Dear Colleagues,

Happy New Year and welcome back to the second semester. I trust that each of you had time for rest and relaxation with family and friends during the holidays. I wish I could say that those cold, snowy days of the holiday break are over, but I’m learning that after nine years in Indiana, if you don’t like today’s weather, tomorrow may bring something different. My New Orleans clan who left seventy degree weather to spend the holidays in the frigid North enjoyed the change in weather, at least for a while. Fortunately, they all left before the arrival of the rich, textured blankets of snow that introduced the New Year.

In the midst of entertainment and feasting on New Orleans and New England specialties like gumbo and turkey stuffing prepared with Bell’s seasoning, I squeezed time for long anticipated reading. As it may be for many of you, there are various piles of books stacked around the house waiting to be read. But rather than choosing from among those, I decided to read last year’s Nobel laureate, Doris Lessing, and bought one of her earlier works from the fifties, Going Home. This remarkable tale is an intriguing account of her return, after many years of exile, to her homeland, pre-independent Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). What she discovers is a disheartening continuance of the rigid separation of the races that renders both blacks and whites impotent in the face of lost potential for her beloved country, human and material. As with any good author, I can hardly wait to read more, particularly her post-independence work. The holiday respite also afforded me time, when I was able to divorce myself from my host responsibilities, to finish a review of a book, Harlem Crossroads for Choice, the literary magazine for libraries. This book about the influences of photography on African American writers from Richard Wright to Toni Morrison has whetted my appetite to re-read Wright, Ellison, Baldwin, Himes, Morrison and others. My year of reading for 2008 is set.

This year’s campus reading of Henrik Ibsen’s An Enemy of the People, dovetails with the campus theme of “Sustainable Communities.” Thanks to Joe Chaney and Deborah Marr, this year’s campus theme has spun off numerous sustainable activities. One of the most interesting, and perhaps most significant, events of the year will take place Tuesday evening (1/15/08), “SeaChange: Reversing the Tide.” Featuring Roger Payne, a renowned marine biologist and Lisa Harrow, an award winning actress, the theme of sustainability and our individual responsibility to the environment will be introduced through a lecture, drama, and poetry that promise to captivate the audience. The event will take place in Northside 158 at 7:30pm. I hope to see you there.

Kudos:

• To Michele Russo for her recent title change to Dean of Library Services.

• To Mary Wilham-Countway on being named Director of the Child Development Center.

• To Vincci Kwong, assistant librarian, who has been selected to participate in ALA’s 2008 Class of Emerging Leaders. The Emerging Leaders program enables new librarians to get on the fast track to ALA and professional leadership. There are only 120 people chosen from a very competitive process.

• To the IU South Bend School of Education for its partnership with Riley High School, Ivy Tech, The Center for Research and P-16 Collaboration out of the School of Education in Bloomington, and the community. The project provides the opportunity for high school students to graduate from high school with up to two years of community college credit. Ambitious students could earn an associate’s degree. The project is intended to attract students who might not otherwise pursue postsecondary education.

Sincerely,

Alfred J. Guillaume, Jr.
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs