Bid for ICASSP-04

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

presented by Prof. Douglas D. O’Shaughnessy,
INRS-Telecommunications (U. of Quebec)

The local conference committee listed below would like to present a bid to host ICASSP in May 2004 at a downtown location in Montreal. Researchers in the Montreal area have participated and presented at ICASSPs for many years, but have not had the opportunity to host an ICASSP. We have a strong local research community, especially at INRS, McGill University, and Nortel Technologies Inc, with other participants locally being from Ecole Polytechnique de Montreal (Polytechnic School - the engineering arm of the University or Monrtreal), Ecole de Technologie Superieure (a type of junior college specializing in engineering) and Concordia University. Nortel is especially strong in the Montreal region, with many R+D activities in ICASSP-related areas. We have been able to form a local committee of 21 people consisting primarily of researchers in the Montreal area, with a few further afield.

Montreal merits consideration as an ICASSP site for several reasons:
1) strong research interest and ICASSP participation over many years, yet ICASSP never held here
2) strong local committee, with support of industry (Nortel)
3) major North American city, with excellent airport and hotels (eleventh-largest city in US-Canada) (metropolitan population: 3 million)
4) no ICASSP anywhere near the northeast+midwest US since 1995 (this broad area from, say, St-Louis to Washington, DC and northeastward is the origin of perhaps almost half of all ICASSP papers)
5) convenient sites already contacted
6) popular tourist sites for unique city combining the familiarity of North America with distinct European (French) flavor
7) excellent weather in mid-May, as flowers and trees bloom
8) easy access (and minimal culture shock) for the many European attendees of ICASSP

The proposed local committee is as follows:

Douglas O’Shaughnessy (general chair or co-chair) prof., INRS-Telecom

Li Deng (technical co-chair) prof., U. Waterloo (EE)
Peter Kabal (technical co-chair) prof., McGill University (EE)

Paul Boucher Nortel
Hugh Cameron Nortel
Benoit Champagne prof., INRS-Telecom
Y-T. Chan  prof., Queens U. (EE)
Pierre Dumouchel  prof., ETS (EE)
Eric Dubois  prof., U. of Ottawa (EE)
Vishwa Gupta  Nortel
Janusz Konrad  prof., INRS-Telecom
John Lodge  CRC (Ottawa)
Paul Mermelstein  prof., INRS-Telecom
Elias Nemer  Nortel
Roch Lefebvre  prof., U. of Sherbrooke (EE)
Doug Peters  Nortel
Lang Tong  prof., Cornell U. (EE)
Rafi Rabipour  Nortel
Real Tremblay  Nortel
Serge Robillard  Nortel
Paul Yatrou  Nortel

Airport located just 12 miles from downtown (15 minute taxi or limousine ride, direct to proposed ICASSP site)
- serves 50 of the world’s largest cities with direct flights, including 37 with non-stops (many daily)
- 200 landings per day
- daily nonstops from Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Paris, London, Zurich, Los Angeles
- several daily nonstops from Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, New York, Philadelphia, Toronto, Washington
- closest major North American airport to Europe (easy one-change flights from all of Europe)
- convenient one-change flights from the Far East (through New York or Toronto)
- convenient one-change flights from virtually all of US
- same discount airfare rules as US (e.g., Saturday night stay)
- easy customs clearance at Dorval airport, since 1/3 of flights are international
  - clear customs on departure (so quick exit from US airport upon arrival)
  - accessible by public transit as well (30 minutes by bus from the Metro subway)

Local attractions:
- popular tourist city, yet can avoid crowds by coming in May, just before the major season begins
- very cosmopolitan city: people of many different cultures (including a sizable Chinatown nearby)
- majority speak French, but English is spoken easily at all commercial establishments (indeed about 40% of Montreal speaks English as a first language)
- very affordable: 1 US dollar = 1.50 $ Canadian; as a result, room and food costs are significantly less than comparable US cities (four-star hotels start at less than $100 US)
comfortable weather in mid-May (average high is 22 degrees Celsius, about 73 F; almost assured better weather than we had at Seattle-98; higher average temperature than at Minneapolis in April, 93)

- unlike many US cities, walking around downtown is safe at all hours; people stroll the main commercial street (two blocks from the proposed site) well into the wee hours
- many restaurants and theaters within a 5-minute walk (including a food court in a major shopping mall)
- a major park for strolling/jogging (Mount Royal Park) is a 15-minute walk away
- many museums (including the Fine Arts Museum)
- many historic churches, including the magnificent Notre Dame Cathedral (in nearby Old Montreal), Mary Queen of the World (next to ICASSP site), and the Oratory
- other unique attractions: Casino (24 hours), Biodome (multiple interior environments for flora), Insectarium, Botanical Gardens, the 1976 Olympic Stadium
- major league baseball (Montreal Expos) in season, quite likely in a new downtown stadium, near the conference site
- theme parks: La Ronde (thrill rides, including one of the world’s best wooden roller coasters - a dual-track one; open weekends in May)
- newly-announced major indoor theme park to open in 2002, the biggest in Canada
- Stanley Cup hockey (Montreal Canadiens in NHL playoff action, if they survive the early rounds)
- late-spring downhill skiing available into May at hills 2-3 hours drive away

Suggested sites:
1) Queen Elizabeth Hotel (heart of downtown), 1050 rooms (largest in Montreal)
   - long-established primary hotel of Montreal, with restaurants and a pool
   - full complement of meeting rooms, quite sufficient for a meeting the size of ICASSP (e.g., 1700-2200 attendees)
   - several other major hotels within 5 minutes walk
   - connected to many local sites (including Montreal’s subway and major train stations) via a vast underground network of shopping boutiques
2) Palais des Congres (Montreal Convention Center), located just off the downtown core, with a vast amount of meeting space and several nearby hotels

Personal information about the proposed chair:
- Dr. O’Shaughnessy spent ten years at MIT (Bsc., Msc.-1972, PhD - 1976) in EE+CS, and since 1977 has been professor at INRS (and adjunct prof at McGill University)
- From 1995-1999, Associate Editor for the IEEE Transactions on SAP
- Since 1998, Associate Editor for the Journal of the Acoustical Society of America
- IEEE Member for 25 years (senior member since about 1987)
- Fellow of the Acoustical Society of America (1992)
- presenter at all ICASSPs (but one) since 1986
  (and attended 21 of all 25 ICASSPs)

Personal information about the proposed technical chairs:
- Dr. Kabal has been professor at McGill University (EE) since 1977
- He is currently an Associate Editor for the IEEE Transactions on SAP
- IEEE Member for many years
- frequent presenter at ICASSPs in the last decade

- Dr. Deng has been professor at University of Waterloo (EE) since about 1990
- He is currently a member of the IEEE Technical Committee on Speech Processing
- IEEE Member for many years
- frequent presenter at ICASSPs in the last decade