Greetings!

Michael D. O'Dell

 T his issue begins with a study in the comparative anatomy of two well-known distributed operating systems. The creators of the Sprite and Amoeba distributed systems have rolled the examining tables side-by-side and take us on a parallel tour of these two influential systems, comparing their structure, organ system by organ system. The design choices and the resulting differences in the two systems can be both large and subtle. Direct architectural comparisons such as this one are particularly stimulating and, unfortunately, appear all too infrequently in our literature.

The next paper revisits an eternal problem: how do we teach "systems skills" to new students? Smith relates his experiences developing an undergraduate practicum concentrating on the principles and realities of complex software development.

The final paper in this issue addresses system I/O performance. Fast processors are now commodity items but equivalent system I/O performance is not nearly as common. Cabrera and Long describe their work to significantly improve the I/O performance of workstation-class machines.

It is also my pleasant duty at this time is to direct your attention to our masthead and the roster of the Editorial Board. These people willingly give substantially of their time and talent to make this journal possible. Additionally, during the this volume we have enlisted the aid of many additional readers whose efforts we deeply appreciate as well. Those specific to volume 4, number 3 were listed in that issue. Further, I'd like to thank Tim Budd, Geoff Collyer, Ralph Griswold, J.

Robert Horgan, Steve Johnson, Mike Lesk, Andy Lynn, Anne Rogers, Barry Shein, and Jim Waldo.

I also want to thank the authors of Volume Four, without whom there would only be blank pages. But lastly, I thank you, our readers, without whom there would be no pages at all.