# EDITORIAL

In this issue, we bring you four articles which illustrate the diversity of Mathematics. In the article on Fermat's Last Theorem, Professor Michael Cowling has shown how a long-standing problem about integers has recently been solved by looking at the graphs of functions which appear to be quite irrelevant, and Geoff Coombs looks at the mathematics underlying the way a computer divides one number by another (and which incidentally relates to a bug found in the Pentium chip). Geoff is leaving the School of Mathematics at the end of this year and will be missed, as will Frank Reid who will be returning to Sydney Grammar next year and whose second article on Conic Sections looks in more detail at the intersection of a plane and a cone. Thank you Frank for your contributions to Parabola over the last year.

Most importantly however is the fact that Frank's article is **in response to a student's question.** We are still looking for questions from you or topics of interest on which you would like to see an article – or even write an article yourself. This leads me to the article on Polygons by Carlos da Silva Victor. Carlos is a teacher in Brazil who sent in a solution to problem 967 using a very nice notation which is unfamiliar to students in Australia and so, at my invitation, he has written an article showing how this notation can provide a formula for the area of any polygon. But I am still waiting to hear from **you**. You can write to me at the School of Mathematics UNSW or (if you have email facilities) at parabola@maths.unsw.edu.au.

R. James
Editor