

About Claudio

Dan Younger

In September 1971, Claudio Lucchesi enrolled in my two-term course in Directed Graphs. Thus began our friendship, both academic and personal. Claudio was then in the second year of the graduate program in Computer Science at the University of Waterloo.

The day after the course ended, Claudio came to me in my office, asking if I would supervise his Ph. D. thesis. Indeed, he proposed the thesis topic: he wanted to work on the conjectured Directed Cut Minimax Equality. I had come to learn of his talent for mathematics, and could see his ambition: I was happy to have him as a student.

There followed an intense period of work and earnest back and forth discussion. His thesis was a total success: it contains the proof of what is now known as the Lucchesi-Younger Theorem; it also describes an algorithm of only polynomial complexity for the terms of that Minimax Equality.

Our experience in mathematics was fun, but not our only fun. Toward the end of his thesis work, I was asked by my cousin Paul to come to his farm to look after it for a week. Paul was an academic, and this was a "gentleman's farm": his only animals were about a dozen cattle. I invited Claudio and Marlei and Andrea to join us there. Paul warned me that his fence system was a little porous. And so it was, on the second day we were there, when we awoke that morning, that the cattle were missing, nowhere to be seen. They must have gotten through the fence system. Phyllis went looking up and down the neighbouring roads in our car. Meanwhile, Claudio and I went and knocked at the neighbouring farmhouse door. Mr McCauley answered the door. We did our best to explain our dilemma. He shook his head and asked "What do you guys do for a living?" [For the rest, I refer you to Claudio, who tells this story better than I.]

It was not only in farming that we got beyond our comfort zone. There was a trip in Claudio's VW Beetle from the beautiful city of Paraty up the old Gold Trail road toward Cunha: we didn't make it--I lost courage. In North America, there was a hike along the exposed ridge connecting Mount Washington and Mount Adams--the two highest peaks in the Northeast, in a very dense fog: we didn't make it, but we survived.

Claudio has lived with passion and energy, an inspiration to students and colleagues. I am fortunate that our lives have had a significant intersection.