

Report of the Secretary-General

International Union for the Study of Social Insects

Covering the period September 1, 2006 – July 15, 2010

Joan M. Herbers

Preface: The most recent four years have encompassed an unusually large number of changes in the way our organization has worked and in how it is projected to operate in the coming years. All of the changes were undertaken in full consultation with President Koos Boomsma and Editor Johan Billen, and many have been shared with Sections. We three have operated as an Executive Committee, with the result that the 2010 Business Meetings have substantial issues for consultation and decisions.

I. Subscriptions to *Insectes Sociaux*

Early in my appointment as Secretary-General, I questioned our practice of having the IUSSI be the intermediary between members and the Publisher to order subscriptions. Many problems arose from this arrangement, including subscription orders for which I never received payment, problems in subscription delivery, and the like. The result was that the Union was in financial jeopardy; with the approval of Boomsma and Billen, I worked with Birkhäuser Verlag (now Springer-Basel) to change over to direct individual subscriptions. That move, completed for the 2008 subscription year, resulted in a dramatic reduction in individual subscriptions (cf Editor's Report), but also alleviated financial stress on the Union itself. Members continued to have concerns about the way the new system was implemented, and we are working with Springer-Basel to improve that service.

II. Union Self-governance

The Executive Committee realized that our existing document needed extensive revision. In addition to some provisions being out of date, our statutes no longer gave officers sufficient direction on how to conduct some aspects of Union business (for example, signing a contract with the Publisher). As a result, we drafted an extensive revision and circulated the draft to sections for comments and suggested changes. The resulting document incorporates suggestions from our Sections, and is now ready for final discussion, amendment, and adoption at the 2010 Congress.

III. Standing of Sections

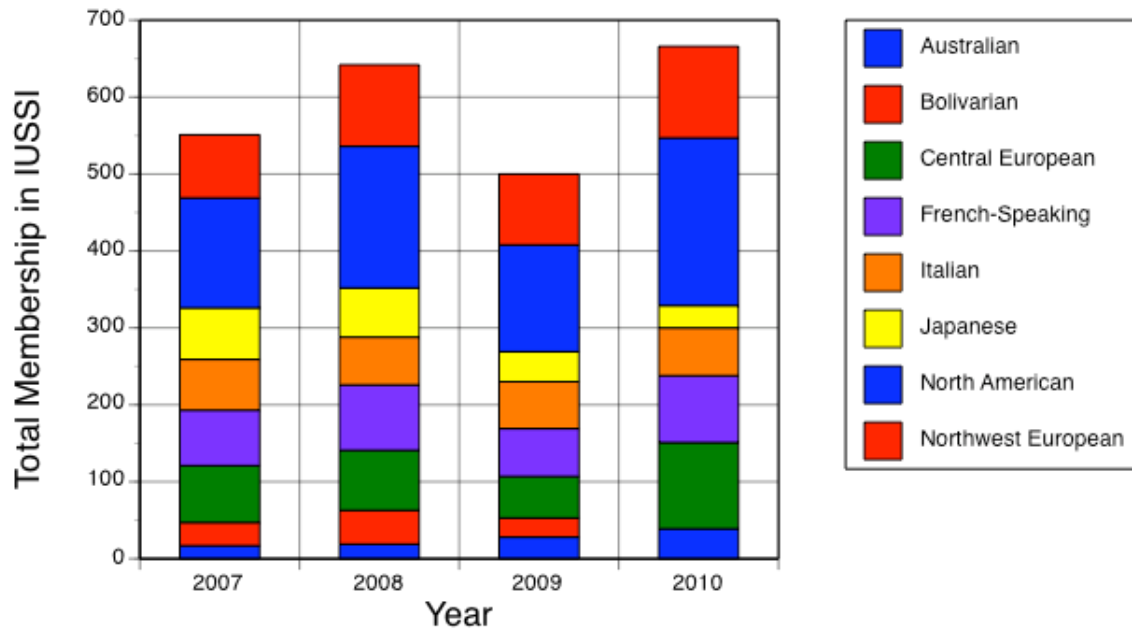
Our existing statutes list the following sections, which I have annotated to indicate current status:

Australian	good standing
Bolivarian	good standing
British (to be renamed Northwest European)	good standing
Central European	good standing
French-speaking	good standing
Italian	good standing
Japanese	good standing
North American	good standing
African	no information
Brazilian	no information
Chinese	no information
Indian	no information
Mexican	no information
Russian	no information

IV. Membership

Membership is reported annually to my office, and I then invoice sections for capitation fees; these fees have held steady at \$10 per regular member and \$5 per student member for several years. Listed below are the data for individual sections, identified as regular members + student members

Section	2007 Membership	2008 Membership	2009 Membership	2010 Membership
Australian	14 + 3	15 + 4	18 + 10	28 + 11
Bolivarian	30 + 0	26 + 18	25 + 0	
Central European	58 + 16	57 + 21	42 + 12	55 + 57
French- speaking	55 + 17	55 + 30	46 + 16	62 + 25
Italian	66 + 0	36 + 26	32 + 29	25 + 37
Japanese	65 + 2	62 + 2	39 + 0	26 + 3
North American	121 + 22	117 + 67	109 + 30	137 + 81
Northwest European	64 + 18	72 + 34	51 + 41	55 + 64



Our total membership fluctuates from year to year, as a function of changing section memberships.

Our current Statutes stipulate that representation at the International Committee be apportioned as follows:

Article 5. The International Committee will be composed of the Officers of the Union and of representatives from Sections, there being one representative for each Section of up to 30 members, two representatives for each Section of 31-60 members, and so on.

Therefore we invite sections to send representatives to the International Committee as follows:

Section	Delegates
Australian	2
Bolivarian	1*
Central European	4
French-speaking	3
Italian	3
Japanese	1
North American	7
Northwest European	5

* I have no data on current membership, nor have I received capitation fees for 2010 yet.

V. Publication of Insectes Sociaux

Our journal was published from its inception through 1991 by Masson, a French publishing house. We moved to Birkhäuser-Verlag then and continue to work with that company. Birkhäuser-Verlag was bought in 2007 by Springer and is now known as Springer-Basel.

Early in my time as Secretary-General, the Executive Committee realized we were conducting business with Birkhäuser under a contract that had not been examined since 1991. Accordingly, we negotiated a new three-year contract, which we signed in 2007. That contract expires in December 2010. The new contract includes a clause obligating us to give them one year's notice if we wished to terminate the arrangement; in the absence of such warning, the contract would renew automatically.

Accumulating dissatisfaction reported by our members, as well as difficulties experienced by the Editorial Board when Birkhäuser was bought by Springer, motivated us to examine the possibility of changing Publishers again. That process, initiated nearly two years ago, resulted in a very strong offer from a competing publisher, and we notified Springer-Basel in December 2009 that we did not intend to renew the contract.

We were surprised to receive a counter-offer from Springer-Basel in spring of 2010; their counter-offer was very similar to the contract we were negotiating with the other Publisher. It corrected many of the issues that we found problematic, and also included a very strong financial incentive to remain with Springer-Basel. After considerable discussion, the Executive Committee has decided to remain with Springer-Basel. Details of the contract are not yet finalized, and we hope to be able to announce its most important features to the International Committee and General Assembly in Copenhagen.

V. Union Finances

When I received the Union funds from my predecessor, I was surprised to learn that the Union was operating at a deficit. That deficit can be traced directly to the cumbersome and error-prone arrangement of handling member subscriptions.

It became important to change our financial model. To that end, we moved to direct subscriptions for individuals, eliminating the Union as a fiscal agent. Even so, we remained with a substantial deficit. To generate additional revenue and bring our finances into a healthy state, the Executive Committee developed a proposal for page charges for our journal. That proposal was circulated to sections in 2007, and generated very negative reactions. Sections were supportive of finding additional revenue, but did not support page charges as the best mechanism. Accordingly, we abandoned the idea of page charges, and instead have slowly worked to eliminate our deficit.

We are committed to complete transparency of our financial situation, and I communicated regularly with sections via a quarterly newsletter and an annual report (also published in our journal). In addition, President Koos Boomsma and Editor Johan Billen have periodically examined the books to ensure our membership that I was discharging my responsibilities appropriately.

At present, the sole source of income to the Union is capitation fees. Sections have been extremely cooperative with my annual requests for those fees, with the result that the Union now is in excellent financial health:

July 15, 2010 financial statement	
ASSETS	
Savings account	\$20,054.89
Checking account	<u>\$1,539.05</u>
Total	\$21,593.94
LIABILITIES	
Hamilton Award	\$1,200.00
Support for Secretary-General office	<u>\$300.00</u>
Total	\$1,500.00
NET ASSETS	\$20,093.94

We anticipate that the new contract with Springer-Basel will include a revenue-sharing provision that will earn our Union substantial funds, starting in 2011. Therefore we need to develop a plan for how to use those earnings. The proposed Constitution has stipulated that we appoint a subcommittee of the International Committee to oversee the Union's financial situation, and to make recommendations on expenditures of Union resources. Furthermore, the new Constitution refers to "Union fees" instead of "capitation fees", in order to provide greater flexibility in how we work with sections.

VI. Hamilton Award

Starting in 2006, our Union bestows the Hamilton Award at its Congress to a senior scientist who has influenced many colleagues and students. The inaugural recipient of the Hamilton Award was Ross Crozier.

In June 2010, I convened a committee of 8 Section Presidents to develop the process for identifying the Hamilton Awardees this year. We solicited nominations from sections, and a very strong slate of candidates was presented. The Presidents voted on that slate, and we are proud to honor Dr. Charles D. Michener with the 2010 Hamilton Award. Dr. Michener will receive a plaque and honorarium of \$1000.