Talitarianism was the enormous effect exerted by messages . . . using electronics communications technology."

But my favorite remarks are by Philip Hughes, co-founder in 1969 of Logica and unsung software hero: "I believe . . . the next 40 years will see much more dramatic change than the past 40 years."

Hughes itemizes some of the advances:

- Optical fibre
- Communications satellites
- Electronic mail
- Video communications
- Mobile phones

Not at all shabby. In fact, I think Hughes is the only one in these two books who lands in the gold. But I think it’s important to realize just how poorly we do at forecasting the future.

I’ve been hearing more and more about the “intelligent” home for the past 15 years. Yet every living room I’ve been in over the past year has a “blinking” VCR/DVD player. I can’t enumerate the number of cars I’ve been in with the wrong time. If folks can’t set/fix these, what good will more advanced features be?

When I was at Penguicon, I was asked how come I knew “this stuff” when “my parents can’t send email? And you’re older than they are.” I don’t know. But I know that Bill Gates’ recent talk about intelligent home appliances was just that: talk.

Heinlein talked of his work as “future history.” We’re making that history . . . but we don’t know what it will be.

Note: I went to my first USENIX Conference in Toronto in 1979. I’ve been writing in ;login: for 20 years. This will be my last history column. Thanks for all the fish.

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U SACO TEAM BRINGS HOME THE GOLD

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Last issue, I wrote all about the USA Computing Olympiad and the USA Invitational Computer Olympiad. We chose four students to represent the U.S.A. at the International Olympiad on Informatics, the high school programming world championships, which were held in Nowy Sacz, Poland, August 18–25.

I am delighted to report that our four students excelled. Veterans Eric Price and Alex Schwendner joined with John Pardon and Matt McCutchen to garner four gold medals. Eric Price achieved the rare perfect score, earning 300 points on each day of the competition.

This is an extraordinary event, rarely achieved and almost never repeated. That being said, both China and the Slovak Republic also won four gold medals, leaving only 12 medals for the remaining 67 countries.

The 2005–2006 season is gearing up with contests scheduled for:

- December 9–12, 2005
- January 13–16, 2006
- February 10–13, 2006
- March 17–20, 2006
- April 27, 2006

If you know pre-college students who would enjoy competing, please send them to http://www.usaco.org to learn all about how it works.

Thanks to USENIX for their tremendous support over the years!

The USACO continues to strive to accomplish its mission with an expanding number of programs and qualifying events. If you’d like to assist or if your organization would like to support the USACO, please contact Rob Kolstad at kolstad@usenix.org.