

## Past President's Report

by Bill Langford, CAIMS•SCMAI President, 2005–7

The very successful 2007 Annual Meeting in the beautiful setting of the Banff Conference Centre marked the end of my two-year term as President of CAIMS•SCMAI. As President, I gained admiration for the many outstanding people who work on behalf of CAIMS•SCMAI. This gives me great optimism for the future growth and success of our Society. In this Report, I would like to summarize some CAIMS•SCMAI activities that I have been involved with in the past two years.

Certainly one highlight of my term as President has been the signing of the Reciprocal Membership Agreement between CAIMS•SCMAI and SIAM. This comes into effect with the 2008 membership year. Under this agreement, a regular member of CAIMS•SCMAI who lives outside the USA is eligible for a 20% discount on annual SIAM membership fees. Similarly, a regular member of SIAM who lives outside of Canada is eligible for a 30% discount on annual CAIMS•SCMAI membership fees. (The differential in the discount percentages is more than offset by the large difference in fees of the two societies.) The full text of the agreement is shown on page 25 and is posted on our website. A SIAM membership form, for CAIMS•SCMAI members wishing to join SIAM at the reciprocal membership rate, is now available on the SIAM website. CAIMS•SCMAI has always enjoyed very good relations with SIAM. Many Canadian applied mathematicians are already members of both societies and this number surely will increase under the new reciprocal agreement. Such an agreement has been a goal of the CAIMS•SCMAI Board for many years. I want to express my heartfelt thanks to former Board Member Leah Keshet and SIAM President Marty Golubitsky for initiating the discussions last year that led to this agreement.

In the past two years I served as the CAIMS•SCMAI representative on the Mathematics-NSERC Liaison Committee that was created to discuss with NSERC officials the impact of proposed changes in the funding mechanisms for the three mathematical sciences institutes (CRM, Fields and PIMS). After much discussion, last year the various proposals crystalized into two options for the funding of the mathematics institutes: (1) the Envelope Option, in which the institute funding and GSC 336+337 Discovery Grant funding would be combined in a common envelope with the possibility to transfer money between them, and (2) the Major Resources Support (MRS) Option, in which the mathematics institutes would be funded independently of Discovery Grants and placed with other institutes in the new MRS Program that was created by NSERC to facilitate access to major experimental and thematic research resources based in Canada. I supported the MRS option and it was this option that NSERC ultimately chose. The three institutes prepared funding proposals for the 2007 competition. CAIMS•SCMAI

sent letters to NSERC in support of all three institutes. Site visits were held in January 2007, with CAIMS•SCMAI represented by Bob Russell at PIMS, Bill Langford at Fields and Jacques Bélair at CRM. The final outcome in March 2007 was very good news for the institutes: an increase of approximately 25% in the annual funding of each institute, for a five year term. At the suggestion of Bob Russell, each of the three institute directors submitted letters for publication in the CAIMS•SCMAI eNews (Vol. 7 No. 3), describing their institute's plans in light of this funding success.

On the other hand, the February 2007 Discovery Grants Competition at NSERC was a particularly difficult one for mathematics research. There were widespread cuts to renewal applications and the success rate for new applicants was unusually low. Personally, I see the root cause of these difficulties as an absence of new funding for the mathematics GSC's at a time when the Canadian mathematics research community is growing in both size and international stature. At the same time, NSERC is undertaking an "International Review of the Discovery Grants Program", according to NSERC, "to determine whether its current awards/applicants funding ratio of 75% in discovery research is consistent with international standards of excellence and whether this funding approach is appropriate." There is a danger that this will shift dramatically the funding of mathematics research in Canada, for which NSERC is the primary source, to a pattern of fewer but larger grants. In response to this situation, a new Mathematics-NSERC Liaison Committee has been formed, to evaluate the impact of the proposed changes in Discovery Grants on mathematics research and to provide a channel for communication between the mathematics research community and NSERC. Once again, I am serving as the CAIMS•SCMAI representative on this Mathematics-NSERC Liaison Committee.

CAIMS•SCMAI is the Canadian member society of the International Council for Industrial and Applied Mathematics (ICIAM) and is one of approximately 25 such national applied mathematics societies throughout the world. Elsewhere in this Newsletter, Ken Jackson has reported on CAIMS•SCMAI involvement in ICIAM. A major activity of ICIAM is to organize every four years the International Congress on Industrial and Applied Mathematics, the most important conference in industrial and applied mathematics in the world. The 2011 Congress will be held in Vancouver, Canada, cohosted by CAIMS•SCMAI, MITACS and SIAM. This is a great coup for Canadian applied mathematics, that will enhance the reputation of CAIMS•SCMAI both nationally and internationally. The Scientific Co-Chairs of ICIAM 2011 are Jerrold Marsden and Ivar Ekeland and the President of ICIAM 2011 is Arvind Gupta of MITACS. An outstanding Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) has been formed. I wish to thank all those who are already at work to make ICIAM 2011 in Vancouver a resounding success, especially Ken Jackson and Bob Russell.

From July 16 to 20, the ICIAM 2007 Congress was held in Zurich, Switzerland. There was an unprecedented level of Canadian participation in ICIAM 2007 at all levels, as described by Ken Jackson in this Newsletter. In addition to a record number of Canadian plenary lectures, the ICIAM call for proposals for Minisymposia received a very strong response from Canadian researchers.

For the future I have great confidence in the continued growth of CAIMS in both size and stature. CAIMS•SCMAI will increase its membership, including new faculty, students, industrial and institutional memberships as we work for greater cooperation with other organizations, national and international, such as NSERC, CMS, SSC, MITACS, SIAM and ICIAM. The new Reciprocity Agreement with SIAM is an important step in this direction, as is our work with NSERC that resulted in increased funding of the mathematics institutes. The growing role of CAIMS•SCMAI in ICIAM, including the hosting of ICIAM 2011, dramatically raises the CAIMS•SCMAI profile on the world stage. Our 30th Anniversary Meeting, to be hosted by the University of Western Ontario in 2009, will be an opportunity to celebrate the maturation of CAIMS•SCMAI as a leading force representing applied and industrial mathematics in Canada and worldwide.

In closing, there are many people that I would like to thank, starting with the organizers of our highly successful 2007 Annual Meeting in Banff. Peter Lancaster and his Scientific Program Committee put together a spectacular program for this meeting, in my view one of the strongest we have ever had. The Organizing Committee, especially Jack Macki and Michael Li, worked tirelessly to make the meeting the huge success that it was. I thank the Applied Mathematics Institute of the University of Alberta for its generous support of this Annual Meeting. Paul Muir, our Treasurer, is doing an excellent job and can take much credit for the sound financial position that our Society now enjoys. Rod Edwards, our multi-talented Secretary, served as Editor of our E-News and Newsletter, maintained the CAIMS•SCMAI website (now in both official languages), handled membership renewals and elections and so much more. Rod has completed his term as Secretary and has earned our heartfelt thanks for his outstanding contributions to CAIMS•SCMAI. I also thank Abba Gumel for taking on the challenging post of Secretary this year. I want to thank all the members of our CAIMS•SCMAI Committees, who gave generously of their time, for example to select the winners of our CAIMS•SCMAI Prizes. Special thanks must go to the Committee Chairs whose terms ended this year: Matt Davison (Cecil Graham Doctoral Dissertation Award), Jianhong Wu (Research Prize), Leah Keshet (Membership), Rod Edwards (Publications), Bob Russell (Nominating) and Sam Shen (Fund Raising). I have to say that I would have been lost without the sage advice of Past-President Ken Jackson and the astute input from President-Elect Bob Russell, on many occasions. CAIMS•SCMAI is an entirely volunteer-run organization and could not survive without the generosity and commitment of talented people such as these. Thank you all!