

Guy L. Steele Jr. July 1992

ANSI Technical Committee X3J13 met on March 31 and April 1, 1992, to resolve outstanding issues in the draft proposal for Common Lisp. A few members had brought up some inconsistencies found at the last minute, and these were fairly easily resolved.

Sandra Loosemore, through an excruciatingly diligent reading of the draft (for which we are all grateful), had produced a list of 495 separate suggested changes! These consisted primarily of editorial corrections of misspellings, wrong fonts, missing words, and other typographical errors. X3J13 broke 13 of these out for separate discussion and adopted the other 482 as a group. Of the 13 suggestions discussed separately, X3J13 agreed with the intent of 10 of them but worked out an improved set of changes at the meeting; 3 of the suggestions were rejected after extensive discussion (with Sandra concurring).

Fortunately, the editorial impact of these changes was quite small, as Sandra had worked closely with the project editor, Kent Pitman, before the meeting to produce an updated draft that members could examine at the meeting (on the speculative chance that most of the corrections would be adopted). Therefore the number of additional changes to be made after the meeting by the project editor was quite small.

Takumi Doi of CSK Corporation made a one-hour presentation about the use of Common Lisp in Japan. During the course of this he emphasized an outstanding inconsistency in the language that impedes the use of the Japanese character set. A proposal for correcting this inconsistency had been circulated some weeks before. At the meeting X3J13 further improved this proposal, as a consequence of the discussion following Mr. Doi's presentation, and approved its adoption:

Add the `:EXTERNAL-FORMAT` keyword to `LOAD` and `COMPILE-FILE`.
The default value is `:DEFAULT` as in `OPEN`. This argument specifies the character representation scheme to be used by `LOAD` and `COMPILE-FILE` when reading a source file, in the same manner as for `OPEN`.

The `:EXTERNAL-FORMAT` argument is ignored by `LOAD` when opening a compiled file. Instead, `COMPILE-FILE` and `LOAD` must cooperate (using some implementation-dependent mechanism) in such a way that similarity of constants is maintained across the interface between these two functions.

After the comments and additional changes were addressed, X3J13 unanimously voted to forward the draft for further processing. (April Fool's Day seemed to some an appropriate date for this vote.)

I would like to congratulate and commend the other members of X3J13 for reaching this important milestone in their work: Kim Barrett, David H. Bartley, John Burger, Kathy Chapman, Bill St. Clair, Patrick Dussud, Felix Frayman, Richard P. Gabriel, George D. Hadden, Steven M. Haflich, Charles Hornig, Masayuki Ida, Gregor Kiczales, Aaron Larson, Andrew Latto, Joachim H. Laubsch, Kevin Layer, Thom Linden, David D. Loeffler, Sandra J. Loosemore, Barry Margolin, Larry Masinter, David A. Moon, Timothy Moore, Stephen L. Nicoud, Crispin Perdue, Kent M. Pitman, John Rose, Andy Sizer, Richard W. Tucker, Walter van Roggen, Jonl White, and Jan Zubkoff. Many, many other people have also made important contributions over the last six years by commenting on various stages of the draft standard.

Since the March/April meeting of X3J13, the draft proposed American National Standard for Programming Language Common Lisp has passed the next administrative milestone: the X3 SPARC committee determined at its May 1992 meeting that the draft conforms in style and content to the requirements of the original project proposal. It now awaits approval from BSR (Board of Standards Review) to begin the first period of public review. If and when this occurs, it will be announced in ANSI (*italics Standards Action*) as well as through press releases.

Those of you who are interested in reviewing this draft should be aware that a two-sided paper copy is just about three inches thick.