Acknowledging The Year, Looking To The Future

By Kevin Nachtrab, President, LES International

This marks my final message to the LES Membership as President. It has been a fine year, one filled with much work and travel but also one that has been marked with much satisfaction and pleasure at seeing the LES Community acting as a real community.

The past year has seen great sorrow within the LES Community. The deaths of Akira Mifune, a distinguished Past President of LESI, Anna Szafruga, President of LES Poland, Jarmila Traplova, Past President of LES Czech Republic and Barbara Powell, wife of Stephen Powell, a former LESI Vice-President and a Past President of LES Britain & Ireland have deeply affected us all. And yet, we can all be proud of the strength of the reaction and support that the entire LES Community extended to their friends and families and to the friends and families of all other members of our Community who passed on in the last year.

The past year also saw great joy within the LESI Community. At our Annual Meeting in the beautiful city of Rio de Janeiro, we celebrated the 40th anniversary of the founding of LES International in the finest and perhaps most appropriate of all styles. While many of us may have been fatigued from the long road to Rio, we somehow found ourselves invigorated just by being there. Perhaps it was the city, perhaps it was the weather or perhaps it was just meeting and greeting old friends again, but no one left disappointed.

Whether it was a time of sorrow or a time of joy, what was consistent throughout the year was the deep sense of community and dedication displayed by our membership. And it is this sense of community and dedication that should give all of us the greatest sense of pride in our organization and hope for its continuing success in the future.

In the past year, I tried to bring more and more transparency to LESI’s operations and decision-making processes, so that we can remain open and inclusive. I have also tried to institute small projects in the hope that they will help form a basis for the future of LES:

- The establishment of a nascent LESI Mentoring Program to assist young and new LES members in understanding and getting the most of what LES has to offer, so that they want to stay members and play a larger role in the organization;
- The establishment of a Corporate Advisory Board to assist us in insuring that LES remains responsive to the needs of industry, so that industry will see the value in permitting its members to not just join, but to also actively participate in LESI activities;
- The establishment of the LESI Academy tasked with revamping and
further developing the LESI Education programs to fully bring them in line with the latest “Best Practices” in the Education field and to make them more effective, so as to provide better educational programs for those wishing to make licensing and technology transfer their vocation;

• The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with ZhongNan University in Wuhan, China, to extend our educational offerings and to promote LES and the CLP in China; and

• The establishment of guidelines and best practices for outreach programs to better educate the business and scientific communities, as well as the general public, to make them more aware of the profession and the benefits it brings and various initiatives to digitalize and modernize our communications.

While the eventual success or not of these projects will depend upon others, the seeds have nonetheless been planted and I am confident that the LES Community will be able to nurture them until they can bear fruit.

And now we look to Philadelphia, where we are about to turn yet another Chapter in the history of LESI, with a new President taking the helm pursuing new goals and ambitions. But in doing so, I am certain that we will not forget where we came from and will continue to acknowledge our rich past while welcoming the future with open arms. For me, this is personally poignant in that Philadelphia is the city where I started my University years, which resulted in my entering the licensing profession and culminated in my Presidency. Now it will be the same city where I end my term as LESI President making a somewhat fitting circle in my professional life.

So it is that I leave the Presidency of LES International: a dynamic community of approximately 11,000 professionals from over 100 countries around the globe who are grouped into 32 member societies and the leading professional organization for the global IP and technology licensing community. It has been my pleasure and my honor to have served.

To everyone who made it possible and to everyone who assisted me, the Delegates and Board of LESI, LESI and its Member Societies and, most importantly of all, the LES Community: I say thank you.

Forty years young and counting. With the wisdom of our experience coupled with the energy of our youth, the possibilities are unlimited. In the next forty years, our members worldwide can look forward to LESI realizing its full potential for their benefit, for the benefit of their profession and for the benefit of the communities in which they live.