

# A Word from the Chair of SIGEVO

Welcome to the Proceedings of GECCO-2006, the eighth GECCO, and in turn a “recombination” of the Fifteenth International Conference on Genetic Algorithms (ICGA) and the Eleventh Genetic Programming Conference (GP)! If you are reading this at GECCO-2006, we hope you are having the type of productive and memorable experience that GECCO is so well known for. If you were not able to attend GECCO-2006 in person, we trust that you will find the articles contained in these Proceedings to be of lasting value. The inclusion of these Proceedings in the ACM Digital Library means that they are accessible to a wider audience than ever before, which is good news for both the authors and those seeking the information presented here. Furthermore, the recent decision by ISI to index ACM-sponsored conference proceedings will lead to additional importance for GECCO Proceedings articles. The highly decentralized review process used for reviewing papers for possible inclusion in these proceedings and oral presentation at GECCO has once again produced an outstanding result – some 46% of papers submitted were accepted as full papers, and an additional 32% were accepted for presentation as posters and 2-page abstracts in these proceedings. These papers span the dynamic field of evolutionary computation, and the review process assures that each category of papers is reviewed by experts in that subspecialty. The Program Committee included fifteen separate review tracks, including some new ones, with similar percentages of submissions being accepted in each track. This policy helps to assure that new areas are not drowned out by the large number of submissions on more familiar topics, and have a chance to take root and grow.

## **SIGEVO!**

This is a year of many transitions for GECCO and its parent organization, SIGEVO. We hope that the attendees of this and future GECCO conferences, together with other members of the new ACM SIGEVO, will experience many benefits from the decision of the International Society for Genetic and Evolutionary Computation, Inc. (ISGEC) to reorganize as a Special Interest Group of the Association for Computing Machinery. The new organization is called the Special Interest Group for Genetic and Evolutionary Computation, or SIGEVO, for short. The dues for SIGEVO are only \$25/year for non-students, and \$10/year for student members. Among the member benefits are a major discount for GECCO registration (\$75 for SIGEVO or ACM members) and receipt of SIGEVO’s brand new newsletter, SIGEvolution! The first issue of SIGEvolution, under the editorship of Pier Luca Lanzi, is scheduled to be issued before GECCO-2006 is held. We hope you’ll submit announcements and brief articles of interest to SIGEVO members to Pier Luca at [lanzi@elet.polimi.it](mailto:lanzi@elet.polimi.it).

This was the first year operating GECCO completely under the auspices of ACM and SIGEVO. Mike Cattolico has done a great job as General Chair, and special thanks are due to Pat Cattolico for outstanding work on most of the logistics for GECCO, including selecting and configuring software for the paper submission and review process and for GECCO registration. New stuff, and it worked great! Maarten Keijzer, Editor-in-Chief of the Proceedings, has done an excellent job lining up track chairs and organizing the review process. We are delighted with the submissions to GECCO, and expect to have, once again, the best conference in the field! The GECCO Business Committee (John Koza and Dave Goldberg), augmented by the immediate past chair, Una-May O’Reilly, and myself, have advised Mike and have been delighted with the support available from ACM’s SIG Support Staff to produce this year’s proceedings, negotiate contracts, and help with planning for GECCO-2007. We’re already busy searching for sites for GECCO-2007, and plan to be able to announce the location during GECCO-2006.

## **FOGA**

Last year, 2005, saw the very successful Eighth FOGA Workshop, held January 5-9, in Aizu, Japan. Many of the leading lights in genetic and evolutionary computation theory gathered there to present their work and

exchange ideas. Planning for the Ninth FOGA Workshop (2007) is now underway. Web pages have been established. Marc Toussaint is one of the co-organizers, and can be emailed at [mtoussai@inf.ed.ac.uk](mailto:mtoussai@inf.ed.ac.uk) for additional information.

## **Involvement in SIGEVO**

SIGEVO is in its second year as a provisional SIG, as all the details for its operation (bylaws, etc.) are worked out. Most of the leadership during this provisional status has been provided by former ISGEC leaders, to smooth the process. Other officers recently elected by the (acting) Executive Committee are John Koza (vice chair), Erick Cantu-Paz (secretary), and Wolfgang Banzhaf (treasurer). The election of new members to the Executive Committee, new officers, etc., is not allowed until the SIG exits provisional status. This is now expected to occur during 2006, now that the first SIGEVO-supervised GECCO has been successful, allowing elections to be held in 2007, staggered so as to replace a portion of the SIGEVO Executive Committee each year. Most of our ISGEC activities will continue – for example, SIGEVO will have a Council of Authors (so if you are author or editor of a new book, let us know, and we'll get you and your book listed on our new SIGEVO web pages). ISGEC's Council of Fellows will undergo a change of name (yet to be determined, but not to conflict with "ACM Fellows"), although those already elected will always be ISGEC Fellows.

If you are interested in devoting some time and energy to GECCO and SIGEVO, please let me know ([goodman@egr.msu.edu](mailto:goodman@egr.msu.edu)). We have many more ideas than we have people to implement them, and we're still open to more ideas. The next few years will be important ones for kicking off SIGEVO, and I welcome all of your help and support in making it as helpful to our membership as we can!

**Erik Goodman**

*SIGEVO Chair*