

This is tutorial for  $\mu$ UL. It is currently work in progress. It is also available in PDF format.

# The $\mu$ CL Tutorial

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## 1. Introduction

This tutorial is quite out of date. The language has not changed much, but the integrated development environment is *not* available.

$\mu$ CL is an acronym for Microcontroller Language. It is a high level language designed specifically for programming 8-bit microcontrollers such as the PICmicro<sup>®</sup> (Peripheral Interface Controller) microcontrollers from MicroChip<sup>®</sup>. The motivation for creating  $\mu$ CL was born of a need for a powerful yet easy to use programming development tool to use with RoboBRiX<sup>&trade;</sup>: a modular system for building robots.

The overall strategy for this tutorial is "hands on". The goal is actually get you to compile and execute the code on actual hardware. Thus, many of the early sections in this tutorial focus on how to use the  $\mu$ CL IDE (Integrated Development Environment), while later sections focus in of various aspects of the  $\mu$ CL language itself.

Without any further discussion, let's get going!

## 2. Downloading the Software

In order to download the software:

1. Read and agree to the  [\$\mu\$ CL license](#).
2. Go to the [Downloads Page](#) and download the appropriate version of the software.

## 3. IDE Overview

The  $\mu$ CL IDE (Integrated Development Environment) provides a graphical user interface to the  $\mu$ CL compiler and provides download and debugging facilities as well. The rest of this section provides a brief overview of the main IDE window without going into much detail. The details are discussed in sections that follow this one.

To start the  $\mu$ CL IDE on Linux, type the following to your favorite shell:

```
uclide &
```

On a Microsoft<sup>®</sup> operating system, double click on the  $\mu$ CL IDE icon to get it started

Once the  $\mu$ CL IDE starts up, you will be presented with a main window that looks as follows:



The main window consists of three rows of buttons followed by a scrollable program editing window.

The top row of "buttons" is a menu bar. Each menu bar button will pop up a menu of actions to select from. Briefly, the menu buttons are as listed below:

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- [File] Allows for the creating, loading, and saving of files.
- [Edit] Provides various editing options, such cut and paste. (Not available in version 0.90.)
- [Buffer] Provides an easy means of switching between loaded file buffers.
- [Search] Provides search and replace facilities. (Not available in version 0.90.)
- [Options] This is where the property sheet is kept.
- [Debug] Currently, this allows you to bring up the debug terminal without having to click on the [Download] button first.
- [View] This currently allows you to change the font size.
- [Help] Currently, this just pops up the current version number.

The second row of buttons are for very common operations in the IDE, such as compiling, downloading, and debugging operations. These operations are listed below:

- [Save] Save the currently modified buffers back to the disk.
- [Edit] Leave debug mode and return to edit mode.
- [Compile] Compile the first buffer.
- [Download] Download the the compiled program to the microcontroller.
- [Run] Run the downloaded program.
- [Step] Single step the program. Follow any procedure calls
- [Next] Single step program. Do not follow any procedure calls.
- [Continue] Continue until the next breakpoint.
- [Reset] Reset the microcontroller.

The third row is for dealing with compiler errors.

- [Next] Make the next compiler error visible.
- [Prev] Make the previous compiler error visible.

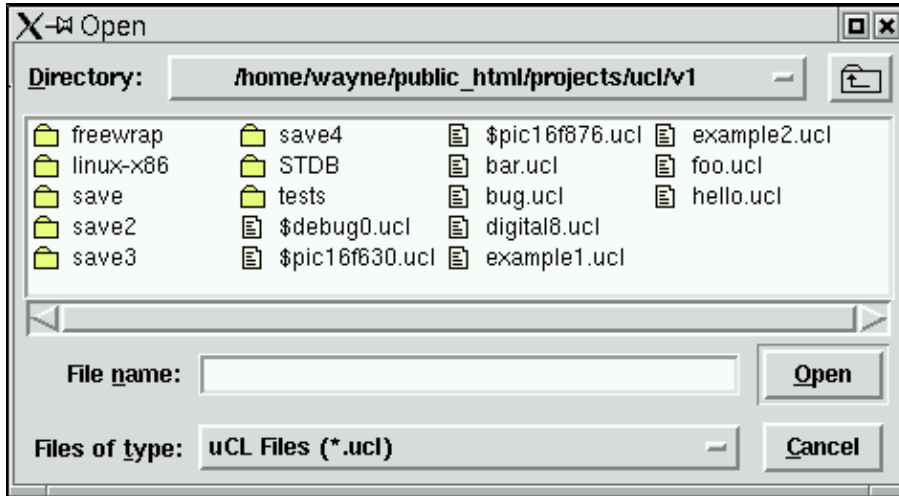
These two buttons are followed by a message window where the IDE shows short information messages.

The rest of the main IDE window consists of a scroll bar, and a text window for viewing program source. The scroll bar is deliberately placed on the left because most editing takes place on the left side of the editing

window.

## 4. Compiling Programs

Before you can compile a file, you need to load it into the IDE. This is accomplished by selecting the [File]=>[Open] menu option. This brings up a file chooser window as follows:



This window allows you to browse around the computer system looking for files to load. The  $\mu$ CL compiler is really picky in that it refuses to compile anything that does not end with a suffix of `.ucl`. For this example, we will assume that you select the file `example1.ucl`. If you do, the code panel will fill up with the code as follows:

The screenshot shows the uCL IDE interface. The title bar reads "uCL Integrated Development Environment -- test". The menu bar includes "File", "Edit", "Buffer", "Search", "Options", "Debug", "View", and "Help". Below the menu bar are several buttons: "Save", "Edit", "Compile", "Download", "Run", "Step", "Next", "Continue", "Next", and "Prev". The main editor window contains the following code:

```

ucl 1.0
# Copyright (c) 2004 by Wayne C. Gramlich
# All rights reserved.

library $pic16f876

origin 8

debug main

procedure main
    arguments_none
    returns_nothing

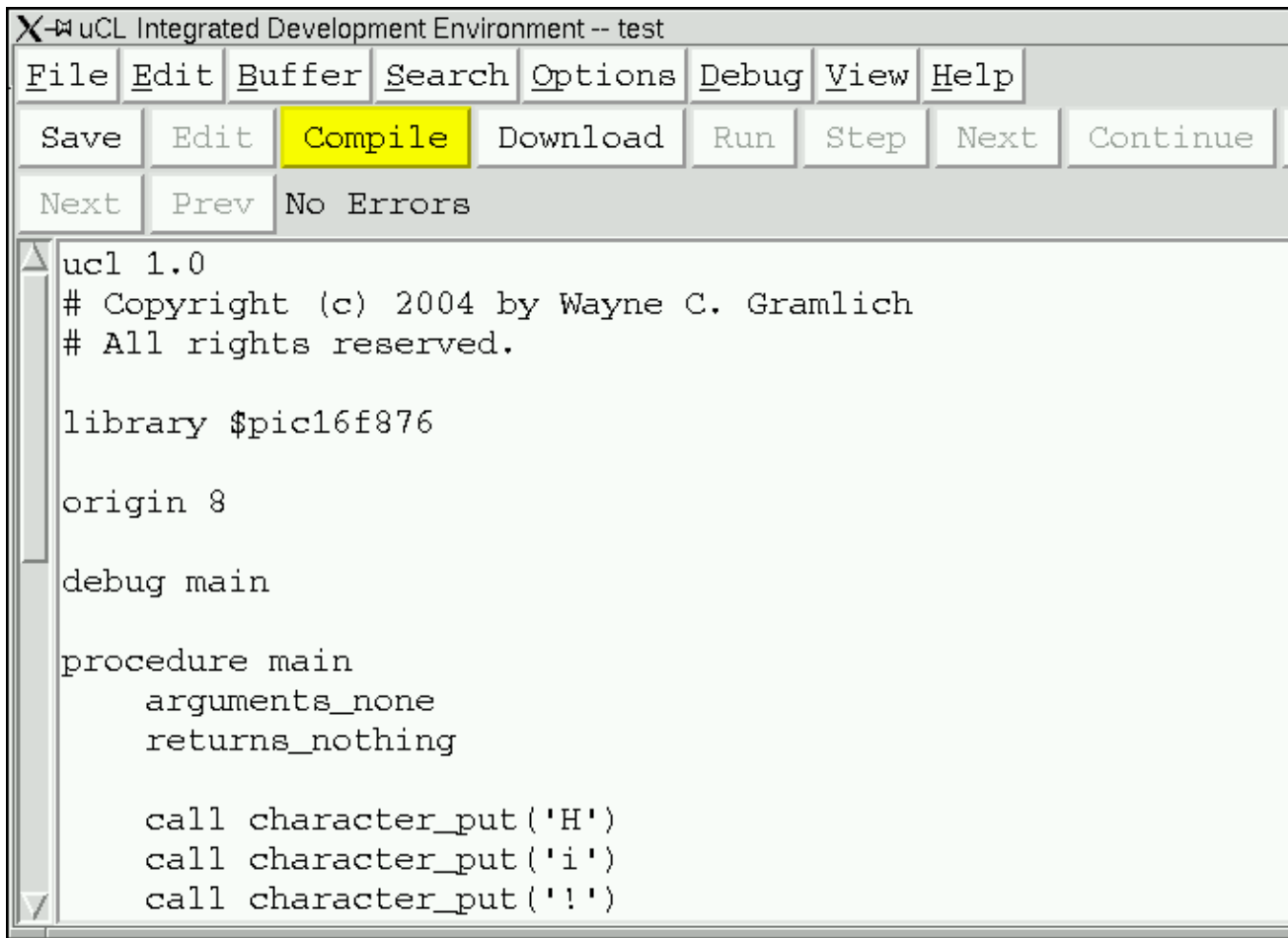
    call character_put('H')
    call character_put('i')
    call character_put('!')

```

Please take a moment to click on the [Buffer] menu button. This button displays list of loaded buffers in the  $\mu$ CL IDE. Since we have loaded only one file into a buffer, only the single buffer called `example1` is available.

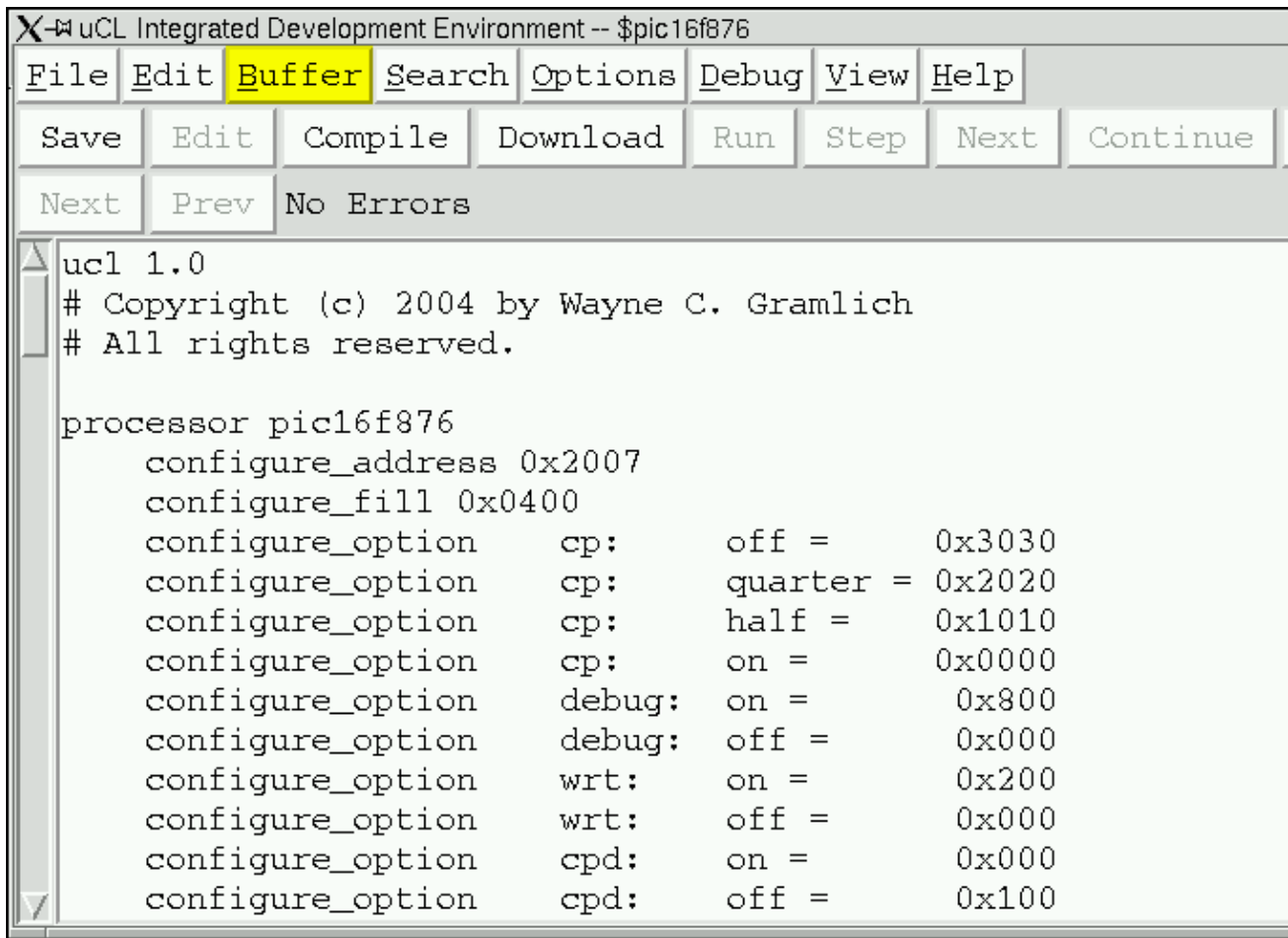
The  $\mu$ CL stores files in internal memory buffers. You can make as many changes to the memory buffers as you want, but nothing becomes permanent until you explicitly save the files to disk (e.g. by clicking on the [Save] button.) By the way, if you try and quit without saving to disk, the  $\mu$ CL IDE tries to warn you with a pop up warning message.

In order to compile the file we just loaded, just click on the [Compile] button. After a brief pause a status message should appear to the right of the [Prev] button that says "No Errors". This is shown below:



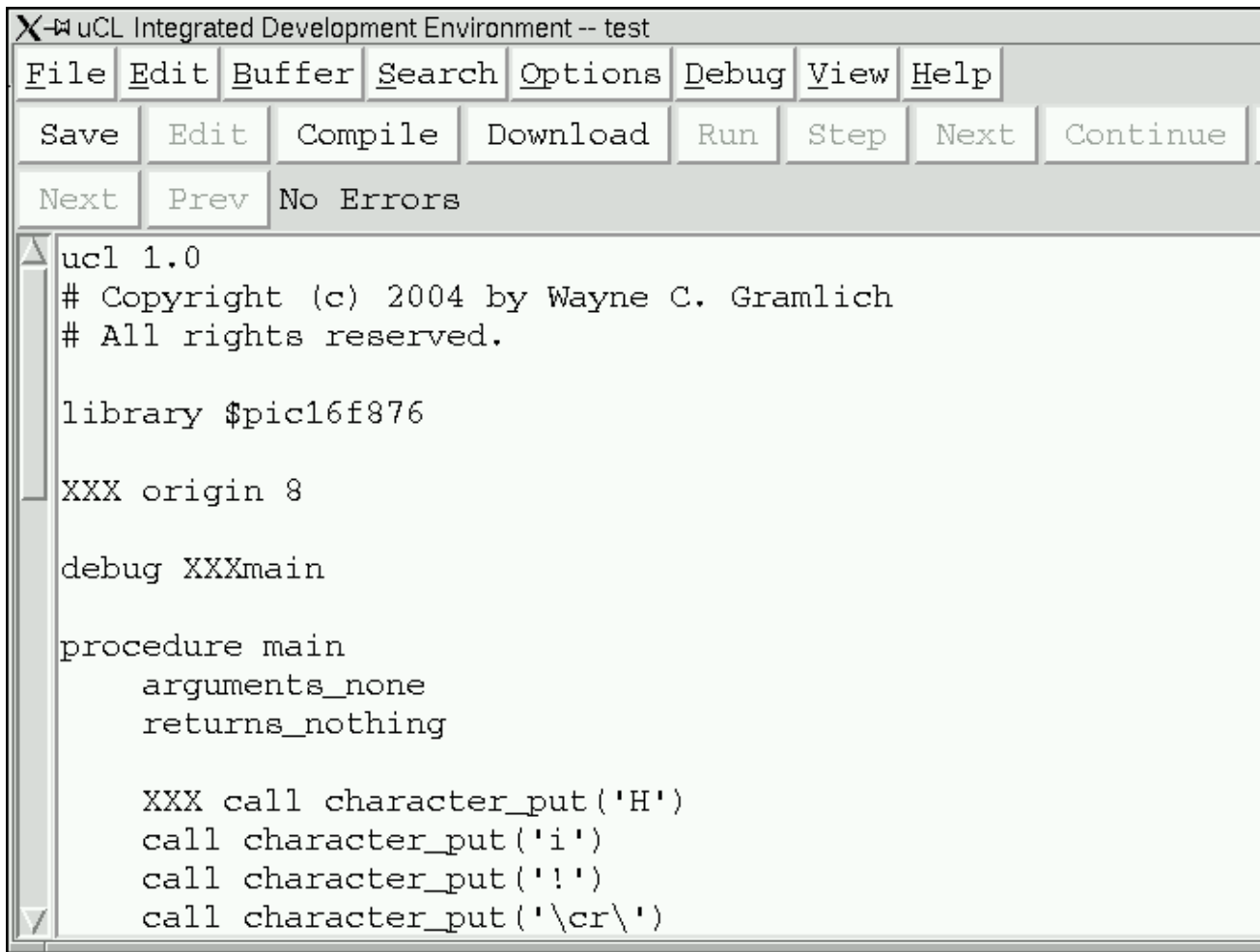
Now take another moment to go back to the [Buffer] menu button and look at it now. You should see three buffers called `example1`, `$pic16f876`, and `$debug0`. As a side effect of compiling, the compiler notified the  $\mu$ CL IDE that two additional files were processed when compiling the `example1` program. The file `&pic16f876.ucl` contains a bunch of definitions for the PIC16F876 microcontroller. The file `$debug0.ucl` is the small chunk of code that is added to the `example1` to enable debugging.

Please select [Buffer]=>[\$pic16f876] to switch switch over to `$pic16f876` buffer. Your IDE main window should look as follows:



Using the [Buffer] menu button, please return to the `example1` buffer.

Now we are going to edit the `example1` buffer to introduce three errors. This is done by adding some extraneous characters such as "XXX" to each of the following lines of code: "origin 8", "debug main", and "call character\_put('H')". These modifications are shown below:



The screenshot shows the uCL IDE interface. The title bar reads "X-μ uCL Integrated Development Environment -- test". The menu bar includes File, Edit, Buffer, Search, Options, Debug, View, and Help. The toolbar contains buttons for Save, Edit, Compile, Download, Run, Step, Next, Continue, Next, and Prev. The status bar shows "No Errors". The main text area contains the following code:

```
ucl 1.0
# Copyright (c) 2004 by Wayne C. Gramlich
# All rights reserved.

library $pic16f876

XXX origin 8

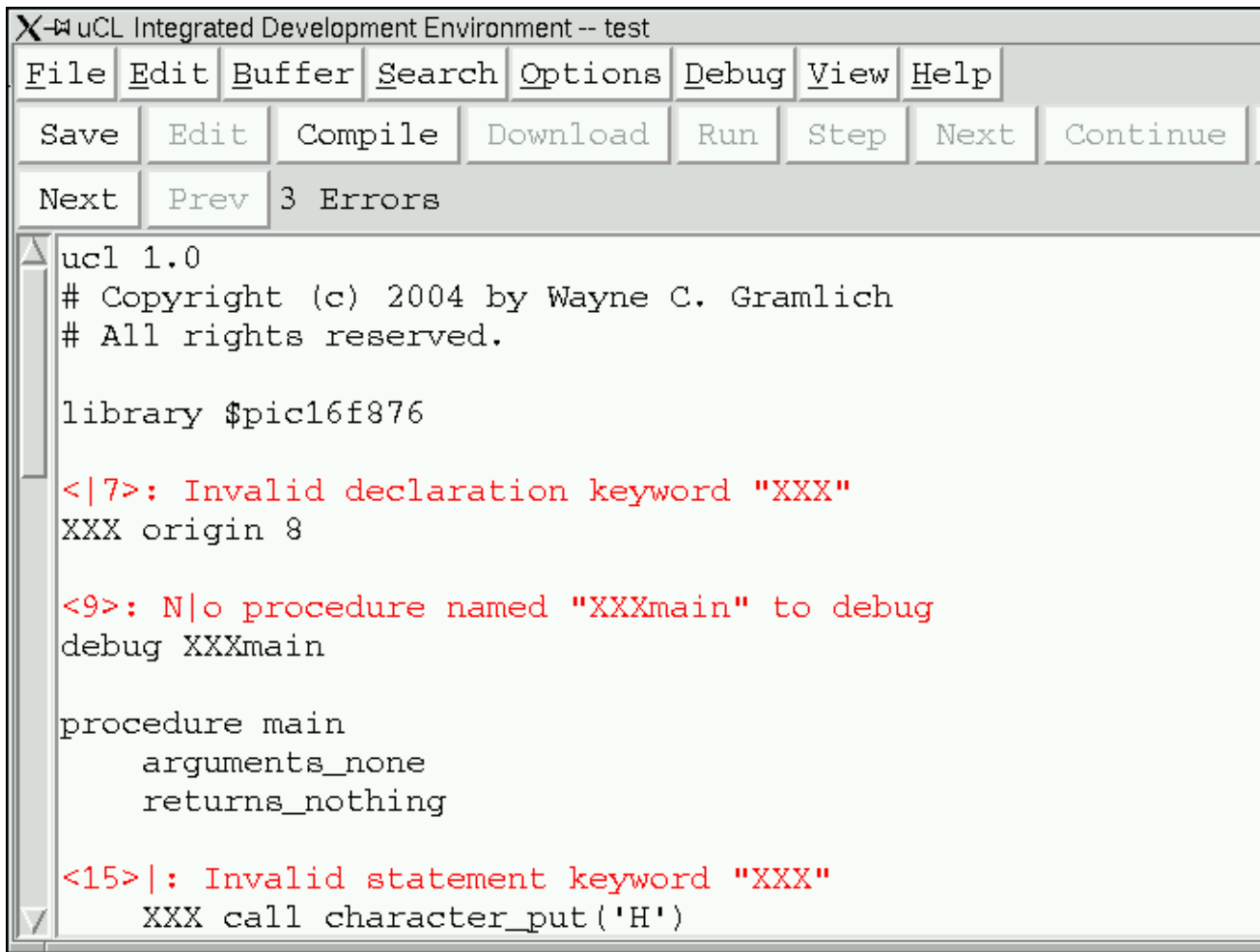
debug XXXmain

procedure main
    arguments_none
    returns_nothing

    XXX call character_put('H')
    call character_put('i')
    call character_put('!')
    call character_put('\cr')
```

Now when you click on the [Compile] button you will get 3 errors and an IDE main window that looks as follows:





The message area to the right of the [Prev] buttons says "3 Errors". Before each line there is a an error message of the form:

*<number> : message*

where

*number*

is the line number the error occurs on, and

*message*

is the error message.

Each error message also has a vertical bar "|" tries to point at where on the line the error was first detected. The is vertical bar is spliced into the error message irrespective of whether it splits a word. For example, for the second error message the vertical bar wound up splitting the word No into N|o.

The [Next] and [Prev] buttons are used to navigate around between error messages. Clicking on the the [Next] button will scroll to next error message and clicking on the [Prev] button will scroll to the previous error message. Unfortunately, all of the errors in this example are visible on one page, so clicking on the [Next] and [Prev] buttons do not actually cause any scrolling to occur.

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If there are multiple errors in multiple buffers, clicking on the [Next] and [Prev] buttons will automatically change buffers and scroll to the appropriate location. This is really useful for programs that are broken up into multiple files.

You are now free to remove the XXX from the three statements. Please leave the red error messages alone. The  $\mu$ CL IDE will remove the error messages before sending back to the compiler.

When you are all done, click on the [File]=>[Quit] menu button to exit the  $\mu$ CL IDE. There is a chance that it will pop up the warning message asking whether to save the modified buffers. In this case, please click [No].

That more or less covers the basics of using the  $\mu$ CL IDE to compile  $\mu$ CL programs.

## 5. Example1 Walk Through

The first program we will download and run is called Example1. It will print the message as a verification that your hardware is hooked up correctly and that your software is properly installed.

The Example1 program is listed below:

```
ucl 1.0
# Copyright &cr; 2004 by Wayne C. Gramlich.
# All rights reserved.

library $pic16f876

origin 8

debug main

procedure main
  arguments_none
  returns_nothing

  call character_put('H')
  call character_put('i')
  call character_put('!')
  call character_put('\cr\')
  call character_put('\lf\')
  loop_forever
    do_nothing

procedure character_put
  argument character byte
  returns_nothing

  # This procedure will output {character} to the UART.

  while !$txif
    do_nothing
  $txreg := character
```

That's it! Now we'll go through a line by line description of what each line means.

The first line of every  $\mu$ CL program is always the following:

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```
ucl 1.0
```

This declaration tells the  $\mu$ CL compiler that this is, in fact, an  $\mu$ CL program, and that it conforms to version 1.0 of the  $\mu$ CL language specification. The first digit corresponds to the major version number (i.e. "1") and the second digit corresponds to the minor version number (i.e. "0".) The minor version number is incremented whenever new features are added that do not break compatibility with prior programs. The major version number is only incremented when an incompatible change is made to the language specification.

The next two lines,

```
# Copyright © 2004 by Wayne C. Gramlich.  
# All rights reserved.
```

are called comments. Comments are completely ignored by the  $\mu$ CL compiler but provide the user with useful information about the program in the form of notations within the program itself. A comment always begins with the sharp (i.e. '#') character and continues to the end of line.

$\mu$ CL uses the ISO (International Standards Organization) Latin-15 8-bit character set. The copyright (i.e. '©') character is perfectly legal and acceptable character in a comment or string.

In the example, there is a blank line between the second comment and the next program line. Just like comments, blank lines are ignored by the  $\mu$ CL compiler.

The next line is,

```
library $pic16f876
```

The `library` declaration instructs the  $\mu$ CL compiler to go to a particular file to fetch additional needed information such as register definitions and reusable code. The dollar sign (i.e. '\$'), appearing as the first character of the library name specifies that the designated library file is to be found in the system library directory. The `$pic16f876` library contains declarations for the MicroChip PIC16F876 microcontroller.

The next line is:

```
origin 8
```

and specifies that the next procedure is to be started at code address 8. This happens to be the address at which code is executed when the "X" command is typed into the RoboBRiX<sup>&trade;</sup> PICBrain11 boot loader.

The next line is:

```
debug main
```

which informs the compiler to generate debugging code for the procedure named `main`.

The next line is:

```
procedure main
```

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and declares that we are starting to define a procedure named `main`. A procedure accomplishes a specific sub-task of the whole program and it can be executed one or more times. A program basically consists of one or more procedures. The `main` procedure is special because it is always the first procedure that is called in an  $\mu$ CL program. There must always be a procedure named `main` or the compiler will not know where to start program execution. The `main` procedure does not have to occur first in the program, although it is quite common for it to be first.

The next line is,

```
arguments_none
```

and it tells the  $\mu$ CL compiler that the `main` procedure is to be invoked without any additional arguments. Note that it is indented by four spaces from the left margin. In  $\mu$ CL, indentation is *required*! The program will produce errors if the declarations and statements for the procedure are not properly indented.

The next line is,

```
returns_nothing
```

and it specifies that the `main` procedure will not be returning any values.

This declaration is followed by a blank line that is ignored by the  $\mu$ CL compiler.

The next five lines are

```
call character_put('H')
call character_put('i')
call character_put('!')
call character_put('\cr\')
call character_put('\lf\')
```

which consist of five calls to the `character_put` procedure to output the messages "Hi!" followed by a carriage return and line feed. The details of the `'\cr\'` and `'\lf\'` are discussed in a section further below.

The next two lines are:

```
loop_forever
do_nothing
```

These two statements cause the microcontroller to go into an infinite loop doing nothing.

The next chunk of code is as follows:

```
procedure character_put
argument character byte
returns_nothing
```

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```
# This procedure will output {character} to the UART.  
  
while !$txif  
    do_nothing  
$txreg := character
```

This code defines a new procedure called `character_put`. It takes a single argument called `character` which is of type `byte`. The `while` statement basically that the processor is to wait until the `$txif` bit becomes 1. The `$txif` bit is defined in the `$pic16f876` library and corresponds to the UART (Universal Asynchronous Receiver and Transmitter) transmit interrupt flag. When the transmit interrupt flag is 1, it is acceptable to send another character. The final line causes a character to be sent by stuffing `character` into `$txreg`.

## 6. Microcontroller Hookup

Hookup a microcontroller to your system is the next task. There are roughly three ways to do it:

- Buy and build a PICBrain11 RoboBRiX that comes with a PIC16F876x pre programmed with the correct boot loader. (Disclaimer: I get a royalty each for each PICBrain11 sold.)
- Hook a PIC16F87x up to a RS–232 level converter chip like a Maxim MX232 chip. Download a boot loader into the PIC16F87x.
- Hook a PIC16F87x up to a transistor based level converter. Again, download a boot loader into the PIC16F87x.

Of the three, the first is the easiest. If you already own a PIC programmer that can program a PIC16F87x, then you might be able to save some money by building your own circuit from scratch.

{Put schematics here.}

## 7. Debugging

The  $\mu$ CL programming compiler provides debugger support for the  $\mu$ CL IDE. The  $\mu$ CL debugger allows the user to set and clear breakpoints, examine and modify variable contents, and single step program execution. (Variable modification does not work for version 0.90.)

Some microcontroller applications can not use the debugger facility because they have hard real–time constraints that would not be met if program execution were to stop at a breakpoint. You will have to decide whether your application can tolerate being stopped at a debugger breakpoint or not. If not, you are more or less on your own and the  $\mu$ CL IDE debugger will not be of much use; otherwise, please continue reading.

Using the `debug` declaration, you can specify a list of procedures for which you want the compiler to produce extra debugger support code. For each procedure with debugging code enabled, the following additional overhead is incurred:

- there are 2 bytes of data space required for debugger use,
- each procedure will have 4 instructions overhead on entry,
- each procedure statement will have 4 instructions of overhead,
- each return will have 2 instructions of overhead.

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Given how good the  $\mu$ CL compiler code generator is, the 4 instructions of overhead per statement will typically double the procedure size and cut its execution speed in half.

The debug declaration has the following form:

```
debug procedure_name, ...
```

where

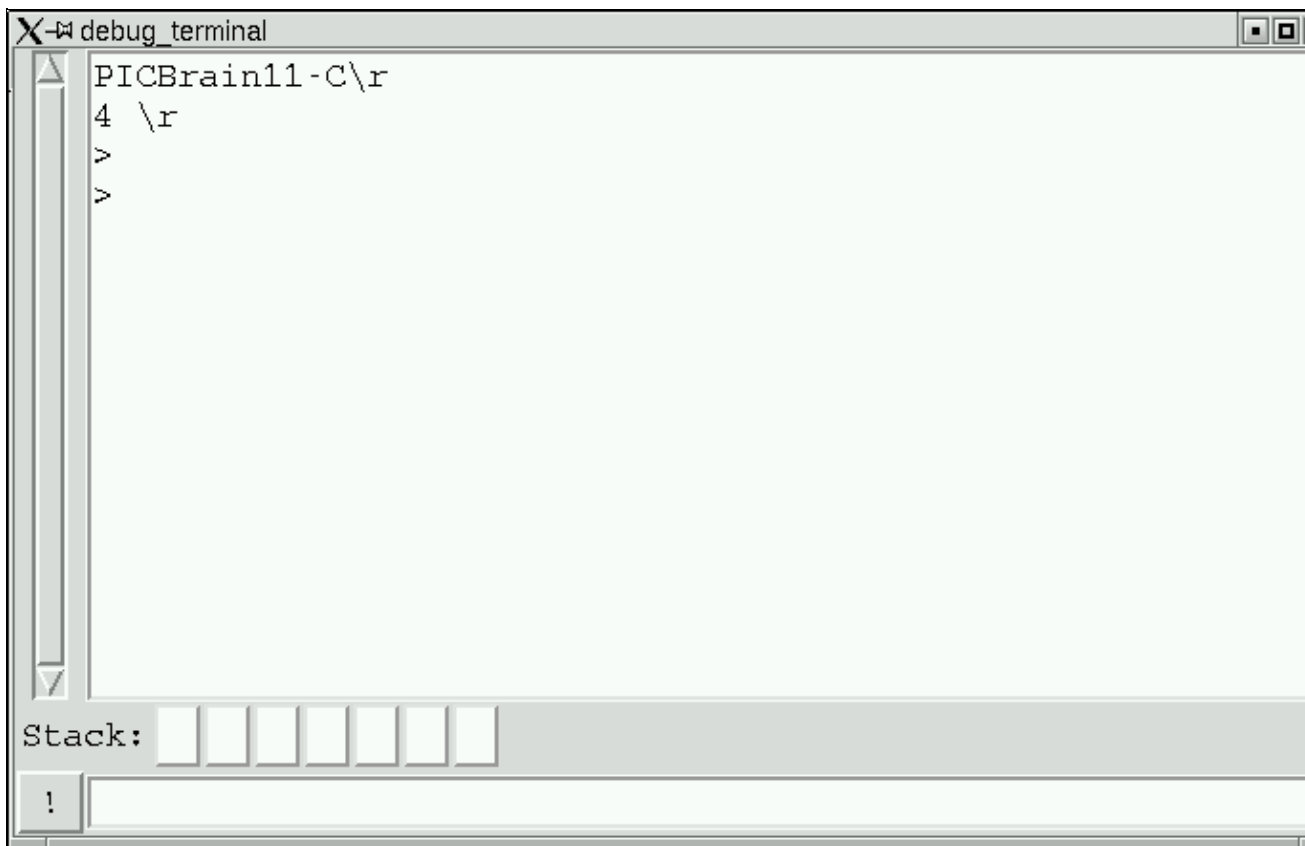
*procedure\_name* is a procedure name.

There can be more than one procedure name separated by commas.

It is time fire up the  $\mu$ CL IDE debugger. Please perform the following steps:

1. start the  $\mu$ CL IDE,
2. plug your hardware into the serial port,
3. turn on the microcontroller power, and
4. click on [Debugger]=>[Debugger...] to bring up the debugger terminal window

The debugger terminal window looks as follows:



The debugger window consists of a text window with a scroll bar on the left, a stack row, and a command line row.

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The "PICBrain11-C" is the boot loader announce string and its presence in the debug terminal indicates that the boot loader inside the microcontroller is running and in control. The ">" is the boot loader command prompt character. If your system does not contain the announce string and command prompt, you need to go back to the previous section and debug your hardware.

You can send commands to the boot loader by typing them into the command line entry at the bottom of the debugger window. For example, typing "v" into the bottom window followed by depressing the [Enter] key will use the boot loader to print out its version number (currently "1.0".) Try it. Similarly, typing "P00" will cause the first page of code to be displayed in hexadecimal. Again, please try it.

By the way, the [!] button in the lower left corner is the repeat button. If you type a command into the entry field and click on [!] it will send the command without deleting it from the entry field. This allows you to send the same command multiple times.

Now that we have verified that the boot loader is working, it is time to compile up a program and run the debugger on it. We are going to use the `example2.ucl` program to demonstrate the debugger. Please do the following:

1. Click on [File]=>[Open...] to bring up a file loader pop-up,
2. select `example2.ucl`,
3. click on the [Compile] button.

This program should compile without errors.

Now click on the [Download] button. This causes the hex file associated with `example2.ucl` to be downloaded into the microcontroller. You should see the hex file scrolling by. There should be a ">" prompt with each line. The debugger window should look sort like the following:

```

X debug_terminal <5>
>:1001200000008C1E91281A0882079A289E28AF2862
>:10013000C028C328290883000034C52883138C1ED7
>:100140009F281A0884008C1EA3281A08AA000C1ED7
>:10015000A72800089900840AAA0BA728C52883139A
>:100160008C1EB0281A0884008C1EB4281A08AA0015
>:100170008C1EB8281A088000840AAA0BB828C52843
>:0C01800083179F28C5288317B0289128FA
>:02400E003A3541
>:00000001FF
Err=00
>
Stack: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
!

```

Each line of the hex file should be preceded by a ">" prompt. The last line of the hex file is always ":00000001FF". The boot loader prints out what its error condition is as "Err=00", which signifies that no errors occurred. If your debug window does not look as described, please click on the [Reset] button and then the [Download] button again.

Moving our attention back to the main  $\mu$ CL IDE window, it should look something like this:



The screenshot shows the uCL Integrated Development Environment window titled "X-μ uCL Integrated Development Environment -- example2". The menu bar includes File, Edit, Buffer, Search, Options, Debug, View, and Help. Below the menu bar are buttons for Save, Edit, Compile, Download, Run, Step, Next, and Continue. A status bar at the bottom of the menu area shows "Next", "Prev", and "No Errors". The main text area contains the following code:

```

debug main
debug hi
debug crlf

procedure main
  arguments_none
  returns_nothing

  ○ call character_put('H')
  ○ call character_put('i')
  ○ call character_put('!')

  ○ call hi()
  ○ call hi()
  ○ call crlf()

  ○ loop_forever
  ○   do_nothing
  ○   do_nothing

procedure hi
  arguments_none
  returns_nothing

  ○ call character_put('H')
  ○ call character_put('i')
  ○ call character_put('!')

procedure crlf
  arguments_none
  returns_nothing

  ○ call character_put('\cr\')
  ○ call character_put('\lf\')
```

The program as been indented by 8 spaces. Each statement that the debugger can stop at is marked with a green "○".

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There are five commonly used debugger buttons and they are listed below:

[Run]

Starts program execution.

[Step]

Causes the program to single step to the next breakpointable statement irrespective of what procedure it occurs in.

[Next]

Causes the program to single step to the next breakpointable statement within the same procedure.

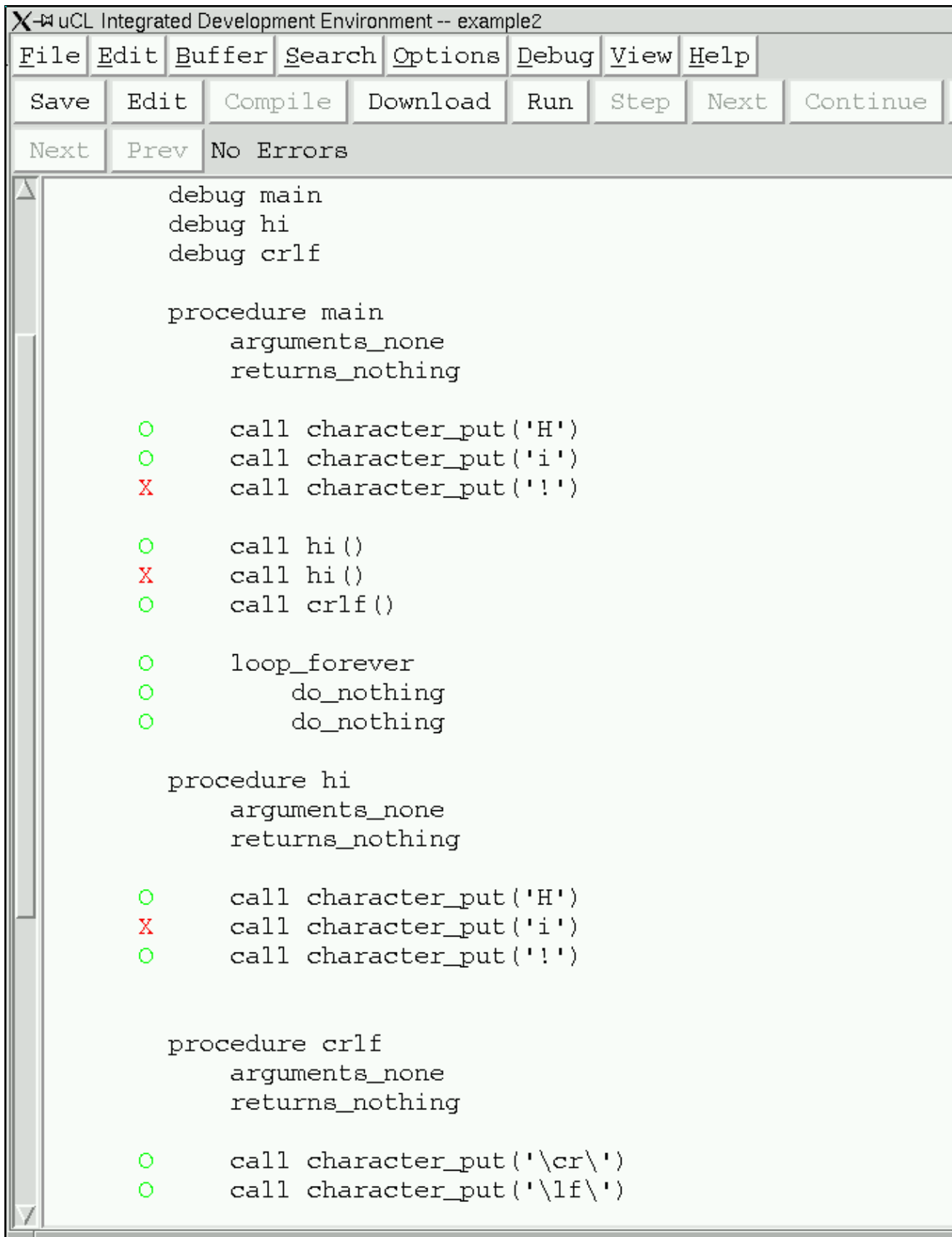
[Continue]

Causes program execution to continue until the next breakpoint is encountered.

[Reset]

Resets the microcontroller and causes the boot loader to be restarted.

A breakpoint is an instruction to the debugger to stop program execution when a particular statement is encountered. To enable a breakpoint, you click on one of the green "O" characters and it will turn into a red "X" character. When program execution reaches one of the red X's, the debugger will suspend execution and allow you to examine various program variables. To disable a breakpoint, click on the red "X" and it will turn back into a green "O" again. The screen below has a few breakpoints set:



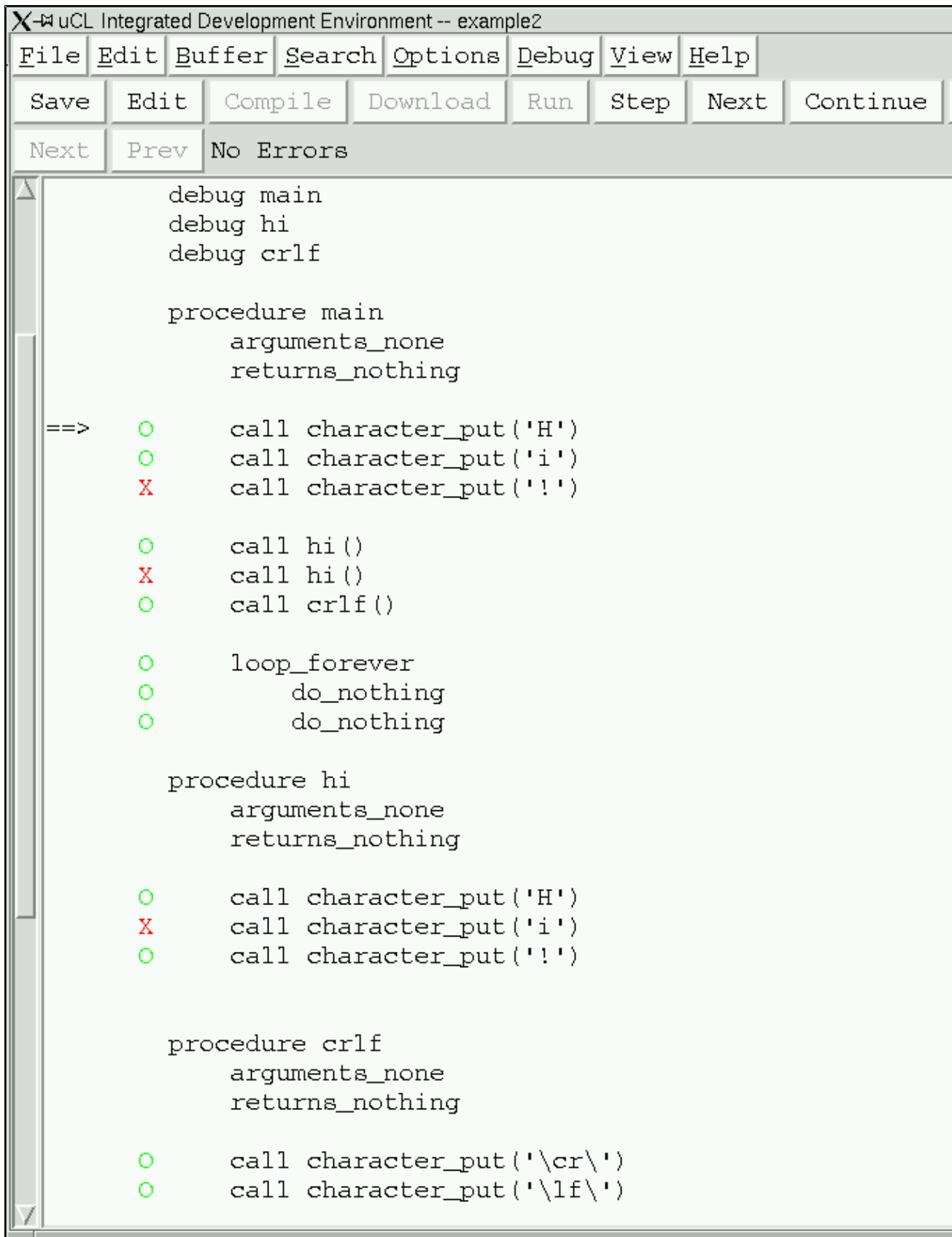
Once you have set your breakpoints, you can start the program by clicking on the [Run] button. The only thing that happens is that the [Step], [Next], and [Continue] buttons will become enabled and the [Run] button

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will become disabled. The program is now stopped at the very beginning of the `main` procedure *before* it has even executed any initialization code.

{Realistically, I need to add some visualization of this state. Probably some sort of special arrow that points at the main procedure declarations.}

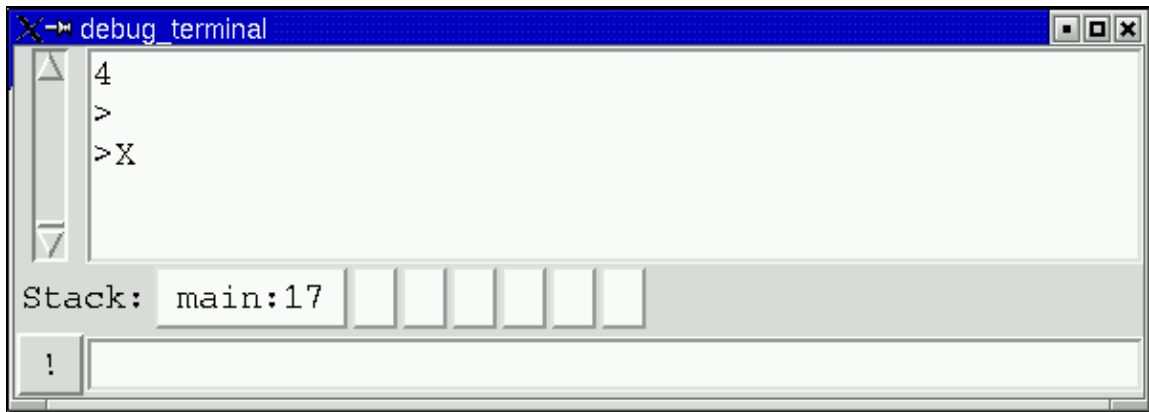
Now you are free to click on [Step], [Next], or [Continue] buttons. For now, click on the [Step] button and you will see a screen that looks as follows:



There is a program counter arrow that consists of "==" that points to the first statement in the program. Every time the program is stopped at a statement, the program counter arrow will point to the statement. In

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addition, please look at the Stack line in the debugger terminal; it should look as follows:



The stack indicates that the procedure is stopped at line 17 (in the file) in the procedure `main`.

{I think the stack should be moved to the main window.}

If you click on the [Step] button a few times you will see it the program counter arrow advance through the program one line at a time. When you get to the first `call hi()` statement and click on [Step], it will transfer control to the first statement in the `hi` procedure. The stack is now two levels deep and looks as follows:



This stack shows that the program is stopped at line 33 (in the file) in the `hi` procedure and was called from the statement at line 21 (in the file) in the `main` procedure.

As programs get bigger, you can click on the stack buttons to scroll to the location listed on the button. In this particular example, the the locations are so close together that typically no scrolling is needed.

If you look back at the source window, it looks as follows:

```

X-# uCL Integrated Development Environment -- example2
File Edit Buffer Search Options Debug View Help
Save Edit Compile Download Run Step Next Continue
Next Prev No Errors

    debug main
    debug hi
    debug crlf

    procedure main
        arguments_none
        returns_nothing

        ○ call character_put('H')
        X call character_put('i')
        ○ call character_put('!')

=1> ○ call hi()
    X call hi()
    ○ call crlf()

    X loop_forever
    ○ do_nothing
    ○ do_nothing

    procedure hi
        arguments_none
        returns_nothing

==> ○ call character_put('H')
    ○ call character_put('i')
    ○ call character_put('!')

    procedure crlf
        arguments_none
        returns_nothing

    ○ call character_put('\cr\')
    ○ call character_put('\lf\')

```

The current program counter arrow is pointing to the first statement in the `hi` procedure. In addition, there is a second stack pointer, "`=1>`" that points to the location in the stack where the call originated from. The digit

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specifies where in the stack the call came from.

If you keep clicking on the [Step] button, you will eventually reach the final `loop_forever` loop where the program counter error will switch between the two `do_nothing` statements. A `do_nothing` statement does not do anything except provide a location for the debugger to stop at.

Now restart the program by clicking on the [Reset] button followed by the [Run] button. First, notice that the stack is cleared.

This time, keep clicking on the [Next] button. The [Next] button differs from the [Step] button in that it does not follow the flow of execution into procedure calls. So, when the program counter arrow gets to the first `call hi()` statement and you click on [Next], the program counter simply advances to the next statement in the `main` procedure.

Again, restart the program by clicking on [Reset] followed by clicking on [Run]. Clicking on [Reset] does not clear any of the breakpoints that you manually set. Now, when you click on the [Continue] button, the program resumes execution until one of the breakpoints marked with a red "X".

It is possible to intermix the usage of the [Step], [Next], and [Continue] buttons. For fun, click on [Reset] and [Run] again and now intermix using the three buttons.

Sometimes a program "gets away" and does not run into any breakpoints. When this happens the three [Step], [Next], and continue buttons will remain disabled. Alas, there is no way to force the current program to stop at the next breakpoint. The only way to recover from this situation is to click on [Reset] and [Run] to restart the program.

So far, we have only focused on following the flow of program execution. It is also useful to be able to see the values of variables change as execution progresses.

The next program to load is called `example3.uc1`. Once you have compiled the program and downloaded it, please set a breakpoint on the last statement. The main window should look as follows:



The screenshot shows the uCL Integrated Development Environment (IDE) window titled "X-μ uCL Integrated Development Environment -- example3". The menu bar includes File, Edit, Buffer, Search, Options, Debug, View, and Help. Below the menu bar are several buttons: Save, Edit, Compile, Download, Run, Step, Next, Continue, Next, and Prev. A status bar at the top right displays "No Errors".

The main editor area contains the following code:

```

ucl 1.0
# Copyright (c) 2004 by Wayne C. Gramlich
# All rights reserved.

library $pic16f876

origin 8

debug main

procedure main
    arguments_none
    returns_nothing

??    local counter byte
??    local a byte
??    local b byte
??    local a_add_b byte
??    local a_minus_b byte
??    local a_and_b byte
??    local a_or_b byte
??    local a_xor_b byte

○     counter := 0
○     loop_forever
○         a := (counter >> 3) & 7
○         b := counter & 7
○         a_add_b := a + b
○         a_minus_b := a - b
○         a_and_b := a & b
○         a_or_b := a | b
○         a_xor_b := a ^ b

# Place a breakpoint here:
X     counter := counter + 1

```

Each local variable has its current value represented in blue next to the variable declaration. In this particular example, the variable is represented with two question marks ("??") to indicate that the debugger has not yet

## The $\mu$ CL Tutorial

accessed microcontroller memory.

Please click on [Run] followed by [Step]. When you do this, all of the "??" values are replaced by the values that happened to be in memory when the microcontroller was powered up. The window below gives an example of what it would look like:

The screenshot shows the uCL Integrated Development Environment (IDE) window titled "X-μ uCL Integrated Development Environment -- example3". The menu bar includes File, Edit, Buffer, Search, Options, Debug, View, and Help. Below the menu bar are several buttons: Save, Edit, Compile, Download, Run, Step, Next, Continue, Next, and Prev. A status bar at the top right displays "No Errors".

The main editor area contains the following code:

```

ucl 1.0
# Copyright (c) 2004 by Wayne C. Gramlich
# All rights reserved.

library $pic16f876

origin 8

debug main

procedure main
    arguments_none
    returns_nothing

04    local counter byte
00    local a byte
00    local b byte
ff    local a_add_b byte
00    local a_minus_b byte
00    local a_and_b byte
04    local a_or_b byte
02    local a_xor_b byte

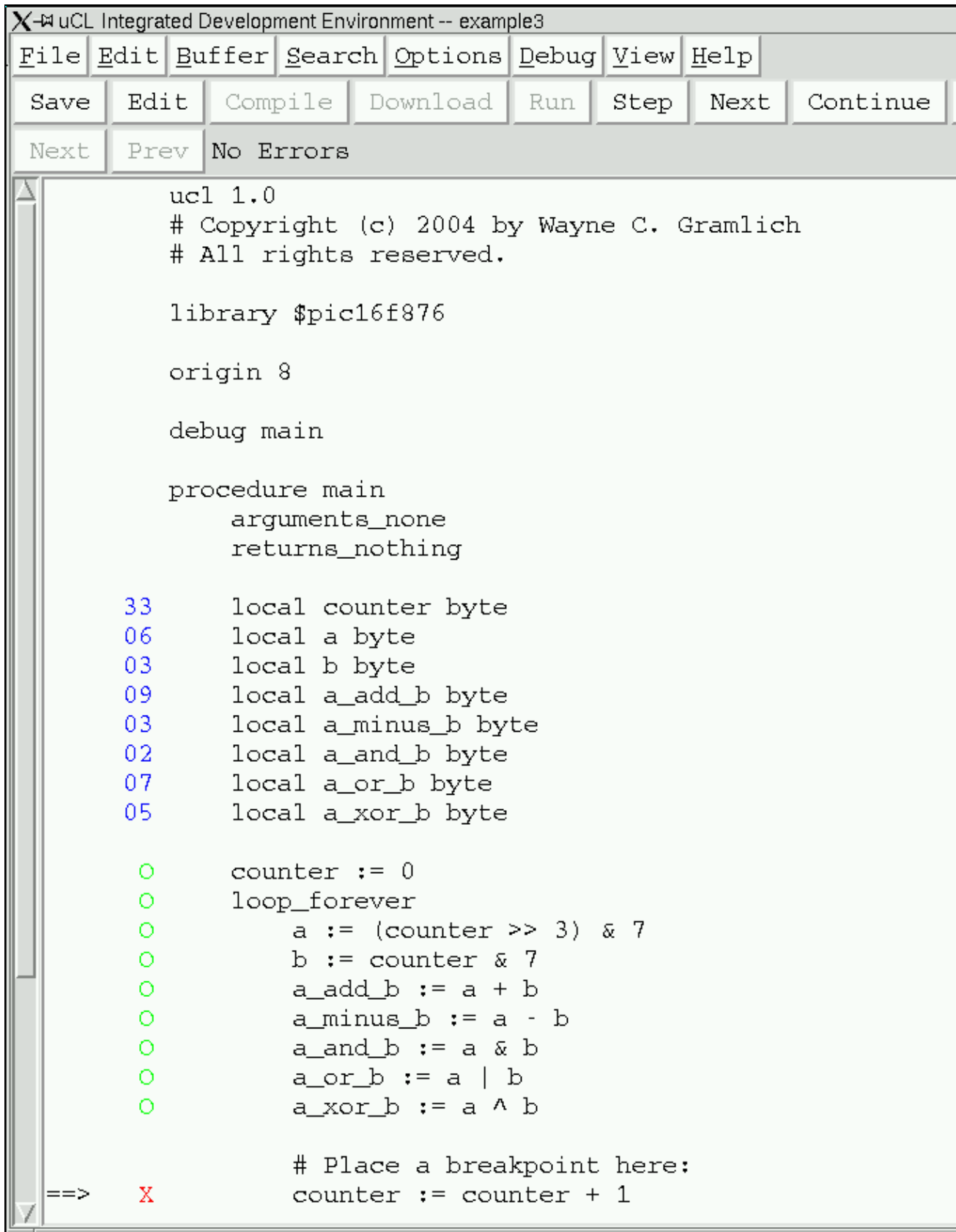
==>  0    counter := 0
      0    loop_forever
      0        a := (counter >> 3) & 7
      0        b := counter & 7
      0        a_add_b := a + b
      0        a_minus_b := a - b
      0        a_and_b := a & b
      0        a_or_b := a | b
      0        a_xor_b := a ^ b

      # Place a breakpoint here:
      X    counter := counter + 1
  
```

The variables are all represented as 2 hexadecimal digit numbers (i.e. 8-bits of data.) Please note that your microcontroller will almost certainly come up with some different values.

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Lastly, please click on the [Continue] button to catch the program on each iteration through the loop. The window below shows the program values when the `counter` has a value of 33 hexadecimal:



The screenshot shows the uCL Integrated Development Environment window titled "uCL Integrated Development Environment -- example3". The menu bar includes File, Edit, Buffer, Search, Options, Debug, View, and Help. Below the menu bar are buttons for Save, Edit, Compile, Download, Run, Step, Next, and Continue. A status bar shows "Next", "Prev", and "No Errors". The main text area contains the following code:

```
ucl 1.0
# Copyright (c) 2004 by Wayne C. Gramlich
# All rights reserved.

library $pic16f876

origin 8

debug main

procedure main
  arguments_none
  returns_nothing

  33  local counter byte
  06  local a byte
  03  local b byte
  09  local a_add_b byte
  03  local a_minus_b byte
  02  local a_and_b byte
  07  local a_or_b byte
  05  local a_xor_b byte

  ○   counter := 0
  ○   loop_forever
  ○     a := (counter >> 3) & 7
  ○     b := counter & 7
  ○     a_add_b := a + b
  ○     a_minus_b := a - b
  ○     a_and_b := a & b
  ○     a_or_b := a | b
  ○     a_xor_b := a ^ b

  # Place a breakpoint here:
  ==> X counter := counter + 1
```

Being able to follow program flow and track variable values is a very powerful set of features for debugging programs. Future versions of the debugger (hopefully version 0.91) will also provide the ability to change values as well.

The only thing left to cover about the  $\mu$ CL debugger is to explain what your program needs to do in order *share* the UART on the microcontroller with the  $\mu$ CL IDE debugger. The baud rate for the on-board UART is set to 9200 baud by the boot loaded that has already been programmed into the microcontroller program memory. After the  $\mu$ CL debugger starts program execution, the program and IDE debugger stub must not get in the way of one another. Basically, your program is allowed to send back character codes in the range 0 through 254 inclusive. Code 255 is reserved exclusively for the  $\mu$ CL IDE debugger. When the  $\mu$ CL debugger sees code 255 it takes over control of the UART for the debugger. Do not not change the baud rate and do not send code 255 are all you have to remember.

## 8. Numbers, Characters, and Strings

Numbers in  $\mu$ CL are represented as either decimal numbers or hexadecimal numbers. (Note to C programmers: no octal numbers!) A decimal number is just a sequence of decimal digits ('0'-'9'). A hexadecimal number is a sequence of hexadecimal digits ('0'-'9', 'A'-'F', 'a'-'f') preceded by the prefix '0x'.

Some example numbers are:

Decimal	Hexadecimal	Decimal	Hexadecimal
0	0x0	255	0xff
1	0x1	256	0x100
9	0x9	65535	0xffff
10	0xa	16777215	0xffffff
15	0xf	16777216	0x1000000
16	0x10	4294967295	0xffffffff

Note that 32-bit numbers can be represented (i.e.  $2^{32}-1$ .) The numbers are unceremoniously truncated to fit within the precision of any variable.

A string is a sequence of zero, one or more Latin-15 characters enclosed in double quotes (i.e. "..."). A character is exactly one Latin-15 character enclosed in single quotes (i.e. 'x'). Non-printing characters are represented using an escape mechanism using pairs of back slash characters ('\'). The non-printing characters are represented as either numbers or symbols. The allowed symbols are:

Symbol	Value	Symbol	Value	Symbol	Value	Symbol	Value	Symbol	Value
nul	0	ht	9	dc2	18	esc	27	t	9
soh	1	lf	10	dc3	19	fs	28	n	10
stx	2	vt	11	dc4	20	gs	29	v	11
etx	3	ff	12	nak	21	rs	30	f	12
eot	4	cr	13	syn	22	us	31	r	13
enq	5	so	14	etb	23	sp	32	tab	8
ack	6	si	15	can	24	del	127	bsl	92
bel	7	dle	16	em	25	a	7	dq	34

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bs	8	dc1	17	sub	26	b	8	sq	39
----	---	-----	----	-----	----	---	---	----	----

Some string examples are shown below:

```
" " # Empty string
"a" # String containing single letter "a"
" " # String containing single space
"Hello, World!\n\" # "Hello, World" followed by line feed
"No.\tab\Desc.\lf\" # String with tab and line feed in it
"\bsl\" # String containing single backslash
"'" # String containing single quote.
"\"sq\" # String containing single quote
"\"dq\" # String containing double quote
"Español\" # String containing Latin-9 "ñ"
"\"dq\"Hi\"dq\" # String encloses "Hi" in double quotes
"Done!\10,13\" # String followed by CR and LF
"Done!\cr,lf\" # String followed by CR and LF
```

(Note to C programmers:  $\mu$ CL strings are not null terminated; they have a size byte at the beginning. This means that  $\mu$ CL strings can contain embedded null characters.)

Some character examples are shown below:

```
'a' # The letter 'a'
' ' # A space
'ñ' # The Latin-9 ñ character
'"' # A double quote character
"\"dq\"' # A double quote character
"\"sq\"' # A single quote character
'\tab\' # A tab character
'\0\' # A null character
'\nul\' # A null character
```

The program below adds some calls to `uart_hex_byte_put` to print out some numbers and characters:

```
ucl 1.0
# Copyright &cr; 2004 by Wayne C. Gramlich.
# All rights reserved.

library $pic16f876
library $uart

procedure main
  arguments_none
  returns_nothing

  call uart_string_put("Hello\cr,lf\")
  call uart_hex_byte_put(16)
  call uart_character_put(' ')
  call uart_hex_byte_put(0xaf)
  call uart_character_put(32)
  call uart_hex_byte_put(-1)
  call uart_string_put("\cr,lf\")
```

Executing this program produces the following output:

```
Hello
10 af ff
```

## 9. Constants and Expressions

A constant declaration allows you to a number (or string) to a symbolic name. From then on you can use the symbolic name interchangeably with the number. The symbolic name is likely to be more meaningful than the number.

The constant declaration has the following form:

```
constant constant_name = constant_expression
```

where *constant\_name* is a new symbol name for the newly defined and *constant\_expression* is an expression that consists of other numbers, strings, and constants.

Here are a few examples to get started:

```
constant clock_frequency = 20000000
constant instruction_rate = clock_frequency / 4
constant version = "V1.3.2"
```

The first constant declaration is a simple one that sets the symbol `clock_frequency` to 20000000 (i.e., 20MHz.) The second constant declaration sets `instruction_rate` to the value of the constant `clock_frequency` is divided by 4. The third constant expression sets `version` to the string "V1.3.2".

Some of the expressions available in  $\mu$ CL are listed in the table below:

Expression	Description
$-e$	negative $e$
$\sim e$	bitwise NOT of $e$
$e1 \ll e2$	$e1$ shifted right by $e2$ bits
$e1 \gg e2$	$e1$ shifted left by $e2$ bits
$e1 \wedge e2$	$e1$ bitwise XOR (exclusive OR) with $e2$
$e1 \& e2$	$e1$ bitwise AND with $e2$
$e1 \mid e2$	$e1$ bitwise OR with $e2$
$e1 * e2$	$e1$ multiplied by $e2$
$e1 / e2$	$e1$ divided by $e2$
$e1 \% e2$	$e1$ modulo (i.e. remainder) $e2$
$e1 + e2$	$e1$ added to $e2$
$e1 - e2$	$e1$ minus $e2$
$e1 \sim e2$	$e1$ string concatenated with $e2$

The table above is partial list of the more common expressions; a more complete list is provided in a section further below. In addition, expressions are listed from highest precedence (top) to lowest precedence (bottom) in the table. Thus,  $-a * b - c * d$  is grouped as  $((-a) * b) - (c * d)$ . You may add parenthesis to improve readability and change order of operation.

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A constant declaration may not reference a constant the its declared further down. They must be ordered so that all constants in the constant expression portion of a constant declaration have been previously defined.

The program below shows a few constant declarations in operation:

```
ucl 1.0
# Copyright &cr; 2004 by Wayne C. Gramlich.
# All rights reserved.

library $pic16f876
library $uart

constant clock_frequency = 20000000
constant instruction_rate = clock_frequency / 4
constant baud_rate = 2400

constant space = ' '
constant crlf = "\cr,lf\"
constant hello = "Hello" ~ crlf

procedure main
  arguments_none
  returns_nothing

  call uart_string_put(hello)
  call uart_hex_byte_put(16)
  call uart_character_put(space)
  call uart_hex_byte_put(0xaf)
  call uart_string_put(crlf)
```

## 10. Variables and Assignments

A variable is used to store a value. There are two kinds of variables -- global and local. The format of a global variable declaration is:

```
global variable_name variable_type
```

and the format of a local variable declaration is:

```
local variable_name variable_type
```

where the declaration must occur with in a procedure declaration. There are actually a few more kinds of global variables (`shared` and `register`) but they are more specialized and are in a section further below.

Global variables are accessible by all procedures in an  $\mu$ CL program. Local variables are only accessible from the procedure that they are defined within. It is legal for a local variable to have the same name as a global variable, in which case the procedure can only access the local variable.

Both global and local variables are uninitialized in  $\mu$ CL.

An assignment statement in  $\mu$ CL looks as follows:

```
variable := expression
```



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Where *variable* is either a local or global variable and *expression* is an expression consisting of numbers, strings, variables, and/or constants. A few example assignments statements are shown below:

```
counter := 0
counter := counter + 1
average := (a + b) >> 1
```

The program below shows some local and global variables along with a few simple assignments:

```
ucl 1.0
# Copyright &cr; 2004 by Wayne C. Gramlich.
# All rights reserved.

library $pic16f876
library $uart

global glob byte

procedure main
  arguments_none
  returns_nothing

  local loc byte

  glob := 0
  loc := 0
  call uart_hex_byte_put(loc)
  call uart_character_put(' ')
  call uart_hex_byte_put(glob)
  call uart_character_put(' ')
  call glob_increment()
  call uart_hex_byte_put(loc)
  call uart_character_put(' ')
  call uart_hex_byte_put(glob)
  call uart_string_put("\cr,lf")

procedure glob_increment
  arguments_none
  returns_nothing

  # This variable "loc" is different from the one in main:
  local loc byte

  loc := 0xff
  glob := glob + 1
```

The following output results:

```
00 00 00 01
```

## 11. Procedures

Procedures are sequences of statements that can be re-executed multiple times. The overall structure of a procedure declaration is:

```

    procedure procedure_name
    argument_declarations
    return_declaration

    local_variable_declarations

    statement_list

```

where

```

procedure_name
    is the procedure name,
argument_declarations
    is a list of one or more procedure argument declarations, or a single arguments_none
    declaration,
returns_declaration
    is either a returns declaration or a returns_nothing declaration,
local_variable_declaration
    is zero, one or more local variable declarations, and
statement_list
    is a list of zero, one, or more statements.

```

The following is an example procedure that takes two arguments and returns one result:

```

    procedure average
    argument left byte
    argument right byte
    returns byte

    return (left + right) >> 1

```

This procedure takes two arguments and returns the average of the two. It is invoked in a expression as follows:

```

    local high byte
    local low byte
    local threshold byte
    ...
    threshold := average(high, low)
    ...

```

In this example the values of the `high` and `low` variable is copied to the argument variables `left` and `right` respectively. The returned result is assigned to the variable `threshold`.

Another example procedure takes no arguments and has no return values:

```

    procedure global_count_increment
    arguments_none

```

```
returns_nothing

global_count := global_count + 1
```

This procedure is invoked using a call statement:

```
...
call global_count_increment ()
...
```

The exact format of an `argument` declaration is as follows:

```
argument argument_name argument_type
```

where

*argument\_name*  
is the name of argument, and  
*argument\_type*  
is the argument type.

There must be one `argument` declaration for each procedure argument.

If the procedure has no arguments, there must be a single `arguments_none` declaration that just consists of the word `arguments_none` sitting on a line by itself:

```
arguments_none
```

A procedure may or may not return a value. If it returns a value, it must have a `returns` declaration of the following form:

```
returns return_type
```

where

*return\_type*  
is the return type for the procedure.

If the procedure does not return anything, there must be a `returns_nothing` declaration that has the following form:

```
returns_nothing
```

## 12. About Indentation

We talked about indentation very briefly in section 3. It is time to talk about it a little more carefully.  $\mu$ CL is a programming language that uses indentation to group statements and declarations together. The reason for this is to provide better error messages. Languages that do not use indentation to perform grouping, tend to have significantly worse error message handling when a grouping error is made.

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The way indentation works, is that the  $\mu$ CL compiler sweeps through the entire program and figures out what column the first printing (i.e. non-whitespace) character occurs in on each line. For the code fragment below, the starting column is the number on the left.

```
...
0  procedure main
4      arguments_none
4      returns_nothing
0
4      local counter byte
0
4      counter := 0
4      loop_forever
8          if counter & 1 = 0
12              call phase1()
8          else
12              call phase2()
8          counter := counter + 1
0
0  procedure phase1
...

```

First, blank lines are ignored. Each time the column number increases from one non-blank line to the next non-blank line, a new grouping is started. This is indicated with the `{` character. Each time the column number decreases from one non-blank line to the next non-blank line, one or more groupings are closed. Again this indicated with a `}` character. For the code fragment above, the grouping characters are shown between the appropriate lines as shown below:

```
...
0  procedure main
      {
4      arguments_none
4      returns_nothing
0
4      local counter byte
0
4      counter := 0
4      loop_forever
      {
8          if counter & 1 = 0
                {
12              call phase1()
                }
8          else
                {
12              call phase2()
                }
8          counter := counter + 1
            }
      }
0
0  procedure phase1
...

```

(Note to C programmers: Some C programmers feel that the curly braces add to the legibility of the code. With the exception of figuring out what column number a line starts on,  $\mu$ CL totally ignores curly braces. Just so long as the code is properly indented, the  $\mu$ CL compiler will happily ignore them.)

## 13. Simple\_Statements

The simple statements in  $\mu$ CL are the assignment, `call`, `if`, `switch`, and `return` statements.

The assignment statement is previously covered in section 6. The assignment statement is unique in  $\mu$ CL in that it is the only statement that does not start with a "keyword". Instead, the  $\mu$ CL compiler scans each line and if it finds a line with the assignment operator (i.e. ':=') in it, it assumes that the line is an assignment statement. An interesting side effect of this design choice is that  $\mu$ CL can add new keywords without breaking any existing code.

The `call` statement is first seen in section 3. Its purpose is to evaluate an expression for its side-effects. The format of the `call` is as follows:

```
call call_expression
```

where

*call\_expression*

is an expression that evaluated for its side effects.

The `return` statement causes the current procedure to terminate and returns control the calling procedure.

The format of the `return` statement is as follows:

```
return return_expression
```

where

*return\_expression*

is an expression that is evaluated to provide the procedure return value. If the procedure does not return anything, this return expression not be provided.

The `if` statement is a real is used for testing conditional values. It has the following overall form:

```
if expression1
statements1
else_if expression2
statements2
...
else_if expressionN
statementsN
else
statementsN+1
```

where

*expression<sub>i</sub>*

is an expression that evaluate to a binary bit value of 1 or 0, and

*statements<sub>i</sub>*

is an indented block of statements that is executed if the corresponding expression evaluates to 1.

There can be zero, one or more `else_if` clauses. The `else` clause is also optional. The first expression that evaluates to 1 causes its corresponds statement list to be executed. No other statement lists are executed. If none of the expressions evaluate to 1, the last sequence of statements in the `else` clause are executed (if they

are present.)

The `switch` statement is used to perform a multi-way branch. The `switch` statement has the following form:

```

switch switch_expression
  case_maximum maximum_expression
  case case_expression1
statements1
  case case_expression2
statements2
  ...
  case case_expressionN
statementsN
  default
statementsN+1

```

where

*switch\_expression*  
is an expression that is evaluated,  
*maximum\_expression*  
is a constant expression that specifies the largest expected value for *switch\_expression*,  
*case\_expression*<sub>*i*</sub>  
is a constant expression that specifies one of the possible values of *switch\_expression*, and  
*statements*<sub>*i*</sub>>  
is a group of statements to be executed when *switch\_expression* matches the corresponding *case\_expression*<sub>*i*</sub>.

Both the `maximum_expression` clause and the `default` clause is optional. There must be at least one case clause.

{Example goes here.}

## 14. Iteration Statements

The iteration statements are the `loop_forever`, `loop_exactly`, and `while`.

The `loop_forever` statement has the following form:

```

loop_forever
statements

```

where

*statements*  
is an indented block of statements that is repeatedly executed.

The `loop_exactly` statement has the following form:

```

loop_exactly loop_exactly_expression

```

*statements*

where

*loop\_exactly\_expression*

is an expression that is evaluated at the beginning of the loop to determine exactly how many times the loop body will be executed

*statements*

is the loop body statements that are executed.

The `while` statement has the following form:

```
while while_expression
statements
```

where

*while\_expression*

is an expression that evaluates to a bit value of 1 or 0,

*statements*

is the loop body statements that get executed if *while\_expression* evaluates to a 1.

## 15. Code and Data Banks

As Moore's law continues its onslaught of further miniaturization, many microcontroller instruction sets run into code and data space problems. A code space problem occurs when there is insufficient space in the control flow instructions (i.e. GOTO, CALL, etc.) to properly access all available program memory. The data space problem occurs when there is insufficient space in the data access instructions to access all available data. A typical solution to these problems is to add bank switching bits. The  $\mu$ CL language has some direct support to deal with microcontroller instruction sets that have resorted to either code or data banks.

The `code_bank` declaration has the following form:

```
code_bank code_bank_expression
```

where

*code\_bank\_expression*

is a constant expression that specifies the code bank that subsequent procedures will be placed in.

For example, the PIC16F87x series of microcontrollers has up to 4 code banks of 2048 instruction words each. The code fragments below show how the `code_bank` declaration works:

```
...
code_bank 0
procedure main
    ...
    call data_sample()
    ...
    call data_process()
```

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```
...  
code_bank 1  
procedure data_sample  
...  
code_bank 2  
procedure data_process  
...
```

In this code the procedure `main` is in code bank 0, `data_sample` is in code bank 1, and `data_processes` is in code bank 2. The  $\mu$ CL compiler is responsible for managing all of the extra instructions required to call a procedure in one code bank from another code bank as shown by the calls to `data_sample` and `data_process` from procedure `main` in the fragment above.

You are permitted to switch back and forth between code banks as many times as you want. The  $\mu$ CL compiler will complain if there is insufficient space in a code bank to contain all of the requested procedures. When placing procedures into specific code banks, it prudent to try to minimize the number of calls between code banks to minimize the amount of time wasted producing code bank manipulation instructions.

The same problem that occurs with code banks can also occur with program data for some microcontrollers. For example, the MicroChip PIC16F87x microcontrollers have 4 data banks of 128 bytes in each bank, where some of the bytes are hardware control registers, some are reserved for future expansion, and the rest are available data memory.

The `data_bank` declaration has the following form:

```
data_bank data_bank_expression
```

where

*data\_bank\_expression*

is a constant expression that specifies the desired data bank that future variable declarations will be allocated in.

The code fragment below shows how the `data_bank` declaration controls where variables are allocated.

```
...  
data_bank 0  
  
global phase byte  
  
procedure main  
...  
    local counter byte  
    ....  
    phase := 1  
  
data_bank 1  
  
procedure sample_data  
    ....  
    local low byte  
    local high byte
```



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```
local average byte
...
phase := 2
```

In the fragment above, the global variable `phase` and local variable `counter` are in data bank 0. The local variables `low`, `high`, and `average` are in data bank 1. The  $\mu$ CL compiler is responsible for generating the extra instructions needed to switch between data banks without any further assistance.

The  $\mu$ CL compiler will inform you if you run out of storage from a given data bank.

On some microcontrollers, there is some memory that is shared between data banks. For example, the MicroChip PIC16F87x series has 16 bytes of shared memory. This memory is prized because it can be accessed without requiring any extra data bank switching instructions. The `shared` declaration provides a way to allocated global variables from this pool of shared memory.

The `shared` command has the following form:

```
shared variable_name variable_type
```

where

```
variable_name
    is the variable name, and
variable_type
    is the variable type.
```

As usual, the  $\mu$ CL compiler will inform you if try to allocate too many variables in shared memory.

## 16. About Types

The initial versions of  $\mu$ CL only support a small number of basic types. These basic types are shown in the table below:

Type	Size	Smallest value	Largest value
Bit	1	0	1
Unsigned8	8	0	255
String			

Over time, this list will be expanded until it eventually includes signed and unsigned integers of up to 32 bits and some floating point numbers as well.

In  $\mu$ CL, strings are a sequence of bytes with a fixed contents and unchangeable length (i.e. they are read-only.) There are some restrictions on

## 17. More About Expressions

{More about expressions goes here.}

## 18. Libraries

Libraries are the primary method available to  $\mu$ CL programmers for code reuse. They are typically used to provide all of the register and bit definitions for a particular flavor of microcontroller and they are used provide libraries of procedures that can be shared between different applications.

A `library` declaration has the following form:

```
library library_name
```

where

```
library_name
```

is the name of the library to include.

This declaration causes the compiler process the code in the named library.

By convention, libraries that have names that start with a dollar sign character ('\$') are taken from the  $\mu$ CL system directory; otherwise, they come from the same directory as the source file. No path names are permitted; the library must come one directory or the other.

Libraries are only processed once. Each subsequent request to include the same library will be silently skipped over.

```
{more here}
```

## 19. Pins

```
{more about pins here}
```

## 20. Embedded Assembly Code

```
{assembly code goes here}
```

## 21. Controlled Delays

```
{controlled delays}
```

## 22. Interrupts

```
{more about interrupts here}
```

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