

Membership & Chapters Committee Report

Giuseppe Caire

June 26, 2009

1 M&C Committee

The *Membership & Chapters Committee* (M&C committee in the following) is presently formed by

- Giuseppe Caire (chair)
- Frank Kschischang
- Gerhard Kramer
- Ruediger Urbanke
- Han Vink
- Sae-Yung Chung
- Uri Erez
- Stephen Hanly

The M&C committee tasks are summarized in the following:

1. Produce an item in the IT-soc. bylaws, similarly to what done for the conference committee, describing responsibilities and mode of operations of the M&C committee.
2. Re-establish the *Distinguished Lecturers Program* by proactively contacting the society Chapters and informing them on this program and at the same time soliciting distinguished lecturers to volunteer for the program.
3. Act as a contact point and coordination point for the organizing committees of Information Theory Schools, similarly to what done for conferences by the conference committee.

4. Appoint the Padovani Lecturer, endowed by the gift of Roberto Padovani to the IT soc..
5. Lead an inspire chapters activities, outreach initiatives for countries with low presence of Information Theory and on fostering new IT membership.

This document reports to the BoG the progresses made along the above points.

2 Distinguished Lecturers Program

- An open call for nomination, summarizing the features and goals of the program and the profile of the “ideal” distinguished lecturer (DL), was posted on the ITsoc web and on the ITsoc. Newsletter.
- A list of internal nominations, proposed by the M&C committee members, has been finalized. The people shortlisted by the M&C committee have been contacted by the M&C committee chair in order to check their availability and commitment to serve as DLs. As of today, Profs. **Amin Shokrollahi** and **Alon Orlitsky** have responded positively (the other potential DLs have not responded yet).

In order to move on and start with the program, the M&C committee proposes to the BoG to appoint Profs. Amin Shokrollahi and Alon Orlitsky as the first two DLs for the period 2009-2011.

- The M&C committee is working actively with the On-line Committee in order to maintain an updated Chapter’s page, and put in place a web support for the DLP.

3 Padovani Lecture

In December 2008, Roberto Padovani kindly donated 10,000\$ to the IT-soc for some special initiative. After some discussion among the IT-soc officers, it was decided in agreement with Roberto that the gift would be used to endow a “Padovani Lecture”. It was also proposed that the M&C committee would select distinguished speakers for this lecture.

We are pleased to announce that the 2009 Padovani Lecturer is Prof. **Abbas El Gamal**, who will present his lecture at the *2nd Annual North American School of Information Theory*, in Evanston IL, August 10-13, 2009.

4 Information Theory Schools

- The *2nd Annual North American School of Information Theory* will take place on August 10-13, in Evanston IL (thanks to Gerhard Kramer, Aylin Yener and the ITsoc. Student Committee,

and to the local organizers: Randall Berry, Dongning Guo, Daniela Tuninetti, Natasha Devroye, Yalin E. Sagduyu, Matthieu Bloch).

- Plans are in place for the *3rd Annual North American School of Information Theory*, to be held in the Los Angeles area with local organization from USC or Caltech, in Summer 2010 (M. Neely/A. Dimakis (USC) and T. Ho/M. Effros (Caltech) were contacted).
- Plans are already in place for the *4th Annual North American School of Information Theory*, to be held in the Houston area, either at Austin, A&M, or Rice, in Summer 2011 (S. Wishwanath/K. Narayanan/A. Sabharwal were contacted).
- The M&C committee received a proposal for an IT school to be organized in South Africa (organizing committee: Dr. Hendrik Ferreira). The first proposal for this school was revised after some feedback and comments from the committee, on costs, organization and location. The current proposal for this school shall be presented to the BoG at ISIT 2009 by Dr. Ferreira.

5 Chapter activities

- Chapter of the Year Award, 2009: a subcommittee formed by Profs. Hanly, Vink and S-Y Chung was appointed. The subcommittee evaluated in details the Chapters' activity reports and inquired the Chapters' chairs for better information. Finally, the subcommittee proposed a Chapter that was voted unanimously by the M&C committee. The Chapter of the Year will be announced at the Award Luncheon, on Tuesday, June 30, 2009.
- The M&C committee received an inquiry from prof. Farshad Lahouti, director of the Communications Engineering Dept., University of Tehran, about forming an ITsoc. chapter in Iran and about the possibility of getting financial aid as usual chapters. Giuseppe Caire inquired the IEEE central administration, in particular, Ms. Cheryl Sinauskas, Director of Geographic Activities. The answer is in the ****negative****:

"...In regards to your question about funding the Iran ITsoc chapter, please note that the Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) restricts any payments or transactions to any individual or entity such as the ITsoc Chapter in Iran at this time."

Dr. Lahouti has been informed and has been invited to create an ITsoc. chapter anyway. We believe that though payments cannot be made to the Iran Chapter, DL support (directly to the speakers) can be made, and this opens up the possibility for them to organize IT distinguished lectures.

- Two new chapters have been formed and have been formed:
 1. IEEE New Zealand Central Section Communications, Signal Processing, and Information Theory Joint Societies Chapter, formation date: June 15, 2009. Chapter chair: Dr. Ming-Kit Lai.
 2. IEEE Chengdu Section Information Theory Society Chapter, formation date: May 1, 2009. Chapter chair: Dr. Xiaohu Tang.
- Chapter lunch at ISIT 2009: the yearly Chapter Lunch will be held on Thursday, July 2nd. The M&C committee members, ITsoc. officers and chapters' chairs have been invited. There, Giuseppe Caire will illustrate the DLP. We also invited Dr. Anand Sarwate (On-line committee) in order to show the features of the ITsoc. web to the chapter chairs. In fact, we have noticed that this information is not regularly updated (to say the least) by the chairs, and we have been experiencing some difficulties in contacting on-duty chapter chairs with updated email contact. **It is highly advisable that the chapters start using the IT web as their main tool to publicize their activities, such as invited lectures and distinguished lectures, and keep the good habit of updating their contact information on a regular basis.**