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Dear Colleague,

This is an issue chock full of articles and columns. For those who enjoy tweaking their code, Henry Baker provides a fascinating set of descriptions of ways to tweak benchmarks. And there's also a discussion on the Common Lisp public review by Guy Steele as well as an announcement of the review period. Jonathan Rees offers a guest column in Pavel Curtis' department, *standard-output*. Our contributors have been so efficient that there has not, in fact, been any room left for the humorous asides we try to include. Perhaps next time.

And speaking of next time, the next issue will be the last one that will come out with yours truly as editor. After five volumes, I'll be turning the publication over to Jon L White, who has done such a wonderful job as Technical Articles editor. I have certainly enjoyed starting up this publication and meeting so many of you in both meetings and by net and snail mail. I'll still be around in ACM so if you attend this January's Principles of Programming Languages Conference in Charlestown, South Carolina (we have an outing on an aircraft carrier!), or if you're at the SIGGRAPH'93 or Multimedia'93 conferences in San Francisco in August (we're soliciting multimedia videos!), I'll see you there.

As JonL takes over Lisp Pointers, he's going to need a lot of support from all of you. If you can identify departments that you want to see, information that you want to know, tell him. Maybe he can find someone to pull the information together for you. And if you can volunteer to help, please do. And he'll certainly enjoy receiving any of the humor pieces you've been so good about sending to me in the past. All of the department heads need your input. They need to know that you're reading what they do and what you like and don't like about it. Especially, they need help with columns. Guest columnists like Jonathan Rees help a department editor stay sane and keeps up a variety that help the readers, too. So get in touch with people and volunteer! After all, this one's for you!

The September 1991 issue of Communications of the ACM was a special issue on Lisp, guest edited by John Foderaro. Anyone interested in obtaining single copies of the issue ($8 for ACM members and $17 for non-members) can use the information below to order.

Communications of the ACM,
LISP, Adapting to the Environment,
September 1991.
Volume 34, Number 9

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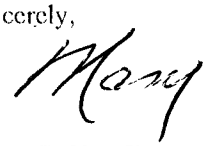

Mary S. Van Deusen

January, 1991

This Issue's Articles: A Letter From the Editor

Dear Lisp Friends:

In this issue of LISP POINTERS we have a paper about an application written in CLOS that stresses the language design in an introspective but very unusual way; and also we have a series of papers about the Gabriel benchmarks revisited.

Perhaps a word about "benchmarking". While the intent of the Gabriels is to measure certain micro levels of Lisp system performance, it must be noted that if a programmer is seriously concerned about the speed of his particular problem (say, for example, the PUZZLE benchmark) then he might better spend his time working on his algorithmic design than in racing one Lisp vendor against another. Of course, the original point of the Gabriels was not necessarily to solve the PUZZLE problem in the fastest possible way, but rather to provide a standardized, realistic piece of Lisp code against which competing Lisp compilers could be compared; for this purposes, even nonsense code could be adequate. But if I read the author's intent correctly, Baker is showing us how a little bit of attention to the coding of a problem can bear orders of magnitude more fruit than simply buying a faster compiler. Maybe not every application can be improved in this way, but this result is certainly an unexpected facet of the now-famous "Gabriels".

As usual, let me encourage you again to send us articles of any interesting nature about the Lisp world. We still could use some tutorial-like articles and thought-provoking position statements.

Cheers, and we look forward to hearing from you!

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