Editorial

Jack D. Gaskill, Editor

Looking Back at 1988

In a similar editorial written one year ago for the December 1987 issue of *Optical Engineering*, I expressed my amazement at how quickly 1987 had seemed to pass. However, my attitude about 1988 is considerably different. Why? Because it was a presidential election year in the United States, which happens to be where I live. Those of you who either do not live in the U.S. or do not follow our election process that closely may not fully appreciate my state of mind, but it seems to me that it has now been several years since the beginning of 1987—and remember that 1987 was quite short.

It must have been the Precambrian era when the various candidates announced their intentions to seek the presidency of the U.S. Next came an era during which the candidates were packaged, investigative reporters conducted stakeouts, and other vital activities took place. The media—all forms—had a heyday. Information was uncovered that caused one of the candidates to withdraw because of his alleged involvement in some sort of monkey business (something about a special interest in an agricultural commodity that is grown in flooded, terraced fields). Another candidate withdrew when it was alleged that several of his remarks had previously been written or spoken by others and that he had not given these other individuals proper credit. One might say he exceeded his credit limit. There are other stories that will be left untold here.

Next came the primaries, the conventions, the selection of running mates, the debates, etc., etc. It went on and on. It must have required the denuding of thousands of square miles of forests to provide all of the pre-election polls we were subjected to. Every kind of journalist you can imagine got into the act. Hunting enthusiasts wrote about finding a

quayl behind every bush. Medical writers informed us of a new affliction known as “being a heartbeat away,” which is alleged to cause great stress on the general populace. We were also told that we would find lip reading to be a nontaxing exercise, and we were introduced to the “L” word. Now that the election is over, the sports journalists have started their Monday-morning quarterbacking, and these post-election analyses are likely to go on for months or years.

On a brighter note, optics did play a part in this campaign: radiometry was mentioned often by one of the candidates (10^3 point sources); fabrication and testing were quite evident (all of the candidates made spectacles of themselves, thus putting voters to the test); and, dark-field illumination was observed (negative video spots).

Enough! I could say much more about the election year we just witnessed, but then I wouldn't have enough room left to mention the important items below. And besides, this whole process has left me completely bushed.

I would now like to acknowledge the efforts of the guest editors for 1988, whose names are listed below with the titles of their very successful special issues:

Lionel R. Baker and **J. Christopher Dainty** (Progress of Industrial Optics in the United Kingdom; January)

Daniel Vukobratovich (Optomechanical Instrument Design; February)

Fu-Pen Chiang (Photomechanics I and II; March and August)

Bahram Javidi (Industrial Applications of Optical Signal Processing I and II; April and May)

Janet S. Fender (Multiple-Aperture Optical Systems; September)

Carmina Londoño and **Jon Van Tassel** (Optical Design; December)

The time and energy all of these individuals devoted to ensure the success of their special issues is sincerely appreciated.

Finally, as I have done many times in the past, I wish to once again thank all of the authors who submitted manuscripts to be considered for publication in *Optical Engineering* and all of the referees who promptly and thoroughly reviewed those manuscripts; we all are deeply indebted to both of these groups of individuals.