

Internet Humour

Please note this document contains some adult language and themes, so read it at your own risk

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The BrickLayer

This is a bricklayer's accident report that was printed in the newsletter of the English equivalent of the Workers' Compensation Board. This is this Bricklayer's report ... a true story.

Dear Sir;

I am writing in response to your request for additional information in Block #3 of the accident reporting form. I put "Poor Planning" as the cause of my accident. You asked for a fuller explanation and I trust the following details will be sufficient.

I am a bricklayer by trade. On the day of the accident, I was working alone on the roof of a new six-story building. When I completed my work, I found I had some bricks left over which when weighed later were found to weigh 240 lbs. Rather than carry the bricks down by hand, I decided to lower them in a barrel by using a pulley which was attached to the side of the building at the sixth floor.

Securing the rope at ground level, I went up to the roof, swung the barrel out and loaded the bricks into it. Then I went down and untied the rope, holding it tightly to insure a slow descent of the 240 lbs of bricks.

You will note on the accident reporting form that my weight is 135 lbs.

Due to my surprise at being jerked off the ground so suddenly, I lost my presence of mind and forgot to let go of the rope. Needless to say, I proceeded at a rapid rate up the side of the building. In the vicinity of the third floor, I met the barrel which was now proceeding downward at an equally impressive speed. This explains the fractured skull, minor abrasions and the broken collarbone, as listed in Section 3, accident reporting form.

Slowed only slightly, I continued my rapid ascent, not stopping until the fingers of my right hand were two knuckles deep into the pulley which I mentioned in Paragraph 2 of this correspondence. Fortunately by this time I had regained my presence of mind and was able to hold tightly to the rope, in spite of the excruciating pain I was now beginning to experience.

At approximately the same time, however, the barrel of bricks hit the ground and the bottom fell out of the barrel. Now devoid of the weight of the bricks, the barrel weighed approximately 50 lbs. I refer you again to my weight. As you might imagine, I began a rapid descent down the side of the building. In the vicinity of the third floor, I met the barrel coming up. This accounts for the two fractured ankles, broken tooth and severe lacerations of my legs and lower body.

Here my luck began to change slightly. The encounter with the barrel seemed to slow me enough to lessen my injuries when I fell into the pile of bricks and fortunately only three vertebrae were cracked.

I am sorry to report, however, as I lay there on the pile of bricks, in pain, unable to move and watching the empty barrel six stories above me, I again lost my composure and presence of mind and let go of the rope and I lay there watching the empty barrel begin its journey back onto me

Paddy

Paddy went to New York to visit his cousin. The cousin decided to show Paddy the sights. What trip to New York would be complete without a game of baseball, so the cousin took Paddy to see the Yankees play.

Paddy had a little difficulty following the game. A lot of running and a lot of throwing. A bloke would come out to a shiny mat on the ground, another bloke would throw a ball at him and the bloke at the plate, using his cudgel, hit it to other blokes in the field. When he hit it, he would run to another mat and the crowd would leap to their feet shouting 'RUN, RUN'. Paddy thought, OK, and joined in the fun.

Just as Paddy thought he had the hang of the rules, this bloke came to the plate and didn't do anything. The other bloke kept throwing the ball at him and still this fella wouldn't use his cudgel. Finally, this bloke just throws his cudgel away and starts to walk. Paddy leapt to his feet, screaming 'RUN, RUN'.

His cousin patted his arm and said 'Paddy, he's got 4 balls, so only has to walk.'

Paddy leapt to his feet again, shouting 'WALK WITH PRIDE MAN, WALK WITH PRIDE!'

PRISON LIFE VS FULL-TIME JOB

- In prison you spend the majority of your time in an 8' X 10' cell
- At work you spend most of your time in a 6' X 8' cubicle.

- In prison you get three meals a day.
- At work you only get a break for one meal and you have to pay for that one.

- In prison you get time off for good behaviour.
- At work you get rewarded for good behaviour with more work.

- In prison a guard locks and unlocks all the doors for you.
- At work you must carry around a security card and unlock and open all the doors yourself.

- In prison you can watch TV and play games.
- At work you get fired for watching TV and playing games.

- In prison they ball-and-chain you when you go somewhere.
- At work you are just ball-and-chained.

- In prison you get your own toilet.
- At work you have to share.

- In prison they allow your family and friends to visit.
- At work you cannot even speak to your family and friends.

- In prison all expenses are paid by taxpayers, with no work required.
- At work you get to pay all the expenses to go to work and then they deduct taxes from your salary to pay for the prisoners.

- In prison you spend most of your life looking through bars from the inside wanting to get out.
- At work you spend most of your time wanting to get out and inside bars.

- In prison you can join many programs which you can leave at anytime.
- At work there are some programs you can never get out of.

- In prison there are wardens who are often sadistic.
- At work we have managers.

Doctor

A doctor had just finished a marathon shagging session with one of his patients.

He was resting afterwards and was feeling a bit guilty because he thought it wasn't really ethical to screw one of his patients. However, a little voice in his head said "Lots of other doctors have sex with their patients so its not like you're the first..."

This made the doctor feel a bit better until another voice in his head said, " but they probably weren't vets"

Airforce Maintenance

Here are some actual maintenance complaints submitted by US Air Force pilots and the replies from the maintenance crews. "Squawks" are problem listings that pilots generally leave for maintenance crews.

Problem: "Left inside main tire almost needs replacement."
Solution: "Almost replaced left inside main tire."

Problem: "Test flight OK, except autoland very rough."
Solution: "Autoland not installed on this aircraft."

Problem #1: "#2 Propeller seeping prop fluid."
Solution #1: "#2 Propeller seepage normal."
Problem #2: "#1, #3, and #4 propellers lack normal seepage."

Problem: "The autopilot doesn't."
Signed off: "IT DOES NOW."

Problem: "Something loose in cockpit."
Solution: "Something tightened in cockpit."

Problem: "Evidence of hydraulic leak on right main landing gear."
Solution: "Evidence removed.."

Problem: "DME volume unbelievably loud."
Solution: "Volume set to more believable level."

Problem: "Dead bugs on windshield."
Solution: "Live bugs on order."

Problem: "Autopilot in altitude hold mode produces a 200 fpm descent."
Solution: "Cannot reproduce problem on ground."

Problem: "IFF inoperative."
Solution: "IFF inoperative in OFF mode."

Problem: "Friction locks cause throttle levers to stick."
Solution: "That's what they're there for."

Problem: "Number three engine missing."
Solution: "Engine found on right wing after brief search."

Catflap

"In retrospect, I admit it was unwise to try to gain access to my house via the cat flap," Gunther Burpus admitted to reporters in Bremen, Germany. "I suppose that the reason they're called cat flaps, rather than human flaps, is because they're too small for people, and perhaps I should have realized that."

Burpus, a forty-one year old gardener from Bremen, was relating how he had become trapped in his own front door for two days, after losing his house keys. "I got my head and shoulders through the flap, but became trapped fast around the waist. At first, it all seemed rather amusing. I sang songs and told myself jokes. But then I wanted to go to the lavatory. I began shouting for help, but my head was in the hallway so my screams were muffled.

After a few hours, a group of students approached me but, instead of helping, they removed my trousers and pants, painted my buttocks bright blue, and stuck a daffodil between my cheeks. Then they placed a sign next to me which said "Germany resurgent, an essay in street art. Please give generously" and left me there. People were passing by and, when I asked for help, they just said "very good! very clever!" and threw coins into my trousers.

No one tried to free me. In fact, I only got free after two days because a dog started licking my private parts and an old woman complained to the police. They came and cut me out, but arrested me as soon as I was freed. Luckily they've now dropped the charges, and I collected over DM3,000 in my underpants, so the time wasn't entirely wasted."

Creation

God created the donkey and told him: "You will work tirelessly from sun up to sun down, carrying heavy bags on your back, you'll eat grass, you will not have intelligence and you will live 50 years. You will be a DONKEY!"

The donkey answered: "I'll be a donkey, but living 50 years is too much, give me only 20 years." And God gave him 20 years.

God created the dog and told him: "You will look after the men house, you will be his best friend, you will eat whatever they give you and you will live 25 years. You will be a DOG!"

The dog answered: "God, living 25 years is too much, give only 10." God gave him 10 years.

God created the monkey and told him: "You will jump from branch to branch, you will do silly things, you will be amusing and you will live 20 years."

The monkey answered: "God, living 20 years is too much, give me only 10 years." And God agreed.

Finally, God created man, and told him: "You will be Man, the only rational being on this earth, you will use your intelligence to control other animals, you will dominate the world and you will live for 20 years."

The man answered: "God, I'll be man, but living 20 years is not enough, why don't you give me the 30 years that the donkey refused, the 15 years that the dog did not want and the 10 years that the monkey refused."

That was what God did, and since then, Man live 20 years like a man, then enters adulthood and spends 30 years like a donkey, working and carrying the load on his back, then when his children leave home, spends 15 years like a dog, looking after the house and eating whatever is given to him, then he gets into retirement, and spends 10 years like a monkey, jumping from house to house or from children to children, doing silly things to amuse the grandchildren..

Golf

A lawyer was so fanatical about his golf game that he played every day. One morning after he had completed the first hole and was just about ready to tee off on the second, he noticed the most gorgeous woman he had ever seen, putting alone on the first green.

The lawyer waited until the woman had reached the second tee and asked if she would like to join him, and they could finish together. To his surprise the woman agreed, and they played the remaining holes. Not only was this woman beautiful, she was also a good golfer.

When they completed their round, the lawyer told the woman that not only was he a lawyer, but he was also a cordon bleu chef and wine buff. He invited her back to his place for a meal and a few drinks. The woman accepted enthusiastically and off they went. Back at the house, the lawyer cooked a magnificent meal. In fact it was more than just cooking; it was a performance to behold. They enjoyed good food, good wine and good conversation. After the meal, the woman repaid the lawyer with the best oral sex he had ever experienced.

The lawyer was so taken by the beauty and skill of this woman that he desired her to no end. He then asked if she would like to play golf the following morning, to which she agreed. Once again, they enjoyed a great game of golf together, a magnificent evening meal, and once more the lawyer received sensational oral sex.

This went on for three weeks, when the lawyer finally said, "Listen, the golf and the company has been fantastic! But, there is only so much oral sex a man can take. When are we going to go at it?"

"We can't" said the woman. "Why not?" cried the lawyer. "Because I'm a transvestite" replied the woman.

"YOU BASTARD!" screamed the lawyer. "I can't believe you have been playing off the LADIES' TEES FOR THE LAST THREE WEEKS!"

If architects had to work like programmers

Dear Mr. Architect:

Please design and build me a house. I am not quite sure of what I need, so you should use your discretion.

My house should have between two and forty-five bedrooms. Just make sure the plans are such that the bedrooms can be easily added or deleted. When you bring the blueprints to me, I will make the final decision of what I want. Also, bring me the cost breakdown for each configuration so that I can arbitrarily pick one.

Keep in mind that the house I ultimately choose must cost less than the one I am currently living in. Make sure, however, that you correct all the deficiencies that exist in my current house (the floor of my kitchen vibrates when I walk across it, and the walls don't have nearly enough insulation in them).

As you design, also keep in mind that I want to keep yearly maintenance costs as low as possible. This should mean the incorporation of extra-cost features like aluminum, vinyl, or composite siding. (If you choose not to specify aluminum, be prepared to explain your decision in detail.) Please take care that modern design practices and the latest materials are used in construction of the house, as I want it to be a showplace for the most up-to-date ideas and methods. Be alerted, however, that kitchen should be designed to accommodate, among other things, my 1952 Gibson refrigerator.

To insure that you are building the correct house for our entire family, make certain that you contact each of our children, and also our in-laws. My mother-in-law will have very strong feelings about how the house should be designed, since she visits us at least once a year. Make sure that you weigh all of these options carefully and come to the right decision. I, however, retain the right to overrule any choices that you make.

Please don't bother me with small details right now. Your job is to develop the overall plans for the house: get the big picture. At this time, for example, it is not appropriate to be choosing the color of the carpet. However, keep in mind that my wife likes blue.

Also, do not worry at this time about acquiring the resources to build the house itself. Your first priority is to develop detailed plans and specifications. Once I approve these plans, however, I would expect the house to be under roof within 48 hours.

While you are designing this house specifically for me, keep in mind that sooner or later I will have to sell it to someone else. It therefore should have appeal to a wide variety of potential buyers. Please make sure before you finalize the plans that there is a consensus of the population in my area that they like the features this house has.

I advise you to run up and look at my neighbor's house he constructed last year. We like it a great deal. It has many features that we would also like in our new home, particularly the 75-foot swimming pool. With careful engineering, I believe that you can design this into our new house without impacting the final cost.

Please prepare a complete set of blueprints. It is not necessary at this time to do the real design, since they will be used only for construction bids. Be advised, however, that you will be held accountable for any increase of construction costs as a result of later design changes.

You must be thrilled to be working on as an interesting project as this! To be able to use the latest techniques and materials and to be given such freedom in your designs is something that can't happen very often. Contact me as soon as possible with your complete ideas and plans.

PS: My wife has just told me that she disagrees with many of the instructions I've given you in this letter. As architect, it is your responsibility to resolve these differences. I have tried in the past and have been unable to accomplish this. If you can't handle this responsibility, I will have to find another architect.

PPS: Perhaps what I need is not a house at all, but a travel trailer. Please advise me as soon as possible if this is the case.

ACTUAL Announcements Taken from Church Bulletins:

- 1) Don't let worry kill you. Let the Church help.
- 2) Thursday night-Potluck Supper. Prayer and medication to follow.
- 3) Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our church and community.
- 4) For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.
- 5) The rosebud on the altar this morning is to announce the birth of David Alan Belzer, the son of Rev and Mrs. Julius Belzer.
- 6) This afternoon there will be a meeting in the south and north ends of the church. Children will be baptized at both ends.
- 7) Tuesday at 4PM there will be an ice cream social. All ladies giving milk will please come early.
- 8) Wednesday, the Ladies Liturgy Society will meet. Mrs. Jones will sing "Put Me In My Little Bed" accompanied by the pastor.
- 9) Thursday at 5PM there will be a meeting of the Little Mothers Club. All wishing to become Little Mothers, please see the minister in his private study.
- 10) This being Easter Sunday, we will ask Mrs. Lewis to come forward and lay an egg on the altar.
- 11) The service will close with "Little Drops of Water." One of the ladies will start (quietly) and the rest of the congregation will join in.
- 12) Next Sunday, a special collection will be taken to defray the cost of the new carpet. All those wishing to do something on the new carpet will come forward and get a piece of paper.
- 13) The ladies of the church have cast off clothing of every kind and they may be seen in the church basement Friday.
- 14) A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall. Music will follow.
- 15) At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be "What is Hell?" Come early and listen to our choir practice.
- 16) Weight Watchers will meet at 7 PM at the First Presbyterian Church. Please use large double door at the side entrance.
- 17) The 1991 Spring Council Retreat will be held May 10 and 11.
- 18) Pastor is on vacation. Massages can be given to church secretary.
- 19) 8 new choir robes are currently needed, due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.
- 20) Mr. Johnson will be entering the hospital this week for testes.
- 21) The Senior Choir invites any member of the congregation who enjoys sinning to join the choir.
- 22) Please join us as we show our support for Amy and Alan who is preparing for the birth of their first child.
- 23) Scouts are saving aluminum cans, bottles, and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.
- 24) The Lutheran Men's group will meet at 6 PM. Steak, mashed potatoes, green beans, bread and dessert will be served for a nominal fee.
- 25) The Associate Minister unveiled the church's new tithing campaign slogan last Sunday: "I Upped My Pledge -- Up Yours."

John Howard

John Howard is visiting a school. In one class, he asks the students if anyone can give him an example of a "tragedy". One little boy stands up and offers, "If my best friend who lives next door was playing in the street when a car came along and killed him, that would be a tragedy."

"No," Howard says, "That would be an ACCIDENT." A girl raises her hand. "If a school bus carrying fifty children drove off a cliff, killing everyone involved... that would be a tragedy." "I'm afraid not," explains Howard. "That is what we would call a GREAT LOSS." The room is silent; none of the other children volunteer.

"What?" asks Howard, "Isn't there any one here who can give me an example of a tragedy?"

Finally, a boy in the back raises his hand. In a timid voice, he says: "If an airplane carrying John Howard and his ministers were blown up by a bomb, THAT would be a tragedy." "How interesting!" Howard beams. "And can you tell me WHY that would be a tragedy?" "Well," says the boy, "because it wouldn't be an accident, and it certainly would not be a great loss!"

Interview Gaffs

We've all been interviewed for jobs. And, we've all spent most of those interviews thinking about what not to do. Don't bite your nails. Don't fidget. Don't interrupt. Don't belch. If we did any of the don'ts, we knew we'd disqualify ourselves instantly. But some job applicants go light years beyond this. We surveyed top personnel executives of 100 major American corporations and asked for stories of unusual behavior by job applicants. The lowlights:

1. Said he was so well-qualified [that] if he didn't get the job, it would prove that the company's management was incompetent.
2. Stretched out on the floor to fill out the job application.
3. Brought her large dog to the interview.
4. Chewed bubble gum and constantly blew bubbles.
5. Candidate kept giggling through serious interview.
6. She wore a Walkman and said she could listen to me and the music at the same time.
7. Balding candidate abruptly excused himself. Returned to office a few minutes later, wearing a hairpiece.
8. Applicant challenged interviewer to arm wrestle.
9. Asked to see interviewer's resume to see if the personnel executive was qualified to judge the candidate.
10. Announced she hadn't had lunch and proceeded to eat a hamburger and french fries in the interviewer's office.
11. Without saying a word, candidate stood up and walked out during the middle of the interview.
12. Man wore jogging suit to interview for position as financial vice president.
13. Said if he were hired, he would demonstrate his loyalty by having the corporate logo tattooed on his forearm.
14. Interrupted to phone his therapist for advice on answering specific interview questions.
15. Wouldn't get out of the chair until I would hire him. I had to call the police.
16. When I asked him about his hobbies, he stood up and started tap dancing around my office.
17. Had a little pinball game and challenged me to play with him.
18. Bounced up and down on my carpet and told me I must be highly thought of by the company because I was given such a thick carpet.
19. Took a brush out of my purse, brushed his hair and left.
20. Pulled out a Polaroid camera and snapped a flash picture of me. Said he collected photos of everyone who interviewed him.
21. Candidate asked me if I would put on a suit jacket to insure that the offer was formal.
22. Said he wasn't interested because the position paid too much.
23. While I was on a long-distance phone call, the applicant took out a copy of Penthouse, and looked through the photos only, stopping longest at the centerfold.
24. During the interview, an alarm clock went off from the candidate's brief case. He took it out, shut it off, apologised and said he had to leave for another interview.
25. A telephone call came in for the job applicant. It was from his wife. His side of the conversation went like this: "Which company? When do I start? What's the salary?" I said, "I assume you're not interested in conducting the interview any further." He promptly responded, "I am as long as you'll pay me more." I didn't hire him, but later found out there was no other job offer. It was a scam to get a higher offer.
26. An applicant came in wearing only one shoe. She explained that the other shoe was stolen off her foot in the bus.
27. His attache' opened when he picked it up and the contents spilled, revealing ladies' undergarments and assorted makeup and perfume.
28. He came to the interview with a moped and left it in the reception area. He didn't want it to get stolen, and stated that he would require indoor parking for the moped.
29. He took off his right shoe and sock, removed a medicated foot powder and dusted it on the foot and in the shoe. While he was putting back the shoe and sock, he mentioned that he had to use the powder four times a day, and this was the time.
30. Candidate said he really didn't want to get a job, but the unemployment office needed proof that he was looking for one.
31. He whistled when the interviewer was talking.
32. Asked who the lovely babe was, pointing to the picture on my desk. When I said it was my wife, he asked if she was home now and wanted my phone number. I called security.
33. She threw-up on my desk, and immediately started asking questions about the job, like nothing had happened.
34. Pointing to a black case he carried into my office, he said that if he was not hired, the bomb would go off. Disbelieving, I began to state why he would never be hired and that I was going to call the police. He then reached down to the case, flipped a switch and ran. No one was injured, but I did need to get a new desk.
35. Asked if I wanted some cocaine before starting the interview.

RAILROAD TRACKS

Two guys were walking along a deserted beach and bored to tears. The first guy says: "Hey, I have an idea. Let's split up. You walk as far as you can that way down the beach, and I'll walk as far as I can the other way down the beach. We'll meet here tomorrow and tell each other what we did."

The other gentleman agreed and each man began walking in opposite directions down the beach. The next day, they meet and the first guy says: "So. Tell me about your day!"

The second guy smiled and said: "Oh, I had a great one! I found a small little oasis with a pond and some cool grass and spent the day swimming and eating coconuts from a tree! What happened to you?"

His friend smiled and said: "You're never going to believe it!! I walked about five miles up the coast and came to these train tracks. I walked down the tracks about a mile and found this girl with the most incredible body I've ever seen tied to the rails! I untied her and carried her to some grass nearby and we spent all day and night having the most incredible sex I've ever had! This girl was amazing! We did everything together!"

The other guy looked at his friend in amazement and asked him.. "Everything?"

"Everything!" he replied.

"Did she suck your dick?"

"Well..no..She didn't do that" the man said with a sigh.. "I couldn't find her head!"

One Liners

Q. What's the difference between pre-menstrual tension and B.S.E?
A. One's mad cow disease, the other's an agricultural problem.

Q. What's the difference between a mugger and a peeping Tom?
A. A mugger snatches watches.

Q: What's the difference between a circus and a whorehouse?
A: A circus is a cunning array of stunts.

Q. What's the difference between a girlfriend and a wife?
A. 45 lbs.

Q. What's the difference between a boyfriend and a husband?
A. 45 minutes.

One sperm to the other, "How far is it to the ovaries?" The other one says, "Relax. We just passed the tonsils."

Q. What is it when a man talks nasty to a woman?
A. Sexual harassment.

Q. What is it when a woman talks nasty to a man?
A. \$3.99 a minute.

Q. What is the definition of "making love"?
A. Something a woman does while a guy is fucking her.

A midget sidles up to a tall blonde and says, "Hey, what do you say to a little fuck?" She says, "Hello, you little fuck."

Q. How are women and rocks alike?
A. You skip the flat ones.

Q. Did you hear about the new blonde paint?
A. It's not real bright, but it's cheap, and spreads easy.

Q. How can you tell if your wife is dead?
A. The sex is the same but the dishes pile up.
Q. How can you tell if your husband is dead?
A. The sex is the same but you get the remote.

Q. How do we know God is a man?
A. Because if God were a woman, sperm would taste like chocolate.

Q. What's the difference between "Ooooh!" and "Aaahhh!?"
A. About four inches

Q: What's got four legs and an arm?
A: A happy pit bull terrier

Q. Why don't cannibals eat clowns?
A. Because they taste funny

Q: What's the definition of Australian aristocracy?
A: A man who can trace his lineage back to his father.

A woman tells her friend she's received a bunch of flowers from her husband. "I suppose I'll have to spend the entire weekend on my back with my legs in the air," she says, to which her friend replies, "Why, don't you just use a vase instead?"

Q. What's the difference between an Australian and a yoghurt?
A. A yoghurt has a living culture.

Q: What's the difference between a 'dog' and a 'fox'?

A: About eight pints of beer.

Q. What do you call a smart blonde?

A. A golden retriever.

Q: How can you tell if a valentine is from a leper?

A: The tongue's still in the envelope.

Q. What's the definition of Trust?

A. Two cannibals giving each other a blow job.

Even if you win the rat race you're still a rat

"Just the same," exclaimed Noah's wife, "I'd feel much safer if those two termites were locked up in a metal box."

A pat on the back is only a few centimeters from a kick in the butt.

A lady goes for her first golf lesson. The pro says, "You've got to hold the club like you hold your husband's organ." She takes the club and hits the ball. He says, "Beautiful. Perfect shot. Right down the fairway. Now, take the club out of your mouth, put it in your hands, and we'll go for distance.

1) On a Barry Jolly Plumbing Van-Cincinnati area : > "A flush beats a full house!"

2) Advertisement for a radiator repair shop: > "Best place in town to take a leak".

3) In the bathroom of a mom and pop store > "we aim to please, so, please, you aim too."

4) Sign on a retail store door in Stevens Point, WI: PUSH, if it doesn't open, PULL, if it still doesn't open, WE ARE CLOSED.

Lords Prayer

LORD,

Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,

the courage to change the things I can,

and the wisdom to hide the bodies of those people I had to kill because they pissed me off.

Also help me to be careful of the toes I step on today

as they may be connected to the ass that I may have to kiss TOMORROW

YESTERDAY

Yesterday,

All those backups seemed a waste of pay.

Now my database has gone away.

Oh I believe in yesterday.

Suddenly,

There's not half the files there used to be,

And there's a milestone

hanging over me

The system crashed so suddenly.

I pushed something wrong

What it was I could not say.

Now all my data's gone

and I long for yesterday-ay-ay-ay.

Yesterday,

The need for back-ups seemed so far away.

I knew my data was all here to stay,

Now I believe in yesterday.

50 ways to confuse, worry, or just scare people in the Computer Lab

1. Log on, wait a sec, then get a frightened look on your face and scream "Oh my God! They've found me!" and bolt.
2. Laugh uncontrollably for about 3 minutes & then suddenly stop and look suspiciously at everyone who looks at you.
3. When your computer is turned off, complain to the monitor on duty that you can't get the damn thing to work. After he/she's turned it on, wait 5 minutes, turn it off again, & repeat the process for a good half hour.
4. Type frantically, often stopping to look at the person next to you evilly.
5. Before anyone else is in the lab, connect each computer to different screen than the one it's set up with.
6. Write a program that plays the "Smurfs" theme song and play it at the highest volume possible over & over again.
7. Work normally for a while. Suddenly look amazingly startled by something on the screen and crawl underneath the desk.
8. Ask the person next to you if they know how to tap into top-secret Pentagon files.
9. Use Interactive Send to make passes at people you don't know.
10. Make a small ritual sacrifice to the computer before you turn it on.
11. Bring a chainsaw, but don't use it. If anyone asks why you have it, say "Just in case..." mysteriously.
12. Type on the VAX for a while. Suddenly start cursing for 3 minutes at everything bad about your life. Then stop and continue typing.
13. Enter the lab, undress, and start staring at other people as if they're crazy while typing.
14. Light candles in a pentagram around your terminal before starting.
15. Ask around for a spare disk. Offer \$2. Keep asking until someone agrees. Then, pull a disk out of your fly and say "Oops, I forgot."
16. Every time you press Return and there is processing time required, pray "Ohpleaseohpleaseohpleaseohplease" and scream "YES!" when it finishes.
17. "DISK FIGHT!!!"
18. Start making out with the person at the terminal next to you (It helps if you know them, but this is also a great way to make new friends).
19. Put a straw in your mouth and put your hands in your pockets. Type by hitting the keys with the straw.
20. If you're sitting in a swivel chair, spin around singing "The Lion Sleeps Tonight" whenever there is processing time required.
21. Draw a picture of a woman (or man) on a piece of paper, tape it to your monitor. Try to seduce it. Act like it hates you and then complain loudly that women (men) are worthless.
22. Try to stick a Nintendo cartridge into the 3 1/2 disc drive, when it doesn't work, get the supervisor.
23. When you are on an IBM, and when you turn it on, ask loudly where the smiling Apple face is.
24. Print out the complete works of Shakespeare, then when it's all done (two days later) say that all you wanted was one line.
25. Sit and stare at the screen, biting your nails noisily. After doing this for a while, spit them out at the feet of the person next to you.
26. Stare at the screen, grind your teeth, stop, look at the person next to you. Repeat procedure, making sure you never provoke the person enough to let them blow up, as this releases tension, and it is far more effective to let them linger.
27. If you have long hair, take a typing break, look for split ends, cut them and deposit them on your neighbor's keyboard as you leave.
28. Put a large, gold-framed portrait of the British Royal Family on your desk and loudly proclaim that it inspires you.
29. Come to the lab wearing several layers of socks. Remove shoes and place them on top of the monitor. Remove socks layer by layer and drape them around the monitor. Exclaim sudden haiku about the aesthetic beauty of cotton on plastic.

30. Take the keyboard and sit under the computer. Type up your paper like this. Then go to the lab supervisor and complain about the bad working conditions.
31. Laugh hysterically, shout "You will all perish in flames!!!" and continue working.
32. Bring some dry ice & make it look like your computer is smoking.
33. Assign a musical note to every key (ie. the Delete key is A Flat, the B key is F sharp, etc.). Whenever you hit a key, hum its note loudly. Write an entire paper this way.
34. Attempt to eat your computer's mouse.
35. Borrow someone else's keyboard by reaching over, saying "Excuse me, mind if I borrow this for a sec?", unplugging the keyboard & take it.
36. Bring in a bunch of magnets and have fun.
37. When doing calculations, pull out an abacus and say that sometimes the old ways are best.
38. Play Pong for hours on the most powerful computer in the lab.
39. Make a loud noise of hitting the same key over and over again until you see that your neighbor is noticing (You can hit the space bar so your fill isn't affected). Then look at your neighbor's keyboard. Hit his/her delete key several times, erasing an entire word. While you do this, ask: "Does your delete key work?" Shake your head, and resume hitting the space bar on your keyboard. Keep doing this until you've deleted about a page of your neighbor's document. Then, suddenly exclaim: "Well, whaddya know? I've been hitting the space bar this whole time. No wonder it wasn't deleting! Ha!" Print out your document and leave.
40. Remove your disk from the drive and hide it. Go to the lab monitor and complain that your computer ate your disk. (For special effects, put some Elmer's Glue on or around the disk drive. Claim that the computer is drooling.)
41. Stare at the person's next to your's screen, look really puzzled, burst out laughing, and say "You did that?" loudly. Keep laughing, grab your stuff and leave, howling as you go.
42. Point at the screen. Chant in a made up language while making elaborate hand gestures for a minute or two. Press return or the mouse, then leap back and yell "COVEEEEEERRRRR!" peek up from under the table, walk back to the computer and say. "Oh, good. It worked this time." and calmly start to type again.
43. Keep looking at invisible bugs and trying to swat them.
44. See who's online. Send a total stranger a talk request. Talk to them like you've known them all your lives. Hangup before they get a chance to figure out you're a total stranger.
45. Bring an small tape player with a tape of really absurd sound effects. Pretend it's the computer and look really lost.
46. Pull out a pencil. Start writing on the screen. Complain that the lead doesn't work.
47. Come into the computer lab wearing several endangered species of flowers in your hair. Smile incessantly. Type a sentence, then laugh happily, exclaim "You're such a marvel!!" and kiss the screen. Repeat this after every sentence. As your ecstasy mounts, also hug the keyboard. Finally, hug your neighbor, then the computer assistant, and walk out.
48. Run into the computer lab, shout "Armageddon is here!!!!", then calmly sit down and begin to type.
49. Quietly walk into the computer lab with a Black and Decker chainsaw, rev that baby up, and then walk up to the nearest person and say, "Give me that computer or you'll be feeding my pet crocodile for the next week".
50. Two words: Tesla Coil.

Uni Application

This is an actual essay written by a university applicant. The author, Graham Gallagher, now attends Southampton University.

3A. ESSAY: IN ORDER FOR THE ADMISSIONS STAFF OF OUR UNIVERSITY TO GET TO KNOW YOU, THE APPLICANT, BETTER, WE ASK THAT YOU ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION:

ARE THERE ANY SIGNIFICANT EXPERIENCES YOU HAVE HAD, OR ACCOMPLISHMENTS YOU HAVE REALISED, THAT HAVE HELPED TO DEFINE YOU AS A PERSON?

I am a dynamic figure, often seen scaling walls and crushing ice. I have been known to remodel train stations on my lunch breaks, making them more efficient in the area of heat retention. I translate ethnic slurs for Kenyan refugees, I write award-winning operas, I manage time efficiently. Occasionally, I tread water for three days in a row.

I woo women with my sensuous and godlike trombone playing, I can pilot bicycles up severe inclines with unflagging speed, and I cook Thirty-Minute Brownies in twenty minutes. I am an expert in stucco, a veteran in love, and an outlaw in Peru.

Using only a hoe and a large glass of water, I once single-handedly defended a small village in the Amazon Basin from a horde of ferocious army ants. I play bluegrass cello, I had trials with Manchester United, I am the subject of numerous documentaries. When I'm bored, I build large suspension bridges in my garden. I enjoy urban hang gliding. On Wednesdays, after school, I repair electrical appliances free of charge.

I am an abstract artist, a concrete analyst, and a ruthless bookie. Critics worldwide swoon over my original line of corduroy evening wear. I don't perspire. I am a private citizen, yet I receive fan mail. I have appeared on Through the Keyhole and won the gold plaque. Last summer I toured Eastern Europe with a travelling centrifugal-force demonstration. I run the 100m in 9.65 secs. My deft floral arrangements have earned me fame in international botany circles. Children trust me.

I can hurl tennis rackets at small moving objects with deadly accuracy. I once read Paradise Lost, Moby Dick, and David Copperfield in one day and still had time to refurbish an entire dining room that evening. I know the exact location of every food item in the supermarket. I have performed several covert operations for the CIA. I sleep once a week; when I do sleep, I sleep in a chair. While on vacation in Canada, I successfully negotiated with a group of terrorists who had seized a small bakery. The laws of physics do not apply to me.

I balance, I weave, I dodge, I frolic, and my bills are all paid. On weekends, to let off steam, I participate in full-contact origami. Years ago I discovered the meaning of life but forgot to write it down. I have made extraordinary four course meals using only some vegetables and a Breville Toaster. I breed prize winning clams. I have won bullfights in Madrid, cliff-diving competitions in Sri Lanka, and chess competitions at the Kremlin. I have played Hamlet, I have performed open-heart surgery, and I have spoken with Elvis.

But I have not yet gone to University.

This is a good message for who is going to be married.

- ** Marriage is not a word, it is a sentence ... (a life sentence !!)
- ** Marriage is very much like a violin ; after the sweet music is over, the strings are attached.
- ** Marriage is love. Love is blind. Therefore marriage is an institution for the blind.
- ** Marriage is an institution in which a man loses his Bachelor's Degree and the woman gets her "Masters".
- ** Marriage is a thing which puts a ring in a woman's finger and two under the man's eyes.
- ** Marriage certificate is just another name for a work permit.
- ** Marriage is not just having a wife but also worries inherited forever.
- ** Marriage requires a man to prepare 4 types of "RINGS"-----The Engagement Ring
-----The Wedding Ring
-----The Suffe-Ring
-----The Endu-Ring
- ** Marriage life is full of excitement and frustration:
In the first year , the man speaks and the woman listens. In
the second year, the woman speaks and the man listens.
In the third year, they both speak and the ... neighbours listen.
- ** Is it true that love is blind but marriage is definitely an eye-opener.
- ** Getting married is very much like going to the restaurant with friends ... You order what you want, and when you see what the other fellow has, you wish you had ordered that.
- ** It's true, all men are born free and equal - but some of them get married.
- ** There was this man who muttered a few words in the church and found himself married.
- A year later he muttered something in his sleep and found himself divorced.
- ** A happy marriage is a matter of giving and taking; the husband gives and the wife takes.
- ** Son: How much does it cost to get married Dad?
Father: I don't know, son, I'm still paying for it!
- Son: Is it true, Dad, that I heard that in China, a man doesn't know his wife until he marries ?
Father: That happens everywhere, son, EVERYWHERE.
- ** There was a man who said, "I never knew what happiness was until I got married and then it was too late! "
- ** Love is one long sweet dream, and marriage is the alarm clock.
- ** They say when a man holds a woman's hand before marriage, it is love; after marriage it is self-defence.
- ** When a newly married man looks happy, we know why. But when a ten year married man looks happy, we wonder why?
- ** There was this lover who told his love that he would go through hell for her. They got married and now he is going through HELL.

Australian CD's

This is of course the magic thing about internet news - you can get authoritative answers on almost any subject within hours...

>From Grube (grube@aol.com):

I am coming to Australia for a 3 year stay. Should I bring my CD's to play on Aussie equipment?

=====

From: adrose@news.gate.net (Adrian Rose)

You will need an American to Australian converter device. This is usually hard wired into the CD player by a reputable Australian tech. They are all familiar with the device. Just pop into any CD store and request the phone # of the nearest CD converter tech. It's usually only around \$30 and you will not even know it had been done. You will be able to play not only US cds, and Australian, but as a bonus, European ones too!

Caution-do not try to play bootleg CDs after the conversion, you will ruin the cd player.

From: adrose@news.gate.net (Adrian Rose)

Sorry about that last post-to play your US cds in Australia, they merely need to be passed thru a strong magnetic or x-ray field, such as you get at Customs. Be sure to pass each one thru separately, as bulk passage may leave the ones in the middle unplayable in Oz.

From: "Mark A. Gray" <markg@ssec.wisc.edu>

Well...this may have worked for you, but I found that the only way to get 'em playing was to smear the shiny side with a very thin layer of vegemite. 'Course this makes the inside of your CD player rather sticky, so make sure you have lots of tissues.

From: andersen@s4.elec.uq.edu.au (Hans Andersen)

Don't listen to them. To play American CDs in Australian CD players, you will need to regroove them. This is because Australian CDs have a different track-width (i.e. 10 ums instead of 5 ums). To do this you will need to buy some fine-grade sandpaper. Try to find some with a grain size of between 8 and 12 ums (micrometers for non-technical people). Put a piece of the sandpaper on a table with the rough side up. Now put your CD on the sandpaper and turn it slowly in a clockwise direction, pushing down hard. Oia la (spit) - now you have Australian standard CDs.

Good luck and I hope you enjoy Australia.

From: M.J.Jennings@amtp.cam.ac.uk (Michael Jennings)

No. That is completely wrong. Australian CDs are exactly the same as American ones except for the fact that the 'groove' goes in the opposite direction. That is whereas an American groove goes inwards as you go clockwise an Australian groove goes inwards as you go anti-clockwise. This is because Australian cars drive on the left and American cars drive on the right. If the groove direction was not reversed there would be parity problems with car CD players. Unfortunately, this means that you cannot play an American CD on Australian equipment.

From: spg@Xenon.Stanford.EDU (Stephen P. Guthrie)

You smartarse. Obviously this is nothing to do with the side of the road cars drive on. Do you seriously expect anyone to swallow that? Anyone with a brain knows that it's related to which direction water goes down the plughole in the Southern hemisphere. In other words in the US the cd rotates in a clockwise direction. In Australia it rotates anticlockwise. Of course this is also true if you play your CD's in South America for example. This is actually quite neat because if you play your Beatles cds in the Southern hemisphere you hear all this neat 'backwards masking' stuff about Paul being dead and taking marijuana. Also I heard that you hear all sorts of satanic stuff in other rock albums, but I'm not a fan myself. My question: has anyone done any experiments about playing cds at the equator or at the north pole? At the equator do your cds stop playing altogether. What about in a reduced gravity environment, like in a free falling elevator?

From: leslie@brisbane.DIALix.oz.au (Tye Leslie Sanders)

You're all a bunch of liars!!!! In Australia the initials C.D. stand for Completely Dyslexic which means that the bits are scattered at random all over the disc. All Australian C.D. players are programmed to randomly search over the disc to find the right bit to play next. It is very unlikely that it could cope with a disc where all the bits were in order. I would advise you to record your discs onto Hi-Fi video tape and connect an Australian VCR to a stereo system. Australian and American VCRs are definitely compatible.

From: "Mark A. Gray" <markg@ssec.wisc.edu>

I can't speak for a reduced gravity environment, but I can speak for the equator. It is interesting that you should bring it up, since many CD's simply do not spin at the equator (or near it actually). In Singapore (for instance) they had to ban a whole bunch of CD's or have them altered so that they would play correctly (course if they had a bit of vegemite their problems would be solved). Video tapes and books(!) seem to suffer the same fate their.

Why don't books work properly at the equator?

And I have another question: Short of smearing every page with vegemite, how do you get a northern hemisphere book to work properly in the southern hemisphere? (I'll be bringing some books home with me when I leave here, so I need to know). Thanks in advance.

From: leslie@brisbane.DIALix.oz.au (Tye Leslie Sanders)

Re-your query on playing CDs in reduced gravity, it is not widely known that on the last Space Shuttle mission it was decided to test the effects of playing a compact disc in zero gravity with disastrous results.

When the disc was played, instead of the disc spinning, the entire vehicle began to spin while the disc remained motionless, turning the entire spacecraft into a giant centrifuge, nearly crushing the astronauts to death before the commander was able to crawl to the machine and press the stop button.

It has been suggested by some at NASA (who have now been dismissed for discussing government secrets) that a compact disc was the cause of the destruction of the Space Shuttle Challenger in 1985. As you may recall, this was the first mission to take a civilian into space. To ease her mind during take-off it was decided to simulate an environment of Earth similar to that of take-off pressure so they decided to play a CD of elevator music to give her the feeling that she was riding up in the lift at her local shopping centre. The craft could not cope with the enormous centrifugal force generated by the spinning disc and broke apart approximately 1 minute after take-off. It was decided to cover up their gross negligence by saying that the o-ring seals in the booster rockets were faulty.

All this is absolutely true or my name is not Ronald Reagan.

From: bobhilt@eskimo.com (Bob Hiltner)

This is a complete load of crap, and probably a troll. The 'Borealis Effect' (or 'Australis' in the southern hemisphere) could in no way overcome the power of the motor in a cd player. Besides, the 'groove' went out in the 60's (70's?). I'm no electrical engineer, but I'm guessing that any backward playing effect is due to the 220v power conversion (which would show up on euro equipment as well) or the reverse polarity down under.

As for the gravity-free environment, who gives a shi*t? I think the astronauts have their hands full anyway, and probably can get good FM reception from any station on earth if they need music to dance by...

Some people are so clueless!

From: jtchew@netcom.com (Joe Chew)

Since the Earth rotates in the opposite direction in the Southern Hemisphere, the AC power there is supplied 180 degrees out of phase with ours. Thus your CD should work just fine, although some audio purists insist on a motor-generator set to supply "American" electricity and then determine the phasing themselves.

From: oauld@ponder.csci.unt.edu (Orion Auld)

At the equator, the cd's stop rotating, so the cd players there must rotate the laser about the stationary cd. The units are very expensive. By contrast, at the north pole, cd players are very cheap. This is because neither the laser or the cd require a motor to provide rotational energy; the cd is placed precisely on the north pole, tied to the firmament so that it doesn't spin, while the laser is fixed to the earth, slightly off-center, and the earth provides the rotation.

What about in a >reduced gravity environment, like in a free falling elevator?

The cd's are virtually weightless, so they can be very massive and yet consumers will have little difficulty operating them. I hope that answers your question.

>From: gunson@ocean.mit.edu (Jim Gunson)

I'm glad you brought this up. The variation of the Coriolis force with latitude (zero at equator, max at north pole, min at south pole), gives rise to the so-called beta effect. Basically what happens is that when a clockwise-spinning object, in the northern hemisphere, moves north it speeds up, when it moves south it slows down. I've conducted experiments whilst driving my car here in Boston: if I head north on route 93 at 75 mph with Kylie's "Locomotion" on the CD player, the pitch of her voice goes higher, but you have to be going pretty fast to notice this. Heading west or east this doesn't happen. To the original poster, if you do find you're having trouble with the Coriolis force adversely affecting your US cd's in australia, try turning the cd player upside-down.

From: Adrian Rose <adrose@gate.net>

No,no,no.....please dont confuse the Coriolis effect with the Doppler effect-the two are quite unrelated,and the Doppler effect is ALMOST unnoticeable,when playing out-of-area CDs,or even records.

The effect was most noticeable on 78's,but that's now academic.

BTW,I am able to offer the conversion at only 75cents (us),if done in bulk.E-mail for quotes.

From: pholman1@aol.com (PHolman1)

No if regrooved in the N Hemisphere the must be spun counterclockwise, remember Aussie turntables etc spin the opposite way, ps Marmite works as well as Vegimite.

From: Armadillo <mike@geophy.curtin.edu.au>

No, American compact discs will only work if you drive on the right-hand side of the road. But I wouldn't expect an aol.com user to know these things.

Dogs vs. Men

(How dogs and men are the same)

Both take up too much space on the bed
Both have irrational fears about vacuum cleaning
Both are threatened by their own kind
Both mark their territory
Both are bad at asking you questions
Neither tells you what is bothering them
The smaller ones tend to be more nervous
Both have an inordinate fascination with women's crotches
Neither does any dishes
Both fart shamelessly
Neither of them notice when you get your hair cut
Both like dominance games
Both are suspicious of the postman
Neither knows how to talk on the telephone
Neither understands what you see in cats

How dogs are better than men

Dogs do not have a problem expressing affection in public
Dogs miss you when you are gone
Dogs feel guilt when they have done something wrong
Dogs do not criticize your friends
Dogs admit when they are jealous
Dogs are very direct about wanting to go out
Dogs do not play games with you except fetch(and they NEVER laugh at the way you throw)
Dogs do not feel threatened by your intelligence
You can train a dog
Dogs are easy to buy for
You are never suspicious of your dogs dreams
The worst social disease you can get from dogs is fleas. OK, the WORST disease is rabies, but there is a vaccine for it, and you get to kill the one that gives it to you
Dogs understand what NO means
Dogs understand when some of their friends can not come inside
Middle-aged dogs do not feel the need to abandon you for a younger owner
Dogs admit it when they are lost
Dogs are colour blind
Dogs are not threatened if you earn more than they do
Dogs mean it when they kiss you

English Students

This assignment was actually turned in by two English students:
Rebecca <last name deleted> and Gary <last name deleted>

English 44A SMU Creative Writing Prof Miller

In-class Assignment for Wednesday Today we will experiment with a new form called the tandem story. The process is simple. Each person will pair off with the person sitting to his or her immediate right. One of you will then write the first paragraph of a short story. The partner will read the first paragraph and then add another paragraph to the story. The first person will then add a third paragraph, and so on back and forth. Remember to reread what has been written each time in order to keep the story coherent. The story is over when both agree a conclusion has been reached.

At first, Laurie couldn't decide which kind of tea she wanted. The camomile, which used to be her favourite for lazy evenings at home, now reminded her too much of Carl, who once said, in happier times, that he liked camomile. But she felt she must now, at all costs, keep her mind off Carl. His possessiveness was suffocating, and if she thought about him too much her asthma started acting up again. So camomile was out of the question.

Meanwhile, Advance Sergeant Carl Harris, leader of the attack squadron now in orbit over Skylon 4, had more important things to think about than the neuroses of an air-headed asthmatic bimbo named Laurie with whom he had spent one sweaty night over a year ago. "A.S. Harris to Geostation 17," he said into his transgalactic communicator. "Polar orbit established. No sign of resistance so far..." But before he could sign off a bluish particle beam flashed out of nowhere and blasted a hole through his ship's cargo bay. The jolt from the direct hit sent him flying out of his seat and across the cockpit.

He bumped his head and died almost immediately, but not before he felt one last pang of regret for psychically brutalizing the one woman who had ever had feelings for him. Soon afterwards, Earth stopped its pointless hostilities towards the peaceful farmers of Skylon 4. "Congress Passes Law Permanently Abolishing War and Space Travel." Laurie read in her newspaper one morning. The news simultaneously excited her and bored her. She stared out the window, dreaming of her youth -- when the days had passed unhurriedly and carefree, with no newspapers to read, no television to distract her from her sense of innocent wonder at all the beautiful things around her. "Why must one lose one's innocence to become a woman?" she pondered wistfully.

Little did she know, but she has less than 10 seconds to live. Thousands of miles above the city, the Anu'udrian mothership launched the first of its lithium fusion missiles. The dim-witted wimpy peaceniks who pushed the Unilateral Aerospace Disarmament Treaty through Congress had left Earth a defenseless target for the hostile alien empires who were determined to destroy the human race. Within two hours after the passage of the treaty the Anu'udrian ships were on course for Earth, carrying enough firepower to pulverize the entire planet. With no one to stop them they swiftly initiated their diabolical plan. The lithium fusion missile entered the atmosphere unimpeded. The President, in his top-secret mobile submarine headquarters on the ocean floor off the coast of Guam, felt the inconceivably massive explosion which vaporized Laurie and 85 million other Americans. The President slammed his fist on the conference table. "We can't allow this! I'm going to veto that treaty! Let's blow'em out of the sky!"

This is absurd. I refuse to continue this mockery of literature. My writing partner is a violent, chauvinistic, semi-literate adolescent.

Yeah? Well, you're a self-centred tedious neurotic whose attempts at writing are the literary equivalent of Valium.

You total \$*&.

Stupid %&#\$.!

Seminars for Men and Women

Seminars for men (Prepared & Presented By Women...)

1. Combating Stupidity
2. You, too, can do housework
3. PMS -- Learn when to keep your mouth shut
4. How to fill an ice tray
5. We do not want sleazy underthings for Christmas -- Give us money
6. Understanding the female response to your coming in drunk at 4:00am
7. Wonderful laundry techniques (formerly titled "Don't wash my silks")
8. Parenting -- No, it doesn't end with conception
9. Get a life -- Learn to cook
10. How not to act like a butt-head when you're obviously wrong
11. Spelling -- Even you can get it right
12. Understanding your financial incompetence
13. You -- The Weaker Sex
14. Reasons to give flowers
15. How to stay awake after sex
16. Why it is unacceptable to relieve yourself in public
17. Rubbish -- Getting it to the curb
18. You can fall asleep without "it" if you really try
19. The morning dilemma if "It's" awake. Take a shower
20. I'll wear what I damn well please
21. How to put the toilet lid down (formerly "No, it's not a bidet")
22. "The weekend" and "sports" are not synonyms
23. Give me a break! Why we know your excuses are bullshit
24. How to go shopping with your mate and not get lost
25. The remote control -- Overcoming your dependency
26. Romanticism - Ideas other than sex
27. Helpful postural hints for couch potatoes
28. Mother-in-laws -- They are people, too
29. Male bonding -- Leaving your friends at home
30. You too can be a designated driver
31. Seeing the true you (formerly "No, you don't look like Mel Gibson, especially when naked!")
32. Changing your underwear -- It really works
33. The Attainable Goal -- Omitting "TITS" from your vocabulary
34. Fluffing the blankets after farting is NOT necessary
35. Techniques for calling home

Seminars for women (Prepared & Presented By Men...)

1. "Are you ready to leave?" -- Definition of the word "yes"
2. Appropriate rhetorical questions (Formerly "Honey, do I look fat?")
3. Elementary Map Reading
4. Crying and law enforcement
5. Advanced Maths Seminar -- Program your VCR
6. You can go shopping for less than 4 hours
7. Gaining five pounds v. the end of the world: a study in contrast
8. The Seven-Outfit Week
9. PMS -- It's YOUR Problem, Not Mine (was: It's Happened Monthly Since Puberty -- Deal With It)
10. Driving I: Getting past automatic transmission, MAGGIE ROSE!
11. Driving II: The meaning of blinking red lights
12. Driving III: Approximating a constant speed
13. Driving IV: Makeup and Driving--It's As Simple As Oil and Water
14. The Super Bowl: Not a Game--A Sacrament
15. Telephone Translations (was: "Me too" equals "I Love You")
16. How to Earn Your Own Money
17. Giftgiving Fundamentals (was: Fabric Bad, Electronics Good)
18. Putting the Seat Down By Yourself: Potential Energy is on Your Side
19. Know When to Say When: The Limits of Makeup
20. Beyond "Clean and Dirty": The Nuances of Wearable Laundry
21. We forget birthdays, you forget sports stats: LET'S LET IT DROP
22. MYOB: Proper response to other couple's public arguments
23. Yes, You Can Buy Condoms (was: WE learned to deal with the embarrassment)
24. Joys of the Remote Control: Reaping the Benefits of 50+ Channels
25. What Goes Around Comes Around--Why His Credit Card is Not a Toy
26. The Penis: His Best Friend Can Be Yours
27. His Poker Games: Deal Yourself Out
28. Commitment Schmittment (was: Wedlock Schmedlock)
29. "To Honor and Obey:" Remembering the small print above "I Do"
30. Why Your Mother Is Unwelcome In The House
31. Your Mate: Selfish Bastard, or Victimised Sensitive Man-child Healing his Father Wound by Expressing the Latent Wild Man Within?

Who get's the money?

We have been told that ... Knowledge is Power and Time is Money and ... Power = Work / Time

So ... Knowledge = Work / Money

Solving this equation for Money, we get ... Money = Work / Knowledge

Therefore, Money approaches infinity as Knowledge approaches zero, regardless of the work done.

What this means is ... The less you know, the more you make.

Finally, proof for what we all suspected!

CIGAR

A North Carolina man, having bought several expensive cigars, insured them against ... get this ... fire. After he had smoked them, he then decided that he had a claim against the insurance company and filed. The insurance company refused to pay, citing the obvious reason that the man had consumed the cigar normally. The man sued. The judge stated that since the company had insured the cigars against fire, they were obligated to pay.

After the man accepted payment for his claim, the insurance company then had the man arrested ... for arson.

The History of the World - according to students

One of the fringe benefits of being an English or History teacher is receiving the occasional jewel of a student blooper in an essay. I have pasted together the following "history" of the world from certifiably genuine student bloopers collected by teachers throughout the United States, from eighth grade through college level. Read carefully, and you will learn a lot.

The inhabitants of Egypt were called mummies. They lived in the Sarah Dessert and traveled by Camelot. The climate of the Sarah is such that the inhabitants have to live elsewhere, so certain areas of the dessert are cultivated by irritation. The Egyptians built the Pyramids in the shape of huge triangular cube. The Pyramids are a range of mountains between France and Spain.

The Bible is full of interesting caricatures. In the first book of the Bible, Guinnesses, Adam and Eve were created from an apple tree. One of their children, Cain, asked "Am I my brother's son?" God asked Abraham to sacrifice Issac on Mount Montezuma. Jacob, son of Issac, stole his brother's birthmark. Jacob was a partiarth who brought up his twelve sons to be partiarth, but they did not take to it. One of Jacob's sons, Joseph, gave refuse to the Israelites.

Pharao forced the Hebrew slaves to make bread without straw. Moses led them to the Red Sea, where they made unleavened bread, which is bread made without any ingredients. Afterwards, Moses went up on Mount Cyanide to get the ten commandments. David was a Hebrew king skilled at playing the liar. He fought with the Philatelists, a race of people who lived in Biblical times. Solomon, one of David's sons, had 500 wives and 500 porcupines.

Without the Greeks, we wouldn't have history. The Greeks invented three kinds of columns - Corinthian, Doric and Ironic. They also had myths. A myth is a female moth. One myth says that the mother of Achilles dipped him in the River Stynx until he became intolerable. Achilles appears in "The Illiad", by Homer. Homer also wrote the "Oddity", in which Penelope was the last hardship that Ulysses endured on his journey. Acutally, Homer was not written by Homer but by another man of that name.

Socrates was a famous Greek teacher who went around giving people advice. They killed him. Socrates died from an overdose of wedlock.

In the Olympic Games, Greeks ran races, jumped, hurled the biscuits, and threw the java. The reward to the visitor was a coral wreath. The government of Athen was democratic because the people took the law into their onwn hands. There were no wars in Greece, as the mountains were so high that they couldn't climb over to see what their neighbors were doing. When they fought the Parisians, the Greek were outnumbered because the Persians had more men.

Eventually, the Ramons conquered the Geeks. History call people Romans because they never stayed in one place for very long. At Roman banquets, the guestes wore garlic in their hair. Julius Caesar extinguished himself on the battlefields of Gaul. The Ides of March killed him because they thought the was going to be made king. Nero was a cruel tyranny who would torture his poor subjects by playing the fiddle to them.

Then came the Middle Ages. King Alfred conquered the Dames, King Arthur lived in the Age of Shivery, King Harlos mustarded his troops before the Battle of Hastings, Joan of Arc was cannonized by George Bernard Shaw, and the victims of the Black Death grew boobs on their necks. Finally, the Magna Carta provided that no free man should be hanged twice for the same offense.

In medevil times most of the people were alliterate. The greatest writer of the time was Chaucer, who wrote many poems and verse and also wrote literature. Another tale of William Tell, who shot an arrow through an apple while standing on his son's head.

The Renaissance was an age in which more individuals felt the value of their human being. Martin Luther was nailed to the church door at Wittenberg for selling papal indulgences. He died a horrible death, being excommunicated by a bull. It was the painter Donatello's interest in the female nude that made him the father of the Renaissance. It was an age of great inventions and discoveries. Gutenberg invented the Bible. Sir Walter Raleigh is a historical figure because he invented cigarettes. Another important invention was the circulation of blood. Sir Francis Drake circumcised the world with a 100-foot clipper.

The government of England was a limited mockery. Henry VIII found walking difficult because he had an abness on his knee. Queen Elizabeth was the "Virgin Queen". As a queen she was a success. When Elizabeth exposed herself before her troops, they all shouted "hurrah". Then her navy went out and defeated the Spanish Armadillo.

The greatest writer of the Renaissance was William Shakespear. Shakespear never made much money and is famous only because of his plays. He lived in Windsor with his merry wives, writing tragedies, comedies and errors. In one of Shakespear's famous plays, Hamlet rations out his situation by relieving himself in a long soliloquy. In another, Lady Macbeth tries to

convince Macbeth to kill the King by attacking his manhood. Romeo and Juliet are an example of a heroic couplet. Writing at the same time as Shakespeare was Milton. Milton wrote "Paradise Lost". Then his wife died and he wrote "Paradise Regained".

During the Renaissance America began. Christopher Columbus was a great navigator who discovered America while cursing about the Atlantic. His ships were called the Nina, the Pinta and the Santa Fe. Later the Pilgrims crossed the Ocean, and that was called the Pilgrim's Progress. When they landed at Plymouth Rock, they were greeted by Indians, who came down the hill rolling their war hoops before them. The Indian squaws carried their cabooses, which proved very fatal to them. The winter of 1620 was a hard one for the settlers. Many people died and many babies were born. Captain John Smith was responsible for all this.

One of the causes of the Revolutionary Wars was the English put tacks in their tea. Also, the colonists would send their parcels through the post without stamps. During the War, Red Coats and Paul Revere was throwing balls over stone walls. The dogs were barking and the peacocks crowing. Finally, the colonists won the War and no longer had to pay for taxes.

Delegates from the original thirteen states formed the Continental Congress. Thomas Jefferson, a Virgin, and Benjamin Franklin were two signers of the Declaration of Independence. Franklin had gone to Boston carrying all his clothes in his pocket and a loaf of bread under each arm. He invented electricity by rubbing cats backwards and declared "a horse divided against itself cannot stand". Franklin died in 1790 and is still dead.

George Washington married Martha Curtis and in due time became the Father of Our Country. Then the Constitution of the United States was adopted to secure domestic hostility. Under the Constitution the people enjoyed the right to keep bare arms.

Abraham Lincoln became America's greatest Precedent. Lincoln's mother died in infancy, and he was born in a log cabin which he built with his own hands. When Lincoln was President, he wore only a tall silk hat. He said, "In onion there is strength". Abraham Lincoln wrote the Gettysburg address while traveling from Washington to Gettysburg on the back of an envelope. He also signed the Emasculation Proclamation, and the Fourteenth Amendment gave the ex-Negroes citizenship. But the Klux Klan would torch and lynch the ex-Negroes and other innocent victims. On the night of April 13, 1865, Lincoln went to the theater and got shot in his seat by one of the actors in a moving picture show. The believed assassin was John Wilkes Booth, a supposedly insane actor. This ruined Booth's career.

Meanwhile in Europe, the enlightenment was a reasonable time. Voltaire invented electricity and also wrote a book called "Candy". Gravity was invented by Isaac Newton. It is chiefly noticeable in the Autumn, when the apples are falling off the trees.

Bach was the most famous composer in the world, and so was Handel. Handel was half German, half Italian and half English. He was very large. Bach died from 1750 to the present. Beethoven wrote music even though he was deaf. He was so deaf he wrote loud music. He took long walks in the forest even when everyone was calling for him. Beethoven expired in 1827 and later died for this.

France was in a very serious state. The French Revolution was accomplished before it happened. The Marseillaise was the theme of the French Revolution, and it catapulted into Napoleon. During the Napoleonic Wars, the crowned heads of Europe were trembling in their shoes. Then the Spanish gorrillas came down from the hills and nipped at Napoleon's flanks. Napoleon became ill with bladder problems and was very tense and unrestrained. He wanted an heir to inherit his power, but since Josephine was a baroness, she couldn't bear him any children.

The sun never set on the British Empire because the British Empire is in the East and the sun sets in the West. Queen Victoria was the longest queen. She sat on a thorn for 63 years. Her reclining years and finally the end of her life were exemplary of a great personality. Her death was the final event which ended her reign.

The nineteenth century was a time of many great inventions and thoughts. The invention of the steamboat caused a network of rivers to spring up. Cyrus McCormick invented the McCormick Reaper, which did the work of a hundred men. Samuel Morse invented a code for telegraphy. Louis Pasteur discovered a cure for rabies. Charles Darwin was a naturalist who wrote the "Origin of the Species". Madame Curie discovered radium. And Karl Marx became one of the Marx Brothers.

The First World War, caused by the assassination of the Arch-Duke by a surfer, ushered in a new error in the annals of human history.

Diary of an AOL User

July 18 - I just tried to connect to America Online. I've heard it is the best online service I can get. They even included a free disk! I'd better hold onto it incase they don't ever send me another one! I can't connect. I don't know what is wrong.

July 19 - Some guy at the tech support center says my computer needs a modem. I don't see why. He's just trying to cheat me. How dumb does he think I am?

July 22 - I bought the modem. I couldn't figure out where it goes. It wouldn't fit in the monitor or the printer. I'm confused.

July 23 - I finally got the modem in and hooked up. that nine year old next door did it for me. But it still don't work. I cant get online.

July 25 - That nine year old kid next door hooked me up to America Online for me. He's so smart. I told the kid he was a prodigy. But he says that's just another service. What a modest kid. He's so smart and he does these services for people. Anyway he's smarter then the jerks who sold me the modem. They didn't even tell me about communications software. Bet they didn't know. And why do they put two telephone jack holes in the back of a modem when you only need one? And why do they have one labeled phone when you are not suppose to hook it to the phone jack on the wall? I thought the dial tone sounded funny! Boy, are modem makers dumb! But the kid figured it out by the sound.

July 26 - What's the internet? I thought I was on America Online. Not this internet thing. I'm confused.

July 27 - The nine year old kid next door showed me how to use this America Online stuff. I told him he must be a genius. He says that he is compared to me. Maybe he's not so modest after all.

July 28 - I tried to use chat today. I tried to talk into my computer but nothing happened. maybe I need to buy a microphone.

July 29 - I found this thing called usenet. I got out of it because I'm connected to America Online not usenet.

July 30 - These people in this usenet thing keep using capital letters. How do they do that? I never figured out how to type capital letters. Maybe they have a different type of keyboard.

JULY 31 - I CALLED THE COMPUTER MAKER I BOUGHT IT FROM TO COMPLAIN ABOUT NOT HAVING A CAPITOL LETTER KEY. THE TECH SUPPORT GUY SAID IT WAS THIS CAPS LOCK KEY. WHY DIDN'T THEY SPELL IT OUT? I TOLD HIM I GOT A CHEAP KEYBOARD AND WANTED A BETTER ONE. AND ONE OF MY SHIFT KEYS ISNT THE SAME SIZE AS THE OTHER. HE SAID THATS A STANDARD. I TOLD HIM I DIDN'T WANT A STANDARD KEYBOARD BUT ANOTHER BRAND. I MUST HAVE HAD AN IMPORTANT COMPLAINT BECAUSE I HEARD HIM TELL THE OTHER SUPPORT GUYS TO LISTEN IN ON OUR CONVERSATION.

AUGUST 1 - I FOUND THIS THING CALLED THE USENET ORACLE. IT SAYS THAT IT CAN ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS I ASK IT. I SENT IT 44 SEPARATE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE INTERNET. I HOPE IT RESPONDS SOON.

AUGUST 2 - I FOUND A GROUP CALLED REC.HUMOR. I DECIDED TO POST THIS JOKE ABOUT THE CHICKEN THAT CROSSED THE ROAD. TO GET TO THE OTHER SIDE! HA! HA! I WASNT SURE I POSTED IT RIGHT SO I POSTED IT 56 MORE TIMES.

AUGUST 3 - I KEEP HEARING ABOUT THE WORLD WIDE WEB. I DON'T NOW SPIDERS GREW THAT LARGE.

AUGUST 4 - THE ORACLE RESPONDED TO MY QUESTIONS TODAY. GEEZ IT WAS RUDE. I WAS SO ANGRY THAT I POSTED AN ANGRY MESSAGE ABOUT IT TO REC.HUMOR.ORACLE. I WASNT SURE IF I POSTED RIGHT SO I POSTED IT 22 MORE TIMES.

AUGUST 5 - SOMEONE TOLD ME TO READ THE FAQ. GEEZ THEY DIDN'T HAVE TO USE PROFANITY.

AUGUST 6 - SOMEONE ELSE TOLD ME TO STOP SHOUTING IN ALL MY MESSAGES. WHAT A STUPID JERK. IM NOT SHOUTING! IM NOT EVEN TALKING! JUST TYPING! HOW CAN THEY LET THESE RUDE JERKS GO ON THE INTERNET?

August 7 - Why have a Caps Lock key if you're not suppose to use it? Its probably an extra feature that costs more money.

August 8 - I just read this post called make money fast. I'm so exited. I'm going to make lots of money. I followed his instructions and posted it to every newsgroup I could find.

August 9 - I just made my signature file. Its only 6 pages long. I will have to work on it some more.

August 10 - I just looked at a group called alt.aol.sucks. I read a few posts and I really believe that aol should be wiped off the face of the earth. I wonder what an aol is.

August 11 - I was asking where to find some information about something. Some guy told me to check out ftp.netcom.com. I've looked and looked but I can't find that group.

August 12 - I sent a post to every usenet group on the Internet asking where the ftp.netcom.com is. hopefully someone will help. I cant ask the kid next door. His parents said that when he comes back from my house he's laughing so hard he can't eat or sleep or do his homework. So they wont let him come over anymore. I do have a great sense of humor. I don't know why the rec.humor group didn't like my chicken joke. Maybe they only like dirty stuff. Some people sent me posts about my 56 posts of the joke and they used bad words.

August 13 - I sent another post to every usenet group on the Internet asking where the ftp.netcom.com is. I had forgot yesterday to include my new signature file which is only 8 pages long. I know everyone will want to read my favorite poem so I included it. I'm also going to add that short story I like.

August 14 - Some guy suspended my account because of what I was doing. I told him I don't have an account at his bank. He's so dumb.

BOOK (TM)

A new aid to rapid - almost magical - learning has made its appearance. Indications are that if it catches on all the electronic gadgets will be so much junk.

The new device is known as Built-in Orderly Organized Knowledge. The makers generally call it by its initials, BOOK(tm).

Many advantages are claimed over the old-style learning and teaching aids on which most people are brought up nowadays. It has no wires, no electric circuit to break down. No connection is needed to an electricity power point. It is made entirely without mechanical parts to go wrong or need replacement.

Anyone can use BOOK(tm), even children, and it fits comfortably into the hands. It can be conveniently used sitting in an armchair by the fire.

How does this revolutionary, unbelievably easy invention work?

Basically BOOK(tm) consists only of a large number of paper sheets. These may run to hundreds where BOOK(tm) covers a lengthy program of information. Each sheet bears a number in sequence, so that the sheets cannot be used in the wrong order.

To make it even easier for the user to keep the sheets in the proper order they are held firmly in place by a special locking device called a "binding".

Each sheet of paper presents the user with an information sequence in the form of symbols, which he absorbs optically for automatic registration on the brain. When one sheet has been assimilated a flick of the finger turns it over and further information is found on the other side. By using both sides of each sheet in this way a great economy is effected, thus reducing both the size and cost of BOOK(tm). No buttons need to be pressed to move from one sheet to another, to open or close BOOK(tm), or to start it working.

BOOK(tm) may be taken up at any time and used by merely opening it. Instantly it is ready for use. Nothing has to be connected up or switched on. The user may turn at will to any sheet, going backwards or forwards as he pleases. A sheet is provided near the beginning as a location finder for any required information sequence.

A small accessory, available at trifling extra cost, is the BOOK(tm)mark. This enables the user to pick up his programme where he left off on the previous learning session. BOOK(tm)mark is versatile and may be used in any BOOK(tm).

The initial cost varies with the size and subject matter. Already a vast range of BOOK(tm)s is available, covering every conceivable subject and adjusted to different levels of aptitude. One BOOK(tm), small enough to be held in the hands, may contain an entire learning schedule.

Once purchased, BOOK(tm) requires no further upkeep cost; no batteries or wires are needed, since the motive power, thanks to an ingenious device patented by the makers, is supplied by the brain of the user.

BOOK(tm)s may be stored on handy shelves and for ease of reference the program schedule is normally indicated on the back of the binding.

Altogether the Built-in Orderly Organized Knowledge seems to have great advantages with no drawbacks. We predict a big future for it.

A Boss's response:

BOOK(tm)* does not, in spite of the claims, seem "to have great advantages with no drawbacks". Soon, it probably won't even be legal. Consider:

"It can be conveniently used sitting in an armchair by the fire." Being paper, it might burn in the fire. Probably fire laws in most locations wouldn't allow its use there. Worse, such a device, which encourages close proximity of the user to fire, will be outlawed by OSHA's request.

"Each sheet bears a number in sequence, so that the sheets cannot be used in the wrong order." How quaint; to think that the programmer (author) would be allowed to turn over such an important task to the user! "cannot" is clearly misuse; any user could incorrectly turn to the wrong page. A proper user interface might correct that, of course, such as requiring that each sheet be torn

off to expose the next. This is a clear conflict with "The user may turn at will to any sheet, going backwards or forwards as he pleases."

"BOOK(tm)s may be stored on handy shelves and for ease of reference". The user interface obviously needs more work before such a system can be practical.

"The motive power - is supplied by the brain of the user". Clearly, the inventors have not examined recent trends. No serious person would suggest even expecting a "user" to have a brain present, much less to use it so continuously.

I'd suggest the inventors return to their consoles and do a thorough associative search of various data banks, like the rest of us, and forget this nonsense.

What in the world is electricity and where does it go after it leaves the toaster?

Here is a simple experiment that will teach you an important electrical lesson: On a cool dry day, scuff your feet along a carpet, then reach your hand into a friend's mouth and touch one of his dental fillings. Did you notice how your friend twitched violently and cried out in pain? This teaches one that electricity can be a very powerful force, but we must never use it to hurt others unless we need to learn an important lesson about electricity.

It also illustrates how an electrical circuit works. When you scuffed your feet, you picked up batches of "electrons", which are very small objects that carpet manufacturers weave into carpet so that they will attract dirt. The electrons travel through your bloodstream and collect in your finger, where they form a spark that leaps to your friend's filling, then travel down to his feet and back into the carpet, thus completing the circuit.

AMAZING ELECTRONIC FACT:

If you scuffed your feet long enough without touching anything, you would build up so many electrons that your finger would explode! But this is nothing to worry about unless you have carpeting.

Although we modern persons tend to take our electric lights, radios, mixers, etc. for granted, hundreds of years ago people did not have any of these things, which is just as well because there was no place to plug them in. Then along came the first Electrical Pioneer, Benjamin Franklin, who flew a kite in a lightning storm and received a serious electrical shock. This proved that lightning was powered by the same force as carpets, but it also damaged Franklin's brain so severely that he started speaking only in incomprehensible maxims, such as, "A penny saved is a penny earned." Eventually he had to be given a job running the post office.

After Franklin came a herd of Electrical Pioneers whose names have become part of our electrical terminology: Myron Volt, Mary Louise Amp, James Watt, Bob Transformer, etc. These pioneers conducted many important electrical experiments. Among them, Galvani discovered (this is the truth) that when he attached two different kinds of metal to the leg of a frog, an electrical current developed and the frog's leg kicked, even though it was no longer attached to the frog, which was dead anyway. Galvani's discovery led to enormous advances in the field of amphibian medicine. Today, skilled veterinary surgeons can take a frog that has been seriously injured or killed, implant pieces of metal in its muscles, and watch it hop back into the pond -- almost.

But the greatest Electrical Pioneer of them all was Thomas Edison, who was a brilliant inventor despite the fact that he had little formal education and lived in New Jersey. Edison's first major invention in 1877 was the phonograph, which could soon be found in thousands of American homes, where it basically sat until 1923, when the record was invented. But Edison's greatest achievement came in 1879 when he invented the electric company. Edison's design was a brilliant adaptation of the simple electrical circuit: the electric company sends electricity through a wire to a customer, then immediately gets the electricity back through another wire, then (this is the brilliant part) sends it right back to the customer again.

This means that an electric company can sell a customer the same batch of electricity thousands of times a day and never get caught, since very few customers take the time to examine their electricity closely. In fact, the last year any new electricity was generated was 1937.

Today, thanks to men like Edison and Franklin, and frogs like Galvani's, we receive almost unlimited benefits from electricity. For example, in the past decade scientists have developed the laser, an electronic appliance so powerful that it can vaporize a bulldozer 2000 yards away, yet so precise that doctors can use it to perform delicate operations to the human eyeball, provided they remember to change the power setting from "Bulldozer" to "Eyeball."

Darwin Award

The NEW, undisputed Darwin Award winner for 1997 Japan Times -- April 16, 1997

"The government must crack down on this disgusting craze of 'Pumping'," a spokesman for the Nakhon Ratchasima hospital told reporters. "If this perversion catches on, it will destroy the cream of Thailand's manhood." He was speaking after the remains of 13 year-old Charnchai Puanmuangpak had been rushed into the hospital's emergency room. "Most 'Pumpers' use a standard bicycle pump," he explained, "inserting the nozzle far up their rectum, giving themselves a rush of air, creating a momentary high. This act is a sin against God." Charnchai took it further still. He started using a two-cylinder foot pump, but even that wasn't exciting enough for him, and he boasted to friends that he was going to try the compressed air hose at a nearby gasoline station. They dared him to do it so, under cover of darkness, he snuck in. Not realizing how powerful the machine was, he inserted the tube deep into his rectum, and placed a coin in the slot. As a result, he died virtually instantly, but passersbys are still in shock. One woman thought she was watching a twilight fireworks display, and started clapping. "We still haven't located all of him.", say the police authorities. "When that quantity of air interacted with the gas in his system, he exploded. It was like an atom bomb went off or something." "Pumping is the devil's pastime, and we must all say no to Satan,"

You may recall 1995 year's Darwin Award winner:

The man who found out moments before making a 300 MPH dent in an Arizona cliff that the JATO (jet assist take off) unit he'd strapped to his car could not be turned off once it was turned on.

1994's winner was the fellow who was killed by a Coke machine which toppled on top of him as he was attempting to tip a free soda out of it.

The 1996 nominees are:

NOMINEE #1 [San Jose Mercury News]

An unidentified man, using a shotgun like a club to break a former girlfriend's windshield, accidentally shot himself to death when the gun discharged, blowing a hole in his gut.

NOMINEE #2 [Kalamazoo Gazette, 4-1-95]

James Burns, 34, of Alamo, Mich., was killed in March as he was trying to repair what police described as a "farm-type truck." Burns got a friend to drive the truck on a highway while Burns hung underneath so that he could ascertain the source of a troubling noise. Burns' clothes caught on something, however, and the other man found Burns "wrapped in the drive shaft."

NOMINEE #3 [Reuters, Mississauga, Ontario]

Man slips, falls 23 stories to his death. A man cleaning a bird feeder on his balcony of his condominium apartment in this Toronto suburb slipped and fell 23 stories to his death, police said Monday. Stefan Macko, 55, was standing on a wheeled chair Sunday when the accident occurred, said Inspector D'Arcy Honer of the Peel regional police. "It appears the chair moved and he went over the balcony," Honer said. "It's one of those freak accidents. No foul play is suspected."

NOMINEE #4 [Hickory Daily Record 12/21/92]

Ken Charles Barger, 47, accidentally shot himself to death in December in Newton, N.C., when, awakening to the sound of a ringing telephone beside his bed, he reached for the phone but grabbed instead a Smith & Weston .38 Special, which discharged when he drew it to his ear.

NOMINEE #5 [UPI, Toronto]

Police said a lawyer demonstrating the safety of windows in a downtown Toronto skyscraper crashed through a pane with his shoulder and plunged 24 floors to his death. A police spokesman said Garry Hoy,

39, fell into the courtyard of the Toronto Dominion Bank Tower early Friday evening as he was explaining the strength of the building's windows to visiting law students. Hoy previously had conducted demonstrations of window strength according to police reports. Peter Lawyers, managing partner of the firm Holden Day Wilson, told the Toronto Sun newspaper that Hoy was "one of the best and brightest" members of the 200-man association.

NOMINEE #6 [AP, Cairo, Egypt, 31 Aug 1995 CAIRO, Egypt (AP)]

Six people drowned Monday while trying to rescue a chicken that had fallen into a well in southern Egypt. An 18-year-old farmer was the first to descend into the 60-foot well. He drowned, apparently after an undercurrent in the water pulled him down, police said. His sister and two brothers, none of whom could swim well, went in one by one to help him, but also drowned. Two elderly farmers then came to help, but they apparently were pulled by the same undercurrent. The bodies of the six were later pulled out of the well in the village of Nazlat Imara, 240 miles south of Cairo. The chicken was also pulled out. It survived.

NOMINEE #7 [Bloomberg News Service, 25 March]

A terrible diet and room with no ventilation are being blamed for the death of a man who was killed by his own gas. There was no mark on his body but autopsy showed large amounts of methane gas in his system. His diet had consisted primarily of beans and cabbage (and a couple of other things). It was just the right combination of foods. It appears that the man died in his sleep from breathing from the poisonous cloud that was hanging over his bed. Had he been outside or had his windows been opened, it wouldn't have been fatal. But the man was shut up in his near airtight bedroom. He was "a big man with a huge capacity for creating [this deadly gas]." Three of the rescuers got sick and one was hospitalised.

NOMINEE #8 [Bloomberg News Service]

SELECTION COMMITTEE "MERIT" CANDIDATE (because no one died)

"In retrospect, lighting the match was my big mistake. But I was only trying to retrieve the gerbil," Eric Tomaszewski told bemused doctors in the Severe Burns Unit of Salt Lake City Hospital. Eric, and his homosexual partner Andrew "Kiki" Fernum, had been admitted for emergency treatment after a felching session had gone seriously wrong. "I pushed a cardboard tube up his rectum and slipped Raggot, our gerbil, in," he explained. "As usual, Kiki shouted out Armageddon", my cue that he had enough. I tried to retrieve Raggot but he wouldn't come out again, so I peered in to the tube and struck a match, thinking the light might attract him."

At a hushed press conference, a hospital spokesman described what happened next. "The match ignited a pocket of intestinal gas and a flame shot up the tube, igniting Mr. Tomaszewski's hair and severely burning his face. It also set fire to the gerbil's fur and whiskers, which in turn ignited a larger pocket of gas further up the intestines, propelling the rodent out like a cannonball."

NOMINEE #9 [18 May 93, San Jose Mercury News]

A 24-year-old salesman from Hialeah, Fla., was killed near Lantana, Fla., in March when his car smashed into a pole in the median strip of Interstate 95 in the middle of the afternoon. Police said that the man was travelling at 80 MPH and, judging by the sales manual that was found open and clutched to his chest, had been busy reading.

NOMINEE #10 [1/29/96 The News of the weird.] JOINT NOMINEE

Michael Anderson Godwin made News of the Weird posthumously in 1989. He had spent several years awaiting South Carolina's electric chair on a murder conviction before having his sentence reduced to life in prison. In March 1989, sitting on a metal toilet in his cell and attempting to fix his small TV set, he bit into a wire and was electrocuted.

On Jan. 1, 1997, Laurence Baker, also a convicted murderer once on death row, but later serving a life sentence at the state prison in Pittsburgh, Pa., was electrocuted by his homemade earphones as he watched his small TV while sitting on his metal toilet.

NOMINEE #11 ["The Indianapolis Star", Wed., Dec. 4, 1996].

A Jay County man using a cigarette lighter to check the barrel of a muzzle loader was killed Monday night when the weapon discharged in his face. Sheriff's investigators said Gregory David Pryor, 19, died in his parents' rural Dunkirk home about 11:30 p.m. Investigators said Pryor was cleaning a .54-caliber muzzle loader that had not been firing properly. He was using the lighter to look into the barrel when the gunpowder ignited.

NOMINEE #12 [AP, Mammoth Lakes]

A San Anselmo man died yesterday when he hit a lift tower at the Mammoth Mountain ski area while riding down the slope on a foam pad, authorities said. Matthew David Hubal, 22, was pronounced dead at Centinela Mammoth Hospital. The accident occurred about 3 a.m., the Mono County Sheriff's Department said. Hubal and his friends apparently had hiked up a ski run called Stump Alley and undid some yellow foam protectors from the lift towers, said Lieutenant Mike Donnelly of the Mammoth Lakes Police Department. The pads are used to protect skiers who might hit the towers. The group apparently used the pads to slide down the ski slope and Hubal crashed into a tower. It was not clear if the tower he hit was one with its pad removed. "With the cold temperatures, the snow was probably pretty fast," said Donnelly.

NOMINEE #13 [Reuters, Warsaw, Poland, 5 May 1995]

A poacher electrocuting fish in a lake in central Poland fell into the water and suffered the same fate as his quarry, police said Thursday. The 24-year-old man was one of four who went fishing with a cable, one end of which they attached to a net and the other to a high-voltage electricity supply line, the PAP news agency quoted a police official in Wloclawek as saying. "For a while everything went according to the poachers' plan and they had fish in their bags. But at a certain moment the man holding the net tripped and fell into the water," the agency said. The other poachers tried in vain to revive him, it said.

NOMINEE #14 [AP, St. Louis]

Robert Puelo, 32, was apparently being disorderly in a St. Louis market. When the clerk threatened to call police, Puelo grabbed a hot dog, shoved it in his mouth, and walked out without paying for it. Police found him unconscious in front of the store: paramedics removed the six-inch wiener from his throat, where it had choked him to death.

NOMINEE 15 [Unknown]

To poacher Marino Malerba, who shot a stag standing above him on an overhanging rock-and was killed instantly when it fell on him.

NOMINEE 16 [Associated Press, Kincaid, W. VA]

Blasting Cap Explodes in Man's Mouth at Party. A man at a party popped a blasting cap into his mouth and bit down, triggering an explosion that blew off his lips, teeth and tongue, state police said Wednesday. Jerry Stromyer, 24, of Kincaid, bit the blasting cap as a prank during a party late Tuesday night, said Cpl. M.D. Payne. 'Another man had it in an aquarium, hooked to a battery, and was trying to explode it,' Payne said. "It wouldn't go off and this guy said, 'I'll show you how to set it off. "I just can't imagine anyone doing something like that," Payne said.

NOMINEE #17 [Fort Worth Star-Telegram, 1-1-93]

In December near Mineral Wells, Texas., three men who were attempting to steal copper wire off live electrical lines for resale were electrocuted. Copper wiring is a valuable scrap metal in Texas but is usually stolen from electric cables that are not being used.

Here are some people that may be future nominees/winners, but still haven't made it to the "Big Leagues"

[UPI, Portland, OR]

Doctors at Portland's University Hospital said Wednesday an Oregon man shot through the skull by a hunting arrow is lucky to be alive, and will be released soon from the hospital. Tony Roberts, 25, lost his right eye last weekend during an initiation into a men's rafting club, Mountain Men Anonymous, in Grants Pass, Ore. A friend tried to shoot a beer can off his head, but the arrow entered Roberts' right eye. Doctors said had the arrow gone 1 millimeter to the left, a major blood vessel would have cut and Roberts would have died instantly.

Neurosurgeon Dr. Johnny Delashaw at the University Hospital in Portland said the arrow went through 8 to 10 inches of brain, with the tip protruding at the rear of his skull, yet somehow managed to miss all major blood vessels. Delashaw also said had Robert tried to pull the arrow out on his own he surely would have killed himself. Roberts admitted afterwards he and his friends had been drinking that afternoon. Said Roberts, "I feel so dumb about this."

No charges have been filed but the Josephine County district attorney's office said the initiation stunt is under investigation.

[VANCOUVER (CP)]

A man arguing over a love triangle accidentally shot himself in the groin, taking off his testicles and part of his penis. Police said the man was waving a .357 Magnum revolver around during the shouting match early yesterday. But when he stuffed it back in his pants the gun went off. Police were called to the hospital after the man in his 20s was brought in by friends. Charges are pending against the victim, who is expected to survive.

[Arkansas Democrat Gazette, July 25, 1996]

Two local men were seriously injured when their pick-up truck left the road and struck a tree near Cotton Patch on State Highway 38 early Monday morning. Woodruff County deputy Dovey Snyder reported the accident shortly after midnight Monday. Thurston Poole, 33, of Des Arc and Billy Ray Wallis, 38, of Little Rock are listed in serious condition at Baptist Medical Center. The accident occurred as the two men were returning to Des Arc after a frog gigging trip. On an overcast Sunday night, Poole's pick-up truck headlights malfunctioned. The two men concluded that the headlight fuse on the older model truck had burned out.

As a replacement fuse was not available, Wallis noticed that the .22 caliber bullet from his pistol fit perfectly into the fuse box next to the steering wheel column. Upon inserting the bullet, the headlights again began to operate properly and the two men proceeded on east-bound toward the White River bridge. After traveling approximately twenty miles and just before crossing the river, the bullet apparently overheated, discharged and struck Poole in the right testicle. The vehicle swerved sharply to the right exiting the pavement and striking a tree.

Poole suffered only minor cuts and abrasions from the accident, but will require surgery to repair the other wound. Wallis sustained a broken clavicle and was treated and released. "Thank God we weren't on that bridge when Thurston shot his nuts off or we might both be dead" stated Wallis.

Some interesting suggestions for answering machine messages:

My wife and I can't come to the phone right now, but if you'll leave your name and number, we'll get back to you as soon as we're finished.

Hello, you've reached Jim and Sonya. We can't pick up the phone right now, because we're doing something we really enjoy. Sonya likes doing it up and down, and I like doing it left to right...real slowly. So leave a message, and when we're done brushing our teeth we'll get back to you.

Hi. This is John.

If you are the phone company, I already sent the money.

If you are my parents, please send money.

If you are my financial aid institution, you didn't lend me enough money.

If you are my friends, you owe me money.

If you are a female, don't worry, I have plenty of money.

(Narrator's voice:)

There Dale sits, reading a magazine. Suddenly the telephone rings! The bathroom explodes into a veritable maelstrom of toilet paper, with Dale in the middle of it, his arms windmilling at incredible speeds! Will he make it in time? Alas no, his valiant effort is in vain. The bell hath sounded. Thou must leave a message.

Hi. I'm probably home, I'm just avoiding someone I don't like. Leave me a message, and if I don't call back, it's you.

Please leave a message. However, you have the right to remain silent. Everything you say will be recorded and will be used by us.

(Sexy female voice with heavy panting)

Hi, you've reached 555-3456.

John is in (sigh)

Oh no, he's out (aah)

Yes, he's in again, (ooh)

No he's out (aah)

Why don't you just leave your name and number and he'll call you as soon as he...comes.

Head in the Clouds

A man was walking along the street when he saw a ladder going into the clouds. As any of us would do, he climbed the ladder. He reached a cloud, upon which was sat a rather plump and very ugly woman. "Screw me or climb the ladder to success," she said.

No contest, thought the man, so he climbed the ladder to the next cloud. On this cloud was a slightly thinner woman, who was slightly easier on the eye. "Screw me hard me or climb the ladder to success" she said. "Well", thought the man, "might as well carry on."

On the next cloud was an even more attractive lady who, this time, was quite attractive. "Screw me now or climb the ladder to success" she uttered.

As he turned her down and went on up the ladder, the man thought to himself that this was getting better the further he went.

On the next cloud was an absolute beauty. Slim, attractive, the lot. "Screw me or climb the ladder to success" she flirted.

Unable to imagine what could be waiting, and being a gambling man, he decided to climb again.

When he reached the next cloud, there was a 400 pound ugly man, arm pit hair showing, flies buzzing around his head, a truly disgusting sample of manhood.

"Who are you?" the man asked, shocked. "Hello," said the ugly fat man, "my name is Cess!"

Weird Sex Laws

- * In the quiet town of Connorsville, Wisconsin, it's illegal for a man to shoot off a gun when his female partner has an orgasm.
- * It's against the law in Willowdale, Oregon, for a husband to curse during sex.
- * In Oblong, Illinois, it's punishable by law to make love while hunting or fishing on your wedding day.
- * No man is allowed to make love to his wife with the smell of garlic, onions, or sardines on his breath in Alexandria, Minnesota. If his wife so requests, law mandates that he must brush his teeth.
- * Warn your hubby that after lovemaking in Ames, Iowa, he isn't allowed to take more than three gulps of beer while lying in bed with you - or holding you in his arms.
- * Bozeman, Montana, has a law that bans all sexual activity between members of the opposite sex in the front yard of a home after sundown - if they're nude. (Apparently, if you wear socks, you're safe from the law!)
- * In hotels in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, every room is required to have twin beds. And the beds must be a minimum of two feet apart when a couple rents a room for only one night. And it's illegal to make love on the floor between the beds!
- * The owner of every hotel in Hastings, Nebraska, is required to provide each guest with a clean and pressed nightshirt. No couple, even if they are married, may sleep together in the nude. Nor may they have sex unless they are wearing one of these clean, white cotton nightshirts.
- * An ordinance in Newcastle, Wyoming, specifically bans couples from having sex while standing inside a store's walk-in meat freezer!
- * A state law in Illinois mandates that all bachelors should be called master, not mister, when addressed by their female counterparts.
- * In Norfolk, Virginia, a woman can't go out without wearing a corset. (There was a civil-service job - for men only - called a corset inspector.)
- * However, in Merryville, Missouri, women are prohibited from wearing corsets because "the privilege of admiring the curvaceous, unencumbered body of a young woman should not be denied to the normal, red-blooded American male."
- * It's safe to make love while parked in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Police officers aren't allowed to walk up and knock on the window. Any suspicious officer who thinks that sex is taking place must drive up from behind, honk his horn three times and wait approximately two minutes before getting out of his car to investigate.
- * Another law in Helena, Montana, mandates that a woman can't dance on a table in a saloon or bar unless she has on at least three pounds, two ounces of clothing.
- * Lovers in Liberty Corner, New Jersey, should avoid satisfying their lustful urges in a parked car. If the horn accidentally sounds while they are frolicking behind the wheel, the couple can face a jail term.
- * In Carlsbad, New Mexico, it's legal for couples to have sex in a parked vehicle during their lunch break from work, as long as the car or van has curtains to stop strangers from peeking in.
- * A Florida sex law: If you're a single, divorced or widowed woman, you can't parachute on Sunday afternoons.
- * Women aren't allowed to wear patent-leather shoes in Cleveland, Ohio - a man might see the reflection of something "he oughtn't"
- * No woman may have sex with a man while riding in an ambulance within the boundaries of Tremonton, Utah. If caught, the woman can be charged with a sexual misdemeanour and "her name is to be published in the local newspaper." The man isn't charged nor is his name revealed.

Computer Camp

The following appeared in a computer magazine in Mr. Dvorak's column:

Dear Mr. Dvorak:

Ann Landers wouldn't print this. I have nowhere else to turn. I have to get the word out. Warn other parents. I must be rambling on. Let me try and explain. It's about my son, Billy. He's always been a good, normal ten year old boy.

Well, last spring we sat down after dinner to select a summer camp for Billy. We sorted through the camp brochures. There were the usual camps with swimming, canoeing, games, singing by the campfire - you know. There were sports camps and specialty camps for weight reduction, music, military camps and camps that specialized in Tibetan knot tying. I tried to talk him into Camp Winnepoopoo. It's where he went last year. (He made an adorable picture out of painted pinto beans and macaroni).

Billy would have none of it. Billy pulled a brochure out of his pocket. It was for a COMPUTER CAMP! We should have put our foot down right there, if only we had known. He left three weeks ago. I don't know what's happened. He's changed. I can't explain it. See for yourself. These are some of my little Billy's letters.

Dear Mom,

The kids are dorky nerds. The food stinks. The computers are the only good part. We're learning how to program. Late at night is the best time to program, so they let us stay up.

Love, Billy.

Dear Mom,

Camp is O.K. Last night we had pizza in the middle of the night. We all get to choose what we want to drink. I drink Classic Coke. By the way, can you make Szechuan food? I'm getting used to it now. Gotta go, it's time for the flowchart class.

Love, Billy.

P.S. This is written on a wordprocessor. Pretty swell, huh? It's spellchecked too.

Dear Mom,

Don't worry. We do regular camp stuff. We told ghost stories by the glow of the green computer screens. It was real neat. I don't have much of a tan 'cause we don't go outside very often. You can't see the computer screen in the sunlight anyway. That wimp camp I went to last year fed us weird food too. Lay off, Mom. I'm okay, really.

Love, Billy.

Dear Mom,

I'm fine. I'm sleeping enough. I'm eating enough. This is the best camp ever. We scared the counselor with some phony worm code. It was real funny. He got mad and yelled. Frederick says it's okay. Can you send more money? I spent mine on a pocket protector and a box of blank diskettes. I've got to chip in on the phone bill. Did you know that you can talk to people on a computer? Give my regards to Dad.

Love, Billy.

Dear Mother,

Forget the money for the telephone. We've got a way to not pay. Sorry I haven't written. I've been learning a lot. I'm real good at getting onto any computer in the country. It's really easy! I got into the university's in less than fifteen minutes. Frederick did it in five, he's going to show me how. Frederick is my bunk partner. He's really smart. He says that I shouldn't call myself Billy anymore. So, I'm not.

Signed, William.

Dear Mother,

How nice of you to come up on Parents Day. Why'd you get soupset? I haven't gained that much weight. The glasses aren't real. Everybody wears them. I was trying to fit in. Believe me, the tape on them is cool. I thought that you'd be proud of my program. After all, I've made some money on it. A publisher is sending a check for _30,000. Anyway, I've paid for the next six weeks of camp. I won't be home until late August. Regards, William.

Mother,

Stop treating me like a child. True - physically I am only ten years old. It was silly of you to try to kidnap me. Do not try again. Remember, I can make your life miserable (i.e. - the bank, credit bureau, and government computers). I am not kidding. O.K.? I won't write again and this is your only warning. The emotions of this interpersonal communication drain me. Sincerely, William.

See what I mean? It's been two weeks since I've heard from my little boy. What can I do, Mr.Dvorak? I know that it's probably too late to save my little Billy. But, if by printing these letters you can save JUST ONE CHILD from a life of programming, please, I beg of you to do so. Thank you very much.

Mary Gates, Concerned Parent

"Justification for higher education"....

In answer to the eternal question "Is it better to be a jock or a nerd?", I submit the following:

Michael Jordan will make over \$300,000 a game: \$10,000 a minute, assuming he averages about 30 minutes per game. Assuming \$40 million in endorsements next year, he'll be making \$178,100 a day (working or not)!

Assuming he sleeps 7 hours a night, he makes \$52,000 every night while visions of sugarplums dance in his head.

If he goes to see a movie, it'll cost him \$7.00, but he'll make \$18,550 while he's there.

If he decides to have a 5 minute egg, he'll make \$618 while boiling it.

He makes \$7,415/hr more than minimum wage (after the wage hike).

He'll make \$3,710 while watching each episode of Friends.

If he wanted to save up for a new Acura NSX (\$90,000) it would take him a whole 12 hours.

If someone were to hand him his salary and endorsement money, they would have to do it at the rate of \$2.00 every second.

He'll probably pay around \$200 for a nice round of golf, but will be "reimbursed" \$33,390 for that round.

He'll make about \$19.60 while watching the 100 meter dash in the Olympics.

He'll make about \$15,600 while the Boston Marathon is being run.

While the common person is spending about \$20 for a meal in his trendy Chicago restaurant, he'll pull in about \$5600.

Amazing isn't it?

BUT CONSIDER THIS: JORDAN WILL HAVE TO SAVE 100% OF HIS INCOME FOR 270 YEARS TO HAVE A NET WORTH EQUIVALENT TO THAT OF BILL GATES.

Stupid Criminals

-- An armed robber who took less than \$100 from a 7-11 store gave it back to the stunned clerks because his getaway car wouldn't start. The unidentified suspect claimed the holdup was just a joke. The two clerks agreed to give his vehicle a jump start, not to write down his license plate number and wait about 40 minutes before calling the police. The suspect was arrested one hour later.

[St. Peters, Mo., Lubbock Avalanche Journal, 07-13]

-- A 33-year-old janitor was arrested for stealing policewomen's underwear while working at the Kwai Chung police station in Hong Kong. The man, who was wearing women's underwear at the time of his arrest, pleaded guilty to theft charges.

[Hong Kong, Merc News, 07-14]

-- A bank robber stripped to his underwear and left his jeans behind after a dye pack exploded inside the front of his pants. After demanding cash from one of the bank tellers, the suspect stuffed the bag inside his pants and left the Life Savings Bank building. "(People saw) an explosion taking place inside his pants," Police Spokesman Mike Carey said. "He was seen hopping and jumping around." The suspect was able to escape. "He's probably sitting around with an ice pack in his lap, if he hasn't sought medical attention," Carey added.

[Virginia Beach, Va., AP, 07-18]

-- Two youngsters are probably not old enough to drive but old enough to rob a supermarket. The boys, both under the age of 16, held up a supermarket in Indianapolis and then attempted to escape by taking the bus. The two teen-aged robbers were arrested a few minutes later.

[Indianapolis, Reuter, 07-18]

-- An armed robber on the run shot and wounded a zoo gorilla before he was apprehended by police. The suspect, who was being chased by police, jumped over the Johannesburg Zoo fence and ended up inside the gorilla's cage. The 418-pound animal was quick to defend his territory and female partner and rushed towards the terrified robber who fired two shots. (The outcome - Max the gorilla: shot twice, recovering well. The armed robber: shot in the hip by police officers, stable condition. The two police officers: attacked by the raging gorilla, hospitalised in stable condition.)

[Johannesburg, South Africa, Reuter, 07-18]

-- An unidentified man and a woman were under arrest after throwing hot coffee on a flight attendant and trying to force their way inside the pilots' cockpit during a Continental Airlines flight from Houston. "The woman was banging on the cockpit door and yelling she had a gun," a spokesperson said.

[Houston, Reuter, 07-18]

-- Edward Faherty, 18, was arrested for riding nude on a stolen motorcycle. "He was apparently out for a little fun on a motorcycle stolen in Memphis, Police Chief Tom Long said. "The thing that we were smiling about at the time was here's this nude guy going 90 mph down the interstate. You know the bugs had to be beating him up." The suspect was freed on \$15,000 bond.

[Senatobia, Miss., AP, 07-18]

-- A blind Egyptian man, turned professional car stereo thief, was arrested after a witness saw him driving a vehicle for a few miles and then walking away with the stereo.

[Cairo, Egypt, Reuter, 07-14]

-- A 29-year-old woman was arrested and accused of attempting to murder her husband by spreading peanut butter over his face, knowing he is diagnosed with severe allergy to nuts. The husband escaped serious injury by immediately injecting himself with a remedy medicine.

[Montreal, Canada, La Presse, 07-20]

-- Two Belgian policeman got into a heated argument while inside their patrol car and ended when one of the officers shot the other in the leg.

[Brussels, Reuter, 07-24]

Real Programmers

We've heard about the exploits of Real Programmers - a legendary breed that scoffs at sleep, scorns documentation, and reads object code with the naked eye. But what of the lesser mortals who must use the programs that Real Programmers write? These unsung heroes (and heroines!) have dedicated their lives to unswerving opposition to computerisation. Ladies and gentlemen, I give you the Real Users!

- Real Users never know what they want, but they always know when your program doesn't deliver it.
- Real Users never use the Help screens.
- Real Users know your home phone number.
- Real Users find the one combination of bizarre input values which will shut the system down for days.
- Real Users will always crash the program the moment you walk out of the door.
- Real Users always remember what they were doing two weeks ago on Saturday at 10:15 am, but they never know what they did five minutes ago that made your program crash.
- Real Users never read the manual.
- Real Users know your Mum's home phone number.
- Real Users will ask how to do something, and then do it the way they wanted to in the first place.
- Real Users use the letter "O" instead of the number zero.
- Real Users want reports in ten different sort sequences.
- Real Users never know how they want a report to look until you show them your finished product, and then they know that isn't it.
- Real Users work all week so that Real Programmers can work all weekend.

Annual Confidential Report

These are (supposedly) genuine examples of senior officers' comments on subordinate commissioned officers on their Annual Confidential Report. For your amusement:

His troops would follow him anywhere, but only out of curiosity.

This officer is really not so much of a has-been, but more definitely a won't-be.

Whenever he/she opens her mouth, it seems it is only to change feet.

He has carried out each and every one of his duties to his entire satisfaction.

He would be out of his depth in a car park puddle.

Technically sound, but socially impossible.

This officer reminds me very much of a gyroscope - always spinning around, but not really going anywhere.

This young lady has delusions of adequacy.

When he joined my ship, this officer was something of a granny. Since then he has aged considerably.

This Medical Officer has used my ship to carry his genitals from port to port, and my officers to carry him from bar to bar.

Since my last report, he has reached rock bottom, and has commenced to dig.

She sets low standards, and then consistently fails to achieve them.

He has the wisdom of youth, and the energy of old age.

Works well only when under constant supervision and cornered like a rat.

Occasionally wets himself under pressure.

This man is depriving a village somewhere of an idiot.

Here's one for all of you chicken lovers

An issue of "Feathers", the publication of the California Poultry Industry Federation, told the following story:

The US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has a unique device for testing the strength of windshields on airplanes. The device is a gun that launches a dead chicken at a plane's windshield at approximately the speed the plane flies. The theory is that if the windshield doesn't crack from the carcass impact, it will survive a real collision with a bird during flight.

A British company wanted to test a windshield on a newly developed, high speed locomotive. They borrowed FAA's chicken launcher, loaded the chicken and fired. The ballistic chicken shattered the windshield, went through the engineer's chair, broke an instrument panel and embedded itself in the back wall of the engine cab. The British were stunned and asked the FAA to re-check the test to see if everything was done correctly.

The FAA reviewed the test thoroughly and had one recommendation: "Use a thawed chicken."

Soap

Below is some correspondence which actually occurred between a London hotel's staff and one of its guests. A disgruntled staff member at the hotel submitted this to the Sunday Times, however the paper did not print the name of the hotel.

WHAT TO DO WITH ALL THOSE "FREE" SOAPS WHEN TRAVELLING

Dear Maid,

Please do not leave any more of those little bars of soap in my bathroom since I have brought my own bath-sized Dial (note: this is a well known brand of soap in Britain). Please remove the six unopened little bars from the shelf under the medicine chest and another three in the shower soap dish. They are in my way.

Thank

you,

S. Berman

Dear Room 635,

I am not your regular maid. She will be back tomorrow, Thursday, from her day off. I took the 3 hotel soaps out of the shower soap dish as you requested. The 6 bars on your shelf I took out of your way and put on top of your Kleenex dispenser in case you should change your mind. This leaves only the 3 bars I left today which my instructions from the management is to leave 3 soaps daily. I hope this is satisfactory.

Kathy, Relief Maid

Dear Maid -- I hope you are my regular maid. Apparently Kathy did not tell you about my note to her concerning the little bars of soap. When I got back to my room this evening I found you had added 3 little Camays to the shelf under my medicine cabinet. I am going to be here in the hotel for two weeks and have brought my own bath-size Dial so I won't need those 6 little Camays which are on the shelf. They are in my way when shaving, brushing teeth, etc. Please remove them.

S. Berman

Dear Mr. Berman,

My day off was last Wed. so the relief maid left 3 hotel soaps which we are instructed by the management. I took the 6 soaps which were in your way on the shelf and put them in the soap dish where your Dial was. I put the Dial in the medicine cabinet for your convenience. I didn't remove the 3 complimentary soaps which are always placed inside the medicine cabinet for all new check-ins and which you did not object to when you checked in last Monday. Please let me know if I can of further assistance.

Your regular maid,

Dotty

Dear Mr. Berman,

The assistant manager, Mr. Kensedder, informed me this A.M. that you called him last evening and said you were unhappy with your maid service. I have assigned a new girl to your room. I hope you will accept my apologies for any past inconvenience. If you have any future complaints please contact me so I can give it my personal attention. Call extension 1108 between 8AM and 5PM.

Thank you.

Elaine Carmen

Housekeeper

Dear Miss Carmen,

It is impossible to contact you by phone since I leave the hotel for business at 7.45 AM and don't get back before 5.30 or 6PM. That's the reason I called Mr. Kensedder last night, you were already off duty. I only asked Mr. Kensedder if he could do anything about those little bars of soap. The new maid you assigned me must have thought I was a new check-in today, since she left another 3 bars of hotel soap in my medicine cabinet along with her regular delivery of 3 bars on the bath-room shelf. In just 5 days here I have accumulated 24 little bars of soap. Why are you doing this to me?

S. Berman

Dear Mr. Berman,

Your maid, Kathy, has been instructed to stop delivering soap to your room and remove the extra soaps. If I can be of further assistance, please call extension 1108 between 8AM and 5PM.

Thank you,
Elaine Carmen,
Housekeeper

Dear Mr. Kensedder,

My bath-size Dial is missing. Every bar of soap was taken from my room including my own bath-size Dial. I came in late last night and had to call the bellhop to bring me 4 little Cashmere Bouquets.

S. Berman

Dear Mr. Berman,

I have informed our housekeeper, Elaine Carmen, of your soap problem. I cannot understand why there was no soap in your room since our maids are instructed to leave 3 bars of soap each time they service a room. The situation will be rectified immediately. Please accept my apologies for the inconvenience.

Martin L. Kensedder
Assistant Manager

Dear Mrs. Carmen,

Who the hell left 54 little bars of Camay in my room? I came in last night and found 54 little bars of soap. I don't want 54 little bars of Camay. I want my one damn bar of bath-size Dial. Do you realise I have 54 bars of soap in here. All I want is my bath size Dial. Please give me back my bath-size Dial.

S. Berman

Dear Mr. Berman,

You complained of too much soap in your room so I had them removed. Then you complained to Mr. Kensedder that all your soap was missing so I personally returned them (54 Camays which had been taken and the 3 Camays you are supposed to receive daily). I don't know anything about the 4 Cashmere Bouquets. Obviously your maid, Kathy did not know I had returned your soaps so she also brought 54 Camays plus the 3 daily Camays. I don't know where you got the idea this hotel issues bath-size Dial. I was able to locate some bath-size Ivory which I left in your room.

Elaine Carmen
Housekeeper

Dear Mrs. Carmen,

Just a short note to bring you up-to-date on my latest soap inventory. As of today I possess:

- * On shelf under medicine cabinet - 18 Camays in 4 stacks of 4 and 1 stack of 2.
- * On Kleenex dispenser - 11 Camays in 2 stacks of 4 and 1 stack of 3.
- * On bedroom dresser - 1 stack of 3 Cashmere Bouquets, 1 stack of 4 hotel-size Ivory, and 8 Camays in 2 stacks of 4.
- * Inside medicine cabinet - 14 Camays in 3 stacks of 4 and 1 stack of 2.
- * In shower soap dish - 6 Camays, very moist.
- * On northeast corner of tub - 1 Cashmere Bouquet, slightly used.
- * On northwest corner of tub - 6 Camays in 2 stacks of 3.

Please ask Kathy when she services my room to make sure the stacks are neatly piled and dusted. Also, please advise her that stacks of more than 4 have a tendency to tip. May I suggest that my bedroom window sill is not in use and will make an excellent spot for future soap deliveries. One more item, I have purchased another bar of bath-sized Dial which I am keeping in the hotel vault in order to avoid further misunderstandings.

S. Berman

The Evolution of a Programmer

High School/Jr.High

```
10 PRINT "HELLO WORLD"  
20 END
```

First year in College

```
program Hello(input, output)  
begin  
  writeln('Hello World')  
end.
```

Senior year in College

```
(defun hello  
  (print  
    (cons 'Hello (list 'World))))
```

New professional

```
#include <stdio.h>  
void main(void)  
{  
  char *message[] = {"Hello ", "World"};  
  int i;  
  for(i = 0; i < 2; ++i)  
    printf("%s", message[i]);  
  printf("\n");  
}
```

Seasoned professional

```
#include <iostream.h>  
#include <string.h>  
class string  
{  
private:  
  int size;  
  char *ptr;  
public:  
  string() : size(0), ptr(new char('\0')) {}  
  string(const string &s) : size(s.size)  
  {  
    ptr = new char[size + 1];  
    strcpy(ptr, s.ptr);  
  }  
  ~string()  
  {  
    delete [] ptr;  
  }  
  friend ostream &operator <<(ostream &, const string &);  
  string &operator=(const char *);  
};  
ostream &operator <<(ostream &stream, const string &s)
```

```

{
    return(stream << s.ptr);
}
string &string::operator=(const char *chrs)
{
    if (this != &chrs)
    {
        delete [] ptr;
        size = strlen(chrs);
        ptr = new char[size + 1];
        strcpy(ptr, chrs);
    }
    return(*this);
}
int main()
{
    string str;
str = "Hello World";
    cout << str << endl;
    return(0);
}

```

Master Programmer

```

[
    uuid(2573F8F4-CFEE-101A-9A9F-00AA00342820)
]
library LHello
{
    // bring in the master library
    importlib("actimp.tlb");
    importlib("actexp.tlb");
    // bring in my interfaces
    #include "pshlo.idl"
    [
        uuid(2573F8F5-CFEE-101A-9A9F-00AA00342820)
    ]
    cotype THello
{
    interface IHello;
    interface IPersistFile;
};
};
[
    exe,
    uuid(2573F890-CFEE-101A-9A9F-00AA00342820)
]
module CHelloLib
{
    // some code related header files
    importhead(<windows.h>);
    importhead(<ole2.h>);
}

```

```

importheader(<except.hxx>);
importheader("pshlo.h");
importheader("shlo.hxx");
importheader("mycls.hxx");
// needed typelibs
importlib("actimp.tlb");
importlib("actexp.tlb");
importlib("thlo.tlb");
[
  uuid(2573F891-CFEE-101A-9A9F-00AA00342820),
  aggregatable
]
coclass CHello
{
  cotype THello;
};
};
#include "ipfix.hxx"
extern HANDLE hEvent;
class CHello : public CHelloBase
{
public:
  IPFIX(CLSID_CHello);
  CHello(IUnknown *pUnk);
  ~CHello();
  HRESULT __stdcall PrintSz(LPWSTR pwszString);
private:
  static int cObjRef;
};
#include <windows.h>
#include <ole2.h>
#include <stdio.h>
#include <stdlib.h>
#include "thlo.h"
#include "pshlo.h"
#include "shlo.hxx"
#include "mycls.hxx"
int CHello::cObjRef = 0;
CHello::CHello(IUnknown *pUnk) : CHelloBase(pUnk)
{
  cObjRef++;
  return;
}
HRESULT __stdcall CHello::PrintSz(LPWSTR pwszString)
{
  printf("%ws\n", pwszString);
  return(ResultFromScode(S_OK));
}
CHello::~CHello(void)
{
  // when the object count goes to zero, stop the server

```

```

cObjRef--;
if( cObjRef == 0 )
    PulseEvent(hEvent);
return;
}
#include <windows.h>
#include <ole2.h>
#include "pshlo.h"
#include "shlo.hxx"
#include "mycls.hxx"
HANDLE hEvent;
int _cdecl main(
int argc,
char * argv[]
) {
ULONG ulRef;
DWORD dwRegistration;
CHelloCF *pCF = new CHelloCF();
hEvent = CreateEvent(NULL, FALSE, FALSE, NULL);
// Initialize the OLE libraries
CoInitializeEx(NULL, COINIT_MULTITHREADED);
CoRegisterClassObject(CLSID_CHello, pCF, CLSCTX_LOCAL_SERVER,
    REGCLS_MULTIPLEUSE, &dwRegistration);
// wait on an event to stop
WaitForSingleObject(hEvent, INFINITE);
// revoke and release the class object
CoRevokeClassObject(dwRegistration);
ulRef = pCF->Release();
// Tell OLE we are going away.
CoUninitialize();
return(0); }
extern CLSID CLSID_CHello;
extern UUID LIBID_CHelloLib;
CLSID CLSID_CHello = { /* 2573F891-CFEE-101A-9A9F-00AA00342820 */
    0x2573F891,
    0xCFEE,
    0x101A,
    { 0x9A, 0x9F, 0x00, 0xAA, 0x00, 0x34, 0x28, 0x20 }
};
UUID LIBID_CHelloLib = { /* 2573F890-CFEE-101A-9A9F-00AA00342820 */
    0x2573F890,
    0xCFEE,
    0x101A,
    { 0x9A, 0x9F, 0x00, 0xAA, 0x00, 0x34, 0x28, 0x20 }
};
#include <windows.h>
#include <ole2.h>
#include <stdlib.h>
#include <string.h>
#include <stdio.h>
#include "pshlo.h"

```

```

#include "shlo.hxx"
#include "clsid.h"
int _cdecl main(
int argc,
char * argv[]
) {
HRESULT hRslt;
IHello *pHello;
ULONG ulCnt;
IMoniker * pmk;
WCHAR wcsT[_MAX_PATH];
WCHAR wcsPath[2 * _MAX_PATH];
// get object path
wcsPath[0] = '\0';
wcsT[0] = '\0';
if( argc > 1) {
    mbstowcs(wcsPath, argv[1], strlen(argv[1]) + 1);
    wcsupr(wcsPath);
}
else {
    fprintf(stderr, "Object path must be specified\n");
    return(1);
}
// get print string
if(argc > 2)
    mbstowcs(wcsT, argv[2], strlen(argv[2]) + 1);
else
    wcsncpy(wcsT, L"Hello World");
printf("Linking to object %ws\n", wcsPath);
printf("Text String %ws\n", wcsT);
// Initialize the OLE libraries
hRslt = CoInitializeEx(NULL, COINIT_MULTITHREADED);
if(SUCCEEDED(hRslt)) {
    hRslt = CreateFileMoniker(wcsPath, &pmk);
    if(SUCCEEDED(hRslt))
        hRslt = BindMoniker(pmk, 0, IID_IHello, (void **)&pHello);
    if(SUCCEEDED(hRslt)) {
        // print a string out
        pHello->PrintSz(wcsT);
        Sleep(2000);
        ulCnt = pHello->Release();
    }
    else
        printf("Failure to connect, status: %lx", hRslt);
    // Tell OLE we are going away.
    CoUninitialize();
}
return(0);
}

```

Apprentice Hacker

```
#!/usr/local/bin/perl
$msg="Hello, world.\n";
if ($#ARGV >= 0) {
  while(defined($arg=shift(@ARGV))) {
    $outfile = $arg;
    open(FILE, ">" . $outfile) || die "Can't write $arg: $!\n";
    print (FILE $msg);
    close(FILE) || die "Can't close $arg: $!\n";
  } } else { print ($msg); }
1;
```

Experienced Hacker

```
#include <stdio.h>
#define S "Hello, World\n"
main(){exit(printf(S) == strlen(S) ? 0 : 1);}
```

Seasoned Hacker

```
% cc -o a.out ~/src/misc/hw/hw.c
% a.out
```

Guru Hacker

```
% cat
Hello, world.
^D
```

New Manager

```
10 PRINT "HELLO WORLD"
20 END
```

Middle Manager

```
mail -s "Hello, world." bob@b12
Bob, could you please write me a program that prints "Hello, world."?
I need it by tomorrow.
^D
```

Senior Manager

```
% zmail jim
I need a "Hello, world." program by this afternoon.
```

Chief Executive

```
% letter
letter: Command not found.
% mail
To: ^X ^F ^C
% help mail
help: Command not found.
% damn!
!: Event unrecognized
% logout
```

If PC User bought cars

Helpline: "General Motors Helpline, how can I help you?"

Customer: "I got in my car and closed the door and nothing happened!"

Helpline: "Did you put the key in the ignition slot and turn it?"

Customer: "What's an ignition?"

Helpline: "It's a starter motor that draws current from your battery and turns over the engine."

Customer: "Ignition? Motor? Battery? Engine? How come I have to know all these technical terms just to use my car?"

Helpline: "General Motors Helpline, how can I help you?"

Customer: "My car ran fine for a week and now it won't go anywhere!"

Helpline: "Is the gas tank empty?"

Customer: "Huh? How do I know?"

Helpline: "There's a little gauge on the front panel with a needle and markings from 'E' to 'F'. Where is the needle pointing?"

Customer: "It's pointing to 'E'. What does that mean?"

Helpline: "It means you have to visit a gasoline vendor and purchase some more gasoline. You can install it yourself or pay the vendor to install it for you."

Customer: "What? I paid \$12,000 for this car! Now you tell me that I have to keep buying more components? I want a car that comes with everything built in!"

Helpline: "General Motors Helpline, how can I help you?"

Customer: "Your cars suck!"

Helpline: "What's wrong?"

Customer: "It crashed, that's what wrong!"

Helpline: "What were you doing?"

Customer: "I wanted to run faster, so I pushed the accelerator pedal all the way to the floor. It worked for a while and then it crashed and it won't start now!"

Helpline: "It's your responsibility if you misuse the product. What do you expect us to do about it?"

Customer: "I want you to send me one of the latest version that doesn't crash any more!"

Helpline: "General Motors Helpline, how can I help you?"

Customer: "Hi, I just bought my first car, and I chose your car because it has automatic transmission, cruise control, power steering, power brakes, and power door locks."

Helpline: "Thanks for buying our car. How can I help you?"

Customer: "How do I work it?"

Helpline: "Do you know how to drive?"

Customer: "Do I know how to what?"

Helpline: "Do you know how to drive?"

Customer: "I'm not a technical person. I just want to go places in my car!"

Bastard Operator From Hell

The Genesis

I'm really bored. You know how bored you get when work's going on and on and on, and nothing interesting is happening, and you're listening to a radio that picks up ONE station on FM, and it's always the station with the least records in the city, about 5, and one of them is "You're so Vain" which wasn't too bad a song until you hear it about 3 times a day for a year, and EVERY time it plays, the announcer tells you it's about Warren Beaty and who he's currently poking, someone you'll never sniff the toe-jam of, let alone meet, let alone get amorous with. And EVERY time someone mentions Warren Beaty, someone says that he used to go out with Madonna too, and have you seen "In Bed With..."

AND THEN, someone ELSE will say "It wasn't really about Warren Beaty, it was James Taylor" and the first person will say "What, 'In bed with Madonna?'" and they laugh and everyone else laughs, and I pull out the Magnum from under the desk where I keep it in case someone laughs at a joke that's so dry it's got a built in water-fountain, and blow the lot of them away as a community Service. I figure that I'll get time off my sentence if I ever kill someone by accident who's got a life.

So visitors are getting pretty thin at the moment, and the Quick-Lime Pits are filling up rapidly, and all I've got to do is the full backups and maybe I can go home.

So, to relieve the boredom, I get some iron filings and pour them into the back of my Terminal until it fizzes out (Which doesn't take all that long, surprisingly enough), then call our maintenance contractors and log a fault on the device. Sometimes they'll send someone who knows what they're doing, but it's a lot more fun when they don't - which is about 98% of the time.

So they maintenance guy comes in, and I can tell he's NEW because the photo on his ID actually LOOKS like him, not like the head engineer, whose photo's a black and white tin-type (he's that old). Maintenance Contractors always dress up nice, with a tie and everything because they believe that a customer will trust a nicely dressed guy with their million dollar equipment just because he's got a nice tie...

Because he's NEW and ALONE, he's what you call an appeasement engineer, the new guy they send so they respond within the 4 hour guaranteed response period. (Things are getting better and better) Your average appeasement engineer is about as clued-up on computers as the average computer "hacker" is about B.O, and their main job is to make sure the power plug is in and switched on, then call back to the office for "PARTS". The really keen ones will sometimes even take a cover off the equipment and pretend that they see this stuff all the time. I wonder what sort today's is...

"You got a dud terminal?", he asks pleasantly.

I tell him "Yeah.", and bring him into the control room.

"Which one is it?", he asks, confused by the fact that only one of them is smoking.

"It's the Model Three", I say, giving NOTHING away.

"Ah, the old model three!", he says knowingly, without a clue what a model three is, or which one of the three terminals it is, which isn't surprising, as I just made it up. "We get a lot of model three problems", he says nodding. "So what actually happened?"

Sneaky, but not good enough. I'm not going to point it out to him.

"It just went dead", I say, in luser mode.

"I see. Could you just recreate what you were doing, so I can check the unit out when it's ready for operation?"

Very Sneaky. I decide to let him off the hook.

"Look, I've got to go to the toilet, there it is over there", I say, pointing at our Waffle-Iron.

"But that's a Wa...", he says, then stops. He's a beginner, and it's just possible that the company has a line of terminals that look like waffle irons. He bites.

"Sorry", he says, smiling again, "for a minute there I thought it was a model 2!"

A reasonably good save, but it won't save him.

I leave, which means he's got to take it to bits, otherwise he knows I won't believe he's worked on it. I give him a couple of minutes to get the element exposed then wander back in.

"So how does it look?", I ask, concerned-like.

"Well, I think we could have a processor problem...", he says concentrating on prying the element up.

... concentrating so much that he doesn't notice me plugging the iron in.

"Shouldn't you be wearing an earthing strap?", I ask innocently.

When he thinks I can't see, he creeps his hand over to the wiring frame and says: "Well, It's just as easy to hold onto earth like this."

"But what about the risk of a cross-the-body shock with no resistor in series with you?", I ask ever-so-more-innocently.

"Oh, it's ok", he says, "the unit's unplug..."

click

BZZZZZZZEEERRT!

clunk...

I ring the maintenance help-desk again...

It's Rhonda!

"Hey Rhonda!, Ah, I'm going to need another engineer and a new Waffle Iron over here; for some reason your engineer opened up my Waffle Iron without switching it off.", I say.

Rhonda knows me. It's the third call and the third appeasement engineer. "You're a real prick", she says, annoyed.

"Tell ya what, Rhonda, why don't you come and fix it; it's a model three..."

Bastard Operator From Hell - The Birth

I'm still bored.

But at least now the radio's off, it was on it's 12th repeat of "Wildfire" THIS WEEK, and it's only Tuesday; shit I hate that.

So anyway, I quicklime the engineer to remove any fingerprints and then FedEx him back to headquarters and set about waiting for the engineer.

Now the second engineer only has to come out after another 4 hours, there's no death of engineer penalty clause, (but I'm thinking about asking for one) so I've got to fill in some time. This guy's going to be a technical engineer, the sort that comes in with a raggedy tie where he got it caught in the drum printer at 3000 rpm a couple of years ago, and he'll have the grazes on the face that indicate that he didn't get the gate open in time... I know these sorts...

So I fill in a couple of hours by killing users off and deleting their files, then waiting for them to call...

"Um, I can't find my files.", the whimpering simp on the phone says.

"Files? What files?"

"The files in my account. My thesis, my research - all gone!"

"Gone ay? What's your username?"

"TURGEN."

"TROJAN?! LIKE THE CONDOM?"

"No, TURGEN. T-U-R..."

"OH, Turgen, like TURD, but with a GEN instead of a D... Ok, lets see."

I make vague clicking noises my dragging the quicklimed man's fingers back and forth across the keypad.

"Uh-huh" drag drag "Yeah..." dragedy poke "AH! - You haven't got any files."

"I KNOW!"

"Well, what are you calling ME for? We don't make the files you know, we just look after them. And chopitty-chop too, your thesis looks like it's due in a couple of days..."

I hang up - he'll call back. Meantime I open up a copy of "VMS BASTARD OPERATORS MANUAL FROM HELL" I'm reading the article I sent in about getting rid of those trouble users...

"... Modify the user's password minimum from 6 to 32 letters, give the password a 1 day lifetime, set it so that they HAVE to use the password generate utility when they change their password (so their password will always be something that looks like vaguely pronouncable line-noise), add a secondary password with the same as the above, then redefine their CLI tables so that the only command that works is DELETE, and all other commands point to it."

Beautiful. Shit I'm good.

He calls back.

"MY FILES ARE GONE!", he screams, panicking.

"Did you have a backup?", I ask, as sweet as pie.

"But that's what you people are supposed to do!", he sobs.

"Yeah, well we did - but then we switched to those 8mm tapes, and they're the same size as the ones in my video camera, so I've been using them to tape the neighbor's sex romps..."

I hear the revolver go off, but what the hell, it's 5pm, and not my problem...

Bastard Operator From Hell - Still Birthing the BOFH

So the second engineer rolls up, but the FedEx man has been and gone, so he misses out altogether.

This guy's a techno (you can tell by the tie), but he's smart (no grazes), so I'm going to have to be wary.

"What's the problem?", he asks, in a business-like manner.

"It's the model three", I say (what the hell, it worked before).

"What the f*ck's a model three?", he asks confused.

He could be just testing me, but I decide to come clean. He doesn't notice so I just walk funny for a couple of minutes and then show him the terminal that I'd poured the iron filings into.

"It just went dead!", I say (having previously vacuumed the iron filings up, of course) - My name's willy, not fucking stupid.

So anyway, he gets to work opening the cover and making board replacement noises. I decide to help and point out a fuse that's blown on the power supply board.

"Oh, I haven't got the parts for that - I've only got a replacement board.", he says in a confused manner. "Which one was the fuse again?"

I point it out to him.

"Wow! And what does it do again? You know, I've been working at the same place for 6 years, and I've never seen one of those fuse thingys. It's amazing what you learn isn't it!"

"What are you again?", I ask, already suspecting the answer.

"Chief Engineer."

Thought so.

"Say, do you know anything about waffle irons?"

"A little..."

Click

Fzzzzzeet!

Clunk...

Bastard Operator from Hell - Chapter 1

It's backup day today so I'm pissed off. Being the BOFH, however, does have it's advantages. I assign the tape device to null - it's so much more economical on my time as I don't have to keep getting up to change tapes every 5 minutes. And it speeds up backups too, so it can't be all bad.

A user rings.

"Do you know why the system is slow?" they ask

"It's probably something to do with..." I look up today's excuse "... clock speed"

"Oh" (Not knowing what I'm talking about, they're satisfied) "Do you know when it will be fixed?"

"Fixed? There's 275 users on your machine, and one of them is you. Don't be so selfish - logout now and give someone else a chance!"

"But my research results are due in tomorrow and all I need is one page of Laser Print.."

"SURE YOU DO. Well; You just keep telling yourself that buddy!" I hang up.

Sheesh, you'd really think people would learn not to call!

The phone rings. It'll be him again, I know. That annoys me. I put on a gruff voice.

"HELLO, SALARIES!"

"Oh, I'm sorry, I've got the wrong number"

"YEAH? Well what's your name buddy? Do you know WASTED phone calls cost money? DO YOU? I've got a good mind to subtract your wasted time, my wasted time, and the cost of this call from your weekly wages! IN FACT I WILL! By the time I've finished with you, YOU'LL OWE US money! WHAT'S YOUR NAME - AND DON'T LIE, WE'VE GOT CALLER ID!"

I hear the phone drop and the sound of running feet - he's obviously going to try and get an alibi by being at the Dean's office. I look up his username and find his department. I ring the Dean's secretary.

"Hello?" she answers.

"Hi, SIMON, B.O.F.H HERE, LISTEN, WHEN THAT GUY COMES RUNNING INTO YOUR OFFICE IN ABOUT 10 SECONDS, CAN YOU GIVE HIM A MESSAGE?"

"I think so..." she says

"TELL HIM 'HE CAN RUN, BUT HE CAN'T HIDE'"

"Um. Ok"

"AND DON'T FORGET NOW, I WOULDN'T WANT TO HAVE TO TELL ANYONE ABOUT THAT FILE IN YOUR ACCOUNT WITH YOUR ANSWERS TO THE PURITY TEST IN IT..."

I hear her scrabbling at the terminal...

"DON'T BOTHER - I HAVE A COPY. BE A GOOD GIRL AND PASS THE MESSAGE ON"

She sobs her assent and I hang up. And the worst thing is, I was just guessing about the purity test thing. I grab a quick copy anyway, it might make for some good late-night reading.

Meantime backups have finished in record time, 2.03 minutes. Modern technology is wonderful, isn't it?

Another user rings.

"I need more space" he says

"Well, why don't you move to Texas?" I ask.

"No, on my account, stupid."

Stupid?!?... Uh-Oh..

"I'm terribly sorry" I say, in a polite manner equal to that of Jimmy Stewart in a Family Matinee "I didn't quite catch that. What was it that you said?"

I smell the fear coming down the line at me, but it's too late, he's a goner and he knows it.

"Um, I said what I wanted was more space on my account, *please*"

"Sure, hang on"

I hear him gasp his relief even though he covered the mouthpiece.

"There, you've got plenty of space now"

"How much have I got"

Now this REALLY *PISES* *ME* *OFF*! Not only do they want me to give them extra disk, they want to check it, to correct me if I don't give them enough. They should be happy with what I give them *and that's it*!!!

Back into Jimmy Stewart mode.

"Well, let's see, you have 4 Meg available"

"Wow! Eight Meg in total, thanks!" he says pleased with his bargaining power

"No" I interrupt, savouring this like a fine red, at room temperature "4 Meg in total..."

"Huh?... I'd used 4 Meg already, How could I have 4 Meg Available?"

I say nothing. It'll come to him.

"aaagggggghhhhhH!"

Bastard Operator from Hell - Chapter 2

I'm sitting at the desk, playing x-tank, when some thoughtless bastard rings me on the phone. I pick it up.

"Hello?" I say.

"Who is this?" they say

"It's me I think" I say, having been through a telephone skills course

"Me Who?"

"Is this like a knock knock joke?" I say, trying anything to save myself having to end this game.

Too LATE! I get killed.

Now I'm pissed!

"What can I do for you?" I ask pleasantly - (one of the key warning signs)

"Um, I want to know if we have a particular software package.."

"Which package is that?"

"Uh, B-A-S-I-C it's called."

>clickety clickety d-e-l b-a-s-i-c.e-x-e<

"Um no, we don't have that. We used to though.."

"Oh. Oh well, the other thing I wanted to know was, could the contents of my account be copied to tape so I have a permanent copy of them to save at home in case the worst happens.."

"The worst?"

"Well, like they get deleted or something.."

"DELETED! Oh, don't worry about that, we have backups" (I'm such a *shit*) "What was your username?"

He gives me his lusername. (What an idiot)

>clickety click<

"But you haven't got any files in your account!" I say, mock surprise leaping from my vocal chords.

"Yes I have, you must be looking in the wrong place!"

So first he spoils my x-tank game, and now he's calling me a liar...

>clickety click<

"Oh no, I made a mistake" I say

Did he mutter "typical" under his breath? Oh dear, oh dear..

"I MEANT TO SAY: That username doesn't exist"

"Huh? >whimper< It must do, I was only using it this morning!"

"Ah well, that'll be the problem, there was a virus in our system this morning, the... uh... De Vinci Virus, wipes out users who are logged in when it goes off."

"That can't be right, my girlfriend was logged in, and I'm in her account now!"

"Which one was that?"

He tells me the username. Some people NEVER learn..

"Oh, yeah, her account was just after we discovered the virus." >clickety click< "..she only lost all her files"

"But..."

"But don't worry, we've got them all on tape"

"Oh, thank goodness!!!"

"Paper tape. Have you got a magnifying glass and a pencil. SEE YOU IN THE MACHINE ROOM!!!! NYAHAHAHAHAHA!"

I'm such a prick!

Bastard Operator from Hell - Chapter 3

So I'm working so hard I barely have time to drive into town and watch a movie before I told people their printing will be ready. The queue's WAAAAAY too long to have everything printed (and sorted) by the time I told them, so I kill all the small jobs so there's only 2 left and I can sort them in no time.

Then, after the movie, (which was one of those slack Bertolucci ones that takes about 3 hours till the main character is killed off in a visionary experience) I get back and clear the printouts.

There's about 50 people waiting outside and I've got two printouts. That's about average for me. I thought I'd killed more though. Anyway, I put out the printouts and walk slooowly inside, fingering the clipboard with "ACCOUNTS TO REMOVE" in big letters on the back. No-one says anything. As usual.

I'm sitting back in the Operations Armchair, watching the computer room closed circuit TV, which just happens to be connected to the frame-grabber's Video player (sent off for repair, due back sometime in '94) when the phone rings. That must be the second time today, and it's really starting to get to me!

"Yes?" I say, pausing the picture.

"I've accidentally deleted my C.V!" the voice at the other end of the line says.

"You have? What was your username?"

He tells me. What the hell, I AM bored.

"Ah no, you didn't delete it - I did."

"What?"

"I deleted it. It was full of shit! You didn't ever get more than a B- in any of your subjects!"

"Huh?"

"And that crap about being a foreign exchange student, that was your girlfriend and we both know it."

"Huh?!!"

"Your academic records. I checked them, you were lying.."

"How did y.." He clicks. "It's you isn't it? THE BASTARD OPERATOR FROM HELL!"

"In the flesh, on the phone and in your account... You shouldn't have called you know. You especially shouldn't have given me your username.." >clickety click< "Neither should you have sent that mail to the System Manager telling him what you think of him in graphic terms.."

"I didn't send any.."

>clickety click<.....

"No, you didn't did you? But who can tell these days. Not to worry though, it'll all be over VERY soon.." >clickety click< "..change my username back, and..."

"b-b-b.." he blubs, like a stood-up date

"Goodbye now" I say pleasantly, "you've got bags to pack and a life to start over..."

I hang up.

Two seconds later the red phone goes. I pick it up, it's the boss. He mumbles the username of the person I was just talking to, mentions something about a nasty mail message, and utters the words "You know what to do..", with the dots and everything.

Later, inside the Municipal Energy Authority Computer, as I'm modifying the poor pleb's Energy Bill by several zeros, I can't help but think about what lapse of judgement - what act of heinous stupidity causes them to call. Then, even later, when I'm adding the poor pleb's photo image over the top of the FBI's online "MOST Wanted Armed and Dangerous, SHOOT ON SIGHT" offenders list, I realise, I'll probably never know; but life goes on.

A couple of hours later, as I see the SWAT vehicle roll up outside the poor pleb's apartment I realise that for some, it just doesn't.

But tomorrow is another day.

Bastard Operator from Hell - Chapter 4

It's a Thursday, and I'm in a good mood. It's payday. I think I'll take some calls. I put the phone back on the hook. It rings.

"I've been trying to get you for hours!" the voice at the other end screams

"Not, it can't be hours" I say, putting Blade Runner back into its cover and looking at the back, "it was more like 114 minutes. I was on a long phone call with the big boss, trying to get you users some better facilities"

Hook; Line; and Sinker... "Oh. I'm sorry."

"That's ok, I'm a tolerant person" I make a mental note to change his password to something nasty in the next couple of days.

"Um, I need to know how to rename a file" he says.

Oh dear... Hang on, it's payday isn't it?! I'm in a good mood.

"Sure. You just go 'rm' and the filename"

"Thanks"

"No worries" (Now I'm in a REALLY good mood. I think I just might write that script to make saving impossible on rogue at random times like I've been thinking about)

The phone rings again.

"Hello?"

"Hi there" I say

"Is this the Operators?"

"Yes it is" I say, nice as pie

"Could you get my printouts out please. I need them urgently, and I printed them over 5 minutes ago"

"Your username?" I ask

He gives it to me, and I write it down for later. "No worries at all!" I say, and head to the printers.

There's a HUUUUUUUGE pile of printouts there, and sure enough, his is at the top of the pile. I pick it up, split it out of the rest and pour our ink-stained cleaning alcohol all over it, run it over a couple of times with the loaded tape trolley then slam it in the tape safe door some times as well.

Beautiful.

"Here's your printout" I say "Sorry about the delay, we've got a few printer problems."

He takes a look and shits himself.

"Well, can I print it again?" he asks, worried

"Sure you can" I say "But no promises, the printer's a bit stuffed today"

"Well can I print it on laser - is that working?"

"Yeah of course, but that'll cost you" I say, oozing compassion for the geek

"It doesn't matter about the cost, THIS IS URGENT!"

I slide-on back into the printer room and put in the toner cartridge we save for special occasions - the one that prints thick black lines down the middle of the page and is all faint on one side. It took me quite a while to make it like that too. The printout shoots through and I bring it out immediately - I don't want to miss this!

"W-w-what's happened to my printout?" he geek-squeals at me.

Lucky I wrote that username down - I'm really starting to develop a taste for torture.

"Well nothing. I mean sure, it's a little soiled, but that cartridge has already done 47 thousand pages and been refilled 17 times. It's quite good compared to some we get"

Geek pays up and starts blubbing.

“Hey now. There’s no reason to cry! Have you got a disk with your work on it?”

He gives me a box of diskettes and I step inside and run them across the bulk eraser. I come back out again.

“Sorry, I just remembered, our machine is on the fritz, you’ll have to take these to the other side of campus to the machine there, it’ll print them ok, and it had a brand-new toner yesterday.”

“GREAT!”

“No worries. Oh, and hold the disks above your head the whole way there, the earth’s magnetic field is particularly strong today.”

“Huh?”

“No arguments, just do it.”

He wanders off, hand held high. Shit I hate myself sometimes.

Bastard Operator from Hell - Chapter 5

I’m bored senseless, so I pass the time by reading users email. I must admit that today’s lot is PARTICULARLY boring, not one good message in all of them. I was expecting at LEAST some veiled reference to a grope in a storeroom, but nothing. So I’m bored senseless by the usual drivel about some relative’s surgery and how the weather is over the other side of the world - that sort of crap.

To relieve the boredom, I remove a e-mail party invite from a user’s mail and post it under the senders username to to alt.singles.with.severe.social.dysfunctions on news, and make a note in my diary to be there with my camcorder. Should be a blast!

Next in line is the online medical records database, in which the company doctors store the current medical histories of the staff. I grep it quickly for “herpes” and “syphilis” and sell the results to the local scum newspaper.

I cover my tracks by adding an entry to one of the doctor’s online electronic diaries for yesterday saying “\$500, Med Recs To Paper” I think that’s all it should take..

I move some tapes from the racks to the trolley to make it look like we really use them, then start looking thru archie listings for a hidden x-gif site. I find one then start a batch job running under some user’s account to get them all back, charged to him. I make sure he’s got enough disk for the job by removing any files not related to the task at hand. Like all those “Doctorate Final Report” papers that have got quite large in the last couple of weeks.

I go back to the mail now, as something’s bound to have happened. I do a grep on all mail files for the words “pregnant” and “family way”, and post them anonymously to the local general interest newsgroup.

Then, before anything can happen, the power goes out! The next second, the phone rings.

“Hello?” I say, annoyed - the coyote was just about to kill roadrunner again!

“Has the comput..”

I hang up. This is a matter of life or death. Quick as I can I rip the computer power cable out of the UPS and plug the TV in. Damn! Wylie missed again!

Meantime, all the alarms are going off like crazy as the disks spin down, but that’s ok, because my Mac and Terminal are hardwired to the UPS in any case; and I’m at the Beer Factory level in Dark Castle too.

The phone rings, so I pull the PABX breaker on the UPS switchboard and it stops. Now to look like I’m working. I break out the puck and the hockey stick and play a little one-on-wall. From the observation window it’ll look like I’m being blindingly efficient, as per usual.

10 Minutes later, the power is back and we’re two HDA’s down, but what the hell, I haven’t lost a man, I’m onto the final screen, and there’s more cartoons!

The phone rings, it’s a luser. (What a surprise)

“Computer Room” I say, being efficient

“Hello, when will the compu...”

I hang up.

I'm doing well in the screen, all I need do is get past the wizard who throws spells at you and I'm in!

The phone rings again. I put it on hands free

"Computer Room" I shout, still deep in the game.

"I've lost my files" a user whines over the loudspeaker

"You bet you have" I say, as my concentration lapses just long enough for me to get zapped by the wizard.

"What was your username?" I say, all sweetness and smiles

He tells me, I look, and he's right. Shit, and I didn't even do it!

Not to be outdone, I change his login directory to the null device, set his path to "." and redefine the command "news" to execute a script in his old login directory to send a nasty message to the equal opportunities officer, then delete itself.

Now that's trying!

Bastard Operator from Hell - Chapter 6

It's Friday, so I get into work early, before lunch even. The phone rings.

Shit!

I turn the page on the excuse sheet. "SOLAR FLARES" stares out at me. I'd better read up on that. Two minutes later I'm ready to answer the phone.

"Hello?" I say.

"WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN, I'VE BEEN TRYING TO GET YOU ALL MORNING?!"

I hate it when they shout at me early in the morning. It always puts me in a bad mood. You know what I mean.

"Ah, yes. Well, there's been some solar activity this morning, it always disrupts electronics..." I say, sweet as a sugar pie.

"Huh? But I could get through to my friends?!"

"Yes, that's entirely possible, solar activity is very unpredictable in it's effects. Why last week, we had some files just disappear from a guys account while he was working on it!"

"Really?"

"Straight Up! Hey, do you want me to check your account?"

"Yes please, I've got some important stuff in there!"

"Ok, what's your username..."

He tells me. Honestly, it's like shooting a fish in a barrel. Twice. With an Elephant Gun. At point blank range. In the head.

(Do I really need to tell you the clicky clicky bit? I think not)

"How many files are in your account?" I ask

"Um, well there should be about 20 in my thesis writeup, 10 or so with the data for it, and another 20 or so in a book that I'm writing"

"Hmmm. Well, I think we caught it just in time. You've still got 2 files left... .cshrc and .login"

"AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAaaaaaaagggggggghhh!"

He sobs into the receiver a bit - it really turns my stomach.

"What can I do?" he sniffs

"Ok, do you have any of your stuff backed up on floppy?"

"Some, but it's weeks old!"

I fire up the bulk eraser.

"Ok" I say "How about I come out and load all that data onto your account pronto so you can get some work done?"

"That'd be great, but it's all at home" he wimpers. "I suppose I'll just load it all in myself tonight".

"Sure. But remember what I said, solar flares are bad for disks and machines. Protect your disks from solar activity to prevent them losing their data"

"How do I do that? Wrap them in tin-foil?"

"NO! TIN FOIL'S THE WORST THING! YOU KNOW WHAT TIN FOIL DOES IN A MICROWAVE DON'T YOU?!"

"Yes.."

"Then don't use it. There's only one thing that protects disks from solar activity.."

"What's that?"

"MAGNETS. Wrap your disks up in a pillow case with lots of magnets - Solar Flares hate that"

"Wow! Thanks"

"No worries at all..."

Shit I'm good!

Bastard Operator from Hell - Chapter 7

So I manage AT LONG LAST, to get a couple of hours off for lunch, AND, because I can't leave my desk unattended, I get the janitor in and have him sit in my chair. I tell him that all he has to do is make sure the receiver doesn't accidentally get put back on the hook. He agrees and I'm off.

First stop, the bank. I change a \$50 note into quarters and then ask to see a balance of my account. Then I yank the power lead out of the teller's vdu.

It dies. I say I'm in a hurry and is the manager around?

He rolls over like a man-sized twinkie and asks what the problem is. I say that all I want is a balance of my accounts. I cross my fingers. YES!

He finds the vdu lead out, plugs it in, and logs in, TO THE MANAGER'S ACCOUNT.

Now's my chance - I slip up against the counter, slopping 200 coins across the counter. The manager ignores it, but all the tellers dive for the money. I watch, unobserved, as the manager types in his password at the breakneck speed of one character a minute. At that rate I should've got \$100 worth...

He finishes typing. "MONEY". What a toughy! Well, that's my mortgage taken care of tonight..

A user that I recognise from "D(eletion) day '89" approaches. I think he's going to talk to me. Even the bank manager is shaking his head furiously.

But it's too late, he stops.

"Um, excuse me, Could you tell me what is the best computer to buy to do my thesis on?"

?!

Right.

"You've heard of Commodore 64's?" I ask

"Yes?.."

"Avoid them like the plague! Not many people know this, but computers aren't made to handle that much memory - it's over 64,000 things, more in some cases. It's a recipe for disaster!"

"Oh!"

"Try something safe and proven. A ZX81 with dual cassette drive if you can get it. The 1K ram model. Write that down. Don't buy a disk drive - You know how they're always failing, but music cassettes last forever!"

"Hey thanks!"

"No worries. What was your username again?"

He tells me. Just in time for D-Day 92. You'd think they'd learn.

I get back to work and the janitor's asleep at the terminal. I ask him if he wants to work here too, but he likes the ability to bust in on people when they're in the toilet..

I put the phone back on the hook, and straight away it rings. I hate it when it does that, it takes me AGES to get my walkman phones in.

It's the hottest hosemonster I've ever met, and she's got a computer problem! I love it when that happens!

"What's your username?" I ask

She tells me (as if I didn't know)

Quick as I can I read all her e-mail (mostly boring stuff), then grep everyone else's mail files for her username. Nothing. Excellent!

"What's the problem?" I ask, all smiles and charm.

"I can't save my documents, it says something about space."

"Not a problem for long" I say, and delete everyone else on the same disk as her. "You should be fine now.."

"Thank you so much" she gushes.

I make a mental note to do something to her account again tomorrow.

"No worries."

The phone rings almost before I've got it on the hook.

"My files are all gone!" a voice whines out at me.

"When did this happen?" I ask.

"Just now..." he says, through the tears

"I see. Well, I wouldn't worry, there's three days till the end of the semester, if you work day and night until then, you should get at least a C-"

He sobs a couple more times then hangs up. What a wimp.

THE PHONE RINGS AGAIN!

"The screen on my PC is really dim" The woman at the other end says "Should I wind the brightness knob up?"

"NO!" I scream "Don't touch that knob! Have you any idea of the radiation that comes out of that thing when the knob gets wound up?!!!!"

"Well I..." she says, all uncertain

"TAKE MY ADVICE!" I say "There's only ONE way to fix a dim display, and that's by power surging the drivers"

The words "power surging" and "drivers" have got her. People hear words like that and go into dummy mode and do ANYTHING you say. I could tell her to run naked across campus with a powercord rammed up her backside and she'd probably do it... Hmm...

"Have you got a spare power cord?"

"No.."

"Oh well, never mind, we'll have to do the power surge idea... Ok, quick as you can, I want you to flick the power switch of your PC on and off 30 times"

"Should I take my disks out?"

"NO! Do you want to lose all your data!?"

"Oh. No! Ok.."

I listen carefully ... clicky ... clicky ... clicky ... clicky ... clicky ... clicky ... BOOM!

Amazing, it probably made it to 27 - the power supply usually shits itself at 15 or so...

"MY COMPUTER BLEW UP!!!" she screams at me down the line

"Really? Must've been a dodgy power supply! Lucky we found out now! Is your machine still under warranty?"

“NO!”

“Dear oh dear. Well, Best get it repaired then. Did you backup your files?”

“Yes, to the system, Yesterday, but all this morning’s work is gone!”

“Oh dear. What was your username, I’ll just check that your backups worked ok?”

She tells me....

Bastard Operator from Hell - Chapter 8

I’m at my desk as usual, and a user calls.

“Hello Computer Room, Simon here, How can I help” I answer

“I can’t get into my account!” A user mumbles at me.

“What was your username please?” I say

They give me their username. No worries. I look in their account.

“No worries, it was just a badly made login file. I’ve fixed it, you should be able to login.”

“Thanks!”

“No worries. Have a nice day!”

WHAT IS THIS? you’re asking yourself. Has the BASTARD OPERATOR FROM HELL turned over a new leaf? Sold out?! GONE INSANE?!!!

Nope. The BASTARD OPERATOR FROM HELL is being logfiled. And if that’s happening, I’m being bugged as well. So I’m being nice till I can find the bugs. It shouldn’t be long - bear with me.

Ah. One in the phone handpiece. Basic. But then the boss is a sneaky sort, so there’s probably a couple more. Ah! And another in the base of the phone and one inside my keyboard. Time for a mad coffee-spilling frenzy. This is a big job, so I bring the whole jug over and wait for a witness. The System Manager comes in.

“Where’s that report of mine?” he asks in a surly manner - he’s obviously pissed that I haven’t implicated myself yet. Antagonist Identified. As the Principal of “BASTARD OPERATOR SCHOOL” (me) will tell you, “There’s no problem so large it can’t be solved by killing the user off, deleting their files, closing their account and reporting their REAL earnings to the IRS”

I pull his printout from under the coffee jug where I put it, and the coffee splashes all over the phone and keyboard, which for some reason were stacked on top of each other.

“Woopsy!” I say, mock horror on my face. The System Manager’s face tells me I was right in my guess.

“Don’t think you’ll get away with this!” he snarls and stomps off. I click on the ethernet monitor and watch the traffic coming out of his PC.

Ah! A memo, authorising the termination of my contract, going to the laser in the director’s office. I make a few alterations to the file in the spool directory and let it go to it’s destination. I run my dinky little program that deposits -522 to the PC and our mainframe shits itself.

Later, while booting, I’ll remove that nasty logfile business.

Next, I wander into the comms room and plug my earphone into the spare RS232 port in the Directors office. It’s amazing how simple it is to bug an office once it’s got data lines going to it!

Director: “Are you sure about this?”

SysMgr: “OF COURSE!”

Director: “You don’t want to reconsider?”

SysMgr : “NEVER!”

Director: “Very well, I’ll fax it to staffing now..”

SysMgr : “EXCELLENT!”

Two seconds later the System Manager strolls in smiling. “Well, I’ll really miss you Simon..” he says, full of himself.

“Oh?” I say, all sweetness and charm “Where are you going?”

“No Simon” he says, with glee “You’re going”

“A PROMOTION!” I say “You’ve finally written that letter to the head of staffing telling him he’s a bum-sucking arse bandit and that you quit?”

“No...”

“Are you sure? It’s much better than the one about me being fired..”

“Y..” His eyes widen slightly

It’s like clubbing a seal to death with a foam cushion. He runs to stop the fax. Only, having just resigned, >clickety clickety< his card key no longer works...

Amateurs...

The Phone rings. It’s the same guy as before

“I can get into my account now, but I’ve run out of disk”

“Hang on, I’ll see what I can do”

>clickety<... rm -r *

Bastard Operator from Hell - Chapter 9

I’m driving to work and I’m stuck behind this old guy, the classic slow driver from hell, whose car red-lines at 20 mph and can’t take corners at more than 5. I honk my horn but his hearing aid’s probably turned way down to “whisper”, so I’m stuck.

I make a mental note of his license plate. In fact, I did that 60 times a minute for 15 and a half minutes. Oh dear.. oh dear.... Looks like another call to the DMV Database to register a vehicle as stolen by out of town arms dealers...

I get to work, flick the excuse page over. “ELECTROMAGNETIC RADIATION FROM SATELLITE DEBRIS”. Fair enough, it looks like it’s going to be a good day.

I log into “FUCKYOU”, (the help-desk enquiries username) and go into mail. There’s 3 new messages, the first of which is 117 lines long, so it’s obviously a storyteller. Shit, I hate that. Instead of saying “My account needs more disk space” they tell you about how they’re doing this bit of research for a lecturer and how it’s got to be in yesterday, and they almost had it but their second cousin twice removed had a perforated herpes scab and lost a lot of blood and had to be rushed into hospital... etc etc. I delete the message.

Second message I read, but it’s one of those people who can’t handle the mail interface and send a null message, so all you get is headers. I reply to the message saying “No worries, we can do that by next Tuesday”. Hope it was important.

The last message I leave for tomorrow, because Saturday would be a dull day if I ever had to work then.

The phone rings. I thought I’d fixed that!

I put it on hands free so I can slop some pizza into the microwave.

“Yes” I call.

“Something’s wrong with my boot disk, I can’t login to the server”

“Have you got your disk with you?”

“Sure!”

I go get the disk and put it and the pizza in for 5 minutes on “ULTRA-NUKE”.

Six minutes later, he rings back.

“It still doesn’t work, and now my disk makes a funny noise and smells.”

“OH SHIT! It’s that electromagnetic radiation from satellite debris again!”

“Really? I think I heard about that!” (What a tool!)

“Yep, I’m sorry, you’ll have to buy another disk”

“Oh, that’s ok, I don’t mind, the old one was getting worn. Thanks”

“Sure, no worries. And be sure to run it through our virus checker FDISK when you get a lot of important data on it...”

“I will! Thanks!”

“That’s Ok - it’s my job!”

Xcbzone is running really slow so I kill off a whole lot of database backends that seem to be hogging all the cpu and get back into my game. Much better.

It isn’t easy on the frontline, work work work...

I go to the cafeteria for a quick 2 hour snack - they’re so nice to me there. They always have been, ever since that computer glitch that registered their kitchen as an organ recipient - very messy. I grab a couple of cans of coke and some cheese things and cruise on back to the office via the first year computer fundamentals lab. I look in the window on the scene that unfolds itself to me - a lab full of first years with no demonstrator.

WELL I’LL JUST HAVE TO HELP!

I walk on in.

“Right, I’m your temporary replacement demonstrator and today we’re going to put our assignments aside for half an hour to learn about the REMARK function, or, as it’s known to the computer literate world, rm..”

I should have been a teacher you know - I’ve got this way with people...

Bastard Operator from Hell - Chapter 10

I get invited to a lecture as a guest speaker in “Computing Operations Fundamentals”, so I leave the control room in the capable hands of Sam, the janitor and cruise on down.

The lecture starts and goes ok, then there’s a 10 minute period where students get to ask a “real operator” questions that they have about operations.

I get out my pad and pen.

“Before we get started” I say, “could you just call out your username before you ask me a question, I find it easier to apply your problem to terms you would understand better”

The lecturer eats all this up - the personal touch really gets to them.

“First Question, You over there..”

“What do you think of the privacy of individuals on a shared system?”

“What was your username please?”

“CMS1103”

>Scratchy scritch<

“Computer Privacy... Hmm. This is a toughy really. You mean stuff like reading the email between you and your counsellor about you not wanting to come out of the closet?”

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAGGGGGGGH!”

“AH. Well, he seems to have left - must have picked a bad COMPLETELY RANDOM example. Next question. You, over there...”

“CMS1136. I was..”

“Ah yes, 1136 the only person on campus who subscribes to alt.sex.buggery.by.sailors.dressed.in.mums.clothing”

“It’s purely for research purposes!”

“I’m sure it is. You do a lot of story posting for a researcher don’t you?”

“NNGggggAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAGGGGGH!”

“Next please...”

...

Two minutes later, the lecture theatre's empty.

That's the problem with students today, they just don't want to learn. I go back to control and Sam's asleep at the console again. I think he's after my job. I make a mental note to tap into the salary database and cancel his health and accident insurance payments. You can't be too careful..

I put the phone on the hook for the first time this afternoon and it starts ringing almost immediately. THAT'S IT! I redirect it to 911 so I can catch a bit of shuteye. That'll teach them. OOPS! Almost forgot to turn over the excuse calendar. "STATIC FROM NYLON UNDERWEAR" Nope, too plausible - although in some cases I could do an on-site check. Nah, can't be stuffed. I'll pick another one. "STATIC FROM PLASTIC SLIDE RULES" Now THAT'S one with a challenge!

I un-redirect the phone and drag the rubbish bin so it rests on the printer's stacker - another job well done. The phone rings - this could be the big one!

"Hello?"

"Hi, Um, how do I spell-check my file?"

"Simple, just type 'spell' and the filename"

"Thanks"

I'm so bloody nice this morning. Especially as I know that my version of spell introduces errors instead of detecting them. Things like changing friend to freind instead of vice-versa. What the hell.

The phone rings - it's them again.

"There's something wrong with spell"

"What makes you think that?"

"Because my file is all corrupt now!"

"That doesn't sound like spell to me. Are you logged into through a PC?"

"Yes, but I can.."

"Please, leave the technical diagnosis to me... Now, is there a plastic ruler somewhere on or in the desk?"

"Um >clunka<, yes..."

"Right. You've got a static buildup on your hard-drive caused by the changing electrostatic field generated by the ruler - the same one that makes bits of paper stick to it when you rub it up and down your arm..."

DUMMY MODE ON

"Oh. What do I do?"

"You know how you get paper off a ruler by hitting it on a table lots of times? Well do that with your PC. Say 20 times - lift it about a foot off the desk & drop it."

"Oh. OK"

>crash< ... >crash< ... >crash< ... >crash<

"Um, the screen went dark"

"That's ok, it's supposed to do that - keep going. And when you're finished, do the screen as well, that static may have gone up the wires to it."

>crash< ... >crash< ... >crash< ... >crash< ...

I hang up. I get up and go out to the public area to put honey in the floppy drives when a guy who looked like Lee Harvey Oswald runs up to me and shoots me, only the sound comes from the machine room, and I can hear the ex System-Manager's chuckle....

Later, in the ambulance, I realise. I forgot to get the guys username...

Then everything goes dark

The Bastard Operator From Hell Lives! - Chapter 11

The darkness cleared as we got out of the tunnel and it occurred to me that I couldn't be all that injured. Then again, maybe I was. Someone was going to p..

I died.

Of course, a true BOFH considers this not really as dying, but more of going home for the holidays.

Five seconds later, I'm getting the upside of 15Kv across the nipples. (These ambulance guys sure know how to party).

Three weeks later I'm back on my backside and feeling rested and relaxed behind the console again. The rest has done me good, I feel *great!*. I catch up on everyone's email then let the students know I'm back by performing an impromptu preventative maintenance in the middle of lab time by kicking the restart switch (They love it really)

I flip today's excuse card, "GLOBAL WARMING" YES YES YES! What a welcome home!

It's the end of the month so all those automatic email reminder programs will be sending messages all over the place. I set the system clock back 7 days to buy some peace and quiet and swap the printer ribbon for the three year old one with holes in it.

I sort through my snail mail and crack open the BOFH Monthly Newsletter, "kill -9" and check out the articles therein. There's a nice peice on making OS/2 slow, boring and painful, but it looks exactly like the OS/2 installation instructions to me... Ah, who knows. I head straight to the BOFH Wizard section to see if any of my articles were published. All of them!!! Even the one about the c compiler that randomly removes one line from the source code it's compiling!

The phone rings.

"The Screen on my PC is blank!!!"

"It's the power cord" I say

"No, I checked that. When I switch it on, it does nothing!"

"It's the power cord" I say

"No, I checked and it's all plugged in properly. There's no lights on the keyboard or anything"

"It's the power cord" I say

"Oh. I just noticed, the cord's not plugged in properly!"

"The power cord?" I ask

"Yes... Woopsy"

"No worries at all" I say "Is it all working well now?"

"Yes, I think so. I'm sorry, you WERE right all along"

"Yes, we're getting a lot of this, it's due to the current Global Warming problem. It causes random thermal expansion and contraction resulting in temperature induced movement of friction based holding mechanisms.."

I listen carefully. Nothing. In other words, <DUMMY MODE ON>...

"You can fix it permanently though" I say

"Really? How?"

"Well it's all to do with lowering salt deposits on the metal contacts"

"Oh!" (Dummy mode irrevocably engaged)

"All you need to do is just take the power plug out and deposit some dilute mineral salts on it. Do you have some dilute mineral salts on you?"

"Uh, no?"

"Ok, no worries, just stick it in your mouth drool into it. But make sure you wipe the plug first to get rid of any germs, and TURN THE SWITCH OFF ON THE MONITOR before you do - we don't want a nasty accident!"

"Oh. Ok!"

>Fzzzt<>clunk!<

I hang up as the receiver hits the floor. Disk space is too good for them.

Bastard Operator from Hell - Chapter 12

I get to work and I'm a bit tired so I plug a thick hunk of copper across the three phase supply and throw the switch. The room is plunged into darkness as the circuit breakers trip and for once the machine room is silent.

I like it.

I pop the phone off the hook and close the curtains on the observation window. Now it's **really** dark in there. I wouldn't be surprised if someone had an accident in here..

I lift a couple of floor tiles up in the darkness and call our maintenance contractors saying the mini popped the breaker again, then replace the fuses in it with a couple of nails and short the power supply to ground. You can't just hope for this sort of thing, you've got to MAKE it happen.

15 minutes later the engineer arrives and falls down the hole. I pop the floor tiles back on just as the System Manager (a new and very thorough individual) comes in, telling me to watch out, someone could really hurt themselves in the dark...

I nod & tell him that we can't really afford all the downtime, and should I just throw the breaker and hope that there was no major fault. After thinking about the negative publicity we're getting already, he makes the last decision of his short career and tells me to go ahead.

Later, when the smoke clears I examine the smoking remains of the mini. Not a pretty sight...

"Strange that the breaker jammed shut, isn't it?" I say to our manager as he packs up the personal things in his office. "One in a million chance. A pity that someone saw what you did and posted the whole story to comp.misc. You'll be lucky to get a job managing a car computer after all that publicity..."

I go back to the machine room and throw the rest of the breakers to liven everything up, then login and start deleting users' email. I spot an interesting off-the-record sexual proposition from our male consultant to a member of the men's swim team which will make a good motd, so I copy it there, modify root's owner name to be "Winker" and password to be "ljkadlkajflkj" (then call the big boss to report a suspected intrusion). Should be at least a couple of hours of login time before we can sort that out. In the meantime, people are just going to have to read that message...

I realise the message has been read when I hear the gunshot from behind the consultant's closed door.

I edit the online helpdesk information and change the phone number to the System Manager's - he'll probably appreciate the extra calls at such a sad time... I hear another shot and realise he won't be answering any calls today. I put the phone back on the hook and flip today's excuse card. "Poor power conditioning". Too plausible. "STATIC BUILDUP". Still a bit too plausible for my liking, but I don't want to run out of cards before the end of the year, so I decide to run with it.

The phone rings almost as soon as I've got "Top Gun" in the video machine so I pause the video and put the phone on hands-free.

"I think I've bought a bad floppy disk"

"Yes?" I wonder if I've suddenly become the consumer's watchdog?

"Well, I've got this disk and it won't format. All the others in the box did so I thought I must have a bad disk"

"Why are you calling me about this?" I ask

"Well, the disk says guaranteed; where do I go to get a replacement?"

Ah! Of course.

"Well, let's see. Are you sure it's the disk, and not just some problem with static buildup?"

"Huh?"

"Static Buildup, you know, static electricity that's passed from you to the computer"

"But I'm wearing a wrist strap!"

Around about now I realise I'm deep in dweeb country. Wrist straps aren't fashion accessories in my part of town...

"Of course you are, but your average wrist strap has a 1 meg resistor in series with it, a **really** poor earth. What you need is a direct earth connection. Hang onto the frame of something that's earthed properly."

"What, you mean like our stainless steel bench?"

“Excellent. Now, have you got a paper clip to discharge the static with?”

“Hang on. Yeah”

“Ok, with your other hand, poke the clip thru the ventilation holes at the back of the unit, and just touch the contact at the end of the thick red wire.”

“The one going to the power supply?”

“Yep, that’s it”

“...Hey, isn’t that the li... >kzzzzt!< >clunk<“

Another call solved by the helpdesk from hell...

I’m really bored. You know how bored you get when work’s going on and on and on, and nothing interesting is happening, and you’re listening to a radio that picks up ONE station on FM, and it’s always the station with the least records in the city, about 5, and one of them is “You’re so Vain” which wasn’t too bad a song until you hear it about 3 times a day for a year, and EVERY time it plays, the announcer tells you it’s about Warren Beaty and who he’s currently poking, someone you’ll never sniff the toe-jam of, let alone meet, leet alone get amouros with. And EVERY time someone mentions Warren Beaty, someone says that he used to go out with Madonna too, and have you seen “In Bed With..” AND THEN, someone ELSE will say “It wasn’t really about Warren Beaty, it was James Taylor” and the first person will say “What, ‘In bed with Madonna““, and they laugh and everyone else laughs, and I pull out the Magnum from under the desk where I keep it in case someone laughs at a joke that’s so dry it’s got a built in water-fountain, and blow the lot of them away as a community Service. I figure that I’ll get time off my sentence if I ever kill someone by accident who’s got a life.

So visitors are getting pretty thin at the moment, and the Quick-Lime Pits are filling up rapidly, and all I’ve got to do is the full backups and maybe I can go home.

So, to relieve the boredom, I get some iron filings and pour them into the back of my Terminal until it fizzes out (Which doesn’t take all that long, surprisingly enough), then call our maintenance contractors and log a fault on the device. Sometimes they’ll send someone who knows what they’re doing, but it’s a lot more fun when they don’t - which is about 98% of the time.

So they maintenance guy comes in, and I can tell he’s NEW because the photo on his ID actually LOOKS like him, not like the head engineer, whose photo is a black and white tin-type (he’s that old).

Maintenance Contractors always dress up nice, with a tie and everything because they believe that a customer will trust a nicely dressed guy.

Because he’s NEW and ALONE, he’s what you call an appeasement engineer, the new guy they send so they respond within the 4 hour guaranteed response period.

(Things are getting better and better) Your average appeasement engineer is about as clued-up on computers as the average computer “hacker” is about B.O, and their main job is to make sure the power plug is in and switched on, then call back to the office for “PARTS”. The really keen ones will sometimes even take a cover off the equipment and pretend that they see this stuff all the time. I wonder what sort today’s is...

“You got a dud terminal?” he asks pleasantly

I tell him yeah, and bring him into the control room.

“Which one is it?” he asks, confused by the fact that only one of them is smoking.

“It’s the Model Three” I say, giving NOTHING away.

“Ah, the old model three!” he says knowingly, without a clue what a model three is, or which one of the three terminals it is, which isn’t surprising, as I just made it up.

“We get a lot of model three problems” he says nodding “So what actually happened?”

Sneaky, but not good enough. I’m not going to point it out to him.

“It just went dead” I say, in luser mode.

“I see. Could you just recreate what you were doing so I can check the unit out when it’s ready for operation?”

Very Sneaky. I decide to let him off the hook.

“Look, I’ve got to go to the toilet, there it is over there” I say, pointing at our Waffle-Iron.

“But that’s a Wa...” He says, then stops. He’s a beginner, and it’s just possible that the company has a line of terminals that look like waffle irons.

He bites.

“Sorry” he says, smiling again “for a minute there I thought it was a model 2!”

A reasonably good save, but it won't save him.

I leave, which means he's got to take it to bits, otherwise he knows I won't believe he's worked on it. I give him a couple of minutes to get the element exposed then wander back in.

“So how does it look?” I ask, concerned-like.

“Well, I think we could have a processor problem..” he says concentrating on prying the element up.

..concentrating so much that he doesn't notice me plugging the iron in.

“Shouldn't you be wearing an earthing strap?” I ask innocently.

When he thinks I can't see, he creeps his hand over to the wiring frame and says “Well, It's just as easy to hold onto earth like this”

“But what about the risk of a cross-the-body shock with no resistor in series with you?” I ask ever-so-more-innocently

“Oh, it's ok” he says “the unit's unplug..”

>click< >BZZZZZZZEEERRT!< >clunk!<

I ring the maintenance help-desk again...

It's Rhonda

“Hey Rhonda!, Ah, I'm going to need another engineer and a new Waffle Iron over here; for some reason your engineer opened up my Waffle Iron without switching it off.” I say

Rhonda knows me. It's the third call and the third appeasement engineer.

“You're a real prick” she says, annoyed

“Tell ya what Rhonda, why don't you come and fix it; it's a model three..”

I'm still bored.

But at least now the radio's off, it was on it's 12 repeat of “Wildfire” THIS WEEK, and it's only Tuesday; shit I hate that. So anyway, I quicklime the engineer to remove any fingerprints and then FedEx him back to headquarters and set about waiting for the engineer.

Now the second engineer only has to come out after another 4 hours, there's no death of engineer penalty clause, (but I'm thinking about asking for one) so I've got to fill in some time. This guy's going to be a technical engineer, the sort that comes in with a raggedy tie where he got it caught in the drum printer at 3000 rpm a couple of years ago, and he'll have the grazes on the face that indicate that he didn't get the gate open in time... I know these sorts...

So I fill in a couple of hours by killing users off and deleting their files, then waiting for them to call...

“Um, I can't find my files” the whimpering simp on the phone says

“Files? What files?”

“The files in my account. My thesis, my research - all gone!”

“Gone ay? What's your username?”

“TURGEN”

“TROJAN?! LIKE THE CONDOM?”

“No TURGEN. T-U-R”

“OH Turgen, like TURD, but with a GEN instead of a D... Ok lets see”

I make vague clicking noises by dragging the quicklimed man's fingers back and forth across the keypad. “Uh-huh” >drag drag< “Yeah..” >dragedy poke< “AH! - You haven't got any files”

“I KNOW!”

“Well, what are you calling ME for? We don't make the files you know, we just look after them. And chopitty-chop too, your thesis looks like it's due in a couple of days..”

I hang up - he'll call back. Meantime I open up a copy of "VMS BASTARD OPERATORS MANUAL FROM HELL" I'm reading the article I sent in about getting rid of those trouble users...

"... Modify the user's password minimum from 6 to 32 letters, give the password a 1 day lifetime, set it so that they HAVE to use the password generate utility when they change their password (so their password will always be something that looks like vaguely pronounceable line-noise), add a secondary password with the same as the above, then redefine their CLI tables so that the only command that works is DELETE, and all other commands point to it."

Beautiful. Shit I'm good.

He calls back.

"MY FILES ARE GONE!" he screams, panicking.

"Did you have a backup?" I ask, as sweet as pie

"But that's what you people are supposed to do!" he sobs

"Yeah, well we did - but then we switched to those 8mm tapes, and they're the same size as the ones in my video camera, so I've been using them to tape the neighbour's sex romps..."

I hear the revolver go off, but what the hell, it's 5pm, and not my problem...

Bastard Operator from Hell - Chapter 13

I'm busy with my new shell replacement login script, and it's almost foolproof. Let's just say it pops up with: "Yes means No and No means Yes. Delete all files [Y]? " upon login. I'm really starting to worry about the number of account breakins we've been having recently.... The manager isn't though. His main concern appears to be the number of computer-related fatalities on campus. Funny world, isn't it?

I flip the excuse card. "DOPPLER EFFECT" Sounds implausible enough that it's plausible - with a little work of course.

The phone, the bane of my existence, rings.

"Hello, Computer Room" I say, being helpful

"Is this the Technicians?" The caller asks.

Amazing the number of deaf people that use these things. What the hell, I'm bored..

"Yes it is" I lie (Nixon could've done with me)

"I've got a problem with my floppy drive, it doesn't seem to be reading all the time"

"Hmmm. How old is the drive?"

"About a year.."

"And it sometimes fails and sometimes works, but it's starting to fail more and more?"

"YES!"

"Yeah, it's the Doppler effect of magnetism.."

"I thought that only happened with light and sound?"

>Bullshit mode ON<

"Yes, well it's been found that on a spinning surface, like a disk, the particle's magnetic alignment changes, especially when the head is stationary and slightly magnetised in respect to it."

"Duh. Oh"

"So, what you need to do is to demagnetise the head. Have you got a disk head demagnetising loop?"

"Uh.... No?"

"OK, we'll have to do it the hard way. Have you got your original diskettes for your software?"

"Yeah."

"Right, chuck them in the drive, one by one, and format them."

“WHAT?!”

“Don’t worry, it won’t work - remember the drive is failing. All that happens is that the virgin magnetic field of the disks realigns the magnetic field of the head, because they weren’t written by a doppler effected drive.”

“Oh, yeah!”

“So, when it gives you a write error and asks if you want to continue, you say yes. Do it with all your original diskettes, then, to complete the demagnetising process, run a head cleaning diskette through the drive as well, which will pick up the stray magenetic particles clinging to the head.”

“Oh. Ok. Thanks”

“Don’t thank me - IT’S MY JOB”

I put the phone down, it rings again. It’s the big boss.

“Simon, could you come to my office please?”

>ALERT!<

Quick as I can, I press the panic button on our LAN-Analyser, or to be more precise, the “Generate 90% random traffic” button
“Sure, would you like me to come now, or..

The other phone rings. I chuck it on hands free

“Hello, Computer Room, Simon Here, How can I help?”

“THE NETWORK IS DOWN, ALL OUR PCS HAVE SHIT THEMSELVES!” the voice on handsfree screams into the mouthpeice of the other phone

“I see” I say calmly “Yes, our Monitor shows it up, it looks to be a bad segment of thinwire - please hold the line while I unplug it”

I press the “I just got a raise” button (AKA “Stop Traffic Generation”) on the Lan Analyser, and almost immediately the user shouts back “Excellent, it’s working now, thanks”

“That’s ok, don’t mention it. Have a nice day”

The big-boss has been listening to all this, so I reckon that the trip to his office won’t be so bad after all. I tell him I’ll be right down as soon as I secure the net and hang up. On the way down, I invent a new buzzword which always keep management happy. Complete Transient Lockout. Sounds much better than pulling the plug. Like Master-Reset sounds better than off-switch. I get to his office and the staffing officer is there too. Uh-oh.

“Simon - How would you like to be our System Manager?”

?!!!

“Well... I don’t know, I like that hands on..”

“Extra 10 grand a year, Varsity Car..”

“Monaro?”

“Ok”

“Sold!”

Bastard Operator from Hell - Chapter 14

I get into my office and it's my first day - I want to make a good impression, so I empty my IN tray into the bin. Now that's what I call efficient!

I get a call from the big boss - he's been getting complaints about the trainee b*****d operator from hell. I ask him to forward all the complaints to me and that it would be best to let me deal with them. I ring the operator and get him to make an appointment with me.

Two weeks later, he does, and I show him the complaints that have accumulated so far.

"Seventy Three complaints in your first three weeks!" I shout "It's good - but it's NOT Good Enough! You should be getting at least 10 complaints a day - AT LEAST! Now, let's see what you're doing wrong: You get a call from a user - what do you do?"

"Kill them off?" The TBOFH replies

"NO! How can you kill them off if you don't know their USERNAME? Your FIRST priority is to get their username. Then what would you do?"

"Kill them off?"

"NO! Get them to tell you what their problem is!"

"Why?"

"Because later I can say they didn't explain their problem to you properly. It's a great defence - works every time. A user rings me up to complain; I listen to their problem, then say "OH, WHEN YOU SAID `MY PC DOESN'T WORK' HE MUST HAVE THOUGHT YOU MEANT `HOW CAN I MAKE MY PC NEVER WORK AGAIN AND DESTROY MY LIFE'S WORK AT THE SAME TIME?' - IT HAPPENS ALL THE TIME!" then they tell me implausible that is, I say how terribly sorry we are, then fake some connect and CPU time records so their monthly bill is about the same as the Uruguayan national debt. So, after you've heard their problem, what do you do?"

"Kill them off?"

"NO! Then you make up some excuse. Have you got an excuse card calendar?"

"Uh. No.."

"And you said you were qualified to operate a computer! You'd better have mine." I pass my computer card calendar over, flipping it to page one - "ENTROPY"..... ..I like it. "Now, you give the cretin an excuse then what do you do?"

"Kill them off?"

"YES!" (He certainly has a fixation) "Then what?"

"Hang up?"

"NO! Then they'll call you back when the problem recurs. Your job is to make them FEAR calling you. How can you work when people are calling? So, you make them pay for calling in the first place. What would you do?"

"Delete their files?"

"Yeah, it's a start, but then they may call back when they get new files. You want them NEVER to call back. What could you do?"

"Swear at them?"

"No. I can see we'll have to demonstrate. Have you got a metal ballpoint?"

"Yes"

"See that wallsocket over there. Take the refill out of the pen and poke in into the wallsocket."

"But it's live!"

"Would I really make you do it if it were live?"

"Oh" >fiddle< >fiddle< >BZZZZZZZZEEEEERT!<

of course I would. He was no good anyway.

Bastard Operator from Hell - Chapter 15

(The Bastard Operator from Hell returns)

It's a stinking hot day in my non-air conditioned office and I'm annoyed. The sort of annoyed that's described, mistakenly, as red hot. The correct colour choice, is, of course white.

I login to my account and there's three helpdesk mail requests, all ticking away to expiration, then escalation, then further escalation, then followup mail message, then even further escalation, then 2nd followup mail message and casual phone call, then still further escalation, then non-casual phone call, then threats, then, ultimately, and sadly, violence. But not so sadly that I won't resort to it. And they know I will too...

Because I used to be... **THE BASTARD OPERATOR FROM HELL !!!**

...and sometimes, late at night I get these twitches. Like dead people get. (Or, as I prefer to call them, perfect computer users)

In the mornings I get them too. Like when the phone rings. And when I get email. And when people talk to me. AND when people are hogging the espresso machine to make fluffy milk. But apart from that I'm cured. A new man.

I smile at the thought and look, in reminiscence, at some reminders of my past. A couple of backup 8mm tapes with cartoons on them. The thank-you cards for my attendance at 23 seperate funerals of computer center staff. The mains plug with the thinwire ethernet plug at the end. I didn't ever get round to trying that one either, so I don't even know what it would've done.

I'm bored.

That's it alright. I am absolutely, stinking, UNCONTROLLABLY bored. I get up and slip a fingerprint free magnet on top of the reed switch that the Boss had installed in my display cabinet while I was on holiday, then pry the glass door open with a screwdriver. As far as I can figure, the switch is supposed to ring an alarm if the door is opened.

If I've said it once, I've said it a thousand times - "Inexpensive means Inefficient".

I open the door to the clamour of... silence. Well, silence and John Lee Hooker's "Mr. Lucky" from my CD. I grab my aforementioned etherkiller and wander down the hallway to the switchboard, applying another magnet and opening that to silence as well.

That's what's missing in society today - trust.

I pull the 15 amp breaker for the meeting room, then wander on round and plug the etherkiller into a cheap 24hour timer set to 5 minutes from now. On the way back to the the switchboard I hear the first few murmurs about excessive collisions. I plug in my unpatented nail "fuse" (estimated fault current 200-300 amps) with a set of heavily insulated pliers and wander off to the tea-room to start my espresso brew. Halfway through the make, the machine stops. Now THAT'S what I call a collision.

I look around in a bewildered manner as panic erupts on all sides, half-made espresso in my hand. I step out into the hallway and behold pandemonium. Two programmers are fighting over a CO2 fire extinguisher in an effort to put their terminals out. I wander down to my room just as my X terminal, the unreliable peice of excretia it is, flames it's last and lapses into a dull smoulder.

"My cabinet!", I cry in 'horror' and hear the extinguisher struggle end abruptly. In a flash the two programmers concerned are behind me staring into my room. Shortly thereafter the boss runs up as well.

"What's this magnet for?", I ask, picking it up and hearing a bell start chiming in the distance.

"You bastard!", one of the programmers utters.

"I'm sorry?", I ask, turning.

"YOU did it, didn't you?"

"What? Break into my own cabinet? But I've got a key..."

That's the terrible burden of proof really - in this day and age, you need some to make an accusation.

The late-breaking news comes in that one of the consultants had a set of headphones plugged into a CDROM drive hanging off their networked PC. But not anymore. Now there's an unexpected vacancy in the department. I blame the Ethernet Isolation specs. 3KV my backside!

Quicker than you can say "Help us with our enquiries" I'm "helping the police with their enquiries".

"What is this, can you tell me?", a burly officer asks, right up in my face. He holds up a magnet.

"It's a magnet. There was one on my cabinet!", I cry.

"Yes. And where did you get them?", he asks, seizing control...

...and losing it.

"On my cabinet! I just said!"

"No not this one. The others. Where did you get them?"

"Others? What others? You mean there were more on my cabinet! Why?!?" (I can play the "stupid game" forever, having had years of education at the hands of computer lusers.)

He tries a different tack.

"What would you say this was off?", he asks.

"My cabinet! It was on my cabinet, I told you! I pulled it off... and I think I heard a bell ringing...."

.... .

A couple of hours later I'm back at my desk with Mr. Lucky, no charges pressed. I close my cabinet, satisfaction mine for the first time in a long while.

Then the phone rings...

Bastard Operator from Hell - Chapter 16

"He's back, and this time he's got a portable bulk-eraser!!!"

It's...

It's...

IT'S!!!!....

The BOFH from Britain

"... I'd like to escalate this call please..."

"I'm sorry?" I can't help but be a little surprised at this guy's tone.

"I'd like to escalate the severity of this call. Surely a person in your situation is aware of the new International Standard regarding fault logging and tracking..."

He's obviously insane.

There's no other reason why he'd call me this early on a Monday afternoon, as soon as I've got to work...

"What was your username?"

He tells me, and some all-too-familiar key clicking noises follow. I notice his account has the pervert flag set, and yet he has no gif files in his directory - which can only mean one thing...

"Now, this escalation business, you want me to increase the priority with which I'll handle this call?"

"Yes!"

"Tell you what, I'll double it", I say, in gentle, soothing tones.

"Good.", he mutters.

"... Now, twice nothing is nothing, and because it's an ESCALATED priority call, it goes into the RED rubbish bin instead of the brown one."

"WHAT!", he screams. "DO YOU KNOW WHO YOU'RE TALKING TO?!?!"

"Well, I could look up your username and find out, but we deal with so many people here. Your name wouldn't mean anything. Not unless we'd seen you doing something *really* depraved on one of our hidden security cameras - you know the sort that were destined to be put in the computing labs to stop piracy, but actually got put in toilet cubicals after the installation order got corrupted somewhere between the purchasing office and the maintenance department. A freak electrical storm maybe... Anyway, unless you'd done something really disgusting that got caught on film...

... like...

(I look him up in the blackmail book)

... like dressing up in women's underthings and dancing what looked (to the untrained observer) like the lead from "Mary Poppins", I'm afraid that your name wouldn't mean anything to us..."

I've heard the sharp intake of breath - he knows I've heard it, for him it's all over.

"Of course, if you were one of THOSE people, well, I'd remember you immediately, especially when reminiscing to the promotions board, all of whom are squarer than a Rubiks Cube. But I'm in a forgetful mood at the moment. I hope you don't mind if I forget that you called..."

"Yes, of course", he says, the last vestiges of self-respect vanishing.

"Goodbye now!", I cry cheerfully. "But before you go, if you could be so kind as to send some money to the Operators Benevolent fund, I'd be so grateful - in fact my gratitude might make me careless with the bulk eraser, if you see what I mean, ... Mary..."

He makes some wild promise of a large amount, and I keep my side of the deal by being careless with the bulk eraser. His account backups are a mere memory... Then I look through the exabyte rack for the video tape in question, (Labeled Archive-26/5/90) and throw it in the "Post awaiting check clearance" bag addressed to his boss..

It's for the best really, he was under a lot of pressure.

The next call of the day is from the User-Union, a pressure group that sprung up because some users thought they were getting a rough deal!

There's no pleasing some people.

Anyway, to get them off my back, I invite them in to see just how hectic an operator's life really is, and have prepared lots of flashing lights and alert sounds to keep the mindless cretins fooled...

They all file into the control room, about 10 of them in all, the dweebish types who hang out in groups like this as a social event. Things are going well, I'm answering calls and resetting "alarms" when some sour-faced old lard jockey ruins everything.

"These bells and lights don't fool me you know. I was an engineer on these babies when they first came out. This alarm sequence is invalid. There's no such alarm as 00-10-03-15-E. That just can't happen. You've probably just programmed the status display to say that! This is all a sham!!"

Trust there to be some reeducation loser in the audience to totally stuff up my day. That just leaves plan B, although it's risky...

"Yes, it's true", I admit, cowering like Joan Crawford on a bender. "It's all fake. I just didn't want you seeing what's in the computer room..."

They can't resist the bait. As soon as it looks like I'm hiding something they're in for the kill like Piranha.

"WHAT'S IN THE COMPUTER ROOM?!?!?", they demand, chomping at the bit.

"Well,", I say in my best 'this-is-it' voice, "you'd best see for yourself..."

..... ..

Later that day, I help the police try and piece the shocking scenario together...

"It's shocking!", I say, voice oozing with the horror of it all, "just terrible!"

"Yes, yes", the officer mumbles, irritated. "Let's just go over this one more time. You left them in the computer room to go and change some paper and they inadvertently triggered the Halon fire extinguishers..."

"Yes, yes, it's awful isn't it officer?!"

"... and even though there's a 30 second warning, they didn't manage to make it out the door..."

"Yes, it's such a tragedy."

"... even though two of the people who are supposed to have been smoking and set off the extinguishers in the room are dedicated non-smokers..."

"Yes, what an unfortunate time to pick up the habit!"

"... and even though it looks, judging by the scratch marks that the door was in some way locked or jammed..."

"... probably jammed officer. It's a matter of public record that I voiced some concern over this very topic although no-one could find any problem with the lock in question..."

"And even though someone outside at the viewing window could have sworn that they saw you pressing the manual release button on the Halon panel..."

"YES, to try and reset the system and save those poor, innocent people..."

"After ALL that, you still expect me to believe it was an accident?"

"... Well officer, I don't really know what I expect you to do, but your face looks vaguely familiar. You haven't used the toilets around here in the past have you?"

"Well, I may have once or twice - we get a lot of calls over here since you've been here - suicides mainly..."

"Yes, yes, Officer, well how about we go into the control room and look at a copy of a video I have, with someone who looks awfully like you, and what they do to a loaf of bread..."

Things are looking up!

And here's finally (???) (hopefully!) the

END.