Message from the Program Chairs

VRAIS ‘97 presents a sample of all the things that make the field of virtual reality an exciting area in which to work. We have papers this year that present quality research on a variety of topics in computing, HCI, and hardware. We also have, for the first time, a number of papers on real applications of VR that go beyond the usual entertainment and giving media interviews. VRAIS continues to attract an international audience, with authors participating from the U.S., Canada, United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Japan and Hong Kong. We have made every effort to maintain the standard of excellence established by previous program chairs. In addition to being international and broadly representative of the field, these proceedings also present some of the best research and development efforts in Virtual Reality. The credit for this goes to the authors who chose to send their work to VRAIS, and to the members of the Program Committee who provided careful reviews of the papers.

On a more personal note, this was my first experience as a program chair for VRAIS. I have learned a great deal from the experience. Although I can not top Holly Rushmeier’s story as SIGGRAPH Program Chair of government shutdowns and blizzards, I did manage to have all the papers arrive in Atlanta in the middle of the Olympic Games. Since my office sat in the middle of the Olympic Village, just getting the papers to me turned out to be a challenge. An overnight package usually spent one night getting to the edge of Georgia Tech’s campus (site of the Olympic Village), and then three to six more days getting through Olympic security. Then MOST of them were delivered to my office except for the ones that went to the headquarters of different Olympic teams (which we finally managed to track down). Getting the papers back off of campus to be reviewed was even more challenging since the express mail carrier was not allowed into the Olympic village. I managed by recruiting two of my students who helped me carry three (big) boxes of express mail packages out of my building, where we got on a shuttle bus, which took us to another shuttle bus, which took us to an off-campus parking lot, where we loaded it all into my car, fought our way through Olympic traffic, and eventually got the packages off to reviewers.

I would still be shuffling papers if it were not for the help of my students and the staff of the Graphics, Visualization & Usability Center. Thanks go to Joan, Tonya, Borut, Byron, Kevin, Solomon, Ben, Drew, Don, Doug, Peter, and Bill for getting me through the process. My thanks also to my program co-chair, Mark Green, and to the conference chair, Sharon Stansfield, for their support and advice.

Larry Hodges
Georgia Institute of Technology

Mark Green
University of Alberta