

## Notes

I participated for the first time in the 3rd IOI in 1991 as an observer, and ever since it has been my dream for IOI to be organized in Iran. My dream is finally realized in IOI-2017, thanks to Dr. Ghodsi and Dr. Abam who made it happen.

Last year, while I was visiting Stanford University, the organizing committee of IOI-2017 asked me to be in charge of the special issue of the Informatics Olympiad Journal for the IOI-2017. It was a true pleasure for me to join the team. Dr. Abam introduced me to Professor Valentina Dagienė, it was great getting to know Valentina and all the great work she has done for the Informatics community. Under their support I drafted a plan and set out to organize an informative, interesting issue. In the following kindly find a brief description of all the contents of the special issue.

- The first item that came to my mind was conducting an interview with Donald Knuth while I was at Stanford. We met Don in his residence at the Stanford campus, and he generously answered all of our questions. I was accompanied by Dr. Amir Zarkesh and Dr. Mohsen Hejrati, both Iranian high tech entrepreneurs in the Silicon Valley. Thanks also goes to Dr. Amin Saberi, a medalist at the IOI and a faculty at Stanford, for his kind support for this endeavor.
- How did IOI start? It has always been somewhat of a mystery, but Professor Petar Kenderov, academician at the Bulgarian Academy of Science and founder of the IOI, generously accepted my request and wrote about the three decades of IOI and how it started.
- Iran joined the IOI in 1992. Dr. Ghodsi, professor of computer science at Sharif University of Technology and co-founder of the Iranian National Olympiad in Informatics, has written a brief introduction about the participation of Iran in the IOI.
- Professor Bahman Mehri, a pioneer and distinguished faculty member at Sharif, has written about al-Khwarizmi, a Persian mathematician who gave his name to the algorithm.
- Dr. Mohammad Ali Abam, a medalist at the International Mathematical Olympiad, faculty at the Sharif Computer Engineering department, and chair of the IOI-2017, has written about the details of the Iranian National Olympiad in Informatics, including national contests and training sessions.
- Informatics training is always an issue such that to bring opportunity for all youth and attract them to programming and problem solving. Dr. Ali Sharifi-Zarchi, Dr. Hamid Zarrabi-Zadeh and Ali Babei, all three very well experienced in IOI,

have written an article and have presented the achievements of the online platforms Kahu and Olympedia.

- In the nearly three decades since IOI began, other programming challenges have been organized in Iran. Dr. Hamid Zarrabi-Zadeh, faculty at the Sharif Computer Engineering Department and director of the ACM/ICPC in Iran, has written about the plethora of programming challenges and contests in Iran.
- Isfahan Mathematics House (IMH) is a unique learning environment for both mathematics or informatics and is focused on extra-curricular experimental and project-based learning. Maryam Ghaemi and Emran Behrooz, research fellows at the IMH, have written about the Isfahan Mathematics House.
- Robotics has long attracted many students in Iranian schools. Gohar Pirayesh and Jafar Ziari, experts in the information technology in education, have written a brief introduction about Robotics in Iranian schools.
- The high-tech startup movement in Iran has attracted many computer science and engineering graduates and is a growing market for computer programmers. Hesham Mirarmandehi and Reza Mohammadi, pioneering high-tech entrepreneurs in Iran, have written about the programming market.
- I myself have been studying new aspects of education in problem solving and algorithmic thinking. I have written an article about computational thinking and present it as a 21st-century skill.

I have to say also, many thanks to the Editorial Board of the IOI journal “Olympiads in Informatics” and all who had assisted with the special issue. Particular thanks are due to the organization committee for the IOI 2017 in Iran, without their assistance we would be unable to hold this special issue of the IOI journal.

Finally, all of these works have common goals: to share the joy of computing, to develop imperative knowledge, and to produce objects of beauty.

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For the IOI-2017