

The following column was written before the election. We have presented the column here, as a part of SIGCHI News, because of its historical importance.

Comments from Candidates for Executive Committee Positions

'CHI officers are elected in odd-numbered years for two-year terms. As I have indicated in the Chairs' Column on many occasions, the coming two years are very important ones, since much will be done during this term to implement new bylaws. Working as Chair of the Nominating Committee I set a goal of having a full slate of qualified individuals to present to the membership for a vote. I believe that goal was met. I want to thank Robert Burns, David Novick, Erika Orrick, and Brian Smith for serving on the Nominating Committee.

Soon, ACM will mail a ballot and you will be asked to select the officers who will lead 'CHI for the next two years. On that ballot each candidate will have a 200-word statement. In past elections, I have questioned whether a 200-word statement is adequate. This limit does not allow much of substance to be said. Further, since no guidance is given to candidates about what to include, it is virtually impossible to see how candidates stand on a given issue. In an attempt to alleviate this problem, I asked candidates to prepare 500-word responses to each of five questions. The questions were suggested by the Nominating Committee. These responses appear below.

A few presentation items to note. First, the order listed here is the reverse of that used in the Chairs' Column, so to be as fair as practical. Second, other than a few spelling corrections and a few formatting changes, these statements are unedited.

To the Nominating Committee. Thank you. There are many roles in an organization that are "behind the scenes" but which nevertheless have a significant impact on the organization. Nominating Committee membership is

clearly such a role, since these people are tasked with identifying qualified leaders.

To the Candidates. Thank you and best of luck. I am very pleased by the experience, service to 'CHI, enthusiasm and energy that is reflected in this slate. In my role as Past Chair in the next term, I set a goal to work with all of you, both those who are elected to positions and those whose dedication to 'CHI will have other outlets.

To SIGCHI Members. The decision is yours and it is an important one. In the Chairs' Column of this issue, I explained why bylaws changes will benefit 'CHI and argued that the real effect of those changes will be on how the bylaws are implemented. The next Executive Committee will be the implementers. Your deliberation and vote are very important. Thank you!

Mike Atwood

Marilyn (Mantei) Tremaine (Chair) / Wendy Mackay (Executive Vice-Chair)

1. How should 'CHI increase the growth, visibility, and involvement of local 'CHI chapters in activities that would benefit the HCI community?

Local CHI chapters are a key mechanism for reaching out to people who are faced with the problems of user interface design but know nothing about the CHI community. This is particularly true now that "local" means geographically dispersed. CHI local chapters are forming across Europe, in Russia and in India. CHI local chapters are now in U.S. and Canadian cities that are not known for their software factories or computer industries. In each of these new locations, the culture for reaching out, for connecting to others, for enlisting volunteers is different than say the California model that formed the very successful BayCHI chapter. Thus, local Chapters can solicit membership and provide HCI information dissemination using methods that are unique to their locale.

SIGCHI needs to be aware of these differences and flexible about its local chapter rules, e.g., a chapter may find it useful to become a subset of a local MIS managers society as a way to best reach people who need to know about HCI. In addition some of the membership solicitation mechanisms require financial support, e.g., Toronto Regional CHI (ToRCHI) set up a booth at a local computer show to solicit new members. SIGCHI should be willing to provide this support on a case by case basis. A fund for this support could be set up and managed by the Local Chapters Chair.

The current work being done coordinating local activities is very impressive and Richard Anderson deserves a round of applause. One of the key problems facing local chapters is a burnout of volunteers and a shortage of new approaches. His email and CHI conference coordination efforts are a great motivation for local chapter officers. A useful additional idea to try would be to set up sister city local chapters where one going and strong CHI chapter supports a fledgling one that is in a similar environment.

2. How should 'CHI increase membership and involvement among HCI professionals worldwide?

This is a curious question because it assumes that there is a well-defined person out in the world known as an HCI professional. Industry puts many people in the role of producing user interfaces and user documentation. What SIGCHI needs to do is reach these people who are often desperately searching for information on how to do their job effectively but bypassing CHI because CHI is not disseminating its information effectively. One of the best ways to reach these people is through the information sources they typically use. Why not a WIRED column? Why not a PR section in SIGCHI that sends out news releases to Business Week, the Economist or computing trade newspapers in the various countries developing software? Local SIGs in various countries could help in writing up the CHI news in their country's languages.