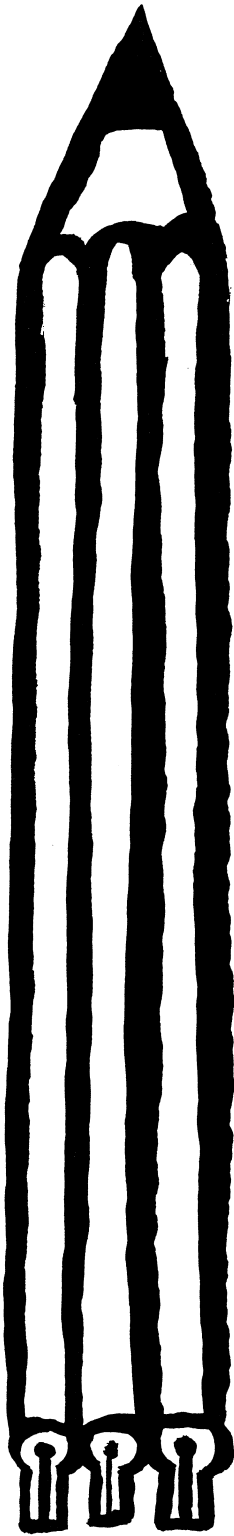




Dear Reader,

ICALP Track A is briefly called "Algorithms and complexity theory," but it seems to me that there is a considerable amount of gap between the two fields and the corresponding two communities do not have a big overlap. I have often heard algorithm people saying "I don't know complexity theory well, so I have no idea about ..." and vice versa. I am probably one of a small number of people who have been involved in the two fields both rather seriously. So I met Alan Selman and Lars Arge quite a few times. I remember well that Alan and I met at some European conference some 10 years back. Alan was almost 70 and I was almost 60 and that conference, as usual, was occupied by a lot of young guys. We spent a lot of time for nice chats; yes, he was really a nice guy as described in Lane's memorial.

To be involved in two or more fields has pros and cons. When some promising topic quickly emerged in one field, it is not easy to get in if one does not have a reasonable amount of knowledge and basic ideas on the field. A good example is quantum computation. It is clear to me that CS people who quickly started quantum computation with nice results had mostly come from complexity theory, not from algorithms. I also got involved in it around 2000, which was only possible since I was used to the way of thinking, not being scared by different computation models, which I think is a key ability of complexity people. Unfortunately, the period was not too long, I almost quit from



quantum computation some ten years back; since I felt quantum computation increasingly needed physics as it was getting matured. This may be a con. Namely, it is hard to reach a really deep level of one field as a specialist. As the field gets matured, it gets harder to write strong papers without that deepness.

Anyway, I enjoyed all four columns in this issue and one book introduction. This is probably the merit of my wideness of research interests. My sincere thanks to the authors and column editors for, as usual, their great jobs.

*Kazuo Iwama, Kyoto
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