PREFACE

WELCOME to the Sixteenth International FLAIRS conference and to St. Augustine. It is a lovely location for the continuation of what has proved to be a wonderful conference.

FLAIRS is held in cooperation with the American Association for Artificial Intelligence (AAAI), and we are happy to continue this in-cooperation status. This year we received a record number of submissions and our acceptance rate was 52.8%. We have an outstanding program with papers that span several areas in AI. The FLAIRS conference continues to attract a large number of international authors and participants, and this year is no exception, with participation from nineteen countries.

A best paper award will be presented at the conference, and a number of papers will be selected for consideration for a special issue of the *International Journal on Artificial Intelligence Tools (IJAIT)*.

The program and these proceedings are the product of the collaboration and hard work of several committed people. We are fortunate to have worked with an excellent group of program and special track committee members. We thank them for their significant contribution in evaluating conference submissions. Their work has resulted in an excellent program with high quality papers and a diverse set of sessions and activities. In addition, we are pleased to have the following invited presentations by four distinguished speakers:

Toward Automating Scientific Discovery
Bruce Buchanan, University of Pittsburgh

Meaning from Data: Challenges for Robot Baby
Paul Cohen, University of Massachusetts

Experimental Comparisons of Semi-supervised and Supervised ART Classifiers
Michael Georgiopoulos, University of Central Florida

Collaborative Systems: Prospects and Problems
Barbara J. Grosz, Harvard University

Ultimately, it is the participation of those who attend that makes the conference what it is. Thanks to you, FLAIRS has become a well-established international conference, which continues to grow from year to year as several attendees return to the conference with new colleagues.

We would like to acknowledge the FLAIRS-2003 general chair, Doug Dankel, for his efforts in the overall organization of the conference. Mike Hamilton and the staff at AAAI have provided us with invaluable assistance during the production of these proceedings. We are indebted to Tim Schmidt for the professional cover design. As usual, we could not have managed without Jean Gerber's thorough and efficient work on registration. Finally, we would like to thank Rosina Weber who has gone above and beyond her duties in organizing and coordinating the special tracks.

We hope you enjoy the conference and find it rewarding and fun, and that you find reading the proceedings valuable and enjoyable.

Susan Haller and Ingrid Russell
FLAIRS-03 Program Cochairs