Letter from the Editor-in-Chief

TCDE Chair Election

The Technical Committee on Data Engineering held an election last fall for chair of the TC. The voting deadline was December 22 of last year. The candidates were Xiaofang Zhou and Erich Neuhold. My thanks both candidates for being willing to run. Being chair of the Technical Committee is largely invisible, but it is an important responsibility for the success of the data engineering community.

The winner, with 69% of the vote is the current chair, Xiaofang Zhou, who has now won his second term. Congratulations to Xiaofang for his electoral victory. Xiaofang knows what the job entails, is experienced in doing it, and does it well. I very much appreciate Xiaofang's efforts and his continued involvement, both at the TCDE and at the Computer Society more widely.

Computer Society News

As I reported in the December issue, I successfully ran for Computer Society First Vice President. In addition, I have been appointed Treasurer of the Computer Society by CS President Jean-Luc Gaudiot. As Treasurer, I have both an opportunity and a responsibility to look carefully at the Computer Society finances. In brief, the Computer Society faces financial difficulties. It has been running a deficit for several years, and that has now caused our fund balance to go negative. The Society has been working hard to correct this situation, but with a negative fund balance, now needs to redouble its efforts. "May you [all of us] live in interesting times."

The Current Issue

My own research aims to achieve great data management performance on modern hardware platforms. These platforms differ substantially from "classical" hardware in memory hierarchy, multicore, and solid state disks. And the hardware platform evolution continues. This is important as the ongoing hardware raw speed increases we have known in the past have slowed substantially. It is this context that makes the topic of the current issue of particular interest.

One of the more recent hardware features to emerge is remote direct memory access (RDMA). RDMA is a networking technology that permits one computer to read and write directly into the memory of another computer, enabling high-throughput, low-latency networking. This provides the opportunity for software architectures that take a different view toward distributed data centric systems, re-architecting them in ways that were previously unimaginable.

Tim Kraska, the current issue editor, has seized the opportunity resulting from the emergence of RDMA. The current issue showcases some of the advanced work being done in data management that exploits RDMA. This should be higly relevant to both the research and industrial communities as we all struggle to improve data management throughput, latency, scalability, and availability. I want to thank Tim for organizing this very timely and important issue, which I personally intend to study very carefully to come to grips, in depth, with RDMA technology and its potential.

David Lomet
Microsoft Corporation