

**REPORT OF TELECONFERENCE CALL WITH
ITC PRESIDENT HILARY BROWN
SATURDAY, MARCH 15, 2003
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA
HOSTED BY ST. JOHN'S AGAPE COMMUNICATORS ITC,
COUNCIL 1, HEART OF AMERICA REGION**

Audio and video cassettes are available by contacting George VanSickles at nikki@indy.net

On Saturday, March 15, 2003, in coordination with the 9th anniversary of the chartering of St. John's Agape Communicators ITC club, a special conference call with ITC President, Hilary Brown, was arranged by St. John's Agape member, George Van Sickles. President Brown had been invited to Indianapolis following the ITC Board meeting in Anaheim. Members from all parts of the world were invited to take part in the call to ask questions of our international president, following the recent board meeting.

Dignitaries in attendance:

June Klyomoto; Executive Director, Asian American Coalition
Sydney Taylor; Board Member, Greater Indianapolis Branch NAACP
Suzette Foster; Community Facilitator, POLIS Center
Edward Wills; Communications, United Way of Central Indiana
Joseph Matthews; Executive Director, OIC Indiana
Charles Roseburgh; Board Member, UNECDC United North East Community Development Corporation
Rozelle Boyd; Minority Leader, Indianapolis City County Council
Mary Tandy; Publisher, Indiana Herald Newspaper
Paul Williams; Indianapolis Convention Bureau
ITC President, Hilary Brown A.C.
ITC Parliamentarian, Mary Remson S.C.
Blue Ridge Region President, Lawrence Williams
Great Lakes Region President, Joyce Wall
Heart of America Region President, Irvin Walker S.C.
Blue Ridge Region President-Elect, Raymona Robinson
Heart of America Region President-Elect, Gloria Z. Wood
Lewis and Clark Region President-Elect, Christine Janda

Greetings and Regrets:

Frank O'Bannon; Governor of Indiana
Bart Peterson; Mayor, City of Indianapolis
Carl Drummer; Center Township Trustee
Glenda Shireman; International Division, Union Planters Bank
Reverend Phillip L. Shobe; Pastor, Saint John's Missionary Baptist Church
Kevin McKinney; Publisher, NUVO Newspaper
Thomas Popcheff; Director Organization Services, Sigma Theta Tau
Victoria Scott; Deputy Mayor, City of Indianapolis
Cherish Pyror; Business Advocacy, Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce

Jeb Conrad; Vice President, Indy Partnership
Caterina Blitzer; Executive Director, International Center of Indianapolis
Ivan Schuman; Executive Director, Indianapolis Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

International Training in Communication Teleconference Transcript 15 March 2003

Teleconference to start at 4:15 p.m. EST (Indianapolis time)

Hilary Brown, International President ITC - Chair
Jane Gollmer, Past International President - Facilitator
Mary Remson - International Parliamentarian

Members participating in teleconference call:

1. **“BRR”** Blue Ridge Region members - Una Slack, Jackie Washington, Hattie Small
2. **“LOLR”** Land O’Lakes Region member - Jean Eckman
3. **“PNWR”** Pacific Northwest Region, Council 6 members - Vivian Guthrie, Irm Matthes, Susan Wood, Doris Ginther, Audrey Pope, Irene Laidley
4. **“EDITH”** Edith Rohan, Blue Flame Club, Southwest Region, El Paso, Texas
5. **“COUNCIL 3”** Council 3, Heart of America Region - Jessie Ivy, Sally Ivy, Patricia Swanson, Janet Leman
6. **“GEORGE”** George Van Sickles and Assembly at Julia Carson Government Center

Jane Gollmer outlined the procedure for the conference call and the order of questioning. One hour would be devoted to the callers’ questions and answers, twenty minutes to the questions emailed by members, and the final twenty minutes to the questions of the assembly. President Brown was welcomed and invited to give her opening remarks.

Hilary Brown’s Opening Remarks:

Some of you may or may not realize that Australia has had a dialogue going about seceding from ITC. Two days ago, we received word that Australia Region held a vote to secede from ITC, but they have overwhelmingly voted to remain with ITC. This was very heartening to ITC Board and ITC.

Our greatest problem is that our membership has been steadily declining at a rate of 7% a year. That means that there has been less operating funds available. In our heyday, investments gave us lots of revenue. But with the drop in the stock market, we lost \$120,000 in investment interest alone this year, plus loss in membership dues. Drastic measures had to be taken.

At this board meeting, we decided we could afford two part-time employees on reduced hours.

At the October board meeting we had 2 hours intensive financial advise from our financial consultant. The board voted to sell the building. The consultant agreed that there was no other

option. We need more funds or will survive previous predicted time. Everyone has an emotional attachment to building. We had to be financially responsible. There were no other options. It made me look back at old Communicator magazines when the Executive Director said we were in dire straits and would not survive without more members. We are four years past the time Muriel predicted we would not survive.

The auditor also attended the board meeting and did not add any comments to the financial report. They commended the Board in another 17% in savings on expenditures after 18% under Irene's leadership. They were surprised that we were able to have even more savings.

The bylaws had to be ignored and we had to supply two copies instead of four publications. We had to make some hard decisions. The auditors could see if we had not made the decision to sell the building, they would be advising us we had to do that.

JANE

I am sure that gives the members a lot of reassurance that the Board is doing everything they can. Hilary, I am going to ask you to answer two questions that I asked all the callers and many other members to answer.

1. What do you personally think is the greatest concern of the members? Dues, membership services, ITC image, internationalism, other?

HILARY

The 70-80 emails say that the cost of dues is of greatest concern to the members. The dues increase caused great concern. But membership services is also a great concern. It would be second.

JANE

2. How do you feel that closing/moving ITC Headquarters will impact the members?

HILARY

Some will be devastated, some think it will be great advantage. They shouldn't be hung up on a building, but there is some emotional attachment to the building. However, there was no option but to sell. ITC is not a building but members and we should be able to function anywhere. We will survive.

JANE

And from your previous comments, you feel that there was no other option so that is just the way it is. Let's go to the phones now and see what the callers have to say.

PNWR do you have a question for Hilary?

PNWR

We have been told that the issue of our Articles of Incorporation stating that the corporation is to be located in the County of Orange has been referred to legal counsel.

Part 1 of our question is: what were we advised legally and part 2 is: that if yes, it is legal to amend the article in order to move ITC Headquarters out of California, what vote is required to amend this article at convention and what will happen if the members are unhappy about it and it is defeated?

HILARY

I will let Mary Remson answer that question.

MARY

Part 1: The State of California does not require ITC Headquarters to remain in California. Our lawyers told us that this type of Article is not typically seen in Articles of Incorporation and they could not understand why it was in our bylaws.

It is our intention to submit an amendment to this article that changes it to state “location to be determined by the ITC Board”. This will not jeopardize our nonprofit status.

Incorporation Code indicates Headquarters could go anywhere within the USA or offshore.

Part 2: Amendment of the article requires 2/3 vote of the registered delegates at convention. The ITC Board implores the members to vote for this. If it is defeated, ITC Headquarters will have to remain in California.

JANE

Thank you, Mary. BRR, do you have a question?

BRR

Could we consider stepping out of the box and reinventing ourselves as an accredited college or university? We could then be known as International Training in Communication College or University. We could build on our 65 plus years of training history and move forward and upward.

Could we offer certification for trainers through recognized colleges and universities and have training modules to be endorsed by different universities?

HILARY

I wish Wilna was here to tell you about what she is looking into. If you read your ITC Communicator, you will see she is doing a workshop in Durban that tells you how to do exactly this. She is looking into establishing our training programs with universities in different parts of the world. I know she is approaching Harvard in the USA and I forget which one in England but they are all universities that we would be proud to be affiliated with.

JANE

George, I know you are looking into something similar, would you like to add anything?

GEORGE

I agree with Ms Slack that this is the way we need to go. Accreditation with educational institutions has been attempted in the past but we need to continue to pursue it.

I have already approached educational institutions other than universities with whom we may be able to establish accreditation. I have talked to some of our fine universities in Indiana and discovered our program must fall within the realm of their mission statements in order to qualify. We must search for other resources.

We have a fine existing accreditation program but we need to pursue accreditation programs to suit entry level people seeking accreditation within their fields to satisfy their employers, their vocation or trade. And what about the many people who are interested in retraining? This kind of thinking is a necessity.

And then there is the great Internet. I am always getting pop-ups on the Internet offering me courses and degrees from all kinds of educational institutions. With our existing educational features and our 65 years of history, we have a lot to bring to the table and can do the same thing.

JANE

I am sure everyone is delighted to hear about this.

Any more comments on the present question? If not, Edith, do you have a question?

EDITH

When I left convention last year, I was of the understanding that we had enough funds to run the organization for two more years. What happened?

HILARY

There was a further downturn of the Market and we lost money on our shares. Our assets included the building so with the sale of the building, we have enough money to last one more year. We need radical changes, membership drives, and more money coming in. We had to sell the building to survive for one more year

JANE

Any further questions on this issue?

JEAN

I am really at a loss to understand why the board did not receive financial advice to put the money in safer investments. Even a money market account would have been safer.

HILARY

As a board must take the advice of our financial advisors, they took the advice they were given. We are not share experts so we followed the advise of the people we employ.

JANE

Any other questions about this? Jean, you were next on my agenda to ask Hilary a question.

JEAN

All I can say is that I did not follow the advice of my financial advisor and put my money into money market accounts so I am probably better off than a lot of people.

My question is on the consideration of the lower costs per member and higher level of services that can be achieved by switching over to a management company rather than having office staff. Specifically looking into streamlining efforts by inquiring into a management firm.

I had assurances from two international president, including Hilary, that this would be investigated. My question is, was this done?

HILARY

Yes, Jean, we did look into it and made the decision to let out the contract. We are not paying for any building costs. It is not up to ITC to pay it. We will be paying a one off price for all services contracted.

JEAN, BRR, AND PNWR

Sorry, I am not understanding what you are talking about.

For instance, there is an international management association in New York that gives advice over the Internet. You fill out a form stating your needs and they give advice from all over the world, based on your parameters. Have you looked into this?

HILARY

No, Jean

JEAN

Are you planning to look into it?

HILARY

No, Jean

JEAN

May we know why not?

HILARY

I believe we have gone too far down the line already and it would mislead the members if we didn't accept bids.

If we found that there is not a much better deal for the members to have better membership services at a lower rate then maybe we would have to investigate this. I believe we should not let the contractors in.

JEAN

I do not have a clue what I am hearing. I don't know what the term "contractors" means. It appears that some course of action has already been taken.

JANE

Hilary, when you speak of “contractors”, are you referring to the proposals that will be submitted to host ITC Headquarters?

HILARY

We are looking at bids from a variety of members from five different countries. Sorry, we haven't received any bids yet. Bids close March 31st. If we don't get any, we will have to go down another road but I am assured that we will get at least one. There should be two more than that one.

JEAN

I'm hearing that rather than the board doing it themselves or striking a committee to do it, they requested that any members or group of members put together a bid.

HILARY

Yes, after long discussion.

JANE

Is everyone satisfied with that answer? Are there any other questions on this issue?

PNWR

If the bid does not indicate sufficient savings, you indicate that the board will consider an outside management firm.

What kind of savings are you looking at?

HILARY

Enough to stop operating on a deficit budget.

PNWR

Can you expand on that? Is it a dues reduction or operating budget? What percentage are you looking at – 30, 40, 50 %?

HILARY

I can't answer that. I have to go away and sit down and work it out. I didn't bring it to the table.

JANE

PNWR, do you have another question?

PNWR

Dues, the big issue. Our council submitted bylaw amendments. What is the board's strategy on dues? The organization is in such financial stress. Are you planning to sustain \$65.00, support dues reduction, what is your strategy?

HILARY

I think I answered this in the previous question. We believe by contracting bids, dues would be reduced. It is really apparent that we realize lots of members will struggle to remain members if dues are \$65.00. In particular, members outside of North America will lose lots of members.

There is no strategy, it is not up to the board to have a strategy on dues.

There is a bylaw proposal to Rescind the proviso not to hold dues to \$65.00.

There are a variety of dues proposals from lowering to raising them to \$80.00 so there will be lots of debate.

If there is a bid that reduces dues, we would be foolish not to accept it.

JANE

Is everyone satisfied with that answer? Blue Ridge, what is your next question?

BRR

Why could we not rent the building instead of selling it?

HILARY

We need far more money than we would get by renting the building.

We have a \$150,000 line of credit that needs to be paid off immediately.

We need \$300,000 to operate for the year.

We have \$65,000 in the Endowment cash account and a total of \$102,000 cash altogether.

Rent will not bring in enough funds to pay off everything.

JANE

Welcome Council 3, Heart of America Region. Blue Ridge, what is your next question?

BRR

The magazine should be on the newsstand. Members could come up with lots of ideas.

HILARY

I will take it up with the editor.

EDITH

Checking around about dues, most members would pay the \$65.00. Many are on fixed incomes but would pay it if necessary.

Membership Services has been deteriorating greatly the past three years. Orders emailed must be followed up by a phone call. We try hard to get new members, money goes to Headquarters, nothing is sent, after weeks a phone call is necessary. It is very discouraging for new members.

HILARY

This is the first time I have heard of this. I can't do anything if don't know about it. You should go to your Division Vice President to get satisfaction

JANE

Council 3 – What do you think is the greatest concern of the members?

COUNCIL 3

High cost of dues is a concern but mostly, it is member recruitment. We had a membership drive a few weeks ago but didn't get any members. Our council is aging. We need guidance on getting new members.

JANE

Do you think there will be any impact due to the ITC headquarters move?

COUNCIL 3

We were very upset at the sale of the ITC Headquarters building, it was a source of a lot of pride. But there won't be any impact on moving unless costs are higher.

PNWR

What is the date for making decision on the new Headquarters' site?

HILARY

We hope to make it by the middle to end of April. It depends on the variety (of proposals) and what we have to compare.

PNWR

There is some concern that because Australia had so much longer to prepare their bid than anyone else that other bids won't be given the same attention.

HILARY

No bids have been received yet. In fact, the Australian bid has not even been received. It is actually a feasibility study to determine whether we actually could move ITC Headquarters. It is being used as a benchmark for the other bids.

They got the Job Description at the same time as everyone else so they actually have the same amount of time.

JANE

Blue Ridge, your question?

BRR

We have a wealth of training materials available. Will the training modules be updated and a curriculum written for universities for Wilna's project?

HILARY

I won't tread on Wilna's patch. I have given you a taste of what's to come. I told you about it based on what you recommend here. I don't want to steal her thunder. She will launch this very exciting project at convention.

BRR

Thank you.

EDITH

I have a question about the Communicator. It is produced on very heavy paper, which is costly, plus the cost of the mailing is increased due to the weight. In prior years, it was printed on good paper, less costly, and we received six copies, reduced to four and then two copies. It was very informative and we looked forward to each issue. That was the only contact they had with ITC Headquarters.

HILARY

Are you telling me now it isn't?

EDITH

We always had good parliamentary articles in it that we used and looked back on.

HILARY

Our parliamentarian would be very upset with you. She wrote two excellent articles on parliamentary procedure.

EDITH

It isn't here yet.

HILARY

Ah, it's lost in the American mail system. I understand everyone has it except North America. If the postman eventually shows up or a carrier pigeon flies by, then maybe you will see it.

EDITH

It is beautiful but heavy.

HILARY

A lot of research went into this paper. The editor and I realized we could not afford shiny paper so we got the cheapest we could get in New Zealand. We saved several thousand dollars on mailing. Printing was the cheapest it's been in years. We saved a lot on the magazine this year. I don't know what else to tell you.

EDITH

If that's the case, I withdraw my question.

JANE

Edith, thanks so much for asking those questions as it was very informative for all of us to hear the answers. Blue Ridge?

BRR

Is it feasible to ask members if want to get the publication on-line, if they have computer capability and prefer to download it?

HILARY

It'll cost you! And depending on how much you pay for your Internet service, it could cost you more. It might take you hours and hours or maybe you might have to leave your computer on all night to download it. We met with the webmaster to discuss this and he does not recommend doing it as it would cost more to download it than to have a hard copy. It's switch and roundabouts. It might take three hours to download and at \$5 per magazine or \$10 on-line, it wouldn't be worth it.

JANE

But Hilary, wouldn't it be fair to say that this is a long term plan?

HILARY

A long term plan, yes, but our web people don't recommend it as it could tie up lines.

EDITH

I just want to say that we have many members who do not have computers so that isn't a good idea for them.

JANE

Edith, it could be an option for members who prefer to get it electronically, couldn't it?

EDITH

Yes, I just wanted to make the point that a lot of people don't have computers.

HILARY

The fewer who receive hard copies, the more expensive it is to produce for those who want hard copies.

JANE

Hilary, what future plans does the board have for the Communicator that you might want to share with us? Will you go back to having paid staff? Where is it going to be produced?

HILARY

The board and Wilna and the officers she knows that are returning wish to retain Judy Joubert in New Zealand as editor. It's very difficult as we don't know the numbers returning and how much money there will be so we have to depend on her good will.

PNWR

I have another question about the magazine. I am one of those dreaded Toastmaster members and our magazine is printed on thin paper, has many attractive graphics and articles and is a quick read. We get it in plastic sleeve. The Communicator covers are not inviting. Could it not be posted on the ITC website?

I see the postmark on it is German and I haven't asked but I suppose it is a cheaper postage method.

I also wonder who pays for all the convention advertisements in the ITC Communicator? Members who are not attending convention might want to see training articles instead of ads.

HILARY

When it was posted from the USA, we always had some postmark that was German, or Danish, some kind of foreign postmark, now the situation is reversed and you're getting it. Posting on the website costs in webmaster fees as he spends lots of hours on something like the Communicator. Jane does a lot of work getting things ready as she can but something like the magazine is very complicated.

We had a lot of complaints after the first issue that the print too small to read. There is no point in putting it on the website if it is so small people can't read it.

PNWR

Sorry to interject, but the print can be magnified on computer so that isn't really a problem.

HILARY

Thanks for that.

We have been investigating having ads for some time now. You are quite correct about the convention ads. Our bylaws state certain things must be put into the magazine so we have no other option. As for the tours in the magazine, the editor contacted the Durban tourist bureau for tours and asked for money from them in exchange for printing the tours. So it was a win-win situation.

JANE

That is nice to hear.

BRR

Can the Communicator have hypertext links to articles to take up less space?

HILARY

Yes, we discussed exploring that with the webmaster.

EDITH

The internationalism is a big plus for ITC.

JANE

Edith, do you think that is a great concern of your members?

EDITH

No, only that it is good.

JANE

What is the greatest concern of the members?

EDITH

Losing ITC.

COUNCIL 3

No questions yet

HILARY

I should let you know that the buyers are to take over the building April 1st. They came to the board meeting because we wanted to see who was buying our "baby". They have five adopted children from different cultures and a business of setting up special schools. They are going to use the meeting room for a school room for their children.

I asked them if the ITC staff and some furniture can stay on in a small part of the building until July 31 in exchange for leaving some of our furniture and they agreed.

PNWR

Are the computers and software all being sold?

HILARY

Yes, we need to make money for ITC

PNWR

Even if the successful bidders are from North America?

HILARY

Yes, because they will be setting up their own business.

PNWR

Will materials continue to be available?

HILARY

Computers and equipment will be sold to bidders and advertised on the web site

All materials will be available right through. Prices for discount items will be on website starting Monday.

Items sold in the warehouse sale were only items that had been around for a long time and had not sold. Some were not even in our catalogue any more but we thought someone might have interest in buying them.

New members will still get the Master Manual

JANE

PNWR, what is the greatest concern to your members?

PNWR

Dues, the survey said dues is the biggest issue. Many members won't be coming back. Many are waiting to see what happens at international to see if dues come down. I can see clubs withholding payment, paying late, or paying for three members.

Moving Headquarters will not have an impact as long as services are kept up.

BRR

Dues is our biggest concern but also our image and the fact that we are a well-kept secret. We need a new marketing strategy.

I talked to our members and moving Headquarters move will have no impact as long as services are kept up.

JEAN

Dues is a concern but it goes far beyond dues. There has been an ongoing concern for the past two years by frustrated members that there is a perceived lack of business experience of the board. Members are frustrated that they are not getting enough back for their dues and there is a constant asking for money. They feel the decision has already made on moving Headquarters.

JANE

So, Jean, you feel the image presented is not one you would prefer?

JEAN

The members are frustrated and feel there is nothing to hope for.

JANE

What about moving Headquarters?

JEAN

There is a groundswell perception that a decision has already been made and frustration that the board has not looked at options that they indicated would be considered. The members are frustrated by what they perceive is not a level playing field.

Land O'Lakes members want to keep the internationalism of the two countries, Canada and the USA.

JANE

Hilary, I have a question about dues. We really no longer will have a place to “hang our hat”. What has the board decided to do about informing the members about where to send the dues? And we won’t know what the dues are until after convention. How is that going to be handled? What is the address for dues? How will members be informed? Has the board made any contingency plans?

HILARY

Until it is changed, the dues remain at \$65.00. Send the dues to the old address and they will be forwarded. There will be someone there until July 31 and if not there it will be forwarded. Antoinette will be staying with us until at least July 31st.

We have discussed the possibility that if dues are sent and then lowered, we may have to send a refund. But it’s not a problem

EDITH

I hope that after the building is sold, the member information will be kept.

HILARY

Absolutely.

EMAIL QUESTIONS

JANE

Hilary, regarding the dues, I have an email comment from Two Oceans Region. Their greatest concern is their very weak Rand and the inability of the members to afford continuing membership.

And from Zimbabwe, I have a message from Trish Mackenzie, council 4 president, who says that member dues are too high for Zimbabwe. For those of us who are whining about the high cost of dues, listen to this. At the current exchange rate, it will cost Z \$90,000 (1400:1) but could be as high as Z \$130,000 by July. This is pretty frightening.

She told me she stood in line for none hours, two days in a row, to get gasoline and was unsuccessful.

Hilary, what about the new program in the latest Communicator, the “Adoption Option”? Is it working? Do you think of it as a band-aid solution and is it something you expect to be ongoing? What about our image? Do we look like a charitable organization?

HILARY

A nonprofit charitable organization. Yes, I believe it is a band-aid solution. The Adoption Option started by Lee Fasnacht has had a good response and now it is in the magazine, we expect even more.

It offers members a chance to support a club or to give the board the option to help in needy areas of which we are aware.

The Hands Across the World program has discovered areas where clubs are struggling. We are delighted with the response.

JANE

Hilary, Malawi says they have not received any magazines since 2000.

HILARY

I just found out about that and we have taken measures to correct that.

JANE

Excellent, I will be thrilled to email them to let them know that good news. Zimbabwe also complains about lack of services. They enjoy the internationalism but feel very isolated.

They say that closing Headquarters will not have much impact except it should reduce running costs. They are very sad to lose the building for which we all worked.

BRR

Our club did not receive their magazines in 2000 but that has been corrected.

JANE

Pat Cartwright, ITC Bylaws and Resolutions Chairman, sent in an interesting question. Can members be assured that proposals to amend ITC Bylaws and Standing Rules submitted through the ITC Bylaws and resolutions Committee will be presented to the delegates at the 2003 convention for debate and voting?

HILARY

There was a huge number of amendments submitted by the Bylaws and Resolutions Committee. I assure Pat that all amendments submitted according to the current ITC bylaws will be presented.

JANE

How many did you receive? Mary looks very dismayed!

HILARY

We received about 90.

JANE

Were many repetitive?

HILARY

No, not many.

JANE

Pat's other question is, what "tricks of the trade" will you use to keep your sense of humour and sanity during the business sessions at convention?

HILARY

The same ones I always use. And I have to remember Lil Morton's sense of humour to inspire me.

JANE

From Great Britain Region, Evelyn Flett says one of the complaints is the long-standing problem of not being able to see what they get for their international dues. I think there is a real problem with communication. There are discontinuities in the links between the grass roots and the international level so we have something of a "them" and "us" situation. Some people see paying their dues as "sending money to America".

It is also the case that administrative problems at Headquarters have caused bad feelings. Problems with getting the manuals and magazine, for example.

Evelyn sees the change at Headquarters offering a chance to break out of the cycle and make a fresh start. She sees it as a good thing.

Callers, any comment?

COUNCIL 3

I have a concern about what to do if ITC dissolves. I looked on the Toastmasters website and their dues are only \$20. What are they doing that is so different?

HILARY

I don't think they are that low. They are more than that in New Zealand and I don't know why they would be different in any other part of the world. They pay every six months in New Zealand. I am not a Toastmaster specialist. The Toastmaster on the line might be able to help.

JANE

They also have about 180,000 members to our 6,000. That makes the soup in their pot much thicker than ours.

PNWR

I don't know how much goes to international but we pay \$50 twice a year. Ernestine White would tell us to think outside the box and roll up sleeves and get to work. They are very aggressive about recruiting. ITC has a better program but don't think that their program is not good because it is. They don't hide their light under a bushel, as we are fond of saying and it is killing us. They also have certification of speakers.

The relationship with Headquarters is fine but when the clubs in your region are not listed in the world roster, it's a bummer. How do people know where to find us and visit our clubs?

HILARY

Right, the clubs need to get their dues in on time so they get in the roster.

JANE

Perhaps the updated roster can be posted on the website.

Sue Martin from New Zealand says as far as the clubs there are concerned, there is an indication that they are trying to keep fees down to a minimum to retain members and to at least get by for another year. The board is being given credit for doing everything possible.

A problem is the closing of the New Zealand account.

HILARY

I think the problem is that people don't want to use their personal credit cards. Using your own card should be no problem.

It cost us money to uplift funds from foreign accounts and depending when we did that, we would often lose large amounts of money so we made a business decision to close them. I am a member of New Zealand region and am getting heat for it.

JANE

I agree it was a cost effective decision.

I have a comment from Anita Henzler, Past ITC President. She says that the concerns she has received for the last several months are

- A. management of ITC and
- B. lack of response to members. In other words, they feel they are not receiving value for their dues. Headquarters does not have a good reputation. This, then, of course does not have an effect on any increased dues. It is not the cost of dues per se but the value received.

Would any of the callers agree?

ALL

Yes!

JANE

Hilary, is there any plan to correct this? Or do we need to just "suck it up" for the time being?

HILARY

Yes, when Muriel was around, we had four staff members and when Laura Sommers came on board, we had four and have been slowly reducing that since then. That means a reduction in services so they suffer.

JANE

Anita goes on to say that it appears many members are unaware of the extent of the happenings. A good number are surprised at the lack of communication to the membership on issues that are so important.

HILARY

I believe Irene really gave the message at convention, as did Antoinette, it was in the Board report, it was all in the Communicator, and posted on the website. I have sent every piece of important information to the region presidents and I cannot help it if it is not going down. I'm not sure what other avenues to take. We are being as open and honest as we can about the situation.

It is not a situation anyone wants to be in.
And if anyone thinks it is fun being ITC President this year, it ain't.

JANE

Now I am opening questions up to the assembly. But meanwhile, Hilary, can you tell us anything about PEP I and II?

HILARY

I can. Regions paying for their visiting officers will receive a variety of materials for a Circle of Excellence. There are four different parts and the guests will liaise with region boards as to what they want to receive. DVPs will send disks to each region not receiving guests. It is a bit like cyber training, but we feel we won't be letting down the regions who can't afford guests, if we provide them with training materials.

BRR

Blue Ridge Region member, Barbara Cobb. Thanks, Hilary, for standing up to all of this. I am inundated with information from the board. We had Val Harper here at our leadership conference and were delighted with her positive attitude. If you need anything, call on Blue Ridge Region.

HILARY

This is probably a good time to tell you that Blue Ridge Region is now the second largest region in the world.

GEORGE

I know this has been a trying time for you and in your fifth year on the ITC board, it is unfortunate that all your plans have come to a disappointing close. Please be candid. Has the board made a five year strategy or any other type of business plan? Is the board going to make any recommendations?

HILARY

Yes, a five year strategy is being developed and we have two officers with excellent business skills who are working on a business plan right now.

Should there be no money, a cyber board will meet and administer the organization. Now we know contingency plans need to be in place.

BRR PRESIDENT; LARRY WILLIAMS

Hilary, please clarify for me where Headquarters will be operating between now and July 31st? Where will Antoinette be?

HILARY

We will be in the same building and have made arrangement with the buyers. We will have the front of the building and they will use the rear part. Antoinette will like the company.

BRR PRESIDENT-ELECT

What is the dollar amount building sold for?

HILARY

We were told we would be very lucky to get \$500,000 so we were delighted, after we kept on negotiating, to get \$535,000.

PNWR

You mentioned cyber board meetings. Is there a board strategy to reduce costs through alternative types of meetings? Is the board looking at other formats for meeting? Do they plan to communicate more often electronically? I notice nobody uses the Chat Room.

HILARY

There is no longer a Chat Room. It is on the list of things for the website chairman to do. She is wonderful but not that wonderful as she hasn't done it.

JANE

I set one up and you threw it out.

PNWR

What other electronic methods and strategies to communicate is the board looking at?

HILARY

More cyber meetings will be used than ever before and we will use the website more and more. If every club could have a web reporter, that would be absolutely wonderful news to us as we can put more on the website.

GREAT LAKES REGION PRESIDENT; JOYCE WALL

Hilary, thanks so much for having this wonderful forum.

I don't know why people are concerned about the dues. It costs us .17 a day in US and .27 a day in Canada. I can't buy a cup of coffee or even a candy for that. We need to start stressing that and talk in the positive. We need to look at quarterly payments and advertise the dues in a different way. If I get to convention, I will be really disappointed to see a dues decrease.

PNWR

Audrey Pope, Vancouver. We will pay the .27. In 1992, the government of Canada faced a serious deficit and turned it around. If they can do it, ITC can, too.

GEORGE

Has the 2005 convention site been finalized?

HILARY

Carol Ann Preiss has negotiated with the Renaissance in Baltimore but it is too costly so her committee is looking at alternative hotels. They are not sure they can find another site.

GEORGE

Are you still accepting other bids?

HILARY

If any other region can put it on for cheaper.

GEORGE

What is the time constraint?

HILARY

It will be very tight because as you know, the Call to Convention is in July.

GEORGE

Heart of America Region will be bidding for a convention in Indianapolis in 2005

JANE

Speaking of convention, Hilary, how many people do you believe will attend convention? Do you think the war will have any impact on attendance?

HILARY

Probably, but you are looking at the negative. It actually might be a safer place than anywhere in the world. We have put lots of funds on the Durban convention site and are committed to having it there. The members are very excited about hosting it and lots of their members have committed to attending. This area also talked about seceding but the excitement of convention, plus, once they see the internationalism, will probably keep them interested.

COUNCIL 3

Where will Headquarters be located?

HILARY

No decision yet. A five year long range plan under development. However, it is very hard at the moment until we know the money we will have and the number of members. We might not be here in five years.

JANE

Are there any further comments from the callers or members before we wrap up?

JEAN

Thank you, Hilary, for making yourself available and thanks to everyone involved.

ALL

Yes, thank you to all.

JANE

I want to thank Hilary once again for being here for what I, personally think was a wonderful opportunity, George Van Sickles for arranging this wonderful session, and especially the callers. You have shown that we are truly international and that the light of love shines for ITC all over the world.

GEORGE

I want to add my thanks to everyone for participating in this historical conference in an effort to keep Ernestine White's dream alive.

Thanks to Jane Gollmer for facilitating and I thank Hilary immensely for agreeing to attend and sharing the news from the board meeting. You said you would much prefer a forum for discussion so that is what we provided.

HILARY

Thank you, this has been the most challenging Issues of the Day discussion in which I ever took part.

Sign off and close