

## Changing of the Guard

Steve McConnell

**I**EEE *Software* began life in 1984 as the first IEEE Computer Society periodical to focus specifically on software. Under the leadership of Bruce Shriver, the magazine devoted itself to the leading issues in software engineering and quickly established itself as the premiere publication in the software development field.



Ted Lewis took over *IEEE Software*'s editorship in 1987, continuing the magazine's focus on innovative software development practices, occupying a unique niche at the crossroads between industry and academia.

In 1991, Carl Chang took the helm as editor in chief. Carl sharpened the editorial focus on "low-hanging fruit"—software development practices that had proven their value in research contexts or that had been used successfully in a few production environments but that hadn't yet made the leap into common use. Carl founded the magazine's Industrial Advisory Board, whose purpose was to ensure that the magazine stay focused on issues useful to industry rather than becoming just another research publication.

Al Davis succeeded Carl Chang in 1995. Al continued to sharpen the magazine's focus on practical content. He identified article genres of interest to practitioners, including case studies, experience reports, how to's, and essays. He appointed more members

from industry to the magazine's Editorial Board and shifted the magazine's emphasis further from research-oriented articles toward content that practitioners would find useful.

### Retrospective

By the time I became editor in chief, I had regarded *IEEE Software* as the leading software development publication for many years. The magazine had established a distinguished legacy of thought leadership, and I considered it to be an honor and a privilege to follow in the footsteps of Bruce Shriver, Ted Lewis, Carl Chang, and Al Davis. Toward the end of Al's term, our editorial and advisory boards formalized the magazine's mission statement: "building the community of leading software practitioners." My focus has been to carry out that mission in our column areas, theme issues, and general articles.

It's hard to believe that four years have passed since I became editor in chief. These years have been an exciting time in the software industry. We've seen Y2K come in with a bang and go out with a whimper. We've seen the rise and fall of the dot-coms. We've seen the US labor market for software developers change from an extraordinary seller's market, in which programmers received high salaries, stock option grants, and signing bonuses, to a buyer's market, in which many experienced developers are glad to work at whatever job they can find. We've seen a significant increase in software development

### DEPARTMENT EDITORS

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wkeuffel@computer.org

**Construction:** Andy Hunt and Dave Thomas,  
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{Andy, Dave}@pragmaticprogrammer.com

**Design:** Martin Fowler, ThoughtWorks,  
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**Loyal Opposition:** Robert Glass, Computing Trends,  
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**Manager:** Don Reifer, Reifer Consultants,  
d.reifer@ieee.org

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voas@cigital.com

### STAFF

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dstrok@computer.org

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activity around the world, including in India, China, Europe, and many other areas.

The past four years have also seen interesting and significant changes in software methodologies. Web development has evolved from a novelty that only a few leading-edge companies attempted to one of the most common varieties of software work. Open source development came in like a hurricane and has now quieted to a gentle breeze that seems to be of interest mostly to people working on Internet systems applications. Methodology discussions have moved from the ivory towers of academia and the Software Engineering Institute into the mainstream world of programmers who attend the Agile Universe conference and read books about Extreme Programming, the Rational Unified Process, and other current methodologies.

The profession of software engineering has advanced by leaps and bounds during this period. The Software Engineering Body of Knowledge project developed and released version 1.0 of the SWEBOK. Curriculum guidelines for undergraduate software engineering programs have been developed, and the number of undergraduate software engineering programs in North America has grown from two to more than two dozen. To provide ethical guidance to software professionals, the two largest professional organizations for software developers (the ACM and the IEEE Computer Society) have defined and adopted a Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct for software engineers.

The past four years as editor in chief of *IEEE Software* have provided many of the high points of my career in the software field. Participating in the magazine I have regarded since the 1980s as the best source of information for leading software practitioners has been a thrill. Our annual Editorial Board and Industrial Advisory Board meetings are more stimulating than any software conference I've attended. I've enjoyed my numerous conversations with our article au-

thors, referees, and board members. Our associate editors in chief—Maarten Boasson, Terry Bollinger, Christof Ebert, Ann Miller, Jeffrey Voas, and Wolfgang Strigel—have been especially supportive of the magazine, and I've learned a lot from each of them. I've also enjoyed the numerous letters and emails we've received from our readers.

### Into the sunset

After four years, I feel I've made as much contribution to the magazine as I can as editor, and, coincidentally, IEEE Computer Society policy limits each editor's term to four years. Consequently, it is with both wistfulness and some relief that I note that this is my last issue as editor in chief.

Because this is a volunteer activity, *IEEE Software* has also consumed many nights, weekends, and vacation days. When my term ends, I'm planning to turn my attention to my company, Construx Software, and to make progress on some long-dormant writing projects. I plan to publish a second edition of *After the Gold Rush* early in 2003 and to complete a book on software estimation by the end of 2003. I have a large stack of magazines and an even larger stack of software engineering books to read. (The past four years have produced an amazing wealth of new software engineering books, which has been an exciting development in itself.)

### Passing the baton

I am very pleased to announce that the IEEE Computer Society has appointed Warren Harrison to be editor in chief of *IEEE Software* beginning with the January 2003 issue. Warren was a member of the *IEEE Software* Editorial Board from 1991 to 1992 and has nearly 15 years of editorial experience. He has served as the North American editor and the editor in chief of *Software Quality Journal*, and he was cofounder and managing editor in chief of *Empirical Software Engineering*.

Warren's interests include software

## FROM THE EDITOR

measurement and decision-making, quality, software engineering economics, and project management, as well as Internet technologies. He has hands-on software product development experience. He cofounded a software tools company called SET Laboratories, which specialized in software metrics analysis tools. His academic research has involved diverse industrial partnerships, and he maintains a strong practical focus on the useful application of new techniques and technologies.

Warren received his PhD in computer science from Oregon State University in 1986 and is a professor of computer science at Portland State University in Portland, Oregon.

Warren has many great ideas that I think will help *IEEE Software* maintain its position as the leading software periodical. I encourage you to



**Warren Harrison**

send Warren your article ideas, theme issue ideas, and letters to the editor (in care of [software@computer.org](mailto:software@computer.org)) and to help him fulfill the magazine's mission of "building the community of leading software practitioners." ☺

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EDITOR IN CHIEF:

**Steve McConnell**

10662 Los Vaqueros Circle  
Los Alamitos, CA 90720-1314  
[software@construx.com](mailto:software@construx.com)

EDITOR IN CHIEF EMERITUS:

Alan M. Davis, Univ. of Colorado  
at Colorado Springs

### ASSOCIATE EDITORS IN CHIEF

**Design:** Maarten Boasson, Quaerendo Invenietis  
[boasson@quaerendo.com](mailto:boasson@quaerendo.com)

**Construction:** Terry Bollinger, Mitre Corp.  
[terry@mitre.org](mailto:terry@mitre.org)

**Requirements:** Christof Ebert, Alcatel Telecom  
[christof.ebert@alcatel.com](mailto:christof.ebert@alcatel.com)

**Management:** Ann Miller, University of Missouri, Rolla  
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**Quality:** Jeffrey Voas, Cigital  
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