

American Society for ybernetics

April 30, 2007

Dear ASC Member,

Following the successful conference in Urbana which strengthened the tradition of open conferences covering a wide ground and allowing spirited and challenging discussion, plus our long-term connection with the arts—for which we have to thank ASC member Mark Enslin and his team—I am writing with some news.

New Secretary

At the conference, we were able to elect Mehdi Majidi as our new secretary. He replaces Jana Schilder who resigned. At the moment we are looking for a VP Membership, so if you would like to volunteer, we'd like to hear from you: write to our president, Lou Kauffman, at

kauffman@uic.edu

Mehdi's biography appears at the end of this message.

Fellows of the ASC

The newly realised Fellow grade of membership was publicly promoted at the meeting, and the foundation Fellows are being appointed as I write. You may remember that I wrote to the membership about this new opening, in January. Once the foundation Fellows are in place, we will inform you and invite the promotion of others to Fellowship.

Conferences

We were also able to announce a lively conference schedule to last over the next 2 years. This includes 2 meetings held internationally. The first, November 16 to 19, will be the von Foerster conference in Vienna. This is a big public event, with the chance to make significant public presentations. The first conference led to the recent publication of the book "An Unfinished Revolution? Heinz von Foerster and the Biological Computer Laboratory/BCL 1958–1976" edited by Albert Mueller and Karl Mueller, published by edition echoraum, Vienna.

This conference will be specially interesting to ASC members because it will involve a special session honouring our 2005 Wiener Medal winner, Ernst von Glasersfeld (which he expects to attend), and the public opening of the Gordon Pask Archive, which will also be the occasion for a special session.

The second, pencilled in for the week of 5 to 9 January 2009 is a working conference on the

theme of Cybernetics Art, Design and Mathematics. This will be a small conference and we are looking to hold it in an English castle (with heating).

In between these is our own ASC conference to be held in the summer of 2008. Unfortunately arrangements for this conference have recently had to be modified due to the award of a Fulbright Fellowship to Arun Chandra who had agreed to organise it. We are therefore again looking for an organiser and venue. If you can help us, please contact President Lou Kauffman (email above).

We also have a session in the ISSS conference this summer, in Japan. This event will take place in Tokyo, August 5 to 10 2007.

<http://www.issss.org/conferences/tokyo2007/>

To check the ASC session (2.12 Cybernetics, chaired by our President, Lou Kauffman: contact details above), go to

<http://projects.issss.org/Main/Tokyo2007CallsForPapers>

Finally, the BCL is also planning a conference to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the BCL, and are proposing a competition: the ASC is closely connected with these two BCL projects.

I hope you will agree, a rich menu of events is being arranged.

Awards

Also in Urbana, we made 4 Wiener Awards. This exceptionally high number was occasioned by the change in the rules that allows us to recognise that service to cybernetics need not always be through furthering theory in some radical and novel way. We awarded the Wiener Medal to Charles Francois for his enormous work in compiling and editing the International Encyclopaedia of Systems and Cybernetics, and former Presidents Pille Bunnell, Larry Richards and Stuart Umpleby who, aside from their own significant work, all brought life and health to the ASC at stages when it was in danger of dying. You can read the citations for them, and for Ernst von Glasersfeld (including a link to a video of the presentation made to him at his home, on our website

<http://www.asc-cybernetics.org/organization/awards.htm>

That's all the news I have for now. Don't forget to look out for your (now electronic) issues of Patterns, our official newsletter edited by Barbara Vogl, which has much more content. I hope to be able to make a major announcement there after the summer concerning membership benefits and a number of ASC-friendly societies.

Best Wishes,

Ranulph Glanville
Vice President, ASC.

Mehdi Majidi Biographical sketch

Mehdi is a university faculty and an international consultant. His main area of interest includes International Business Strategy, Cross-cultural Management, and Cultural Factors in Socioeconomic Development.

His consulting projects include industrial development, workforce development, implementation of information technology in education, engaging the private sector in socioeconomic development, and the design of a solution to measure, monitor, and evaluate the dynamics of the socioeconomic progress of a country based on international standards indexes.

Mehdi is also a university faculty member, designing and teaching graduate level courses and executive training workshops and presentations in international business strategy and cross-cultural management. He also serves on the MBA program's academic committees.

