It is estimated that the membership of the IEEE Computer Society will approach 40,000 by January 1979—an increase of about 25 percent over the past year. The Computer Society membership is now about one-fifth of that of the IEEE, by far the largest among the 30-odd societies/groups of the Institute. There are many factors contributing to this phenomenal increase. However, this does indicate the fruitful efforts of many of our hardworking volunteers and staff. Among them much credit is due to Merlin Smith, our immediate past president, for taking the lead in initiating and improving various society activities and services. During the coming year such efforts will be continued and further expanded.

In the technical activities area we have implemented the concept of Technical Interest Councils during the past year. It is an important step to further promote our technical affairs and provide necessary communication links between technical committees and other society functions. A few staffing and operational problems encountered initially have been resolved, and we are looking forward to a more active and productive year in this area.

Paralleling the technical activities are our regional affairs. The Distinguished Visitors Program has been one of the successful activities among our chapters. Also, a number of new chapters have been created recently, and a few others are being initiated. However, we feel that we can do more in this area of activities. Communications among chapter officers and other society volunteers need to be improved. Regional activities such as tutorials, meetings, and conferences should be encouraged. As a matter of fact, some of the projects are already underway.

Another major society function is represented by publications. With our new quarterly, the IEEE Transactions on Pattern Analysis and Machine Intelligence (PAMI), the Computer Society now has four regular publications, the other three being the IEEE Transactions on Computers (monthly), the IEEE Transactions on Software Engineering (bimonthly), and Computer Magazine (monthly).

While the Transactions are published through IEEE Headquarters, our Publications Office at Long Beach is responsible for the production of Computer. Continuous efforts are being made to improve the quality and appearance of these journals, and to publish them on time. We are also seriously considering the publication of a new journal in the area of computer systems and applications.

Closely related to publications are conferences and meetings. In 1978 alone the Computer Society sponsored/co-sponsored over 50 technical conferences and workshops. These meetings not only provide opportunities for participants to exchange ideas, but also produce a large number of conference records available to all our members. While regular publications are, in principle, financially self-supporting, the conference publications provide surpluses that can be plowed back into member services. It is expected that conference activities this year will be further increased.

Another area related to publications is our tutorial programs. Available as part of a conference program or on a stand-alone basis, tutorials offer up-to-date technical information to our members. In addition, they also generate some revenue for the society. The quality of tutorial material and the qualification of speakers go through appropriate screening procedures. During the coming year we intend to expand our tutorial programs and improve the quality control procedures.

Financially, the Computer Society is in good shape. In 1977, the society generated a surplus of about $180,000.
This permitted us to undertake a number of “one-shot” expenses to further improve our membership services. A small surplus is expected for 1978. This year we expect to increase society activities even further (publication of *Transactions on PAMI* is one example) and, depending on future expenses, will have a planned deficit, depending on the extent of our expanded services. The society’s current reserve is about $700,000.

Starting this year two additional ad hoc committees are in operation. The Long Range Planning Committee was established by a resolution passed at the September 1978 Governing Board meeting for the purpose of formulating the long range plans and goals of the society. The Operations Committee will have the responsibility of reviewing current society operations and projecting future needs. Additional committees may be established when specific needs are identified.

It is time for IEEE Fellow nominations. Compared with other IEEE societies and groups, the Computer Society has relatively few IEEE Fellows. You are encouraged to nominate any qualified person for consideration. The nomination kits are available from IEEE Headquarters, 345 East 47th Street, New York, New York 10017. If you wish to nominate someone, you must act immediately in order to meet the deadline.

The Computer Society also makes a number of awards each year to those who have distinguished themselves by their technical contributions to the computer profession. However, it is equally important to recognize those hardworking volunteers who have contributed much of their time and effort to the professional goals of the society and the welfare of its members. Specific efforts will be made in identifying those volunteers.

In order to improve membership services, it is extremely important to have two-way communications between the society officers and their members. A series of special messages such as this one are being planned to appear in *Computer* during the coming months. These messages will review current activities and project the future directions of each individual area. All society officers will be glad to hear any criticisms and suggestions that you may care to make (write to any officers you wish, c/o the executive secretary). These messages will be even more meaningful if they can induce you to participate in the society’s activities.

Tse-yun Feng
President

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**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

Editor:

“The Zero Law of Debugging” [Computer, Open Channel, August 1978, p. 76] had only two things to say:

1. Keep your programs organized, readable and well documented.
2. In case 1, above, fails to be heeded, it may sometimes be more economical to recode from scratch than to try to figure out why someone’s code doesn’t work.

The rest of the author’s words serve only to cloud the issue.

The main objection I have to the article is the inappropriate and confusing analogy with hardware. The “TV service man” analogy is particularly bad. Taking this analogy in the other direction, the author is proposing that if a hardware module is malfunctioning, the service man should throw it away and, on the spot, design and build a new module from scratch. The inappropriateness of this analogy should be obvious.

The above is just another example of how issues are clouded and effort is misdirected by inappropriate analogy and terminology. The software side of our industry has borrowed terms such as “maintenance” and “reliability” from the hardware side, hoping that by using these names they will be able to solve some of the problems with which they have been plagued. Such terminology is particularly confusing to me with my original background as an engineer and my nearly 30-year involvement with software.

David Feign
Chapman College

To be considered for publication, a letter to the editor must be accompanied by a statement giving *Computer* permission to publish that letter.