

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members of the IASS,

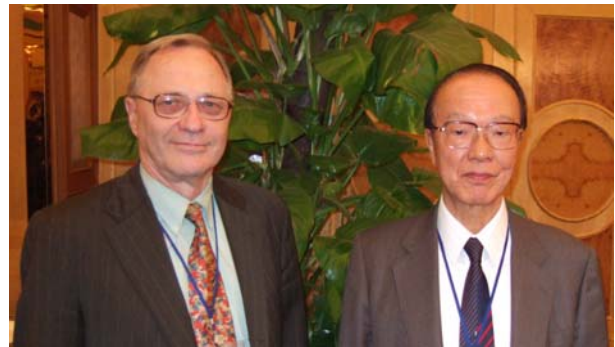
It is a great privilege for me to write my first annual letter to you as president of our Association. I am grateful for the confidence that the Executive Council has expressed by electing me for a three-year term, commencing with the 2006 Symposium.

My term continues until the 50th Anniversary Jubilee of the IASS, a signal event to be celebrated in 2009. Therefore, I am especially conscious and humbled to be following in the 47-year line of my distinguished predecessors in the presidency, beginning with our founder, Eduardo Torroja. It is fitting that we are once again reminded of his extraordinary legacy by the new book, Eduardo Torroja: Works and Projects, reviewed in this issue.

A report covering the past year would not be complete without a tribute to my immediate predecessor, Professor Mamoru Kawaguchi, who has been an outstanding leader of our Association. He has just completed two terms in the presidency (2000-06) and, uniquely, had also served previously in 1990-91 when he completed the term of his distinguished mentor, Professor Yoshikatsu Tsuboi, who died during his presidency. Professor M. Kawaguchi has provided exemplary leadership, and I am grateful that we will still have his wise counsel as a continuing member of both the Executive Council and Working Bureau. Of course, he is well known to the membership of the Association for both his outstanding career as an academic and professional leader in Japan and his renowned designs of lightweight and long-span structures in many parts of the world. We have been greatly privileged to have his lectures and publications at IASS events regarding his innovative structures and systems, from giant flying carp to pantadomes to footbridges, to cite just a few examples.

I turn now to reporting on the events and activities of the IASS during 2006. Because many aspects are included in more detailed reports in this issue of the Journal, much of this letter serves as a concise preface to subsequent news articles. The exceptions are the developments that affect the future of the IASS, described near the end of this letter.

Memorials. The past year included sad news concerning the death of two distinguished and val-



President J. Abel and Past-President M. Kawaguchi at the IASS-APCS Symposium 2006

ued Honorary Members of the IASS. Professor Wolfgang Zerna, who passed away in November 2005, was a pioneer in the areas of structural mechanics and thin-shell concrete structures, especially cooling towers. In October of this year, Professor Mircea Mihailescu died unexpectedly. Among his many long-time contributions to the engineering of thin shells and to the IASS, he is most recently remembered for ably organizing and hosting the 2005 Symposium in Romania. Memorial statements for these two brilliant engineers immediately follow this letter.

The Annual Symposium and EC Meeting. The highlight of each IASS year is the annual symposium. This year, we were fortunate to be hosted in Beijing on October 16-19 for the theme "New Olympics, New Shell and Spatial Structures." The chair of the organizing committee was Professor S. D. Xue, whose report on the event appears in this issue. In addition, in connection with the Symposium, a special issue of the Journal was published on "Recent Spatial Structures in China." On behalf of the IASS, I wish to congratulate the organizers for an excellent program and thank them for wonderful hospitality.

On the day prior to the symposium, as is customary, the IASS Executive Council held its annual meeting. In addition to conducting elections, the 24-member EC hears the reports and recommendations from the officers and committees of the Association and it takes necessary actions, which require a 2/3 vote for approval. The chair of the Elections Committee is R. Astudillo, and results of elections are reflected on the IASS page of this issue (following the Contents page). The Chair of the Financial

Committee, Treasurer A. Samartin, reported on the good financial health of the Association; we have a substantial financial reserve that is earning interest, and membership fees can remain at the same level, lower than most comparable societies.

The remaining five standing IASS committees (with their respective chairs) are:

- Technical Activities (Y. B. Yang)
- Tsuboi Awards (N. K. Srivastava)
- Hangai Prizes (M. Takayama)
- Editorial (J. F. Abel)
- Membership (B. Smith)

Reports of the first three of these are included in this issue. Regarding Editorial matters, the Journal of the IASS has gradually improved its quality and has benefited from both conscientious reviewing and an increased number of submitted manuscripts. The Journal will be seeking to be accepted for ICI indexing; moreover, starting in 2007, it will be published on-line as well as in print. Regarding Membership, we have had a slight decline to 568; efforts to retain and increase membership continue, and all current members are urged to help recruit.

Honors and Awards. During the opening ceremony of the Beijing Symposium, the Executive Council through President Kawaguchi was pleased to award Honorary IASS Membership to Professor Tien T. Lan of the Chinese Academy of Building Sciences. He has been a long-time leader in the area of spatial structures in China and an active and distinguished member of the IASS since the previous Beijing Symposium held in 1987.

The winners of the 2005 Tsuboi Awards and 2006 Hangai Prizes were also celebrated at the Beijing Symposium as reported in this issue. Particularly impressive were the oral presentations in plenary session by the 4 young Hangai Prize winners. The winning Hangai papers and the Tsuboi Proceedings Award paper are printed in this issue of the Journal.

Working Groups, Colloquia and Workshops. The report of the Technical Activities Committee in this issue of the Journal summarizes the accomplishments and plans of the 12 active Working Groups of the Association. In addition, some of the Working Groups sponsor colloquia, conferences, or workshops from time to time; during 2006, two such meetings were held and reports of these are included in this issue. They are (with organizing chairs):

- First International Colloquium on Free Form Design, Delft, 28-29 September, Sub-Group of WG 15 Morphology (A. Borgart et al.)
- International Workshop on Computational Morphogenesis, Nagoya, 10-12 October, Sub-Group of WG 13 Computation (H. Ohmori)

In addition, the IASS was a proud co-sponsor of the Vth Conference on Metalwork in Civil Engineering held in Kiev 19-22 September (O. Shimanovsky et al.), a report of which is also included in this issue.

Future Developments. Some exciting new developments for the IASS are in progress under the supervision of ad hoc committees. These are:

- IASS Website and Database (chaired by J. Abel). Our new website, including the on-line Journal, is expected to be ready by spring of 2007.
- IASS Slideshow (R. Motro). Accomplishments of IASS notables, to be linked to the new website.
- Honors and Awards (N. Srivastava). New nomination procedures to be published soon.
- 50th Anniversary Jubilee Publication (I. Mungan). A decade-by-decade account of the first 50 years, scheduled for completion in 2009.

Future Events. Interspersed in this and future issues of the Journal are announcements of upcoming IASS or IASS-sponsored events, including, chronologically (with organizing chairs):

- 10th World Conference on Seismic Isolation 2007, 28-31 May, Istanbul (I. Mungan et al.)
- International Symposium on Studies on Historical Heritage 2007, 17-21 September, Antalya, Turkey (G. Arun et al. for WG 17)
- Structural Engineering World Congress 2007, 4-9 November, Bangalore (R. Sundaram)
- IASS Symposium 2007, "Structural Architecture," 3-6 December, Venice (E. Siviero)
- IASS-IACM 2008: 6th International Conference on Computation of Shell and Spatial Structures, 28-31 May, Ithaca, NY, USA (J. Abel for WG 13)
- IASS Symposium 2008, 27-31 October, Acapulco (J. G. Oliva-Salinas)
- IASS 50th Anniversary Symposium 2009, Valencia (A. Domingo, C. Lazaro, R. Astudillo)

I hope that all members will continue to support and participate in the activities of the IASS. My best wishes to all for a happy and fruitful 2007!

John F. Abel
President of the IASS