Editor’s Letter

Since Michael Loui has resigned his post of Editor of Computing Reviews, this issue contains the last of his Reprints from Computing Reviews column. Michael has performed a great service for the computer science community during his term as Editor of Computing Reviews, and has provided the theory community with an equally great service in arranging for reprints of reviews of theory publications to appear in SIGACT News. I would like to thank him for his efforts over the years and welcome his successor, Joel Seiferas, to the volunteer staff of SIGACT News. We look forward to seeing Joel’s first column in the next issue.

The post of Book Review Columnist has now become open. Thanks to Tom Jacob for reactivating this column and keeping it on its feet. I’m looking for a volunteer to take over his position, preferably a person located in the US or a nearby country in order to minimize postage expenses. If you feel like you can do a good job of locating likely reviewers and twisting their arms metaphorically until you get a review, please send email to editor@sigact.acm.org.

Ian Parberry, Editor

Transitions

Changes of professional address to be listed in the Transitions section of SIGACT News should be sent by electronic mail to the Editor, editor@sigact.acm.org.

Ron Fagin is visiting the IBM Haifa Research Lab for around 9 months, until mid-August, 1997. You should continue to send both mail and email to his IBM Almaden address, where it is forwarded to him in Haifa.

His phone number at IBM Haifa is +972-4-829-6481, his fax number at IBM Haifa is +972-4-829-6114, and his home phone number in Haifa is +972-4-826-2164. His URL is:

http://www.almaden.ibm.com/cs/people/fagin/

Quarterly Quote

For a research worker, the unforgotten moments of his life are those rare ones, which come after years of plodding work, when the veil over nature’s secret seems suddenly to lift and when what was dark and chaotic suddenly appears in a clear and beautiful light and pattern.

— Gerty Cori
Editor’s Letter

This issue of SIGACT News contains much that is both new and interesting, to rephrase the old quote. Among other excellent contributions we have four technical columns from our area experts in the fields of Complexity Theory, Cryptology, Computational Geometry, and Logic; a thought-provoking column by Rocky Ross in the Education Forum; and several interesting articles. As mentioned in the last issue, Joel Seiferas has taken over from Michael Loui as Editor of Computing Reviews, and this issue contains the first of his Reprints from Computing Reviews column.

I’m still looking for a volunteer for Book Review columnist — please send email to ian@cs.unt.edu if you are interested.

Ian Parberry, Editor

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Quarterly Quote

The theory of our modern technic shows that nothing is as practical as theory.

— J. Robert Oppenheimer
Editor’s Letter

This issue of SIGACT News contains, in addition to the excellent regular contributions that you have come to expect, a series of four articles on the role and future of Theoretical Computer Science. I am sure that they will prove to be exciting and thought-provoking.

As members of SIGACT will have noticed, we recently held an election for the various SIGACT Officers. The new officers are:

- Chair: Jeff Vitter
- Vice-Chair: Faith Fich
- Secretary/Treasurer: Hal Gabow
- Members at Large: David Karger and Prabhakar Raghavan

Contact information for the new officers can be found on the inside cover of this and subsequent issues of SIGACT News.

I am also pleased to announce that Bill Gasarch has agreed to take over as Book Review Columnist (with his first column in this issue), and Rakesh Sinha has agreed to take over the Technical Report Column. We still have a vacancy for the Journal Backlog Columnist. Contact information for the new columnists can also be found on the inside cover of this and subsequent issues of SIGACT News.

Finally, on a sad note, this issue also contains an obituary for Ron Book, who passed away on May 27, 1997.

Ian Parberry, Editor

Quarterly Quote

The major difference between a thing that might go wrong and a thing that cannot possibly go wrong is that when a thing that cannot possibly go wrong goes wrong it usually turns out to be impossible to get at or repair.

— Douglas Adams
Editor’s Letter

Although we will miss John Mitchell’s regular contributions to SIGACT News as Logic Columnist, I am very pleased to announce that Jon Riecke of Bell Laboratories has kindly agreed to take over his position. We look forward to seeing his first column in a later issue. On another note, we still have a vacancy for the Journal Backlog Columnist — prospective volunteers can contact me at editor@sigact.acm.org.

Ian Parberry, Editor

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Quarterly Quote

I add only that errors in general detract from your credibility. Even if your reader does not herself know precisely what rules you are breaking, she will certainly notice whether your thoughts are easy to understand. If you write muddy, indecipherable prose, riddled with mistakes, your reader is bound to wonder how carefully you designed your study, collected your data, applied statistical techniques, or otherwise behaved like a respectable scientist.

— Lyn Dupré, Bugs in Writing

Mission Statement

The primary mission of SIGACT is to foster and promote the discovery and dissemination of high quality research in the domain of theoretical computer science. The field of theoretical computer science is interpreted broadly so as to include algorithms, data structures, complexity theory, parallel computation, distributed computation, information theory, cryptography, program semantics and verification, machine learning, computational biology, VLSI, computational geometry, computational number theory and algebra, and the study of randomness. Work in this field is often distinguished by its emphasis on mathematical technique and rigor.