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Welcome Back, ICASSP

ICASSP is back! I have been attending ICASSPs since 1978 (Hartford), and I very much missed not having an ICASSP to attend in 2003. ICASSP is more than just a conference. It is the annual gathering of the signal processing community and a celebration of signal processing.

I enjoy the educational activities of ICASSP: the tutorials, the plenary talks, the oral sessions, the poster sessions, and the exhibits. These activities allow us to come together as a community and see what we have done in the past year. I value the opportunity to see a large number of ideas presented in a short period of time. This lets me tap into the collective wisdom of 2,000 colleagues at the leading edge of signal processing and form my own snapshot of the signal processing community—where we are and where we are heading.

I enjoy the informal activities of ICASSP. I enjoy seeing colleagues recognized for their accomplishments. I enjoy the receptions—beyond the abundant food. I enjoy chatting with colleagues in the hallways. These too are ways of tapping into the collective wisdom of 2,000 colleagues at the leading edge of signal processing.

I also enjoy the business meetings. We describe the Technical Committee, Conference Board,

Publications Board, Board of Governors, and Executive Committee meetings as “business meetings,” and the Society does conduct its business in these meetings. However, each of these bodies also reflects on the health of our Society, its directions, and whether those directions are reflective of the changes in signal processing technology. These meetings are another way of tapping into the collective wisdom of 2,000 colleagues at the leading edge of signal processing.

Each ICASSP has its own venue and its own special charms. I won't bore you with anecdotes of ICASSPs past, but I will say that I have enjoyed the local charm of many ICASSP sites. Participating in ICASSP also brings us in contact with our colleagues from other countries, and we hear their different perspectives. As a community, we have the opportunity to listen to each other and hear each other in ways that cannot be communicated in e-mail.

Perhaps you know that ICASSPs are typically approved five years in advance. Furthermore, it takes some serious work to compose a winning ICASSP proposal. A typical ICASSP Committee has been working on its ICASSP for six years, or more,

before it is held. And, in the last few months before ICASSP, it can be a full-time job for the volunteers. We owe our Conference Board great thanks for finding, selecting, and supporting strong ICASSP organizing committees. We owe the organizers of all our ICASSPs great thanks for bring-



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ing them to us. We owe our Society's staff and conference managers thanks for the conference management they provide. Today, I would especially like to thank the organizers of ICASSP'04. Montreal was both fabulous and *fantastique*. Thanks for bringing ICASSP back to us again!



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