

# CONNIPTION

"All the News that's Print to Fit"

April 1, 1986

Turner Communications

Volume 1 No. 4

## TURNER STAGES TURNABOUT!

### *Staff Returns; Sharky Grovels*

With a swiftness that has shocked the journalism industry, *The Conniption* has changed owners yet again. Ted Turner, that brash financial wizard, has added *The Conniption* to his star-studded empire, purchasing the beleaguered newsletter within two weeks after its sale to Rupert Murdoch.

Turner's takeover was friendly. Murdoch was frankly relieved to unburden the troubled paper, and all of the former staff members, most of whom had quit when Murdoch bought *The Conniption*, are back at work. "It's great to be back," said C. Lex Awkman. "I was getting tired of eating cold hamburgers on the picket line."

However, some members of the staff took offense at the low price Turner paid for the newsletter. "I think we're worth more than a pair of season tickets to the Atlanta Braves' games," grumbled one writer. Said another, "what really got me was that they were only bleacher seats!"

A spokesman for Murdoch Communications, Ltd. said that they considered Turner's offer overly generous, considering the state of the journal. "When we bought the newsletter, we had great hopes that we could turn it into the kind of yellow rag that this company is famous for. We thought our Editor-in-Chief, Sharky DeBullion, showed great promise. He has a natural bent toward sensationalism and inflammatory journalism. Sharky knows just how to pander to an audience's baser instincts.

"What we didn't foresee," the spokesman continued, "was that the rest of the staff had some scruples. We figured that people who churned out the kind of stuff in *The Conniption* wouldn't mind stooping to a little sleazy innuendo. And I think we could've convinced the staff to do it, too, if only Sharky hadn't demanded that they address him as 'Emirate of the Apollonian Journalistic States.'" Without its brilliant staff, *The Conniption* quickly went downhill.

Turner approached former Editor-in-Chief D.C.M. Chief before the actual purchase to ensure that the entire staff would return. "We did some tough negotiating," Chief said. "The staff and I forced Ted to make two major concessions before we agreed to come back: absolutely no interference from him [Turner] with our operations; and Sharky's head on a platter."

The staff voted unanimously to retain DeBullion as a columnist, despite the ill will generated during the Murdoch ownership. "I gotta admit, no one else at Apollo knows how to dig up the Wall Street dirt like the Shark," said Chief. "Besides, I feel better when I have tight reins and a close watch on worms like Sharky."

In a public ceremony held last week, DeBullion was forced to kneel and kiss the soles of each staff member's feet. "It was a bit degrading," DeBullion said of the experience, "but I've tasted worse."



### Apollo AG Introduces the DN30000: An All-Weather Workstation for Submerged Applications by Kurt Retort *Conniption Foreign Correspondent*

(Bohn) — Today wier happy bei der DN30000 Station-Werken zu gennouncen, mit 68020 technolische und kolor Monitor. Diesen StationWerken ist amazink becam er unter Wasser (100 m.) zu runnen able ist, und mit der 3-D Graphicschen Accellerometer im placen, er dem Windows mit dem multiplerasteropgeblitten zip zap zuperfasten hatgedrawen. Wow! Ist really zumptin zu watchen! Er hat der extralongen Cablecord fur Netzwerks in Luftwaffe und UnterWasserBoaten, und also access gedialen mit dem Modem fur in dem Innen Holidaysche gewerken. Zuper great we know it! Sei müssen von gebuyen right genow before alles ist gepufften! Dankeschon fur seine supportten.

## PODUSKA RENAMES LATEST STARTUP

by Scoop Malone

J. William Poduska, high-tech start-up veteran, has re-named his latest venture, Stellar Computer Corp., to Big Bang Computer. "We needed to bring our name up to speed with our product", said the 47 year old Poduska, "and, frankly, we just ran out of superlatives that would describe its impact on the marketplace."

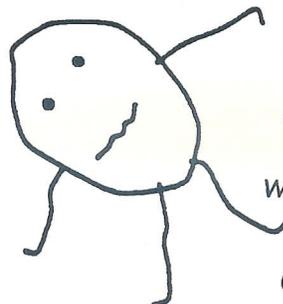
Big Bang's original name was Belmont Computer Corp., after Poduska's home town, a bedroom community just outside of Boston. But investors winced, calling the title 'too yuppie' and 'too Massachusetts'. Later Belmont Computer was changed to Stellar. Some say this appellation was selected to reflect the galactic reverberations that the start-up's workstation product would have on the industry. Not so, says founder Poduska. "Stellar was actually chosen by Jack Panda, our marketing VP. Jack was born and raised in Somerville. He wanted to change the name to either 'Somerville Systems' or 'Stellar,' after Brando's famous cry in "A Streetcar Named Desire" — Jack's a real movie buff. Anyway, I knew we'd have to cut our prices if we went with Somerville Systems. The rest is history."

But the title 'Stellar Computer' would be short-lived. Brando wanted too much for endorsements and insisted that board meetings be held in Bora Bora. "We needed a new name — a be-all-and-end-all name for this, the be-all-and-end-all of computer start-ups," Poduska reflected. "We needed a name that would somehow give form to the uncomputed-computer, the uncompiled compiler that an industry yearned for. After all, we are creating high-performance workstations for the technical professional out of little more than primordial goo and a bit of custom VLSI technology. In the end it was a toss-up between 'USDA Approved Computers' and 'Big Bang'. But I think that Big Bang says it all."

Poduska admits that other events contributed to his final selection. "When [Frank] Moss and [Dave] Jabs arrived it became clear that we also needed a name that would reflect our product design process."

What about the future? Are there any more start-ups on the horizon for Bill Poduska? When asked these questions, Bill smiles. "The first two were just practice. I expect to take Big Bang to a billion dollars within ten years. After that I'm getting into acquisitions. We'll need to pick up a company that will provide us with the

little plastic wall sockets that you can plug your workstation into. We could also use a location near the Framingham Tara. My wife's opening up a restaurant there, you know.... Even though minicomputers are dead and midrange workstations are gonna bite the big one in a few years, I always like to pick up all my toys after I'm done playing, heh, heh, heh."



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### Important Notice to Employees

To: Apollo Employees in Building 270  
From: Facilities  
Subject: Employee Entrance

All right, you wisenheimers, listen up: we in Facilities have just about had it up to here with your walking on the grass. We've tried all the nice ways we can think of to make you walk on the brick walkway: we put up signs (and they even said *Please*), and we put up a fence. Did you pay attention to the signs? No! You just strolled right by them, or you turned them around. Did the fence stop you? No! You just climbed over it.

Well, we've gotten tough. No more Mr. Nice Facilities Guy. When we took the fence out, we sprinkled the ground around the employee entrance with an invisible tracing powder—you know, the kind the Russians used on U.S. diplomats. Every time you walk on the grass, your shoes pick up some of the particles. Some evening soon, after everyone's gone home, we'll get out our scanning equipment and follow your tracks—all the way to your office. Do you want to imagine what we might do to your nodes, your furniture, or your personal belongings?

By the way, this powder that we've sprinkled on the grass is radioactive—the government hasn't determined yet how much damage those diplomats sustained from the Russian's use of it. But, frankly, we're so sick and tired of you smart alecks wearing down the grass that we think it serves you right to get a healthy dose of radiation poisoning.

## *In Search of Apollo*

### **F.J.E.E.E.E., Car Wars, and Corporate Culture**

*by Mike Tentacle*

Corporate culture is an often misused term that frequently enters the pages of new best-selling books on the business world. Some new titles coming up: *The Role of Corporate Culture in the Yogurt Business*, *Brown-Nosing Your Boss*, and *In Search of Mediocrity*. People often pose the question, "What is Apollo culture and where did it come from?" Let me attempt to answer that question.

Ole Bill P. used to be very fond of a speech that started out with his 6 Apollo culture buzzwords. How did it go now? "Fun, justice, excellence, ego, ego, and ego..." It was something like that anyway. I interviewed Bill to find out how he came up with this marvelous set of easy to remember hallmarks of Apollo personality. Bill said, "Well, first of all I wanted something with a nice easy acronym. So I started out with the letters F.J.E.E.E.E. which is pronounced like Fiji, which happens to be my favorite weekend vacation spot. Then, it was just a matter of thinking up words that would fit into the acronym. I knew I wanted to emphasize ego, because at the time we were busy filling out our OS and graphics groups. So that covered 3 of the E's. Then I slipped the word fun in because I needed something to conceal the

3 ego's. Justice seemed like an appropriate description of the stock options I granted to my revered "First 50". Finally, I threw in excellence because I thought I might get interviewed for that new book that Waters and whats-his-name were working on." Thus, are corporate culture legends born.

To get the real low-down on a company, you sometimes have to seek out disgruntled former employees. In the far reaches of Rhode Island, I found former hardware engineer and Apollo "First 50" keyholder, Sean Q. Hart. I posed the question to Sean, "What were the best and worst aspects of Apollo culture for you?" Sean had this to say: "Well, Apollo was bitchin' back when we worked all kinds of weirrrrd hours. When we were debugging the Apollo I [DN100] I used to work from say 8 pm to 4 am and then Byron [Byron Durso] would take the 4 am to noon shift. I loved that shit. There was none of this baby stuff of getting managers to approve your tasklist and sign off on the schedule. We just wailed on the sucker 'till it worked."

Sean went on to say, "When our eyes were too red to see the glow of the phosphor any more, Lepaul [Vin Lepaul] and I would wail on pong until we were too tired to stand up. Then I'd go home for an hour or two, have breakfast, and come back psyched for another MD session. It was finnnne. Back in those days, nobody gave a shit about corporate culture. To us corporate culture meant busting our butts - we knew that if our friends and family still recognized us at the end of a project, we hadn't worked hard enough. We lived that same philosophy on the Lemming project. We wailed on that sucker for 9 months, and then shipped it, because Bill said we had to. I did first proto debug out at Calma. It was grrrrreat!"

No examination of company climate would be complete without a look at company status symbols. Apollo has its own special version of this, known affectionately throughout the company as "Car Wars." Car wars started in the days when men were men, women were secretaries, and cars were expensive. In the early days before IPO (Initial Public Offering), a Saab or BMW packed plenty of wallop to satisfy even the most fervent of car warriors. A Saab 900 Turbo represented a good first strike capability. After IPO, everything changed. An Apollo VP without a Porsche became an object of ridicule at OC meetings. But the threat of nuclear car wars loomed larger and larger as the price tags grew with each passing month. The end came soon enough - R & D VP Dave Nillson launched an all-out preemptive 150 megaton Multiply Independent Reentry Vehicle - the only car whose \$30,000 rebate was as much as the other warrior's cars - a black Rolls Royce.

Dave's Rolls had armor plating to protect from terrorist activity (Dave always was a forward thinker). From the back it looked just like a big Buick of days gone by. But a front view revealed that classic Rolls silver grille - big enough to obstruct the view of smaller, less expansive automobiles. Its \$150,000 price tag nuked the opposition into submission. The other VP's drove their Porsche's around wearing dark glasses and Groucho noses so as not to be recognized by Dave in his splendiferous horseless carriage. The war was over.

Next Week: Interviews with survivors of the famous Lemming Project and the ghosts of "Black Tuesday" Resizing Victims.



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### RESPONSE TIME

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Dear *Conniption*:

I didn't understand that there artsty-fartsy book review by Smedly Luce in your second issue. Am I just plain dumb, or what? - KUK, Loonenburg MA.

*Mr. Luce responds:* Actually, I do not feel qualified to diagnose your intellectual capacities (tempting though that may be); however, there were several printing errors in my last review which caused it to seem totally meaningless and vapid. Please note that the title of the piece should be: *The Machine in the Garden: Eschatological Formalisms in Post-Modern Programming*. Moreover, the footnote which accompanies the final paragraph was not printed. It should read, "For a complete treatment of these critical issues, see my forthcoming book *In Search of Sequence: Some Pointers on Arrays*, Oxford University Press, 1986." I fully sympathize with your profound puzzlement in light of these omissions, and trust that you agree their inclusion transforms the article into a paragon of literary criticism. Let us hope that the production staff of this worthless rag can improve their performance in the future so that scholars such as I need not humble themselves with as pointless an exercise as responding to reader comments.



DON'T MISS OUR NEW  
TASTE SECTION  
IN THIS WEEKS  
CONNIPTION

## Apollo Moves Toward Case Sensitivity

In response to increasing industry pressure, Apollo has announced that it will abandon its policy of case insensitivity and will make its systems case sensitive. Toward this end, the company will be sending all of its software engineers to case sensitivity training workshops during the next six months.

The three-day intensive workshops that the engineers will attend are to be conducted by Professor U.L.C. Capp, a recognized expert in case sensitivity training and author of the definitive text on the subject, *I'm Mixed Case, You're Mixed Case*. Professor Capp has been leading case sensitivity training workshops since 1971, when the UNIX operating system's creation forced engineers throughout the computer industry to confront their own case insensitivity and explore the subtle nuances of case.

During the workshops, engineers will be encouraged to examine the messages underlying case. Professor Capp will teach them to recognize the uses - and abuses - of capital letters: to see their occasional use as emphatic, and their constant use as signifying an overbearing personality. Lower case, too, will be given close study. Professor Capp's lecture entitled "Lower Case: User-Friendly or User-Diminutive?" is traditionally one of the most popular parts of the workshop. It has been videotaped and shown to engineers in all corners of the world.

Engineers will attend the workshops in groups of no more than eight. All workshops will be conducted at Apollo during normal working hours. Engineering managers will be contacting engineers individually over the next several weeks to schedule workshop attendance. Engineers with more than one capital letter in their last names (e.g. O'Toole, Von Bryan) will be asked to attend special four-day workshops.



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# TASTE

## *Vanderslice Adds the Cafeteria to Pampel's Plate*

President Thomas Aquinas Vanderslice announced a reorganization of the corporation last week. The cafeteria will no longer be a separately managed organization within Apollo. Vice-President Roland Pampel will assume managerial responsibilities for the cafeteria. He will continue to manage R&D and marketing. "We are very excited at Apollo with this new organization. This focuses the internal and external workings of our development group in one location," Vanderslice told the stockholders at last week's meeting.

Vanderslice denies that this new organization is in direct response to the news last week that Sun Microsystems was entering a major joint marketing venture with Beatrice to develop microprocessor-controlled orange juice.

In a interview with this reporter, Pampel outlined his plans for the cafeteria. He will reduce the amount of cooking that currently is done in the kitchens. "Since I've been here, I've heard nothing but complaints that the food is not prepared correctly," Pampel stated. He went on to explain that it isn't a case of the cooks not being good enough to prepare the food or that there were not enough cooks, but that the cooks were trying to cook too many things. "I am examining the menu that we currently serve. I plan to eliminate the frills and stick to the basics. We need to stay with the things that we do well," explained Pampel.

Pampel plans to identify the three or four items that the cafeteria prepares well. Pampel claims, "We will supplement this selection with more buyout of food prepared by third-party vendors." Initial reports indicate that the items that Pampel plans to keep are burgers, hotdogs, and fries, "the items that we must cook to be called a true cafeteria." It also has been rumored that a new emphasis will be placed on bulk and roughage foods. An unnamed source claims that Pampel's plans are to get R&D and Marketing "moving" again.

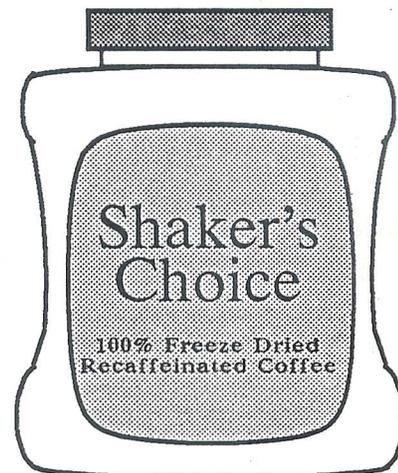
Pampel is personally preparing the new menus. He plans to announce the contents of the new menus within the next week.

"In addition to the new menus, I would like to place the entire cafeteria process under ECO control," said Pampel. He feels that the manufacturing of food should follow the same procedures that Apollo uses to develop products. Pampel hopes to have a process in place within the next year where the cooks verify that new dishes developed by local restaurants are tasty. After the cooks approve the new dishes, Manufacturing will begin to cook the dishes using specs sent over by the cooks. Pampel stated, "I don't think that Apollo needs to have its own cooks develop new meals. Its much more cost efficient to buy the new recipes."

Work appears to be slowing down in the cafeteria. The cooks are not sure which of the meals they will be allowed to continue to sell and as a result have stopped working on new menus. One cook explained, "Why should I perfect my new chicken Kiev? Until Roland gives us the new menus, I don't know what I'll have to cook." He went on to complain, "If the rumors are true, and we end up only cooking burgers and fries and have to buy the rest of the stuff, I'm walking. I didn't spend three years at the Culinary Institute of America to become a short-order hack."



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### CRITIC'S CORNER

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**Cafe Teria** (Bld. 270, open 7:00 am – 2:00 pm weekdays. Call ext. 1111 for reservations.) The first thing one senses when one enters the newly reopened Cafe Teria is the muted elegance of its decor: simple round tables; molded chairs in soft pastels with clean, uncluttered lines; understated white dinnerware. Gone are the gaudy, rococo displays of the previous owners; the new hosts, Jan and Vince, present you with a tasteful dining experience unparalleled in contemporary corporate cultures.

Jan met us at the door and conducted us to a cozy corner table near the windows. This allowed us to explore the bucolic vista beyond the glass as we savored a quiet fruit cocktail in preparation for the meal. The passing semi's were a rumbling contrast to the calm within: a fitting reminder of the secluded sanctuary which we had discovered.

The Teria menu has been completely revamped, tending toward more fashionable, lightly-seasoned dishes which vary according to the prevailing season. During our visit, we sampled the ever-popular Onion Rings (\$0.69) and found them to be a deep-fried delight. The batter was browned to perfection with just that hint of oil which reminds you of the Ring's culinary heritage. We also tried the Salmon Patti Supreme (\$2.25): small cakes of fish flesh awash in a sea of rich egg noodles. Magnifique! Accompanied by a fresh garden salad and the best carbonated beverage in the house, the meal was sumptuous to excess. As a fitting end to our repast, we enjoyed a frosty Sport Bar straight from the ice cream dispenser in the foyer (not, as in some less thoughtful surroundings, right in the midst of the dining area!). The family feeling imparted by this "serve yourself" approach to desserts was truly a breath of fresh air.

This diner was delighted by the entire experience. Be sure to include brunch at the Cafe Teria in your itinerary the next time you chance to pass through Building 270.



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Are you tired of the same old meals? Do you have as much trouble matching your beverage with your entree as you do finding a tie to go with that plaid shirt? The solution's right here — *Meal-in-a-Wine-Glass* — from Barstow and Jaynes! In the freezer section of finer supermarkets.

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## classifieds

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## GRAIN FUTURES

by Sharky DeBullion, *Cub Reporter*

Sharky fans, I bet you're wondering how it came to be that I, Sharky DeBullion, executive editor, Mr. Front Page, have been exiled to six-point seclusion back here in the fish wrapping section.

When Ted Turner takes over *The Conniption*, he invites me to a "business lunch." So, his limo pulls up at Conniption Towers, and I feel like a million bucks as I get in and shake hands with him, larger than life and smelling of Old Spice. We hit it off immediately; there's a certain kinship among men who share the same lofty moral values. I complement his photo of Nixon. He complements my "Go Braves" t-shirt (which I have bought for the occasion). We drive to his yacht. "Hope you like sailing?" he asks with a smile. "Hell yes," I answer powerfully. "I was in the Navy for four years." (Okay, so I was in procurement, big deal.) So we're sailing and it's getting a little bumpy and we start to eat lunch and his chef serves squid *en el tente* and I end up throwing up *el tente* all over Mr. Turner. He is furious; he doesn't say another word to

me, just orders his captain to make for shore. When we're back in the limo, Ted is all smiles again as he whispers instructions to the driver. We drive to a basketball stadium. "Wonderful!" I say, "We're going to see your Atlanta Hawks play." He chuckles inwardly and tells me "Something like that, Mr. DeBullion." So we go inside the stadium and it's totally empty. I mean the only people inside that stadium are Mr. Turner, me, and this tiny black guy. Now, Sharky is as modern as the next guy so I say to him "Son, why don't you fetch Mr. Turner and me some popcorn so that we can enjoy the game." This breaks both him and Mr. Turner up. "I don't think you quite understand Mr. DeBullion, you are the game." It seems that they want me to go one-on-one with the little guy. No problem; I have six inches and tons of experience on him. "And just to make it more interesting Mr. DeBullion," he tells me, "if you lose this game, you're out as editor." So, we tip off and things don't go too well for Sharky. The ball just wasn't bouncing in for me; the breaks weren't falling my way. I lose 26-0. Mr. Turner and the little guy slam high-fives at center court and walk off. I'm alone, beaten, and unemployed. Then I remembered the law offices of Dewey, Cheatem, and Howe. Mr. Turner was all too happy to settle out-of-court as long as I made some slight compromises. So I'll be back to you next week with all the important news from the Chicago Grain Market.