Editorial—Looking Back

It is bittersweet to pen my final editorial as (now past) TOSEM editor-in-chief. I've had a wonderful six years in the position (and, after all, it's all about me!). At the very least, I hope I haven't damaged TOSEM in any way, maintaining the quality of TOSEM as created by my predecessors—Rick Adrion, Axel van Lamsweerde, and Carlo Ghezzi—and passing it on in good shape to my successor—David Rosenblum. You are all amazing, and I'm privileged to be part of your cohort. (By the way, David's appointment also establishes beyond question TOSEM's international reach: David has served in research/academic positions in three continents: North America, Europe, and now Asia.)

Before I get to the core of the editorial—thanking all the people who did the real work—let me make just a few quick comments about publishing software engineering research. I care about publication of results, as can be gleaned not only by my work on TOSEM but also as program chair at major software engineering conferences. There is a massive amount of important discussion going on about journals, conferences, who should own the publications, who should pay for the publications, and more, much more. Please pay attention to this as it is highly material to our field. But I want to say something that (I hope) transcends those discussions. Specifically, I'd like very much for each and every reader, contributor, reviewer, and editor to remember that the publications aren't primarily for promotions, or for citation counts, or such. Rather, the intent is to make the engineering of software more effective so that society can benefit even more from the amazing potential of software. It is sometimes hard to see this on a day-to-day basis given the many external pressures that we all face. But if we never see this, what we do has little value to society. If we care about influence, as I hope we do, then adding value to society is the *real* measure we should pursue. Of course, this isn't easy to quantify (as are many important things in life, such as romance), and it's rarely something a single individual can achieve even in a lifetime. But BHAGs (Big Hairy Audacious Goals) are themselves of value, and we should never let them fade far from our minds and actions.

Whew, I'd better come off my podium.

I am a bit scared of thanking all of the associate editors, since I could conceivably miss one. But after some careful research and risk analysis, I decided to try anyway. Having been an EIC and an AE, I can assure you that (for me at least) being an AE is a harder and more important job. So without further ado, I bid adieu to the following wonderful AEs who have served during my two terms: George Avrunin, Laurie Dillon, Sebastian Elbaum, Mary Jean Harrold, Jim Herbsleb, André van der Hoek, Paola Inverardi, Mehdi Jazayeri, Shriram Krishnamurthi, Gail Murphy, Oscar Nierstrasz, Alex Orso, Corina Pasareanu, Mauro Pezzè, Lori Pollock, David Rosenblum, Zhendong Su, Tetsuo Tamai, Peri Tarr, Willem Visser, Rob Walker, and Andreas Zeller. Thanks for everything (and it was a lot!)

Sung Kim and Jim Whitehead have served as web master and information director, respectively, and I appreciate their dedicated efforts!

The folks at ACM has been extremely helpful. I have had a modest set of interactions with the Publications Board and with Bernard Rous (director of publications), but they have always been focused, effective, and thoughtful. Jono Hardjowirogo and now Laura Lander have been first-rate colleagues in dealing with TOSEM planning and related

management issues. Irma Strolia has been a lovely and effective editorial assistant for us at ACM (and Carol Matsumoto and I will miss working with Irma). And Joanne Pello has handled the post-acceptance processes with skill. I may miss the AEs, but I'll see them here and there, so I'll miss you all much more! (Don't tell them I said so.) Thank you from the very bottom of my heart for all your help!

Who is left? I think I've covered everybody. Oh wait, I almost forgot one. The super-duper, superb, incalculably valuable, ever-kind and ever-attentive, and awesomely effective editorial assistant, Carol Matsumoto. At a board meeting (OK, OK, a fancy dinner) at a recent conference, there was little talk about a new EIC, there was little talk about TOSEM, but there was lots of talk about Carol—it was lovely, because it gives them a reason to miss me, even if it has nothing to do with me. In six years, I had not a single complaint about Carol or her work. I am fortunate in that I will still be able to see Carol, simply by walking downstairs. TOSEM will surely have a wonderful new editorial assistant, but nonetheless Carol has set a bar that will be challenging to reach. On behalf of the entire TOSEM community, THANK YOU CAROL!

Oh, one more—you! TOSEM is nothing without authors, readers, and reviewers. I am sure I haven't satisfied the entire community, but you have more than met your side of the bargain. Thanks!

I had promised some careful data analysis of TOSEM acceptance rates, time-to-review, etc. But I won't be able to do it for this editorial. I hope to do it and distribute it through some other channels at some point soon. Sorry.

Once again, thank you for the privilege and pleasure of serving as TOSEM's EIC for the past years. I look forward to seeing it continually improve during David Rosenblum's terms and for decades thereafter.

Methodically yours,

David Notkin

Former Editor-in-Chief