



Harkness Autocrat Register-Beacon

THE TECHNOLOGY HOUSE PERIODICAL

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A Note from the Autocrat

Matthew Petersen

As we head into the Thanksgiving holidays, please enjoy what we have to offer for you this issue. While less immense than our last bumper issue, we have a few interesting articles. We have another review of an automobile from the inestimable James Dilling, as well as some more standard newspaper fare: an advice column, and a horoscopes section. Enjoy this issue

of the Autocrat!

A Biography: Paul Addonizio

Lucas Kasser



From a young age, Paul Addonizio has been hell bent on global domination. His first taste of power came in middle school, when he was elected into Student Government by his unsuspecting peers. A mere sip of the succulent nectar of control was not enough for Paul, however: a deeply ingrained part of his psyche compelled him to strive for loftier goals.

For a time, Paul wandered, propelled by this irrepressible force and yet without direction. Eventually, however, he

encountered at his high school a certain Tom Trocano. Mr. Trocano taught science, and taught it with a quick wit and unrivaled passion for the subject. He genuinely cared about his students, and did his best to imbue each and every one of them with a lifelong love of knowledge.

Young Paul recognized this as the opportunity that he had been waiting for. Not content to merely acquire and embrace the secrets of the universe, he felt compelled to apply them for his own gain, twisting and perverting the very fabric of nature. He tested his radical ideas with human subjects, and began laying the foundations for amassing even greater power. Applying his vast intellect to the task of padding his resume, he got accepted into one of our nation's most prestigious institutions. Now able to easily acquire previously inaccessible resources (like scientific research intended for the betterment of mankind), Paul studies, waits, and schemes in the Tech House lounge of Brown University.

A Review: 2001

BMW 325xi

James Dilling

If Japan won the US auto market in 80s and 90s, I'd argue that Germany was the real winner of the 2000s. Back in the 70s, few people owned imported luxury cars, and imports were rare to begin with. It was mostly a supply chain problem, where repairs ended up as several times as expensive, which is a problem you can still encounter today (and will if you own this car). But Honda got past that by climbing a ladder of econoboxes coupled with the coincidental fuel crises of the 70s and general stagnation of corporate culture in the US auto market. Luxury cars weren't so lucky when your sought after A/C unit was controlled by easily broken vacuum lines, and your target market for luxury cars probably remembers killing either a German or Japanese person some 30 years prior.

But the market changes, and A/C is now standard on the lowliest of Kia Rios, and with that brings into question what a luxury car marque even is. Today, you can't get a bare bones basic Honda Fit without a touchscreen "infotainment" system, power everything and security system. I think this started sometime in the early 90s, where the constant motion of brands moving up-market to satisfy the increasingly focus group tested and engineered consumer started to tear into

the leather-power-seat and AC bread and butter that used to be luxury features. Even the mainstay of the mandatory automatic transmission has been adopted by most low tier cars. A manual transmission is now a "sport" option rather than the economy option, and this really digs into what you're actually getting with a luxury car.

Article continues on page 3.

Smash and Sundry

Paul Addonizio

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

1. Leo Cooper
2. Dayton Wilson
3. Miles Holland
4. Paul Addonizio
5. Nick Cunningham
6. Raz Rivlis
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

Real Facts About Real Numbers

Zachary Zagorski

You know all about math... but how much do you know about modern Brazilian currency?

1. The Brazilian real as we know it was introduced in the year 1994 to put an end to inflation.
2. When it was introduced, one real was worth 1 US Dollar.
3. As of October 2016, one real was worth 3.22 US Dollars.
4. One real is subdivided into 100 centavos. There are coins for 1, 5, 10, 25, and 50 centavos, as well as 1 real.
5. The largest bill made is worth 100 reals.
6. Brazil spent at least 39.1 billion reals on the 2016 Olympic Games.

Horoscopes

Kasser and Tomic

Aries (March 21 – April 19):

Your problems will soon be replaced by new, potentially worse problems. But you'll be better prepared to deal with them!

Taurus (April 20 – May 20):

Cells in your body will soon undergo apoptosis. Watch out!

Gemini (May 21 – June 20):

If bugs appear in your computer code this month, it's not your fault. Your code is perfect; the computer has been possessed by demons. Consult a priest.

Cancer (June 21 – July 22):

Avoid consuming arsenic this month.

Leo (July 23 – August 22):

There is mail in your future.

Virgo (August 23 – September 22):

Fluffy dogs will be thrilled to see you this month. Be sure to pet any that you see!

Libra (September 23 – October 22):

Diplomacy is not your friend this month. For better results, try screeching loudly until the other person stops arguing with you.

Scorpio (October 23 – November 21):

Eating food could result in death. So could drinking water. Better play it safe...

Sagittarius (November 22 – December 21):

Your birthday will occur within the next 30 days.

Capricorn (December 22 – January 19):

Much like a cat, you will be lethargic and filled with apathy. Combat this by panting heavily and fetching sticks.

Aquarius (January 20 – February 18):

Reduce stress and improve morale this month by not completing assignments and neglecting your responsibilities.

Pisces (February 19 – March 20):

You're a fish! Glub, glub.

Article Continued From Page ??

You can be tempted to say "performance," but we don't live in the 40s where we proudly name a car a "century" if you can get the 100 horsepower necessary to maintain 100mph. A 2017 Honda Fit has a 0-60 time of 8.5 seconds, whereas a 1977 Corvette has a 0-60 time of 8.7 seconds. Sure cars of the 70s were pathetic all around, but the average driver won't notice whatever power or torque figure you pull out of your ass when driving habits coupled with overall ride quality are what makes a car "feel" fast (and I'd argue driving a slow car fast is a lot more fun than driving a fast car slow). And yes, a more expensive car will probably net you better performance, but very little ends up being translated into functionality to the driver, especially when a more than competent 300+ hp used C5 Corvette can be gotten for under a third of the price of some new "luxury" cars.

But I'm three paragraphs in and

haven't even talked about the car being reviewed, so I'll say that simply put, the 2001 BMW 325xi is not an especially fast car. It is not an especially comfortable car. It is not even an especially well built car, as I've known people to have invested an additional \$10 grand in repairs shortly after purchase. And yet it's still a luxury car, and therefor commands a bafflingly higher price. Even 15 years later, it asks for between 4 and 7 grand on autotrader. Compare this to the under 3 grand asked for by most cars in this age segment.

Sure the 2.5L straight six engine is peppy and spirited (and I do praise BMW for supporting the I6 engine, the powertrain feels responsive and smooth as a watch, but I feel like that's prerequisite rather than an accomplishment), but in the end it produced 185 HP and 180 ft-lbs of torque. You know what was faster? A Buick Regal with the 3.8L V6, giving 200 HP and 225 ft-lbs, \$4000 cheaper msrp at launch, and the real kick in the teeth? Better fuel economy. And this was out of a dorky, American "mid-size." Yeah, we're comparing cars with vastly different ride qualities, in which case compare the Pontiac Grand Prix, an even cheaper sporty car marketed to millennials and bought by rednecks, but the Buick loses in the one place it couldn't win – it was a Buick and the BMW was a BMW. And this is the argument Bimmer fans will make whenever you criticize their brand, "my car is a BMW and yours is

not” and that’s what costs the extra money. A circle split into alternating quadrants of blue and white, positioned strategically around the outer body, and paired with the name of the high lord’s house, “BMW.”

I feel like this is a car that could have only arose in modern the American culture that supports \$5 coffee. No, you don’t need an iPhone specifically, but you’ll buy it anyway and call the lack of a headphone jack a “bold” decision. A softshell jacket from Walmart would’ve done, but you bought the North Face one instead. You don’t need the Fitbit, or refrigerator with Bluetooth, or your organic humus and quinoa from Whole Foods, but you just have to have your BMW 3 series and pass me out without ever using turn signals because goddammit you have somewhere to go right now.

That’s what BMW is selling; not a luxury car, but the idea of a luxury lifestyle, the idea that metal bent in Germany is fastest, and we’ve fallen for it hook, line and sinker. BMW has doubled their sales since 1998. And has sold ten-fold from 1980. And Mercedes and Audi have similar stories, while Lincoln and Cadillac sales have cut in half from 1990. I’m not saying I rank them any better in how dumb I feel the “luxury” car is, but BMW sold it best, all while selling an overpriced car that is utterly mediocre.

Overheard At Technology House

Tech House Quotes Page

“There is no gossip in TH, just layers of misinformation.”

-A. offers a Goddardment perspective

“It’s not a period of my past that I’m proud of, but there IS considerable evidence of it on the Internet.”

-T.

“I insulted his mother, father, his grandfather, his spell, and called him ugly. So it’s been 5 rounds.”

-N., measuring time in insults.

The Timsort Algorithm

Lucas Kasser

Sorts the given list l in $O(n)$ time, where n is the amount of other work that Tim has to do. It can be seen in algorithm 1 on the following page.

Dear Dr. and Mrs. Dr. Love

L. G. K. and V. M. T.

Editors note: I received these advice columns scrawled on a metaphorical piece of paper shoved under a metaphorical door, and I cannot confirm the

veracity of the questions nor endorse the advice given. The opinions presented here are the opinions of the self-identified “Dr. and Mrs. Dr. Love” and them alone.

Dear Dr. and Mrs. Dr. Love,

I have had my pet gerbil, Peanut, for over a year now and I am beginning to suspect that I love him more than he loves me. How can I correct this asymmetric relationship?

-Gerbils are love. Gerbils are life.

Dear Gerbils,

Given the inherent discrepancy in cognitive abilities between you and your pet, I fear that your relationship is doomed to failure. Better break it off now before you get even more emotionally invested.

-Dr. Love

Dear Gerbils,

Maybe your gerbil just needs space. Try releasing him in the wild for 2-3 weeks. When he comes back, trust me, you’ll know where he really stands.

-Mrs. Dr. Love

Dear Dr. and Mrs. Dr. Love,

My boyfriend and I have been going steady for almost 3 years. We are both happy, and have even been thinking of getting married! :)

There’s just one small problem. I am a devout Christian, but I try not to push my beliefs on

Algorithm 1 Timsort

```

1: sendMessage(contacts['Tim'].getEmailAddress(), listToString(l))
2: waitUntilMessageFrom('Tim')
3: sorted = getMessageFrom('Tim')
4: return stringToList(sorted)

```

anyone. Still, I have been feeling a little uncomfortable lately with some of my boyfriend's religious choices. He has recently joined a local organization, The Order of the Antichrist and, although I think it's great that he's getting out on weekends, some of their more eccentric activities have started to disturb me. I can accept the nightly chants praising the Devil and tolerate slaughtering calves in the bathtub, even though the blood takes forever to clean up afterwards. Lately, however, he's been talking about sacrificing our firstborn to the Dark Lord. As a Christian I feel strongly that our child should be baptized instead. How can we resolve this conflict?

-Troubled in Texas

Dear Troubled,

God does not exist. As shown in the following argument, the existence of an omnipotent, benevolent deity is incompat-

ible with the the existence of suffering:

P1- An omnipotent deity could make the best of all possible worlds. P2- A benevolent deity would want to make the best of all possible worlds. Conclusion- An omnipotent, benevolent deity would make the best of all possible worlds. Corollary: As we do not live in the best of all possible worlds (i.e., suffering exists), there does not exist an omnipotent, benevolent deity.

The existence of the Devil, however, is not refuted by (and may even be supported by) the existence of suffering. Thus, I would recommend giving up your objectively flawed theological beliefs and instead join The Order of the Antichrist with your soon to be fiancé. I'm sure the Dark Lord will appreciate receiving the blood of your firstborn and you will be eternally rewarded when you at last join him in his unholy domain!

-Dr. Love

Dear Troubled,

It's important to remember that healthy relationships are all about compromise! Remind your hubby-to-be that the children will be much more valuable to the Dark Lord after their blood has been purified by baptism and allowed to mature. Bringing up aged wine or marinating steaks is a sure way to convince him to hold off on butchering your kids for at least a couple of years - and maybe even segue into a romantic dinner ;)

-Mrs. Dr. Love

*Have relationship problems?
Email autocrat@techhouse.org
and ~~get advice from the experts!~~
we will forward your query onto
the people who wrote the above
column.*

Letters

SIR-

In response to Mr. Cunningham's letter of last issue, I can only say that I have no comment.

Best,

Matthew Petersen

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

Open House and Stuff Night - 6 PM-10PM, 30 November 2016

Come to our Open House! Play games! Meet new people! Learn about Tech House! Food will be available during the first half of the event, and tours will be given periodically.

Nerf Wars - 3 December 2016

Come to our premier Nerf event, held in Smitty B! Stay tuned for details.

Masthead

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