2006 Newsletter

2006 ACL NEWSLETTER Greetings for the new year. We at ACL wish you a wonderful time in 2006. This is the second time that this newsletter is distributed only in electronic format. This is also the first newsletter written by the new ACL secretary. Please contact me at acl@org.aclweb (unscramble me) if you have any suggestions about ACL, whether it is about conferences, the Web site, about volunteering for new projects, or whatever else crosses your mind.

If you haven't yet signed up for ACL membership for 2006, please visit http://www.aclweb.org/membership and join electronically via our secure server. You can also print a form and mail it to ACL. If you want to donate to the Walker Fund, please use that same Web site. The Walker fund makes it possible to send some student members to conferences. The main ACL web page http://www.aclweb.org/ will also take you to a new form which you can use to order older proceedings. The ACL conference in Ann Arbor held in June attracted about 700 participants. Despite the hot and humid weather, the conference (and the food during the breaks!) was deemed an overwhelming success. A large number of people helped make that conference possible. The general chair was Kevin Knight of the USA. The program committee was chaired by Kemal Oflazer of Turkey and Hwee Tou Ng of Singapore while the local committee was chaired by Dragomir Radev. The conference recognized the fourth ACL lifetime achievement (LTA) winner (after Aravind Joshi in 2002, Makoto Nagao in 2003, Karen Sparck Jones in 2004). The 2005 ACL LTA award went to Martin Kay, an early pioneer of machine translation, grammar formalisms, and a number of other areas of Computational Linguistics. The best paper award in 2005 went to David Chiang of the University of Maryland for his paper titled "A Hierarchical Phrase-Based Model for Statistical Machine Translation". Other highlights of ACL 2005 included invited talks by Justine Cassell and Michael Jordan as well as a visit to the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, MI which included a banquet and a very funny presidential speech by Martha Palmer. For the third time in history, two of the major CL conferences, ACL and COLING, will be held together. In 2006, COLING-ACL will be held in Sydney, Australia. The joint conference's general chair is Nicoletta Calzolari. The local chairs of the conference are Robert Dale and Cécile Paris. The program committee is chaired by Claire Cardie and Pierre Isabelle. Two chapter conferences are also happening in 2006. EACL was held in Trento, Italy from April 3 to April 7. It was organized locally by Bernardo Magnini and Alberto Lavelli. The program chairs were Diana McCarthy and Shuly Wintner. HLT-NAACL will be held in New York City on June 4-9. The general chair is Robert Moore; the program co-chairs are Jennifer Chu-Carroll, Jeff Bilmes, and Mark Sanderson. Satoshi Sekine is in charge of local arrangements.
A number of conferences are already being planned for 2007. These include ACL in Prague, Czechia (also known as the Czech Republic) from June 22 to June 30, NAACL in the USA (place tba), and IJCNLP in Hyderabad, India. In 2008, it is reasonable to expect to have ACL in the Americas, EACL in Europe, COLING (place TBA), as well as IJCNLP in the Asia/Pacific region. On January 1, a number of changes to the ACL executive board took place. I would like to thank the former members of the exec for their hard work and dedication to the ACL community. These include Johanna Moore, Graeme Hirst, and Annie Zaenen. Sandra Carberry stepped down as ACL secretary but will remain on the exec for another year in the position of past secretary to facilitate the transition of leadership. Similarly, Martha Palmer is no longer the president of ACL but is part of the exec as the past president. Jun'ichi Tsujii is now the ACL president. Mark Steedman became the new vice president of ACL. Four new members joined the exec in 2006: Bonnie Dorr (vice-president elect), Claire Cardie, Dragomir Radev (secretary), and Owen Rambow (ex officio as president of NAACL). The rest of the exec includes Kathy McCoy (treasurer), Walter Daelemans, Keh-Yih Su, Robert Dale (journal editor) and Gertjan van Noord (EACL president). The list of special interest groups under ACL has grown to 12. In addition to SIGDAT, SIGDIAL, SIGGEN, SIGHAN, SIGLEX, SIGMEDIA, SIGMOL, SIGNLL, SIGPARSE, SIGPHON, and SIGSEM, we now have a new special interest group called SIGWAC (Web As Corpus). The first chair of the SIG is Adam Kilgarriff. The North American Chapter of the ACL (NAACL) ran its own elections in late 2005. The newly elected members are Owen Rambow (president), Chris Manning (treasurer), as well as Regina Barzilay and Mary Harper. They replace departing members Graeme Hirst (president), Dragomir Radev (treasurer), Ellen Riloff, and Janyce Wiebe. The European chapter (EACL) did not have elections this year. If your address changes, please write immediately to Priscilla Rasmussen at acl@org.aclweb (unscramble me). And, please note that the address of our ACL offices has recently changed to ACL, 209 N. Eighth Street, Stroudsburg, PA 18360.
I wish a successful year to all ACL members. When I ran for the secretary position, my platform was focused on making ACL even more open to member initiatives and member participation in various activities. Please write to secretary(at)org.aclweb if you have any interesting suggestions for new initiatives or concerns and suggestions about the way our conferences are run, or if you want to volunteer. Dragomir Radev
University of Michigan radev@umich.edu ACL Secretary