

SOGESCI-BVWB
Annual General Meeting on February 6, 2004

Dear Mister Chairman, dear colleagues,

In 2003 our society was like previous years active with three tools :

- the ORBEL17 conference
- the Sogesci-BVWB Prize
- the Sogesci-BVWB scientific publications.

The ORBEL17 conference in Brussels January 23-24, organised in the Royal Military Academy by H. Pastijn, was a scientific success. The Sogesci-BVWB President expressed his gratitude to the Royal Military Academy for its hospitality. The number of participants was satisfactory and the number of contributing papers was 30. Plenary sessions about « Metaheuristics and vehicle routing problems » by Frederic Semet on one hand, and « Controversial features of the AHP » by F. Lootsma on the other hand, were most appreciated by the audience. Unfortunately our friend Freerk Lootsma passed away a few months later. We will miss him.

During this conference the Sogesci-BVWB prize was awarded to Tom Westra.

The publication of JORBEL, the Sogesci-BVWB scientific journal, has been replaced by the journal 4OR, after the publication of the 2002 volume of JORBEL. In 2002 the 4OR contract was signed. In co-operation with the French and the Italian OR societies, a new European society « ORP Publications » has been created, with its headquarters in Brussels. This society launched the joint scientific publication of the Belgian, the French and the Italian OR societies, in 2003. It is expected to have a more regular publication scheme than the one which was experienced with Jorbel the last few years. We are thankful to the dynamic team which was responsible for this initiative. Thank you Marc Pirlot and Frank Plastria for most of the work done for kicking-off this project. Good luck to the whole team of editors. It is however everybody's task to contribute to the success of this initiative.

The first volume of 4OR in 2003 is composed of 4 issues of a total number of 348 pages. There are 17 papers : 4 invited surveys of high standard, 12 submitted papers, and one paper concerning an industrial application. Four PhD summaries were also published (2 from Italy and 2 from Belgium).

There are currently enough papers waiting for publication, enabling the realisation of the second volume. The editors however insist that the survival of any journal necessitates a constant effort of everybody among us.

The distribution of 4OR is materialised among 500 members in Belgium, France and Italy, and a number of libraries.

Let me briefly mention some other activities of the year 2003 .

- The website <http://mathro.fpms.ac.be/sogescibvwb/main>, was hosted by the Mathro Lab at FP Ms, created and completed by Philippe Fortemps. For practical reasons the website of the society moved physically to the Royal Military Academy, under the address www.orbel.be . The maintenance will be performed by personnel of the Royal Military Academy without extra costs. The renewal of the overall design is requiring however still some effort from our society.
- A very positive fact is related to our constant presence on the EURO level. 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 and Jacques Teghem, main editor of EJOR, for the dynamic style with which they represented us in EURO and IFORS.
- Concerning young people, I think we should try to attract more young scientists and practitioners from industry. The number of members remained more or less stable over the last few years. The very large majority comes however from an academic environment. Among us there are very few pure practitioners. The challenge met by our society is to attract indeed young people and real practitioners. This will again be one of the concerns of our president in 2004.

Concerning our Financial situation I would like to mention our current stability and security, partly thanks to the subsidies which are offered by the French Community of Belgium, supporting the activities of our society and supporting the publication of our journal.

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

Hugo Pastijn, Delegate Administrator