceed to produce a promotional CD for regional offices to use. The CD will include templates for a variety of promotional items that the region can personalize for its own use in promoting IPPS and regional events.
- Regions were reminded that the IPPS International website is available for regions to host their regional websites without having to pay for their own websites on an independent server.
- Funds were set aside for the preparation of all the *Proceedings* to be mounted on the ISHS website for horticultural publications, for member searching and paper downloading. This is a major undertaking for the Board, placing the IPPS *Proceedings* in the national limelight as a unique reference resource for ornamental propagation and production information.

- Negotiations will commence on the opportunity for IPPS to have a refereed journal, possibly by assuming responsibility for a journal already being published. The Board will review more information in March of 2007.
- The request for annual funding of \$2,500 for the "Propagation of Ornamental Plants" journal was not approved.
- Southern African Region will host the 2014 International Tour. Scandinavian Region will no longer host tours since that region will merge with the Great Britain & Ireland Region as an area of that region.
- The voting on the constitutional amendment adding a Second Vice President to the Board was reported – the amendment and two others were passed by the collective majority of votes in all regions.
- The budget proposed for 2007 was approved, with an expected excess of revenue over expenses.
- Regions were encouraged to include a page in their regional newsletters for International business, including a message from the International President and other news of international interest.
- A strategic planning session will be scheduled as part of the 2007 International Tour.
- Alternate Directors will be invited to be more active participants in committee work during the International Tour.
- For the 2007 International Tour, Regional Secretary-Treasurers will be encouraged to attend to participate in the planning session and interact with the Directors and Alternate Directors. The International Board will assume responsibility for airfare costs, with regions asked to pay the tour registration costs.
- Election of 2007 officers resulted in the following:
 President – James Gilbert, Southern Region of North America
 Vice President – Terry Hatch, New Zealand Region
 Second Vice President – Peter Bingham, Region of Great Britain & Ireland
 International Secretary-Treasurer – Patricia Heuser
 International Editor – Dr. Charles Heuser

2006 INTERNATIONAL TOUR

The International Board is grateful to the IPPS members in the Scandinavian Region for an exciting, informative, and enjoyable time visiting Sweden, Norway, and Denmark during the 2006 Viking Tour. These are beautiful countries—rugged and lush landscapes, picturesque cities and towns, hard-working people with a history of self-sufficiency, vision, and pride in their families and communities. For those of us from the United States, history takes on a new meaning, with buildings older than our country – still occupied! The feeling one has in Scandinavian countries is simplicity--and ingenuity in design of all things that support human existence. People prosper in integration with nature and the natural environment – buildings and towns blend into the natural environment instead of being in harsh contrast with this old and majestic part of our world.

Thanks to Jørgen Selchau, International President, for enlisting the wonderful help of a number of Regional leaders to plan the tour and assist the group in its travels. Marianne Andersen, Regional President, and Lars Sangaard, Regional Treasurer, were part of the tour group and their knowledge of the areas we traveled through was extremely helpful. Lars Rudin guided us in Sweden from Malmö to Gothenburg, including visits to Splendor Plants in Svanshall and TÖnnersjö Plantskola in Halmstad, the largest tree producer in Sweden. Our route also allowed us to spend time at the Gothenburg Botanical Gardens, one of the

leading botanical gardens in Europe, located in the center of the city so all can enjoy its beauty and environmental importance.

In Norway, our guide met us in the wonderful waterfront village of Dröbak – Inger Hilmersen grew up near this quaint fishing village and led a beautiful evening walking tour of the town and the coastal path, her memories of the town's history adding even more to our visual appreciation. In the Reenskaug Hotel that night, the group paid tribute to the retirement of John Wott as International Secretary-Treasurer, with many of the "old-timers" in the tour group reliving some of the happy times spent with John in his past twenty years of participation on the tours and handling the Society's affairs in the International Office. An appreciation plaque was presented to John, along with many good wishes for a healthy and happy retirement.

Grimsby, an innovative family greenhouse strawberry operation in Hoböl was our morning stop, and we then enjoyed an adventurous trip to the Holmenkollen Park Hotel, high atop the hills overlooking Oslo – site of the winter sports area and magnificent ski jump. Our bus, a two-level beauty, was too tall to maneuver a low bridge on the road to the peak, but our driver, Pia, managed to turn around and the group was treated instead to a ride on the local train to the top of the mountain. Lunch in the Hotel was elegant and delicious, and we could clearly see why this resort was such a popular spot for wedding receptions, parties, winter sports, and summer enjoyment of the surrounding forested area. Then we were off to the harbor in Oslo for an overnight cruise to Denmark.

Arne Andersen was with the tour group from the beginning, but he took over as our Danish guide when we arrived in Copenhagen. The culture of this city is amazing, and we spent a wonderful morning seeing some of the city, with a stop at the Royal Castle and its beautiful fountain gardens. We also spent time at the Louisiana Art Museum, whose grounds alone were worth the visit. A visit to the Danish Wine Center helped us appreciate the entrepreneurial spirit of these people – growing grapes and making wine in a country whose appreciation for fine wine is just emerging. Thanks to a sponsorship from Jørgen Selchau's company, GPL International, the group took time to enjoy Tivoli Gardens in central Copenhagen, including dinner at one of the amusement park's fine and fun restaurants.

The next morning's stop at PlanteRiget helped us appreciate the garden center industry in Denmark – the marketing savvy of the family owners brought a mixture of plant materials and gift items to their customers – again reminding us that it is the enjoyment of plants in a living environment that we are truly "selling." The greenhouse production of lettuce and herb varieties for the consumer marketplace at the nursery, Legro, was an amazing display of greenhouse automation. In the afternoon, we visited with Christensens Planteskole I/S in Fjenneslev where a family business only five years old was still struggling with the challenges of growth with a positive outlook and creative ideas. The crossover from Copenhagen to Odense on the Great Belt Bridge, the second-largest suspension bridge in the world was "awesome" and again reminded us of the engineering expertise that seems so prevalent in these countries.

In the Stige area, the group was again intrigued by the automation and technology used in production at Ex-Plant ApS in Stige and also at Dalina ApS and its collaborative operation, Gartneriet Näldebakken ApS. Robotics and mechanization are replacing the need for large labor forces, an important aspect of profitability in a country with high labor costs and almost negligent unemployment. Ivy production at Multigreen.dk in Fangel also showed how robotics can add significant value to production, with almost "around the clock" automation enhancing human labor where skilled hands and knowledgeable minds can't be replaced.

With the tour's end in Odense, the group was treated to a wonderful dinner and evening enjoyment at an historic location called Holckenhavn Castle -- the newest owner is investing millions of kroners in restoring the castle to its original charm and functionality. We were delighted to be able to appreciate once again the history and continuing cultural contributions of these families in Denmark.

For the next two days, many of the group participated in the Scandinavian Region's conference and enjoyed some time in Odense, birthplace of Hans Christian Andersen, the marvelous writer of fairy tales we all enjoyed as children.

There are no words to fully express the sense of shared excitement, amazement, and companionship these tours provide to the people who come from all over the world with a passion for plants and for IPPS. The group is "seeking and sharing" not only the plant knowledge that still excites them, but also the human bond that keeps the world a smaller place where we can understand and appreciate our varying backgrounds and cultures, and comfortably enjoy all that each of us gives to each other.

Report prepared by:

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