



McGill

C e n t r e f o r

Intelligent Machines

5th Annual IRIS-Precarn Conference June 13-15, Vancouver, BC

If you were at CIM during the week of June 13, you probably wondered why it was so easy to get a workstation at any time of the day. The reason was that a large contingent of CIMites found themselves heading towards Vancouver for the annual IRIS-Precarn conference.

It was a hectic time at CIM in the weeks preceeding the conference. Many of us were working on posters and videos so that CIM's research could be represented at the conference. Greg Dudek did an excellent job of editing the many hours of demonstration videos into a unified 20 minute video presentation. (I wonder if he received any recording contract offers while in Vancouver for the soundtrack to the video.) The printing shop downstairs and MP Photo appeared to prosper from the added business during the poster production phase. Some of us had stressful experiences with MP Photo as the deadline for departure approached, but I won't go into that!

On the first day of the conference, many were setting up their posters and demonstration booths. A reception was held Tuesday evening. During the reception, the audience sampled the appetizers and mingled with the poster and demonstration presenters. Hotel Vancouver is a very nice hotel and some of us were fortunate to stay there while others appeared to struggle with deciding on a place to stay.

There were various keynote addresses, panel sessions, project reports, and tutorials given during Wednesday and Thursday. It allowed some of us to get a glimpse of other research areas in the intelligent systems field. Concurrently during the various sessions, posters and demonstrations were available for viewing.

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Newsletter

The closing banquet was quite the feast. The appetizer was smoked salmon and the main meal was steak, with cheesecake to top it all off. The speaker at the closing banquet - Dr. Hugh Wynne-Edwards of BC Research Inc. - gave an interesting speech. He stressed the problems of entitlements to the research community and the need for a reality check with regards to the times in which we live. Various CIMites took home awards which were given out at the banquet (mentioned elsewhere in the newsletter).

CIMites also mixed pleasure with business during the week. Don't forget that the conference was being held in 'Lotusland'. Some of the CIMite experiences included touring Stanley Park or Granville Island, eating at a variety of different and interesting restaurants, jogging, bicycling, hiking in the mountains, and boating. Let me stress that the recreational aspects were done after the conference was completed as many stayed until at least Sunday morning in order to help IRIS save some money for airfare costs. All in all most of us enjoyed the conference and Vancouver.

Submitted by John Zelek

Meanwhile back at McGill...

On June 15, the few people here at CIM who didn't get to go to the IRIS conference had a rather spontaneous picnic. Everyone brought something to share, and we all trooped out to the children's area on campus to enjoy the sunshine and warm weather. (Ahmed stole the show with tons of fresh falafel!) I think it's safe to say that we all appreciated the fresh air, the change of scenery, and Kathleen's yummy brownies. There were even hints that some people might be interested in having another picnic in July (if you are one of them email kimberly@cim, we may organize another one).

Submitted by Kimberley Benedict

Sexual Harassment

An obnoxious message addressed to one of CIM's students was found on the bulletin boards near rm 418 and at 2020 last week. This is a warning that McGill University has strict policies regarding sexual harassment, and neither CIM nor the University will tolerate such misconduct. We are investigating the source of the message. Be aware that anyone who is caught engaging in such activity will be disciplined according to McGill's guidelines on this issue. Students or staff members who are being sexually harassed can contact me (Janet at loc. 4132) for advice or the sexual harassment assessors provided by McGill. All discussions will be kept strictly confidential.

CIM offices remain open on Fridays


A reminder that although the University Administration offices will be closed on Fridays until Aug. 25 (incl), CIM offices remain open throughout the summer. If you need help, you can find a staff member in either room 409 or 410.

Beware the lunch thief ...


It's a well known fact that CIM people prepare the most exotic array of food at lunch time; perhaps this is too well known! Since the main CIM fridge has been temporarily relocated in the seminar room, someone has been sampling some of these dishes, unfortunately leaving their rightful owners without any lunch. Short of putting a lock on the fridge, we can only repeat and stress again the necessity of keeping all doors locked. Yes, it's hard to close a door behind you when you are holding a coffee mug in one hand and an ice cream in the other, but... your next meal may depend on it!

NEWS AND EVENTS

Hats off to...


 **John Zelek** who won first prize in the poster competition (in the category for ISDE 'Integrated Systems in Dynamic Environments') at the IRIS Conference in Vancouver. The poster was entitled: *Task Driven Behavioral Navigation: Where am I*

going & How should I get there? Prize for the best demo was awarded jointly to **Christophe Ramstein** (CITI) and **Vincent Hayward** who demonstrated a haptic device developed at McGill called the Pantograph applied to a multi-modal user interface. This interface involved a combination of graphics, sound and haptics (touch and kinesthesia).

 All the CIM students who received their degrees at the Spring Convocation. Doctorate Degrees were conferred on the following: **Pierre Breton**, **Abbas Fattah**, **André Foisy**, **John Lloyd** (Dean's Honour List), **Ameen Maluf**, **Hamidreza Mohammadi Daniali** (Dean's Honour List), **Majid Noorhosseini**, **Marco Petroni** (Dean's Honour List), **Kumbasa Sandrasegaran** and **Honjin Wu**.

The following students received their Masters Degrees: **Alain Achkar**, **Tal Arbel**, **Marc Bolduc** (Dean's Honour List), **Pierre Canet**, **Danny Grant**, **Pedro Gregorio**, **Behram Kapadia**, **Anna Lin**, **Eric Martin**, **Joey Mennito**, **Michael Milligan**, **Ali Nahvi**, **Gal Sela**, **Jimmy Wang** and **Mei Zhang**. Congratulations and best of luck to all of you !!!

To update the news on some of the above-mentioned graduates: After six months of postdoctoral work research at Concordia with Dr. R. Patel on the IRIS ISDE2 project entitled "Design Analysis & Control of High Performance Fixtureless Assembly", **Majid Noorhosseini** has returned home to Iran. **Sandy Sandrasegaran** has left the University of Zimbabwe for a post as lecturer at the University of Durban-Westville.

 **Majid Ezzati**, whose future sounds very exciting. He sent us the following: "I will be starting a PhD at Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International affairs at Princeton University in September. The official name of the specialization is Science, Technology, and Public Policy. I will be concentrating on the social, economic, and environmental impacts of new technology and cross-cultural transfer of technology. Given all the angles with which one can approach this topic, this is as much as I know about it now. My research is likely to involve looking at the inter-relationship

between culture, economic structure, and technique. I probably will have to look much deeper into the areas of social sciences and policy than I ever have. But then, this is exactly the reason for diverting my PhD in that direction." Good luck, Majid!

☛ **Nadia Girolamo** has left the Centre for a job at BNR. Good luck, Nadia!

☛ **Welcome to Lucas Jakob Langer** born June 12th at 8:20 pm weighing in at 7 lbs. 6 oz. Mother (Corinna), son, and papa (Michael) are all doing very well. Congratulations to the happy family !

SAFETY ALERT

In this horrendous heat, it is very tempting to open all the office windows. You may not know that if you open the top section at more than a 45° angle, there is a danger of it swinging open completely and falling on your head !! Yes, it has already happened. Please be careful!

Thank you to ...

All the students and research engineers who took some moments of their very precious IRIS preparation time to help us move furniture once again. You may have noticed that offices have been switched around to make the following changes: **Prof. De Mori** has joined us on the 4th floor in room 425; the 3 occupants in that room have moved to 463, the new visitors room; while the occupants of 463 have move to either 2020 or 429. Which means that those who were in 429 are now in 464 ... does anyone need a map? Thanks to all who helped this happen so efficiently !

Articles & ideas are welcome. Please send them by e-mail to the editor. Deadline for publication is the 7th of every month.

Editor: Janet Burghardt (e-mail: jmb@cim.mcgill.ca)

Associate Editors: Paul Mackenzie
Kathleen VanderNoot

Attention all singers and would-be singers

Want to sing but don't know where to go or could never find the time? Want to sing, but were always too shy, or were always told you had no voice, or always thought you couldn't, or never had the opportunity? Want to sing with your friends from CIM, but never thought they would go for it? Here's the answer to all your hopes and dreams -- the **CIM Choir!**

Come join us for fun, relaxed sessions of music-making every week. The aim of the choir is to help people learn about and develop their voices in a friendly, non-judgmental environment, and at the same time learn new songs and music. No experience necessary, only enthusiasm and a positive attitude required. When: Thursdays, 4.30 p.m.

Where: CIM Seminar Room, MC437

For more info : Anna Lin at anlin@cim.mcgill.ca

CIMbernetics Softball Schedule

Mon. July 10	vs The Communicators
Thur. July 20	vs Snafu
Fri. August 4	vs Snafu (again!)

From the "Life is Like a Box of Metaphors" department: HUNTING ELEPHANTS!

Mathematicians hunt elephants by going to Africa, throwing out everything that is not an elephant, and catching one of whatever is left.

Experienced mathematicians will attempt to prove the existence of at least one unique elephant before proceeding to step 1 as a subordinate exercise.

Professors of mathematics will prove the existence of at least one unique elephant and then leave the detection and capture of an actual elephant as an exercise for their graduate students.

Computer scientists hunt elephants by exercising Algorithm A:

1. Go to Africa.
2. Start at the Cape of Good Hope.

3. Work northward in an orderly manner, traversing the continent alternately east and west.
4. During each traverse pass: a. Catch each animal seen.
- b. Compare each animal caught to a known elephant.
- c. Stop when a match is detected.

Experienced computer programmers modify Algorithm A by placing a known elephant in Cairo to ensure that the algorithm will terminate.

Assembly language programmers prefer to execute Algorithm A on their hands and knees.

Engineers hunt elephants by going to Africa, catching gray animals at random, and stopping when any one of them weighs within plus or minus 15 percent of any previously observed elephant.

Economists don't hunt elephants, but they believe that if elephants are paid enough, they will hunt themselves.

Statisticians hunt the first animal they see N times and call it an elephant.

Consultants don't hunt elephants, and many have never hunted anything at all, but they can be hired by the hour to advise those people who do.

Operations research consultants can also measure the correlation of hat size and bullet color to the efficiency of elephant-hunting strategies, if someone else will only identify the elephants.

Politicians don't hunt elephants, but they will share the elephants you catch with the people who voted for them.

Lawyers don't hunt elephants, but they do follow the herds around arguing about who owns the droppings.

Software lawyers will claim that they own an entire herd based on the look and feel of one dropping.

Vice presidents of engineering, research, and development try hard to hunt elephants, but their

staffs are designed to prevent it. When the vice president does get to hunt elephants, the staff will try to ensure that all possible elephants are completely pre-hunted before the vice president sees them. If the vice president does see a nonpre-hunted elephant, the staff will (1) compliment the vice president's keen eyesight and (2) enlarge itself to prevent any recurrence.

Senior managers set broad elephant-hunting policy based on the assumption that elephants are just like field mice, but with deeper voices.

Quality assurance inspectors ignore the elephants and look for mistakes the other hunters made when they were packing the jeep.

Sales people don't hunt elephants but spend their time selling elephants they haven't caught, for delivery two days before the season opens.

Software sales people ship the first thing they catch and write up an invoice for an elephant.

Hardware sales people catch rabbits, paint them gray, and sell them as desktop elephants.

Submitted by Paul Mackenzie

The Top Ten Lies Told by Graduate Students – taken from the Harvard Crimson

10. It doesn't bother me at all that my college roommate is making \$80,000 a year on Wall Street.
9. I'd be delighted to proofread your book/chapter/article.
8. My work has a lot of practical importance.
7. I would never date an undergraduate.
6. Your latest article was so inspiring.
5. I turned down a lot of great job offers to come here.
4. I just have one more book to read and then I'll start writing.
3. The department is giving me so much support.
2. My job prospects look really good.
1. No really, I'll be out of here in only two more years.

Top Five Lies Told by Teaching Assistants:

5. I'm not going to grant any extensions.
4. Call me any time. I'm always available.
3. It doesn't matter what I think; write what you believe.
2. Think of the midterm as a diagnostic tool.
1. My other section is much better prepared than you guys.

You just might be a graduate student if...

- you can analyze the significance of appliances you cannot operate.
- your office is better decorated than your apartment.
- you are startled to meet people who neither need nor want to read.
- you rate coffee shops by the availability of outlets for your laptop.
- there is a microfilm reader in the library that you consider "yours."
- you actually have a preference between microfilm and microfiche.
- you look forward to summers because you're more productive without the distraction of classes.
- you consider all papers to be works in progress.
- professors don't really care when you turn in work any more.
- you find the bibliographies of books more interesting than the actual text.
- you have accepted guilt as an inherent feature of relaxation.
- you find yourself explaining to children that you are in "20th grade".
- you start referring to stories like "Snow White et al."
- you frequently wonder how long you can live on pasta without getting scurvy.
- you look forward to taking some time off to do laundry.
- you have more photocopy cards than credit cards
- you wonder if APA style allows you to cite talking to yourself as "personal communication".

Submitted indirectly by Gilbert Cabana, Biology Department, McGill

CIM TOP TEN

Top Ten Excuses for last month's pathetic Top Ten List

- ⑩ Too busy playing with the Nomad mobile robot's speech synthesizer.
- ⑨ Temperature in the mobile robotics lab caused my brain to seize up.
- ⑧ Lost the good list after I accidentally left it in a white Ford Bronco.
- ⑦ Was caught in the middle of a McGill power transfer.
- ⑥ Not yet recovered from "Celine Dion overload" after having lunch downtown at Nickel's.
- ⑤ I had a headache (a lame excuse, perhaps, but I hear this one all the time...).
- ④ Too overcome by fits of laughter when asked when I was going to do my Ph.D.
- ③ Contracted out parts of the list to CAE.
- ② Received bad advice from JoJo's Psychic Alliance.
- ① Four words: I'm just plain weird.

Submitted by Paul Mackenzie