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ANNUAL CIRCULAR 2007

International Association for Theoretical and Applied Limnology

Commentary from the Acting General Secretary...

1 January 2007

Back to the Future

Many SIL members share the impression that SIL has become something of an antique. Antiques often are pleasing aesthetically and evoke pleasant aspects of the past, but may not function very well. Thus, we were urged by General Secretary – Treasurer Wetzel to “evolve or die.” By way of finding solutions, President Likens formed a Futures Committee to assemble a list of possible beneficial changes in SIL.

The entire membership has received and considered the report of the Futures Committee chaired by Brian Moss. President Likens has received comments from the membership and has shared these comments with the Executive Committee. Having done the exciting but hypothetical task of considering the future, we now face the necessity of making some very specific commitments to be implemented by SIL over the next few years. While our decisions will be made at the Montreal Congress, critical thinking about these decisions must occur beforehand, because our time for action at the Congress will be relatively short.

The agenda of the Futures Committee was very broad. I present here four specific issues that stand out for me as critically important from the viewpoint of operations, budget, and general effectiveness of SIL.

Nomenclature. SIL has a confusing nomenclature. The acronym (SIL) is taken from a three-word Latin name for the society. For those of us familiar with the organization, the acronym successfully evokes the organization. When we write out the name and present it outside the organization, we are delivering an unfamiliar noun (limnology) in an unfamiliar language (Latin). Thus the Latin name is of little use, except that it gives us the acronym.

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SIL has two other names, one of which is German and the other English. The German one is a serious mouthful, even for those who speak German. The English name is similarly cumbersome: seven words, mostly polysyllabic, that require one to pay serious attention in order to comprehend.

SIL, like all organizations, must be visible to the outside world in order to remain viable and attractive. The outside world has lost patience with information that is not packaged in small, easily digested bites. We must have a more concise name, and it must be in English.

My current favorite prospect as a name for SIL would be "International Society for Limnology." This would give us the acronym ISL, or we could keep SIL as an acronym even with the new name.

Publishing. Aside from the *SILNews*, the only publication of SIL is the *Proceedings*. The *Archiv* is affiliated with SIL but owned and managed by Schweizerbart'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung (SBV). The *Mitteilungen* issues are too few and irregular to count for much. As recognized by the Futures Committee and many individual members of SIL, the *Proceedings* presents a number of problems. Because it comes out in large lumps at irregular intervals rather than regularly as a journal would, it does not receive the recognition of a journal. Therefore, a perfectly good article in the *Proceedings* is likely not to be cited as much as it would if published in a journal. Also, the *Proceedings* has acquired the image of a dumping ground for papers that might not be publishable elsewhere. By introducing peer review, we have been quite successful at discouraging authors from submitting something that should not be published. Even if we steadily improve the quality of the *Proceedings* through reviewing and editing practices, however, an unfavorable image once acquired is difficult to cast off.

One option for SIL is to transform the *Proceedings* into a journal. A transformation rather than an abrupt break would be desirable because it is the only means by which we can keep our institutional subscribers (mainly libraries), which are a significant source of support for any publishing that we do. Subject to a financial analysis, it would be possible for SIL to publish a journal at regular intervals (probably quarterly at first), and to invite Congress participants to submit sound, significant papers for publication in the journal. The journal certainly would be strengthened by inclusion of the Baldi Lecture and other plenary lectures, which typically are quite impressive and yet not so well recognized as they might be if published in a journal. The journal would also make open solicitations of manuscripts. The journal would include the traditional breadth of content that is favored by SIL, and there would be rejection of some papers based on a fair review process, and a strong editorial hand to keep the papers concise, well constructed, and generally appealing. SIL would own the journal, but would publish it through a commercial publisher such as Schweizerbart'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung (SBV).

Other paths are possible. SBV is willing to make the *Archiv*, which has a long affiliation with SIL but is owned by SBV, an official journal of SIL. SBV would provide an electronic copy of the *Archiv* to all SIL members at a cost to SIL of about \$60,000 per year. As owner of the journal, SBV would retain complete control over its content, format, and other features. For me, the possibility of creative control by SIL and even potentially a revenue source for SIL through publishing is more appealing than the offer from SBV, although it involves more responsibility and more work.

If SIL does have a journal, on its own or through the *Archiv*, submissions to the annual Congresses cannot be published as they are now because the journal will use up the publication budget. *Proceedings* could be typeset and distributed electronically with no paper copies, but even this would be quite costly. The easiest path would be to require members to submit an abstract in camera-ready form, and to make the abstracts available electronically as well as in paper form at the time of the Congress. Thus, articles would not be published by SIL except through submission to the SIL journal, which could publish many but not all articles.

Member Services. The Futures Committee also observed that member services of SIL are weak and irregular. The focus on congresses draws the society toward triennial surges of activity followed by quiescence. This works against the entrainment of young scientists, who seek contact more frequently as they enter the field. It also may lead members to feel detached at times, and to decide against paying their dues.

We cannot have a congress every year or even every other year. A tremendous effort goes into each congress. The burden is borne by hosts, and part of the reward for the hosts is a high international turnout, which makes a very impressive meeting. It would be difficult to find hosts rapidly enough to have congresses more frequently, and more frequent congresses would erode the international attendance at any given congress. Therefore, congresses should remain as they are now.

Congresses could be supplemented by other kinds of meetings. At present, we have the possibility of endorsing other kinds of meetings through our working groups. Some members have very much benefited from working groups, and some of the working groups have done impressive work. For the most part, however, they are active only sporadically and involve only a few members. Something else is needed in addition.

SIL could organize a program of inter-congress meetings, perhaps focusing on one or a few broad topics that would draw the attention of a substantial subset of the membership. This could be set as a goal, but its implementation must involve financial studies. By using

hosts, SIL escapes financial liability for congresses. Other kinds of meetings might not be accomplished through the work of hosts, in which case SIL might need to take some financial risk. Therefore, such a proposition needs to be endorsed in concept and left for specific implementation following financial analysis.

Additional meetings to fill the gaps between congresses and regular service through receipt of a new journal would do much to broaden the benefit package for members, and probably would be more favorable for the attraction and retention of young members.

National Representatives. National Representatives serve as a legislative body for SIL and, in countries with numerous members, the lead representative also collects dues from members. The collection of dues by lead national representatives was essential in decades past because of the difficulties of currency exchange and transmission of money across national boundaries. In most parts of the world, these difficulties now have passed. The work of the lead national representatives can be made less onerous, and SIL can receive its dues money more quickly and efficiently, if SIL will adopt a new policy of allowing all members to pay their dues directly to SIL. Members who wish to pay through a national representative on a voluntary basis may be allowed to do so, but it need not be required.

Other kinds of reforms that were brought to our attention by the Futures Committee are not dealt with here. The four reforms described above are most important from the viewpoint of the general secretary – treasurer’s office, as they relate to visibility, SIL services to members, and financial transactions. I would be glad to receive opinions of members on these issues, as would any member of the executive committee.



William M. Lewis, Jr.
Acting General Secretary – Treasurer

VISIT THE SIL WEBSITE

SIL has a home page located at:

www.limnology.org

Information is available on membership, publications, national representatives, committees, awards, and statutes, as well as links to other sites. In addition, we have initiated a placement service for job offerings. Visit often, as information is updated regularly by SIL webmaster Gordon Goldsborough, University of Manitoba.

Montreal SIL Congress

Dear Colleagues,

Only nine months left before the opening ceremony of the Montreal SIL Congress! For many of us, SIL congresses are akin to the Olympics: a pilgrimage we do every three years with a feeling of excitement for exploring a new location, of anticipation of meeting old friends again and making new ones, and foremost, of learning something new. In my own experience, congresses are good when you leave them with a sense of having gotten a little closer to being the scholar you strive to be but never have time to fulfill! It is with this concept in mind that we have developed and articulated both the scientific and social activities of the Montreal meeting, which, due to unprecedented collaboration with other scientific societies, will most likely be the largest ever.

Obviously, preparations for such a large meeting are, at this stage, well underway. The Montreal congress will be held at the Palais des Congrès, a modern convention facility located in the heart of downtown, and we have also secured sleeping rooms in several nearby hotels. All congress scientific activities will take place on a single floor, in adjacent rooms. Furthermore, offsite social events will make you discover our Montreal.

Last Spring’s Call for Special Sessions generated a large number of proposals that have led to an impressive final list of over 70 sessions, covering the entire spectrum of limnological research and its applications. We have striven to innovate and include new

features in our SIL congress. It will be a “green” congress, whereby a carbon preventive approach will be implemented (more carbon stored than emitted, including that generated by your travels). A new lunchtime panel format, called the *WaterWorks* forum, will bring together researchers, end-users and policy makers to discuss, in a more direct way, the services that limnological knowledge and expertise can offer to our economy and to society in general. We also took special care to design activities aiming to better integrate the next generation of researchers.

We are pleased to announce that we have been open for on-line registration and abstract submission since mid-October. I urge you to visit our website www.sil2007.org to learn about our plenary speakers, our session topics, and all our other scientific and not-so-scientific activities (including my personal favorite, the *Limnology Symphony Orchestra*). It is my sincere hope that the Montreal Congress will contribute in bringing to light significant scientific advances, and to foster a community of scientists sharing the common goal of understanding and preserving arguably the most precious resource of our planet.

I look forward to seeing you in Montréal next August.



Yves Prairie
Chair, Local Organizing Committee
SIL 2007

NOTES REGARDING THE 30th CONGRESS IN CANADA:

AWARDS AND HONORS

The Baldi Memorial Lecturer for the 30th Congress in Canada will be **Dr. Michio Kumagai**, Director of the Lake Biwa Research Institute, Otsu, Shiga, Japan.

The Kilham Memorial Lecturer for the 30th Congress will be presented by **Dr. Kevin Rogers** of the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa.

SIL 2013: PROPOSALS NEEDED

At the upcoming congress in Montreal, the national representatives should decide upon a venue for the 2013 SIL Congress. If SIL members have recommendations or want to make inquiries leading potentially to a proposal for sponsorship of a congress, they are urged to contact the SIL Acting General Secretary – Treasurer.

PUBLICATIONS

PROCEEDINGS VOLUME 29 (Lahti, Finland):

SIL Volume 29 has been published by Schweizerbart.

Members in good standing should have received their copies.

Members who send their dues to a national representative do not receive the publications until the dues have been sent to the

SIL administrative office by the national representative. The

CD for Volume 29 is released after all papers belonging to Volume 29 have been prepared for publication. If you have questions about the delivery of your copies of Volume 29, contact the SIL administrative assistant at the address shown on page six of this circular.

SIL members owe much gratitude to Professor Jack Jones of the University of Missouri for his extensive editorial work. We also congratulate Schweizerbart for upgrading the cover for Volume 29.

CORRECT ADDRESSES

Please verify your name and address given on the address label of this circular. SIL cannot be responsible for loss of publications because of unreported changes of address.

SPONSOR A MEMBER

Some members have generously contributed sufficient funds to sponsor a researcher or student of limnology from countries from which it is difficult to pay our modest membership fee. Contact the General Secretary-Treasurer for details.

Alternatively, we urge you to contribute to either of our two Endowment Funds.

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THEORETICAL AND APPLIED LIMNOLOGY

The following countries or regions pay dues of \$50.00 (Regular Members) and \$100.00 (Institutional Members) in U.S. Dollars, by check drawn on an international bank in the USA that is recognized by the Federal Reserve System, or by major credit card (Visa or MasterCard):

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Members in the following countries send their subscriptions to the National Representatives at the rates indicated:

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- LIFE MEMBER** Individuals who make major financial contributions to SIL. The minimum contribution for this category of membership consists of 70 times the prevailing dues. These contributions will be placed in a special endowment fund intended to help young limnologists attend congresses and other meetings sponsored by SIL.

Emeritus membership categories are also available to long-term members of SIL. Contact the General Secretary-Treasurer for details.

PUBLICATIONS

The *Proceedings (Verhandlungen)* consists of volumes of scientific papers delivered at the triennial congresses of SIL. Irregular *Communications (Mitteilungen)* consists of critical analyses of methods and other topical subjects and are published as finances of SIL permit. Payment of annual membership dues is required whether publications are received in one particular year or not. *Proceedings* and *Communications* are issued to all members who are in good standing for the entire triennium during which the publications were produced. Back issues of SIL publications are available for purchase; contact the General Secretary for details. Beginning with *Proceedings* 27, publications are available in printed form or on CD-ROM; please indicate your choice below:

- Printed CD-ROM Both printed & CD-ROM (\$25 Advance payment required; \$30 if by VISA or MasterCard)

In addition, individual members of SIL can obtain the *Archiv für Hydrobiologie* publication series at a 20% price reduction through the Acting General Secretary.

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Exchange rates are established each November 1st for the following calendar year. Payments may be made to the General Secretary-Treasurer, or in certain countries to cooperating National Representatives (see attached sheet for current rates as issued with each Annual Circular in January).

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