

THE FIBONACCI CONFERENCE IN GRAZ

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The Seventh International Research Conference on Fibonacci Numbers and Their Applications was held at the Technische Universität in Graz, Austria, July 15-19, 1996. It was sponsored by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science, the Governor of Styria, the Mayor of Graz, the Technische Universität in Graz, the Austrian Academy of Sciences, the European Mathematical Society, and the Fibonacci Association. We all wish to express our deep gratitude to these sponsors.

How befitting that Graz was chosen as the site. This old university town (*die alte Universität* was founded in 1845) radiates the charm of old-worldliness combined with the spirit of progressive modernism and technology. What an atmosphere for thought and reflection—mathematical or otherwise! Enriched by new and happy experiences, all crammed into but a few days, we once again felt what a unifying force our mathematics is. Being the international language *par excellence*, it bridges nationalities, customs, ideas. Colorfully different accents but enhance the fact that our discipline is understood by all its devotees. And loved by them.

A record number of 95 papers was presented: the U.S.A. provided 27 of them; Austria 11; Italy and Japan tied with nine each; France and Germany with eight. Three speakers came from Canada, and also from Russia; one or two speakers hailed from each of the remaining countries. Significantly justifying the fact that our Conference is truly an **International** one, a count of the nationalities on the roster revealed the stunning number of 32—among them Australia, the Republic of Belarus, Cyprus, New Zealand, and South Africa.

These large numbers bespeak the growing magnetism of our "Fibonacci-type mathematics," and—maybe—Austria's popularity. (May I, a former Viennese, be accused of bias?) Hence, it was with considerable reluctance that it became necessary to resort to double sessions. We, indeed, wanted to hear it all.

We did work hard. The sessions started at 9:00 A.M. and extended to the early evening, followed by enjoyable social events, planned by the Local Committee. Even just listening to the titles of the presentations, no one could doubt that there is more imagination in the mind of a mathematician than, possibly, in that of a poet.

The ties of old friendships were strengthened; new ones were kindled. Many of these became fertile soil for joint authorship research. Predictably, the "Goddess Mathesis," as Howard Eves calls her, smiles benevolently upon this phenomenon. I was saddened by the absence of one of my co-authors, George M. Phillips, who, through illness, was unable to attend.

Our deep thanks go to Gerald E. Bergum, the **very soul** of the Fibonacci Association; to our Robert Tichy, who ever-so-amiably coped with all the work; and, indeed, also to the other Committee members, both local and international. Nor will we ever forget Verner E. Hoggatt, Jr., who created The Fibonacci Association; or Andreas N. Philippou, who launched the idea of a Fibonacci Conference. Our appreciation, however, also goes out to all the participants of the Conference. The presentations mirrored their intense mathematical involvement and enthusiasm.

Finally, our *Wiedersehen* in Graz had to come to an end. Now, however, in another two years—**Rochester, here we come!** And may our Conferences always be so very fruitful and enjoyable.

