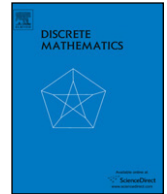




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## Preface

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IPM, the Institute for Research in Fundamental Sciences in Tehran, Iran – also known as the Institute for Studies in Theoretical Physics and Mathematics – was the site of **IPM Combinatorics II**, an International Workshop on *Design Theory, Graph Theory, and Computational Methods* from April 22 to 27, 2006. This workshop was the sequel to the first International Combinatorics Workshop at IPM in August 2003 (R. A. Brualdi, S. Hedayat, H. Kharaghani, G. B. Khosrovshahi, and S. Shahriari, editors. *Discrete Mathematics, Special Issue: International Workshop on Combinatorics, Linear Algebra, and Graph Coloring*. Volume 306. Elsevier, December 2006.) The organizers for the workshop were S. Hedayat (University of Illinois at Chicago, USA), H. Kharaghani (University of Lethbridge, Canada), G. B. Khosrovshahi (IPM and University of Tehran, Iran), and S. Shahriari (Pomona College, USA).

The invited speakers for the workshop were Aart Blokhuis (Eindhoven University of Technology, Netherlands), Andries E. Brouwer (Eindhoven University of Technology, Netherlands), Jeff Dinitz (University of Vermont, USA), Willem H. Haemers (Tilburg University, Netherlands), Samad Hedayat (University of Illinois, Chicago, USA), Hadi Kharaghani (University of Lethbridge, Canada), Elena Konstantinova (Sobolev Institute of Mathematics, Russia), Brendan McKay (Australian National University, Australia), Shahriar Shahriari (Pomona College, USA), Richard M. Wilson (California Institute of Technology, USA), and Qing Xiang (University of Delaware, USA). Patric Östergård (Helsinki University of Technology, Finland) was also invited, but could not attend for personal reasons. However he did send in his talks that were delivered by Brendan McKay. In addition to the invited speakers, many excellent talks were presented by young Iranian mathematicians.

IPM is the premiere research institute in Iran supporting mathematicians and research in pure mathematics. A growing group of young mathematicians in Iran – with the support of IPM – are making fundamental contributions in the area of combinatorics. The aim of the conference was to create an opportunity for these young mathematicians to interact with the leading mathematicians in the area of combinatorics. Since this workshop, IPM has been the site of an International Conference on Algebraic Graph Theory in April 2007, and in May 2009, IPM will celebrate the twentieth anniversary of its founding by another major Combinatorics Conference (<http://math.ipm.ac.ir/combinatorics2009/>).

Participants from outside of Iran were unanimous in their praise for the hospitality of the local organizers. In fact, the IPM staff did not spare any efforts to make sure that the meeting went smoothly. A daily newsletter provided information about the invited speakers as well as tidbits on Iranian culture and on mathematical history. A number of excursions – including a post-workshop plane trip to the city of Shiraz and the ruins of Persepolis – were organized, and a generous and tasty Conference Dinner was provided. The participants could not have asked for more.

This Special Issue of *Discrete Mathematics* contains a selection of refereed papers from the conference. They cover a range of topics in Combinatorics mirroring the variety of talks given at the conference. The organizers thank the editors of *Discrete Mathematics* for their help with this issue.