

Report of Affiliated Commission AC.2 for 2009-10

The principal event of our year was the triennial GR conference. GR19 was held in July 2010 in Mexico City, at the Centro Banamex.

The local organizers had managed very well to cope with the drop in sponsorship following the credit crunch, by renegotiating some deals and careful husbandry. Sadly, one of the sponsors who withdrew was the Gravity Research Foundation, who have on several occasions funded talks broadening the range of topics. There were 733 registered participants, of whom 187, mostly students, were allowed free registration. Sponsorship from IUPAP, and AC2's own limited funds, assisted some of these participants.

As usual the conference had plenary talks in the morning, covering the whole field of AC2's interest, and in the afternoons there were parallel contributed papers sessions. There were 15 plenary talks (3 of the speakers being women) and 17 parallel sessions (5 of the chairs being women). A book containing abstracts of all submissions was circulated. Those authors not selected for oral presentation were given the opportunity of posters.

During the meeting the Xanthopoulos Prize (similar to but predating IUPAP Young Scientists Prizes) was presented to Stefan Hollands (Cardiff). The inaugural triennial Ehlers and Bergmann-Wheeler Prizes (for the best PhD theses in classical and quantum gravity respectively) were presented to Nicholas Yunes (Princeton) and Victor Taveras (Louisiana State). The annual GWIC thesis prize (for which AC2 acts as fundholder) was presented to Holger Pletsch (Hanover). The Hartle Prizes, for student presentations at the meeting, were awarded to Amitai Bin-Nun (U Penn), Samuel Gralla (Chicago), Ian Morrison (UC Santa Barbara), Vivien Raymond (Northwestern), David Sloan (Penn State), Jan Steinoff (Jena), Charalampos Markakis (Wisconsin, Milwaukee), Bethan Cropp (Wellington, New Zealand) and Francesca Vidotto (Marseille). The inaugural Chandrasekhar Prizes, for postdoctoral presentations at the meeting, were awarded to Parampreet Singh (Perimeter Institute), Mark Hannam (Vienna), Thomas Corbitt (LIGO Lab, MIT) and Woei Chet Lim (AEI). AC2 gratefully acknowledge support from FORTH (Greece), Springer-Verlag, the UK Institute of Physics Publishing, and World Scientific for the Xanthopoulos, Ehlers, Bergmann-Wheeler and Chandrasekhar Prizes respectively.

The Society also awarded its first Fellowships, to Alessandra Buonanno (Maryland), Alejandro Corichi (UNAM, Mexico), Gabriela Gonzalez (Louisiana State), James Hough (Glasgow), Don Marolf (UC Santa Barbara), Roger Penrose (Oxford), Frans Pretorius (Princeton), Carlo Rovelli (Marseille), Madhavan Varadarajan (RRI, Bangalore) and David Wands (Portsmouth).

The Commission itself (alias the Society's committee) held 3 meetings during GR19. IUPAP support for Commission meetings was used to enable a number of less well-funded members, in particular IUPAP representatives, to be present.

The first meeting reviewed the previous three year's activities and included reports from the editors of the Society's journal (whose impact factor rose from 1.8 to 2.6 in 2009), from PANAGIC and GWIC, from IUPAP C&CC meetings, and its information website <http://hyperspace.aei.mpg.de/>. The last is now under the care of the Albert Einstein Institute (AEI), after 20 years being run by me as Secretary of the Society. AEI have also become custodians of our archives, and I have sent them my personal almost complete collection of proceedings and abstracts volumes from past GR conferences.

The second was to hear bids for the site of the next meeting. It was agreed that GR20 will be held in Warsaw in July 2013, and that Amaldi 10 (in the Amaldi series which is organized by GWIC and sponsored by IUPAP via AC2) will be held there simultaneously.

This recommendation was accepted by the General Assembly of the Society, which also elected new officers and committee members in accordance with the constitution. I became President and Beverly Berger became Secretary. My predecessor, Abhay Ashtekar, automatically becomes Deputy President. The Assembly also reviewed membership, finance and administration and heard the reports from the journal, PANAGIC, GWIC, IUPAP, and Hyperspace.

The third committee meeting was to discuss future plans. AC2 is exploring suitable ways to mark the centenary of general relativity in 2015, such as a review volume and possibly a video.

With the change of Secretary, the location of the Society's web pages has changed. We now have a non-geographic domain name, www.isgrg.org, currently hosted by a commercial web host and managed by Penn State University.

By a long-standing agreement, IUPAP appoint four members of the AC2 committee, each for a six-year term, two changing after every GRn conference. AC2 itself nominates possible IUPAP members, seeking, in doing so, to improve geographic, subject and/or gender balance among its members. The two members retiring in 2010 are Odylio Aguiar (Brazil) and Alexei Starobinskii (Russia): the latter has been elected to the committee anyway. The continuing IUPAP members are Nigel Bishop (South Africa) and Yongge Ma (P.R. China). AC2 proposes as the new IUPAP members Nadia Margalhaes (Brazil) and David McClelland (Australia).