WHAT'S COOKING?

This column was started to provide a place for computer designers to present their ideas, opinions, cries for help, and almost anything else relating to computer design. It is in danger of turning into a monologue unless you keep sending in ideas, opinions, cries for help, etc. Anything short and to-the-point will be published as-is; while longer stuff will usually be abstracted along with your name and address for the benefit of those who want to inquire further. Things that look like regular articles may be referred to the regular editors for regular handling.

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and now for the answers . . .

We didn’t really intend for the last issue of this column to be the Annual Puzzle Number. But if you are still trying to figure out how to make a ripple counter go twice as fast without using Gray code, here are the illustrations that were supposed to have been mixed in with the text. The first one is the swift ripple counter, and the second is the Gray counter, if we can manage to get them printed in that order.

help!

Tektronix makes a probe tip that fits over a .025 square Wire-Wrap pin and screws on to one of their probes. Somebody else makes a similar article for the probes that use slip-on tips. Does anyone know who?
our readers write (at last)

One reader suggested we use the Cookbook to bring together enough people to get the 25-up price on expensive integrated circuits. My first reaction is that somebody would have to do an awful lot of work to get 25 orders together for anything. Then, too, there are a couple of nationally-advertising distributors who are offering ordinary IC's in small quantities for just about the "official" 1000-up price. Maybe these are equally well prepared to get you the exotic ones cheap. Anyway, this gives me a chance to talk about an interesting organization that you may be unaware of: the Amateur Computer Society. This organization is principally a mailing list of around 310 names, plus one energetic individual who mails out a newsletter from time to time. Five dollars to Stephen B. Gray, Amateur Computer Society, 260 Noroton Avenue, Darien, Conn. 06820, gets you on the list for as many issues as can be printed before the money runs out, at which time the hat is passed around again. If you're in the mood to build your own computer at home, a subscription to the newsletter is a good way to find out who else is afflicted with the same kind of insanity, where to get parts cheap, news about useful manufacturers' literature, etc. Someday we hope the articles will occasionally rise to a more philosophical level, such as discussion of what you can do with a home computer if you ever get it finished. (Haven't worked on mine for a couple of years now.)

speaking of amateurs...

We see in the newsletter of another IEEE Group a call for group members who are also radio amateurs to organize for on-the-air technical discussions. It strikes me that this might be a really worthwhile way to get some member participation in the deliberations of our Technical Committees, which otherwise have to depend on having a meeting in connection with a computer conference. I remember there used to be a regular technical broadcast and discussion connected with the Air Force MARS organization; and these were popular enough to merit having their schedules printed in journals. These could probably be revived with a computer orientation if the amateur bands are too crowded. Anyone wanna give it a try? We'll publish call signs and proposed schedules.

we see by the papers

(in this case, the May 24, 1972 issue of Computerworld, page 38) that there was an interesting debate at SJCC involving our luminaries Avizienis, McCluskey, Flynn, and Bell, on the subject of university-industry cooperation in computer systems design and research. This is a topic on which I have some strong personal opinions concerning both the need for exploration of new approaches to computer organization and the coming need for lifelong continuing education for the practicing designer in industry. Rather than commenting here on what the reporter said the participants said at the meeting, I plan to ask each of them to prepare a position paper for publication in COMPUTER; and I would like to invite anyone else who has opinions on the subject to write us a letter or an article. I would particularly like to learn of instances of cooperative effort that have already been successful; this could include university research projects that spun off commercial products or companies, commercial machine designs strongly influenced by university research, university projects that have been substantially aided by some sort of assistance from industry, etc.

speaking of education,

we received an interesting publication from Digital Equipment, apparently titled "edu" which is aimed at educators who use or would like to use computers. Aside from subtle hints about the relevance of DEC products in this field, there is a wealth of information about books, games, films, etc. that are available from various sources. If you're an educator by all means get on the mailing list; if not, be sure your company library and your local high school math/science types are aware of it.

no man is an island dept.

Something I'm glad we don't have in COMPUTER are those collections of 9-month-old photographs and chapter meeting programs that fill the newsletters of some other IEEE Groups. Something we ought to have, though, is news about worthwhile activities of chapters or just groups of engineers that could well be emulated elsewhere. Here's an example of what I mean; I happened to learn about it from casual conversation with a fellow engineer in the Phoenix area.

Victims of cerebral palsy have entirely normal minds (often better than normal), but they are unable to control their muscles. The young man in this story was unable to communicate with the world, being unable to speak or write. His arms are not paralyzed; it's just that he can't very well control their activity. Some employees of a computer manufacturer obtained a surplus console typewriter and wired the six bits of its input code to large-headed pushbuttons mounted several inches apart on a board. A binary-to-character code chart was also part of the board; and there were buttons to cause a letter to be printed, or to cancel incorrect codes that had been partially stored. The boy was able to control his arms just well enough that he could usually swap the right buttons to cause a desired character to be typed. You and I would find it impossibly discouraging to try to write in this manner; but for the individual involved the special typewriter was the best and only means of self-expression available.