One of my best friends is weird. His name is Richard and he is always called Richard, never Ricky or Dick. Richard is wimpy looking. It isn't just that he's short. It's more that he looks like it would take a major miracle for him to catch a baseball.

Richard has no interest in catching baseballs or any other kind of balls. He does not like sports, rock music or automobiles. He prefers water to soft drinks and wishes McDonald's would offer steamed broccoli instead of French fries.

I got to be friends with Richard when my family rented the house next door to his. We moved in at the end of June so I wasn't in school, and there wasn't any place to make new friends except right in my own neighborhood. Richard is the only kid my age within four blocks.

Richard has his own computer and I asked him to teach me how to run it. We started playing computer games and I have to admit, Richard's good. He may be a wimp, but he's a smart wimp. He even invented some new games and programmed the computer to do them.

We had a good time that first summer, playing the computer games.

After we'd known each other a few weeks, I asked Richard if he wanted to call up strangers on the telephone. He asked me why I would want to talk to someone I don't know, and I said I thought all kids did that when they're bored. I explained how most kids call somebody