



Richard F. Walters

Onward and Upward!

by Richard F. Walters

I write this, my last editorial as Executive Editor of *M Computing*, with complex emotions. They are mostly positive, but some nagging questions and doubts remain unanswered as I prepare to depart.

The positives are easy. I have no reservations at all about my successor, Dr. Valerie Harvey. Dr. Harvey has been an active M community member for over a decade, is a faculty member of a respected institution (Robert Morris College) which has embraced M with open arms (more than I can say for my campus), and a specialist in database systems who has the respect of the M community, has participated in the MDC and at least two ANSI and ISO committees, and is a good friend. I know that *M Computing* is in good hands, and I know that Dr. Harvey will receive the same welcome and generous offers of support that I have enjoyed these past four years.

The journal is doing well. Articles are coming in at a greater rate this past six months than I can recall ever before, and the diversity of subjects is a fitting tribute to the diversity of M. We are continuing to hear from some regular contributors, but, as this issue reflects, we are starting to get material relating to the business world (unsolicited, at that), an area I tried hard to promote in the past.

I don't worry about my future with M either. Having just delivered to Digital Press the revision of the *ABCs of M[UMPS]*, which is updated and expanded to include all 1995 M Standard elements, I feel certain that I will have opportunities to revisit that text in the months ahead. I am also embarking on another new venture for M: offering courses over the Internet in beginning and intermediate M programming. This venture, being conducted in pilot study form sponsored by University Extension, the continuing education outreach arm of the University of California, Davis, will make it possible for more people to learn about M on their own and ... well, please see the announcement elsewhere in this issue (page 44).

I am also not concerned about what to do with my spare time, now that my editing responsibilities are ending. I hope to continue to generate the index for *M Computing*. I am working on some exciting projects having to do with distance learning (hence the course on M on the Internet), and I have several years before I will retire to part-time teaching here at Davis.

With all these positives, where are the negatives? Well, for one thing, I will no longer have as frequent contact with the MTA office, an activity I cherished. I will definitely miss the good friends I know there, and their unfailing support in this job. I will miss the excuse to contact many of the M community as editor of *M Computing*, since it enabled me to stay in touch with many of you whom I might not otherwise contact as regularly. I won't miss visiting each year with the review-

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ers of *M* articles, since I intend to participate as a reviewer even though not as editor, but I will miss contacting them about specific articles, and using that as an excuse to stay in touch.

Another nagging regret is the feeling that I might have done more in this position to see *M* grow and flourish. If I had more spare time, this might have been possible, and on reflection I recognize many missed opportunities to contribute more to *M*, especially in the times of change that face us now.

Surprisingly, since one tends to regard the obligation of forced writing as onerous, I regret not being placed in the position of writing an editorial for each issue of *M Computing*. I dreaded the deadline each time, and yet, each time that I sat down to write the editorial, once I had overcome the block of a blank screen and set the first ten words on the page, the rest flowed and I realized, as I do now, that I enjoy this kind of writing. It is a heady thing, as I said in my first editorial, to be allowed to voice one's opinion on a wide range of matters bearing on our community. I will not have that forum (and I look forward to reading Dr. Harvey's contributions in the years ahead), and it will take a little time to adjust to that fact.

Taken as a whole, though, life is going to continue to be upbeat. *M Computing* will flourish, I will continue to attend meetings and see many of you there. I will keep on writing (sometimes for *M Computing*), and I'll keep on working with *M* in a variety of contexts. *M* has done many good things for me, and I know that too will continue. My one request is that, even though you are blessedly spared seeing my photograph in early pages of *M* starting next year, that you will individually and collectively stay in touch. I will respond in kind, you may be sure.

Good Luck, Dr. Harvey, and thank you *M* people everywhere.

Dick

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