Interpolation Problem by IBM 1620, as Told to Dave Reid

Dave Reid
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Abstract
In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"Editor's Note: The increasingly important role played by computers in our modern world has not passed by the staff of this magazine unnoticed. Indeed, we can even foresee a new use for these mechanical masterminds—the writing of poetry. To prove our point, we bring to your attention part of a simple math problem. But note the view of life it presents, especially in the last ten lines."

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Editor's Note: The increasingly important role played by computers in our modern world has not passed by the staff of this magazine unnoticed. Indeed, we can even foresee a new use for these mechanical masterminds—the writing of poetry. To prove our point, we bring to your attention part of a simple math problem. But note the view of life it presents, especially in the last ten lines.

Step 27 \[ W = (Z - X(1))/0.05 \]
\[ A = T(J \times I) \]
\[ B = W * (D(1, I - 1) + D(1, I))/2 \]
\[ C = W * W * D(2, 1 - 1)/2 \]
\[ P = W * (W * W - 1.1) * (D(3, I - 2) + D(3, I - 1))/12 \]
\[ Q = W * (W * W - 1.1) * D(4, I - 2)/24 \]
\[ F = W * (W * W - 1.1) * (W * W - 4.1) * (D(5, I - 3) + D(5, I - 2))/240 \]
\[ \text{ANS} = A + B + C + P + Q + F \]

Punch 28, Ans

28 FORMAT (16H INTERPOLATED X=,E14.7)
  XJ=J
  TJZ=COS(XJ*ATAN(SQRT(1.1-Z*Z)/Z))
Punch 29, TJZ

29 FORMAT (14H CALCULATED X=,E14.7)
  ERR=100 * (TJZ-ANS)/ANS
Punch 30, ERR

30 FORMAT (15H PERCENT ERROR=,E14.7)
PAUSE
END

IN SECURING OBLIVION

By Joseph M. Chiuffini

I

It was once just an old sand lot sitting in nothing and surrounded by other sand lots. The lot lay content in doing nothing. Large grains of sand shifted; water spilled over rocks and stones and filtered into deep crevices. But nothing moved under its own power, for power was as of now, not. Only passive parts, waiting.

At the end of darkness came light and also time. With them they brought the grass, flowers, bushes and trees; then animals and crawling, writhing creatures, slimy and soft, cuddly and furry, hard shelled and rough. And they were happy.

The walking, grunting and wailing creatures mastered the slow, silent foliage and shrubbery and became the rulers at large, with none above them, except one. And among themselves they fought fiercely and in doing so, killed each other for food and for their happy life. Thus, in the brief period before Them, some remains were left on the old sand lot and the remaining creatures stood together and waited.

Waiting is a tedious time when intelligent beings choose to stay another moment or choose to go on. Each choice involves a risk; a calculated, intelligent risk.

The remainders waited for something. Something they should master as before. Perhaps they grew tired of waiting, but they waited. Passively they waited. Coldness and his