



Harkness Autocrat Signal-Epitaph

THE TECHNOLOGY HOUSE PERIODICAL

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A Note from the Autocrat Matthew Petersen

This issue marks the start of a new year, a new semester, a new volume, and a new leaf for the Technology House periodical. We here at Technology House hope to entertain, inform, and

educate our readership, with interesting and insightful articles and features covering a wide range of the human experience. From mathematics to motor vehicles, this issue has something for everyone. So read, review, and enjoy this publication, and send your questions, comments, or concerns to autocrat@techhouse.org or to the return address.

A Review: 1998 Buick Century James Dilling

Driving a 1998 Buick Century must be what I imagine Christian guilt feels like. It's heavy, and yet somehow floaty at the same time, unresponsive to any of the glaring issues it faced as an American car in the late 90s while being steadfast to whoever actually felt the need to buy this car new. But who actually wanted this car new? Why pick this car over any of the innumerable other mid-size sedans of the late 90s? Imports had already won at this point, Honda was

no longer the new kid on the block and Acura and Lexus were starting to prove that Asian car manufacturers could do luxury too. GM lost the 90s, and at this point were barely playing damage control, and doing it poorly when you consider the Century was a "mid-size" sedan. That's right, despite being about the size of the current Buick LaCrosse, a modern "full-size," the Century was small, only because it shared the lot with real behemoths like the Buick Park Avenue (but that's another story of GM's failure to adapt).

Article continues on page 3.

Get Your Word's Worth Ekaterina Kryuchkova

One can wonder about the origin of the phrase "reckless abandon." One rarely hears "abandon" used as a noun without the idiomatic adjective. The phrase originated in mid-nineteenth century, when "abandon," meaning "lack of moderation" was

¹Not real

borrowed from French. The authors who used “abandon” frequently added “reckless” those of their readers who had the educational (mis)fortune of not speaking French. The qualifier stuck.

The above etymological investigation was conducted by yours humbly, Alex Levine, and Leo Cooper.

Dice Roles

Petersen and Wilson

In this issue of Dice Roles, we'll be reviewing *Microscope*, a “fractal role-playing game of epic histories.” In *Microscope*, the players do not play characters; at least not in the large. Rather, players act as the arbiters of history, deciding diachronically what occurs over an entire history.

At the beginning of the game, the players build a consensus over which elements are to be included in the history, after deciding the overall ‘Big Picture.’ The consensus becomes the Palette, a list of items which either cannot be included ever, or are encouraged to be included even if they seem odd. A Big Picture might be “an underground civilization makes contact with the surface” or “mankind expands to the stars.” Items on the palette are, if ‘Yes,’ items that you might not expect in the history, and, if ‘No,’ items that you might expect but have

been outlawed. For example, in the latter Big Picture, it might be ‘Yes’ for “demigods” and ‘No’ for “faster than light travel.”

The “fractal” part of the game comes from the way in which the history is constructed: from the outside in, non-chronologically, focusing on different themes (called ‘Lenses’) throughout the history. Going around a circle, players take turns being the Lens and deciding the Focus. Within a Focus, players can add periods, events, and scenes, all focusing on the topic decided by the current Lens. Periods are large lengths of time that cover pivotal stages of the history, like an expansion period or an era of exploration. Events are individual smaller time periods that are pivotal to the history, such as disasters or discoveries. Scenes, the most granular timescale, are either dictated or role-played, and answer a specific question: “why didn't the High Priest leave the flooding temple?”

Overall, despite its broad focus, *Microscope* provides players with a structure within which to explore a coherent history and find things out about the world they create. Because it is not played chronologically, the past may be a closed book while the future may be well defined. Give *Microscope* a shot; you won't regret it.

Smash and Sundry

Paul Addonizio

Below are the rankings for the Tech House 2016 Smash Ladder:

1. Leo Cooper
2. Miles Holland
3. Paul Addonizio
4. Dayton Wilson
5. Raz Rivlis
6. Nick Cunningham
7. Ben Wilson
8. Preston Law
9. Aaron Gokaslan
10. Zachary Zagorski
11. AJ Whitman
12. Aiden Schore
13. Lucas Kasser
14. Solomon Klein
15. Julius Reiner
16. Tracy Knight
17. Ethan Mok

Real² Facts About Real Numbers

Samuel Angelo Crisanto

1. Most even primes are indivisible by two
2. Gaurav's Theorem: 3 and $3.1004010104014!^3$ are the same number. We know this because we never see them in the same equation at the same time.
3. $3.1004010104014!^3$. Dividing most real numbers by 1 is a bad idea. This is because 1 is the identity element, and a number di-

²Not real

vided against itself cannot stand.

4. The value of π changes the faster you go due to Lorentz contraction.
5. By the pigeonhole principle, at least two pigeons have the same number of holes.
6. Fermat's Little Theorem was impossible to analyze until the invention of the Scanning Electron Microscope³.
7. Most arithmetic errors are not due to carelessness - division only works half the time.

Article Continued From Page 1

But the Century has one thing that the others lacked, and that was price. MSRP for the base model was \$18,000. The Accord? \$24,000. Toyota Avalon? \$28,000. This was a luxury car, for under \$20,000. I mean, luxury is a heavily subjective term, and one of the quickest ways to lose a luxury marque is to undersell the market, but if you wanted an American made car that you could get away with bringing to the golf course, this was probably your cheapest way out, and it did feel like "luxury" to some extent - the ride is smooth and forgiving with extremely soft suspension, and steering requires maybe a pinky's worth of effort, but did amount to that bulky, yet floaty

feeling of driving a blimp on the road, which is only made worse by the negotiable feeling brakes.

Much of the cost savings this car achieved were in the driveline. Whereas many of mid-sized GM cars of the era used the Series II 3.8L V6, the Century was powered by the 3.1L V6 that was also behind many of the smaller, faster Honda Civic competitors made by Chevy and Pontiac, as well as the base models of larger cars intended to use the 3.8L. The 3.8L was an option on some larger cars, so the marketing team could claim a lower starting price, when in reality people expected the torque available in the 3.8L, and just got that instead. This was how the Century's sister cars, the Oldsmobile Intrigue and Chevy Lumina, managed to sell, by catering to a larger market, but the Century only offered the 3.1L. In hindsight, this was probably a blessing for the car's longevity since the 3.8L featured brittle plastic intake manifolds, and weak head gaskets that would suck down antifreeze with glee, making many 3.8L cars not even make it 100,000 miles. That doesn't make the 3.1L a great motor; at the end of the day it was a single cam in block pushrod engine that hates hard revs and flatlines in torque past 2000 RPM. Couple that with a slushy, laggy torque converter 5 speed automatic, and you get, well, a car. A plain, normal car that's perfectly fine to live with since it makes a hundred

and something horsepower and costs maybe \$30 a week for gas (at \$3 a gallon).

The only oddity here was it willingly undercutting other GM cars filling the same role, like the Oldsmobile Intrigue by \$4,000, and even the Regal. Seriously, you could go to a Buick dealership to see a Regal, and I mean it's nice, nicer in every way, but how can you really pick the Regal when it's exterior looks the same as the Century, has less interior space and costs \$6,000 more. Although I guess you could supercharge the Regal, but who the hell gets a grand sport package for an old people car.

And these cars were *really* made for old people, and it pokes through in about every sense of design choices on the car. The headlights turn on for you, but it's not like there's much of a difference between the day running lights and normal headlights anyway. The car will beep at you if you leave the keys in the ignition with the door open, will beep at you when you are at a 1/3 tank of gas, and will beep at you before you lock the car's doors, as if it's asking "are you *sure* you didn't forget your keys inside again Gladys?" Even the quirks of the car, like the split bench seat and column shifter, would appeal to fans of the cars of yesteryear. I'd reckon the liveliest person driving this car at it's launch might have been, well, your dad, who would mimic a Neal Peart's drum solo to Rush's Tom Sawyer switch-

³Many scientists believe it was not fully understood until the construction of the LHC.

are shorter, but quite realistic utterances.

The phonological and morphological inventories of Salishan languages provide nominal evidence that they may be distantly related to other North American languages, particularly the Wakashan, Inuit, Algonquian, and Athabaskan families, which all share similar phonological and structural qualities. The evidence of shared vocabulary between these families is greater than chance, but still marginal. Due to the lack of historical record of vocabulary changes, there is insufficient evidence in shared vocabulary to support a genealogical relationship, rather than rich lexical borrowing. The existence of distal genealogical relationships between American languages may never be conclusively proven, but likewise the complete absence of superordinate genealogical relationships at all between the large quantity of isolate American language families currently posited, seems moreover unlikely.

Reel Facts About Reel Numbers

Zachary Zagorski

You know all about math... but how much do you know about winding objects and English dances?

1. The standard length of a 35 mm film reel is 1,000 feet (305 m), which runs approximately 11 minutes for sound film.
2. The earliest known depiction of a fishing reel is in a Chinese painting from 1195 CE.
3. The Virginia reel, a traditional line dance, consists of two equal parallel lines. Depending on the variant being used, it repeats either every 48 or 64 bars.
4. There are 0 other interesting facts about reels, which is disappointing. I thought this column was going to have more substance to it.

Literature Today

Lucas Kasser

This song was written during a dark period in my life, a period in which I had to learn functional programming languages. Our relationship has since improved, but, as documented by the following lyrics, it had a rocky start.

(To the tune of "Baby Come Back")

Spending all my nights, all my time going to the CIT

Doing anything just to get them off my mind

But when the IDE finally loads,

I'm right back where I started again

Trying to forget them is just a waste of time

Local variables come back, any kind of fool could see

You made programmin' so easy

Local variables come back, you can blame it all on me

I was wrong, and I just can't live without you

All day long, typing with false bravado

Trying to keep up a smile that hides a tear

But as the computer powers down, I get that empty feeling again

How I wish to God that they were here

Local variables come back, any kind of fool could see

You made programmin' so easy

Local variables come back, you can blame it all on me

I was wrong, and I just can't live without you

Now that I put it all together

Give me the chance to make you see

Have you used up all the addresses in your RAM?

Are there none left for me?

Are there none left for me?

Local variables come back, any
kind of fool could see

You made programmin' so easy

Local variables come back, you
can blame it all on me

I was wrong, and I just can't live
without you

I was wrong, and I just can't live

Local variables come back, any
kind of fool could see

There was something intuitive
about you

Local variables come back, you
made programmin' so easy

I was wrong, and I just can't live
without you

Local variables come back

A Biography: Ben Wilson

Lucas Kasser



Since birth, Ben "bDubs" Wilson has been a man of vision.

Filled with unmatched inner drive and determination, he has pursued the arts and sciences at some of our country's most esteemed institutions. With stoicism, Ben has endured the harsh initiation rituals that are Brown's Intro to CS courses, engaged in strenuous physical trials like swimming and rowing, and bravely crafted coffee mug logos in Adobe Illustrator. Unfortunately, despite his many valiant personality traits, fate has not been kind to Ben.

Even before birth, his home was wrought with conflict. His parents could not agree on a name for their son; it was only after many heated debates that they arrived on Ben. Trouble was just beginning for poor Ben, however. Due to spacial limitations, he had to share a room with his younger brother for much of his childhood!

Due to this plentiful source of inner angst, Ben has found solace through the arts. Converting his inner turmoil into masterful renditions of tetra-dimensional imagery, his work has drawn awe and amazement from all who behold it. When asked for the underlying philosophy that enables him to create such masterpieces, Ben stated only, "Art is cool."

How Dare You!

Nick Cunningham

~~Matthew Petersen, you understand why I am writing this denouncement.~~

~~The events of this recent weekend need not be recounted to those in the know, but suffice to say that your actions were unconscionable and, in fact, illegal.~~

~~I am shocked and horrified by the way that you paid off a police officer to get off scot-free, and furthermore I cannot believe that one such as you, supposedly devoted to the rigorous and thorough adherence to rule of law, would have been in such a position in the first place.~~

~~Do not try to deny it - for the people of Technology House at large have the right to know that you have done wrong and should be punished for your actions.~~

~~The only way to right this wrong is your immediate resignation from the position you hold in the Autocrat, which both was gained improperly and held immorally.~~

~~Fail to resign at your own peril, for I have no doubt that public opinion will soon swing against you, and with the force and discretion of a wrecking ball.~~

~~Truthfully yours,~~

~~Nick Cunningham~~

Matthew Petersen, this is an outrage!

The column which I sent to you earlier was a perfectly good piece of investigative journalism, and your cruel censorship is more evidence that you must be immediately removed from your position as Autocrat.

It should be clear to an informed reader that when I spoke of you paying off a police officer this weekend of October 8-9, it was *entirely* metaphorical and in no way the literal truth; and when I accused you of horrifying deeds it was not because those deeds would have made a jury shriek "Guilty! Guilty of murder!" but because the things you have done are in fact offensive to Technology House as an institution.

I hope that you can find it in your cold, cruel, shriveled heart to at least publish this denunciation, now that it has been sufficiently watered down so that an

uninvolved party would be able to understand that I am not in fact accusing you of killing three children and paying off a police officer in the park at the corner of Brook and Arnold streets on the night of October 8, but because you are simply a person who cannot be trusted to run the most respected publication in all of Technology House.

Unironically yours,

Nick Cunningham

I Dared Too Much

Nick Cunningham

It has come to my attention that a proofreader took my accusations seriously and was quite upset with Matthew Petersen.

Although it is perfectly within your rights to be upset with him, for he has done horrible things ranging from enforcing deadlines to requiring work from robots, he has not done anything that is, strictly speaking, illegal.

Though I wish nothing more than his forced removal from the position of Autocrat (and perhaps the appointment of someone more qualified - the Doomba itself?) I feel I should make it clear that if tried, he would not be convicted; and though angry letters supporting this cause would be appreciated by the Autocrat as a publication, they need not delve into the entirely metaphorical accusations leveled against him in my previous column.

Apologetically yours,

Nick Cunningham

Letters

SIR-

In response to Mr. Cunningham's letter of the last issue, I would like to say that I don't see him volunteering to wake up at 7 a.m. each morning, crawl around the lounge sucking up dirt, and then return to a resting place beneath a table for the

remainder of the day. Surely, if someone volunteered for this position, I would accept their labor; at present, no one has, and the only one with the moral fiber, constitution, and dutiful rectitude to carry out the task is our very own Doomba.

SIR-

Why can't we have nice things?

The other day I visited AD-Phi for their tea event, and was struck by the poshness of their lounge. They had wooden floors! I've been told that they also have a very nice (albeit quite flammable) library.

This led me to ask myself: Why doesn't Tech House possess such high-quality items?

When I brought this question to our illustrious housing manager he sorrowfully told me the unadulterated truth. Nice things cost money, and we don't have as much money as AD-Phi. I understand, however, that this venerable newspaper is sent to many TH alumni. Therefore, I have written to implore you: Give us your hard-earned money! Just the other day I was looking at an empty space in the lounge and thinking how nice it would be to have a 32" TV in that space. With your money

we can remedy the situation and lead Tech House into a glorious new era of wealth and prosperity!

Best regards,

K. G. L.

Send us letters! Reach us at the return address, if you are a postal subscriber, or at *autocrat (at) techhouse (dot) org*. We look forward to hearing from you!



Events

Tech House Fall Recruiting - Through 23 October

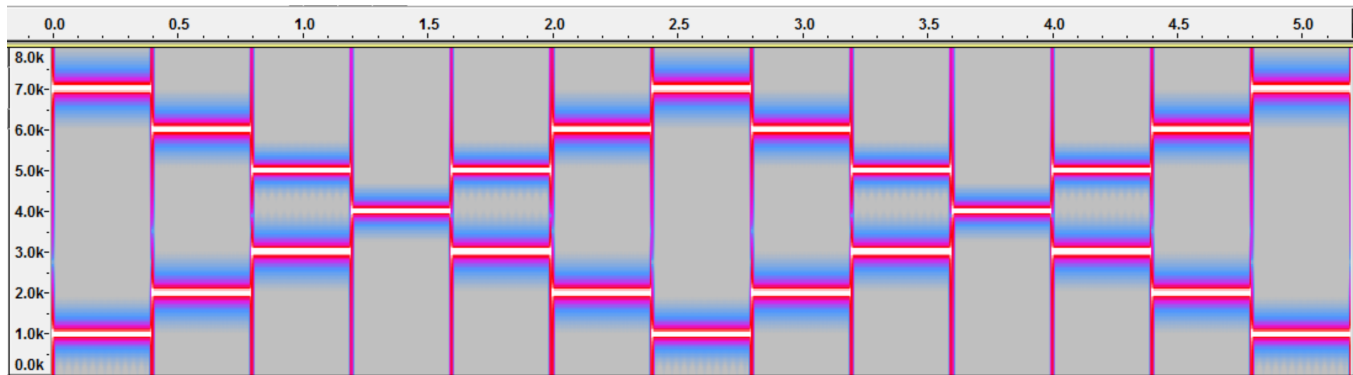
Many events every week! Weekly events include Board Game Night (Thu. 8 PM), Movie Night (Fri. 8 PM), Arts and Crafting Circle (Sat. 3-5 PM), Anime Night (Sat. 8 PM), Listening to Different Music in the Partial Dark with Portuguese Treats and Tea (Sat. 11:30 PM), and Listening to Portuguese Music in the Dark at Midnight (Sat./Sun. Midnight).

JavaSpook - 29 October 2016

Come dance the night away at Tech House's annual Halloween Party! We'll be bringing in up to four live bands (lineup to be determined) and providing plentiful baked goods, coffee, cider, and hot chocolate. Stay tuned for more info, and look for our posters and tableslips soon!

Art of the Bifortnight

AJ Whitman



Spectrogram art made in Audacity. It sounds like “beep doop beep boop beep doop beep.”

Masthead

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