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International Association of Law Libraries
IJLI Editorial Office
P.O. Box 5709
Washington, D.C. 20016-1309, USA
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Mark.engsberg@yale.edu

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

This issue of the journal contains, as usual, the features you all have come to expect: reports, articles, *Book Reviews*, edited by **Thomas Mills**, and the *International Calendar*, edited by **Lyonette Louis-Jacques**. We have unfortunately chosen to include another piece in this issue: I say “unfortunately” merely because the piece in question is a memorial dedicated to **Lesley Wilkins**, who sadly passed away this year. The IJLI does not regularly publish memorials or testimonials, but Lesley’s is a special case. Lesley Wilkins was a friend and colleague of many law librarians around the world. Her passing will be felt keenly by the whole law library community, and foreign, comparative, and international librarians in particular. The memorial piece for Lesley is largely a collaborative effort of her many friends and colleagues, though its principal authors are **Annette Demers** and **Pete Wilkins**.

It may seem unhappily sobering to lead off an issue of the IJLI with a memorial, though as you read the comments in the article about Lesley you will be reminded of the joy she brought to her work and to those whose lives she touched. Perhaps you will be inspired – as I was – to work harder to live up to the personal and professional example she has set. As a librarian whose career was dedicated particularly to bridging gaps between cultures, leading off this issue with a remembrance of Lesley Wilkins is perhaps a most appropriate introduction to this year’s proceedings issue after all.

Each year, the *IALL Annual Course on International Law* seems to get better and better. The most recent *Annual Course*, IALL’s 25th, was held in St. Petersburg and Moscow, Russia. It fully met the growing expectations for excellent programming, delightful social events, fascinating venues, and overall first rate organization. With this Russian event, the bar appears to have been raised once again for future conferences.

The Russian program charted new territory for the IALL, as well as for our Russian colleagues. It was the first international conference on law librarianship to be held in Russia, and helped mark the establishment of Russia’s new **Russian Association of Law Libraries**. Of course, there were significant hurdles for planners and conference delegates alike, including language and cultural differences, and venues in two major cities located across a huge distance. Even so, the local planning committee and IALL Board liaisons worked diligently to produce a truly remarkable conference. Translators assisted our Russian hosts and conference delegates to bridge language barriers, and transportation and other logistics were meticulously planned. As a result, the entire conference proceeded smoothly, and the

overwhelming consensus among all who attended was that it was very well done.

The final published program for the Russian conference leads off the proceedings. It helps illustrate the varied social and intellectual activities organized for conference delegates. Furthermore, the conference website contains more complete information about the IALL *Annual Course* held in Russia. It can be found at: <http://www.iall.org/iall2006/iall2006/index.htm>.

A quick look at the table of contents reveals that this proceedings issue contains fewer conference papers compared to previous proceedings issues. There are a number of reasons for that, but chief among those is the problem of obtaining English translations of programs authored and presented in Russian. Translation at the conference itself was not a problem as there was simultaneous *oral* translation into English for those conference speakers who presented their comments in Russian (which was the majority of the speakers). Obtaining suitable English translations for Russian *texts*, however, proved to be prohibitively expensive and logistically difficult. Working closely with IALL President **Jules Winterton** and with members of Russia's local planning committee, we obtained for publication in the *International Journal of Legal Information* the English version texts of four conference papers. The four papers are representative of the themes of the three substantive sessions at the conference:

- *Constitutional Law and the Developments of Federalism*; (paper by **Sergey D. Knyazev**);
- *Legal Education: the Problem of Unity and Differentiation Bologna process*; (paper by **Anatoly Kapustin**), and
- *The Legal System of Russia in Contemporary Stage*, (papers by **Sergey A. Belov**, and **Valeriy A. Musin**).

All four authors provide much enlightenment in various issues of Russia's contemporary legal system.

Translating Russian into English is not always easy. As with almost any language translation, there are some concepts or expressions that simply do not translate well. In cases where I encountered such issues with the translations provided by our Russian colleagues, I have done my best to edit the papers with as light a touch as possible. At the same time, I have attempted to most closely preserve the substance – if not the exact expression – provided by the authors.

Each *Annual Course* is marvelous in its own way, but the IJLI's proceedings issues can merely provide a partial representation of these events. We do our best to describe conferences, but there is nothing like experiencing the real thing. If it is at all possible, I urge you to attend an IALL *Annual Course*. If you go, you'll know! This year's course will be in Mumbai, India;

next year it will be in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and the following conference will be in Istanbul, Turkey. What fabulous venues! Make plans, save, and work to convince your employer of the excellence of these intellectual and professional networking events. It might sound somewhat time-worn, but there is great truth in the saying, “where there’s a will there’s a way.”

So, having sketched the varied landscape of this issue of the IJLI, and done my best to encourage you to attend an IALL conference, I now step aside and allow you to sample the riches within. Before adding the final punctuation to this introduction, however, I invite you once again to phone or email me with ideas for articles, with drafts or manuscripts of articles you have already produced, books you would like to see reviewed, events to add to the International Calendar, or questions large and small about the IJLI or IALL. Thanks, and I hope to see you at an IALL *Annual Course* soon!

*Mark Engsberg, Editor
International Journal of Legal Information
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Yale Law School*