# IJCAI: International Jamboree for Canadian Artificial Intelligence

*Alan K. Mackworth*

The 1995 International Joint Conference on AI, IJCAI '95, will be held in Montréal on August 20-25, 1995. Since IJCAI is being held in Canada for the second time, the editor of this esteemed organ decided, for reasons known only to himself, but with infinite wisdom (editors always have infinite wisdom) to ask me to write a short note on the historical context for IJCAI and Canada. So here it is. We'll start with a little quiz.

IJCAI conferences have been, and will be, held in
- Washington, D.C., USA (1969)
- London, England (1971)
- Stanford, California, USA (1973)
- Tbilisi, Georgia (1975)
- Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA (1977)
- Tokyo, Japan (1979)
- Vancouver, Canada (1981)
- Karlsruhe, Germany (1983)
- Los Angeles, California, USA (1985)
- Milan, Italy (1987)
- Detroit, Michigan, USA (1989)
- Sydney, Australia (1991)
- Chambery, France (1993)
- Montreal, Canada (1995)
- Yokohama, Japan (1997)
- Stockholm, Sweden (1999)
- Somewhere, USA (2001)

Now, as a test for your theory of inductive learning, I would like you, or your program, to induce the simplest rule for planning IJCAI locations based on the historical record. What's the pattern? Don't peek at the answer below.

Here's part of it in Prolog:

```
ijcai_planner(Year, Location) :-
 Year =< 1989,
 Year mod 4 =:= 1,
 continent(Location, north_america).

ijcai_planner(Year, Location) :-
 Year =< 1989,
 Year mod 4 =:= 3,
 continent(Location, Continent),
 Continent =\= north_america.
et cetera
```

You get the idea. It was a trick question: there's no single simple rule. As IJCAI went along it has dynamically invented its own version of the planner. At IJCAI '77, for example, some of us assumed the rule was that the conference alternated between the USA and the rest of the world and made a pitch for IJCAI '79 to be at UBC in Vancouver. At that point the declared rule was clarified to the effect that IJCAI alternated between North America and the rest of the world, so it went to Tokyo. That clarification entitled us to make a successful bid, at IJCAI '79 in Tokyo for IJCAI '81 in Vancouver. Later, as it became clear that IJCAI could better serve its mandate by moving more of its conferences outside North America, the rule was changed so that only every third conference was in North America. And now the lead time for conference planning is six years.

Planning the location involves many factors but the key criteria include local support, both within the country and at the site from the AI community, and the likelihood that the conference will trigger or consolidate growth in the national AI community. Canada will be the first country, besides the USA, to have the honour of hosting IJCAI twice, which is a strong vote of confidence in our AI community.

The Canadian AI community has played an ongoing role in the non-profit society, International Joint Conferences on Artificial Intelligence,Inc.(IJCAII) that co-sponsors the conferences with the local societies (CSCSI and AAAI for IJCAI '95). Don Walker, as the guiding spirit behind IJCAII for many years, successfully built it into a truly international force, while minimizing the bureaucratic inertia that can plague international efforts. IJCAII is run by a minimalist organization consisting of the Board of Trustees, chaired by the current conference chair, and the Secretary-Treasurer. We have declared Ron Brachman, the current Secretary-Treasurer, and Priscilla Rasmussen, who toils behind the scenes, honorary Canadians.

Given the Canadian proclivity for international action it's not too surprising that we have participated in so many ways in IJCAII. Just a few of the connections are mentioned here. The IJCAII Computers and Thought Award to a young AI researcher went to Hector Levesque in 1985. He was the first researcher working outside the US to receive it. In 1987 another Canadian, Johan de Kleer (a UBC and MIT

grad working at Xerox PARC) was chosen. In 1993 Ray Reiter was honoured with the IJCAI Award for Research Excellence. People who have served as officers of various IJCAI's include Richard Rosenberg, Local Arrangements Chair (1981), Alan Mackworth, Conference Chair for IJCAI '85, and John Mylopoulos and Ray Reiter, Program Chairs, IJCAI '91. And, of course, for IJCAI '95 the Canadians have taken over: Raymond Perrault is Conference Chair, Renato de Mori is Local Arrangements Chair, Gordon McCalla is Tutorial Chair, and a passel of distinguished Canadians serve on the National Committee.

The impression that Canadians are over-represented both on the Program Committee and in the number of papers presented, compared to the population as a whole and to the size of the community has been confirmed by rigorous analysis; that is, I vaguely recall that someone looked at the statistics once. The idea that there is any causal connection between our presence on the PC and the proportion of papers presented is a scurrilous rumour. The correlation is simply an artefact: both are simple consequences of the excellence of AI in Canada. There's also a rumour that the acronym IJCAI really stands for International Jamboree for Canadian AI. Rumours like these are spread by those paranoids who hold the view that IJCAI has been taken over by 'the Canucks' - a secret society that believes in the power of the Maple Leaf, eh. The paranoids also suggest, based on only a few shreds of evidence such as lapel pins, that there are links between the Canucks and the once-feared, but now toothless, Knights of the Lambda Calculus.

CSCSI is the world's oldest national AI society, founded in 1973. (Both AISB and SIGART are, indeed, older but neither was founded as a national AI society.) So it is only natural that CSCSI should host the world's oldest and still most prestigious AI conference. The choices of Vancouver and Montreal as the two host cities were only natural since they are, as we all know, the hot spots of AI activity in the country.

Over the years many research areas have splintered off from the IJCAI community to form their own specialized workshops and conferences. In 1973, for example, pattern recognition was explicitly excluded causing much sound and fury, and wailing and gnashing of teeth not to mention IJCPR, a pale IJCAI imitation. Theorem proving, representation and reasoning, vision, natural language, constraint programming, robotics, and fuzzy systems have all factored off. Does this mean that IJCAI is obsolete? Absolutely not. Now we realize that carving up the field by function institutionalizes a false view of the design of intelligent agents. IJCAI is, as always, at the centre of the action.



*Alan Mackworth is a Professor of Computer Science at the University of British Columbia and a Fellow of the Artificial Intelligence and Robotics Program of the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research. He completed a B.A.Sc. in Engineering Science at the University of Toronto in 1966, an A.M. at Harvard University in 1967 and a D.Phil. at Sussex University, England in 1974, when he moved to UBC. He has served as President of the Canadian Society for Computational Studies of Intelligence and as General Chair of the IJCAII Board of Trustees. He has received the Information Technology Association of Canada/NSERC Award for Academic Excellence and the CSCSI/SCEIO Distinguished Service Award. He is currently a Project Leader in IRIS, a Fellow of AAAI, and the Director of the UBC Laboratory for Computational Intelligence. He works on constraints.*

## AAAI Calendar Notices

**AAAI Spring Symposium Series 1995**, sponsored by the American Association for Artificial Intelligence, March 27-29, 1995, Stanford University, California. Contact: Spring Symposium Series 1995, AAAI, 445 Burgess Drive, Menlo Park, CA 94025; 415-328-3123; FAX: 415-321-4457; electronic mail: sss@aaai.org.

**IJCAI '95, Fourteenth International Joint Conference on Artificial Intelligence** sponsored by the International Joint Conference on Artificial Intelligence Inc.; the American Association for Artificial Intelligence, and the Canadian Society for Computational Studies of Intelligence, August 20-25, 1995, Montreal, Canada. Contact: AAAI, 445 Burgess Drive, Menlo Park, CA 94025; 415-328-3123; FAX: 415-321-4457; electronic mail: ijcai@aaai.org.

**IAAI '95, Seventh Annual Conference on Innovative Applications of Artificial Intelligence** sponsored by the American Association for Artificial Intelligence, August 20-25, 1995, collocated with IJCAI-95, Montreal, Canada. Contact: IAAI-95, 445 Burgess Drive, Menlo Park, CA 94025; 415-328-3123; FAX: 415-321-4457; electronic mail: iaai@aaai.org.

**AAAI Fall Symposium Series 1995**, sponsored by the American Association for Artificial Intelligence, November 10-12, 1995, tentatively scheduled to be held at MIT, Massachusetts. Contact: Fall Symposium Series 1995, AAAI, 445 Burgess Drive, Menlo Park, CA 94025; 415-328-3123; FAX: 415-321-4457; electronic mail: fss@aaai.org.