

FROM THE EDITOR

Changes for the New Year

By Michael Slater

Since the first issue of *Microprocessor Report* was published in September, 1987, the microprocessor business has changed dramatically. As the pace of new microprocessor introductions picked up, we doubled the frequency of the newsletter from monthly to biweekly in 1990. This enabled us to be more timely, but it created its own problems. The overhead of reviewing, editing, and releasing 24 issues per year reduced the time available for research and analysis, and with only two weeks between issues, our publication schedule prevented us from attending as many conferences and company meetings as we'd like.

So, after two years of biweekly publication, we are changing to a compromise frequency—starting with this issue, *Microprocessor Report* is a “triweekly” (one issue every three weeks, 17 issues per year). Each issue typically will be 24 pages long, instead of 16 or 20, so the total number of pages annually will be about the same as it has been. We believe that this will serve our readers better by enabling us to devote more time to in-depth analysis. It will also allow us to include a wider variety of articles, as well as some longer articles, in each issue.

With our new triweekly frequency, we'll be fine-tuning our format. *Literature Watch* will now be published in every issue, instead of only in alternate issues. (Thanks to all of you who replied to our call for feedback on whether we should continue *Literature Watch*; the response was overwhelmingly positive.) *Resources* will appear on the back page of every issue and will list events, new publications, and other information resources related to microprocessors. *Lexicon*, which has appeared occasionally on that page, will now appear inside the newsletter from time to time in connection with specific articles. *Recent IC Announcements* will continue, as always, on the inside back page of every issue.

In addition to fine-tuning our format, we're adding to our editorial team. Brian Case, who has been a frequent contributor for the past three years, has joined our staff as Associate Editor, and you'll be seeing his writing regularly. Brian was one of the architects of the 29000 at AMD and has worked on RISC projects at Sun and Apple, so he brings an exceptional level of expertise to our coverage of high-performance microprocessors. We'll be expanding our staff further later this year to continue to broaden and deepen our coverage of microprocessors, computer system technology, and embedded

applications.

Our regular columnists, John Wharton and Nick Tredennick, will continue to espouse their views in their inimitable styles, and we will be inviting guest viewpoints to alternate with these columns. We intend to maintain *Microprocessor Report's* distinction as the industry's most provocative and irreverent publication, as well as its best source for inside information on pending developments and detailed technical information on new microprocessors.

This year will be an exceptionally exciting one for the microprocessor industry. As transistor counts move to 1 million and higher even for inexpensive, commodity chips, the magic of semiconductor technology will continue to make possible enormous strides in microprocessor performance. A new wave of RISC chips and Intel's P5 will bring mainstream performance levels up to the 50–80 MIPS range, providing a performance boost that will be critical for next-generation applications. In addition, functional integration will be a key focus, creating optimized “system chips” for a variety of embedded and general-purpose applications.

While much of the computer industry is in the doldrums and the economy is rocky, the future prospects for microprocessor-based products are brighter than ever. Microprocessor technology has provided the industry with amazingly powerful building blocks, and in the next few years this underlying technology will result in a fantastic explosion of intelligent consumer electronic products. This emerging market, expanding embedded applications, and new developments in personal computer software make us enthusiastic about the prospects for the microprocessor industry.

Microprocessors have become far more complex in the past few years, as have the systems in which they are used. In addition, the number of microprocessor suppliers and architectures has increased, and new implementations are coming out at a record rate. Our charter is to help sort out the resulting confusion by combining in-depth technical coverage with critical analysis.

We're committed to keeping *Microprocessor Report* your most useful information resource as the industry evolves, and we welcome your feedback on how we're doing and what areas you'd like us to focus on. A Subscriber Survey is included with this newsletter for your suggestions; if you don't have the form, please send me a note with your comments. We look forward to another exciting, prosperous year for the microprocessor industry. ♦