



# McGill

C e n t r e f o r

## Intelligent Machines

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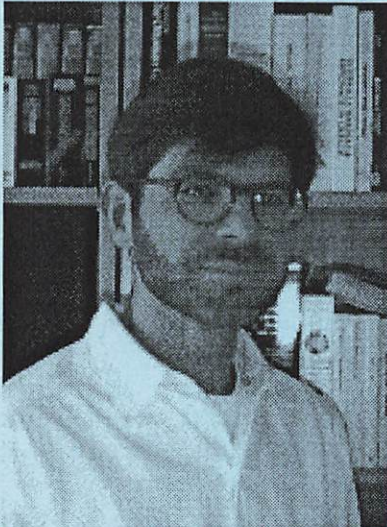
# Newsletter

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### A Heartfelt Farewell

On May 31, CIM and the Department of Mechanical Engineering bid farewell to **Professor Evangelos Papadopoulos** and his wife Evie. To everyone's dismay and envy, after four harsh winters in Canada they decided to return to their beautiful, sunny, homeland Greece with their two lovely children.

Eric Martin presented the following touching tribute to him on behalf of all his students:



"Before beginning, Dr. Papadopoulos reminded us that when we present our work, we must be very sure of our material. So, today, on behalf of his students, I would like to say a few words, sadly but confidently. We would like to thank you very much for your helpful guidance throughout our work. We all learned a lot during our weekly meetings where you were able to share with us your knowledge in many areas of mechanical engineering. To make us understand your points, you always had some analogies between everyday life and a complicated phenomenon of engineering. Complicated notions became clear after only a few minutes of discussion."

"Moreover, you were always available to help us and you never hesitated to give us your full support. We think that you did a great job as our supervisor. You leave us now after giving us a not only a strong background for research, but also in many other aspects of our lives. What more can we ask of a supervisor? Well, we can ask him to stay... but you also taught us that we all have to make decisions, whether it be in research or in life. In our careers and personal lives, some of us may look back to this day as an inspiration for making our own tough decisions. In that sense you are a model."

"Most of us have had the opportunity of attending one of your courses and we can compliment you also for this fine aspect of your work. Your lectures were always very organized, as you are yourself, and you were able to cover a lot of material while taking the time to explain everything. You have this ability to present your lecture at a level that your students are able to understand, but without neglecting any important aspect of the course. We can say that you are as great a lecturer as you are a researcher and supervisor. Everybody at McGill will miss you very much and we are sure that it will be very difficult to replace you, almost impossible. The students in Greece are really lucky to get such a good professor."

"Finally, the best that we could give would be to attain our respective goals and to transmit to others what you have given us. Again, thank you very much!"

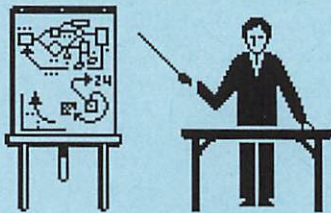
*Submitted by Eric Martin, Glen Bilodeau, Yves Gonthier, Chu-Jen Wu, Daniel Rey, Real Frenette, Bin Mu, Soumen Sarkar*

## NEWS AND EVENTS

### Reflections on IRIS-PRECARN '97

From June 10 to 12, a delegation of CIM-ites descended on Ottawa for the 1997 IRIS-PRECARN conference. To mark the tenth birthday of PRECARN the theme of the conference was "*Celebrating Canadian Success*". To celebrate the passing of the conference, and CIM's strong representation, here are a few highlights that stand out in this delegate's humble memory.

First of all, congratulations are in order to **Ioannis Rekleitis** for winning a Best Poster Award for his submission entitled "*Multirobot Exploration of an Unknown World: Efficiently Reducing Odometry Error*". The criteria were scientific merit and originality, quality of presentation, and relevance.



Every conference is a learning experience. At this one, I learned how to talk about my research in under 60 seconds; to never leave town with a maxed-out credit card; that a fan is indispensable in the residences at Ottawa U.; and that sometimes museums can be more educational than plenary sessions (not that I missed any sessions!).

IRIS-PRECARN offered a great opportunity for CIM-ites to get together and socialize. I found it amazing that I was meeting people who work less than 50 metros away from me for the first time. It was a pleasure to meet some old CIM faces as well, particularly James Elder, who's now an Assistant Professor in Psychology at York, and the boys at Hymarc, who are busy these days digitizing artifacts for the Museum of Civilization.

Beyond CIM, the conference was also an opportunity to make new contacts. The poster sessions and demos offered plenty of opportunity for mingling with students and professors who have similar research interests. The first annual job fair also provided contact opportunities for those of us who are looking for jobs.

Once again, CIM was well represented. We had student posters everywhere in the poster room (no thanks to MP Photo), and **Danny Grant** dazzled observers with his demonstration. **Professors Ferrie and Hayward** from CIM, Merrett from CS and O'Shaughnessy from EE all presented their research. **Professor Dudek's** near-legendary MRL video also made several feature performances – we're still waiting for the Oscar nomination.

If I have one complaint about the conference (apart from the stuffiness of the residences), I believe that it was one shared by many of the attendees. This year's IRIS-PRECARN placed too much emphasis on industry, marketing and applications and not enough on academics. Session after session addressed the issue of meeting the demands of the global economy, the challenges of building a startup company, and, ultimately, finding new ways for the industry to profit from the results of IRIS projects. In the stampede for project funding and product marketing, the academic value of our research was often ignored. Sadly, even sessions that were billed for sharing research results often degenerated into info-mercials (anybody wanna buy a Tri-Clops?). Kudos to Professors Hayward and Ferrie for striving to keep the academics in focus throughout their talks.

Finally, the ultimate highlight was the final banquet/ gala. The Westin Hotel's daring chefs soared to new heights – four courses! The poached salmon and salad with wild-flowers and cornstalks were awfully good. PRECARN's 10th birthday celebration was punctuated by disco tunes, glow-in-the-dark stars, flammable drink menus, helium balloons weighted down by leaky sandbags, and birthday cakes. A good time was had by all.

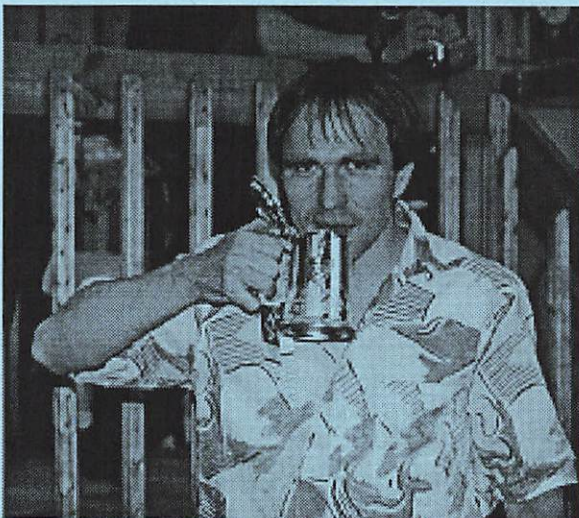
IRIS-PRECARN '97 was a success in terms of networking, and informative in terms of technology development, not to mention that Ottawa is always a fun town to visit. I look forward to next year's conference in Vancouver where CIM will undoubtedly pick up more distinctions, blaze new trails in academic prowess and reach new heights in museum attendance. .... Here's to '98!

*Submitted by Robert Sim*

## Hats off to ...



Congratulations to **Professor Martin Buehler** who has been promoted to the rank of full-time Associate Professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering as of June 1, 1997.



The members of the *Ambulatory Robotics Lab* were quick to help him celebrate the event and quench his thirst.



Congratulations are also due to **Professor Evangelos Papadopoulos** who obtained his tenure on the eve of his departure. Another reminder of how much we will miss him!



Thank you to **Susan Hayes** (and son William) for having the courage to clean out that particularly unappetizing fridge in the Lounge ...



Summer is here and as usual, CIM-ites are taking some precious time off to explore the world. Postcards have arrived addressed to all of us c/o Room 410: **Irene Cartier** sends her regards from the IFToMM Conference in Bulgaria, while on her way to Turkey and Greece; **Paul Zsombor-Murray** and **Pat Gervasi** wrote to us while traveling down the coast of Amalfi in Italy; **Christian Lange** was elated to have visited the Canadian Rockies before returning to Germany. Just for the record, many of us are thrilled just to go roller-blading down in the Old Port under the beautiful Montreal sun!! And if you would like to see what summer students do at CIM for fun ... check out **Pat Gervasi** and **Victor Kabuga's** "Meccano" set in 462!!!



## Alma Mater Student Travel Grant

NEXT DEADLINE: AUGUST 15, 1997  
for meetings taking place October 1, 1997 - January 31, 1998.

Guidelines and Forms for the next competition can be found at : <http://www.mcgill.ca/fgsr>  
click: Fellowships and Awards  
click: Alma Mater Student Travel Grants  
Please note that we will not systematically mail the information to departments. Those departments who do not have access to the Web or who experience difficulties in downloading the forms may contact our office for assistance at 398-3995.

Applications with supporting documents must be received in the Office of Fellowships and Awards, Dawson Hall, Room 408, by August 15, 1997.

Articles & ideas are welcome. Please send them by e-mail to the editor. Deadline for publication is the 5th of every second month.

Editor: Marlene Gray <manager>  
Associate Ed.: Kathleen VanderNoot <kathleen>



## An Inspirational Note

During these trying times, I thought you might be amused by the Editorial that appeared in the recent Newsletter of the International Association for Pattern Recognition.

*Submitted by Martin D. Levine*



Dear Anybody,

How is it for you? You are in Japan, China, India, Russia, Belarus, UK, USA .... You are in 33 different countries. How is it for you? Do they ask you to do research, administration, teaching, to write proposals and form consortia, to write journal papers and get industrial support and do they tell you that there is no money for keeping up your salary with inflation? Do they put you through "research assessment exercises" and "teaching quality assessments" and give you marks for being a "good boy", or a "bad girl"? Do they count papers, citations and grants? Have you ever had a proposal rejected because it did not have industrial support, only to have it resubmitted and re-rejected because it was "so relevant to industry that industry should fund it"? Have you ever felt that you were asked to walk a tight rope over a river with crocodiles below, ready to pick up a little omission or fault so that your proposal is rejected? Have you ever felt that you were playing crazy golf with the hole at the top of the hill, so that if you push too little, the ball does not reach it and if you push too hard, the ball goes to the other side? I bet you have, if you live in a country that believes in market forces!

Market forces perhaps have shaped the world, but market forces in research is a totally modern idea. We have terms now in academic vocabulary like "lobbying" and "professional proposal writing" (apparently it costs about UK£7000 to have your proposal written by an expert).

However, throughout the millennia, humans have found ways of beating even the most stifling and oppressive systems: Researchers fight back now! The common secret is that people no longer submit proposals on what they want to work on; rather, they do the work first, one way or another, and then, knowing where it leads, they submit proposals for funding work that they have already done! Can you imagine Archimedes lobbying Jupiter to fund his research? And can you imagine him adapting to our circumstances and, *after* having discovered the buoyancy force, jumping out of his bath and running naked to Olympus mountain to submit a proposal for research on "throwing precious metals in water" with application to "ships that can sink at will" and exploitation plans for 2,000 years hence?

Adjustability is the art of survival, but it is also the force of peaceful destruction: flowers that adjust, flourish even on concrete, breathing through the pores of cement at the beginning, through the cracks they create later! Let us hope that one day the cracks we open now, will become gaping holes, so that even the most blinking politician, advocates of the market forces in research, will be able to see through them.

*Maria Petrou*

