TCDE Chair Election

I would like to draw your attention to the message on page 50 from Paul Larson, chair of the TCDE Nominating Committee. The TC will be electing a new TCDE Chair, as Betty Salzberg's term as Chair ends in December. The Nominating Committee has nominated Erich Neuhold, the current Vice Chair of the TCDE to run for Chair of the TCDE. Nominations for TCDE Chair were also solicited from TCDE members. There were no nominations submitted.

Now I would urge you to participate in the electoral process. While Erich Neuhold is running unopposed, voting is important as a way to make your intent clear. Having sufficient number of TCDE members voting helps to ensure that the electoral process works well and results in the outcome that members intend.

The Current Issue

As the database industry, and the database products that are sold by the industry, mature it is clear that simply answering queries that are precisely stated, and that have precise results, at which our current database systems excel, does not always meet the needs of users. This is particularly true when the user's intent is exploratory in nature. Not only does such a user not wish to provide precision in his request, but such precision may not be possible at his current state of knowledge. Further, such a user will frequently be willing to trade precise query results for approximate results, when the approximate results can be delivered much faster than the precise results.

Sunita Sarawagi, who acted as the editor for this issue, contacted researchers who are active in the field of imprecise queries. They have responded to Sunita's reasonably precise request about work on imprecise queries by providing papers that report on their recent work or work in progress in this exciting area. Such work expands on the usual database query processing techniques, exploiting combinations of techniques from information retrieval, probability theory, and totally new methods. It does not take great foresight to realize that this field will be one that researchers will be exploring for years to come. Sunita surely deserves our collective thanks for assembling the current issue, which, with its diverse collection of approaches, helps us all to stay current in this young and fast moving field.