1. Changing Presidents

During the last two years, from August 1993 – August 1995, **Jef Teugels** served as President of the Bernoulli Society. At the 52nd ISI Session in Istanbul the new President, **Louis Chen**, succeeded in office. He held his Inaugural Speech at the General Assembly of the Bernoulli Society in Istanbul on August 25, 1997.

Friends and Colleagues,

It fills me with a sense of awe and honour to be here today as President of the Bernoulli Society. Honour because I am aware that this is the first time an Asian, albeit from a very small country, has been chosen to be the President. Awe because I am also aware that this historic city of Istanbul, with its rich cultural and intellectual heritage, stands at a meeting-point between Europe and Asia. This coincidence in timing and geography, whether it is planned or not, should augur well for the Bernoulli Society as it approaches the 21st century.

It also fills me with a heavy responsibility to realize that the Bernoulli Society has made vast strides under the presidencies of my two predecessors, Ole Barndorff-Nielsen and Jef Teugels. Since 1993, many beneficial changes for the Society have taken place. Among them I mention the following:

(i) The formation of the post of Membership Secretary, which has not only boosted the Society's membership but also improved the quality of contact between the Society and its members;

(ii) the creation of the journal BERNOULLI and the newsletter Bernoulli News, both of which the Society can rightfully call its own;

(iii) a new level of ISI-Bernoulli Society relationship, which has improved the financial standing of the Society;

(iv) the initiative to promote and contribute to environmental studies - a move both timely and in the right direction;

(v) the initiative to revive the East Asian and Pacific Regional Committee (EAPRC) to strengthen the links between the Bernoulli Society and probabilists and statisticians in the East Asia-Pacific region; and last but not least,

(vi) the introduction of an outreach programme by which the publications of the Society are able to reach places where members would ordinarily have no access to these materials.

It will not be an easy task for any president to match the achievements of any of my two predecessors. It is both a privilege and a challenge that I am given an opportunity to try to do something for the Society. I will continue with the policies and initiatives made before me. In particular, I will pay special attention to the strengthening of links between the Bernoulli Society and the East Asia-Pacific region. I will try to consolidate what we have achieved in the revival of EAPRC and its activities in the region.

The Society's renewed interest in the East Asia-Pacific region at this time is significant because the region is experiencing one of the world's fastest growth in economy. Many countries in the region are expected to achieve developed status in the 21st century, and undoubtedly, statistics and probability can provide the scientific tools for the process of nation building and development. The role which the Bernoulli Society can play is limited only by the imagination.

At this moment of history, we are also witnessing spectacular advances in molecular biology towards the understanding of the mysteries of life and the elimination of pain and suffering caused by diseases. You are probably aware that the tremendous amount of data and information amassed by molecular biologists are beginning to be analysed. Computational biology is an emerging field in which probabilistic and statistical techniques are being applied to analyse these biological data.

Although applications of probability and statistics to genetics and evolutionary theory date back to the early 1900's, what we are witnessing now is a new era in biological sciences. This is therefore an opportune time for the Society to pay special attention to promoting inter-disciplinary work between molecular biologists on the one hand and probabilists and statisticians on the other.

There are two possible ways to do this. One way is to enlarge the scope of the Committee for Conferences on Stochastic Processes (CCSP) or of the Committee for Probability and Statistics in Physical Sciences ($C(PS)^2$). The other is to set up a new standing committee which we may call *Committee for Probability and Statistics in Biological Sciences* (CPSBS). I am inclined to favour the second option as this effort would be more focused and would give greater impetus to the inter-disciplinary initiative. I have discussed this matter with a number of people, including the outgoing President, the incoming President-Elect, the Scientific Secretary and the Chairpersons of CCSP and $C(PS)^2$, and have also brought it up for discussion during the CCSP meeting in Viña del Mar in June this year. The responses I have received are in favour of setting up a new standing committee. In the Council Meeting held last week, I received further support for my proposal to set up the committee.

With your help and support, I hope that the committee could be formed and conferences with cross-disciplinary emphases in biological sciences planned within the next two years. I invite all of you to come forward and give your suggestions on how we can achieve this.

The Bernoulli Society should lead in promoting activities in new and emerging fields. If we succeed in our efforts in promoting applications of probability and statistics to biological sciences, thereby contributing to the development of the field, we could pride ourselves that we have played our part in meeting the challenges of the 21st century.

Thank you.

The photo shows (from left to right): Jef Teugels (Past President), Claudia Klüppelberg (Editor of this Newsletter), Louis Chen (President), David Siegmund (Incoming President) and Wilfrid Kendall (Scientific Secretary).

New Incoming President

When Louis Chen became President of the BS, at the same time **David Siegmund** was elected the new Incoming President.

David Siegmund received his Ph.D. from Columbia University, New York, in 1966. For about 10 years he seems to have been alternatively attracted by two American extremes, namely Stanford and Columbia. In 1976 finally Stanford won. David has been a supporting pillar of the excellent Department of Mathematics of Stanford University.

His very broad scientific interests are reflected in about 80 articles and, of course, his books, who are well-known to everybody:

Great Expectations: The Theory of Optimal Stopping (with Y.S.Chow and H.Robbins) and

Sequential Analysis: Tests and Confidence Intervals.

He has served our scientific community in many ways. To mention just three, for more than a decade, he was Associate Editor of the Annals of Statistics and the Annals of Probability and he served as President of the Institute of Mathematical Statistics in 1990-91.