Our New Financial Plan

Those of you who have read prior letters from me about the Bulletin's financial situation will recall that the TC on Data Engineering does not generate enough revenue for the standard IEEE mechanisms to adequately fund the Bulletin. This has been a long-standing concern of mine. Our new TC Chair, Betty Salzberg, explains in her letter a major step to put our finances on a firmer footing. We will distribute hardcopy of the Bulletin starting in 1999 *only* to those TC members who explicitly request hardcopy. All members will continue to receive email announcing each new Bulletin issue, and will be able to download the issue from our web site

http://www.research.microsoft.com/research/db/debull.

We are including this information in the Bulletin itself, as our current hardcopy distribution is the only sure way we have to reach all our members. I will be reminding you of this new "hardcopy only by request" policy in subsequent email announcements. But the ones who really must pay attention to this are exactly those that we have trouble reaching by email, i.e. those who cannot access the Bulletin web site. If you are one of these and want to continue receiving the Bulletin, you *must* act now. Please read Betty Salzberg's letter on page 1 for specifics.

Changing Editorial Staff

With this issue, the Bulletin has a completely new set of editors. Daniel Barbara's term as Bulletin editor concluded with the March 1998 issue on "Mining of Large Datasets". Daniel also was the editor for the March 1997 issue on "Supporting On-line Analytical Processing". Both of these issues were on subjects that are of current consuming interest within our database community. Daniel did a fine job on both of the issues, bringing together articles from leading researchers in industry and universities. I want to thank Daniel for these excellent issues and his hard work in putting them together.

I am very pleased to announce that Elke Rudensteiner from Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) in Worcester, Massachusetts has agreed to serve as a Bulletin editor. Elke previously was a faculty member at the University of Michigan. Her Ph.D. is from the University of California at Irvine. Elke has been active in the database community for ten years, with interests in OO and multi-media databases, data warehousing, and web and distributed database applications. She is a past NSF Young Investigator. It is a real pleasure for me to welcome Elke to the Bulletin, and I look forward to working with her on an issue coming your way soon.

This Issue

David DeWitt, in an invited talk at a recent SIGMOD Conference, suggested that database research might be "road kill on the Information Highway". I hope that by the time you have finished reading the current issue, that you will agree that, if our community is "road kill", that it has refused to stay dead for long. Surajit Chaudhuri has assembled papers from researchers, both industrial and academic, and developers, presenting a overview of much that is going on in the web and database space. This issue explores how database and the web are "assimilating" each other, and explores a collection of applications of database technology to information management on the web. I think you will end up agreeing with me that our research community is a very lively corpse indeed in dealing with the web. I want to thank Surajit on bringing together this broad collection of intriguing papers.