committee and to work with Chip Stockton and Michael Elliott, Computer Society executive director, in developing a Silver Spring-based public relations activity for the society.

During this past year, I have served as a member of both the task force on the growth of the Computer Society and the IEEE Long-Range Planning Committee. Although some IEEE societies do share common characteristics, the task force agrees that the Computer Society differs from all other IEEE societies in a number of ways: size, growth rate, pervasiveness, accreditation, competition, and cooperation. These findings are based on the Computer Society Executive Committee’s perceptions favoring some sort of reorganization in the IEEE structure to allow for increased autonomy, identity, and freedom of action for the Computer Society; increased representation on the IEEE Board of Directors and Executive Committee; and decreased IEEE financial obligation with respect to services performed by Computer Society staff that need not be done by IEEE staff.

Proposals have been made to provide the Computer Society with an extra position on the IEEE Executive Committee and an additional one or two divisional directors to serve on the Technical Activities Board and its operating committee. It is hoped that some of these proposals will be adopted by the IEEE to assist the Computer Society in working effectively within the organizational structure of the institute.

Now that the Computer Society is over 30 years old, we may want to consider adopting a life member program. In a recent letter to Computer Society President Oscar Garcia, Edwin Harder, chairman of the IEEE Life Member Fund Committee, suggested that there are opportunities for older members throughout the institute. He is interested in developing programs that will increase the involvement of members over 64 years of age in IEEE activities. Suggestion for similar Computer Society activities should be sent directly to Edwin Harder, 1204 Milton Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15218.

Membership development has been one of the most dynamic areas of the Computer Society. Information activities and public relations constitute a new area, which we plan to expand. I am interested in hearing all ideas and suggestions that pertain to these areas.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Equally important: language facilities, how they're used

Editor:
The comments made in G. R. Eugenia Schneider's letter to the editor, "Developing procedures for code maintenance," in the June 1982 Computer only tell part of the story. She states, "Maintenance costs are independent of the language used, once the programmers have thoroughly learned the language." This, however does not address how the language is used. I guarantee you that even an experienced programmer will have an easier time debugging and making modifications to structured, well-formed programs rather than "ugly, unstructured code."

I inherited a large (over 50K lines) programming system written by several previous people. Part of the system was written in completely unstructured, haphazard Fortran code while the rest was done using a restricted subset of the language employing structured techniques. Each time the user requested a change to the structured part of the system, the code was easily changed and testing proved relatively straightforward. However, when a change to the unstructured code was necessary, major trauma ensued. One change affected another previously working area, which required more changes—all of which required a thorough, lengthy testing.

The bottom line is that maintenance costs are dependent on how the language is used, and how it is used depends on what the language offers the programmer in the way of program and data structures.

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Standard for Unix-like systems supported

Editor:
The suggestion for a standard for Unix-like* systems (July 1982, Computer, pp. 79-80) deserves a great deal of support, for the benefits go far beyond those accrued by "purchasers and vendors." Consider: To a considerable extent, increasing national economic productivity hinges upon computer effectiveness, and the present limiting factor seems to be an inability to produce software more effectively. (See my "Software: Breaking the Bottleneck,” IEEE Spectrum, Mar. 1982, pp. 43-50.)

So the evolution of a helpful and powerful programming environment would appear to have vast benefits, which brings us back to a standard for Unix-like systems. Such a standard would dramatically increase the number of organizations that could innovate at the leading edge of programming environments and, equally vital, build upon each other's innovations.

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*Unix is a registered trademark of Bell Laboratories.

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

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