



McGill

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Newsletter

IEEE Robotics and Automation Conference in Nagoya, Japan

As an interesting sideline to our continuing education here at CIM, several of us were able to attend the 1995 IEEE Robotics and Automation Conference in Nagoya, Japan. Right from the beginning we knew we were in for an exciting time as we wandered the streets of Nagoya looking for our hotel. Finally, after apparently seeing us circle the same area several times with our luggage, a taxi driver stopped and asked us if we were with the Robotics Conference. Apparently we were not the only ones having problems reading the Japanese signs. This turned out to be a continuing source of amusement, frustration and excitement, just trying to do the normal things one does in any Canadian city. Fortunately for us, most of the restaurants had very useful plastic models of their food displayed outside so we were able to see what our food looked like even if we did not always know what we were getting. (I personally had an interesting five minute conversation with a waiter where I was attempting to mime any form of breakfast at one place that had no such helpful models.)

As for the conference itself, it was very well organized and had an attendance of approximately 1000 people. It was however very hard to meet the native Japanese as there were obvious communication difficulties. One gentleman, whose lecture I attended, could barely understand English and yet he gave a 20 minute totally comprehensible speech in English, apparently by phonetic memorisation. (He didn't do as well with the questions as he could not understand them!) This was quite a feat and it is one of many examples of how the Japanese will go to great lengths to accommodate foreigners. The banquet was also quite a feast with never-ending wine glasses and an army of waiters and waitresses running around in white

coats (there seems to be no lack of jobs in the service industry in Japan).

We also had the time to explore numerous temples and shrines in Japan, especially in Kyoto where there are more than 2000 temples. It is impossible for me to describe in words the majestic beauty of the Japanese culture, suffice to say I am making plans to go back there some day.

The night life in Japan was also quite unique. The first establishment we visited we found ourselves ordering Labatt Ice (yes, a Canadian lager) since it was on special at \$6 a bottle! We also managed to find a small club which featured a great Nirvana cover band where the singer couldn't speak English.

As you may have already guessed, the thing I enjoyed the most about Japan was the fact that it was so different. It's hard to get bored in a place where ordering a meal is an adventure.

Submitted by Danny Grant



NEWS AND EVENTS

As mentioned in the May newsletter, Prof. Levine will be on Sabbatical starting September 1, 1995 for a year. During his absence Prof. Jorge Angeles will be the Acting Director. All issues related to CIM should be directed to Prof. Angeles during this period. Prof. Levine is planning to spend much of his time on his research here at the Centre.

CIM to honour Prof. G. Zames

On May 16th Prof. George Zames was awarded the Killam Prize at a ceremony in Ottawa (see June Newsletter). This prize is Canada's most distinguished award in the field of natural sciences, health sciences and engineering. Since many people were away during the summer, we felt we would wait until September to congratulate Prof. Zames officially here at the Centre. CIM will hold a wine and cheese reception in his honor in September and the date will be announced on MOTD. Everyone is invited, so please join us!!

Paul Zsombor-Murray was in Austria this summer to attend the wedding of former CIM visitor Manfred Husty and Claudia. It consisted of a civil ceremony on June 30 in Kitzek, near Leibnitz, about 40km south of Graz followed by a dinner party for family & close friends. Kitzek is in the centre of the steep-hills-&-valleys, picturesque wine growing region of Styria. The next day there was a more elaborate celebration with music, dining, drinking, dancing & various artistic performances for about 100 guests. It was a memorable event for all who attended.

Good bye to...

Andrès Kesckmethy who sent us this message: "We have just been informed that we have our seats confirmed for August 15, so that's the date we will

be heading back. I will return to my former institute, the Fachgebiet Mechatronik, to work on some urgent projects which have come up in the last months. I had a great time here at CIM and I will miss you all very much. I am also very grateful for the support and the wonderful working atmosphere I was able to experience. I hope that some of you will be visiting Germany soon, in which case I'll be happy to welcome you in Metropolitan Duisburg. Hope to see you soon, and best of luck to you all!" Goodbye Andrès and good luck to you too!

Welcome to...

Since May, new students have been registering at the Centre. We have not yet received any personal blurbs for this newsletter but here are their names (you may have already met some of them): Tanya Adamson (room 438 with Prof. Zucker's group), Gordon Lam (at 2020, working with Prof. Angeles), Nicholas Roy & Michael Daum (both in 433 with Prof. Dudek), Mark Phelan (room 434 with Prof. Michalska) and Christos Magdalinos who joins the Speech group in 412). Welcome to CIM!

Lan Kelly Jones-Mackling was born at approximately 7:00 AM on Tuesday, July 18th, weighing 7 lbs, 8 ounces. Proud father Thomas Mackling reports that everyone is well, except for being tired and a wee bit cranky. He has been seen at his desk since then looking rather tired but very happy!!! Congratulations to the family.

Two new babies were born to the occupants of 411 last month: Lim Hun-Ok is the proud father of a baby boy while Mojtaba Ahmadi is still recovering from the early arrival of his daughter. Congratulations to the new Moms & Dads!!

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)

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Orientation session for new students

There will be a CIM Orientation session for new students in September. We'd like to organize some activities for all students and staff after the information sessions so please watch the MOTD during the next few weeks for more information. It will be an opportunity for new students to find out about CIM and to meet the staff, other students, and each other.

Call for donations

CIM recently received a letter from a library in Nigeria that was completely destroyed by fire. They have requested donations of books, journals, printed material and/or funds because they do not have the funding to replace their books. If anyone would like to help out with a donation, please see Janet for more information.

More wedding noose, er, news

July 18 saw a few (well, about 25) fun-loving guys gathering at Thompson House to bid bon voyage to CIM's own **Marc Bolduc** at the first CIM bachelor party, affectionately known as CIM-STAG 1. The purpose was simple: Marc would be married in just over a week, and we wanted to leave him with a few thoughts to ponder as he began his long road toward minivans, tricycles and white picket fences. The challenge for Marc was to assimilate all these thoughts and still remember them the next day. As it turned out, Marc bravely met this challenge, in spite of the 15 mixed drinks he so courageously quaffed. Special thanks to Ahmed Helmy who graciously donated a triple vodka to the cause (ouch!!).

After the spiritual cleansing at Thompson House, the newly-formed Marc Bolduc fan club led Marc downtown for a little sight-seeing. Here, thanks to the entrepreneurial spirit of "The Man" Danny Grant, Marc was able to relax, loosen his tie (!) and enjoy the ambiance. Not being one to miss an

opportunity, Sir Marc also went about securing alternative job skills in the entertainment industry and impressing people from all over the world (even as far away as Norway). As all will agree, it was a very successful endeavour.

11 days later our hero exchanged vows with his new wife Annie at a charming ceremony in Iberville, Quebec. Attended by family and friends, Marc and Annie bravely (all right, maybe a LITTLE bit nervously) stood forward and took the plunge. The reception afterward was an amazing combination of great food (all you can eat! yahoo!!), great dancing (especially Thierry Baron and CIM-alumni Anna Lin), a fun-loving disc jockey, and loads of laughter (much of which came from viewing the bachelor party photos...). The happy couple honeymooned in the Quebec City region for sight-seeing, whale-watching, and general relaxation.

In other wedding news, Oliver Astley will be the next victim, er, lucky guy to join the ranks of the spousally inclined. Oliver will marry his long-time belle Anita in Maine on August 25th. Of course, we couldn't in good faith let him go without a memorable bachelor party, so stay tuned for CIM-STAG 2: The Sequel, coming soon....

Submitted by Paul Mackenzie



CIM TOP TEN

Top Ten Signs Your Bachelor Party was a Smashing Success

- 10** You have new career prospects as an exotic dancer.
- 9** You can't remember a thing.
- 8** You won the bet-when-the-groom-is-going-to-be-sick contest.
- 7** Seagrams, Jack Daniels and Smirnoff all compete for your endorsement services.
- 6** You receive a standing ovation when you step off the elevator the next day.
- 5** You invited wheeling & dealing street-wise stag consultant Danny Grant.
- 4** Visitors from Amsterdam are left with the feeling that their home town seems tamer than they remember.
- 3** After attending your bachelor party, upcoming CIM-stag recipients begin to wonder if getting married is such a good idea after all.
- 2** Photos taken at the party are hot-ticket items on the black market.
- 1** Your name is Marc Bolduc.

Submitted by Paul Mackenzie