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Letter from Ben Brosgol, SIGAda Chair

Dear Colleagues:

In this letter I would like to share a few thoughts about our financial status and our upcoming conference, and to initiate some preliminary brainstorming on our future relationship with one of the other ACM SIGs.

Financially we are in reasonable condition. As many of you know, our fund balance[1] saw a precipitous drop between 1996 and 1998; fortunately, careful management of our conference budgets over the past several years – and replacing contracted services by able and enthusiastic volunteers – has borne fruit. We expect our fund balance to be around $25K at the end of the current Fiscal Year (July 2001), which should provide the new set of officers[2] with some "breathing room" in planning future activities and undertaking new initiatives.

For those who are curious about financial detail, our budget for the next Fiscal Year (July 2001 – June 2002) predicts revenue of around $153K and expenses of $141K. The major contributions to revenue are $92K from the SIGAda 2001 Conference, $32K from dues and subscriptions, and $20K anticipated as a grant from the Ada Resource Association. Major expense items are the conference ($82K), Ada Letters ($19K), and the Ada Awareness Initiative (the $20K ARA grant, mostly related to taking the SIGAda booth to trade shows).

The SIGAda 2001 conference will be in the Minneapolis area during the week of September 30. It will include tutorials, a technical program of refereed papers, and a vendor exhibit area; preliminary information is included in this issue of *Ada Letters*. Papers and workshop proposals from all segments of the Ada community are solicited – users, implementers, educators, researchers, students, closet language designers with proposals for new features in Ada '0X. Our annual conference serves both as a vehicle for top-quality technical papers and as a meeting place for the Ada community, and I encourage you to participate. The weather in Minneapolis at the time of our conference should be delightfully autumnal (with little likelihood of snow :-)

It is sometimes useful to look beyond the short term and to identify longer range strategies that will help us serve our members and also the Ada community in general. Interestingly enough, one possible measure recalls an arrangement that was in place during our formative years in the early 1980s, namely a closer

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[1] *Fund balance* is ACM-speak for what might be regarded as a SIG's treasury / "bank account".

[2] SIGAda is holding an election this year, and a new administration will be in place in July. In the waning days of my term in office I am considering pardons for Ada programmers who have drifted into C++ or Java, as long as they are willing to repent :-)

relationship with SIGPLAN. Old-timers will remember that, before we became a full-fledged SIG, we were a technical committee ("AdaTEC") under the auspices of SIGPLAN. For a variety of reasons a tighter coupling may make sense again:

- It sometimes seems that we spend a lot of energy "preaching to the choir"; it would be useful for us to have the SIGPLAN membership as our audience.

- A number of SIGPLAN conferences and workshops (e.g., OOPSLA, PLDI) are directly relevant to the Ada community, but they rarely attract Ada participation.

- SIGPLAN has financial resources to support activities that could be too risky for SIGAda.

On the other hand, it is important not to lose our identity as an Ada-focused group. Even with membership declining (a situation that most ACM SIGs are encountering), SIGAda serves an essential role, and I would not advocate a relationship that fails to preserve our "Ada self" and our autonomy.

The idea of closer coupling with SIGPLAN is at the pre-brainstorming stage; it is not about to happen immediately, and indeed it is not clear whether there is any kind of formal relationship that would satisfy all parties. Nevertheless, we have sent out "feelers" to SIGPLAN, and their officers have indicated preliminary support for the general concept. If you have thoughts about this issue, please get in touch with any of the SIGAda officers. The topic will likely be discussed at the Extended Executive Committee meeting at SIGAda 2001.

Sincerely,

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