Computing for Business or Pleasure

The last year or so we have seen phenomenal, not to say explosive, growth in computing as a hobby, fueled by the introduction of inexpensive microprocessor kits for home construction and accompanied by a flurry of publishing activity. There are now several magazines devoted entirely to, shall we say, nonprofessional computing: and a number of amateur radio and electronics technician/hobbyist magazines have added regular columns devoted to microcomputers and digital technology. No doubt a number of Computer readers are into computing both professionally and as a hobby. Given all of these terribly clever people doing computer development for fun, we have every reason to foresee some really interesting and important technical developments coming out of the computing hobbyist activity. Hence . . . we think it would be altogether appropriate to use the Open Channel as a means to bring significant material from the nonprofessional literature to the attention of our community of readers. We will welcome original articles, reviews, or digests of articles from other publications, and even notes and phone calls to the effect that there is something interesting in such-and-such an issue of some publication that wouldn't normally be seen by our readers. Better yet, would someone out there like to make a hobby of scanning the popular literature for items of professional interest and digesting them into a somewhat regular column for Computer?

The Open Channel is exactly what the name implies: a forum for the free exchange of technical ideas. Hold your contributions to one page maximum in the final magazine format (about 1000 words—less, if you want to include illustrations).

We'll accept anything (short of libel or obscenity) so long as it's submitted by a member of the Computer Society. If it's really bizarre we may require you to get another member to cosponsor your item.

Send everything to Jim Haynes, Applied Sciences, UC Santa Cruz, CA 94064.

"On a clear disk, you can seek forever."

Jeff Mischkinsky

Bugs!!!

Three a.m. the fluorescent lights Burnt holes into his eyes.
He searched for program bugs Which crouched in their disguise.

He scratched a STORE, he sniffed a LOAD,
He gazed suspiciously
Upon a SHIFT RIGHT 24—
Should that be 23?

And while his head was buzzing from
His many hours awake
He chanced to brush his hand across
An ADD IMMEDIATE.

Up sprang a program flea which jumped
Onto his head and dug
Into the jungle of his scalp!
This programmer was struck

With insane fear and in his haste
To exit from his chair
His other hand was thrown upon
A SAVE, RESTORE, and CLEAR—

Pop! Pop! Pop! Three other bugs Disturbed from their repose
Began to crawl upon his hand
And then into his clothes!

He wildly picked his program up
To swipe them all away.
Instead 500 program ants
Were dumped upon his leg!

His scream released the program moths
And program gnats and flies.
They flew in clouds around his head
And muffled frenzied cries.

He fell upon the ground as
He was about to choke.
His head slipped from his hand and
then . . .
He suddenly awoke.

Muse in the Computer Center

While a graduate student at Washington State University, D. M. Nessett (now of the Australian National University) used to vent his frustrations by writing humorous verse for the WSU "Computer Center News." We reprint one of his pieces here for your amusement.