

CONNPTION

"One year later, and we're still employed!"

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First Anniversary Issue! Please Pardon Our Appearance

We at *The Connption* have been redesigning our format to keep up with the competition. The design process has been slow; we've been at it ever since our last issue. As you can see, we're still a long way from polishing our final, snazzy design. However, we decided that you, our loyal readers, have waited long enough for a new issue. We're sure you'll forgive our looks for the sake of our jokes.

A Letter from "Our Editor"

Editorial Note: The following anonymous submission is printed as a public service, and does not necessarily reflect official *Connption* policy. — S. DeBullion, Editor Pro Tem.

Well, well, we've come full circle. The *Connption* is ONE year old this month. Will wonders never cease? I guess this is where I'm supposed to reflect on the year gone by, the good times, the tough times ... But this is my rag, and I'll do as I please! We're going to talk about our winter break, so listen up.

Being the nice Chief that I am, I could see that my staff was overworked after putting out our best and most comprehensive Christmas Catalog to date, followed by a stupendous first-of-the-year edition. So I decided to give them all a little R & R.

Well, Clark heads for the hills somewhere, mumbling something about the invigorating smell of goat dung wafting in the clear mountain air of his homeland. Hildy heads out to the Dick Butkus School of Mining and Underwater Sneaker Repair. Lex said something about "I & I, smokin da spliff", and heads south; we haven't seen him since. Scoop decides he needs to "find" himself, and off he goes to sit in some cactus or something. Lois had some heavy date lined up for 2-1/2 months! I wish I could figure out what the hell she's smiling about all the time — it's REALLY getting on my nerves. So ... that leaves me and Sharky...

The day everyone left for their little vacations, I was sitting in the office, cleaning some things up when in walks Mr. "Excuse me for Living", Sharky DeBullion. He tells me he's planning a jaunt to South America, in search of Wonder Woman. Then he asks me what I'm planning on doing. At this point all I know is I want to fish so bad I'm growing scales! So Sharky says, "Hey Chief." And I say for the MILLIONTH time, "Don't Call Me Chief!!" So he says, "Oh, sorry CHIEF!" Then he tells me that he needs someone to bring his boat back from Florida while he's in South America, and he offers me the use of it if I'll just do that one little favor for him.

The next thing I know, I'm in the Keys, fishing off DeBullion's boat, aptly named *My Mother Wears Army Boots*, registered out of Caracas, Venezuela. The crew that handed the boat over to me seemed awfully paranoid and hyper. They kept asking me if I wanted to do up some lines, but everytime I put the fishing pole over the side of the boat, they laughed. I should have known something was fishy at that point.

The next day I'm out drifting around fishing all by myself, when the Coast Guard comes blaring at me full speed, sirens screaming and guns drawn. They jump on the boat, grab me, read me my rights, cuff me, and take me off to some disgusting rat infested jail cell, where they book me for possession of ... Cocaine!

Of course my first thought is ... @#!\$#@! Sharky !#@#!%! My second thought is, "KILL Sharky!" My third thought is to call the Law Offices of Dewey, Cheatem, and Howe, which I do. I talk to Cheatem (Dewey's at the track with a client), and he tells me, "I'm real sorry, Chief, but we're representing a Mr. DeBullion in this matter, and frankly, I'm afraid, you're SCREWED!"

So here I sit, in Cockroach Club Med, while DeBullion is probably in the arms of W.W. And every time I call *The Connption*, all I can get is a lousy "Chief who?"

So I'm putting this letter in a bottle and pitching it in the drink. I can only hope that some kind soul, perhaps a young child or an indicted former White House staffer, finds it and gets it printed in the next issue so that my story is heard. If anyone's listening ... if you can hear my pitiful pleas ... then please, please send Lawyers, Guns & DeBullion, not necessarily in that order...

Wall Street Weak

by Sharky DeBullion

Way too early to be thinking about the 1988 presidential election? Not for Sharky it isn't. Now is the time to assess the candidates:

Scenario 1: It's January of 1990. The Ayotallah Khomeini has suddenly realized that his war with Iraq was all a terrible mistake. What God really wanted him to do was to wage a holy war against Monaco. OPEC announces an embargo which sends oil soaring to a stratospheric 42 dollars a barrel. What would various hopefuls do if they were president in this situation?

President Bush: Announces "110% support for the gallant Monacans," but takes absolutely no action. Texans rejoice in renewed wealth; Bush uses extraordinary powers to revoke SMU football suspension.

President Haig: Bombs Iran, Iraq, Israel, and all countries beginning with the letter "I" just because he "feels like it."

President Dukakis: Takes full credit for the prosperity of Monaco.

President Hart: Who can guess?

Scenario 2: It's July of 1990. Soviet Premier Gorbachev announces free elections, the immediate release of all refuseniks, a unilateral test-ban treaty, and a desire for a just and lasting peace with the United States.

President Bush: Taking cue from predecessor, summers in Maine with explicit instructions to aides about not being bothered.

President Haig: Sees right through "Commie trick" and puts all NATO forces on red alert.

President Dukakis: Takes full credit for the "economic miracle of Moscow." Goes on public relations visit to Soviet heartland and tells farmers about cranberries.

President Hart: Sharky hasn't a clue.

Yes sir, the preceding scenarios are just two reasons why Sharky is placing his entire support on the Al Haig bandwagon for '88. That is, unless of course Oral Roberts decides to toss his hat into the ring.



First Anniversary Flavors from Barstow & Jaynes

Barstow & Jaynes is proud to be included in the *Connip-tion's* First Anniversary Celebration. The bold, vivacious spirit of that publication is perfectly captured by our latest list of fashionable flavors. Pick up a four-pack of your favorite fluid today!

Anniversary Flavors:

Lite 'n Liver Wine Cooler — perfect anytime
Symply Syrup Wine Cooler — dieter's delight
Hiya Hawaya Wine Cooler — tropical treat
Roadhouse Rose' — trucker's temptation

Clubhouse Chatter

By Hildy (Ace) Hogan

A trip through the the home team's locker room produced these tidbits... *The Connption* has learned that now that spring training is nearly over, Head-Coach-of-Just-About-Everything Rolling Pamper has gathered his team and told them just how high the stakes are this season. "I've had a call from the Big Kahuna," Pamper told his players. "TAV told me that if we don't deliver SR10 and \$400 million in sales this season, he's going to call me on home ..." Meanwhile, Pamper reportedly is concerned about word of intra-squad scuffling. He's heard that part of his team thinks BSD stands for "Boneheaded Software Development" and that the other part breaks out in hives when it sees a dollar sign anywhere but on a paycheck. "We've got to play the %tages," Pamper said. "It's the only way we'll stay in the game ..." Insiders say this version of the team will perform much better against the Whetstones and the Linpacks. "Several of our guys were on a special conditioning program during the off-season, and you'll see the results when we get up to bat," said Batting Coach Port Holler'n'run.

The team might have an ace up its sleeve. Big Jim Taggit was overheard bragging about the fact that "at the winter team meetings we agreed that we'd use X-Fields, but we're really gonna use an entirely different defense. They won't know what D__M stuff hit 'em ..." New on the menu at the ballpark this season: Cafe-way Franks. Their slogan: *If you've got the time, we've got the cholesterol...* Some players are grumbling about having to share lockers. "I thought this was The Bigs," one muttered.

There's no truth to the rumor that Scott MacNealy will sing the national anthem on Opening Day. "Are you crazy?" asked an incredulous team spokesman. "Let him sing about the 'dawn's early light'? ..." However, officials refused to confirm or deny the story that one of the two MG's had been asked to change his name. "Well, it does get confusing on the lineup card," one official admitted.



Advertisement

"I used to be a carefree, happy-go-lucky hacker. I'm tellin' you, there wasn't nothin' got under my skin. I could spend forty-eight hours at the campus computer center putting binary patches in the Bliss compiler, then go cruisin' with the guys for chips and Tab.

"Then it happened. Jeez, I remember it like it was yesterday. The recruiter had promised me a career opportunity with plenty of potential, but he never said nothin' about a coat and tie! Sure, I can carry more pens now, but what about my calculator hip holster? And who cares about socks, anyway? Can't somebody save me from this horror?"

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At the Keyboard

with
Gene and Roger

"Hi! I'm Gene Pistol, command critic for the Lowell *Sun-Times*!"

"And I'm Roger Hebert, command critic for the Lowell *Tribune*. Tonight we'll be changing course a bit from our usual review of new commands to look at our picks for this year's upcoming awards (the coveted "Otter") from the Academy of Software Arts and Sciences. We've chosen what we feel is the best code of 1986, and want to share it with you. Gene?"

"Thanks, Roger. As you know, 1986 was a big year for blockbuster software: Chelmsford just couldn't seem to get enough action on the screen. First, there was *Network Ninja*, written and directed by Chuck Morris, which dominated the box office this summer. Semester Stallone's *RAM-Blow*, of course, was a monster hit in the fall — who could resist the dramatic artistry of four thousand DN550's exploding during the climactic booting sequence?"

"Maybe that spoke to you, Gene, but it left me cold. Stallone has the personality of week-old meatloaf, and his sophomoric 'script' had to be the worst this season."

"OK, so it wasn't Shakespeare, but you have to admit the public loved it. And, Roger, that's what the Academy goes for these days."

"Fine, Gene, but we're here to pick the best. Let me start off with my nominee for Best Female Command: *SALACL*. Sal, a young girl from the Midwest, journeys to the big city, only to find the protection which she had come to expect in Smallville violated in the most brutal way. Her story is compelling as we watch her try to salvage her dignity and sense of security. Sally Fields is brilliant in the title role; in my opinion, this is her best work so far."

"Interesting, Roger. She may have been a bit stronger with Burt in *Smokey and the Nitwit*, in my opinion. I have to admit, though, the ACL story grabs me by the heart every time..."

"My nomination for Best Original Coding goes to *ARGS*, a fascinating study in growing up. Set in post-war Pittsburg, four young men return to a favorite hangout and, basically, sit around discussing their lives and passions. Not much action here, but the dialog is inspired. Most notable is scriptwriter Ed Itpad's notion of leaving the actors unnamed; they are referred to only by position. Character ^2, played by Kevin Bacon, is particularly intriguing: he simply repeats what everyone else says. I marvel every time I see it."

"Right you are, Gene. The story line here is everything. In fact, if you take away the characters, all you are left with is an empty shell. We need more of this kind of thing in software today; that's all that I can say. But let's move on. Our nominee for Best Foreign Hack is the disturbing monochrome documentary, *YACC*. Director Anatol Egrepchmod follows the elusive beast for an entire year, chronicling its every wandering activity. Never before has anyone captured on the screen this animal's sinister feeding and breeding habits. This is not a nature special for young children, but every hardened programmer should see it at least once."

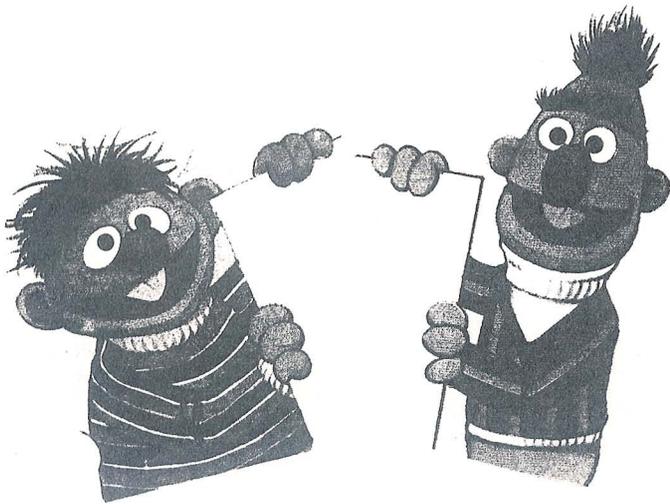
"Roger, my Otter nominee for Best Supporting Actress has to go to Kim Bayslinger for her torrid performance as Micky O'Rourke's love-slave in the controversial *9.5 MIPs*. Their dynamic linking simply burns up the screen. I don't know when I've seen anything like it. What about you?"

"I agree totally. It's a performance that numbs the senses with its disturbingly profound impact. It has penetrating implications for all interprocess communications, don't you think?"

"I certainly do. Well, I guess that does it for our slate of Otter nominees. 1986 was a pretty fair year for software, Roger. Let's just hope 1987 turns out as well."

"My sentiments exactly, Gene. Be sure to join us next week, when Gene and I return to our regular format and review four new commands from the wonderful world of software engineering. Until then, I'm Roger Hebert."

"And I'm Gene Pistol. Thanks for watching, and we'll see you at the keyboard."



Apollo Signs New Advertising Firm

Chelmsford (A&P) — Apollo Computer Inc. announced today that the prestigious CTW Group has been hired to direct marketing and advertising efforts for 1987. "Big changes are in the offing, I can tell you!" reports Murray Merryman of Apollo's MARCOM department. "Just take, for instance, the new look of our 1986 annual report. What a difference!"

According to CTW advertising design specialists Bert and Ernie, who are handling most of the work on the new Apollo account, "we've decided to target a much younger audience than in the past. After all, the pre-schoolers of today are the technical professionals of tomorrow. We feel that the new 'Crayola look' of the annual report better communicates to this audience. And such individuals certainly have significant influence with purchasing decision-makers at all levels."

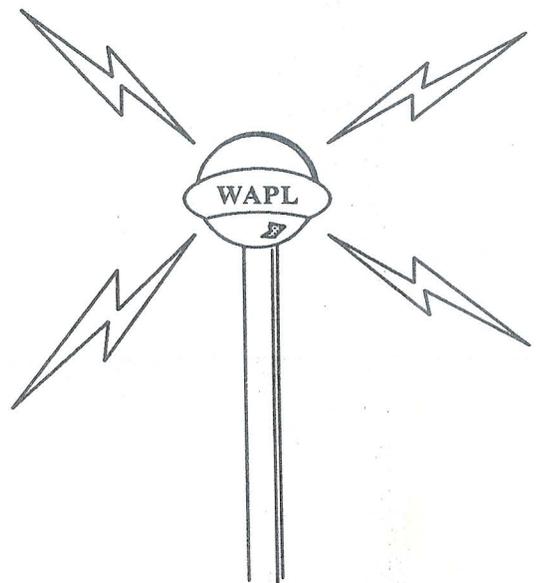
Bert and Ernie expect all future marketing materials to reflect this new emphasis on the low end of the maturity spectrum. Next year's annual report will feature a pop-up model of Apollo corporate headquarters and a challenging maze puzzle representing the corporate planning process. Quarterly reports will feature dot-to-dot earnings and growth charts, "giving readers and investors the chance to turn dry financial data into a positive learning experience. We also hope that, by printing and distributing fewer copies, everyone can learn the benefits of sharing."

In a related development, the Apollo Board of Directors revealed that Mr. Rogers, former President and CEO of The Neighborhood Corp., has been added to the Board. "We're all pleased and excited about his coming on board," said TAV, "because he likes us just the way we are."

Radio Free Apollo Begins Broadcasts

The Static Curtain surrounding SUN-block countries lifted a bit today with the first broadcast of Radio Free Apollo. Special programs designed to deliver truth and enlightenment to the oppressed workers of the competition are now beamed weekly to conference rooms throughout the East and West Coast high-tech corridors, where intrepid bands of listeners tune in on contraband speakerphones. Despite the jamming efforts of the 'Evil Empire', Apollo broadcast executive V. H. Eff estimates that "literally several people are sure to be listening. Of course, Apollo employees are encouraged to catch the broadcasts, too; but they've heard it all before, haven't they?"

Eff contends that, with adequate funding to purchase a new, even more powerful transmitter, programs could penetrate the 'Wall of Silence' surrounding Maynard, MA. "We'll show Olsen a thing or two, then!" Eff said. He brushed aside concerns that increased broadcast power levels could threaten the environment surrounding the transmitter. "What's the harm in a little nighttime glowing?" he asked. "The good people of Chelmsford won't need flashlights anymore!"



Hey, Fritz!

A question and answer column that allows you to get the real poop on facilities-related issues. All questions are answered personally by Fritz Facilities.

Hey, Fritz: How come you guys changed all of the lights in my building? Now everything has an eerie red glow.

Dear Moron: I'm sick and tired of you namby pamby wimps complaining about the new lights. Everyday I hear the gripes: "Fritz, these new lights hurt my poor widdle eyes!" "Fritz, my tender senses can't stand how red everything is!" Ah, shuddup, the lot of you.

You should be thankful you have any light at all. If you lived in the Middle Ages, you'd probably be writing your microcode and playing your video games by candle-light.

Ah, hell, I'm sorry. I don't mean to jump down your throat. The truth is, I don't really know why we had to change the lights, either. It was as much of a surprise to me as it was to you.

It happened like this. One day, not too long ago, the guard at the front desk calls me and tells me that there's a work party in the lobby of 23 guys. They're here to put in new lights, the guard says.

Well, nobody had told me anything about new lights. But nobody tells me anything anymore. So I go down to the front desk to see what this is all about.

They're all standing in the lobby, 23 guys in blue uniforms, carrying ladders, fluorescent light bulbs, and what-all installation equipment. And they're all wearing sunglasses, mirrored sunglasses, all the same style. They looked like one of those heavy metal rock groups that my son listens to. I wanted to know how they played the light bulbs.

Their leader steps up to me, swaggering and chewing gum. "You Fritz?" he says. I say yah. He says, "I got this work order signed by Tom Vanderslice to replace all the fluorescent lights in this building," and he shoves a piece of paper at me. It looked okay—it had a big "X" at the bottom like Tommy always signs. But I wasn't born yesterday. I needed more convincing than just a piece of paper.

"We have lights. Why do we need new ones?" I say. The guy snorts, looks over his shoulder to his goons, and says, "This guy wants to know why he needs new lights." The others all snort, too. To me, the leader says, real sarcastic, "While you've been holed up here in this godforsaken backwater, lighting technology has been developing new, incredible advancements. The lights we're installing today will increase worker effectiveness by eighty-seven-point-three-oh-two percent. Lights aren't just lights anymore—they're employee enhancers."

Naturally, I was very impressed. I showed the guys where to start and went back to reading *True Detective*.

Around lunch time, I decided to see how the lighting crew was getting on. I found them eating lunch out in the back parking lot—all of them with their sunglasses off. As I came up to them, one of the guys hastily threw on his blue work shirt over a tee shirt that said "Sun" or something on it.

I tried to chew the fat with the light crew, but they weren't real friendly. They all put away their lunches and started walking back into the building. As they entered the building, they all put the sunglasses back on.

I've been waiting to see some report on how worker effectiveness has gone up since the new lights went in, but I haven't heard a word yet. I'm beginning to think someone pulled a fast one on somebody. If Vanderslice okayed the deal, it's probably fine. Still, I'm going to get myself a pair of mirrored sunglasses, just in case.

Do you have a question about Apollo Facilities? Send it to Hey, Fritz! care of The Conniption.

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