

The CHARM++ Programming Language Manual

The Charm software was developed as a group effort. The earliest prototype, Chare Kernel(1.0), was developed by Wennie Shu and Kevin Nomura working with Laxmikant Kale. The second prototype, Chare Kernel(2.0), a complete re-write with major design changes, was developed by a team consisting of Wayne Fenton, Balkrishna Ramkumar, Vikram Saletore, Amitabh B. Sinha and Laxmikant Kale. The translator for Chare Kernel(2.0) was written by Manish Gupta. Charm(3.0), with significant design changes, was developed by a team consisting of Attila Gursoy, Balkrishna Ramkumar, Amitabh B. Sinha and Laxmikant Kale, with a new translator written by Nimish Shah. The CHARM++ implementation was done by Sanjeev Krishnan. Charm(4.0) included CHARM++ and was released in fall 1993. Charm(4.5) was developed by Attila Gursoy, Sanjeev Krishnan, Milind Bhandarkar, Joshua Yelon, Narain Jagathesan and Laxmikant Kale. Charm(4.8), developed by the same team included Converse, a parallel runtime system that allows interoperability among modules written using different paradigms within a single application. CHARM++ runtime system was re-targeted at Converse. Syntactic extensions in CHARM++ were dropped, and a simple interface translator was developed (by Sanjeev Krishnan and Jay DeSouza) that, along with the CHARM++ runtime, became the CHARM++ language. The current version (5.4R1) includes a complete rewrite of the CHARM++ runtime system (using C++) and the interface translator (done by Milind Bhandarkar). It also includes several new features such as Chare Arrays (developed by Robert Brunner and Orion Lawlor), and various libraries (written by Terry Wilmarth, Gengbin Zheng, Laxmikant Kale, Zehra Sura, Milind Bhandarkar, Robert Brunner, and Krishnan Varadarajan.) A coordination language “Structured Dagger” has been implemented on top of CHARM++ (Milind Bhandarkar), and included in this version. Several features have also been added to Converse. Dynamic seed-based load balancing has been implemented (Terry Wilmarth and Joshua Yelon), a client-server interface for Converse programs, and debugging support has been added (Parthasarathy Ramachandran, Jeff Wright, and Milind Bhandarkar). Converse has been ported to new platforms including ASCI Red (Joshua Yelon), Cray T3E (Robert Brunner), and SGI Origin2000 (Milind Bhandarkar). The test suite for CHARM++ was developed by Michael Lang, Jackie Wang, and Fang Hu. Projections, the performance visualization and analysis tool, was redesigned and rewritten using Java by Michael Denardo. Orion Lawlor, Gengbin Zheng, and Milind Bhandarkar have been responsible for the changes to the system since the last release.

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"L. V. Kale, Milind Bhandarkar, Narain Jagathesan, Sanjeev Krishnan and Joshua Yelon. CONVERSE: An Interoperable Framework for Parallel Programming. Proceedings of the 10th International Parallel Processing Symposium, pp 212-217, April 1996."

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Contents

1	Introduction	4
1.1	Overview	4
1.2	History	5
2	Charm++ Overview	5
2.1	Proxies and Handles	6
2.2	CHARM++ Execution Model	6
2.3	Entities in CHARM++ programs	7
2.3.1	Sequential Objects	7
2.3.2	Messages	7
2.3.3	Chares	8
2.3.4	Chare Arrays	8
2.3.5	Chare Groups	8
2.3.6	Chare Nodegroups	8
3	The Charm++ Language	9
3.1	Modules	9
3.1.1	Structure of a CHARM++ Program	9
3.1.2	Functions in the “decl.h” and “def.h” files	11
3.2	Entry Methods	11
3.2.1	Entry Method Attributes	11
3.3	Parameter Marshalling	12
3.3.1	Marshalling User-Defined Structures and Classes	13
3.4	Messages	13
3.4.1	Message Creation and Deletion	14
3.4.2	Messages with Variable Length Arrays	15
3.4.3	Message Packing	16
3.4.4	Custom Packed Messages	17
3.4.5	Prioritized Execution	19
3.5	Chare Objects	21
3.5.1	Chare Creation	22
3.5.2	Method Invocation on Chares	23
3.5.3	Local Access	23
3.6	Read-only Variables, Messages and Arrays	24
3.7	Basic Arrays	24
3.7.1	Declaring a 1D Array	24
3.7.2	Creating a Simple Array	25
3.7.3	Messages	25
3.7.4	Broadcasts	26
3.7.5	Reductions on Chare Arrays	26
3.7.6	Destroying Arrays	26
3.8	Advanced Arrays	26
3.8.1	Declaring 2D, 3D, or User-defined Index Arrays	26
3.8.2	Advanced Array Creation	27
3.8.3	Advanced Array Creation: CkCreateOptions	27
3.8.4	Advanced Array Creation: Map Object	27
3.8.5	Advanced Array Creation: Initial Elements	28
3.8.6	Advanced Array Creation: Bound Arrays	28
3.8.7	Advanced Array Creation: Dynamic Insertion	29
3.8.8	Advanced Array Creation: Demand Creation	30
3.8.9	User-defined array index type	30
3.8.10	Migratable Array Elements	31

3.8.11	Load Balancing Chare Arrays	32
3.8.12	Local Access	32
3.8.13	Array Section	33
3.9	Group Objects	34
3.9.1	Group Creation	35
3.9.2	Method Invocation on Groups	35
3.10	Nodegroup Objects	36
3.10.1	Method Invocation on Nodegroups	36
3.11	Load Balancing Framework	37
3.11.1	Available Load Balancing Strategies	37
3.11.2	Load Balancing Chare Arrays	38
3.11.3	Other utility functions	39
3.11.4	Compiler and run-time options to use load balancing module	40
3.11.5	Load Balancing Simulation	41
3.12	Quiescence Detection	41
3.13	Reductions	42
3.13.1	Reduction Clients	42
3.13.2	Built-in Reduction Types	43
3.13.3	Defining a New Reduction Type	44
3.14	Callbacks	45
3.14.1	Client Interface	45
3.14.2	Library Interface	46
3.15	PUP	47
3.15.1	C and Fortran bindings	48
3.15.2	Dynamic Allocation	48
3.15.3	Automatic allocation via PUP::able	49
3.15.4	Common PUP::ers	50
3.15.5	PUP::seekBlock	50
3.15.6	Writing a PUP::er	51
3.16	Terminal I/O	51
3.17	initcall routines	52
3.18	Other Calls	52
3.19	Delegation	53
3.19.1	Client Interface	53
3.19.2	Manager Interface	54
3.20	Communication Optimizations Framework	55
4	Inheritance and Templates in Charm++	57
4.1	Chare Inheritance	57
4.2	Inheritance for Messages	58
4.3	Generic Programming Using Templates	58
A	Structured Dagger	59
A.1	Grammar	62
A.1.1	Tokens	62
A.1.2	Grammar in EBNF Form	62
B	Further Information	63
B.1	Related Publications	63
B.2	Associated Tools and Libraries	63
B.2.1	PROJECTIONS	63
B.3	Contacts	63

1 Introduction

This manual describes CHARM++, an object oriented portable parallel programming language based on C++. Its program structure, execution model, interface language constructs and runtime system calls are described here¹.

CHARM++ has continuously evolved since the OOPSLA 1993 paper. The earlier versions modified the C++ syntax to support CHARM++ primitives, and contained a full-fledged CHARM++ translator that parsed the CHARM++ syntactic extensions as well as the C++ syntax to produce a C++ program, which was later compiled using a C++ compiler. The current version does not augment the C++ syntax, and does not use a CHARM++ translator as in previous versions. Instead, the older constructs are converted to calls into the runtime library, several new constructs are added, and minimal language constructs are used to describe the interfaces.

CHARM++ is an explicitly parallel language based on C++ with a runtime library for supporting parallel computation called the Charm kernel. It provides a clear separation between sequential and parallel objects. The execution model of CHARM++ is message driven, thus helping one write programs that are latency-tolerant. CHARM++ supports dynamic load balancing while creating new work as well as periodically, based on object migration. Several dynamic load balancing strategies are provided. CHARM++ supports both irregular as well as regular, data-parallel applications. It is based on the CONVERSE interoperable runtime system for parallel programming.

Currently the parallel platforms supported by CHARM++ are the IBM SP, SGI Origin2000, Cray T3E, Intel Paragon, a single workstation or a network of workstations from Sun Microsystems (Solaris), IBM RS-6000 (AIX) SGI (IRIX 5.3 or 6.4), HP (HP-UX), and Intel x86 (Linux, Windows NT). CHARM++ programs can run without changing the source on all these platforms. Please see the CHARM++/CONVERSE Installation and Usage Manual for details about installing, compiling and running CHARM++ programs.

1.1 Overview

CHARM++ is an object oriented parallel language. What sets CHARM++ apart from traditional programming models such as message passing and shared variable programming is that the execution model of CHARM++ is message-driven. Therefore, computations in CHARM++ are triggered based on arrival of associated messages. These computations in turn can fire off more messages to other (possibly remote) processors that trigger more computations on those processors.

At the heart of any CHARM++ program is a scheduler that repetitively chooses a message from the available pool of messages, and executes the computations associated with that message.

The programmer-visible entities in a CHARM++ program are:

- Concurrent Objects : called *chares*²
- Communication Objects : Messages
- Readonly data

CHARM++ starts a program by creating a single instance of each *mainchare* on processor 0, and invokes constructor methods of these chares. Typically, these chares then creates a number of other chares, possibly on other processors, which can simultaneously work to solve the problem at hand.

Each chare contains a number of *entry methods*, which are methods that can be invoked from remote processors. The CHARM++ runtime system needs to be explicitly told about these methods, via an *interface* in a separate file. The syntax of this interface specification file is described in the later sections.

CHARM++ provides system calls to asynchronously create remote chares and to asynchronously invoke entry methods on remote chares by sending messages to those chares. This asynchronous message passing

¹For a description of the underlying design philosophy please refer to the following papers :
L. V. Kale and Sanjeev Krishnan, "CHARM++: *Parallel Programming with Message-Driven Objects*", in "Parallel Programming Using C++", MIT Press, 1995.

L. V. Kale and Sanjeev Krishnan, "CHARM++: *A Portable Concurrent Object Oriented System Based On C++*", Proceedings of the Conference on Object Oriented Programming, Systems, Languages and Applications (OOPSLA), September 1993.

²Chare (pronounced **chär**, ä as in cart) is Old English for chore.

is the basic interprocess communication mechanism in CHARM++. However, CHARM++ also permits wide variations on this mechanism to make it easy for the programmer to write programs that adapt to the dynamic runtime environment. These possible variations include prioritization (associating priorities with method invocations), conditional message packing and unpacking (for reducing messaging overhead), quiescence detection (for detecting completion of some phase of the program), and dynamic load balancing (during remote object creation). In addition, several libraries are built on top of CHARM++ that can simplify otherwise arduous parallel programming tasks.

The following sections provide detailed information about various features of CHARM++ programming system.

1.2 History

The CHARM software was developed as a group effort of the Parallel Programming Laboratory at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Researchers at the Parallel Programming Laboratory keep CHARM++ updated for the new machines, new programming paradigms, and for supporting and simplifying development of emerging applications for parallel processing. The earliest prototype, Chare Kernel(1.0), was developed in the late eighties. It consisted only of basic remote method invocation constructs available as a library. The second prototype, Chare Kernel(2.0), a complete re-write with major design changes. This included C language extensions to denote Chares, messages and asynchronous remote method invocation. CHARM(3.0) improved on this syntax, and contained important features such as information sharing abstractions, and chare groups (called Branch Office Chares). CHARM(4.0) included CHARM++ and was released in fall 1993. CHARM++ in its initial version consisted of syntactic changes to C++ and employed a special translator that parsed the entire C++ code while translating the syntactic extensions. CHARM(4.5) had a major change that resulted from a significant shift in the research agenda of the Parallel Programming Laboratory. The message-driven runtime system code of the CHARM++ was separated from the actual language implementation, resulting in an interoperable parallel runtime system called CONVERSE. The CHARM++ runtime system was retargetted on top of CONVERSE, and popular programming paradigms such as MPI and PVM were also implemented on CONVERSE. This allowed interoperability between these paradigms and CHARM++. This release also eliminated the full-fledged CHARM++ translator by replacing syntactic extensions to C++ with C++ macros, and instead contained a small language and a translator for describing the interfaces of CHARM++ entities to the runtime system. This version of CHARM++, which, in earlier releases was known as *Interface Translator* CHARM++, is the default version of CHARM++ now, and hence referred simply as **Charm++**. In early 1999, the runtime system of CHARM++ was formally named the Charm Kernel, and was rewritten in C++. Several new features were added. The interface language underwent significant changes, and the macros that replaced the syntactic extensions in original CHARM++, were replaced by natural C++ constructs. Late 1999, and early 2000 reflected several additions to CHARM++, when a load balancing framework and migratable objects were added to CHARM++.

2 Charm++ Overview

We think that CHARM++ is easy to use if you are familiar with object-based programming. (But of course that is our opinion, if your opinion differs, you are encouraged to let us know the reasons, and features that you would like to see in CHARM++.) Object-based programming is built around the concept of “encapsulation” of data. As implemented in C++, data encapsulation is achieved by grouping together data and methods (also known as functions, subroutines, or procedures) inside of an object.

A class is a blueprint for an object. The encapsulated data is said to be “private” to the object, and only the methods of that class can manipulate that data. A method that has the same name as the class is a “blessed” method, called a “Constructor” for that class. A constructor method is typically responsible for initializing the encapsulated data of an object. Each method, including the constructor can optionally be supplied data in the form of parameters (or arguments). In C++, one can create objects with the **new** operator that returns a pointer to the object. This pointer can be used to refer to the object, and call methods on that object.

CHARM++ is built on top of C++, and also based on “encapsulation”. Similar to C++, CHARM++ entities can contain private data, and public methods. The major difference is that these methods can be invoked from remote processors asynchronously. Asynchronous method invocation means that the caller does not wait for the method to be actually executed and does not wait for the method’s return value. Therefore, CHARM++ methods (called entry methods) do not have a return value³. Since the actual CHARM++ object on which the method is being invoked may be on a remote processor⁴, the C++ way of referring to an object, via a pointer, is not valid in CHARM++. Instead, we refer to a remote chare via a “proxy”, as explained below.

2.1 Proxies and Handles

Those familiar with various component models (such as CORBA) in the distributed computing world will recognize “proxy” to be a dummy, standin entity that refers to an actual entity. For each chare type, a “proxy” class exists.⁵ The methods of this “proxy” class correspond to the remote methods of the actual class, and act as “forwarders”. That is, when one invokes a method on a proxy to a remote object, the proxy forwards this method invocation to the actual remote object. All entities that are created and manipulated remotely in CHARM++ have such proxies. Proxies for each type of entity in CHARM++ have some differences among the features they support, but the basic syntax and semantics remain the same – that of invoking methods on the remote object by invoking methods on proxies.

You can have several proxies that all refer to the same object.

Historically, handles (which are basically globally unique identifiers) were used to uniquely identify CHARM++ objects. Unlike pointers, they are valid on all processors and so could be sent as parameters in messages. They are still available, but now proxies also have the same feature.

Handles (like CkChareID, CkArrayID, etc.) and proxies (like CProxy_foo) are just bytes and can be sent in messages, pup’d, and parameter marshalled. This is now true of almost all objects in Charm++: the only exceptions being entire Chares (Array Elements, etc.) and, paradoxically, messages themselves.

2.2 Charm++ Execution Model

A CHARM++ program consists of a number of CHARM++ objects distributed across the available number of processors. Thus, the basic unit of parallel computation in CHARM++ programs is the *chare*, a CHARM++ object that can be created on any available processor and can be accessed from remote processors. A chare is similar to a process, an actor, an ADA task, etc. Chares are created dynamically, and many chares may be active simultaneously. Chares send *messages* to one another to invoke methods asynchronously. Conceptually, the system maintains a “work-pool” consisting of seeds for new chares, and messages for existing chares. The runtime system (called *Charm Kernel*) may pick multiple items, non-deterministically, from this pool and execute them.

Methods of a chare that can be remotely invoked are called *entry* methods. Entry methods may take marshalled parameters, or a pointer to a message object. Since chares can be created on remote processors, obviously some constructor of a chare needs to be an entry method. Ordinary entry methods⁶ are completely non-preemptive—CHARM++ will never interrupt an executing method to start any other work, and all calls made are asynchronous.

CHARM++ provides dynamic seed-based load balancing. Thus location (processor number) need not be specified while creating a remote chare. The Charm Kernel will then place the remote chare on a least loaded processor. Thus one can imagine chare creation as generating only a seed for the new chare, which may *take root* on the most *fertile* processor. Charm Kernel identifies a chare by a *ChareID*. Since user code does not need to name a chares’ processor, chares can potentially migrate from one processor to another. (This behavior is used by the dynamic load-balancing framework for chare containers, such as arrays.)

³Asynchronous remote method invocation is the core of CHARM++. However, to simplify programming, CHARM++ makes use of the interoperable nature of its runtime system, and combines seamlessly with user-level threads to also support synchronous method execution, albeit with a slight overhead of thread creation and scheduling.

⁴With its own, different address space

⁵The proxy class is generated by the “interface translator” based on a description of the entry methods

⁶“Threaded” or “synchronous” methods are different.

Other CHARM++ objects are collections of chares. They are: *chare-arrays*, *chare-groups*, and *chare-nogroups*, referred to as *arrays*, *groups*, and *nodegroups* throughout this manual. An array is a collection of arbitrary number of migratable chares, indexed by some index type, and mapped to processors according to a user-defined map group. A group (nodegroup) is a collection of chares, one per processor (SMP node), that is addressed using a unique system-wide name.

Every CHARM++ program must have at least one **mainchare**. Each **mainchare** is created by the system on processor 0 when the CHARM++ program starts up. Execution of a CHARM++ program begins with the Charm Kernel constructing all the designated **mainchares**. For a **mainchare** named X, execution starts at constructor X() or X(CkArgMsg *) which are equivalent. Typically, the **mainchare** constructor starts the computation by creating arrays, other chares, and groups. It can also be used to initialize shared **readonly** objects.

The only method of communication between processors in CHARM++ is asynchronous entry method invocation on remote chares. For this purpose, Charm Kernel needs to know the types of chares in the user program, the methods that can be invoked on these chares from remote processors, the arguments these methods take as input etc. Therefore, when the program starts up, these user-defined entities need to be registered with Charm Kernel, which assigns a unique identifier to each of them. While invoking a method on a remote object, these identifiers need to be specified to Charm Kernel. Registration of user-defined entities, and maintaining these identifiers can be cumbersome. Fortunately, it is done automatically by the CHARM++ interface translator. The CHARM++ interface translator generates definitions for *proxy* objects. A proxy object acts as a *handle* to a remote chare. One invokes methods on a proxy object, which in turn carries out remote method invocation on the chare.

In addition, the CHARM++ interface translator provides ways to enhance the basic functionality of Charm Kernel using user-level threads and futures. These allow entry methods to be executed in separate user-level threads. These *threaded* entry methods may block waiting for data by making *synchronous* calls to remote object methods that return results in messages.

CHARM++ program execution is terminated by the CkExit call. Like the exit system call, CkExit never returns. The Charm Kernel ensures that no more messages are processed and no entry methods are called after a CkExit. CkExit need not be called on all processors; it is enough to call it from just one processor at the end of the computation.

2.3 Entities in Charm++ programs

This section describes various entities in a typical CHARM++ program.

2.3.1 Sequential Objects

A CHARM++ program typically consists mostly of ordinary sequential C++ code and objects. Such entities are only accessible locally, are not known to the CHARM++ runtime system, and thus need not be mentioned in the module interface files.

CHARM++ does not affect the syntax or semantics of such C++ entities, except that changes to global variables (or static data members of a class) on one node will not be visible on other nodes. Global data changes must be explicitly sent between processors. For processor- and thread-private storage, refer to the “Global Variables” section of the Converse manual.

2.3.2 Messages

Messages supply data arguments to the asynchronous remote method invocation. These objects are treated differently from other objects in CHARM++ by the runtime system, and therefore they must be specified in the interface file of the module. With parameter marshalling, the system creates and handles the message completely internally. Other messages are instances of C++ classes that are subclassed from a special class that is generated by the CHARM++ interface translator. Another variation of communication objects is conditionally packed and unpacked. This variation should be used when one wants to send messages that contain pointers to the data rather than the actual data to other processors. This type of communication objects contains two static methods: **pack**, and **unpack**. The third variation of communication objects is

called *varsize* messages. Varsize messages is an effective optimization on conditionally packed messages, and can be declared with special syntax in the interface file.

2.3.3 Chares

Chares are the most important entities in a CHARM++ program. These concurrent objects are different from sequential C++ objects in many ways. Syntactically, Chares are instances of C++ classes that are derived from a system-provided class called **Chare**. Also, in addition to the usual C++ private and public data and method members, they contain some public methods called *entry methods*. These entry methods do not return anything (they are **void** methods), and take at most one argument, which is a pointer to a message. Chares are *accessed* using a proxy (an object of a specialized class generated by the CHARM++ interface translator) or using a handle (a **CkChareID** structure defined in CHARM++), rather than a pointer as in C++. Semantically, they are different from C++ objects because they can be created asynchronously from remote processors, and their entry methods also could be invoked asynchronously from the remote processors. Since the constructor method is invoked from remote processor (while creating a chare), every chare should have its constructors as entry methods (with at most one message pointer parameter). These chares and their entry methods have to be specified in the interface file.

2.3.4 Chare Arrays

Chare arrays are collections of chares. However, unlike chare groups or nodegroups, arrays are not constrained by characteristics of the underlying parallel machine such as number of processors or nodes. Thus, chare arrays can have any number of *elements*. The array elements themselves are chares, and methods can be invoked on individual array elements as usual. Each element of an array has a globally unique index, and messages are addressed to that index.

Unlike other entities in CHARM++ the dynamic load balancing framework (LB Framework) treats array elements as objects that can be migrated across processors. Thus, the runtime system keeps track of computational load across the system, and also the time spent in execution of entry methods on array elements, and then employs one of several strategies to redistribute array elements across the available processors.

2.3.5 Chare Groups

Chare Groups⁷ are a special type of concurrent objects. Each chare group is a collection of chares, with one representative (group member) on each processor. All the members of a chare group share a globally unique name (handle, defined by Charm kernel to be of type **CkGroupID**). An entire chare group could be addressed using this global handle, and an individual member of a chare group can be addressed using the global handle, and a processor number. Chare groups are instances of C++ classes subclassed from a system-provided class called **Group**. The Charm kernel has to be notified that these chares are semantically different, and therefore chare groups have a different declaration in the interface specification file.

2.3.6 Chare Nodegroups

Chare nodegroups are very similar to chare groups except that instead of having one group member on each processor, the nodegroup has one member on each shared memory multiprocessor node. Note that CHARM++ (and its underlying runtime system Converse) distinguish between processors and nodes. A node consists of one or more processors that share an address space. The last few years have seen emergence of fast SMP systems of small (2-4 processors) to large (32-64 processors) number of processors per node. A network of such SMP nodes is the most general model of parallel computers, making pure distributed and pure shared memory systems mere special cases. CHARM++ is built on top of this machine abstraction, and Chare nodegroups embody this abstraction in a higher level language construct. Semantically, methods invoked on a nodegroup member could be executed on any processor within that node. This fact can be utilized for supporting load balance across processors within a node. However, this also means that different processors within a node could be executing methods of the same nodegroup member simultaneously, thus

⁷These were called Branch Office Chares (BOC) in earlier versions of Charm.

leading to common problems associated with shared address space programming. However, CHARM++ eases such problems by allowing the programmer to specify an entry method of a nodegroup to be *exclusive*, thus guaranteeing that no other *exclusive* method of that nodegroup member can execute simultaneously within the node.

3 The Charm++ Language

3.1 Modules

3.1.1 Structure of a Charm++ Program

A CHARM++ program is structurally similar to a C++ program. Most of a CHARM++ program *is* C++ code.⁸ The main syntactic units in a CHARM++ program are class definitions. A CHARM++ program can be distributed across several source code files.

There are five disjoint categories of objects (classes) in CHARM++:

- Sequential objects: as in C++
- Chares (concurrent objects)
- Chare Groups (a form of replicated objects)
- Chare Arrays (an indexed collection of chares)
- Messages (communication objects)

The user's code is written in C++ and interfaces with the CHARM++ system as if it were a library containing base classes, functions, etc. A translator is used to generate the special code needed to handle CHARM++ constructs. This translator generates C++ code that needs to be compiled with the user's code.

Interfaces to the CHARM++ objects (such as messages, chares, readonly variables etc.) have to be declared in CHARM++ interface files. Typically, such entities are grouped into *modules*. A CHARM++ program may consists of multiple modules. One of these modules is declared to be a *mainmodule*. All the modules that are “reachable” from the *mainmodule* via the *extern* construct are included in a CHARM++ program.

The CHARM++ interface file has the suffix “.ci”. The CHARM++ interface translator parses this file and produces two files (with suffixes “.decl.h” and “.def.h”, *for each module declared in the “.ci” file*), that contain declarations (interface) and definitions (implementation) of various translator-generated entities. If the name of a module is *MOD*, then the files produced by the CHARM++ interface translator are named *MOD.decl.h* and *MOD.def.h*.⁹ We recommend that the declarations header file be included at the top of the header file (*MOD.h*) for module *MOD*, and the definitions file be included at the bottom of the code for module (*MOD.C*).¹⁰

A simple CHARM++ program is given below:

```

////////////////////////////////////
// File: pgm.ci

mainmodule Hello {
  readonly CProxy_HelloMain mainProxy;
  mainchare HelloMain {
    entry HelloMain(); // implicit CkArgMsg * as argument
    entry void PrintDone(void);
  };
};

```

⁸**Constraint:** The C++ code cannot, however, contain global or static variables.

⁹Note that the interface file for module *MOD* need not be named *MOD.ci*. Indeed one “.ci” file may contain interface declarations for multiple modules, and the translator will produce one pair of declaration and definition files for each module.

¹⁰In the earlier version of interface translator, these files used to be suffixed with “.top.h” and “.bot.h” for this reason.

```

    group HelloGroup {
        entry HelloGroup(void);
    };
};

////////////////////////////////////
// File: pgm.h
#include "Hello.decl.h" // Note: not pgm.decl.h

class HelloMain: public Chare {
public:
    HelloMain(CkArgMsg *);
    void PrintDone(void);
private:
    int count;
};

class HelloGroup: public Group {
public:
    HelloGroup(void);
};

////////////////////////////////////
// File: pgm.C
#include "pgm.h"

CProxy_HelloMain mainProxy;

HelloMain::HelloMain(CkArgMsg *msg) {
    delete msg;
    count = 0;
    mainProxy=thishandle;
    CProxy_HelloGroup::ckNew(); // Create a new "HelloGroup"
}

void HelloMain::PrintDone(void) {
    count++;
    if (count == CkNumPes()) { // Wait for all group members to finish the printf
        CkExit();
    }
}

HelloGroup::HelloGroup(void) {
    ckout << "Hello World from processor " << CkMyPe() << endl;
    mainProxy.PrintDone();
}

#include "Hello.def.h" // Include the Charm++ object implementations

////////////////////////////////////
// File: Makefile

pgm: pgm.ci pgm.h pgm.C

```

```

charmc -c pgm.ci
charmc -c pgm.C
charmc -o pgm pgm.o -language charm++

```

HelloMain is designated a *mainchare*. Thus the Charm Kernel starts execution of this program by creating an instance of *HelloMain* on processor 0. The *HelloMain* constructor creates a chare group *HelloGroup*, and stores a handle to itself and returns. The call to create the group returns immediately after directing Charm Kernel to perform the actual creation and invocation. Shortly after, the Charm Kernel will create an object of type *HelloGroup* on each processor, and call its constructor. The constructor will then print “Hello World...” and then call the *PrintDone* method of *HelloMain*. The *PrintDone* method calls *CkExit* after all group members have called it (i.e., they have finished printing “Hello World...”), and the CHARM++ program exits.

3.1.2 Functions in the “decl.h” and “def.h” files

The *decl.h* file provides declarations for the proxy classes of the concurrent objects declared in the “.ci” file (from which the *decl.h* file is generated). So the *Hello.decl.h* file will have the declaration of the class *CProxy_HelloMain*. Similarly it will also have the declaration for the *HelloGroup* class.

This class will have functions to create new instances of the chares and groups, like the function *ckNew*. For *HelloGroup* this function creates an instance of the class *HelloGroup* on all the processors.

The proxy class also has functions corresponding to the entry methods defined in the “.ci” file. In the above program the method *wait* is declared in *CProxy_HelloMain* (proxy class for *HelloMain*).

The proxy class also provides static registration functions used by the CHARM++ runtime. The *def.h* file has a registration function (*_registerHello* in the above program) which calls all the registration functions corresponding to the readonly variables and entry methods declared in the module.

3.2 Entry Methods

In CHARM++, chares, groups and nodegroups communicate using remote method invocation. These “remote entry” methods may either take marshalled parameters, described in the next section; or special objects called messages. Messages are lower level, more efficient, more flexible, and more difficult to use than parameter marshalling.

An entry method is always a part of a chare— there are no global entry methods in CHARM++. Entry methods are declared in the the interface file as:

```
entry void Entry1(parameters);
```

Parameters is either a list of marshalled parameters, (e.g., “int i, double x”), or a message description (e.g., “MyMessage *msg”). See section 3.3 and section 3.4 for details on these types of parameters.

Entry methods typically do not return data— in C++, they have return type “void”. An entry method with the same name as its enclosing class is a constructor. Constructors in C++ have no return type. Finally, sync methods, described below, may return a message.

3.2.1 Entry Method Attributes

CHARM++ provides a handful of special attributes that entry methods may have. In order to give a particular entry method an attribute, you must specify the keyword for the desired attribute in the attribute list of that entry method’s .ci file declaration. The syntax for this is as follows:

```
entry [attribute1, ..., attributeN] void EntryMethod(parameters);
```

CHARM++ currently offers four attributes that one may give an entry method: *threaded*, *sync*, *exclusive*, *immediate*.

Threaded entry methods are simply entry methods which are run in their own nonpreemptible threads. To make an entry method threaded, one simply adds the keyword **threaded** to the attribute list of that entry method.

Sync entry methods are special in that calls to sync entry methods are blocking - they do not return control to the caller until the method is finished executing completely. Sync methods may have return values; however, they may only return messages. To make an entry method a sync entry method, add the keyword **sync** to the attribute list of that entry method.

Exclusive entry methods, which exist only on node groups, are entry methods that do not execute while other exclusive entry methods of its node group are executing in the same node. If one exclusive method of a node group is executing on node 0, and another one is scheduled to run on that same node, the second exclusive method will wait for the first to finish before it executes. To make an entry method exclusive, add the keyword **exclusive** to that entry method's attribute list.

Immediate entry methods are entry functions in which short messages can be executed in an "immediate" fashion when they are received either by an interrupt(Network version) or by a communication thread(SMP version). Such messages can be useful for implementing multicasts/reductions as well as data lookup, in which case processing of critical messages won't be delayed (in the scheduler queue) by entry functions that could take long time to finish. Using immediate messages currently is tricky. Immediate entry methods should be reentrant, and it cannot depend on any processor private data. Immediate array messages cannot be sent to a nonexistent array element. Also, it is user's responsibility to use lock to protect critical data. Function `CmiProbeImmediateMsg()` can be called in users code to probe and process immediate messages periodically.

3.3 Parameter Marshalling

In CHARM++, chares, groups and nodegroups communicate by invoking each others methods. The methods may either take several parameters, described here; or take a special message object as described in the next section. Since parameters get marshalled into a message before being sent across the network, in this manual we use "message" to mean either a literal message object or a set of marshalled parameters.

For example, a chare could have this entry method declaration in the interface (.ci) file:

```
entry void foo(int i,int k);
```

Then invoking `foo(2,3)` on the chare proxy will eventually invoke `foo(2,3)` on the remote chare.

Since CHARM++ runs on distributed memory machines, we cannot pass an array via a pointer in the usual C++ way. Instead, we must specify the length of the array in the interface file, as:

```
entry void bar(int n,double arr[n]);
```

Since C++ does not recognize this syntax, the array data must be passed to the chare proxy as a simple pointer. The array data will be copied and sent to the destination processor, where the chare will receive the copy via a simple pointer again. The remote copy of the data will be kept until the remote method returns, when it will be freed. This means any modifications made locally after the call will not be seen by the remote chare; and the remote chare's modifications will be lost after the remote method returns-CHARM++ always uses call-by-value, even for arrays and structures.

This also means the data must be copied on the sending side, and to be kept must be copied again at the receive side. Especially for large arrays, this is less efficient than messages, as described in the next section.

Array parameters and other parameters can be combined in arbitrary ways, as:

```
entry void doLine(float data[n],int n);
entry void doPlane(float data[n*n],int n);
entry void doSpace(int n,int m,int o,float data[n*m*o]);
entry void doGeneral(int nd,int dims[nd],float data[product(dims,nd)]);
```

The array length expression between the square brackets can be any valid C++ expression, and may depend in any way on any of the passed parameters, global variables, or global data. The array length expression is evaluated exactly once per invocation, on the sending side only. Thus executing the `doGeneral` method above will invoke the (user-defined) `product` function exactly once on the sending processor.



3.3.1 Marshalling User-Defined Structures and Classes

For a “simple” struct or class without dynamic allocation, virtual methods, or subclasses, the marshalling system will copy the type across machines as flat bytes. Thus these sorts of structures will work properly as parameters or in arrays with no further effort:

```
//Declarations:
class point3d {
public:
    double x,y,z;
};

typedef struct {
    int refCount;
    char data[17];
} refChars;

class date {
public:
    char month,day;
    int year;
    //...non-virtual manipulation routines...
};

//In the .ci file:
    entry void pointRefOnDate(point3d &p,refChars r[d.year],date &d);
```

Any user-defined types in the argument list must be declared before including the “.decl.h” file. As usual in C++, it is often dramatically more efficient to pass a large structure by reference (as shown) than by value.

Complicated structures, such as those with dynamically allocated data or virtual methods can only be passed as parameters, but never in arrays. They also must include a pup routine and C++ operator— (see the PUP chapter for details). PUP::able structures may be passed via a pointer, but will be copied and then dynamically allocated on the receive side. For historical reasons, pointer-accessible structures cannot appear alone in the parameter list (because they are confused with messages).

Large, complicated structures are most efficiently passed via messages; not marshalling.

3.4 Messages

A message encapsulates all the parameters sent to an entry method. Since the parameters are already encapsulated, sending messages is often more efficient than parameter marshalling. In addition, messages are easier to queue and store on the receive side.

The largest difference between parameter marshalling and messages is that entry methods *keep* the messages passed to them. Thus each entry method must be passed a *new* message. On the receiving side, the entry method must either store the passed message or explicitly *delete* it, or else the message will never be destroyed, wasting memory.

Several kinds of message are available. Regular CHARM++ messages are objects of *fixed size*. One can have messages that contain pointers or variable length arrays (arrays with sizes specified at runtime) and still have these pointers to be valid when messages are sent across processors, with some additional coding. Also available is a mechanism for assigning *priorities* to messages that applies all kinds of messages. A detailed discussion of priorities appears later in this section.

Like all other entities involved in asynchronous method invocation, messages need to be declared in the .ci file. In the .ci file (the interface file), a message is declared as:

```
message MessageType;
```

A message that contains variable length arrays is declared as:

```
message MessageType {
    type1 var_name1[];
    type2 var_name2[];
    type3 var_name3[];
};
```

If the name of the message class is *MessageType*, the class must inherit publicly from a class whose name is *CMessage_MessageType*. This class is generated by the charm translator. Then message definition has the form:

```
class MessageType : public CMessage_MessageType {
    // List of data and function members as in C++
};
```

3.4.1 Message Creation and Deletion

Messages are allocated using the C++ `new` operator:

```
MessageType *msgptr =
    new [(int sz1, int sz2, ... , int priobits=0)] MessageType[(constructor arguments)];
```

The optional arguments to the `new` operator are used when allocating messages with variable length arrays or prioritized messages. *sz1*, *sz2*, ... denote the size (in appropriate units) of the memory blocks that need to be allocated and assigned to the pointers that the message contains. The *priobits* argument denotes the size of a bitfield (number of bits) that will be used to store the message priority.

For example, to allocate a message whose class declaration is:

```
class Message : public CMessage_Message {
    // .. fixed size message
    // .. data and method members
};
```

do the following:

```
Message *msg = new Message;
```

To allocate a message whose class declaration is:

```
class VarsizeMessage : public CMessage_VarsizeMessage {
public:
    int *firstArray;
    double *secondArray;
};
```

do the following:

```
VarsizeMessage *msg = new (10, 20) VarsizeMessage;
```

This allocates a *VarsizeMessage*, in which *firstArray* points to an array of 10 ints and *secondArray* points to an array of 20 doubles. This is explained in detail in later sections.

To add a priority bitfield to this message,

```
VarsizeMessage *msg = new (10, 20, sizeof(int)*8) VarsizeMessage;
```

Note, you must provide number of bits which is used to store the priority as the *priobits* parameter. The section on prioritized execution describes how this bitfield is used.

In Section 3.4.3 we explain how messages can contain arbitrary pointers, and how the validity of such pointers can be maintained across processors in a distributed memory machine.

When a message is sent to a chare, the programmer relinquishes control of it; the space allocated to the message is freed by the system. When a message is received at an entry point it is not freed by the runtime system. It may be reused or deleted by the programmer. Messages can be deleted using the standard C++ delete operator.

There are no limitations of the methods of message classes except that the message class may not redefine operators `new` or `delete`.

3.4.2 Messages with Variable Length Arrays

An ordinary message in CHARM++ is a fixed size message that is allocated internally with an envelope which encodes the size of the message. Very often, the size of the data contained in a message is not known until runtime. One can use packed messages to alleviate this problem. However, it requires multiple memory allocations (one for the message, and another for the buffer.) This can be avoided by making use of a *varsize* message. In *varsize* messages, the space required for these variable length arrays is allocated with the message such that it is contiguous to the message.

Such a message is declared as

```
message mtype {
    type1 var_name1[];
    type2 var_name2[];
    type3 var_name3[];
};
```

in CHARM++ interface file. The class *mtype* has to inherit from *CMessage_mtype*. In addition, it has to contain variables of corresponding names pointing to appropriate types. If any of these variables (data members) are private or protected, it should declare class *CMessage_mtype* to be a “friend” class. Thus the *mtype* class declaration should be similar to:

```
class mtype : public CMessage_mtype {
private:
    type1 *var_name1;
    type2 *var_name2;
    type3 *var_name3;
    friend class CMessage_mtype;
};
```

An Example

Suppose a CHARM++ message contains two variable length arrays of types `int` and `double`:

```
class VarsizeMessage: public CMessage_VarsizeMessage {
public:
    int lengthFirst;
    int lengthSecond;
    int* firstArray;
    double* secondArray;
    // other functions here
};
```

Then in the `.ci` file, this has to be declared as:

```
message VarsizeMessage {
    int firstArray[];
    double secondArray[];
};
```


We specify the types and actual names of the fields that contain variable length arrays. The dimensions of these arrays are NOT specified in the interface file, since they will be specified in the constructor of the message when message is created. In the .h or .C file, this class is declared as:

```
class VarsizeMessage : public CMessage_VarsizeMessage {
public:
    int lengthFirst;
    int lengthSecond;
    int* firstArray;
    double* secondArray;
    // other functions here
};
```

The interface translator generates the *CMessage_VarsizeMessage* class, which contains code to properly allocate, pack and unpack the *VarsizeMessage*.

One can allocate messages of the *VarsizeMessage* class as follows:

```
// firstArray will have 4 elements
// secondArray will have 5 elements
VarsizeMessage* p = new(4, 5, 0) VarsizeMessage;
p->firstArray[2] = 13;    // the arrays have already been allocated
p->secondArray[4] = 6.7;
```

Another way of allocating a varsize message is to pass a *sizes* in an array instead of the parameter list. For example,

```
int sizes[2];
sizes[0] = 4;           // firstArray will have 4 elements
sizes[1] = 5;           // secondArray will have 5 elements
VarsizeMessage* p = new(sizes, 0) VarsizeMessage;
p->firstArray[2] = 13;    // the arrays have already been allocated
p->secondArray[4] = 6.7;
```

No special handling is needed for deleting varsize messages.

3.4.3 Message Packing

The CHARM++ interface translator generates implementation for three static methods for the message class *CMessage_mtype*. These methods have the prototypes:

```
static void* alloc(int msgnum, size_t size, int* array, int priobits);
static void* pack(mtype*);
static mtype* unpack(void*);
```

One may choose not to use the translator-generated methods and may override these implementations with their own *alloc*, *pack* and *unpack* static methods of the *mtype* class. The *alloc* method will be called when the message is allocated using the C++ *new* operator. The programmer never needs to explicitly call it. Note that all elements of the message are allocated when the message is created with *new*. There is no need to call *new* to allocate any of the fields of the message. This differs from a packed message where each field requires individual allocation. The *alloc* method should actually allocate the message using *CkAllocMsg*, whose signature is given below:

```
void *CkAllocMsg(int msgnum, int size, int priobits);
```

For varsize messages, these static methods *alloc*, *pack*, and *unpack* are generated by the interface translator. For example, these methods for the *VarsizeMessage* class above would be similar to:

```

// allocate memory for varmessage so charm can keep track of memory
static void* alloc(int msgnum, size_t size, int* array, int priobits)
{
    int totalsize, first_start, second_start;
    // array is passed in when the message is allocated using new (see below).
    // size is the amount of space needed for the part of the message known
    // about at compile time. Depending on their values, sometimes a segfault
    // will occur if memory addressing is not on 8-byte boundary, so altered
    // with ALIGN8
    first_start = ALIGN8(size); // 8-byte align with this macro
    second_start = ALIGN8(first_start + array[0]*sizeof(int));
    totalsize = second_start + array[1]*sizeof(double);
    VarsizeMessage* newMsg =
        (VarsizeMessage*) CkAllocMsg(msgnum, totalsize, priobits);
    // make firstArray point to end of newMsg in memory
    newMsg->firstArray = (int*) ((char*)newMsg + first_start);
    // make secondArray point to after end of firstArray in memory
    newMsg->secondArray = (double*) ((char*)newMsg + second_start);

    return (void*) newMsg;
}

// returns pointer to memory containing packed message
static void* pack(VarsizeMessage* in)
{
    // set firstArray an offset from the start of in
    in->firstArray = (int*) ((char*)in->firstArray - (char*)in);
    // set secondArray to the appropriate offset
    in->secondArray = (double*) ((char*)in->secondArray - (char*)in);
    return in;
}

// returns new message from raw memory
static VarsizeMessage* VarsizeMessage::unpack(void* inbuf)
{
    VarsizeMessage* me = (VarsizeMessage*)inbuf;
    // return first array to absolute address in memory
    me->firstArray = (int*) ((size_t)me->firstArray + (char*)me);
    // likewise for secondArray
    me->secondArray = (double*) ((size_t)me->secondArray + (char*)me);
    return me;
}

```

The pointers in a varsize message can exist in two states. At creation, they are valid C++ pointers to the start of the arrays. After packing, they become offsets from the address of the pointer variable to the start of the pointed-to data. Unpacking restores them to pointers.

3.4.4 Custom Packed Messages

In many cases, a message must store a *non-linear* data structure using pointers. Examples of these are binary trees, hash tables etc. Thus, the message itself contains only a pointer to the actual data. When the message is sent to the same processor, these pointers point to the original locations, which are within the address space of the same processor. However, when such a message is sent to other processors, these pointers will point to invalid locations.

Thus, the programmer needs a way to “serialize” these messages *only if* the message crosses the address-space boundary. CHARM++ provides a way to do this serialization by allowing the developer to override the default serialization methods generated by the CHARM++ interface translator. Note that this low-level serialization has nothing to do with parameter marshalling or the PUP framework described later.

Packed messages are declared in the .ci file the same way as ordinary messages:

```
message PMessage;
```

Like all messages, the class *PMessage* needs to inherit from *CMessage_PMessage* and should provide two *static* methods: *pack* and *unpack*. These methods are called by the CHARM++ runtime system, when the message is determined to be crossing address-space boundary. The prototypes for these methods are as follows:

```
static void *PMessage::pack(PMessage *in);
static PMessage *PMessage::unpack(void *in);
```

Typically, the following tasks are done in *pack* method:

- Determine size of the buffer needed to serialize message data.
- Allocate buffer using the *CkAllocBuffer* function. This function takes in two parameters: input message, and size of the buffer needed, and returns the buffer.
- Serialize message data into buffer (alongwith any control information needed to de-serialize it on the receiving side.
- Free resources occupied by message (including message itself.)

On the receiving processor, the *unpack* method is called. Typically, the following tasks are done in the *unpack* method:

- Allocate message using *CkAllocBuffer* function. *Do not use new to allocate message here. If the message constructor has to be called, it can be done using the in-place new operator.*
- De-serialize message data from input buffer into the allocated message.
- Free the input buffer using *CkFreeMsg*.

Here is an example of a packed-message implementation:

```
// File: pgm.ci
mainmodule PackExample {
    ...
    message PackedMessage;
    ...
};

// File: pgm.h
...
class PackedMessage : public CMessage_PackedMessage
{
public:
    BinaryTree<char> btree; // A non-linear data structure
    static void* pack(PackedMessage*);
    static PackedMessage* unpack(void*);
    ...
};
```

```

...

// File: pgm.C
...
void*
PackedMessage::pack(PackedMessage* inmsg)
{
    int treesize = inmsg->btree.getFlattenedSize();
    int totalsize = treesize + sizeof(int);
    char *buf = (char*)CkAllocBuffer(inmsg, totalsize);
    // buf is now just raw memory to store the data structure
    int num_nodes = inmsg->btree.getNumNodes();
    memcpy(buf, &num_nodes, sizeof(int)); // copy numnodes into buffer
    buf = buf + sizeof(int);             // don't overwrite numnodes
    // copies into buffer, give size of buffer minus header
    inmsg->btree.Flatten((void*)buf, treesize);
    buf = buf - sizeof(int);             // don't lose numnodes
    delete inmsg;
    return (void*) buf;
}

PackedMessage*
PackedMessage::unpack(void* inbuf)
{
    // inbuf is the raw memory allocated and assigned in pack
    char* buf = (char*) inbuf;
    int num_nodes;
    memcpy(&num_nodes, buf, sizeof(int));
    buf = buf + sizeof(int);
    // allocate the message through charm kernel
    PackedMessage* pmsg =
        (PackedMessage*)CkAllocBuffer(inbuf, sizeof(PackedMessage));
    // call "inplace" constructor of PackedMessage that calls constructor
    // of PackedMessage using the memory allocated by CkAllocBuffer,
    // takes a raw buffer inbuf, the number of nodes, and constructs the btree
    pmsg = new ((void*)pmsg) PackedMessage(buf, num_nodes);
    CkFreeMsg(inbuf);
    return pmsg;
}

...
PackedMessage* pm = new PackedMessage(); // just like always
pm->btree.Insert('A');
...

```

While serializing an arbitrary data structure into a flat buffer, one must be very wary of any possible alignment problems. Thus, if possible, the buffer itself should be declared to be a flat struct. This will allow the C++ compiler to ensure proper alignment of all its member fields.

3.4.5 Prioritized Execution

By default, CHARM++ will process the messages you send in roughly FIFO order. For most programs, this behavior is fine. However, some programs need more explicit control over the order in which messages are processed. CHARM++ allows you to control queueing behavior on a per-message basis.

The simplest call available to change the order in which messages are processed is `CkSetQueueing`.

```
void CkSetQueueing(MsgType message, int queueingtype)
```

where *queueingtype* is one of the following constants:

```
CK_QUEUEING_FIFO
CK_QUEUEING_LIFO
CK_QUEUEING_IFIFO
CK_QUEUEING_ILIFO
CK_QUEUEING_BFIFO
CK_QUEUEING_BLIFO
```

The first two options, CK_QUEUEING_FIFO and CK_QUEUEING_LIFO, are used as follows:

```
MsgType *msg1 = new MsgType ;
CkSetQueueing(msg1, CK_QUEUEING_FIFO);

MsgType *msg2 = new MsgType ;
CkSetQueueing(msg2, CK_QUEUEING_LIFO);
```

When message *msg1* arrives at its destination, it will be pushed onto the end of the message queue as usual. However, when *msg2* arrives, it will be pushed onto the *front* of the message queue.

The other four options involve the use of priorities. To attach a priority field to a message, one needs to set aside space in the message's buffer while allocating the message. To achieve this, the size of the priority field in bits should be specified as a placement argument to the *new* operator, as described in Section 3.4.1. Although the size of the priority field is specified in bits, it is always padded to an integral number of *ints*. A pointer to the priority part of the message buffer can be obtained with this call:

```
unsigned int *CkPriorityPtr(MsgType msg)
```

There are two kinds of priorities which can be attached to a message: *integer priorities* and *bitvector priorities*. Integer priorities are quite straightforward. One allocates a message, setting aside enough space (in bits) in the message to hold the priority, which is an integer. One then stores the priority in the message. Finally, one informs the system that the message contains an integer priority using *CkSetQueueing*:

```
MsgType *msg = new (8*sizeof(int)) MsgType;
*CkPriorityPtr(msg) = prio;
CkSetQueueing(msg, CK_QUEUEING_IFIFO);
```

The predefined constant CK_QUEUEING_IFIFO indicates that the message contains an integer priority, and that if there are other messages of the same priority, they should be sequenced in FIFO order (relative to each other). Similarly, a CK_QUEUEING_ILIFO is available. Note that MAXINT is the lowest priority, and **NEGATIVE_MAXINT** is the highest priority.

Bitvector priorities are somewhat more complicated. Bitvector priorities are arbitrary-length bit-strings representing fixed-point numbers in the range 0 to 1. For example, the bit-string "001001" represents the number .001001_{binary}. As with the simpler kind of priority, higher numbers represent lower priorities. Unlike the simpler kind of priority, bitvectors can be of arbitrary length, therefore, the priority numbers they represent can be of arbitrary precision.

Arbitrary-precision priorities are often useful in AI search-tree applications. Suppose we have a heuristic suggesting that tree node N_1 should be searched before tree node N_2 . We therefore designate that node N_1 and its descendants will use high priorities, and that node N_2 and its descendants will use lower priorities. We have effectively split the range of possible priorities in two. If several such heuristics fire in sequence, we can easily split the priority range in two enough times that no significant bits remain, and the search begins to fail for lack of meaningful priorities to assign. The solution is to use arbitrary-precision priorities, i.e. bitvector priorities.

To assign a bitvector priority, two methods are available. The first is to obtain a pointer to the priority field using *CkPriorityPtr*, and to then manually set the bits using the bit-setting operations inherent to C. To

achieve this, one must know the format of the bitvector, which is as follows: the bitvector is represented as an array of unsigned integers. The most significant bit of the first integer contains the first bit of the bitvector. The remaining bits of the first integer contain the next 31 bits of the bitvector. Subsequent integers contain 32 bits each. If the size of the bitvector is not a multiple of 32, then the last integer contains 0 bits for padding in the least-significant bits of the integer.

The second way to assign priorities is only useful for those who are using the priority range-splitting described above. The root of the tree is assigned the null priority-string. Each child is assigned its parent's priority with some number of bits concatenated. The net effect is that the entire priority of a branch is within a small epsilon of the priority of its root.

It is possible to utilize unprioritized messages, integer priorities, and bitvector priorities in the same program. The messages will be processed in roughly the following order:

- Among messages enqueued with bitvector priorities, the messages are dequeued according to their priority. The priority “0000...” is dequeued first, and “1111...” is dequeued last.
- Unprioritized messages are treated as if they had the priority “1000...” (which is the “middle” priority, it lies exactly halfway between “0000...” and “1111...”).
- Integer priorities are converted to bitvector priorities. They are normalized so that the integer priority of zero is converted to “1000...” (the “middle” priority). To be more specific, the conversion is performed by adding 0x80000000 to the integer, and then treating the resulting 32-bit quantity as a 32-bit bitvector priority.
- Among messages with the same priority, messages are dequeued in FIFO order or LIFO order, depending upon which queuing strategy was used.

A final warning about prioritized execution: CHARM++ always processes messages in *roughly* the order you specify; it never guarantees to deliver the messages in *precisely* the order you specify. However, it makes a serious attempt to be “close”, so priorities can strongly affect the efficiency of your program.

3.5 Chare Objects

Chares are concurrent objects with methods that can be invoked remotely. These methods are known as entry methods, and must be specified in the interface (.ci) file:

```
chare ChareType
{
    entry    ChareType          (parameters1);
    entry    void EntryMethodName2 (parameters2);
};
```

A corresponding chare definition in the .h file would have the form:

```
class ChareType : public Chare [: superclass names] {
    // Data and member functions as in C++
    // One or more entry methods definitions of the form:
public:
    ChareType(parameters2)
    { // C++ code block }
    void EntryMethodName2(parameters2)
    { // C++ code block }
};
```

Chares are concurrent objects encapsulating medium-grained units of work. Chares can be dynamically created on any processor; there may be thousands of chares on a processor. The location of a chare is usually determined by the dynamic load balancing strategy; however, once a chare commences execution on

a processor, it does not migrate to other processors¹¹. Chares do not have a default “thread of control”: the entry methods in a chare execute in a message driven fashion upon the arrival of a message¹².

The entry method definition specifies a function that is executed *without interruption* when a message is received and scheduled for processing. Only one message per chare is processed at a time. Entry methods are defined exactly as normal C++ function members, except that they must have the return value `void` (except for the constructor entry method which may not have a return value, and for a *synchronous* entry method, which is invoked by a *threaded* method in a remote chare) and they must have exactly one argument which is a pointer to a message.

Each chare instance is identified by a *handle* which is essentially a global pointer, and is unique across all processors. The handle of a chare has type `CkChareID`. The variable `thishandle` holds the handle of the chare whose entry function or public function is currently executing. `thishandle` is a public instance variable of the chare object (it is inherited from the system-defined superclass for chares, `Chare`). `thishandle` can be used to set fields in a message. This mechanism allows chares to send their handles to other chares.

3.5.1 Chare Creation

First, a chare needs to be declared, both in `.ci` file and in `.h` file, as stated earlier. The following is an example of declaration for a chare of user-defined type `C`, where `M1` and `M2` are user-defined message types, and `someEntry` is an entry method.

In the `mod.ci` file we have:

```
module mod {
  chare C {
    entry C(parameters);
    entry void someEntry(parameters);
  };
}
```

and in the `mod.h` file:

```
#include "mod.decl.h"
class C : public Chare {
public:
  C(parameters);
  void someEntry(parameters);
};
```

Now one can use the class `CProxy_chareType` to create a new instance of a chare. Here `chareType` gets replaced with whatever chare type we want. For the above example, proxies would be of type `CProxy_C`. A number of chare creation calls exist as static or instance methods of class `CProxy_chareType`:

```
CProxy_chareType::ckNew(parameters, CkChareID *vHdl, int destPE);
```

Each item above is optional, and:

- `chareType` is the name of the type of chare to be created.
- `parameters` must correspond to the parameters for the constructor entry method. If the constructor takes void, pass nothing here.
- `vHdl` is a pointer to a chare handle of type `CkChareID`, which is filled by the `ckNew` method. This optional argument can be used if the user desires to have a *virtual* handle to the instance of the chare that will be created. This handle is useful for sending messages to the chare, even though it has not

¹¹Except when it is part of an array.

¹²Threaded methods augment this behavior since they execute in a separate user-level thread, and thus can block to wait for data.

yet been created on any processor. Messages sent to this virtual handle are either queued up to be sent to the chare after it has been created, or simply redirected if the chare has already been created. For performance reasons, therefore, virtual handles should be used only when absolutely necessary. Virtual handles are otherwise like normal handles, and may be sent to other processors in messages.

- *destPE*: when a chare is to be created at a specific processor, the *destPE* is used to specify that processor. Note that, in general, for good load balancing, the user should let CHARM++ determine the processor on which to create a chare. Under unusual circumstances, however, the user may want to choose the destination processor. If a process replicated on every processor is desired, then a chare group should be used. If no particular processor is required, the parameter can be omitted, or CK_PE_ANY.

The chare creation method deposits the *seed* for a chare in a pool of seeds and returns immediately. The chare will be created later on some processor, as determined by the dynamic load balancing strategy. When a chare is created, it is initialized by calling its constructor entry method with the message parameter specified to the chare creation method. The method operator does not return any value but fills in the virtual handle to the newly created chare if specified.

The following are some examples on how to use the chare creation method to create chares.

1. This will create a new chare of type *C* on *any* processor:

```
CProxy_C chareProxy = CProxy_C::ckNew(parameters);
```

2. This will create a new chare of type *C* on processor *destPE*:

```
CProxy_C chareProxy = CProxy_C::ckNew(parameters, destPE);
```

3. The following first creates a CkChareID *cid*, then creates a new chare of type *C* on processor *destPE*:

```
CkChareID cid;
CProxy_C::ckNew(parameters, &cid, destPE);
CProxy_C chareProxy(cid);
```

3.5.2 Method Invocation on Chares

A message may be sent to a chare using the notation:

```
chareProxy.EntryMethod(parameters)
```

This invokes the entry method *EntryMethod* on the chare referred to by the proxy *chareProxy*. This call is asynchronous and non-blocking; it returns immediately after sending the message.

3.5.3 Local Access

You can get direct access to a local chare using the proxy's *ckLocal* method, which returns an ordinary C++ pointer to the chare if it exists on the local processor; and NULL if the chare does not exist or is on another processor.

```
C *c=chareProxy.ckLocal();
if (c==NULL) //...is remote-- send message
else //...is local-- directly use members and methods of c
```

β

3.6 Read-only Variables, Messages and Arrays

Since CHARM++ does not allow global variables for keeping programs portable across a wide range of machines, it provides a special mechanism for sharing data amongst all objects. *Read-only* variables, messages and arrays are used to share information that is obtained only after the program begins execution and does not change after they are initialized in the dynamic scope of `main::main()` function. They can be accessed from any chare on any processor as “global” variables. Large data structures containing pointers can be made available as read-only variables using read-only messages or read-only arrays. Read-only variables, messages and arrays can be used just like local variables for each processor, but the user has to allocate space for read-only messages using `new` to create the message in the `main` function of the `mainchare`.

Read-only variables, messages, and arrays are declared by using the type modifier `readonly`, which is similar to `const` in C++. Read-only data is specified in the `.ci` file (the interface file) as:

```
readonly Type ReadonlyVarName;
```

The variable `ReadonlyVarName` is declared to be a read-only variable of type `Type`. `Type` must be a single token and not a type expression.

```
readonly message MessageType *ReadonlyMsgName;
```

The variable `ReadonlyMsgName` is declared to be a read-only message of type `MessageType`. Pointers are not allowed to be read-only variables unless they are pointers to message types. In this case, the message will be initialized on every processor.

```
readonly Type ReadonlyArrayName [arraysize];
```

The variable `ReadonlyArrayName` is declared to be a read-only array of type `Type`. `Type` must be a single token and not a type expression.

Read-only variables, messages and arrays must be declared either as global or as public class static data, and these declarations have the usual form:

```
Type ReadonlyVarName;
MessageType *ReadonlyMsgName;
Type ReadonlyArrayName [arraysize];
```

Similar declarations preceded by `extern` would appear in the `.h` file.

Note: The current CHARM++ translator cannot prevent assignments to read-only variables. The user must make sure that no assignments occur in the program.

3.7 Basic Arrays

Arrays are arbitrarily-sized collections of chares. The entire array has a globally unique identifier of type `CkArrayID`, and each element has a unique index of type `CkArrayIndex`. A `CkArrayIndex` can be a single integer (i.e. 1D array), several integers (i.e. a multidimensional array), or an arbitrary string of bytes (e.g. a binary tree index).

Array elements can be dynamically created and destroyed on any processor, and messages for the elements will still arrive properly. Array elements can be migrated at any time, allowing arrays to be efficiently load balanced. Array elements can also receive array broadcasts and contribute to array reductions.

3.7.1 Declaring a 1D Array

You can declare a one-dimensional chare array as:

```
//In the .ci file:
array [1D] A {
    entry A(parameters1);
    entry void someEntry(parameters2);
};
```

Just as every Chare inherits from the system class `Chare`, every array element inherits from the system class `ArrayElement` (or one of its subclasses, `ArrayElement1D`, `ArrayElement2D`, or `ArrayElement3D`). Just as a Chare inherits “thishandle”, each array element inherits “thisArrayID”, the `CkArrayID` of its array, and “thisIndex”, the element’s array index.

```
class A : public ArrayElement1D {
public:
    A(parameters1);
    A(CkMigrateMessage *);

    void someEntry(parameters2);
};
```

Note A’s odd migration constructor, which is normally empty:

```
//In the .C file:
A::A(void)
{
    //...your constructor code...
}
A::A(CkMigrateMessage *m) { }
```

Read the section “Migratable Array Elements” for more information on the `CkMigrateMessage` constructor.

3.7.2 Creating a Simple Array

You always create an array using the `CProxy_Array::ckNew` routine. This returns a proxy object, which can be kept, copied, or sent in messages. To create a 1D array containing elements indexed (0, 1, ..., `num_elements-1`), use:

```
CProxy_A1 a1 = CProxy_A1::ckNew(parameters,num_elements);
```

For creating higher-dimensional arrays, or for more options when creating the array, see section 3.8.2.

3.7.3 Messages

An array proxy responds to the appropriate index call— for 1D arrays, use `[i]` or `(i)`; for 2D use `(x,y)`; for 3D use `(x,y,z)`; and for user-defined types use `[f]` or `(f)`.

To send a message to an array element, index the proxy and call the method name:

```
a1[i].doSomething(parameters);
a3(x,y,z).doAnother(parameters);
aF[CkArrayIndexFoo(...)].doAgain(parameters);
```

You may invoke methods on array elements that have not yet been created— by default, the system will buffer the message until the element is created¹³.

Messages are not guaranteed to be delivered in order. For example, if I invoke a method A, then method B; it is possible for B to be executed before A.

```
a1[i].A();
a1[i].B();
```

Messages sent to migrating elements will be delivered after the migrating element arrives. It is an error to send a message to a deleted array element.

¹³However, the element must eventually be created— i.e., within a 3-minute buffering period.

3.7.4 Broadcasts

To broadcast a message to all the current elements of an array, simply omit the index, as:

```
a1.doIt(parameters); //<- invokes doIt on each array element
```

The broadcast message will be delivered to every existing array element exactly once. Broadcasts work properly even with ongoing migrations, insertions, and deletions.

3.7.5 Reductions on Chare Arrays

A reduction applies a single operation (e.g. add, max, min, ...) to data items scattered across many processors and collects the result in one place. CHARM++ supports reductions on the elements of a Chare array.

The data to be reduced comes from each array element, which must call the `contribute` method:

```
ArrayElement::contribute(int nBytes,const void *data,CkReduction::reducerType type);
```

Reductions are described in more detail in Section 3.13.

3.7.6 Destroying Arrays

To destroy an array element—detach it from the array, call its destructor, and release its memory—invoke its `Array destroy` method, as:

```
a1[i].destroy();
```

You must ensure that no messages are sent to a deleted element. After destroying an element, you may insert a new element at its index.

3.8 Advanced Arrays

The basic array features described above (creation, messaging, broadcasts, and reductions) are needed in almost every CHARM++ program. The more advanced techniques that follow are not universally needed; but are still often useful.

3.8.1 Declaring 2D, 3D, or User-defined Index Arrays

CHARM++ contains direct support for multidimensional and even user-defined index arrays. These arrays can be declared as:

```
//In the .ci file:
message MyMsg;
array [1D] A1 { entry A1(); entry void e(parameters);}
array [2D] A2 { entry A2(); entry void e(parameters);}
array [3D] A3 { entry A3(); entry void e(parameters);}
array [Foo] AF { entry AF(); entry void e(parameters);}
```

The last declaration expects an array index of type `CkArrayIndexFoo`, which must be defined before including the `.decl.h` file (see “User-defined array index type” below).

```
//In the .h file:
class A1:public ArrayElement1D { public: A1(){} ...};
class A2:public ArrayElement2D { public: A2(){} ...};
class A3:public ArrayElement3D { public: A3(){} ...};
class AF:public ArrayElementT<Foo> { public: AF(){} ...};
```

A 1D array element can access its index via its inherited “`thisIndex`” field; a 2D via “`thisIndex.x`” and “`thisIndex.y`”, and a 3D via “`thisIndex.x`”, “`thisIndex.y`”, and “`thisIndex.z`”. A user-defined index array can access its index as “`thisIndex`”.

3.8.2 Advanced Array Creation

There are several ways to control the array creation process. You can adjust the map and bindings before creation, change the way the initial array elements are created, create elements explicitly during the computation, and create elements implicitly, “on demand”.

You can create all your elements using any one of these methods, or create different elements using different methods. An array element has the same syntax and semantics no matter how it was created.

3.8.3 Advanced Array Creation: CkCreateOptions

The array creation method `ckNew` actually takes a parameter of type `CkCreateOptions`. This object describes several optional attributes of the new array.

The most common form of `CkCreateOptions` is to set the number of initial array elements. A `CkCreateOptions` object will be constructed automatically in this special common case. Thus the following code segments all do exactly the same thing:

```
//Implicit CkCreateOptions
a1=CProxy_A1::ckNew(parameters,nElements);

//Explicit CkCreateOptions
a1=CProxy_A1::ckNew(parameters,CkCreateOptions(nElements));

//Separate CkCreateOptions
CkCreateOptions opts(nElements);
a1=CProxy_A1::ckNew(parameters,opts);
```

Note that the “numElements” in an array element is simply the numElements passed in when the array was created. The true number of array elements may grow or shrink during the course of the computation, so numElements can become out of date.

3.8.4 Advanced Array Creation: Map Object

You can use `CkCreateOptions` to specify a “map object” for an array. The map object is used by the array manager to determine the “home” processor of each element. The home processor is the processor responsible for maintaining the location of the the element.

There is a default map object, which maps 1D array indices in a round-robin fashion to processors, and maps other array indices based on a hash function.

A custom map object is implemented as a group which inherits from `CkArrayMap` and defines these virtual methods:

```
class CkArrayMap : public Group
{
public:
    //...

    //Return an ‘arrayHdl’, given some information about the array
    virtual int registerArray(int numInitialElements,CkArrayID aid);
    //Return the home processor number for this element of this array
    virtual int procNum(int arrayHdl,const CkArrayIndex &element);
}
```

Once you’ve instantiated a custom map object, you can use it to control the location of a new array’s elements using the `setMap` method of the `CkCreateOptions` object described above. For example, if you’ve declared a map object named “blockMap”:

```
//Create the map group
CProxy_blockMap myMap=CProxy_blockMap::ckNew();
//Make a new array using that map
CkCreateOptions opts(nElements);
opts.setMap(myMap);
a1=CProxy_A1::ckNew(parameters,opts);
```

3.8.5 Advanced Array Creation: Initial Elements

The map object described above can also be used to create the initial set of array elements in a distributed fashion. An array's initial elements are created by its map object, by making a call to `populateInitial` on each processor.

You can create your own set of elements by creating your own map object and overriding this virtual function of `CkArrayMap`:

```
virtual void populateInitial(int arrayHdl,int numInitial,
void *msg,CkArrMgr *mgr)
```

In this call, `arrayHdl` is the value returned by `registerArray`, `numInitial` is the number of elements passed to `CkCreateOptions`, `msg` is the constructor message to pass, and `mgr` is the array to create.

`populateInitial` creates new array elements using the method `void CkArrMgr::insertInitial(CkArrayIndex idx,void *ctorMsg)`. For example, to create one row of 2D array elements on each processor, you would write:

```
void xyElementMap::populateInitial(int arrayHdl,int numInitial,
void *msg,CkArrMgr *mgr)
{
    if (numInitial==0) return; //No initial elements requested

    //Create each local element
    int y=CkMyPe();
    for (int x=0;x<numInitial;x++) {
        mgr->insertInitial(CkArrayIndex2D(x,y),CkCopyMsg(&msg));
    }
    mgr->doneInserting();
    CkFreeMsg(msg);
}
```

Thus calling `ckNew(10)` on a 3-processor machine would result in 30 elements being created.

3.8.6 Advanced Array Creation: Bound Arrays

You can “bind” a new array to an existing array using the `bindTo` method of `CkCreateOptions`. Bound arrays act like separate arrays in all ways except for migration—corresponding elements of bound arrays always migrate together. For example, this code creates two arrays A and B which are bound together—`A[i]` and `B[i]` will always be on the same processor.

```
//Create the first array normally
aProxy=CProxy_A::ckNew(parameters,nElements);
//Create the second array bound to the first
CkCreateOptions opts(nElements);
opts.bindTo(aProxy);
bProxy=CProxy_B::ckNew(parameters,opts);
```



Bound arrays are often useful if $A[i]$ and $B[i]$ perform different aspects of the same computation, and thus will run most efficiently if they lie on the same processor. Bound array elements are guaranteed to always be able to interact using `ckLocal` (see section 3.8.12), although the local pointer must be refreshed after any migration.

An arbitrary number of arrays can be bound together— in the example above, we could create yet another array C and bind it to A or B . The result would be the same in either case— $A[i]$, $B[i]$, and $C[i]$ will always be on the same processor.

There is no relationship between the types of bound arrays— it is permissible to bind arrays of different types or of the same type. It is also permissible to have different numbers of elements in the arrays, although elements of A which have no corresponding element in B obey no special semantics. Any method may be used to create the elements of any bound array.

3.8.7 Advanced Array Creation: Dynamic Insertion

In addition to creating initial array elements using `ckNew`, you can also create array elements during the computation.

You insert elements into the array by indexing the proxy and calling `insert`. The `insert` call optionally takes parameters, which are passed to the constructor; and a processor number, where the element will be created. Array elements can be inserted in any order from any processor at any time. Array elements need not be contiguous.

If using `insert` to create all the elements of the array, you must call `CProxy_Array::doneInserting` before using the array.

```
//In the .C file:
int x,y,z;
CProxy_A1 a1=CProxy_A1::ckNew(); //Creates a new, empty 1D array
for (x=...) {
    a1[x ].insert(parameters); //Bracket syntax
    a1(x+1).insert(parameters); // or equivalent parenthesis syntax
}
a1.doneInserting();

CProxy_A2 a2=CProxy_A2::ckNew(); //Creates 2D array
for (x=...) for (y=...)
    a2(x,y).insert(parameters); //Can't use brackets!
a2.doneInserting();

CProxy_A3 a3=CProxy_A3::ckNew(); //Creates 3D array
for (x=...) for (y=...) for (z=...)
    a3(x,y,z).insert(parameters);
a3.doneInserting();

CProxy_AF aF=CProxy_AF::ckNew(); //Creates user-defined index array
for (...) {
    aF[CkArrayIndexFoo(...)].insert(parameters); //Use brackets...
    aF(CkArrayIndexFoo(...)).insert(parameters); // ...or parenthesis
}
aF.doneInserting();
```

The `doneInserting` call starts the the reduction manager (see “Array Reductions”) and load balancer (see 3.11)— since these objects need to know about all the array’s elements, they must be started after the initial elements are inserted. You may call `doneInserting` multiple times, but only the first call actually does anything. You may even insert or destroy elements after a call to `doneInserting`, with different semantics— see the reduction manager and load balancer sections for details.

If you do not specify one, the system will choose a processor to create an array element on based on the current map object.

3.8.8 Advanced Array Creation: Demand Creation

Normally, invoking an entry method on a nonexistent array element is an error. But if you add the attribute [createhere] or [createhome] to an entry method, the array manager will “demand create” a new element to handle the message.

With [createhome], the new element will be created on the home processor, which is most efficient when messages for the element may arrive from anywhere in the machine. With [createhere], the new element is created on the sending processor, which is most efficient if when messages will often be sent from that same processor.

The new element is created by calling its default (taking no parameters) constructor, which must exist and be listed in the .ci file. A single array can have a mix of demand-creation and classic entry methods; and demand-created and normally created elements.

3.8.9 User-defined array index type

CHARM++ array indices are arbitrary collections of integers. To define a new array index, you create an ordinary C++ class which inherits from `CkArrayIndex` and sets the “nInts” member to the length, in integers, of the array index.

For example, if you have a structure or class named “Foo”, you can use a *Foo* object as an array index by defining the class:

```
#include <charm++.h>
class CkArrayIndexFoo:public CkArrayIndex {
    Foo f;
public:
    CkArrayIndexFoo(const Foo &in)
    {
        f=in;
        nInts=sizeof(f)/sizeof(int);
    }
    //Not required, but convenient: cast-to-foo operators
    operator Foo &() {return f;}
    operator const Foo &() const {return f;}
};
```

Note that *Foo*’s size must be an integral number of integers— you must pad it with zero bytes if this is not the case. Also, *Foo* must be a simple class— it cannot contain pointers, have virtual functions, or require a destructor. Finally, there is a CHARM++ configuration-time option called `CK_ARRAYINDEX_MAXLEN` which is the largest allowable number of integers in an array index. The default is 3; but you may override this to any value by passing “-DCK_ARRAYINDEX_MAXLEN=n” to the CHARM++ build script as well as all user code. Larger values will increase the size of each message.

You can then declare an array indexed by *Foo* objects with

```
//in the .ci file:
array [Foo] AF { entry AF(); ... }
```

```
//in the .h file:
class AF:public ArrayElementT<Foo>
{ public: AF() {} ... }
```

```
//in the .C file:
    Foo f;
```

```

CProxy_AF a=CProxy_AF::ckNew();
a[CkArrayIndexFoo(f)].insert();
...

```

Note that since our `CkArrayIndexFoo` constructor is not declared with the `explicit` keyword, we can equivalently write the last line as:

```
a[f].insert();
```

When you implement your array element class, as shown above you can inherit from `ArrayElementT`, a class templated by the index type *Foo*. The array index (an object of type *Foo*) is then accessible as “`thisIndex`”. For example:

```

//in the .C file:
AF::AF()
{
    Foo myF=thisIndex;
    functionTakingFoo(myF);
}

```

3.8.10 Migratable Array Elements

Array objects can migrate from one PE to another. For example, the load balancer (see section 3.11) might migrate array elements to better balance the load between processors. For an array element to migrate, it must implement a `pack/unpack` or “`pup`” method:

```

//In the .h file:
class A2:public ArrayElement2D {
private: //My data members:
    int nt;
    unsigned char chr;
    float flt[7];
    int numDbl;
    double *dbl;
public:
    //...other declarations

    virtual void pup(PUP::er &p);
};

//In the .C file:
void A2::pup(PUP::er &p)
{
    ArrayElement2D::pup(p); //<- MUST call superclass's pup routine
    p(nt);
    p(chr);
    p(flt,7);
    p(numDbl);
    if (p.isUnpacking()) dbl=new double[numDbl];
    p(dbl,numDbl);
}

```

Please note that if your object contains Structured Dagger code (see section “Structured Dagger”) you must use the following syntax to correctly pup the object:


```

class bar: public ArrayElement3D {
private:
    int a,b;
public:
    bar_SDAG_CODE
    ...other methods...

    virtual void pup(PUP::er& p) {
        __sdag_pup(p);
        ...pup other data here...
    }
};

```

See the section “PUP” for more details on pup routines and the PUP::er type.

The system uses one pup routine to do both packing and unpacking by passing different types of PUP::ers to it. You can determine what type of PUP::er has been passed to you with the `isPacking()`, `isUnpacking()`, and `isSizing()` calls.

An array element can migrate by calling the `migrateMe(destination processor)` member function— this call must be the last action in an element entry point. The system can also migrate array elements for load balancing (see the section 3.11.2).

To migrate your array element to another processor, the CHARM++ runtime will:

- Call your `ckAboutToMigrate` method
- Call your `pup` method with a sizing PUP::er to determine how big a message it needs to hold your element.
- Call your `pup` method again with a packing PUP::er to pack your element into a message.
- Call your element’s destructor (killing off the old copy).
- Send the message (containing your element) across the network.
- Call your element’s migration constructor on the new processor.
- Call your `pup` method on with an unpacking PUP::er to unpack the element.
- Call your `ckJustMigrated` method

Migration constructors, then, are normally empty— all the unpacking and allocation of the data items is done in the element’s `pup` routine. Deallocation is done in the element destructor as usual.

3.8.11 Load Balancing Chare Arrays

see section 3.11

3.8.12 Local Access

You can get direct access to a local array element using the proxy’s `ckLocal` method, which returns an ordinary C++ pointer to the element if it exists on the local processor; and NULL if the element does not exist or is on another processor.

```

A1 *a=a1[i].ckLocal();
if (a==NULL) //...is remote-- send message
else //...is local-- directly use members and methods of a

```

Note that if the element migrates or is deleted, any pointers obtained with `ckLocal` are no longer valid. It is best, then, to either avoid `ckLocal` or else call `ckLocal` each time the element may have migrated; e.g., at the start of each entry method.



3.8.13 Array Section

CHARM++ now supports array section. Array section is a subset of array elements in a char array. You can build a special proxy for a section and do multicast via the proxy. Section reduction is not directly supported in the section proxy. However, an optimized section multicast/reduction library called CkMulticast is provided as a separate library module.

For each char array "A" declared in a ci file, the definition of section proxy of type "CProxySection_A" is automatically generated. You can create an array section proxy in your application by invoking ckNew() to CProxySection:

```
CkArrayIndexMax *elems;    // add array indices
int numElems;
CProxySection_Hello proxy = CProxySection_Hello::ckNew(helloArrayID, elems, numElems);
```

Once you have the array section proxy, you can do multicast to all the section members, or send messages to one member using its index that is local to the section, like these:

```
CProxySection_Hello proxy;
proxy.someEntry(...)        // multicast
proxy[0].someEntry(...)     // send to the first element in the section.
```

You can move the section proxy in a message to another processor, and still safely invoke the entry functions in the section proxy.

In the multicast example above, for a section with k members, total number of k messages will be sent to all the members separately, which is considered inefficient when multiple section members are at same processor, in which case the messages can be combined into one. To optimize the communication and in order to support the section reduction, a separate library called CkMulticast is provided.

To use the library, you need to compile and install CkMulticast library and link your applications against the library using -module:

```
# compile and install the CkMulticast library, do this only once
cd charm/net-linux/tmp/libs/ck-libs/multicast
make

# link CkMulticast library using -module
charmcc -o hello hello.o -module CkMulticast -language charm++
```

CkMulticast library is implemented as a delegation of communication for a section proxy. Once an array section proxy is delegated, all the messages sent from the section proxy will be routed to the local delegation branch and handled by it.

To use the CkMulticast delegation, you need to create the CkMulticastMgr Group first, and setup the delegation relationship between the section proxy and CkMulticastMgr Group. You only need to create one CkMulticastMgr Group though, it can serve as multicast/reduction delegation for all array sections you create:

```
CProxySection_Hello sectProxy = CProxySection_Hello::ckNew(...);
CkGroupID mCastGrpId = CProxy_CkMulticastMgr::ckNew();
CkMulticastMgr *mcastGrp = CProxy_CkMulticastMgr(mCastGrpId).ckLocalBranch();

sectProxy.ckDelegate(mCastGrpId); //section proxy knows who is the delegation
mcastGrp->setSection(sectProxy);  //delegation knows whom to delegate

sectProxy.someEntry(...)          //multicast via delegation library as before
```

Note, to use CkMulticast library, all multicast messages must inherit from CkMcastBaseMsg, as following:

```

class HiMsg : public CkMcastBaseMsg, public CMessage_HiMsg
{
public:
    int *data;
};

```

Due to this restriction, you need to define message explicitly for multicast entry functions and no parameter marshalling can be used for multicast with CkMulticast library.

To use section reduction, the root of the reduction array element need to register a reduction callback function to the CkMulticastMgr delegation:

```

CProxySection_Hello sectProxy;
CkMulticastMgr *mcastGrp = CProxy_CkMulticastMgr(mCastGrpId).ckLocalBranch();
mcastGrp->setReductionClient(sectProxy, callback, userData);

```

When an array element in a section contributes to the reduction, it needs to retrieve the section cookie from the multicast message received, and use the cookie when talking to the delegation:

```

CkSectionCookie cookie;

void SayHi(HiMsg *msg)
{
    CkGetSectionCookie(cookie, msg);    // update section cookie every time
    int data = thisIndex;
    mcastGrp->contribute(sizeof(int), &data, CkReduction::sum_int, cookie);
}

```

Note, cookie is retrieved from the multicast message and contains information about the multicast spanning tree information and reduction counter. You need to keep this cookie for next uses(i.e. define cookie outside of the entry function instead of a local variable). Using multicast/reduction, you don't need to worry about array migrations, the CkMulticast library can automatically update multicast spanning tree for efficient communication.

3.9 Group Objects

A group¹⁴ is a collection of chares where there exists one chare (or *branch*) on each processor. Each branch has its own data members. Groups have a definition syntax similar to normal chares, except that they must inherit from the system defined class `Group`, rather than `Chare`.

In the interface file, we declare

```

group GroupType {
    // Interface specifications as for normal chares
};

```

In the `.h` file, we define `GroupType` as follows:

```

class GroupType : public Group [,other superclasses ] {
    // Data and member functions as in C++
    // Entry functions as for normal chares
};

```

A group is identified by a globally unique group identifier, whose type is `CkGroupID`. This identifier is common to all of the group's branches and can be obtained from the variable `thisgroup`, which is a public

¹⁴Originally called *Branch Office Chare* or *Branched Chare*

local variable of the `Group` superclass. For groups, `thishandle` is the handle of the particular branch in which the function is executing: it is a normal chare handle.

Groups can be used to implement data-parallel operations easily. In addition to sending messages to a particular branch of a group, one can broadcast messages to all branches of a group. There can be many instances corresponding to a group type. Each instance has a different group handle, and its own set of branches.

3.9.1 Group Creation

Given a `.ci` file as follows:

```
group G {
    entry G(parameters1);
    entry void someEntry(parameters2);
};
```

and the following `.h` file:

```
class G : public Group {
public:
    G(parameters1);
    void someEntry(parameters2);
};
```

we can create a group in a manner similar to a regular chare.

```
CProxy_G groupProxy = CProxy_G::ckNew(parameters1);
or
CkGroupID groupId = CProxy_G::ckNew(parameters1);
CProxy_G groupProxy(groupId);
```

3.9.2 Method Invocation on Groups

Before sending a message to a group via an entry method, we need to get a proxy of that group.

A message may be sent to a particular branch of group using the notation:

```
groupProxy[Processor].EntryMethod(parameters);
```

This sends the given parameters to the branch of the group referred to by `groupProxy` which is on processor number `Processor` at the entry method `EntryMethod`, which must be a valid entry method of that group type. This call is asynchronous and non-blocking; it returns immediately after sending the message.

A message may be broadcast to all branches of a group (i.e., to all processors) using the notation :

```
groupProxy.EntryMethod(parameters);
```

This sends the given parameters to all branches of the group at the entry method `EntryMethod`, which must be a valid entry method of that group type. This call is asynchronous and non-blocking; it returns immediately after sending the message.

Sequential objects, chares and other groups can gain access to the local (i.e., on their processor) group object using:

```
GroupType *g=groupProxy.ckLocalBranch();
```

This call returns a regular C++ pointer to the actual object (not a proxy) referred to by the proxy *groupProxy*. Once a proxy to the local branch of a group is obtained, that branch can be accessed as a regular C++ object. Its public methods can return values, and its public data is readily accessible.

Thus a dynamically created chore can call a public method of a group without needing to know which processor it actually resides: the method executes in the local branch of the group.

One very nice use of Groups is to reduce the number of messages sent between processors by collecting the data from all the chores on a single processor before sending that data to the main chore. To do this, create basic chores to break up the work of a problem. Also, create a group. When a particular chore finishes its work, it reports its findings to the local branch of the group. When all the chores on one processor are complete, the local branch of the group can then report to the main chore. This reduces the number of messages sent to main from the number of chores created to the number of processors.

3.10 Nodegroup Objects

Node groups are very similar to the group objects already discussed in that node groups are collections of chores as well. Node groups, however, have one chore per node rather than one chore per processor. So, each node contains a branch of the node group, each containing one set of data members. When an entry method of a node group is executed, it runs on only one processor within each node.

Node groups have a definition syntax that is very similar to groups. Rather than inheriting from the system defined class, *Group*, node groups inherit from *Nodegroup*. For example, in the interface file, we declare:

```
nodegroup NodegroupType {
    // Interface specifications as for normal chores
};
```

In the *.h* file, we define *NodeGroupType* as follows:

```
class NodeGroupType : public Nodegroup [,other superclasses ] {
    // Data and member functions as in C++
    // Entry functions as for normal chores
};
```

Like groups, nodegroups are identified by a globally unique identifier of type *CkGroupID*. Just like with groups, this identifier is common to all branches of the nodegroup and can be obtained from the variable *thisgroup*, and once again, *thishandle* is the handle of the particular branch in which the function is executing.

Node groups may possess exclusive entry methods. These are entry methods that will not run while other other exclusive entry methods of that node group are running on the same node. For instructions for making an entry method exclusive, refer to section 3.2.1.

For certain applications, node groups can be used in the place of regular groups to cut down on messaging overhead when shared memory access is possible. For example, consider a parallel program that does one calculation that can be decomposed into several mutually exclusive subcalculations. The program distributes the work amongst all of the processors, the subresults are all stored in the local branch of a group, and when the local branch has recieved all of its results, it relays everything to one particular processor where the subresults are put together into the final result. When normal groups are used, the number of messages sent is $O(\# \text{ of processors})$. However, if node groups are used, a number of message sends will be replaced by local memory accesses if there is more than one processor per node. Instead, the number of messages sent is $O(\# \text{ of nodes})$.

Just like groups, there can be many instances corresponding to a single node group type, and each instance has a different group handle, and its own set of branches.

3.10.1 Method Invocation on Nodegroups

Methods can be invoked either on a particular branch of a nodegroup by specifying a *node number* as a method parameter. In the absence of such a parameter, the call is treated as broadcast on a nodegroup,

i.e. executed by all nodes. When a method is invoked on a particular branch of a nodegroup, it may be executed by *ANY* processor in that node. Thus two invocations of a specific method on a particular branch of a nodegroup may be carried out *simultaneously* by two different processors of the node. If that method contains code that should be executed by only one processor at a time, the method should be flagged **exclusive** in the interface file. If a method *M* of a nodegroup *NG* is marked exclusive, it means that while that method is being executed by any processor within a node, no other processor within the same node may execute any other *exclusive* method of that nodegroup branch. Other processors are free to execute other *non-exclusive* methods of that nodegroup branch, however.

The local branch of a **nodegroup** can be accessed using `CkLocalNodeBranch()` function. Thus data members could be accessed/modified or methods could be invoked on a branch of a **nodegroup** using this function. Note that such accesses are *not* thread-safe by default. Concurrent invocation of a method on a nodegroup by different processors within a node may result in unpredictable runtime behavior. One way to avoid this is to use node-level locks (described in Converse manual.)

`CkLocalNodeBranch` returns a generic (`void *`) pointer, similar to `CkLocalBranch`. Also, the static method `ckLocalNodeBranch` of the proxy class of appropriate nodegroup can be called to get the correct type of pointer.

3.11 Load Balancing Framework

In CHARM++, objects(except groups) can migrate from processor to processor at run-time. Object migration can potentially improve the performance of the parallel program by migrating objects from overloaded processors to underloaded ones at run-time. However, we can see it is non-trivial to decide which objects to move and where to move them in order to achieve load balance in a fashion without the knowledge about the application.

CHARM++ implements a generic, measurement-based load balancing framework which automatically instruments all CHARM++ objects, collects computation load and communication pattern during execution and stores them into a **load balancing database**. CHARM++ then provides a collection of **load balancing strategies** whose job is to decide on a new mapping of objects to processors based on information from the database. This is made possible because we can reasonably assume that objects in CHARM++ application tend to exhibit temporal correlation in their computation and communication patterns, i.e. future can be to some extent predicted using the historical measurement data, allowing effective measurement-based load balancing without application-specific knowledge.

Here are the two terms often used in CHARM++ load balancing framework:

- **Load balancer or strategy** takes the measurement data and produces the new mapping of the objects. In CHARM++, it is implemented as Chare Group inherited from BaseLB.
- **Load balancing database** provides the interface of almost all load balancing calls. On each processor, it stores the load balancing instrument data and coordinates the load balancing manager and balancer. it is implemented as a Chare Group.

3.11.1 Available Load Balancing Strategies

Listed below are the available load balancers and their brief descriptions:

- **RefineLB**: Move objects away from the most overloaded processors to reach average;
- **RandCentLB**: Randomly assign objects to processors;
- **RandRefLB**: Randomly assign objects to processors, then refine;
- **RecBisectBfLB**: Recursively partition with Breadth first enumeration;
- **MetisLB**: Use Metis(tm) to partitioning object communication graph;
- **CommLB**: Greedy algorithm which takes communication graph into account;

- **Comm1LB**: another variation of CommLB;
- **HeapCentLB**: Similar to RefineLB, but using heap to sort by load;
- **GreedyRefLB**: Apply greedy, then refine;
- **NeighborLB**: A neighborhood load balancer

It is up to the users to choose which load balancing algorithm for the application at compile or run-time. The compiler and run-time options are described at section 3.11.4.

3.11.2 Load Balancing Chare Arrays

Load balancing framework is well integrated with Chare array implementation - chare array when created automatically registers itself to load balancing framework, instrument of compute wall/cpu time and communication is done automatically and APIs are provided for triggering the load balancing; thus load balancing with array is preferred in CHARM++, although experienced users still can do load balancing on normal chares using load balancing framework API, but this topic is currently beyond the scope of this manual.

To use the load balancer, you must make your array elements migratable (see migration section above) and choose a **load balancing strategy** (see the section 3.11.1 for a description of available load balancing strategies).

We implemented three methods to use load balancing for chare arrays trying to meet different needs of the application. These methods are different in how and when a load balancing phase starts. The three methods are: **automatic without Sync**, **automatic with Sync** and **manual mode**.

In case of the two *automatic* load balancing modes, users don't need to worry about how to start the load balancing phase. Load balancer starts itself at some certain point based on the hint given by users. The users can either tell load balancer when is the good time to start load balancing (*sync mode*) or simply say that he/she doesn't care (*without sync mode*). In *automatic without sync mode*, application asserts that load balancer can start working at any time during the execution, and guarantees that the chare arrays are always ready to migrate¹⁵. In this mode, load balancer works in parallel with the application so application doesn't need to stop waiting for load balancing to complete. However, in most cases, application does not want load balancing to occur arbitrarily because it knows when is the proper time for load balancing¹⁶. *Automatic with sync mode* is designed for this scenario. In this mode, user inserts *AtSync()* calls at certain points in application where load balancing is desired. Load balancing is triggered after all the local array elements on each processor reach the sync point¹⁷. However, *AtSync()* is not a blocking call, load balancing does not force the application to block until it finishes. When load balancing finishes, load balancer notifies every array element by calling *ResumeFromSync()*¹⁸. In many applications, it is often desirable that application waits for load balancing complete since there may be migration occurs when load balancing and application may want to respond to the migration. Thus, one of the popular strategy is that array elements stop sending message after *AtSync()* is called, and resume work after load balancer calls back *ResumeFromSync()*.

The two *automatic* load balancing modes described above hide nicely the details of invoking load balancer into the array implementation itself, which makes the use of load balancing easier. However, this is relying on the assumption that load balancing occur only after all array elements are created, i.e. *doneInserting()* must be called in case of dynamic inserting array elements. This is because array manager needs to maintain a head count of local array elements for the sync barrier in order to tell if *everybody* is ready for load balancing, but dynamic inserting of array elements makes it impossible. In this case, users have to use the *manual mode* to start load balancer themselves. The API is described below.

A few notes about *ResumeFromSync()*¹⁹. It can be used in all above three load balancing modes. To array element(whether it is migrated or not), it is more like getting a notification from load balancer about the completeness of load balancing phase. Users can choose to handle it by writing their own code for

¹⁵All the state data of the array elements have to be properly packed before migrating to other processors

¹⁶For example, in the application with multiple iterations, load balancing best happens every a few iterations

¹⁷It is implemented as a local barrier of all the array elements on one processor

¹⁸*ResumeFromSync()* is a virtual function of array element base class which can be redefined in application.

¹⁹It used to only work in automatic with sync mode.

ResumeFromSync(), or just ignore it. The proper use of both *AtSync()* and *ResumeFromSync()* gives you the effect of load balancing barrier.

The detailed APIs of these three methods are described as follows:

1. **automatic without Sync:** By default, the array elements may be asked to migrate at any time provided that they are not in the middle of executing an entry method. The array element's variable `usesAtSync` being `CmiFalse` attributes to this default behavior.
2. **automatic with Sync:** Using the *AtSync* method, elements can only be migrated at certain points in the execution. For the *AtSync* method, set `usesAtSync` to `CmiTrue` in your array element constructor. When an element is ready to migrate, call `ArrayElement::AtSync()`. After the first `doneInserting` call (which starts the load balancer) and once all local elements have reached *AtSync*, the load balancer runs and migrates elements. Once all migrations are completed, the load balancer calls the virtual function `ArrayElement::ResumeFromSync()` for each of the array element.

Note that *AtSync()* is not a blocking call, it just suggests to load balancing that it is time for load balancing. Between the calls to *AtSync* and *ResumeFromSync*, the object may be migrated. So the most commonly used approach is to stop sending messages after array elements call *AtSync()*, and start sending messages again in *ResumeFromSync*. If processing some messages would prevent your object from migrating (for example, because it would register itself with a local group object, or set up some persistent communication), then it is your responsibility to ensure such messages either aren't sent during an *AtSync*, or are buffered until the *ResumeFromSync*.

3. **manual mode:** The load balancer can be programmed to be started manually. To switch to the manual mode, you should call *TurnManualLBOn()* on every processor, so that no Load Balancer will be started automatically. *TurnManualLBOn()* should be called as early as possible in the program. It could be called at the initialization part of the program, for example from a global variable constructor, or an *initcall*. It can also be called in the constructor of a static array and definitely before the *doneInserting* call for a dynamic array. This call has to be made on all processors. It can be called multiple times on one processor, but only the last one takes effect. One way to do this is to call *TurnManualLBOn()* in a *initcall* function.

The function call *StartLB()* will start the load balancer. This call should be made at only one place on a processors as it automatically start load balancing on all processors. The load balancer works in the background and won't stop the array elements from functioning. But since migration may happen at any time before load balancing finishes, it is user's responsibility to make sure processing messages won't prevent objects from migrating. You can also choose to stop sending messages after calling *StartLB()*²⁰, and resume in *ResumeFromSync*.

TurnManualLBOff() turns off manual load balancing and switches back to the automatic Load balancing mode (using or not using *AtSync*).

3.11.3 Other utility functions

There are several utility functions that can be called in applications to configure the load balancer, etc. These functions are:

- **setMigratable(CmiBool migratable):** is a member function of array element. This function can be called in an array element constructor to tell load balancer whether this object is migratable or not²¹.
- **lbdb-¿SetLBPeriod(double s):** this function can be called anywhere²² to regulate the load balancing period. It tells load balancer not to start next load balancing in less than *s* seconds. This can be used to prevent load balancing from occurring too often in *automatic without sync mode*. Here is how to use it:

²⁰A global barrier is desired in this case

²¹Currently not all load balancers recognize this setting though.

²²except that it must be called after *LBDatabase* has been initialized in Charm++ init phase, so for example global variable constructor is not a good place to call it.


```
// if used in an array element
LBDatabase *lbdb = getLBDB();
lbdb->SetLBPeriod(5);

// if used outside of an array element
// must be called after load balancer is initialized.
LBDatabase *lbdb = LBDatabase::Object();
lbdb->SetLBPeriod(5);
```

3.11.4 Compiler and run-time options to use load balancing module

Load balancing strategies are implemented as libraries in CHARM++. This allows programmers to easily experiment with different existing strategies by simply linking a pool of strategy modules and choose one to use at run-time via command line options.

Please note that linking a load balancing module is different from activating it:

- link a LB module: is to link a Load Balancer module(library) at compile time; You can link against multiple LB libraries as candidates.
- activate a LB: is to actually ask to create a LB strategy and start it. You can only activate one LB either at compile time or at run-time and the LB module must be one of the LB module linked at compile time.

Below are the descriptions about the compiler and run-time options:

1. compile time options:

- *-module NeighborLB -module CommLB ...*
links module NeighborLB, CommLB ...
- *-module EveryLB -lmetis*
links special module EveryLB which includes all the load balancing strategy modules in CHARM++
- *-balancer CommLB*
links module CommLB and make it a default load balancer to activate at runtime.

The list of existing load balancers are in section 3.11.1. Note: you can have multiple *-module *LBs* options. LB modules are linked into a program, but they are not activated. Using *-balancer* to activate one LB as default at compile time. Having *-balancer A* implies *-module A*, so you don't have to write *-module A*, although it does not hurt. Using *EveryLB* is a convenient way to link against all existing LBs. One of the load balancer in *EveryLB* called *MetisLB* requires *METIS* library which is located at: *charm/src/libs/conv-libs/metis*. You need to compile it first by "make METIS" under *charm/tmp*.

2. run-time option:

- *+balancer CommLB*
activates a load balancer CommLB.

Note: *+balancer* option works only if you have already linked the LB module at compile time. *+balancer* with a wrong LB name will show you all the available LBs linked at compile time. When you have used *-balancer A* as compile time option, you don't need to use *+balancer A* again to activate it at runtime. However, you can use *+balancer B* to override the compile time option and choose to activate another LB - B.

3. When there is no LB activated

When you don't activate any of load balancer at compile or run time, you still can run the program. This is done by automatically creating a *NullLB* which does nothing but calling *ResumeFromSync()*. The *NullLB* takes over when there is no LB activated, and will keep silent when non *NULL* LB is doing its job.

3.11.5 Load Balancing Simulation

The simulation feature of load balancing framework allows the users to collect information about the compute wall/cpu time and communication of the chares during a particular run of the program and use this information to later test different load balancing strategies to see which one is suitable for the programs behaviours. Currently, this feature is supported only for the centralized load balancing strategies. For this, the load balancing framework accepts the following command line options:

1. *+LBDump StepNo*
This will dump the instrument/communication data collected by the load balancing framework during the load balancing step *StepNo* into a file on the disk. The name of the file is given by the *+LBDumpFile* option. After dumping the data, the program exists.
2. *+LBDumpFile FileName*
This option specified the name of the file into which to dump the load balancing data. If this option is not specified, the framework uses the default file `lbdata.dat`.
3. *+LBSim*
This option instructs the framework to do the simulation during the first load balancing step. When this option is specified, the load balancing data from the file specified in the *+LBDumpFile* option will be read and this data will be used for the load balancing. The program will then print the results of the load balancing and exit.

As an example, we can collect the data for a 1000 processor run of a program using:

```
./charmrun pgm +p 1000 +balancer RandCentLB +LBDump 0 +LBDumpFile dump.dat
```

And then, we can use this data to observe various centralized strategies using:

```
./charmrun pgm +balancer <Strategy to test> +LBSim +LBDumpFile
```

3.12 Quiescence Detection

In CHARM++, quiescence is defined as the state in which no processor is executing an entry point, and no messages are awaiting processing.

CHARM++ provides two facilities for detecting quiescence: `CkStartQD` and `CkWaitQD`.

`CkStartQD` registers with the system a callback that should be made the next time quiescence is detected. `CkStartQD` takes two parameters: an index corresponding to the entry function that is to be called, and a handle to the chare on which that entry function should be called. The syntax of this call looks like this:

```
CkStartQD(int Index,const CkChareID* chareID);
```

To retrieve the corresponding index of a particular entry method, you must use a static method contained within the `CkIndex` object corresponding to the chare containing that entry method. The syntax of this call is as follows:

```
myIdx=CkIndex_ChareName::EntryMethod(parameters);
```

where *ChareName* is the name of the chare containing the desired entry method, *EntryMethod* is the name of that entry method, and *parameters* are the parameters taken by the method. These parameters are only used to resolve the proper *EntryMethod*; they are otherwise ignored.

`CkWaitQD`, by contrast, does not register a callback. Rather, `CkWaitQD` blocks and does not return until quiescence is detected. It takes no parameters and returns no value. A call to `CkWaitQD` simply looks like this:

```
CkWaitQD();
```

Keep in mind that `CkWaitQD` should only be called from threaded entry methods because a call to `CkWaitQD` suspends the current thread of execution, and if it were called outside of a threaded entry method it would suspend the main thread of execution of the processor from which `CkWaitQD` was called and the entire program would come to a grinding halt on that processor.

3.13 Reductions

A reduction applies a single operation (e.g. add, max, min, ...) to data items scattered across many processors and collects the result in one place. CHARM++ supports reductions over the members of an array or group.

The data to be reduced comes from a call to the member `contribute` method:

```
void contribute(int nBytes,const void *data,CkReduction::reducerType type);
```

This call contributes `nBytes` bytes starting at `data` to the reduction `type` (see reduction types, below). Unlike sending a message, you may use `data` after the call to `contribute`. All members must call `contribute`, and all must use the same reduction type.

When you create a new member, it is expected to contribute to the next reduction not already in progress on that processor. The reduction will complete properly even if members are migrated or deleted during the reduction.

For example, if we want to sum each member's single integer `myInt`, we would use:

```
//Inside any member method
int myInt=get_myInt();
contribute(sizeof(int),&myInt,CkReduction::sum_int);
```

The built-in reduction types (see below) can also handle arrays of numbers. For example, if each element of an array has a pair of doubles `forces[2]` which need to be summed up (separately) across every element, from each element call:

```
double forces[2]=get_my_forces();
contribute(2*sizeof(double),forces,CkReduction::sum_double);
```

Note that since C++ arrays (like `forces[2]`) are already pointers, we don't use `&forces`.

The result of the reduction operation is passed to the *reduction client*. Many different kinds of reduction clients can be used, as explained below (Section 3.13.1).

3.13.1 Reduction Clients

After the data is reduced, it is passed to a you via a callback object, as described in section 3.14. The message passed to the callback is of type `CkReductionMsg`. The important members of `CkReductionMsg` are `getSize()`, which returns the number of bytes of reduction data; and `getData()`, which returns a "void *" to the actual reduced data.

You may pass the client callback as an additional parameter to `contribute`. If different `contribute` calls pass different callbacks, some (unspecified, unreliable) callback will be chosen for use.

```
double forces[2]=get_my_forces();
//When done, broadcast the CkReductionMsg to 'myReductionEntry'
CkCallback cb(CkIndex_myArrayType::myReductionEntry(NULL),thisProxy);
contribute(2*sizeof(double),forces,CkReduction::sum_double,cb);
```

If no member passes a callback to `contribute`, the reduction will use the default callback. You set the default callback for an array or group using the `ckSetReductionClient` proxy call on processor zero. Again, a `CkReductionMsg` message will be passed to this callback, which must delete the message when done.

```
//Somewhere on processor zero:
myProxy.ckSetReductionClient(new CkCallback(...));
```

For backward compatability, rather than a general callback you can specify a peculiar kind of C function using `ckSetReductionClient` or `setReductionClient`. This C function takes a user-defined parameter (passed to `setReductionClient`) and the actual reduction data, which it must not deallocate.

```

//Somewhere on processor zero:
myProxy.setReductionClient(myClient,(void *)NULL);

void myClient(void *param,int dataSize,void *data)
{
    double *forceSum=(double *)data;
    cout<<'First force sum is '<<forceSum[0]<<endl;
    cout<<'Second force sum is '<<forceSum[1]<<endl;
}

```

3.13.2 Built-in Reduction Types

CHARM++ includes several built-in reduction types, used to combine the separate contributions. Any of them may be passed as an `CkReduction::reducerType` type to `contribute`.

The first four reductions (sum, product, max, and min) work on int, float, or double data as indicated by the suffix. The logical reductions (and, or) only work on integer data. All the built-in reductions work on either single numbers (pass a pointer) or arrays— just pass the correct number of bytes to `contribute`.

1. `CkReduction::sum_int`, `sum_float`, `sum_double`— the result will be the sum of the given numbers.
2. `CkReduction::product_int`, `product_float`, `product_double`— the result will be the product of the given numbers.
3. `CkReduction::max_int`, `max_float`, `max_double`— the result will be the largest of the given numbers.
4. `CkReduction::min_int`, `min_float`, `min_double`— the result will be the smallest of the given numbers.
5. `CkReduction::and`— the result will be the logical AND of the given integers. 0 is false, nonzero is true.
6. `CkReduction::or`— the result will be the logical OR of the given integers.
7. `CkReduction::set`— the result will be a verbatim concatenation of all the contributed data, separated into `CkReduction::setElement` records. The data contributed can be of any length, and can vary across array elements or reductions. To extract the data from each element, see the description below.
8. `CkReduction::concat`— the result will be a byte-by-byte concatenation of all the contributed data. There is no separation added between different contributions.

`CkReduction::set` returns a collection of `CkReduction::setElement` objects, one per contribution. This class has definition:

```

class CkReduction::setElement
{
public:
    int dataSize;//The length of the data array below
    char data[];//The (dataSize-long) array of data
    CkReduction::setElement *next(void);
};

```

To extract the contribution of each array element from a reduction set, use the *next* routine repeatedly:

```

//Inside a reduction handler--
// data is our reduced data from CkReduction_set
CkReduction::setElement *cur=(CkReduction::setElement *)data;
while (cur!=NULL)
{
    ... //Use cur->dataSize and cur->data
}

```

```

    //Now advance to the next element's contribution
    cur=cur->next();
}

```

The reduction set order is undefined. Add a source field to your contribution if you need to know which array element gave a particular contribution.

3.13.3 Defining a New Reduction Type

It is possible to define a new type of reduction, performing a user-defined operation on user-defined data. A reduction function combines separate contributions (from this or other processors) into a single combined value.

The input to a reduction function is a list of `CkReductionMsgs`. A `CkReductionMsg` is a thin wrapper around a buffer of untyped data to be reduced. The output of a reduction function is a single `CkReductionMsg` containing the reduced data, which you should create using the `CkReductionMsg::buildNew(int nBytes,const void *data)` method.

Thus every reduction function has the prototype:

```
CkReductionMsg *reductionFn(int nMsg,CkReductionMsg **msgs);
```

For example, a reduction function to add up contributions consisting of two machine short integers would be:

```

CkReductionMsg *sumTwoShorts(int nMsg,CkReductionMsg **msgs)
{
    //Sum starts off at zero
    short ret[2]=0,0;
    for (int i=0;i<nMsg;i++) {
        //Sanity check:
        CkAssert(msgs[i]->getSize()==2*sizeof(short));
        //Extract this message's data
        short *m=(short *)msgs[i]->getData();
        ret[0]+=m[0];
        ret[1]+=m[1];
    }
    return CkReductionMsg::buildNew(2*sizeof(short),ret);
}

```

You must register your reduction function with CHARM++ using `CkReduction::addReducer` from an `initcall` routine (see section 3.17 for details on the `initcall` mechanism). `CkReduction::addReducer` returns a `CkReduction::reducerType` which you can later pass to `contribute`. Since `initcall` routines are executed once on every node, you can safely store the `CkReduction::reducerType` in a global or class-static variable. For the example above:

```

//In the .ci file:
    initcall void registerSumTwoShorts(void);

//In some .C file:
/*global*/ CkReduction::reducerType sumTwoShortsType;
/*initcall*/ void registerSumTwoShorts(void)
{
    sumTwoShortsType=CkReduction::addReducer(sumTwoShorts);
}

//In some member:
    short data[2]=...;
    contribute(2*sizeof(short),data,sumTwoShortsType);

```

Note that you cannot call `CkReduction::addReducer` from anywhere but in an `initcall` routine.

3.14 Callbacks

A callback is a generic way to transfer control back to a client after a library has finished. For example, after finishing a reduction, you might want the results passed to some chare's entry method. To do this, you create an object of type `CkCallback` with the chare's `CkChareID` and entry method index, then pass the callback object to the reduction library.

3.14.1 Client Interface

You can create a `CkCallback` object in a number of ways, depending on what you want to have happen when the callback is finally invoked. The callback will be invoked with a `CHARM++` message; but the message type will depend on the library that actually invokes the callback. Check the library documentation to see what kind of message the library will send to your callback. In any case, you are required to free the message passed to you via the callback.

The callbacks that go to chares require an "entry method index", an integer that identifies which entry method will be called. You can get an entry method index using the syntax:

```
myIdx=CkIndex_ChareName::EntryMethod(parameters);
```

Here, *ChareName* is the name of the chare (group, or array) containing the desired entry method, *EntryMethod* is the name of that entry method, and *parameters* are the parameters taken by the method. These parameters are only used to resolve the proper *EntryMethod*; they are otherwise ignored. An entry method index is the `CHARM++` version of a function pointer.

There are a number of ways to build callbacks, depending on what you want to have happen when the callback is invoked:

1. `CkCallback(CkCallbackFn fn,void *param)` When invoked, the callback will pass *param* and the result message to the given C function, which should have a prototype like:

```
void myCallbackFn(void *param,void *message)
```

This function will be called on the processor where the callback was created, so *param* is allowed to point to heap-allocated data. Of course, you are required to free any storage referenced by *param*.

2. `CkCallback(CkCallback::ignore)` When invoked, the callback will do nothing. This can be useful if the library requires a callback, but you don't care when it finishes, or will find out some other way.
3. `CkCallback(CkCallback::ckExit)` When invoked, the callback will call `CkExit()`, ending the `Charm++` program.
4. `CkCallback(int ep,const CkChareID &id)` When invoked, the callback will send its message to the given entry method of the given Chare. Note that a chare proxy will also work in place of a chare id:

```
CkCallback myCB(CkIndex_myChare::myEntry(NULL),myChareProxy);
```

5. `CkCallback(int ep,const CkArrayID &id)` When invoked, the callback will broadcast its message to the given entry method of the given array. As usual, an array proxy will work just as well as an array id.
6. `CkCallback(int ep,const CkArrayIndex &idx,const CkArrayID &id)` When invoked, the callback will send its message to the given entry method of the given array element.
7. `CkCallback(int ep,const CkGroupID &id)` When invoked, the callback will broadcast its message to the given entry method of the given group.

8. `CkCallback(int ep,int onPE,const CkGroupID &id)` When invoked, the callback will send its message to the given entry method of the given group member.

One final type of callback, a `CkCallback(CkCallback::resumeThread)`, can only be used from within threaded entry methods. This type of callback is typically hidden within a thread-capable library, so is discussed further in the library section.

3.14.2 Library Interface

Here, a “library” is simply any code which can be called from several different places. From the point of view of a library, a `CkCallback` is a destination for the library’s result. `CkCallback` objects can be freely copied, marshalled, or even sent in messages.

Postponing threads for a moment, the only thing you can do with a `CkCallback` is to move it around or send a message to it:

```
//Main library entry point, called by asynchronous users:
void myLibrary(...library parameters...,const CkCallback &cb)
{
    ..start some parallel computation, dragging cb along...
}

//Internal library routine, called when computation is done
void myLibraryDone(...parameters...,const CkCallback &cb)
{
    ...prepare a return message...
    cb.send(msg);
}
```

A `CkCallback` will accept any message type, or even `NULL`. The message is immediately sent to the user’s client function or entry point, so you *do* need to document the type of message you will send to the callback so the user knows what to expect.

Threaded clients are a bit more complicated– you need to suspend the calling thread using “`thread.delay`” which, after the corresponding “send”, returns the sent message to its caller. For example:

```
//Main library entry point, called by threaded users:
myLibMsg *myThreadedLibrary(...library parameters...)
{
    CkCallback cb(CkCallback::resumeThread);
    myLibrary(...,cb); //Just call normal library with new cb
    return cb.thread.delay(); //Will suspend until cb.send() is called
}
```

“`thread.delay`” just immediately returns `NULL` for non-threaded callbacks, so you can even combine the threaded and non-threaded interfaces using C++’s default parameters. For example:

```
//Main library entry point, called by threaded users:
myLibMsg *myGenericLibrary(...library parameters...,
    CkCallback cb=CkCallback(CkCallback::resumeThread))
{
    myLibrary(...,cb);
    //For threaded clients, suspends until cb.send, then returns message;
    // for non-threaded clients, just returns NULL:
    return cb.thread.delay();
}
```

3.15 PUP

The PUP framework is a generic way to describe the data in an object. The CHARM++ system can use this description to pack the object into a message, and unpack the message into a new object on another processor. The name thus is a contraction of the words Pack and UnPack (PUP).

Like many C++ concepts, the PUP framework is easier to use than describe:

```
class foo {
private:
    double a;
    int x;
    char y;
    unsigned long z;
    float q[3];
public:
    ...other methods...

    //pack/unpack routine: describe my fields to charm++
    void pup(PUP::er &p) {
        p(a);
        p(x);p(y);p(z);
        p(q,3);
    }
};
PUPmarshall(foo); //<- for passing foo's as marshalled parameters
```

This class's pup routine describes the fields of a *foo* to CHARM++. This will allow CHARM++ to: marshall parameters of type *foo*, send *foo* objects in messages, translate *foos* across processors, inspect and modify *foo* objects in the debugger, and checkpoint calculations involving *foos*.

The `PUPmarshall(foo)` statement allows *foo* objects to be marshalled properly when passed as parameters to CHARM++ entry methods.

As shown, data is described by passing it to an object of type `PUP::er`. You can apply a `PUP::er` to any primitive variable, as “`p(a)`”. For an array of primitive variables, you apply the array and an integer that gives the length of the array, as in “`p(q,3)`”. You can pass a simple run of bytes by calling the `PUP::er` with a “`void *`” and number of bytes (bytes, however, prevents cross-platform operation).

The system uses the one pup routine to do both packing and unpacking by passing different types of `PUP::ers` to it. You can determine what type of `PUP::er` has been passed to you with the `p.isPacking()`, `p.isUnpacking()`, and `p.isSizing()` methods. The `p.isDeleting()` method returns true if the pupped object will be deleted after packing.

Note that the same data must be passed to the `PUP::er` in the same order regardless of the pack direction. This is the fundamental beauty of the `PUP::er` framework.

The `PUP::er` overhead is very small— one virtual function call for each item or array to be packed/unpacked. The actual packing/unpacking is normally a simple memory-to-memory binary copy.

Please note that if your object contains Structured Dagger code (see section “Structured Dagger”) you must use the following syntax to correctly pup the object:

```
class bar {
private:
    int a,b;
public:
    bar_SDAG_CODE
    ...other methods...

    virtual void pup(PUP::er& p) {
        __sdag_pup(p);
    }
};
```



```

        ...pup other data here...
    }
};

```

3.15.1 C and Fortran bindings

C and Fortran programmers can use a limited subset of the PUP::er capability. The routines all take a handle named `pup_er`. The routines have the prototype:

```

void pup_type(pup_er p,type *val);
void pup_types(pup_er p,type *vals,int nVals);

```

The first call is for use with a single element; the second call is for use with an array. The supported types are char, short, int, long, uchar, ushort, uint, ulong, float, and double, which all have the usual C meanings.

A byte-packing routine

```

void pup_bytes(pup_er p,void *data,int nBytes);

```

is also provided, but its use is discouraged for cross-platform puping.

`pup_isSizing`, `pup_isPacking`, `pup_isUnpacking`, and `pup_isDeleting` calls are also available. Since C and Fortran have no destructors, you should actually deallocate all data when passed a deleting `pup_er`.

C and Fortran users cannot use PUP::able objects, seeking, or write custom PUP::ers. Using the C++ interface is recommended.

3.15.2 Dynamic Allocation

If your class has fields that are dynamically allocated, when unpacking these need to be allocated (in the usual way) before you pup them. Deallocation should be left to the class destructor as usual.

```

class bar {
private:
    foo *f; /*Heap-allocated foo object*/
    int n;
    double *arr;/*Dynamically allocated array of n doubles*/
public:
    ...other methods...
    //Destructor is the usual
    ~bar() {free(arr);delete f;}

    //pack/unpack: describe my fields to Charm++
    void pup(PUP::er &p) {
        if (p.isUnpacking())
            f=new foo;
        f->pup(p);//pup f's fields

        p(n);//pup the array length n
        if (p.isUnpacking())
            arr=(double *)malloc(sizeof(double)*n);
        p(arr,n);//pup array data
    }
};
PUPmarshall(bar); //<- for passing foo's as marshalled parameters

```

3.15.3 Automatic allocation via PUP::able

If the *foo ** above might have been a subclass, instead of simply using *new foo* above we would have had to allocate an object of the appropriate subclass. Since determining the proper subclass and calling the appropriate constructor can be difficult, the PUP framework provides a scheme for automatically determining and dynamically allocating subobjects of the appropriate type.

You enable this by inheriting the root of your inheritance heirarchy from PUP::able, adding empty CkMigrateMessage * constructors, and including a few #defines for each class. Each class needs a PUPable_decl(*className*) in its declaration body, a PUPable_def(*className*) exactly once at file scope, and a PUPable_reg(*className*) executed exactly once on each processor at initialization time (usually via the “initcall” mechanism, see chapter of the same name). For example,

```
//Somewhere in the .ci file:
    initcall void parentChildInit(void);

//In the .h file:
class parent : public PUP::able {
    ... data members ...
public:
    ... other methods ...
    parent() {...}
    parent(CkMigrateMessage *m) : PUP::able(m) {}
    virtual void pup(PUP::er &p) {
        PUP::able::pup(p); //Call base class
        ... pup data members as usual ...
    }
    PUPable_decl(parent);
};
class child : public parent {
    ... more data members ...
public:
    ... more methods, possibly virtual ...
    child() {...}
    child(CkMigrateMessage *m) : parent(m) {}
    virtual void pup(PUP::er &p) {
        parent::pup(p); //Call base class
        ... pup child's data members as usual ...
    }
    PUPable_decl(child);
};

//Somewhere in a .C file:
PUPable_def(parent);
PUPable_def(child);

void parentChildInit(void)
{ //Called once on each processor
    PUPable_reg(parent);
    PUPable_reg(child);
}
```

These declarations supercede the PUPmarshall declaration described earlier.

With these declarations, then, we can automatically allocate and pup a pointer to a parent or child using the vertical bar PUP::er syntax:

```
class keepsParent {
```

```

    parent *obj; //May actually point to a child class (or be NULL)
public:
    ...
    ~keepsParent() {
        delete obj;
    }
    void pup(PUP::er &p)
    {
        p|obj;
    }
};
PUPmarshall(keepsParent);

```

This will properly pack, allocate, and unpack `obj` whether it is actually a parent or child object. The child class can use all the usual C++ features, such as virtual functions and extra private data.

If `obj` is `NULL` when packed, it will be restored to `NULL` when unpacked. For example, if the nodes of a binary tree are `PUP::able`, one may write the tree's `pup` routine easily:

```

class treeNode : public PUP::able {
    treeNode *left; //Left subtree
    treeNode *right; //Right subtree
    ... other fields ...
public:
    ... usual PUP::able support: ...
    treeNode(CkMigrateMessage *m) : PUP::able(m) {}
    ~treeNode() {delete left; delete right;}
    void pup(PUP::er &p) {
        PUP::able::pup(p); //Call base class
        p|left;
        p|right;
        ... pup other fields as usual ...
    }
    PUPable_decl(treeNode);
};

```

This same implementation will work properly if the tree's internal nodes are actually subclasses of `treeNode`.

3.15.4 Common PUP::ers

The most common `PUP::ers` used are `PUP::sizer`, `PUP::toMem`, and `PUP::fromMem`. These are sizing, packing, and unpacking `PUP::ers`, respectively.

`PUP::sizer` simply sums up the sizes of the native binary representation of the objects it is passed. `PUP::toMem` copies the binary representation of the objects passed into a preallocated contiguous memory buffer. `PUP::fromMem` copies binary data from a contiguous memory buffer into the objects passed. All three support the `size` method, which returns the number of bytes used by the objects seen so far.

Other common `PUP::ers` are `PUP::toDisk`, `PUP::fromDisk`, and `PUP::xlater`. The first two are simple filesystem variants of the `PUP::toMem` and `PUP::fromMem` classes; `PUP::xlater` translates binary data from an unpacking `PUP::er` into the machine's native binary format, based on a `machineInfo` structure that describes the format used by the source machine.

3.15.5 PUP::seekBlock

It may rarely occur that you require items to be unpacked in a different order than they are packed. That is, you want a seek capability. `PUP::ers` support a limited form of seeking.

To begin a seek block, create a `PUP::seekBlock` object with your current `PUP::er` and the number of “sections” to create. Seek to a (0-based) section number with the `seek` method, and end the seeking with the `endBlock` method. For example, if we have two objects A and B, where A’s pup depends on and affects some object B, we can pup the two with:

```
void pupAB(PUP::er &p)
{
    ... other fields ...
    PUP::seekBlock s(p,2); //2 seek sections
    if (p.isUnpacking())
    { //In this case, pup B first
        s.seek(1);
        B.pup(p);
    }
    s.seek(0);
    A.pup(p,B);

    if (!p.isUnpacking())
    { //In this case, pup B last
        s.seek(1);
        B.pup(p);
    }
    s.endBlock(); //End of seeking block
    ... other fields ...
};
```

Note that without the seek block, A’s fields would be unpacked over B’s memory, with disastrous consequences. The packing or sizing path must traverse the seek sections in numerical order; the unpack path may traverse them in any order. There is currently a small fixed limit of 3 on the maximum number of seek sections.

3.15.6 Writing a `PUP::er`

System-level programmers may occasionally find it useful to define their own `PUP::er` objects. The system `PUP::er` class is an abstract base class that funnels all incoming pup requests to a single subroutine:

```
virtual void bytes(void *p,int n,size_t itemSize,dataType t);
```

The parameters are, in order, the field address, the number of items, the size of each item, and the type of the items. The `PUP::er` is allowed to use these fields in any way. However, an `isSizing` or `isPacking` `PUP::er` may not modify the referenced user data; while an `isUnpacking` `PUP::er` may not read the original values of the user data. If your `PUP::er` is not clearly packing (saving values to some format) or unpacking (restoring values), declare it as `sizing PUP::er`.

3.16 Terminal I/O

CHARM++ provides both C and C++ style methods of doing terminal I/O.

In place of C-style `printf` and `scanf`, CHARM++ provides `CkPrintf` and `CkScanf`. These functions have interfaces that are identical to their C counterparts, but there are some differences in their behavior that should be mentioned.

A recent change to CHARM++ is to also support all forms of `printf`, `cout`, etc. in addition to the special forms shown below. The special forms below are still useful, however, since they obey well-defined (but still lax) ordering requirements.

```
int CkPrintf(format [, arg]*)
```

This call is used for atomic terminal output. Its usage is similar to `printf` in C. However, `CkPrintf`

has some special properties that make it more suited for parallel programming on networks of workstations. `CkPrintf` routes all terminal output to the `charmrun`, which is running on the host computer. So, if a chare on processor 3 makes a call to `CkPrintf`, that call puts the output in a TCP message and sends it to host computer where it will be displayed. This message passing is an asynchronous send, meaning that the call to `CkPrintf` returns immediately after the message has been sent, and most likely before the message has actually been received, processed, and displayed.²³

`void CkError(format [, arg]*))`

Like `CkPrintf`, but used to print error messages on `stderr`.

`int CkScanf(format [, arg]*)`

This call is used for atomic terminal input. Its usage is similar to `scanf` in C. A call to `CkScanf`, unlike `CkPrintf`, blocks all execution on the processor it is called from, and returns only after all input has been retrieved.

For C++ style stream-based I/O, CHARM++ offers `ckout` and `ckerr` in the place of `cout`, and `cerr`. The C++ streams and their CHARM++ equivalents are related in the same manner as `printf` and `scanf` are to `CkPrintf` and `CkScanf`. The CHARM++ streams are all used through the same interface as the C++ streams, and all behave in a slightly different way, just like C-style I/O.

3.17 initcall routines

Some registration routines need be executed exactly once everywhere before the computation begins. By declaring a regular C++ subroutine `initcall` in the `.ci` file, you ask CHARM++ to execute the routine exactly once on every node before the computation begins.

```
module foo {
    initcall void fooGlobalInit(void);
    chare bar {
        ...
        initcall void barInit(void);
    };
};
```

This code will execute the routines `fooGlobalInit` and `bar::barInit` before the main computation starts. These routines should only do registration, not computation— use a `mainchare`, which gets executed on only one processor, to begin the computation. Initcall routines are typically used to do special registrations and global variable setup before the computation actually begins.

3.18 Other Calls

The following calls provide information about the machines upon which the parallel program is executing. Processing Element refers to a single CPU. Node refers to a single machine— a set of processing elements which share memory (i.e. an address space). Processing Elements and Nodes are numbered, starting from zero.

Thus if a parallel program is executing on one 4-processor workstation and one 2-processor workstation, there would be 6 processing elements (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5) but only 2 nodes (0 and 1). A given node's processing elements are numbered sequentially.

`int CkNumPes()`

returns the total number of processors, across all nodes.

`int CkMyPe()`

returns the processor number on which the call was made.

`int CkMyRank()`

returns the rank number of the processor on which the call was made. Processing elements within a node are ranked starting from zero.

²³Because of communication latencies, the following scenario is actually possible: Chare 1 does a `Ckprintf` from processor 1, then creates chare 2 on processor 2. After chare 2's creation, it calls `CkPrintf`, and the message from chare 2 is displayed before the one from chare 1.



```

int CkMyNode()
    returns the address space number (node number) on which the call was made.
int CkNumNodes()
    returns the total number of address spaces.
int CkNodeFirst(int node)
    returns the processor number of the first processor in this address space.
int CkNodeSize(int node)
    returns the number of processors in the address space on which the call was made.
int CkNodeOf(int pe)
    returns the node number on which the call was made.
int CkRankOf(int pe)
    returns the rank of the given processor within its node.
    The following calls provide commonly needed functions.
void CkAbort(const char *message)
    Cause the program to abort, printing the given error message.
void CkExit()
    This call informs the Charm kernel that computation on all processors should terminate. After the
    currently executing entry method completes, no more messages or entry methods will be called. CkExit
    should be the last call of the entry method from which it was called.
double CkCpuTimer()
    Returns the current value of the system timer in seconds. The system timer is started when the program
    begins execution. This timer measures process time (user and system).
double CkWallTimer()
    Returns the elapsed time in seconds since the program has started from the wall clock timer.
double CkTimer()
    This is an alias for either CkWallTimer on dedicated machines (such as ASCI Red) or CkCpuTimer for
    machines with multiple user processes per CPU (such as workstation cluster.)

```

3.19 Delegation

Delegation is a means by which a library writer can intercept messages sent via a proxy. This is typically used to construct communication libraries. A library creates a special kind of Group called a *DelegationManager*, which receives the messages sent via a delegated proxy.

There are two parts to the delegation interface— a very small client-side interface to enable delegation, and a more complex manager-side interface to handle the resulting redirected messages.

3.19.1 Client Interface

All proxies (Chare, Group, Array, ...) in CHARM++ support the following delegation routines.

```
void CProxy::ckDelegate(CkGroupID delMgr);
```

Begin delegating messages sent via this proxy to the given delegation manager. This only affects the proxy it is called on— other proxies for the same object are *not* changed. If the proxy is already delegated, this call changes the delegation manager.

```
CkGroupID CProxy::ckDelegatedIdx(void) const;
```

Get this proxy's current delegation manager.

```
void CProxy::ckUndelegate(void);
```

Stop delegating messages sent via this proxy. This restores the proxy to normal operation.

One use of these routines might be:

```

CkGroupID mgr=somebodyElsesCommLib(...);
CProxy_foo p=...;
p.someEntry1(...); //Sent to foo normally
p.ckDelegate(mgr);
p.someEntry2(...); //Handled by mgr, not foo!

```

```
p.someEntry3(...); //Handled by mgr again
p.ckUndelegate();
p.someEntry4(...); //Back to foo
```

The client interface is very simple; but it is often not called by users directly. Often the delegate manager library needs some other initialization, so a more typical use would be:

```
CProxy_foo p=...;
p.someEntry1(...); //Sent to foo normally
startCommLib(p,...); // Calls ckDelegate on proxy
p.someEntry2(...); //Handled by library, not foo!
p.someEntry3(...); //Handled by library again
finishCommLib(p,...); // Calls ckUndelegate on proxy
p.someEntry4(...); //Back to foo
```

Sync entry methods, group and nodegroup multicast messages, and messages for virtual chares that have not yet been created are never delegated. Instead, these kinds of entry methods execute as usual, even if the proxy is delegated.

3.19.2 Manager Interface

A delegation manager is a group which inherits from `CkDelegateMgr` and overrides certain virtual methods. Since `CkDelegateMgr` does not do any communication itself, it need not be mentioned in the .ci file; you can simply declare a group as usual and inherit the C++ implementation from `CkDelegateMgr`.

Your delegation manager will be called by CHARM++ any time a proxy delegated to it is used. Since any kind of proxy can be delegated, there are separate virtual methods for delegated Chares, Groups, NodeGroups, and Arrays.

```
class CkDelegateMgr : public Group
public:
    virtual void ChareSend(int ep,void *m,const CkChareID *c,int onPE);

    virtual void GroupSend(int ep,void *m,int onPE,CkGroupID g);
    virtual void GroupBroadcast(int ep,void *m,CkGroupID g);

    virtual void NodeGroupSend(int ep,void *m,int onNode,CkNodeGroupID g);
    virtual void NodeGroupBroadcast(int ep,void *m,CkNodeGroupID g);

    virtual void ArrayCreate(int ep,void *m,const CkArrayIndexMax &idx,int onPE,CkArrayID a);
    virtual void ArraySend(int ep,void *m,const CkArrayIndexMax &idx,CkArrayID a);
    virtual void ArrayBroadcast(int ep,void *m,CkArrayID a);
    virtual void ArraySectionSend(int ep,void *m,CkArrayID a,CkSectionCookie &s);
;

```

These routines are called on the send side only. They are called after parameter marshalling; but before the messages are packed. The parameters passed in have the following descriptions.

1. **ep** The entry point begin called, passed as an index into the CHARM++ entry table. This information is also stored in the message's header; it is duplicated here for convenience.
2. **m** The CHARM++ message. This is a pointer to the start of the user data; use the system routine `UsrToEnv` to get the corresponding envelope. The messages are not necessarily packed; be sure to use `CkPackMessage`.
3. **c** The destination `CkChareID`. This information is already stored in the message header.

4. **onPE** The destination processor number. For chare messages, this indicates the processor the chare lives on. For group messages, this indicates the destination processor. For array create messages, this indicates the desired processor.
5. **g** The destination CkGroupID. This is also stored in the message header.
6. **onNode** The destination node.
7. **idx** The destination array index. This may be looked up using the lastKnown method of the array manager, e.g., using:

```
int lastPE=CProxy_CkArray(a).ckLocalBranch()->lastKnown(idx);
```

8. **s** The destination array section.

The CkDelegateMgr superclass implements all these methods; so you only need to implement those you wish to optimize. You can also call the superclass to do the final delivery after you've sent your messages.

3.20 Communication Optimizations Framework

The communications framework in charm++/converse is aimed at optimizing certain communication patterns. Currently the programmer has to specify which communication pattern. In future this is aimed at being automatic!

The communications library uses the delegation framework. This is to make it transparent to the programmer. The communications library currently optimizes the following communication patterns. The parameter strategy to the communications library initialization specifies this.

- Collective personalized communication. In this communication operation each array element sends a distinct message to many other array elements. The sending and receiving elements need not belong to the same array.
- Collective multicast operation. Here each array element sends the same message to many other array elements.
- Streaming. In this communication pattern each array element sends many small messages to other array elements but these sends are not synchronized and the library periodically collects messages and sends them to their destinations. The period is a parameter to the library.

To use the communications library it needs to be compiled first.

```
cd charm/tmp/libs/ck-libs/commlib;
make;
```

Calls to the communications library have to be made at three places in the user program. They are :

1. main.ci,

```
extern module ComlibModule;
readonly CkGroupID dmid;
```

2. main.C


```

#include 'ComlibManager.h' //Call this before all other includes!
CkGroupID dmid;

//In main::main()
//Initialize the library
dmid = CProxy_ComlibManager::ckNew(strategy);
//Will be explained later
CProxy_ComlibManager(dmid).ckLocalBranch()->createId();

```

3. In the array element

```

//Called in the constructor
//Registers the array element with the communications framework
(CProxy_ComlibManager(dmid).ckLocalBranch()->localElement());

//Before calling an entry method whose message should go thorough the library
//the proxy has to be delegated
array_proxy.ckDelegate(dmid);

(CProxy_ComlibManager(dmid).ckLocalBranch()->beginIteration());
array_proxy[index].entry();
.....
.....
(CProxy_ComlibManager(dmid).ckLocalBranch()->endIteration());

//Now all calls to array_proxy will go through the library.
//So non library calls should use another proxy!
//The begin and end calls do not have to be called for the streaming strategy.

```

The parameter strategy specifies to the library which strategy to use. The following are the strategies currently supported.

- **USE_DIRECT**, **USE_MESH**, **USE_HYPERCUBE**, **USE_GRID**. These are strategies to optimize all to all personalized communication. **USE_DIRECT** sends the message directly. **USE_MESH** imposes a 2d Mesh virtual topology on the processors so now each processor sends messages to its neighbors in its row and column of the mesh which forward the messages to their correct destinations. **USE_HYPERCUBE** and **USE_GRID** impose a hypercube and a 3d Grid topologies on the processors. **USE_HYPERCUBE** will do best for very small messages and small number of processors, 3d has better performance for slightly higher message sizes and then Mesh starts performing best. The programmer is encouraged to try out all the strategies.
- **USE_STREAMING**, here on each processor the library waits for 10 ms by default and sends all messages that are destined to a processor in one message. The period which is 10ms by default can be passed as a parameter to the communications library constructor.

The createId call in main::main initializes the library communications identifier. By default its assumed that array elements exist on all processors and will contribute to the collective communication operations. But if they dont then the set of processors in which the array elements are present needs to be passed to the library. So now the createId call will look like this :

```
CProxy_ComlibManager(dmid).ckLocalBranch()->createId(pelist, npes);
```

where pelist is an integer array giving the list of processors and npes is the length of that list.

4 Inheritance and Templates in Charm++

CHARM++ supports inheritance among CHARM++ objects such as chares, groups, and messages. This, along with facilities for generic programming using C++ style templates for CHARM++ objects, is a major enhancement over the previous versions of CHARM++.

4.1 Chare Inheritance

Chare inheritance makes it possible to remotely invoke methods of a base chare from a proxy of a derived chare. Suppose a base chare is of type *BaseChare*, then the derived chare of type *DerivedChare* needs to be declared in the CHARM++ interface file to be explicitly derived from *BaseChare*. Thus, the constructs in the .ci file should look like:

```
chare BaseChare {
    entry BaseChare(someMessage *);
    entry void baseMethod(void);
    ...
}
chare DerivedChare : BaseChare {
    entry DerivedChare(otherMessage *);
    entry void derivedMethod(void);
    ...
}
```

Note that the access specifier `public` is omitted, because CHARM++ interface translator only needs to know about the public inheritance, and thus `public` is implicit. A Chare can inherit privately from other classes too, but the CHARM++ interface translator does not need to know about it, because it generates support classes (*proxies*) to remotely invoke only public methods.

The class definitions of both these chares should look like:

```
class BaseChare : public Chare {
    // private or protected data
public:
    BaseChare(someMessage *);
    void baseMethod(void);
};
class DerivedChare : public BaseChare {
    // private or protected data
public:
    DerivedChare(otherMessage *);
    void derivedMethod(void);
};
```

Now, it is possible to create a derived chare, and invoke methods of base chare from it, or to assign a derived chare proxy to a base chare proxy as shown below:

```
...
otherMessage *msg = new otherMessage();
CProxy_DerivedChare *pd = new CProxy_DerivedChare(msg);
pd->baseMethod();    // OK
pd->derivedMethod(); // OK
...
Cproxy_BaseChare *pb = pd;
pb->baseMethod();    // OK
pb->derivedMethod(); // COMPILE ERROR
```

Note that C++ calls the default constructor of the base class from any constructor for the derived class where base class constructor is not called explicitly. Therefore, one should always provide a default constructor for the base class, or explicitly call another base class constructor.

Multiple inheritance is also allowed for Chares and Groups. Often, one should make each of the base classes inherit “virtually” from Chare or Group, so that a single copy of Chare or Group exists for each multiply derived class.

Entry methods are inherited in the same manner as methods of sequential C++ objects. To make an entry method virtual, just add the keyword `virtual` to the corresponding chare method—no change is needed in the interface file. Pure virtual entry methods also require no special description in the interface file.

4.2 Inheritance for Messages

Messages cannot inherit from other messages. A message can, however, inherit from a regular C++ class. For example:

```
//In the .ci file:
message BaseMessage1;
message BaseMessage2;

//In the .h file:
class Base {
    // ...
};
class BaseMessage1 : public Base, public CMessage_BaseMessage1 {
    // ...
};
class BaseMessage2 : public Base, public CMessage_BaseMessage2 {
    // ...
};
```

Messages cannot contain virtual methods or virtual base classes unless you use a packed message. Parameter marshalling has complete support for inheritance, virtual methods, and virtual base classes via the PUP::able framework.

4.3 Generic Programming Using Templates

One can write “templated” code for Chares, Groups, Messages and other CHARM++ entities using familiar C++ template syntax (almost). The CHARM++ interface translator now recognizes most of the C++ templates syntax, including a variety of formal parameters, default parameters, etc. However, not all C++ compilers currently recognize templates in ANSI drafts, therefore the code generated by CHARM++ for templates may not be acceptable to some current C++ compilers²⁴.

²⁴Most modern C++ compilers belong to one of the two camps. One that supports Borland style template instantiation, and the other that supports AT&T Cfront style template instantiation. In the first, code is generated for the source file where the instantiation is seen. GNU C++ falls in this category. In the second, which template is to be instantiated, and where the templated code is seen is noted in a separate area (typically a local directory), and then just before linking all the template instantiations are generated. Solaris CC 5.0 belongs to this category. For templates to work for compilers in the first category such as for GNU C++ all the templated code needs to be visible to the compiler at the point of instantiation, that is, while compiling the source file containing the template instantiation. For a variety of reasons, CHARM++ interface translator cannot generate all the templated code in the declarations file `*.decl.h`, which is included in the source file where templates are instantiated. Thus, for CHARM++ generated templates to work for GNU C++ even the definitions file `*.def.h` should be included in the C++ source file. However, this file may contain other definitions apart from templates that will be duplicated if the same file is included in more than one source files. To alleviate this problem, we have to do a little trick. Fortunately, this trick works for compilers supporting both Borland-style and Cfront-style template instantiation, therefore, code using this trick will be portable. The trick is to include `*.def.h` with a preprocessor symbol `CK_TEMPLATES_ONLY` defined, whenever templates defined in an extern module are instantiated. If your interface file does not contain template declarations or definitions, you need not bother about including `*.def.h` for extern modules. For example, if module `stlib` contains template definitions, that you may want to instantiate in another module called `pgm`, then `pgm.C` should include `stlib.def.h` with `CK_TEMPLATES_ONLY` defined. Of course, `stlib.decl.h` needs to be included at the top of `pgm.C`.

The CHARM++ interface file should contain the template definitions as well as the instantiation. For example, if a message class *TMessage* is templated with a formal type parameter *DType*, then every instantiation of *TMessage* should be specified in the CHARM++ interface file. An example will illustrate this better:

```
template <class DType=int, int N=3> message TMessage;
message TMessage<>; // same as TMessage<int,3>
message TMessage<double>; // same as TMessage<double, 3>
message TMessage<UserType, 1>;
```

Note the use of default template parameters. It is not necessary for template definitions and template instantiations to be part of the same module. Thus, templates could be defined in one module, and could be instantiated in another module, as long as the module defining a template is imported into the other module using the `extern module` construct. Thus it is possible to build a standard CHARM++ template library. Here we give a flavor of possibilities:

```
module SCTL {
  template <class dtype> message Singleton;
  template <class dtype> group Reducer {
    entry Reducer(void);
    entry void submit(Singleton<dtype> *);
  }
  template <class dtype> chare ReductionClient {
    entry void recvResult(Singleton<dtype> *);
  }
};

module User {
  extern module SCTL;
  message Singleton<int>;
  group Reducer<int>;
  chare RedcutionClient<int>;
  chare UserClient : ReductionClient<int> {
    entry UserClient(void);
  }
};
```

The *Singleton* message is a template for storing one element of any *dtype*. The *Reducer* is a group template for a spanning-tree reduction, which is started by submitting data to the local branch. It also contains a public method to register the *ReductionClient* (or any of its derived types), which acts as a callback to receive results of a reduction.

A Structured Dagger

CHARM++ is based on the Message-Driven parallel programming paradigm. The message-driven programming style avoids the use of blocking receives and allows overlap of computation and communication by scheduling computations depending on availability of data. This programming style enables CHARM++ programs to tolerate communication latencies adaptively. Threads suffer from loss of performance due to context-switching overheads and limited scalability due to large and unpredictable stack memory requirements, when used in a data-driven manner to coordinate a sequence of remotely triggered actions.

The need to sequence remotely triggered actions arises in many situations. Let us consider an example:

Consider an algorithm for computing cutoff-based pairwise interactions between atoms in a molecular dynamics application, where interaction between atoms is considered only when they are within some cutoff distance of each other. This algorithm is based on a combination of task and spatial decompositions

```

class compute_object : public Chare {
private:
    int          count;
    Patch        *first, *second;
public:
    compute_object(MSG *msg) {
        count = 2; MyChareID(&chareid);
        PatchManager->Get(msg->first_index, recv_first, &thishandle, NOWAIT);
        PatchManager->Get(msg->second_index, recv_second, &thishandle, NOWAIT);
    }
    void recv_first(PATCH_MSG *msg) {
        first = msg->patch;
        filter(first);
        if (--count == 0 ) computeInteractions(first, second);
    }
    void recv_second(PATCH_MSG *msg){
        second = msg->patch;
        filter(second);
        if (--count == 0) computeInteractions(first, second);
    }
}

```

Figure 1: Compute Object in a Molecular Dynamics Application

of the molecular system. The bounding box for the molecule is divided into a number of cubes (*Patches*) each containing some number of atoms. Since each patch contains a different number of atoms and these atoms migrate between patches as simulation progresses, a dynamic load balancing scheme is used. In this scheme, the task of computing the pairwise interactions between atoms of all pairs of patches is divided among a number of *Compute Objects*. These compute objects are assigned at runtime to different processors. The initialization message for each compute object contains the indices of the patches. The patches themselves are distributed across processors. Mapping information of patches to processors is maintained by a replicated object called *PatchManager*. Figure 1 illustrates the CHARM++ implementation of the compute object. Each compute object requests information about both patches assigned to it from the PatchManager. PatchManager then contacts the appropriate processors and delivers the patch information to the requesting compute object. The compute object, after receiving information about each patch, determines which atoms in a patch do not interact with atoms in another patch since they are separated by more than the cut-off distance. This is done in method `filter`. Filtering could be done after both patches arrive. However, in order to increase processor utilization, we do it immediately after any patch arrives. Since the patches can arrive at the requesting compute object in any order, the compute object has to buffer the received patches, and maintain state information using counters or flags. This example has been chosen for simplicity in order to demonstrate the necessity of counters and buffers. In general, a parallel algorithm may have more interactions leading to the use of many counters, flags, and message buffers, which complicates program development significantly.

Threads are typically used to perform the abovementioned sequencing. Lets us code our previous example using threads.

Contrast the compute chare-object example in figure 1 with a thread-based implementation of the same scheme in figure 2. Functions `getFirst`, and `getSecond` send messages asynchronously to the PatchManager, requesting that the specified patches be sent to them, and return immediately. Since these messages with patches could arrive in any order, two threads, `recvFirst` and `recvSecond`, are created. These threads block, waiting for messages to arrive. After each message arrives, each thread performs the filtering operation. The main thread waits for these two threads to complete, and then computes the pairwise interactions. Though the programming complexity of buffering the messages and maintaining the counters has been eliminated in

```

void compute_thread(int first_index, int second_index)
{
    getPatch(first_index);
    getPatch(second_index);
    threadId[0] = createThread(recvFirst);
    threadId[1] = createThread(recvSecond);
    threadJoin(2, threadId);
    computeInteractions(first, second);
}
void recvFirst(void)
{
    recv(first, sizeof(Patch), ANY_PE, FIRST_TAG);
    filter(first);
}
void recvSecond(void)
{
    recv(second, sizeof(Patch), ANY_PE, SECOND_TAG);
    filter(second);
}

```

Figure 2: Compute Thread in a Molecular Dynamics Application

this implementation, considerable overhead in the form of thread creation, and synchronization in the form of *join* has been added. Let us now code the same example in *Structured Dagger*. It reduces the parallel programming complexity without adding any significant overhead.

```

class compute_object
sdagentry compute_object(MSG *msg){
    atomic {
        PatchManager->Get(msg->first_index,...);
        PatchManager->Get(msg->second_index,...);
    }
    overlap {
        when recv_first(Patch *first) atomic { filter(first); }
        when recv_second(Patch *second) atomic { filter(second); }
    }
    atomic { computeInteractions(first, second); }
}

```

Figure 3: *Structured Dagger* Implementation of the Compute Object

Structured Dagger is a coordination language built on top of CHARM++ that supports the sequencing mentioned above, while overcoming limitations of thread-based languages, and facilitating a clear expression of flow of control within the object without losing the performance benefits of adaptive message-driven execution. In other words, *Structured Dagger* is a structured notation for specifying intra-process control dependences in message-driven programs. It combines the efficiency of message-driven execution with the explicitness of control specification. *Structured Dagger* allows easy expression of dependences among messages and computations and also among computations within the same object using when-blocks and various structured constructs. *Structured Dagger* is adequate for expressing control-dependencies that form a series-parallel control-flow graph. *Structured Dagger* has been developed on top of CHARM++ *Structured Dagger* allows CHARM++ entry methods (in chares, groups or arrays) to specify code (a when-block body) to be

executed upon occurrence of certain events. These events (or guards of a when-block) are entry methods of the object that can be invoked remotely. While writing a *Structured Dagger* program, one has to declare these entries in CHARM++ interface file. The implementation of the entry methods that contain the when-block is written using the *Structured Dagger* language. Grammar of *Structured Dagger* is given in the EBNF form below.

A.1 Grammar

A.1.1 Tokens

```
<ident> = Valid C++ identifier
<int-expr> = Valid C++ integer expression
<C++-code> = Valid C++ code
```

A.1.2 Grammar in EBNF Form

```
<sdag> := <class-decl> <sdagentry>+

<class-decl> := "class" <ident>

<sdagentry> := "sdagentry" <ident> "(" <ident> "*" <ident> ")" <body>

<body> := <stmt>
        | "{" <stmt>+ "}"

<stmt> := <overlap-stmt>
        | <when-stmt>
        | <atomic-stmt>
        | <if-stmt>
        | <while-stmt>
        | <for-stmt>
        | <forall-stmt>

<overlap-stmt> := "overlap" <body>

<atomic-stmt> := "atomic" "{" <C++-code> "}"

<if-stmt> := "if" "(" <int-expr> ")" <body> [<else-stmt>]

<else-stmt> := "else" <body>

<while-stmt> := "while" "(" <int-expr> ")" <body>

<for-stmt> := "for" "(" <c++-code> ";" <int-expr> ";" <c++-code> ")" <body>

<forall-stmt> := "forall" "[" <ident> "]" "(" <range-stride> ")" <body>

<range-stride> := <int-expr> ":" <int-expr> "," <int-expr>

<when-stmt> := "when" <entry-list> <body>

<entry-list> := <entry>
              | <entry> [ "," <entry-list> ]
```

```
<entry> := <ident> [ "[" <int-expr> "]" ] "(" <ident> "*" <ident> ")"
```

For more details regarding *Structured Dagger*, look at the examples located in `pgms/sdag` directory in the CHARM++ distribution.

B Further Information

B.1 Related Publications

For starters, see the publications and reports as well as related manuals that can be found on the Parallel Programming Laboratory website: <http://charm.cs.uiuc.edu/>.

B.2 Associated Tools and Libraries

Several tools and libraries are provided for CHARM++. PROJECTIONS is an automatic performance analysis tool which provides the user with information about the parallel behavior of CHARM++ programs. The purpose of implementing CHARM++ standard libraries is to reduce the time needed to develop parallel applications with the help of a set of efficient and re-usable modules. Most of the libraries have been described in a separate manual.

B.2.1 Projections

PROJECTIONS is a performance visualization and feedback tool. The system has a much more refined understanding of user computation than is possible in traditional tools.

PROJECTIONS displays information about the request for creation and the actual creation of tasks in CHARM++ programs. Projections also provides the function of post-mortem clock synchronization. Additionally, it can also automatically partition the execution of the running program into logically separate units, and automatically analyzes each individual partition.

Future versions will be able to provide recommendations/suggestions for improving performance as well.

B.3 Contacts

While we can promise neither bug-free software nor immediate solutions to all problems, CHARM++ is a stable system and it is our intention to keep it as up-to-date and usable as our resources will allow by responding quickly to questions and bug reports. To that end, there are mechanisms in place for contacting Charm users and developers.

Our software is made available for research use and evaluation. For the latest software distribution, further information about CONVERSE/CHARM++ and information on how to contact the Parallel Programming laboratory, see our website at <http://charm.cs.uiuc.edu/>. The software is also available by anonymous ftp, from [a.cs.uiuc.edu](ftp://a.cs.uiuc.edu), under the directory `pub/research-groups/CHARM`.

If retrieval of a publication via these channels is not possible, please send electronic mail to kale@cs.uiuc.edu or postal mail to:

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Index

- [createhere], 30
- [createhome], 30
- CkChareID, 8
- alloc, 16
- arbitrary-precision priorities, 20
- array, 9, 24, 25
- Array broadcast, 26
- Array destroy, 26
- Array index type, user-defined, 30
- array initial, 28
- array map, 27
- Array message, 25
- array reduction, 26, 42
- ArrayElement, 25
- ArrayElement1D, 25
- ArrayElement2D, 25
- ArrayElement3D, 25
- ArrayElement::AtSync(), 39
- ArrayElement::ResumeFromSync(), 39
- ArrayElementT, 31
- arrayHdl, 28
- arrays, 24
- AtSync, 39
- base chare, 57
- bindTo, 28
- bitvector format, 21
- bitvector priorities, 20
- bound arrays, 28
- branch, 35–37
- broadcast, 35
- Chare, 8, 22, 25, 34, 58
- chare, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 15, 21–24, 34–36, 41, 52
- chare array, 24
- chare arrays, 9
- chare group, 23
- chare groups, 9
- charmrun, 52
- CK_ARRAYINDEX_MAXLEN, 30
- CK_PE_ANY, 23
- CK_QUEUEING_FIFO, 20
- CK_QUEUEING_IFIFO, 20
- CK_QUEUEING_ILIFO, 20
- CK_QUEUEING_LIFO, 20
- CK_TEMPLATES_ONLY, 58
- CkAbort, 53
- ckAboutToMigrate, 32
- CkAllocBuffer, 18
- CkAllocMsg, 16
- CkArrayID, 24, 25
- CkArrayIndex, 24, 26, 30
- CkArrayMap, 27, 28
- CkCallback, 45, 46
- CkCallback(CkCallback::ckExit), 45
- CkCallback(CkCallback::ignore), 45
- CkCallback(CkCallback::resumeThread), 46
- CkCallback(CkCallbackFn fn,void *param), 45
- CkCallback(int ep,const CkArrayID &id), 45
- CkCallback(int ep,const CkArrayIndex &idx,const CkArrayID &id), 45
- CkCallback(int ep,const CkChareID &id), 45
- CkCallback(int ep,const CkGroupID &id), 45
- CkCallback(int ep,int onPE,const CkGroupID &id), 46
- CkChareID, 22, 23, 45, 54
- CkCpuTimer, 53
- CkCreateOptions, 27, 28
- CkDelegateMgr, 54, 55
- ckerr, 52
- CkError, 52
- CkExit, 7, 11, 53
- CkFreeMsg, 18
- CkGroupID, 8, 34, 36, 55
- ckJustMigrated, 32
- ckLocal, 23, 29, 32
- ckLocal for arrays, 32
- CkLocalBranch, 37
- CkLocalNodeBranch, 37
- ckLocalNodeBranch, 37
- CkLocalNodeBranch(), 37
- CkMigrateMessage, 25
- CkMigrateMessage *, 49
- CkMyNode, 53
- CkMyNodes, 53
- CkMyPe, 52
- CkMyRank, 52
- ckNew, 11, 22, 27
- ckNew(10), 28
- CkNodeFirst, 53
- CkNodeOf, 53
- CkNodeSize, 53
- CkNumPes, 52
- ckout, 52
- CkPackMessage, 54
- CkPrintf, 51, 52
- Ckprintf, 52
- CkPriorityPtr, 20
- CkRankOf, 53

- CkReduction::addReducer, 44, 45
- CkReduction::and, 43
- CkReduction::concat, 43
- CkReduction::max_int, 43
- CkReduction::min_int, 43
- CkReduction::or, 43
- CkReduction::product_int, 43
- CkReduction::reducerType, 43, 44
- CkReduction::set, 43
- CkReduction::setElement, 43
- CkReduction::sum_int, 43
- CkReductionMsg, 42, 44
- CkReductionMsg::buildNew(int nBytes,const void *data), 44
- CkScanf, 51, 52
- CkSetQueueing, 19, 20
- ckSetReductionClient, 42
- CkStartQD, 41
- CkTimer, 53
- CkWaitQD, 41
- CkWallTimer, 53
- CmiProbeImmediateMsg(), 12
- const, 24
- constructor, 22, 23
- contribute, 26, 42–44
- CProxy, 22
- CProxy_Array::ckNew, 25
- CProxy_Array::doneInserting, 29
- createhere, 30
- createhome, 30
- data, 42
- default constructor, 58
- Delegation, 53
- DelegationManager, 53
- delete, 15
- derived chare, 57
- destPE, 23
- destroy, 29
- doGeneral, 12
- doneInserting, 29, 39
- entry method, 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, 21, 23, 41
- entry methods, 22
- exclusive, 11, 12, 36, 37
- exit, 7
- extern, 9, 24, 58
- extern module, 59
- getData(), 42
- getSize(), 42
- Group, 8, 34–36, 58
- group, 7, 9, 11, 12, 34, 35
- handle, 22, 23
- immediate, 11, 12
- inheritance, 57
- initcall, 44, 45, 52
- input/output, 51, 52
- insert, 29
- integer priorities, 20
- integer priority range, 20
- isPacking(), 32
- isSizing(), 32
- isUnpacking(), 32
- Load balancer or strategy, 37
- load balancing, 23
- Load balancing database, 37
- load balancing database, 37
- load balancing strategies, 37
- load balancing strategy, 38
- machineInfo, 50
- mainchare, 7, 11, 24
- mainmodule, 9
- max_double, 43
- max_float, 43
- MAXINT, 20
- message, 4, 6, 9, 14, 15, 22, 23
- message delivery order, 19, 21
- message inheritance, 58
- message packing, 5, 16
- message priority, 20
- message serialization, 18
- mgr, 28
- migrate, 31
- migrateMe, 32
- min_double, 43
- min_float, 43
- module, 9, 59
- msg, 28
- msg1, 20
- msg2, 20
- multiple inheritance, 58
- multiple priority types, 21
- myIdx, 41, 45
- nBytes, 42
- new, 14, 16, 18, 20, 24
- node groups, 36
- Nodegroup, 36
- nodegroup, 7, 11, 12, 36, 37
- numInitial, 28
- p.isDeleting(), 47
- p.isPacking(), 47

- p.isSizing(), 47
- p.isUnpacking(), 47
- pack, 7, 18
- packed messages, 15, 17
- populateInitial, 28
- priorities, 19, 20
- prioritized, 14
- prioritized execution, 19
- prioritized message passing, 19
- priority, 14
- priority field, 20
- priority pointer, 20
- priority range splitting, 20, 21
- product, 12
- product_double, 43
- product_float, 43
- public, 57
- PUP, 32, 47
- PUP::able, 13, 48–50
- PUP::er, 32, 47–51
- PUP::fromDisk, 50
- PUP::fromMem, 50
- PUP::seekBlock, 51
- PUP::sizer, 50
- PUP::toDisk, 50
- PUP::toMem, 50
- PUP::xlater, 50
- pup_er, 48
- pup_isDeleting, 48
- pup_isPacking, 48
- pup_isSizing, 48
- pup_isUnpacking, 48
- PUPable_decl(*className*), 49
- PUPable_def(*className*), 49
- PUPable_reg(*className*), 49
- PUPmarshall, 49
- PUPmarshall(*foo*), 47

- quiescence, 5, 41

- readonly, 7, 9, 24
- registerArray, 28

- seed, 23
- serialized messages, 18
- setMap, 27
- setReductionClient, 42
- size, 50
- sum_double, 43
- sum_float, 43
- sync, 11, 12

- template, 59
- templates, 58

- thisgroup, 34, 36
- thishandle, 22, 35, 36
- threaded, 7, 11, 12
- timers, 53
- type, 42, 48

- unpack, 7, 18
- usesAtSync, 39
- UsrToEnv, 54

- variable size messages, 15
- varsize message, 15
- VarsizeMessage, 16
- virtual, 58
- virtual handle, 22, 23
- void, 22
- void CkArrMgr::insertInitial(CkArrayIndex idx,void
*ctorMsg), 28