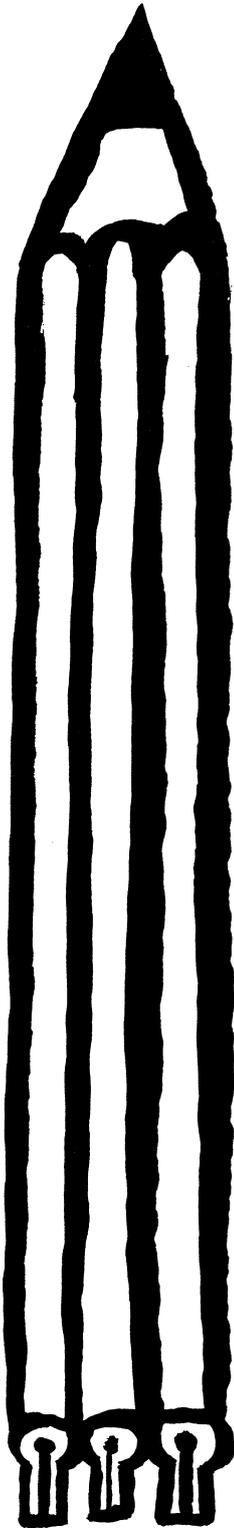


Dear Reader,

My recent days have been a bit hectic because, as you see, we have only a couple of weeks to go before ICAP/LICS 2015 will be starting. In the letter of the president, Luca says that the early registration fee is roughly 320 EUR, which is very low for a five day conference. Thanks for the appreciation, but it is also the fact that this benefit for people outside Japan is just due to the exchange rate. The current rate is approximately 140 JPY per EUR, but just looking back a couple of years ago, it was about 100 JPY per EUR. Some 40 % down only in a few years! If it is the same rate now, then the fee would be some 450 EUR, which may be ok, but no one would say "very cheap." ICALP 2015 in Kyoto was decided two years ago. I gave a short presentation about what it would look like in the business meeting of ICALP 2013, in which I made a sort of promise that the fee should not be more than 350 EUR. At that time, the rate was already something like 130 JPY per EUR, but I had a clear memory that it had been 100 JPY just one year or so before. Who knows if it would come back soon...

We had two sad news. One is that of Jiří Matoušek. We have an obituary by Takeshi Tokuyana in this issue. The other is that of John Nash; Mr and Mrs Nash were killed by a car crash in May. I read a NY Times article as well as many reader's comments there. Many of the readers mentioned the New Jersey Turnpike, one of the busiest and toughest highways in the US, and rear-seat seat-belts (they were not wearing



seal-belts in the rear-seat of the cab and were thrown out of the car). I do know that rear seat-belts in old US cabs are often broken and/or are buried in a gap of rear seats; it is not easy at all for senior people to wear them quickly. I also want to say something about the highway (I remember well when I first drove on the Turnpike, which seemed to me a most exciting American culture), that is its efficiency. The data show that the traffic of the Turnpike is something like 20,000 at a peak time, meaning that number of vehicles (and roughly the same number of people because most cars carry only a driver) go one direction. This may seem a lot, but just consider a single subway line in Tokyo. One train has ten cars, each car accommodates well more than 100 people and they run every 2.5 minutes. Simple calculation shows that this is already more than the monster highway with 6-7 lanes each direction.

I should come back to the Bulletin. As you see in a moment, we started another new section "Reflections on Influential Scientists and Ideas." There is an introduction by Luca about its purpose, but simply speaking, that is a section for essays about big influential scientists and/or their ideas. Our first essay is about George Dantzig and his simplex method by David Avis (the last year is the centenary of George Bernard Dantzig's birth). When David was a Stanford student, he took a class of Dantzig, thus I am sure he is a best person to start this new column. Also this year is the 100th anniversary of the birth of Richard Hamming. I studied the Hamming code long



time ago, but to me the Hamming distance is more impressive as an important notion for TCS people. I think it is a fun to approach such big guys from several different angles of our own. Please consider your contributions to this new section.

This issue's columns are very rich; many thanks to the column editors again and again. Finally I hope I can see you in Kyoto very soon.

*Kazuo Iwama, Kyoto
June 2015*