

A message from the President

It is traditional for the President of AAM to address the Members and Fellows at least once during his tenure of office, and I do so now. I am perfectly aware that this message may actually not appear in print till 2006, beyond my tenure which ends on 31 December 2005. This brings me to the first item of importance I wish to discuss: that, hopefully, the membership will approve the decision taken at the Orlando meeting of AAM this past November that, as of 2007, the presidency will last for two years rather than one. This initiative of my predecessor, Ted Belytschko, is a very necessary one, in my view, for the good of AAM. Judging from my own experience, despite being Acting President for the whole of 2004, only now (say as of September) can I say that I know the ropes of how the Academy works, what are its needs, what happens when, which things should be promoted, and so on. So, by the time a president is fully productive, in the current scheme he steps down shortly thereafter — clearly an undesirable state of affairs.

Another important initiative by the Belytschko presidency was the organization of an AAM Mechanics Conference, the first being planned for the spring/summer of 2007 in New Orleans, organized by Professor George Voyiadjis. This conference will supplement the PACAM conferences held every two years just after New Year's day, the next one being in January 2006 in Mérida, Yucatán, Mexico. More news about the 2007 conference will appear in this journal, in due course.

Yet another important decision taken in Orlando was the creation of an *ad hoc* committee for increased membership. With the proliferation of societies and conferences, we must have a convincing set of arguments why colleagues should be members. We should also promote mechanisms via which we convince meritorious colleagues to join the Academy. If anyone is keen to join the committee, please let me know (e-mail: michael.paidoussis@mcgill.ca or mary.fiorilli@mcgill.ca). The committee has already started work.

The short answer to the question of *why should one be a member of the American Academy of Mechanics?* is that belonging helps ensure the survival of Mechanics in the long run. I assert that there is a discipline of Mechanics, distinct from the more applied aspects of Mechanical and Civil Engineering, even though what is now considered part of Mechanics is quite different from what it was 50 years ago.

Mechanics is alive and well, and it continues in the noble tradition of such giants as Archimedes, Galileo, Newton, Euler, Lamb, Rayleigh, Poincaré, G.I. Taylor and von Kármán. We, who are members of AAM, should be proud to be mechanicians, and should convince others to join the ranks of AAM for a more vibrant Academy and for a stronger image of Mechanics at the national and international arenas, throughout the Americas.

I take this opportunity to encourage each one of the Members and Fellows of AAM to speak to at least one colleague who works alongside him/her to convince him/her to join AAM. Here it should also be opportune to stress that AAM is an *Academy*. Hence part of its function is the recognition of the outstanding accomplishments of some of its members by electing them to the grade of Fellow. To become a Fellow one needs to be a Member first.

The membership in Canada as well as in Central and South America is not what it could be, by a long chalk, and this despite PACAM. Clearly, a lot of work remains to be done.

I wish the new President of AAM, Professor Stelios Kyriakides, all the best, and I take this opportunity to convey to all the Fellows and Members the best of the Season's Greetings.

Michael P. Païdoussis
President of the Academy (2005)