

"Dear Richard, I am enclosing herewith my check for \$10 - to be used at your discretion. This represents an additional contribution to HP Users Club and is in appreciation of your incredible efforts on behalf of a whole hell of a lot of people.

"Since I can't figure out how you can possibly even have time to read this letter, I invite you to stop right here and save the balance for some time after you have retired."

"Dear Retiree, I can't even tell you what possessed me to buy an HP-65 in the first place. I was operating beautifully on a HP-22 and that is still the instrument I keep on my desk for my daily work (importing commodities).

"Chalk it up to an insatiable curiosity and my general frustration at not having the vaguest idea of how computers work while being overwhelmed by what they seem to accomplish.

"I was under no particular illusion that an HP-65 was an IBM 370 but I felt that it might give me some ideas of how one might work.

"As a matter of fact, your Users Club brochure made me make up my mind to do the deed, especially after I had sent for your sample Newsletter which was -- to me -- unintelligible but seemed to hold out some nebulous promise that if I pushed my 53 year old mind hard enough, you might be able to push me through to a glimmering of understanding.

"Well, I bought the 65 - a bunch of books - all your back issues - read the owner's handbook 400 times and slavishly copied your published programs, especially games. I amazed myself and my friends, became a bore on the subject and, in general went through my thing as I usually have done.

"Finally, HP sent me the contributor's library and I ordered a bunch of stuff. Well, it finally dawned on me that I didn't know - really know - how to do a complex original bit of programming.

"I am absolutely a non-mathematician (aside from some affinity for business statistics) but my HP-65 connected reading had introduced me to the Fibonacci Series (which I don't recall ever hearing about before).

"I decided to program that myself and I did it in about 40 steps. Subsequently, HP notes came with the damn thing done in about 6 steps. I hate to be so deflated, so I went back to the books.

"Finally, I developed a whole other Fibonacci program in which I could develop the series from any numerical starting point; answer what the nth number would be in the series; develop the next smallest series number under a prescribed maximum and how many additions it took to make the series. THAT I did in 62 steps. Now, not quite literally; I don't even know what a Fibonacci series is used for. Further, quite literally, I cannot imagine in my wildest dreams what I would ever use it for. Besides, in my heart of hearts, I know that someone who knew what he was doing could probably do all that in, say 20 steps. But I did it.

"My next thing was to look at an interesting (to me) game in the Contributor's Library and refrain from spending \$3.00 (unusual for me) and deciding I would or should be able to do it myself from the abstract which specifically said 99 steps.

"Within reasonably short order I did it in 60 odd steps!!

"I couldn't stand all that extra room, so I decided to improve the program by showing the random numbers as xxx.yyy instead of individually and further to accumulate the score as aaa.bbb where it seemed to me the original program showed xxx and yyy as separate numbers and the score as aaa and bbb separately and did not accumulate consecutive games.

"My first try was about 140 steps -- painfully worked down to about 105. I estimate I spend a minimum of 50 hours directly plus hours of driving time, lost sleep, mind drifting. I finally figured if I knew more about the subject that I would probably give it up as impossible. I finally resolved to leave it for a week and with some strain I did.

"When I returned to the problem -- in short order, I finished it in 99 steps. Now one of your experts looking at it might laugh hysterically. And, for all I know, it may do nothing that the original program did not do.

"But it does contain the Lampman Split Logic, it did make me the happiest man in the world and now I think I'm starting to begin to understand that infernal machine.

"I give you and your super efforts the lion's share of the credit. Thanks."

"P.S. I even understand the cocked and uncocked status of RTN and how many importers can say that!"