

Reflections on Our Collaboration and Friendship

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It is difficult for me to get used to the fact that Maciej turns 60 years old in September. He was always a young kid for me and then, all of a sudden, one of my favorite kids becomes 60 years old!

I do not remember exactly when I met Maciej for the first time, but this must have happened during one of the Petri Nets conferences in the 1980's.

I like to think that I had some influence on his scientific development and academic career. His early research on Petri nets was perhaps influenced by my work on step semantics, elementary net systems, and theory of traces. Then, he and his wife Marta got very involved in research on the synthesis of concurrent systems based on the theory of regions developed by Andrzej Ehrenfeucht and myself.

Gradually a cooperation developed between Maciej (and Marta) and my group in Leiden. In particular, Jetty Kleijn, my special daughter, developed a close scientific cooperation with Maciej and Marta, and in fact (to my delight) they became very close family friends.

I have also succeeded in infecting Maciej with an enthusiasm for problems related to information processing in biology and consequently we (including Jetty) have collaborated quite intensely on reaction systems, a novel model of interactive computation inspired by the functioning of the living cell, developed by Andrzej Ehrenfeucht and myself about 10 years ago. As a result of many years of collaboration, we have developed a close relationship on both professional and personal levels.

It is a pleasure to collaborate scientifically with Maciej. He is a very gifted researcher, really engaged in formulating and solving interesting problems. He is also very efficient and very reliable - these features are also very important in organizational tasks. It is no surprise that he is such an excellent Chair of the Steering Committee for the well established International Conference on Applications and Theory of Petri Nets and Concurrency. Having invested so much energy and enthusiasm in building up this community, it is very nice and reassuring for me to know it is in very good hands.

On a personal level, Maciej is a very nice friend to have. We have visited each other many times. He is always a very good host and I feel very comfortable (also from the health point of view) and very welcome whenever I visit him in Newcastle. He is a real food connoisseur and an excellent cook. I always enjoy the dinners he prepares as well as his guided culinary "escapades" in Newcastle to sample excellent foods of various origin (Chinese, Iranian, British, ...), including the famous Newcastle fish and chips. My stays in Newcastle are always very pleasant and invigorating with the special benefit of being able to enjoy the company of Marta - Maciej is really lucky to get such a joyful and interesting life partner.

The question arises whether meeting Maciej, and subsequently developing a special professional and personal relationship, was accidental or was it predestined? This question is clearly important for the magician in me, but it seems to be difficult to answer. Here are some relevant facts.

- We both come from Poland.



- Even though I am from Warsaw, while Maciej spent his childhood in Torun, we share an Alma Mater, viz., Warsaw University of Technology. Maciej started his studies there long after I left Poland.
- When Maciej moved from Torun to Warsaw, he got a room in a student house, which was located just about 200 meters from the house where I was living in Warsaw.

As my famous son says "coincidences do not exist", and so I tend to believe that meeting Maciej was predestined, a very nice predestination indeed.

Dear Maciej:

Congratulations on your 60th birthday and best wishes for good health, productivity, satisfaction, and joy (your grandchildren will take care of this) for many years to come. Thank you for your friendship.

Big Birthday Hugs, also from Maja,
Grzegorz Rozenberg
Bilthoven, August 2018

Acknowledgement: I am grateful to Paul Smit for giving me a permission to use the wonderful picture above, which was taken by him.