

## Celebrating 50 Years of IFORS

### Editorial

The activities of IFORS are broad and wide and with this edition of the newsletter the Administration Committee (AC) reports on these activities. The year 2009 also marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the establishment of IFORS. It therefore is appropriate to congratulate IFORS with this major milestone! Much has happened over the fifty years and through the tireless efforts of IFORS, Operations Research is not only used and applied in almost all areas of life but the international community is now very well represented. In this respect IFORS welcomes its latest new member to the OR community, namely the national OR society of Uruguay (AUDIIO) (Informatics and Operational Research Uruguayan Association). AUDIIO is the 49<sup>th</sup> national OR society to join IFORS – almost 50 members in the 50<sup>th</sup> year! Enjoy reading this annual report.

Hans W Ittmann

Newsletter editor, [hittmann@csir.co.za](mailto:hittmann@csir.co.za)



### IFORS President's Report

Being a Triennial Conference year, 2008 was significant but made doubly momentous as IFORS celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Conscious efforts were spent into putting societies at center stage, figuratively and literally. It was but fitting that the communities which make up the federation, namely, its 48 national societies, came and were represented in full force for the festivities.

### Conferences

The Chairman for Conferences, Mike Trick, left no stones unturned in making sure that the conference was not only up to par as far as Triennial conferences go, but that activities fitting a half century celebration were mounted. The three sessions on the IFORS Past, Present and Future were well-attended and raised thought-provoking questions on what is in store for the future IFORS. The dinner ceremony with presentation of certificates to the national representatives was, as expected from Mike, lively and well-organized.

### Website

Following up on what the conference had achieved, efforts to enhance the connection with national societies continued in cyberspace, through the IFORS website. Follow up activities involved researching national society sites and providing links to them, updating national society information, putting up of a photo gallery, and posting of announcements for member society conferences. Member services were improved through the introduction of member-restricted areas and an on-line voting facility. Prior to this, the IFORS-contracted web-developer kicked off 2008 by giving the website a "new look," complete with features that made it more interactive for visitors. This was made possible by an improved layout and navigation as well as the installation of a news management system. The RSS Feed and Search facilities were also put up, soon after the Language Translation facility was used, both to gather information from the non-English member society sites as well as to provide visitors the option to view the page in another language. Apparently, these actions were seen favourably, based on the increased hits recorded by the newly put-up website visitor statistics and tracking facility.

# ANNUAL REPORT 2008

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## Newsletter

As far as communicating with its constituent members, the IFORS News, under the editorship of Hans Iltmann, saw the circulation of a complete set of quarterly issues for 2008, having just been launched in June 2007. Except for the June 2008 issue which was devoted to the 2007 Annual Report, the newsletter featured regular, relevant and refreshing perspectives on the OR discipline, which include: national events from member society China and new member Slovenia; the ELAVIO young scholars program; IFORS developing country initiatives; perspectives both from IFORS distinguished lecturers and past IFORS officers; write ups of the IFORS Prize winning papers; as well as other scholarly takes on various OR topics. Even as the IFORS News has continued to provide member societies with a well balanced mix of IFORS news, insights and researches, the editor has consistently requested for contributions from its readers.

All the issues are downloadable from the IFORS website. Only the June 2008 issue featuring the 2007 Annual report were printed and distributed during the Triennial Conference General Membership meeting and mailed to member societies.

The IFORS News has also covered main activities and initiatives of the Developing Countries Committee - it will be remembered that Hans had previously edited the *Direct Connection to Developing Countries* newsletter before he was handed the role of covering all IFORS activities through the IFORS News.

## Developing Country Activities

Developing country activities were highlighted in the Triennial conference through the presentation of the IFORS Prize. Paul Fatti, acting as Chair of the 2008 IFORS Prize, commended the continuous improvement in the quality of the papers received by the Triennial competition. Out of the fifteen submissions, eight finalists were chosen for presentation in South Africa. The USD 2,000 and USD 1,500 cash prizes were awarded to: the winner: Tunisian nationals Haouari M., Aissaoui N., Berrima K., Sherali H.D. and Mansour F.Z. for their article on *Integrated Aircraft Fleetling and Routing at TunisAir*; and to the runner up Raad D., Sinske A. and van Vuuren J. who presented the South African entry on *Robust Multi-objective Optimization for Water Distribution System Design Using a Meta-heuristic*.

IFORS sponsorship of the Operations Research Practice for Africa conference for 2008 or ORPA4, was one of the activities pursued in support of the developing country initiatives. With the help of IFORS funding, the fourth annual conference which focused on the use of operations research to address urban transportation and water resource management issues in Africa was held in Washington, D.C. ORPA 4 was intended to help participants working on water or urban transportation problems in Africa to better understand how operations research could help them resolve problems. Participants included researchers, students, policy makers, and representatives from NPOs/ NGOs involved in African urban transportation and water issues. On the other hand, operations researchers were provided a venue for understanding the complexities of such problems in the African context. Hans Iltmann's *Perspectives on Urban Transport in South Africa with Specific Reference to OR Applications* provided an overview of problems faced in the urban transport arena in South Africa.

A review and re-think of developing country initiatives was undertaken by Horacio Hideki Yanasse. A suggestion put forth during the International Conference on OR for Development (ICORD) V and VI resulted in a call for Proposals issued by DC Co-Chair Theo Stewart that would lead to the organization of smaller workshops leading up to the ICORD. To be supported by an IFORS allocation of USD 10,000 intended to defray the cost of such workshops, the new structure aims to achieve:

- A greater momentum for the ORD programme through greater frequency and visibility of actions;

- Improved focus for ORD activities on selected problem-oriented themes.

While three inquiries had been received in 2008 in response to this call, a formal proposal has yet to be received.

The possibility of including educational workshops linked to some or all of the above workshops have been included in the above call. The educational workshops are aimed at developing appropriate OR skills in the region have been included in the above call.

The IFORS sponsorship of the 2008 ALIO/INFORMS/IFORS/ EURO Workshop on OR Education was a step in this direction. The workshop held in conjunction with the 2008 Latin-Ibero-American Conference on Operations Research (XIV CLAIO) held in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia on September 9-12, 2008, featured demonstrations and presentations on effective methods for quantitative education. IFORS-sponsored speaker was Fredrik Odgaard of the Western Ontario University, Canada who led a workshop on *Bringing the Exciting Real World of OR Into the Classroom*. Participants from Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Portugal, Spain, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela were provided the opportunity to share ideas across cultures and learn from the experiences of others.

## Publications

Initiatives started during the administration of Tom Magnanti for the Publications, specifically, the International Abstracts in Operations Research (IAOR) and International Transactions in Operational Research (ITOR) were pursued with IFORS VP Michel Gendreau performing an oversight role for the various work in progress.

The IAOR system development seeks to modernize IAOR by making it an "online-based" rather than a "print-based" product. Development activities to improve speed and comprehensiveness in acquiring abstracts and allowing access to online subscribers continued under the direction of Hugh Bradley and IAOR editor David Smith. Progress of work in 2008 indicates that the new search technology will be in place for 2009. These development activities accounted for the 81% increase in expenses for 2008. A net income increase coming from increased revenues and normalization of operating expenses are expected to be felt onwards of 2010.

It will be remembered that ITOR appointed a new editor in Celso Ribeiro last year. He has since implemented various initiatives. Results for 2008 showed not only an increase in the number of issues, pages and papers published, but also an impressive earnings increase of 31% over the previous year. In addition, Celso and the publisher have started the process of obtaining ISI recognition for the journal.

## IFORS Distinguished Lecture

A regular IFORS contribution to regional activities which at the same time aims to recognize OR professionals who have excelled in their fields is the IFORS Distinguished Lecture (IDL). The nomination, screening and selection process for the 2008 IDLs was headed by Conference Chair, Michael Trick. IDL awards were given to: Satvros Zenios, Rector of the University of Cyprus for the ALIO conference and Michel Balinski of the École Polytechnique, Paris, for the INFORMS regional conference.



## Regional Activities

Regional Vice Presidents acknowledged the above support from IFORS as they continued performing their roles as IFORS "ambassadors" to their respective areas, namely: ALIO for the Latin American, APORS for the Asia Pacific, EURO for the European (including Africa), and NORAM for the North American regions.

IFORS VP for EURO M.Grazia Speranza, pointed out that although EURO has traditionally not held a EURO conference in an IFORS Triennial year following an agreement with IFORS, numerous national conferences, as well as the conferences, publications and annual meetings of the 28 EURO Working Groups involved with all major topics of OR have kept the region as active as ever.

Horacio Hideki Yanasse, as IFORS VP for ALIO, managed the dissemination of information, evaluation of applicants and selection of the IFORS scholar to the ELAVIO summer school in Peru. This represents one of IFORS efforts to give networking opportunities for young Operations Researchers who come from developing countries. The 2008 regional CLAIO conference held in Colombia helped in further promoting this exchange of experiences and information among researchers, academicians and practitioners working in the region.

Tatsuo Oyama acting as IFORS VP for APORS monitored and ensured that activities are in place for the holding of the triennial APORS conference in 2009. He has in the meantime also been very involved with another annual regional OR conference for the ISORA.

Michael Trick, wearing his regional VP for NORAM hat, reported on the 2008 publications, membership status, awards granted and conferences held by the two societies which make up the NORAM, namely: INFORMS and CORS.

## IFORS Finances

It need not be mentioned that the above activities were made possible by the judicious use and astute management of the IFORS funds, responsibility for which falls on the shoulders of the IFORS Treasurer Peter Bell. The Treasurer reports a decline in net income from 2007, resulting from increased expenses and flat revenues. The increased expenses reflect the significant investment in the on-line IAOR initiative, coupled with some unfavourable exchange rate effects. However, the publications initiatives on stream are expected to pay off in the following years. Backed by a conservative investment strategy, the Treasurer is confident that IFORS remains in good financial health and is well-positioned to tackle its projects.

It is with this same optimism that I end this report for 2008, along with an assurance that your AC is hard at work, building on the efforts invested by its past, forward-looking leaders. Your continued involvement in and support of IFORS will all the more make it a significant journey in the next 50 years.

by **Elise del Rosario**  
IFORS President, [elise@jgdelrosario.com](mailto:elise@jgdelrosario.com)

# MEETINGS REPORT

2008 was the year of the 18<sup>th</sup> Triennial Conference of IFORS, held for the first time on the African Continent. The conference, held July 13-18 in Sandton, South Africa, went off without a hitch. The conference had 677 attendees from 58 countries, truly making this an international event. Our hosts, the Operational Research Society of South Africa deserve our thanks for the excellent conference. Organizing Chair Hans Ittmann and Program Chair John Bartholdi deserve special thanks for their efforts on behalf of IFORS and the conference. There were a number of new activities at the conference, many in conjunction with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations that deserve mention:

- There was a plenary presentation every day, not just the opening and closing plenary. This allowed the conference as a whole to come together and really unified the conference.
- The conference dinner included a special presentation by IFORS President Elise del Rosario to a representative of every national society. It was very impressive to see the 50 countries march in the "Members Parade" and was a great reminder of how broad an organization IFORS is.
- There were panel discussions on the Past, Present, and Future of IFORS, which led to a spirited discussion of what IFORS should be.

Based on some of the discussions, we are putting together a section of the website to allow members a better opportunity to review various issues they face, including more extensive information on proposed sites for future conferences.

The next conference will be held July 10-15, 2011 in Melbourne Australia with the Australian Society for Operations Research. Organizing Committee Chair is Patrick Tobin of the Australian Catholic University and Program Chair is Janny Leung of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. The website for the conference is <http://www.ifors2011.org>

Since 2008 was a Triennial Conference year, there were fewer opportunities to appoint IFORS Distinguished Lecturers, but two such lectures were given. Satvros Zenios, Rector of the University of Cyprus, spoke at the XIV Latin Ibero – American Congress on Operations Research (CLAIO) 2008 in Cartagena, Columbia. Michel Balinski, École Polytechnique, Paris, spoke at the INFORMS conference held in Washington, DC. In 2009, the IFORS Distinguished Lecturers will be:

- Richard Karp, Berkeley, appointed for EURO, Bonn, Germany
- Christos Papadimitriou, Berkeley, for CORS-SCRO/INFORMS Toronto, Canada
- Jonathan Caulkins, Carnegie Mellon University, for APORS Jaipur, India.

by **Michael Trick**  
VP, [trick@cmu.edu](mailto:trick@cmu.edu)

IFORS Past Presidents - Heiner Muller-Merbach, Brian Haley, Peter Bell, Andreas Weintraub, Paulo Toth and Tom Magnanti with Elise del Rosario.



# Regional Reports

## Association of Latin-Iberoamerican Operations Research Societies (ALIO)

ALIO (<http://www.dc.uba.ar/alio>) was created in Rio de Janeiro in 1982, following agreements in the preceding year among several IO researchers and practitioners from Argentina, Brazil and Chile. At present, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela, along with societies from Spain (SEIO) and Portugal (APDIO) comprise the regional grouping.

The current board of ALIO is composed of:

President:

- Héctor Cancela, Universidad de la República, Uruguay, [cancela@fing.edu.uy](mailto:cancela@fing.edu.uy).

Vice-presidents:

- Andrés Medaglia, Universidad de los Andes, Colombia, [amedagli@uniandes.co](mailto:amedagli@uniandes.co)
- Marcela González Araya, Universidad de Talca, Chile, [mgonzalez@utalca.cl](mailto:mgonzalez@utalca.cl)

Secretary:

- Nélide Etchebest, Universidad Nacional de la Plata, Argentina, [opti@cacho.mate.unlp.edu.ar](mailto:opti@cacho.mate.unlp.edu.ar)
- IFORS-Vice-president representing ALIO:  
Horacio Hideki Yanasse, Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas Espaciais, Brasil, [horacio@lac.inpe.br](mailto:horacio@lac.inpe.br)

ALIO's purpose is to promote the exchange of experiences and information among researchers, academicians and practitioners working on Operations Research in the region, and foment the use of techniques and methodologies related to this discipline. The main goals are: to contribute, establish, and deepen ties between researchers and practitioners of countries within ALIO, and to help young undergraduate and graduate students in their professional development.

These goals are achieved through the following two events: the CLAIO (Latin-Iberoamerican Congress on Operations Research), which from 1982 has been held biannually in different Latin American cities, and the ELAVIO (Escuela Latinoamericana de Verano de Investigación Operativa) that has been held annually since 1994 and attended by some 50 to 70 young scholars from Latin America and more recently from other countries, following agreements with IFORS, CORS and EURO.

XIV CLAIO (<http://www.socio.org.co/CLAIO2008>), held in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, from September 9 to 12, 2008, was organized by the Colombian Operations Research Society, SOCIO (Sociedad Colombiana de Investigación Operativa). The chair of the organizing committee was Prof. Jesús M. Velasquez from OPTEX Mathematical Modeling Systems Ltd, Colombia. The chair of the academic committee was Carlos Paternina from Universidad del Norte, Colombia. The conference was a success, featuring approximately 800 registered participants, over 650 papers, and 10 plenary speakers. The IFORS Distinguished Lecturer, Prof. Stavros A. Zenios was among the plenary speakers. During the meeting in Cartagena de Indias, an ALIO regular meeting was held, and the current board was elected.

The XV CLAIO will be held in 2010 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Activities towards the organization of this meeting are under way. It is going to be a joint meeting with INFORMS.

XIII ELAVIO (<http://sistemas.unmsm.edu.pe/elavio2008/>) was held in Chosica-Lima, Peru, from February 4 to 8, 2008, organized by

Professors Rosa Delgadillo and David Mauricio from Facultades de Ingeniería de Sistemas y de Matemáticas – Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, Peru. The conference had 57 registered participants, and some 35 papers by young researchers were presented, in addition to the tutorials and papers of the invited speakers. Majority of those attending were from the home country; but in all, participants came from 11 different countries.

The young researchers sponsored by CORS and EURO were: Navneet Vidyarthi, from Canada; Morteza Purakbar from Holland and Yael Berstein, from Israel. Adonis Robilla Cagape from the Phillipines was the IFORS fellow selected among 10 applicants. Andrés Medaglia (Colombia), Héctor Cancela (Uruguay), Horacio Hideki Yanasse (Brazil), Luciana Salette Buriol (Brazil), Nélio Domingues Pizzolato (Brazil) gave tutorials and/or invited talks.

The XIV ELAVIO (<http://www.udo.mx/elavio2009>) will be held in El Fuerte (Sinaloa) from August 9-14, 2009. It is being organized by Professors Juan Carlos Leyva López, from Universidad de Occidente, Ricardo Aceves, from Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, María Auxilio Osorio, from Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, Roger Z. Ríos, from Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León, Claudio López Miranda, from Universidad de Sonora, and Jorge Navarro Castillo, from Universidad Autónoma de Sinaloa., all in Mexico.

Another conference in the region held in December 2008 was the VI ALIO/EURO Workshop on Applied Combinatorial Optimization, held in Buenos Aires, Argentina. It was organized by the Combinatorial Optimization Group of Computer Sciences Department at Science School, Buenos Aires University. Isabel Méndez-Díaz, Graciela Nasini and Paula Zabala composed the Organizing Committee. The workshop had over 60 registered participants, around 90 papers, and 8 plenary presentations. Participants came from Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Ecuador, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Peru, Paraguay, Spain, Uruguay, and the USA.

More details about ALIO activities and news can be seen, in Spanish and in English, at <http://www.dc.uba.ar/alio>

by **Horacio Hideki Yanasse**  
VP ALIO, [horacio@lac.inpe.br](mailto:horacio@lac.inpe.br)

## Association of Asia Pacific Operations Research Societies within IFORS (APORS)

Activities for 2008 focused on coordinating preparations for the 8th Association of Asia Pacific Operational Research Societies (APORS within IFORS) Conference. This was finalized to be held from December 6 to 9, 2009 in Jaipur, India. With the theme "Operations Research for Emerging Economies," this Triennial conference will be hosted by the Operational Research Society of India.

The international community is encouraged to take note of the following dates:

- Deadline for abstract submission:  
September 15, 2009
- Notification of acceptance:  
October 15, 2009
- Deadline for early registration:  
July 31, 2009
- Deadline for author registration:  
November 06, 2009

Information is available at [www.apors2009.com](http://www.apors2009.com)



### Regional Reports - continued

This will also be the venue for the APORS Council meeting where the new officers for the term 2010-12 will be elected. Representation from member societies Australian Society for Operations Research (ASOR), Operations Research Society of China (ORSC), Operations Research Society of Bangladesh (ORSB), Operational Research Society of India (ORSI), Operations Research Society of Japan (ORSJ), Korean Operations Research and Management Science Society (KORMS), Management Science/Operations Research Society of Malaysia (MSORSM), Operational Research Society of New Zealand, Operations Research Society of the Philippines (ORSP) and the Operational Research Society of Singapore (ORSS).

Another regional initiative, the annual Symposium on Operations Research and Its Applications (ISORA 2009), organized by Asia-Pacific Operations Research Center (APORC) under APORS and the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) was held in 2008 and will again happen in Zhangjiajie, China from September 20 to 22, 2009. ISORA is a series international symposium which seeks to provide an international forum for scientists, researchers, educators, and practitioners in OR/MS to exchange ideas and approaches, to present research findings and state-of-the-art solutions, to share experiences on potentials and limits, and to open new avenues of research and developments, on all issues and topics related to the theories and applications of Operations Research. Schedules for this activity follow:

- Deadline for abstract submission:  
May 31, 2009
- Deadline for early registration:  
August 15, 2009

More details on the ISORA can be seen at <http://www.aporc.org>.

by **Tatsuo Oyama**

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## Association of European Operational Research Societies within IFORS (EURO)

The President of EURO for 2007 and 2008 has been Martine Labbé, from Belgium. The current EURO Executive Committee members, besides the president, are Gerhard Wäscher (Germany), Marc Sevaux (France), Bjarni Kristjánsson (UK), Jesper Larsen (Denmark). The permanent treasurer is Marino Widmer (Switzerland) and the webmaster is Bernard Fortz (Belgium). Philippe Van Asbroeck is the permanent secretary and Véronique Bastin the newsletter editor. For 2009, Valerie Belton, from UK takes over as the EURO president.

The members of EURO are full members of IFORS and comprise the national OR societies of countries located within or nearby Europe. EURO represents 30 national OR societies: Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom. In 2008 IFORS and EURO welcomed a new member society, the Slovenian Society.

The EURO conference is held yearly, except during an IFORS Triennial conference year, in order to encourage the participation of Europeans in the IFORS conference. Thus, for 2008, many European OR researchers participated and contributed to the success of the IFORS conference which took place in Sandton, South Africa.

Most of the EURO member societies organized in 2008 their national conferences, many of which have increasingly become international, as they continue to attract not only OR professionals from within, but also from other European and non-European countries.

The 28 EURO Working Groups represent Europe-wide scientific networks in all major topics of OR. Most EURO Working Groups had a meeting in 2008 where the members exchanged ideas, experiences

and research results, and supported each other in research work. In addition to their annual meetings, the groups also have other ways of working; for example, they organise sessions in conferences, publish feature issues of the European Journal of Operational Research or other OR journals, and organise conferences or seminars.

In addition to the large EURO-k conferences considering all possible OR-subjects and as a supplement to the established EURO Working Groups, a series of so-called Mini EURO Conferences (MEC) was initiated in 1984. The objective is to assemble a limited number of specialists around a specific theme. In May 2008, a Mini EURO Conference, organized by Leonidas Sakalauskas, was held in Neringa (Lithuania) on 'Continuous Optimization and Knowledge Based Technologies'.

The 23rd EURO conference will take place in Bonn, July 5 - 8, 2009. The previous EURO conference was held in Prague in 2007 and was a great success with about 2000 participants. We expect the Bonn conference to be as successful. In the meantime the EURO Executive Committee has formed the Juries in preparation for the awarding, in Bonn, of the following:

- Excellence in Practice Award
- Euro Doctoral Dissertation Award
- Gold Medal
- Management Science Strategic Innovation Prize
- EURO Distinguished Service Medal

Extensive information about EURO and its activities may be found in the EURO website: [www.euro-online.org](http://www.euro-online.org).

by **M. Grazia Speranza**

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## Association of North American OR Societies (NORAM)

The societies that make up NORAM, the Canadian Operational Research Society and the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences continue to be active, with a host of conferences, prizes, and other activities.

CORS (The Canadian Operational Research Society) celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2008. Its annual conference was held in Quebec. Prizes awarded included the CORS Order of Merit (contributions by a CORS member to operational research) to Alain Martel, Faculté des sciences de l'administration, Université Laval; the Omand Solandt Award (organization making an outstanding contribution to operational research in Canada) to R&D pour la défense Canada - Valcartier; and the Harold Larnder Prize (international distinction in Operational Research) to IFORS Past-President Tom Magnanti. The 2009 conference will be held with INFORMS in Toronto, Ontario (June 14-17, 2009). The membership of CORS is currently 462, an increase of 20 over the membership one year ago.

INFORMS held its largest conference ever in October, 2008 in Washington D.C. with over 3900 presentations. As is its practice, INFORMS gave out a number of awards at that conference, including the John von Neumann Theory Prize to Frank Kelly, the President's Award (contributions to humanity) to Margaret Brandeau, and the Lanchester Prize (best English-language publication) to Warren Adams, Hanif Sherali, and Lawrence Wein. The Society held its "Practice Meeting" in April, 2008 in Baltimore and awarded its Edelman Prize to a team that worked on scheduling the train system in the Netherlands. In 2009, INFORMS will hold a June conference jointly with CORS, its Practice Meeting in April in Phoenix, and its Annual Meeting in October in San Diego.

by **Michael Trick**

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# IFORS PUBLICATIONS REPORT 2008

Since its very beginnings, publications have played a very important role within IFORS. In fact, besides the triennial conferences, the *International Abstracts in Operations Research (IAOR)* has probably been, since 1961, the most visible contribution of the Federation to the O.R. community. For many years, IAOR has been a key tool for those wishing to know what was being published in O.R. journals around the world. Furthermore, IAOR has been a very significant source of revenues for IFORS. Since 1994, IFORS has also sponsored a second publication, the *International Transactions in Operational Research (ITOR)*, a journal publishing scientific articles on a variety of O.R. topics. Among other things, a vast number of issues of *ITOR* have been devoted to the publication of papers presented during the triennial conferences. As time passes, both IAOR and *ITOR* have to face critical challenges with respect to their usefulness and their credibility. In that respect, 2008 has been an extremely important year with major developments for both publications.

## ITOR

Since he took over as Editor-in-chief of *ITOR* in February 2007, Celso Ribeiro has rejuvenated the Editorial Board and revisited the editorial policy of the journal. The new editorial policy gives a lot of importance to special issues focused on current topics, as well as to international perspectives of operations research, in particular, the applications of O.R. in development, a subject that is seldom covered by other major O.R. journals. Five calls for papers for special issues have been announced along the year. The first two special issues are scheduled to appear in 2009.

The journal is continuing to improve as a commercial success. Total Revenue increased by 17% and Expenses increased by only 9%, resulting in an Earnings increase of 31%. Most of the revenue improvement came from a continued increase in library members through Consortia Subscriptions. At the end of 2008, over 2,220 libraries around the world had paid access to the current content of *ITOR* through library consortia. 610 libraries in developing countries were also provided online access to *ITOR* for free or at low cost. Conventional Institutional Subscriptions declined by 1 to 72 and Individual Member Subscribers including IFORS Triennial Conference delegates declined by 1 to 911. There has been a significant shift from print to online for institutional subscriptions during recent year: online subscriptions represented 36% of the total by the end of 2008 compared to only 17% at the end of 2005.

Volume 15 (2008) consisted of 6 issues in 782 pages, a 30% increase over Volume 14. The number of full, technical papers published was also up significantly to 38 compared to 35 in Volume 14. The number of submissions also increased with respect to 2008.

The new electronic editorial office for *ITOR*, powered by Manuscript Central, was also launched in November 2008, increasing the effectiveness of the refereeing procedure and contributing to the reduction of the average refereeing time.

One of the major challenges faced by *ITOR* is being recognized as a major journal. In particular, in the past, *ITOR* has not been able to secure ISI coverage, which is a key factor for attracting papers from some sources: there are universities all around the world that will only take into account ISI journals when assessing tenure or promotion cases. Together with the Publisher of *ITOR*, Celso has started

the process to obtain ISI recognition for the journal. This is a complex process, which has necessitated significant effort and which will be completed in 2009.

## IAOR

This journal continues to be a major financial contributor to IFORS. In 2008, Institutional Subscription revenue was up 8.7%, reflecting price increases, even though Institutional Subscriptions declined from 220 in 2007 to 211 in 2008. Revenue from Society Licensing, which permits online access for all members of a subscribing IFORS Society, dropped to essentially zero because of an invoicing oversight, which has been corrected for 2009. Total Revenue was up 3.2%. Operating Expense, including the first of a three-year amortization of the cost of developing the new *IAOR* Online System, was up 81%. The resulting decline in profit to IFORS is a reversal of the upward trend of the past 10 years, which had been driven by price increases in the face of declining Institutional Subscriptions. The marketplace is now resisting those price increases. However, the longer-term finances look good now that the new *IAOR* Online System is operating. Site License sales for subscriber access are encouraging, and in 2010, the final year of the amortization charge, which has been reduced because the project was completed under budget, we expect the profit to IFORS to return to normal, and grow from there.

Over the last few years, following the recommendations of the *IAOR* Strategic Planning Committee, a comprehensive plan of action was undertaken to completely transform *IAOR* from a paper-based publication to an online journal capable of meeting the challenges created by the widespread availability of powerful browsers on the Internet. The objectives of this transformation are to regain *IAOR*'s role as the "First Source" for those researching the OR literature and to maintain its profitability for IFORS and its Publisher.

A major step along the path towards the new *IAOR* Online has been the development of a new "Editor's Workbench" to allow the capture of source materials electronically to the greatest extent possible. Statistics indicate that 93% of the abstracts could be supplied to *IAOR* electronically by publishers at the time of publication. Under the new system, the Editorial Office will cover all of the primary Operations Research journals, either electronically or by manual entry, and do all the

indexing to insure consistency and timeliness. Although abstract processing under the new system will change, each Member Society will still be responsible to provide a Contributing Editor for their country, but with a new role, namely, to alert the Editorial Office about new journals and to submit relevant OR materials from their country not already covered by the Editorial Office.

The first release of the Editor's Workbench began user testing in August 2008. After considerable testing by David Smith, the Editor-in-chief, and the development teams, the live Workbench was launched in early December 2008. Obtaining abstracts and citations electronically from publishers proved to be more complicated and time consuming than anticipated, but more than half of the 150 journals routinely screened and indexed by *IAOR* are now providing electronic data at the time of publication. Most of the others are in process of administrative approval or testing. There is a separate group of journals which can provide electronic data, but not in the format required by the Workbench. These journals will be abstracted from their electronic files. Finally, a small number of journals are unable to provide electronic data in any usable form, and they will continue to be handled manually from the printed issues.

Issues 1 and 2 of the 2009 volume of *IAOR* were produced using the "old" workflow. However, issue 3 is being produced using electronic output from the Workbench. The Workbench will continue to undergo refinements and further testing during 2009.

The Beta version of *IAOR* Online was launched, as planned, at the IFORS Triennial Conference in South Africa in July 2008 using a database created from existing 20-year archives of indexed abstracts. These archives were completed by retrieving and indexing missing abstracts from major OR journals. Marketing efforts throughout 2008 focused on publicizing the Beta version of *IAOR* Online, with site demos, showcards, and fliers at the IFORS, ORS, and INFORMS conferences. Version 1.0 of *IAOR* Online, with the complete 20-year data archive, was launched on January 1, 2009. A major promotional campaign profiling the new *IAOR* Online will be undertaken in 2009.

In April 2008, the Publisher, Palgrave, implemented a new business model whereby online access to *IAOR* is sold as a site license. Sales are done by a separate group, the Site License Business Unit, which sells the full online catalog of Palgrave-Macmillan and



**IFORS Publications Report - continued**

Nature Publishing Group. The launch in April 2008 allowed them significant time to talk to customers, librarians, and consortia, ahead of the placement of orders for 2009. However, since the new *IAOR* Online was not yet available, selling it did not begin until the last quarter of 2008. Despite this late start, more than £5,000 revenue in 2008 is attributable to online/site license sales.

Volume 59 (2008) of *IAOR* consisted of 8 issues containing 4778 abstracts, a 24 % increase from 2007. This increase reflects both the recent upward trend in the number of abstracts included in *IAOR* and the decision to clear the backlog of abstracts that had accumulated by mid-2008. The backlog was cleared by adding 236 pages to the planned number of 1,504 for a total of 1,740 pages for the year.

For each article, *IAOR* provides an abstract, with title, author name and affiliation, and bibliographic information. *IAOR* Editors add value to the abstracts by identifying and including in the indexing OR concepts which are not explicit in the original published abstract. The table below shows by source the number of abstracts published in 2008. Most of the sources are identified by country of publication, but some abstracts are submitted by Contributing Editors responsible for specific application areas. The preponderance of abstracts from the Netherlands reflects the number of OR journals published there.

**SOURCE OF ABSTRACTS PUBLISHED IN IAOR DURING 2008**

Source	No. of Abstracts
Australia	1
Belarus	23
Belgium	1
Brazil	120
Canada	36
China	117
Cuba	21
Denmark	1
Finland	9
Forestry	3
France	25
Germany	45
Greece	14
Hungary	17
India	68
Japan	42
Netherlands	1091
Portugal	18
Production (NL journals)	114
Production (UK journals)	140
Production (US journals)	59
Singapore	32

Source	No. of Abstracts
Slovenia	13
South Africa	14
South Korea	37
Spain	1
Taiwan	5
Transport (NL journals)	1
Turkey	8
United Kingdom	1598
United States	1104

As in previous years, while these numbers are impressive, the real story is in what is missing. There were no abstracts submitted from several National Contributing Editors. This

must result in some important papers missing from *IAOR*, which undermines its credibility. The number of volunteer Contributing Editors has become so large that there is continual turnover, leading to spotty coverage. National Societies do not always report changes in their Contributing Editors promptly, or sometimes at all, to the Editor-in-Chief, and in some instances fail to replace a Contributing Editor who steps down, resulting in gaps in coverage. And occasionally Contributing Editors become lax. It is an objective of the new computer system to provide tracking reports to the Editor-in-Chief to help correct these problems.

**by Michel Gendreau**  
*VP and Publications Chair,*  
*michel.gendreau@cirrelt.ca* ■



# Treasurer's Report

The IFORS financial position continues to be strong. The audited results for 2008 show a deficit of \$15,863 which is a decline from the surplus in 2007 (\$98,691). Royalty payments for *IAOR* and *ITOR* (Journal Royalties are earned in Pounds Sterling but expressed in US Dollars.) both declined from 2007 to 2008. The decline in *IAOR* royalties reflects a significant investment in the new on-line *IAOR* as well as a large decline in the exchange rate. Revenues from Member Subscriptions were down at \$17,453. Adding income from the IFORS South Africa conference (\$84,300) resulted in a small increase in total income for the year.

Expenses more than doubled from 2007 (\$102,413) to 2008 (\$225,145) largely as a result of expenses directly associated with the conference (\$79,102) and increased editorial expenses for *ITOR* and *IAOR*. Expenses for core activities (Committees, and Secretariat) were roughly constant. The end result was a small decline in overall Net Income.

The 2009 budget (approved by the IFORS AC in South Africa) shows an operating profit of \$15,272 although I am now expecting a modest loss as a result of a decline in the sterling/\$ exchange rate and interest rates.

Looking ahead to the 2010 budget, IFORS should begin seeing the results of initiatives underway with respect to publications that are designed to secure IFORS future income streams from *IAOR* and *ITOR*.

On balance, the small loss in 2008 did not materially change IFORS financial strength. Our very conservative investment strategy has left our reserves isolated from the economic downturn. Prospects for the future are sound with the only significant financial threat being the potential decline in *IAOR* royalties and outside factors such as interest rates and exchange rates. In view of the Society's financial position and prospects, no change in member society dues is recommended at this time.

**By Peter Bell**  
*Treasurer, pbell@ivey.ca*



# The 2008 IFORS Prize for OR in Development

## Introduction

As has become customary the OR in Development Prize competition was run again during the most recent IFORS conference held in Sandton, South Africa. This prize is an IFORS initiative aimed at encouraging papers on good applications of OR in developing countries, by OR practitioners from these countries, and with a stress on developmental issues. Two prizes are awarded for the competition.

The competition was introduced at the IFORS XI conference in Buenos Aires in 1987 and, except for 1990, the prize has been awarded at every IFORS triennial conference since then. Of the six winning papers that had been awarded since the inception of the competition until the Honolulu IFORS conference in 2005, two each had originated from Chile and China and one each from India and Brazil. Of the ten runners-up over this period, three had been awarded for papers from China, two each from Brazil, India and South Africa and one from Egypt. This is ample evidence of the broad appeal of this competition.

## The 2008 Competition

Calls for submissions to the competition were sent out to all IFORS member societies in mid-2007, with a submission deadline of 31 January, 2008. Fifteen submissions were received by the deadline from the following countries: two each from Brazil, China, Mexico, South Africa and Tunisia and one each from Colombia, India, Nigeria & South Africa, Serbia and Vietnam.

The panel of judges comprised of the following members:

- Paul Fatti (Chair – South Africa)
- Arabinda Tripathy (India)
- Irene Loiseau (Argentina)
- Leroy White (UK)
- Theo Stewart (Chair: IFORS Developing Countries Committee – South Africa)
- Joao Neiva de Figueiredo (Brazil).

For the first round of judging, in which every paper had to be evaluated and a shortlist selected, it was decided to optimise the panel's efforts by not requiring every paper to be judged by every member. In order to ensure that the allocation of papers to judges was reasonably fair, allocations were made according to a Partially Balanced Incomplete Block Design (no fully balanced design exists for this combination of papers and judges), which required each member to evaluate five papers, each paper being evaluated by two members. So as to ensure impartiality in the allocation of papers to members, the fifteen

papers were put in random order before the allocations were made. This design enabled the differences between the judging standards of the different judges to be (partially) adjusted for in the final score allocations.

After all the scores were received from the panelists and processed, the top eight papers were selected for the shortlist to be presented at the IFORS XVIII conference in Sandton on July 14, 2008. One of the finalists was unable to make it to the conference to present his paper.

The finalists presented their papers on the first day of the conference. The members of the judges' panel were generally very impressed by the high standard of the presentations.

Two papers stood out above the rest, and although it took some debate amongst the judges, they were eventually unanimous about the winner. This was presented by Mohamed Haouari (from Tunisia), and describes the models and solution approaches developed by him and his co-authors towards integrated airline operational planning, simultaneously considering both the fleeting and routing of aircraft in a small to mid-sized airline such as TunisAir. Computational experiments conducted on real data showed that their proposed heuristic is effective, fast, robust and easy to implement, and its flexibility should allow it to be applied directly to airlines in developing countries. The judges' panel was unanimous in their view that this paper epitomizes good OR in development!

The runner-up paper, presented by Darian Raad (from South Africa), describes a meta-algorithm, developed by him and his co-authors, for optimizing the design of urban water distribution systems. This uses a robust multi-objective approach that finds the best trade-off between system cost and reliability and can handle multiple demand loading conditions, withstand component failures and allow surplus capacity for growth. Application of this algorithm demonstrated large cost savings and reliability improvements for a real developmental water distribution system in South Africa.

Although the future of the IFORS OR for Development prize competition is currently under review, the panel of judges was of the unanimous opinion that the quality of the papers presented at this year's competition is ample evidence of the success of this IFORS initiative!

**by Paul Fatti**

*Chair of the Panel, paulfatti@gmail.com*

## IFORS NEWS

The newsletter, IFORS News, is one of the mechanisms that IFORS uses to communicate with the international OR community. This newsletter was initiated by the IFORS President, Elise del Rosario, when she took office and it has now been published since June 2007 on a quarterly basis. The purpose of the newsletter is one of communicating in various ways. Firstly it gives members of the IFORS Administration Committee the opportunity to communicate ideas, interesting developments and decisions to the OR community. Secondly it allows more popular but technical articles on various topics to be published. Lastly the newsletter is also there to communicate news about its members, news about the various member countries as well as reporting on interesting occurrences, anniversaries, celebrations of societies, conferences, etc. There are many things that can be achieved through this newsletter. It also compliments the newly developed and designed website of IFORS.

During the past year the newsletter was published quarterly and the content was very varied. In essence the content is dependent on what the editor can obtain from individuals or from societies. In this regard it was possible to publish a number of technically oriented articles in each edition of the newsletter. Various societies used the opportunity to publish stories related to their activities; the newsletter featured the IFORS distinguished lecturer while a whole range of conferences were "advertised". The September 2008 edition was devoted almost entirely to the IFORS 2008 conference. The format of the newsletter is electronic and is published on the IFORS website. With every new edition of the newsletter the link to the website is also sent to all society representatives with the request to either send this link to their respective society members or even the entire electronic copy of the newsletter. All of this was done during the past year. In addition a limited number of the edition of the newsletter that contained the IFORS annual report was printed in hard copy. These copies with the IFORS 2007 Annual Report were distributed at the IFORS 2008 triennial conference in Sandton, South Africa.

The editor would like to take this opportunity to thank the AC, especially Elise del Rosario, for its support and all those that contributed to the various editions of the newsletter over the past year. Without these contributions there would not have been a newsletter. All members are requested, and are more than welcome, to submit any contribution to the editor.

**by Hans Iltmann**

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