

SOGESCI-BVWB Annual General Assembly on February 23, 2007

In 2006 our society was traditionally active with four tools:

- the ORBEL conferences
- the Sogesci-BVWB Prize
- the workshops
- the Sogesci-BVWB scientific publications

The ORBEL20 conference in Ghent on January 19-20, organized by Bernard De Baets and Hans De Meyer was a complete scientific success. More than hundred participants attended, including 59 speakers.

During this conference the Sogesci-BVWB prize 2006, sponsored by OM Partners, was awarded to Joke Devriese (VUB), supervised by our member Frank Plastria, with the work entitled: "Brandweerlocatiemodellen en toepassingen op België"(Fire station location models and applications to Belgium).

A one-day symposium on Optimization and Engineering took place at the Center for Operations Research and Econometrics (CORE) on the UCL campus of Louvain-la-Neuve on May 24, was organized by Yves Crama, François Glineur, Etienne Loute et Annick Sartenaer. Participants appreciated especially the invited research talks as well as the plenary talk by Serge Gratton from CERFACS (Toulouse, France) on data assimilation for ocean models. Feedback on the meeting was excellent.

The publication of the journal 4OR, in cooperation with the French and the Italian OR societies, is strengthening its growing reputation of a high quality journal. During its three first years of existence (2003-2005), it was - on about 1020 pages - covering high quality papers, among which there were eleven invited surveys, one educational paper, thirty seven regular scientific contributions (among which three book reviews), four industrial topics, and seventeen PhD summaries. This last category is characterizing the "national" nature of our journal. The high quality of the other contributions will ensure its international value and recognition in the future. Papers from the countries of the three participating national societies accounted till 2005 for 46% of all submissions with a 60% rejection rate whereas the overall rejection rate of the 189 submitted papers has been 71%. We are thankful to the dynamic team, which was responsible for this initiative. We wish good luck to the team of editors, Denis Bouyssou, Silvano Martello and Frank Plastria. Volume 4 (2006) of our journal 4OR, in cooperation with the French and the Italian OR societies, continues its ascent towards recognition as a high quality international journal. Its 352 pages contained an editorial with an analysis of the first three years of activity, the story of the discovery of a scientific fraud, three surveys by renowned experts, twelve regular papers, one industry paper and five PhD summaries. The worldwide visibility of the journal, already strongly increased by its inclusion in online journal-packages to libraries, will be further enhanced by the separate publication in 2007 of the collected surveys published in 4OR during its three first years. The team of editors announces that there is no shortage of papers for the next year, but it remains every member's task to contribute to the success of this initiative by submitting their work for publication in our journal, and encouraging others to submit. The average time between submission-acceptance and publication is very short, compared to many other journals: mostly much less than one year. It is however too early to produce any meaningful statistical material about lead-time matters. The distribution of 4OR is done among some 650 members in Belgium, France and Italy. 4OR is now also available online at a growing number of libraries worldwide.

Let me briefly mention some other activities of the year 2006.

- The web-site of the society, physically located at ULB, under the address www.orbel.be, was maintained by F.Glineur.
- A very positive fact is related to our constant presence on the EURO scene. Traditionally our Belgian colleagues are actively involved in a wide range of European OR activities. We are proud to have such important delegates of Sogesci-BVWB in the EURO Board and Council. On behalf of our society I would like to congratulate especially Philippe Vincke, past president of EURO, and Jacques Teghem, main editor of EJOR, and Martine Labbé for the dynamic style with which they represented us in EURO and IFORS.
- The initiative of E Loute to edit and to distribute an ORBEL Newsletter is much appreciated by the current members of our society. Input can be sent to orbel@fusl.ac.be.
- The Borsalino project, under Gerrit Janssens' leadership, aiming to make the past Sogesci-BVWB publications electronically available, is well in progress.

Concerning our financial situation I would like to mention our current stability and safety, thanks to the careful management of our treasurer, thanks to the organizers of the last ORBEL conferences, thanks to the careful management of our memberships, and finally thanks to the subsidy offered by the French Community of Belgium for the support of the activities of our society.

At the beginning of 2007, I wish you personally and the Sogesci-BVWB a very productive year 2007, strengthening the position of OR in an academic and industrial environment, in the public and in the private sector.

Hugo Pastijn, Delegate Administrator