As most of you know, the managing editor, Marie English, and I read your comments and compile your article and column ratings very carefully. Your inputs are very important to us. In addition, I usually note the country of origin and the postage stamp. Unfortunately, more and more people, in most countries, use a postage meter, which yields a very unimpressive "stamp."

Many cards and letters have traveled a great distance. IEEE Micro has active subscribers on every continent except Antarctica. This month I happened to notice an editorial response from A.F. van V., from Upper Hutt, New Zealand. A.F. van V. has taken the time to write before, but that's not what attracted my attention. Upper Hutt resides on a road approximately 30 kilometers northeast of the capital, Wellington. Halfway between Upper Hutt and Wellington is the city of Lower Hutt. Lower Hutt and Tempe, Arizona—the city in which I live and work—are "sister cities." The sister city program is a worldwide cultural and student exchange agreement that fosters international understanding, goodwill, and, in my opinion, world peace. Tempe also has sister cities in Germany and Yugoslavia and is now negotiating with a city in the People's Republic of China.

Ten years ago I encountered a similar program within the US. The National Science Foundation selected a number of university professors and placed them in industrial environments, in their own field of expertise, for a period of one year. That's how I met Joe Hootman, your associate editor-in-chief. I have never attended any of Joe's classes at the University of North Dakota, but I know he is one of the best engineers that I have met.

I firmly believe that cultural, professional, and technical exchange is a good practice, at all levels. Over the past few years, IEEE Micro has been fortunate to attract an excellent international Editorial Board, while maintaining a healthy academic-industrial balance overall.

A few readers expressed disappointment that the April issue focused on Japan, and I expect that a few readers will be disappointed that this issue focuses on Europe. However, the overwhelming majority of readers approved of the April issue, and many requested more information and extra copies. While accepted contributed articles will be published throughout the year, regardless of origin, the IEEE Micro Editorial Board decided to continue focusing on the Far East in April and the IEEE Region 8 (Europe, Middle East, Africa) in October of both 1988 and 1989. I hope that you will find this first IEEE Micro special issue on Europe interesting and useful.

Your comments are always appreciated. Your Editorial Board is especially interested in your reaction to this issue and our April special issue on Japan.

Best regards,

Jim Farrell