



## Editorial

Jack D. Gaskill, Editor

## More on Author Sequence

In my editorial published in the May 1987 issue of *Optical Engineering*, I addressed a question that had been posed by Adolf Lohmann regarding the appropriate sequence for listing authors' names on multiple-author technical publications. Adolf indicated that authors' names are listed in alphabetical order at his institute but wondered how the sequence was determined elsewhere. There have been several responses to that editorial, most of which have tended to agree with the opinion I expressed therein: if the contributions of one of the authors are substantially greater than the contributions of the others, that author's name should be listed first, followed by the names of the remaining authors in alphabetical order.

One of the individuals who responded was R. H. T. Bates of the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand. Richard wrote, "ideas are of course the essence," and that the main idea generator should probably go first. However, he also said that when research students are among the authors, his "major concern is with optimising their

careers (future as well as immediate)" and suggested that they be given top billing unless their contributions have been "comparatively menial."

Finally, Richard wrote, "while Adolf's Medes-and-Persians-like alphabetical immutability has a lot to be said for it, and does not in any way contravene natural justice, I do not think it is quite optimum when research students are involved. Of course, people who have co-authored plenty of papers while under Adolf's tutelage have no need to bother how far down the authorship lists they are, since their careers are assured anyway."

In a modest attempt to answer one of Adolf's questions regarding "the frequency of authors appearing in alphabetical order," I gathered the following insufficient data: of 52 papers with multiple authors published in four issues of *Optical Engineering* within the past year, 34 appeared with at least one author listed out of alphabetical sequence. By contrast, it appeared that 100% of the single-author papers had the author's last names listed alphabetically.

## OPTICAL ENGINEERING EDITORIAL SCHEDULE

### November 1987

**Contributed papers on optical engineering**

### December 1987

**Contributed papers on optical engineering**

### January 1988

**Progress of Optics in the United Kingdom**

John C. Dainty	Lionel R. Baker
Blackett Laboratory	Sira Ltd.
Imperial College	South Hill, Chislehurst
London SW7 2B2, UK	Kent BR7 5EH, UK
01-589-5111	01-467-2636

### February 1988

**Contributed papers on optical engineering**

### March 1988

**Photomechanics I**

Fu-Pen Chiang  
SUNY/Stony Brook  
Lab. for Experimental Mechanics Research  
Stony Brook, NY 11794  
516/632-8311

### April 1988

**Photomechanics II**

Fu-Pen Chiang

### May 1988

**Industrial Applications of Optical Signal Processing**

Bahram Javidi  
Michigan State University  
Electrical Engineering Department  
East Lansing, MI 48824-1226  
517/353-6329

### June 1988

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