

**Wednesday September 19, 2012**  
**SPECIAL SESSION** dedicated to the  
**65th birthday of Professor Gianni Gilardi**

**Elisabetta**

It is a great pleasure for us to celebrate the 65<sup>th</sup> birthday of our friend Gianni, a teacher for many of us, a nice colleague to ask questions about mathematics or the proof of a technical lemma, being sure that addressing a question to him will find him prepared to discuss and willing to solve your problems. We all know that Gianni is very generous in providing his ability to help young mathematicians to grow up or less young-aged fellows needing his advice to check whether that solution could be as regular as we need.... Or to learn how the coffee and the cup should be as hot as Gianni likes... The short notes, the books, or the lecture notes of courses, the examples and counterexamples you can find in his webpage are quite numerous and of course can make you aware why things should be done in that particular way or why you cannot claim that your tentative statement holds. People who had the chance to write papers with him always claim to be very lucky, since they experienced that when, during the discussions at the blackboard, you somehow begin to see how the mathematical results are deduced, Gianni is already offering himself to write down the paper. And a few days later you become very surprised when you receive in your e-mail box the draft of the paper (perfect typesetting of course IN PLAIN TEX), and even more happy when you start to check it and you realize that no mistakes are there and the amount of the things to correct is rather small, you would say that the paper is almost ready for submission. We point out that his generosity is not only delivered for mathematical proofs and examples in PDEs, or for the writing of papers in a team of collaborators, but also from the academic point of view let us say that Gianni is not the guy who saves himself from taking courses to teach or assuming other academic responsibilities: in particular, at the moment he is the person responsible for the teaching programs in Mathematics at the University of Pavia. Speaking of Pavia, let me give the word to Pier and Elena.

**Pier**

Well, the 65<sup>th</sup> birthday of our friend Gianni was for us a good opportunity to dedicate him a special session with the lectures of scientists and friends that are closely related to Gianni both from the human side and for their contribution in research. We have the pleasure to begin with Pippo Geymonat, who started research activity and arised as mathematician along with Gianni from the same Pavia school, actively working on nonhomogeneous boundary value problems for partial differential equations, under the advice of personalities like Enrico Magenes and Jacques Louis Lions. The contributions of Paolo Podio-Guidugli and Mauro Fabrizio put the interest and the focus on the aspects of modeling, going from the coupling of hyperbolic heat conduction with mechanical vibrations to a proposed integration model for ethnic groups: Mauro and Paolo are among the applied scientists and mechanics who collaborated very fruitfully with Gianni. Nobuyuki Kenmochi will discuss parabolic variational inequalities, which represent a research area to whom Gianni has always been attracted. Juergen Sprekels will talk about the time discretization for a nonstandard viscous Cahn-Hilliard , which is a PDE system recently addressed by Gianni and Juergen along with Paolo and the lucky guy Pierluigi. Giulio Schimperna deserves a special mention since he has probably been the first PhD student of Gianni. He started his research activity under the guidance of Gianni and very recently he developed with him and Alain Miranville an interesting work on Cahn-Hilliard equations with dynamic boundary conditions and related systems: will actually lecture on

some Cahn-Hilliard models with nonlinear diffusion, while Alain's talk is concerned on evolution systems with logarithmic nonlinear terms. Maurizio Grasselli is a long term collaborator of Gianni and along with me (sorry for mentioning me too much...) they systematically treated Stefan-like and phase field models with memory from the analytical point of view. Nonlocal interactions in Cahn-Hilliard-Navier-Stokes systems will be discussed by Maurizio in his talk. Finally, last but not least, we will appreciate the lecture of Willi Alt on parabolic systems: it is a special tribute for us to have Willi's contribution in our session since when Gianni was at the beginning of his career he spent some months in Germany as visiting researcher and he had the chance to collaborate fruitfully with Willi Alt. In conclusion, let me thank all the contributors of today's session and ... let us briefly switch to Italian for some informal words and thanks to Gianni.

## **Elena**

Vogliamo anche dire due parole in italiano, per rappresentare un ringraziamento sentito da parte di tutti i giovani (o forse ex giovani) di Pavia che lo hanno avuto e lo hanno come guida. Ricordo che Gianni è stato il primo professore che ho incontrato da matricola. Aveva un maglione con uno sciatore (allora non sapevo quanto fosse appassionato di montagna) che stava per giungere all'arrivo. Ci aveva detto di averlo indossato come augurio per noi. In realtà poi ci ha aiutato e anzi ha fortemente contribuito a vivere quella sfida, stimolandoci, spronandoci e anche sapendo richiamarci con fermezza (alzi la mano chi tra i suoi studenti non ha mai ricevuto un "meno" da Gianni!). Il clima bellissimo e fecondo che abbiamo respirato a Pavia risente fortemente dello stile di chi ha saputo tracciare questi sentieri, tra cui sicuramente vi è Gianni. Siamo certi che Enrico Magenes continua ad essere orgoglioso di lui e degli altri suoi studenti, oggi nostri maestri.

E' testimone di impegno e senso del dovere, ci richiama costantemente ad uno spirito di servizio per fare della nostra università non uno sterile luogo di tecnicismi, ma una comunità che libera e fa crescere il pensiero scientifico, e per questo risulta profondamente umana. Gianni col suo esempio ha saputo trasmetterci il valore – a lui chiarissimo - dell'importanza di un gioco di squadra dove ognuno di noi mette le sue capacità e i suoi talenti a disposizione degli altri, come in una cordata che scala le dolomiti...

In Italia si usa dire che dietro ad un grande uomo c'è una grande donna. Permettetemi di correggere questo detto. Ciascuno di noi, che fa un lavoro così appassionante come la ricerca, ha imparato che non dietro ma spesso davanti a noi o meglio al nostro fianco ci sono le persone che hanno scelto di accompagnarci, e spesso queste persone, le mogli e i mariti, i nostri compagni di strada, danno un senso ancora più alto al nostro ricercare e lo rendono più fecondo e rigoroso. Questo abbiamo imparato a leggere nell'affetto di Gianni per sua moglie Ce, per Laura e Carla, per i suoi bellissimi nipoti, le cui foto decisamente non mancano nel suo studio!

Oggi non abbiamo voluto raccontare la storia di Gianni. Perché siamo certi che Gianni ha ancora tanta storia da raccontarci. E se lo avessi avuto, oggi in suo onore avrei indossato un maglione con uno sciatore che è alla partenza della gara, perché c'è ancora tanta matematica da scoprire e scrivere e raccontare...per questo buona partenza Gianni!