LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT   July 2021

Dear Members,

I'm writing this having just read about an "excessive heat warning" for Bavaria. Perhaps not quite the best time for writing The President's Letter for July, but I'll carry on nonetheless, aided and abetted by a glass of ice-cube cooled water. Of course, the good news is that there are improvements on the Covid front. We can go to the cinema again, enjoy an evening in a beer garden and even buy a few summer clothes. Normality is returning, it would seem.

And the Franconian Society? Well, we had a committee meeting on June 21st and have begun to plan a programme for the coming months. Talks and walks are certainly on the cards, as well as a pleasant evening or two "Under the Oak Tree" at the Turnerbund. More on this later in our Newsletter.

Another thing in the planning is celebrating Ingeborg's 100th birthday on September 8th. Our Second Vice-President has told me that she has been given the status of "Honorary Membership in the Senior Citizens' Council" for her services to Erlangen, a well-deserved honour, I feel. Over the years she has done so much for Erlangen's reputation at home and abroad, organizing, for example, help and support for hospitals and orphanages, for the city's older citizens, and, above all, for the Franconian Society. Her life has been a remarkable achievement, and whenever I speak to her on the phone and see her in person I'm astounded at her wide-ranging knowledge, her enthusiastic interest in the world around her, her humanity and generosity. Since becoming President, I have felt privileged to know her, a sentiment that I'm sure all of you understand and share. So, mark the 8th September in your diaries and remember to send her a card. That would really make her day!

I am sure all of you have been following the news in India. Harrowing scenes in over-crowded hospitals, distressing images of sad relatives cremating their deceased loved ones in conditions that seemingly defy dignity, hunger and despair in the eyes of the very young and very old. Very recently we received news from the Deutsch-Indische Gesellschaft in Nuremberg that the General Hospital in Pondicherry *(on the south-east coast of India) was at breaking point and needed donations to purchase equipment and oxygen. After consulting the committee, it was decided that a donation of 500€ was appropriate and the amount was duly sent off. In the meantime, I have received confirmation that the money was received and was helping convey an

urgently needed shipment of supplies to Pondicherry. If someone in our society knows Pondicherry well, I would be very pleased to hear from them.

Yesterday I received a mail from Ivan, the young man doing research into older people and their cultural bonds. He was extremely pleased that 132 people had taken part in his survey – he had been expecting 60 to 70. His aim is to finish his master's next month. I'm sure he will be able to attend one of our meetings in the near future to discuss his findings in person.
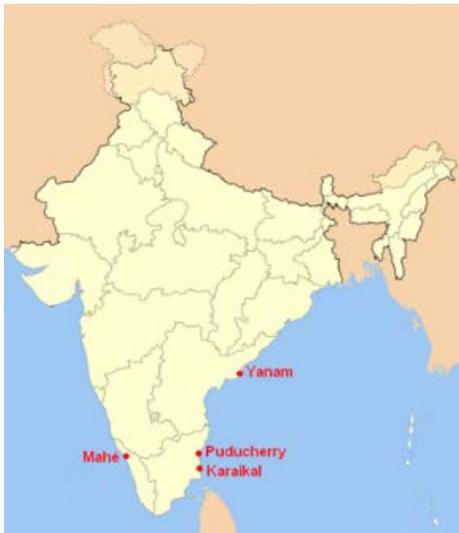
Well, this may be one of the shortest President's Letters ever, but nonetheless it is full of hope for the months ahead!

Take care and stay safe and see you soon.

Frank

* Here is a little history of Pondicherry gleaned from Wikipedia:

Puducherry, formerly rendered Pondicherry, is the capital and the most-populous city of the Union Territory of Puducherry in India. It is surrounded by the state of Tamil Nadu, with which it shares most of its culture, heritage and language. The region's history is dominated by colonial settlements – French, Portuguese, Dutch, and English. In 1674 the French East India Company set up a trading centre at Pondicherry and this outpost eventually became the chief French settlement in India.

Pondicherry is a tourist destination in South India. The city has many colonial buildings, churches, temples and statues which, combined with the town planning and French style avenues in the old part of town, still preserve much of the colonial ambiance.