Special Focus Issue:Clustering

Guest Editor: Joseph L. Kaiser

inside:

MOTD
BY ROB KOLSTAD

motd

USA Computing Olympiad Wins One

by Rob Kolstad

Dr. Rob Kolstad has long served as editor of *;login:*. He is also head coach of the USENIX-sponsored USA Computing Olympiad.

kolstad@usenix.org

The USA delegation to the International Programming Contest (known as the IOI – International Olympiad on Informatics) performed outstandingly well last week (July 16-20) in Tampere, Finland. Only recently chosen (see p. 92), the team tallied enough points to outscore every team but one.

Best of all, gold-medal veteran Reid Barton topped all competitors with a whopping 580 points out of 600. He outpaced second place by almost 50 points and third place by about 50 more! He is the USA team's first overall winner.

Reid is an especially talented competitor. Just a week ago, he earned his fourth consecutive gold medal at the International Math Olympiad, posting a perfect score on his way to this world-record breaking achievement.

Reid is home-schooled, though he doesn't spend his time "at home." He attends classes at the local high school, MIT, Tufts, and other universities "local" to his Boston home. He plays the piano and speaks an assortment of foreign languages, including Swedish. He also works part-time at Akamai Technologies, a local startup company. Quiet and self-effacing, he is a pleasure to work with. Coaching him has been a challenge: what an awful thing it would be to coach him into a worse status than his current state! Reid will be attending MIT in a few weeks.

The rest of the team also earned medals.

Tom Widland, a private school student from Albuquerque, New Mexico almost topped the silver medalists. A couple more test cases (out of over 100) and he would have had a gold medal. Tom is planning to take a year off to work in Spain before attending Harvard.

Vladimir Novakovsky, a student at Thomas Jefferson High School of Science and Technology in Virginia, also earned a silver medal. Vlad came to Finland after a short break in Moscow subsequent to his other silver medal performance in Antalya, Turkey at the International Physics Olympiad. Vlad is foregoing his senior year at TJ (having taken all the courses there) to attend Harvard this fall.

Steven Sivek, a rising senior at TJHSST, earned a bronze medal. Steven will continue his extracurricular activities at TJ this fall, sharing many of them with his identical twin brother. They include science bowl, computer club (complete with training and lectures for IOI and American Computer Science League competitions), and other academic-style clubs.

All-in-all, a super group of young men who have performed better than any team we've had in the past. I hope that each of you encourages those young people you encounter who indicate an interest in computer careers. We always need a larger number of competent and talented professionals!

USENIX is the sole sponsor of the USACO, a completely volunteer organization. I head the staff of half a dozen coaches while Don Piele, a professor at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside, handles all the administration and operational tasks. I know that everyone on the team appreciates USENIX's commitment and works hard to make all members proud of the team's accomplishments.