President's Corner: The IEEE Neural Networks Council and IEEE Transnationalism

Robert J. Marks II
President, IEEE Neural Networks Council

The IEEE is a transnational organization with local sections in such provocative places as Moscow, Beijing, Singapore, Tehran and San Francisco. Many of the thirtysomething IEEE Societies have local chapters in these and other sections. The IEEE Neural Networks Council, alas, cannot have such local chapters - yet. We will when we warrant Society status within IEEE.

Regional neural network societies, not directly affiliated with IEEE, have recently been sprouting like spring tulips in rich humus. The Council is busy working with some of these organizations. When our status within IEEE allows chapter reproductive rights, this cooperative work will continue.

The reasons are twofold. First and foremost, the community will be best served via cooperation. Secondly, the Council, strongly inclined towards engineering, asks what the neuron can do for us. Cognitive psychologists, neurophysiologists and other members of these regional organizations, ask the converse. Information cross fertilization and interaction with our sister disciplines.

Here's a (partial?) list of current regional neural network professional organizations:

- Australian Neural Networks Association
- Chinese Neural Networks Committee
- European Neural Networks Society
- International Neural Networks Society (United States)
- Japanese Neural Networks Society
- Russian Neural Networks Society

Each of these Societies is less than four years old. The Australian Neural Networks Association was formed in August.

Here is a nutshell summary of our current joint activities with these regional societies. In October, 1992, we will be co-sponsoring, in Russia, the 1992 RNNS/IEEE Symposium on Neuroinformatics and Neuro-computing with the Russian Neural Networks Society. In another joint effort with the RNNS, the Council is pursuing the publication of the second edition of a neural network volume, this time in English, by the President of the RNNS, Dr. Witold Dunin-Barkowski. (This will be one of a number of books sponsored by the Council to be published by the IEE Press). The November 1992 ICNN in Beijing is co-sponsored by the Chinese Neural Networks Committee. The Japanese Neural Networks Society is a co-sponsor of the Nagoya ICNN in October 1993. The Council has been in cooperation with European conferences since 1993.

With an eye to additional cooperation, the IEEE Neural Networks Council sponsored the First Presidents Dinner at the Seattle ICNN. Representatives of the neural networks societies of the world were in attendance.

- CNNC: Prof. Youshou Wu, (Tsinghua University, Beijing) President; Dr. Zong Sha (Chinese Institute of Electronics, Beijing) Secretary; Prof. Yi-Xin Zhong (University of Posts & Telecom, Beijing).
- ENNS: Prof. John Taylor (King's College, London) Vice President and Rolf Eckmiller (University of Dusseldorf), Vice President.
- INNS: Dr. Harold H. Szu (Naval Research Lab, Washington D.C.), Treasurer.
- JNNS: Dr. Kunihiko Fukushima (Osaka University, Japan), President.
- RNNS: Dr. Witold Dunin-Barkowski (Rostov State University, Russia), President.

The IEEE Neural Networks Council was represented by Dr. Russell C. Eberhart (continued on Page 2)

IEEE Neural Networks Council

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President's Corner (Cont.)

(Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Lab), President-Elect and me. Although there was no set agenda save cuisine enjoyment, the conversation was exuberantly jubilant, replete with toasts to cooperation and harmony. The most important outcome of the event, I believe, was eyeball-to-eyeball dialogue among the participants, most of whom had not previously met. 'Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success'. We have begun. Progress will be made when the second President's Dinner is held at the Singapore IJCNN.

All of the regional neural network organizations and other professional organizations devoted to intelligent systems, will be invited to participate in the World Congress on Intelligent Systems to be first held in July 1994 in Washington D.C. In the spirit of self organization, the major meetings of the IEEE Neural Networks Council will here be clustered in the same location at the same time, including The International Conference on Neural Networks and FUZZ-IEEE. Although initiating the Congress sooner would be best for all, the 1994 date is necessitated by the lead time requirements for conference facilities.

The world of intelligent systems is becoming more involved. Like qualifying for paying windfall profits tax, this is a good problem to have. Indeed, when the going gets easier, chances are we're going downhill.