

Past President's Report

by Robert D. Russell, CAIMS•SCMAI President 2007-09

It has been a great pleasure to have served you as President of the Canadian Applied and Industrial Mathematics Society for the past two years. As a volunteer run organization, its smooth functioning heavily depends upon the dedication and skill of its Board members, and particularly its Executive, and I have been extremely fortunate to have had an outstanding group of individuals to work with. The previous President, Bill Langford, has been tireless through the years in serving our Society, as partly evidenced by his being this year's selection for the DSA (Distinguished Service Award). Our diligent Treasurer Paul Muir and Secretary Abba Gumel have given selflessly their time and energy to see that things have run smoothly.

It is most appropriate that the celebration of the 30th Anniversary of CAIMS•SCMAI has been at the 2009 annual meeting at the University of Western Ontario, a university that has long supported applied mathematics and indeed has one of the largest groups of applied mathematicians in Canada. I am most grateful to the organizers of the meeting, especially Xingfu Zou and Geoff Wild, for the enormous effort they expended to see that the meeting was a success. At this year's banquet several of the past CAIMS•SCMAI Presidents spoke about the early years of our organization, and I have an article on this elsewhere in the Newsletter.

One of the major purposes of our society is to honour the leaders in applied and industrial mathematics in Canada through various awards. The success of these awards (and, indeed, of the applied mathematics education programs across Canada) is evidenced by the growing interest in our DDA (Doctoral Dissertation Award), which had 12 strong nominations this year. I am most grateful to Ray Spiteri (Chair), JF Williams, and Henry Wolkowicz, members of the DDA Committee, in their selecting two outstanding winners, Raluca Eftimie and Colin Macdonald. The choice of an exceptional winner of the CAIMS•SCMAI Research Prize, Mark Lewis, was made by the Committee of Michael Mackey (Chair), Gordon Swaters, Michel Fortin and John Peirce. Finally, I wish to thank the DSA Committee, Serpil Kocabiyik (Chair), Bryant Moodie, and Sue Ann Campbell, for their deliberations and selection of Bill Langford.

One of my goals when elected President of CAIMS•SCMAI was to introduce two new awards, one honouring a junior researcher and the other an industrial mathematician. I am very pleased that, due largely to the efforts of Ian Frigaard, we will be collaborating with PIMS to offer an annual Junior Researcher Prize, starting in 2010. As well, collaborating with MITACS we will offer an annual Industrial Researcher Prize. Details of these awards also appear in this Newsletter. Please consider nominating suitable colleagues for these awards.

Our relations with the three Canadian Mathematics Institutes (PIMS, CRM and

Fields) and MITACS are extremely good, with these organizations providing support in many ways. Their support was critical when our 2008 annual meeting in Montréal was held in collaboration with the CMS and our corresponding French organizations. Recently, MITACS has taken over the investing of our surplus finances and is pursuing various ways in which they can provide key administrative support for CAIMS•SCMAI. These include the handling of membership reminders and renewals, streamlining of our election process, handling of the E-News/Newsletter preparation and mailout, helping with our annual meetings, improving the advertising and submission process for the CAIMS•SCMAI Awards, and helping with the design and maintenance of our webpage.

I am particularly pleased with the various ways in which CAIMS•SCMAI continues to increase its international profile. One key initiative has been the negotiation of reciprocal membership agreements with other mathematics organizations. Under Bill Langford's Presidency, a reciprocity agreement was made with SIAM, and we have recently formed a similar agreement with the SMAI, our French counterpart. I encourage you to check our website for details of these.

CAIMS•SCMAI is involved in several collaborations on international meetings. The First Joint North American Meeting in Industrial Mathematics, organized by CAIMS•SCMAI, SIAM and the Mexican Mathematical Society, will be held in Mexico in December, 2010, and we hope there will be a large contingent of Canadians in attendance. As you know, the International Council for Industrial and Applied Mathematics, the world's collection of applied mathematics organizations, will hold its next meeting in Vancouver in 2011. ICIAM11 will be an international collaboration between CAIMS•SCMAI with MITACS and SIAM, and it will be the finest opportunity by far for us to highlight the high level level of Canadian applied mathematics on the international stage. CAIMS•SCMAI members (with Ian Frigaard the Chair) are working in collaboration with PIMS and MITACS to organize a large number of thematic programmes for ICIAM11. Ken Jackson and other CAIMS•SCMAI members are hosting SCICADE11, an international conference on Scientific Computing And Differential Equations, in Toronto. This conference, held just prior to ICIAM11, is being well supported by the Fields Institute and MITACS.

My two years as President of CAIMS•SCMAI have been extremely rewarding, and I leave with a sense of optimism about the long term health of our Society. Still, as Past President of CAIMS•SCMAI, I intend to keep working on several personal goals for supporting our organization and Canadian applied mathematics in general. A major challenge is to find better ways of encouraging the younger Canadian applied mathematicians to take a more active role in CAIMS•SCMAI, including as members of its Board or its various committees. At a concrete level, Ian Frigaard and I have formed a Liaison Committee consisting of members throughout most Canadian universities who will work to en-

sure that their colleagues are CAIMS•SCMAI members and their universities are Academic members. An important way that you can help is to suggest your colleagues for these positions, either to me personally or to Lucy Campbell, the new Membership Committee Chair. Finally, I ask you to join me in an effort to attract applied and computational mathematicians who are not currently members to CAIMS•SCMAI, including more individuals from Canada's strong groups of discrete mathematicians, computational computer scientists, and mathematicians working in industry.

CAIMS•SCMAI membership comes with a number of concrete benefits, including receipt of our Newsletter containing information directed primarily towards Canadian faculty and students, reduced membership costs for SIAM and applied mathematics societies in other countries, and free electronic access to the Canadian Applied Mathematics Quarterly. But in my opinion, the strongest argument for soliciting our colleagues support is that there is no doubt that applied mathematics would not be nearly as strong as it is without CAIMS•SCMAI, the Canadian Society dedicated first and foremost to the promotion of applied mathematical research and education. For example, Canada would simply not be hosting the hallmark applied mathematics meeting, that of the International Congress for Industrial and Applied Mathematics in 2011, were it not for CAIMS members whose untiring efforts included an unsuccessful bid for ICIAM07 in 2005 and ultimately involved coordinating with MITACS and its marvellous administrative staff in our successful bid for ICIAM11 with SIAM. Our annual meetings like the ones at Banff and UWO cover a very wide spectrum of topics and demonstrate that applied mathematics is, to borrow a phrase from the UWO Dean of Science at the opening of this year's meeting, a "gateway to interdisciplinarity." This interdisciplinarity is reflected in the fact that our members are funded from many different NSERC GSCs, which of course brings many challenges to see that we are treated equitably in an environment where research specialization remains the norm. A vital role of CAIMS•SCMAI is to advocate for its members' interests with NSERC, and our new President Jacques Bélair is uniquely placed to do so.

Finally, let me remind you that perhaps the best way you can support CAIMS•SCMAI is by organizing a minisymposium at our upcoming national and international meetings. So I hope to see you in St. John's at next year's annual meeting. What better place than Newfoundland to enjoy a uniquely Canadian environment with our many colleagues from home and abroad, eh?