

## YOU'RE RECOMMENDING WHAT?!

By Norman Chonacky, Editor in Chief



**T**HIS MAGAZINE'S EDITORIAL BOARD JUST CONCLUDED ITS ANNUAL MEETING AT THE AMERICAN CENTER FOR PHYSICS IN COLLEGE PARK, MARYLAND. DURING THE PROCEEDINGS, I INTRODUCED SOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS AND ANNOUNCED THE RETIREMENT OF SOME OTHERS.

I'll take some space in the next issue to express my thanks to those who invested a piece of themselves in the life of *CiSE* and its predecessors. Naturally, the publication's evolution involves a concomitant evolution of its editorial board, but sometimes these retirements arise sadly and unexpectedly. Julian V. Noble, co-editor of our Computing Prescriptions department and a long-time professor of physics (recently professor emeritus) at the University of Virginia, very recently died (see p. 84); we will miss him.

It's at times of such transitions in life that I reflect about transitions in other contexts—in this case, the life of our publication. Gathered around the meeting table were both the young and the not-so-young, embodying a range of assets from energy to wisdom. Within the “younger” set are those people growing up in an information galaxy that sometimes seems to me to reside in another universe.

One of the big issues on the table was how to expand our ability to create a community among groups of scientists, engineers, and mathematicians who are drawn together by their common intellectual investment in computing. To the “youngsters,” the obvious answer is the Web. I tend to view the Web as a source of information rather than a medium for building a community, especially among people who don't know one another; but “that's the whole point,” these energetic enthusiasts exclaim. As I understand it, our mission is to serve a collection of people who have a common need but not an ethos. Yet, the assumption at the meeting is that a sizeable chunk of our putative community belongs to this Web generation: its members don't hesitate to exchange ideas and critiques in near real time with others about whose professional (let alone personal) character and competence they have almost no idea—it's the buzz that brings them together.

I must admit that I don't really “get it,” but in my ripe old

age I'm also not inclined to obstruct new possibilities even if they don't make complete sense to me at the time. And I deeply believe that we have a responsibility to build a community whose members are in need, perhaps serious need, of some ethos of shared intellectual interests. So you can count on seeing an experiment in *CiSE*-sponsored blogging in the not-too-distant future.

How soon? Well, one metric was evident during our meeting. While I was expounding about the algorithm for determining *CiSE*'s share of the income earned from the IEEE's digital library (Xplore) and asking for strategic moves that might ameliorate its decline, the “youngsters” were busy online buying a domain name for blogging purposes ... right there in front of me! I doubt it'll be very long at all before you have the opportunity to share your thoughts.

In the meantime, enjoy this issue, which is full of Pythonista enthusiasm—this, I *do* get—and continue to enjoy our tales from the far North with our International Polar Year theme track.



### How You Can Contribute

#### 1. Send a Letter to the Editor

Have we published something that caught your eye? Would you like to comment on any of our articles, or share an opinion about any of our departments? Please email senior editor Jenny Stout (jstout@computer.org).

#### 2. Review for Us

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