UPSON'S FAMILIAR QUOTATIONS
1974 - 1979

Al Gaulle, Editor

examples of the eloquence that
abounds in Upson's hallowed halls

TR 79-378

May 1979

Computer Science Department
Cornell University
Ithaca, New York 14853
UPSON'S FAMILIAR QUOTATIONS
1974 - 1979

Al Gaulle, Editor

TR 79-378
May 1979

Computer Science Department
Cornell University
Ithaca, New York 14853

Abstract:
This report is a compilation of several hundred examples of context free language and very irregular expressions. Contributions were submitted over the last five years by numerous computer science graduate students who collected these now immortal words in classes and seminars. We wish to express our gratitude to the faculty, guest lecturers, and students who provided the bulk of this work.

This work entirely nonsupported by National Science Foundation grant UFQ-79-256-4934.
75 Feb 10  (On ON conditions:)  
PL/19 might have this form, Dijkstra be damned, ...

75 Sep 02  (On altering an assignment:)  
This is unreasonable, but I've been doing it that way for a long time.

75 Sep 23  (On relational data bases:)  
I don't know anything about the mathematical basis of it, but I've read it so many times I think I can reproduce it verbatim.

75 Sep 23  These tuples may be students.

75 Sep 30  (On a coming assignment:)  
I'll think up something only mildly insidious.

75 Oct 16  (On JCL:)  
I've always been able to find some grad student who has been able to understand all this, and I've never had to learn any of it.

75 Oct 21  (On ISAM:)  This is all done for you by mirrors. I think it's kind of cute.

75 Oct 28  RPG is a shame.

76 Oct 07  For anybody else that'd be silly, but not for Dijkstra.

76 Oct 07  (To Gries:)  You're cheating, but we still haven't figured out how.

77 Sep 13  This is instantaneous, which is pretty fast.
76 Sep 23 (To Salton:)
Gerry, when was the last time you wrote a program?

76 Sep 30
Hopefully -- I'm David Gries from Cornell.

76 Oct 07
Conway: Half a proof might be very long but not very helpful.
Gries: Yes, and a whole proof might be wrong.

77 Mar 31
The way I do it is roughly the same funny little technique I used up there.

77 Mar 31
Yes. No. Not really. Probably there is, but I'd have to think about it.

77 Nov 03
Gries: Could you explain where the term "modal" comes from?
Constable: No.
Gries: Thank you.

78 Mar 03 (To first year students:) The only reason we're here and you're there is that we're older than you.

78 Oct 17
211 TA: In the recursive Towers of Hanoi program, how do you prove that you never put a disk on a smaller disk?
Gries: You prove it by recursion.
211 TA: You prove it by recursion?
Gries: Sure, you just say, "By recursion."

78 Nov 30
I need a bit in there, but I'd rather not do that, because then I wouldn't have anything to say.

79 Mar 15
Compiler writers don't know too much.

79 Mar 26
Student: Could you lower the blinds, please?
Gries: Are you sure it's not my brilliance that's blinding you?

79 Apr 25 (When looking for an antonym for "dereferencing"):)
Gries: ... "dereferencing" and "ref-referencing"?
... "anti-dereferencing"? ...
Student: How about "referencing"?
Gries: That's too simple.

Fred Schneider

79 Feb 16
When the 983 crashes, the operator takes a dump.
Greg Andrews

75 Sep 03  (On the banker's algorithm:) There are parallel paths of confusion through it.
75 Sep 17  I'm not doing legitimate things, but I think you can see that I can do it.
75 Oct 03  In six months people figure out how to use their machines until they're overused. That's called "enhancement".
75 Oct 08  (On the 613 project:) We've tried to make it as painless as possible, but it will be painful.
75 Oct 20  (On the midterm:) All I know is it's a 50 point exam, and McGraw got a 35 and beat me by 5 points.
75 Oct 24  Today's going to be a fairly dull lecture.
75 Oct 31  This is a string of stack snack shops -- uhm -- snack shots.
75 Nov 03  If the last page of the priority list is three, we take the threeth page.
75 Nov 03  Let's just throw up a few distinct partitions of memory.
75 Nov 03  We can order the pages in some order.
75 Nov 07  (On queuing models:) I'm not going to go through all that crud -- I don't understand it anyway.
75 Dec 05  Everything has to be written down and not in my head, because I don't know my head from a hole in the wall.
76 Sep 13  I have erroneously coded that program incorrectly.
76 Sep 13  It is well known that you can share reentrant code.
76 Sep 20  There are two ways to share data. The first is that you don't. You either share it or you don't, if you know what I mean. No, you don't.
76 Nov 17  There's nothing profound here, and that may be true of the whole lecture.
76 Nov 19  This is important, but the stuff I understand is completely irrelevant.
77 Sep 05  ... then there are idiots like myself who try to hang on.
As soon as there were machines, people wanted to use them.

The Dining Philosophers is an interesting problem posed by Dijkstra. Many interesting problems with no practical application were posed by Dijkstra.

I'll show you some syntax and you'll go "yuck" -- and that's the state of the art.

PL/I is a language that has been used.

The idea is simpler to explain with a little handwaving.

The question is "does it work"? Well, I should hope so.

It would sure be nice to not need another mechanism for every problem.

This room is a monitor. One person is active and everybody else is asleep.

Now to answer Rick's question. But first, to dispose of Mike ...

Packet switching has become more in vogue, but the Army is not in vogue.

You're making a non-point.

I had a nice clean solution in my paper until the referee told me it wasn't legal.

Let me try to be coherent for a change.

Gries, you're a sweet rat.

Ingber: Excuse me, I've been a little confused lately.
Andrews: Like about 23 years?

No, we wait until this is truly true.

There's no way I can hope to get done today, so I suspect I'll dribble over to Monday.

It's amazing how much you can do lecturing, when you realize how little there is.

There's a mistake in the notes from the last lecture -- all but the following line is incorrect.
It's obviously obvious to you.

Let's call them A, B, C, D, E, F -- oops -- ...

I just don't know, exactly, what we're doing.

Incidentally, I was Aiken's last Ph.D. student, if you can believe that.

Everything that we do is ad hoc also.

Now what we were taught to do at Harvard ...

From where I sit, and it's total ignorance I'm sure, ...

I certainly didn't know what I was doing.

Business people, by definition, are not so smart.

Unfortunately, each possibility has sub-possibilities.

I am not saying anything new, except what we already know.

(On trees:)
Each node, except for leaves, may have descendants.

(After a loud yawn from a student:)
I feel the same way; I do this as a duty to the undergraduates in the class.

(After 68 minutes of a 75 minute class:)
I haven't told you yet anything of interest.

211 TA: Would you like to help grade the 211 exams?
Salton: No. I probably am not qualified.

In principle, you need to know nothing. In practice, you need to know something, but not much.

I could say that this is a new subject, but then you would wonder why anybody was teaching it.
If you read the proof in Hopcroft and Ullman, and you'll need to read it after this ...

Proof: Q.E.D.

The only way false can be true is if ...

Let me change the theorem to one I can actually prove.

Let us recall briefly what it will be.

The PL/CV Proof Checker will check that program correctness is correct.

Now we only have ten minutes left for hard science. But that's probably enough ...

... a really kinky semantics that would support the slickest proof rules ...

Blast! I don't have time to look at three copies of Z (the integers)!

Student: Number 6 doesn't make sense to me.
Constable: Well, let's write it out bigger.

What's going to be amazing is that next time I'll be able to prove -- that itself will be amazing -- ...

Let me back up to where I believed it.

This syntactic sugar is looking terrible -- syntactic pepper.

Stanford gobbled up the really good women.

We had 180 people apply. We call these applicants.

We are experimenting with constructive set theory, and so may go wrong.

One reason that concept is peculiar is that in mathematics one always deals with extensional objects, and thus never discusses them, while in computer science one rarely deals with extensional objects, and thus never discusses them.

Since no one wants a take home final, I've decided to compromise and give an in class final and a take home final.
Jim Donahue

77 Feb 02 The proof took five blackboards, so the method is worthless.

77 Feb 07 Putting together long proofs is fun.

77 Feb 14 I can fill up blackboards in a great hurry. If you can fill up blackboards very quickly, then it must be interesting.

77 Feb 16 Student: It seems that we're not doing anything but pushing bottoms around.
Donahue: Eventually we'll do more than just push bottoms around.

77 Mar 14 Ok, one last bit of denotational grunge.

77 Mar 14 This is sort of denotational bootcamp.

77 Mar 16 After a while, if your mind gets warped enough, you tend to think in these terms.

77 Mar 27 Well, if we can get started before Rich gets here, he can be thoroughly confused one more time.

77 May 04 Having another set of brackets around is a good thing.

78 Apr 27 ... their syntactic functionalities, if you will ...

78 Apr 27 Any value is as good as anything else for almost anything.

78 Sep 28 Take a type -- now I'm real dumb in doing this ...

79 Jan 13 The proofs aren't very exciting -- just a lot of symbol pushing.

79 Jan 23 Why are we doing this? Because there are some neat theorems to be proved at the end of this course.

79 Jan 25 (On the lambda calculus:) You really wouldn't want to work out the successor of 25.

79 Feb 01 I don't have a copy of this. I've never even read it, but it gets referenced a lot.

79 Feb 06 Why am I using complete lattices? Well, it's what I was brought up on.

79 Feb 08 It turns out that restricting yourself to continuous functions is no great act of heroism.
I'll call this phi and psi again just to be confusing.

You can easily show that any space you can imagine is buried within D-infinity somewhere.

There are infinitely many bottoms around.

This is probably the most influential paper in semantics that's never been published.

(On "Admissibility of Fixed Point Inductions in First Order Logic of Typed Theories", by S. Igarashi:) This report is about as impenetrable as its title.

Translating your problems don't make them go away.

By the time you read the details, you should either be completely lost, or completely understand what is going on.

We haven't said anything and we've said everything.

Well, I'm not going to talk about string quartets today.

(On a language he had designed to be very simple:) It's starting to look like PL/I.

He probably wanted to get to the point where he could define PL/I on one side of a 3x5 card.

I would like to say we've proven such a theorem for Russell, but Alan's been awfully slow about it.

That's why one does type checking -- to prove that theorem.

It's got plus and times and all that other neat stuff.

If you spend a lot of time building up the mathematics of the model, by the time you're done, you're tired.

It's clear that the idea of power domains fits in there somewhere.
The key to this is that -- is that -- oh, my ...

I'm out of time, so I'm not going to have time this time to talk about the run time stack.

It's not as good a semi-colon as 'PL/I.'

Teitelbaum: An await on a zombie is a no-op?
Demers: No, it gives you back some information on the zombie.

Student: Constants do matter in the real world.
Demers: Well, especially since infinity here is 4800.

Jesus H. Bald Christ!

I don't want to sound like I'm avoiding answering your question; I just want to avoid answering your question.

Jesus! How do you give a talk like this with Reynolds in the audience?

One reason you might want to say, "Why not?", or rather one reason you might want to say, "Why?", or actually, a reason you'd say "not."

(On 681:) This course is supposed to be hot new algorithms, or something like that.

This one's a real live Turing reduction.

Let me suppose, and this is a big assumption -- it gets an asterisk --, ...

Student: Isn't that an inspired construction?
Demers: Oh, it is. When I thought of it I was insufferably proud of myself for hours.

Let me say what I'm not going to do at the moment.

After looking at that for some time, the i and the i are not the same i, are they?

Not only is it not obvious, I claim in general it's false.

That's in Knuth, volume tree.
By the way, if all you people understand this proof it will all but double the number of people in the world that do.

When I do it, it comes out that way. When Tarjan does it, it comes out that way. So proof by intimidation.

The proof is by obviousness.

The precise details are kind of mysterious.

(On his notes:)
I'm beginning to think this is nonsense.

Let's take this whole section of the board and write a big "dubito" over it.

The precise definition is motivated by that bow tie.

The reason I can't say that is because it's not true.

Oh wow, yes, the other one begins to look worse and worse.

I'll explain to you why it's not clear.

So now let's get to the exciting case in which something has to happen.

I sure wish I had a snappy comeback.

It's a commutative ring, so I can do a whole lot of cavalier things.

It's not in general obvious how to do it, but I was hoping that would slip by.

This may be impossible -- at least it's hard -- I don't know how to do it.

When I divide b by n what do I get? Well, I get b over n, obviously.

A k-tape non-deterministic Turing machine is this umpteen-tuple.

Demers: Here is the promised Fast Fourier Transform example. It worked for the two examples I tried, so I'm fairly sure it's correct.

Fischofer: Proof by exhaustive testing?
Demers: Well, it sure exhausted me.
78 Nov 17  No, I did not prove it correct. I sat at a terminal
at midnight and fiddled with it until it worked.

78 Nov 20  It depends on something that I really don't want to
get into -- it depends on honesty.

78 Nov 20  It just wouldn't do you any good to apply the pumping
lemma to the 168 -- it doesn't stay up that long.

78 Dec 01  I'll just let truth propagate out.

78 Dec 01  In a sense higher up means harder -- but not really.

78 Dec 01  It spaces me out every time I look at it.

78 Dec 06  I'm going to write down something that is sort of a
grab bag.

78 Dec 06  I can write the expression down in polynomial space
and time -- in fact, I'm going to write it down in
about three seconds on the board here.

79 Feb 22  Well, there are steps 1, 2, 3, and 4 -- uh -- there
are really steps -1 and 0 here.

79 Feb 22  You look at every occurrence of every variable, and
throw in every base that could possibly be of any
use.

79 Feb 22  You put handcuffs on yourself and try to swim the
English Channel or something.

79 Mar 27  Demers: Why did we switch from call-by-reference to
call-by-value, when we switched from
procedures to functions?

Donahue: I don't know.

Demers: I guess that's as good an answer as any.

79 Apr 05  Corky: What do you call the segment table under the
meta segment table?

Demers: Well, I wasn't calling it a meta segment
table.

79 Apr 05  The program counter doesn't count.
Tim Teitelbaum

74 Apr 17  Everything I say is plus or minus one.
76 Jan 05  The last 10% of your grade will be determined by
other considerations, mainly sexual.
77 Mar 14  Ummm, what's going on here?
77 Mar 28  What is going on? What is going on?
77 Mar 28  Why am I so goddamned lost?
78 Jun 23  I have a story to tell you which, besides from the
fact that it has nothing to do with communication, is
completely irrelevant.
78 Dec 05  100 TA: Tim, there was a blatant case of cheating on
the program. What should we do?
    Tim T.: What did she look like?

Juris Hartmanis

74 Apr 19  Student: What are you trying to prove?
    Hartmanis: I don't know, I never know when I start.
74 Sep 02  Clearly Turing machines, obviously.
74 Sep 02  I have good news and I have bad news. The good news
is that I am not Hopcroft. The bad news is that
Hopcroft will be back.
74 Sep 02  The lovely thing of giving a regular expression ...
75 Apr 28  That's clearly just obviously ...
75 May 02  A polynomial is a goddamn big function.
75 May 02  But that's irrelevant -- I'm just stalling for time.
75 May 02  You can do brutal things in polynomial time.
75 Sep 08  If it's wrong, don't tell me.
75 Sep 10  Finite means you can stuff it in a box.
75 Sep 12  Thank god for the null string.
75 Sep 22  As long as I talk fast, wave arms vigorously, I'm
going to be in good shape.
It's easy with arrows. But if you write "iff", I never know if I've proved the if or the only if.

I even put on a necktie today not to make any mistakes.

This is known, as of today, as the "Sticky Fingers Louie" method.

This may look to you like my chalk is faster than your eye.

Oh, I goofed -- no, I didn't -- yes, I didn't.

(On a PDA:) It just brutally stuffs it in the stack.

I choose r so fat and big that one won't make any difference.

Hopcroft would tell you that this is divide and conquer. To me, that seems like lots of fingers.

(On the date of the final exam:)
Why don't I tell you it's on Wednesday, and on Wednesday tell you I lied.

Any comedian who tried to get away with the jokes I'm telling would get booed off the stage. People like me should not be flattered by my apparent wit.

It's a very cheap trick -- which works.

Oops, sorry, I need a conclusion.

Slight editing will make the proof correct.

If you get a proof, you will see it isn't very difficult to prove.

(To a seminar speaker who, unlike himself, spoke with an accent:) Will the rest of the talk be in English?

Student: Can you go over that again?
Hartmanis: I hope it's still true.

I could have chosen another proof, but I don't know any other proof.

Gerry Salton is going to come back and he's going to ask me what I learned.

He will be working in a group with John Backus -- er, Jim -- no, John ...
(About the first 60 pages of Aho, Hopcroft and Ullman:) It's kind of leisure reading.

Everything in this class is a power of two.

I'd have to think about it; I'm not in the mood to think.

Not everything I say is correct. It's correct modulo the little details you're going to have to worry about.

There's lots of little details I skip.

Somebody should warn me when we get to the end of class by walking out, or I'll tend to keep on talking.

There's one little catch here -- this is not quite correct.

(After two days of Presburger arithmetic:) I mean, I'm writing out kind of ridiculous things.

(Trying to decide between $r-p$ and $r-p+1$ in the statement of a theorem:) I'm sure we can prove it no matter which one I stick in there.

I have an $n$ floating around, which I guess I haven't mentioned today.

Without loss of generality, for a reason that temporarily eludes me, ...

One thing I like to ignore is details.

Two sets of half size -- $1/4$ being approximately $1/2$.

Assume $F$ is a tautology and there is no contradiction. I want to show there is a contradiction.

Student: That means zero to the zero is zero.

Hopcroft: Observations like that lead me to believe that you understand what I'm doing.

I suppose none of these algorithms are really useful.

Whenever it doesn't make sense, stop me, because there's a good chance it's wrong.
This seems like a good point to quit. I'm hungry -- I suspect you are too.

Now let's do something with ideas in it, rather than numbers.

(After messing up a proof by forgetting how to use induction:) I never should do things carefully.

I'd hate to leave you for a vacation without showing you how to prove that a problem is NP-complete.

I'm going to call that a picture proof.

Let me erase some space.

I didn't want to make that precise.

I think that's the same -- that's a minor detail.

This is obvious to an educated person.

I'll have you know I spent 13 hours preparing this lecture -- so nobody had better sleep.

Let L0 be your favorite NP-complete problem ...

It's a trick. That's what separates NA from ordinary mathematics.

3/5 is a calm number.

Aij is not Aij. Don't quote me on that -- it sounds like a madman.

I don't know what I'm talking about.

It's my definition. I can make it anything I want.

I have never presented this without getting it backwards. My solution this year is to leave it as a homework exercise.

It's a straightforward mess.
Of course we do not wait until i goes to infinity.

The accuracy should not be doubted, because numerical analysis sends people to the moon.

I think that is going too far, because that research does not have any applications.

I won't give you a sketch of the proof because the sketch wouldn't be sketchy.

The proof of this is so simple that I'm going to give it.

It seems we have transformed a difficult problem into an impossible one.

So zero is strictly less than one.

Although it's such a simple algorithm, it's still widely used, because very often you have nothing better to do than bisection.

If we do not know f(x), its (n+1)st derivative is even harder to come by.

So we have to take almost an infinite number of steps to get to Xk.

Usually, of course, you stop after a finite number of steps.

This is a very vague argument, but it's valid in practice.
John Dennis

74 Jan 30 Those are different A's and B's, but since both are arbitrary, they both might be the same sometime.

74 Mar 27 Chebyshev, I'm sure, wouldn't do something false.

74 Apr 01 (On teaching induction to freshmen:) One year, one of the bachelor professors got a girl to understand it, and he married her.

74 Apr 01 It doesn't mean you can do it, but if you do it, you can.

74 Apr 03 (On the Remes algorithm:) I'm not sure if it's gonna be a math lecture or a religious experience.

74 Apr 03 I'm gonna say this -- I hope it's true.

74 Apr 05 They're different, in fact, rather than being the same.

74 Apr 19 ... sequences that go off to hell in a wheelbarrow.

74 Apr 29 If that were clear, then I'd be very offended.

74 May 01 I have been known to blow this one.

74 May 03 I guess I'm kind of a numerical analytic Eichmann. If the guy says "fit it with a line," I'll fit it with a line.

74 Sep 30 I'm just gonna, as my old Texas analysis teacher used to say, jump on it and ride it till it falls.

74 Dec 02 Suppose that God or someone high up in government told me ...

76 Mar 08 Checking that this is a homomorphism is just checking that [tau rho tau inverse] is whatever it's supposed to be.

Jorge More

75 Apr 03 One part of the theorem is absolutely trivial -- hmmm -- which part is trivial?

75 Apr 03 The denominator is positive because it's positive.
Shih-Ping Han

75 Feb 13  Student: What will the workload be?
            Han: There will be no workload.

75 Sep 15  We just permute the columns of this matrix here.

75 Sep 22  Worst cases very rarely happen.

75 Nov 14  If b equals 1, we have a corollary.

75 Nov 17  The numerical methods can always produce a number,
            but if the problem has no solution, the number will
            be meaningless.

75 Nov 24  ... but unfortunately, we have two terms left.

76 Feb 25  Safety is better than the wrong answer.

76 Feb 27  We can factorize this expression.

76 May 05  He just found this matrix -- like it fell from the
            sky.

76 May 07  The question is how good is the method is?

John Williams

75 Nov 24  (Replying to a question by Steve Baume:)
            I might be dumb, but I'm not that dumb.

76 Oct 07  There's apparently a lot of ad hoc-ery going on here.

77 Sep 19  That is clearly -- no, opaquey -- a call to a
            machine language subroutine.

77 Sep 29  Guarded commands are like flying buttresses.

77 Sep 29  I haven't done anything -- it's Backus!

77 Sep 29  There's something that should bother you in there.
            There's something that bothers me -- that nothing
            bothers you.

- 18 -
Corky Cartwright

76 Sep 22 I think we all know what we are talking about -- the integers are real!

76 Sep 22 There is no getting away from infinite regression of definition.

76 Sep 22 This is ambiguous, but I'll try to resolve the ambiguity with more prose.

77 May 02 I don't like infinite objects.

77 May 04 I don't believe in top.

77 May 04 I sort of have the minimal knowledge of hardware you can have and come out of Stanford.

77 Sep 08 Everything's a tree, possibly infinite.

77 Sep 13 I shouldn't even mention keypunches in connection with LISP. That's heresy.

77 Sep 13 Needless to say, the LISP interpreter which I consider good hasn't been done yet.

77 Sep 15 Can you put my obfuscation into words?

77 Sep 15 I'm tripping over myself trying to explain that.

77 Sep 15 It has to be the way it is, by definition, because of the way it was defined.

77 Sep 15 We can show that optimal searching is in some sense optimal.

77 Sep 20 I claim that every other possibility is impossible.

77 Sep 20 I still claim it's a straightforward induction, not as straightforward as last time ...

77 Oct 11 Is that a question? I keep hearing these grunts.

77 Oct 11 The problem is that people use "conjunct" and "disjunct" differently.

77 Oct 13 Let's get on quickly to the handwaving we can do.


78 Apr 11 I'm in zombie mode, having to teach 106.
Computer scientists are so accustomed to reality that, when they are given the opportunity to create an illusion, they won't.

After we solve the reliable software problem, we must solve the reliable lecture problem.

... so I will eliminate the source of cuteness, which in hindsight, I dislike.

Programming languages should not be subject to whimsical variations in semantics that depend on the mood of the person who wrote the compiler.

Gries: Why don't you just show us the whole slide? Corky: Can't quarrel with God.

This is the list of axioms you can derive from the set of definitions. It's mostly mumbo-jumbo.

We should come up with programming languages that don't require a telephone book to describe their little pathologies.

Outside this expression language, APL sucks.

(On APL:) I want to put up a program chosen to make the language look bad.

A program is a comment, a means for getting from a precondition to what you want.

I'm getting down to the nuts.


The water's being shut off in an hour, so you'd better go now, or forever hold your, uh, piece.

We're trying very hard to make sure that this Christmas tree isn't anti-semantic.

Bernd Reusch, Post-Doc

I'm not going to define that because it's easy to understand but hard to define.
Mathematics

Kenneth Brown

76 Oct 08  The easiest way to assert that something is true is to state that it is clearly true.

Michael Morley

77 Apr 19  Have faith.
77 Apr 19  The length of 1 is 2.

Richard Platek

77 Feb 07  We want to talk about meaning -- syntax just leads you astray.
77 Mar 21  Syntax is the most dreary of subjects.

Richard Shore

76 Apr 30  Let's see if by the end of the semester we can cover everything we assumed at the beginning of the semester.

Lenny Schreiber, Math 581 TA

78 Apr 09  ... binary decimals, if that makes any sense.
78 Apr 09  Aleph sub alpha is the alpha-th aleph.
(Reading what he'd just written on the board:)
What does that say?

The second term vanishes just as it has been doing all afternoon.

What I want to emphasize here is that it doesn't -- what do I want to emphasize here?

Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, of course, that means -- uh, no ...

Is the picture totally obscure?

... which is a contradiction just in the nick of time.

Was it a parody of my lecture, or is my lecture a parody of itself?

Essentially, all these things follow from writing things down.

I've written something absurd here. Oh yes, I'm sorry, it's correct.

Let's ride a little roughshod over the technicalities.

Counterexamples are always better than proofs.

We now use the Edmonds algorithm, which you don't know and I have forgotten.

That may sound like a tautology, but it sure as hell isn't.
John Muckstadt

76 Feb 11  As h goes to zero, h goes to zero.

77 Mar 07  (mu1+lambda)*p1 is equal to a new piece of chalk.

George Nemhauser

74 Sep 16  I haven't actually stated a theorem, but let's just concentrate on what we're trying to prove.

74 Oct 21  There's a very explicit statement in the text -- here I'm just trying to confuse you ...

Lee Schruben

78 Nov 29  Is there anybody who's confused -- who shouldn't be?

Murad Taqqu

74 Feb 20  What I want to compute is my posterior -- well, that's a funny way of saying it, but anyway, ...

74 Feb 20  You see, it's much better not to use indices after a while, because if you use indices you get confused, while if you think a little you know what you're doing.

75 Feb 13  The loss is infinite if you get knocked out, bankrupted, or die.

75 Mar 11  Last week I introduced the notion -- which notion?

75 Mar 13  How do I do it? Very simple, it's a trick.

75 Apr 15  I'm just going to reason heuristically, because heuristic reasoning always gives you the right thing in the first place.

75 Apr 15  Since I'm already here, I can more or less continue.
Les Trotter

76 Jan 26  This is messier, do it this way.
76 Jan 28  This sounds like hocus pocus. It is.
76 Jan 30  Theorem: EDD minimizes Lmax and Tmax. Ok, now that I've stated it, what does it mean? It means that if we use an EDD schedule we will minimize Lmax and Tmax.
76 Feb 06  First we can assume assumptions.
76 Feb 27  (On the expression $A_i \leq X_i \leq B_i$, and pointing to it:) There aren't any A's or B's in it, except for the A and B that's there.

Albert Tucker

75 Apr 24  (On Gauss:) He made his early reputation as a computer.

Jacob Zahavi

75 Sep 01  Weekly homework assignments will be assigned every week.
75 Nov 10  You have probably seen finding the maximum of a function of one variable before. In high school this is called the "Classical Optimization Problem".
75 Dec 05  (Addressing an Oriental student whose name he had forgotten:) Yes, Mr. uh, uh, -- yes, Mr. Hong Kong?
Electrical Engineering

Hwa Tornq

78 Sep 29 You can see that it's not very difficult to see.
78 Oct 04 I don't think this is misleading. If any mathematician wants to find fault, tough.

Norman Vrana

76 Jan 30 That's correct. On the other hand, it could be incorrect.

1979 Messenger Lecture

Marvin Minsky

79 Apr 10 I cannot talk and write at the same time.
79 Apr 10 I usually use notes to remember what not to say.
79 Apr 10 It wasn't necessary for me to finish because you knew that the end of it was going to be about the end of it.
79 Apr 10 There's lots of ways of getting this information, if you're actually alive.
79 Apr 10 What's the relation between how I think and how I think I think?
79 Apr 10 You've heard these jokes about getting a doctorate for studying the use of semicolons. We're in that business.
79 Apr 11 "Is" is the verb for when you don't want a verb.
79 Apr 11 There is the knowledge of how to use the knowledge, which is nowhere in particular here.
79 Apr 11 You can only understand a complicated thing by starting with a dumbell theory.

- 25 -
Computer Science Graduate Students

Jim Archer

78 Feb 23  Aesthetics isn't one of my better suits.

Barry Bakalor

78 Sep 25  There seem to be no computer science grad students taking CS 100, for some reason.

Joe Bates

78 Oct 26  If you don't know what it's supposed to do, you can't tell whether or not it does it.
78 Oct 26  You say "Go!", and it goes "Boom!", and writes you a program.

Sandy Coe

78 Oct 31  For those of us who were little lost sheep, we just stuck with Constable, our little lost shepherd.

Bill Fischofer

78 Sep 26  1 is a generally happy number. It doesn't care what you do with it.
79 Apr 29  Max, as a unary function, isn't very interesting.
John Guttag

77 Nov 10  Algebraic specifications are good. If I were Edsger Dijkstra, perhaps I would say they are great.

77 Nov 10  Teitelbaum: What are the prospects for an optimizer?
            Guttag: I'm not at all optimistic.

Michael Harrison

76 Sep 22  You don't need this there, I just put it in for the special case where it happens to work.

Barbara Liskov

77 Dec 15  Arrays are mutable. They're mutable because we define them to be.

Harlan Mills

77 Apr 21  (Said several times:) I am a finite man.

John Reynolds

78 Apr 20  That is as far as I can go in general waffling.

William Waite

77 Mar 24  ... mungy, grungy, and unstructured.

Andrew Yao

77 Oct 13  I'll show you in a minute why this is a very stupid result.
Tom Murtagh

78 Nov 08  It is a fairly unfair definition of cost.

Hal Perkins

78 Mar 16  It's just a small group of people instead of the Chinese army, and it works wonders.

78 Mar 16  This is where the little lines started to drive me crazy last night.

Rich Reitman

77 Mar 09  (To Donahue in 711:) What!? I'll give you a chance to retract that statement.

Jeff Savit

78 May 16  They use lotsa stuff from 712, which I haven't gotten to yet, but I saw lotsa bottoms in there.

Morrie Siegel

77 Apr 20  I think this is no worse than writing a LISP interpreter in LISP.

77 Sep 29  And even LISP is nothing like SNOBOL.

77 Sep 29  Actually, it's very difficult to explain this in ten words or less.

Glenn Skinner

78 Apr 11  They used to be wonderful until something better came along. They were wonderful by default.
Sandor Halaasz

77 Jan 24  My feeling is that Salton is beginning to drip into the fire.

Carl Hauser

78 Oct 12  An infinite number of successors, infinitely many times, in an infinite tree, is pretty messy.

Ralph Johnson

79 Mar 01  If the program works you probably don't care.
79 Mar 01  This is a language for hackers -- I mean, it's a really neat language for hackers.
79 Mar 01  A good hacker's language is one in which you can do things the writer of the language never intended.
79 Mar 21  For many other people their lack of knowledge is much more obvious.

Scott Johnson

78 Apr 01  You know, I'll bet arrays of procedures are a lot less efficient than a case statement.
78 Jun 24  Maybe it's only as bad as it is, and not worse than it is.

Tom London

75 Nov 07  (On the 613 simulator:) The way this is organized, we had to fudge it.
Tom Murtagh

78 Nov 08  It is a fairly unfair definition of cost.

Hal Perkins

78 Mar 16  It's just a small group of people instead of the Chinese army, and it works wonders.
78 Mar 16  This is where the little lines started to drive me crazy last night.

Rich Reitman

77 Mar 09  (To Donahue in 711:) What!? I'll give you a chance to retract that statement.

Jeff Savit

78 May 16  They use lotsa stuff from 712, which I haven't gotten to yet, but I saw lotsa bottoms in there.

Morrie Siegel

77 Apr 20  I think this is no worse than writing a LISP interpreter in LISP.
77 Sep 29  And even LISP is nothing like SNOBOL.
77 Sep 29  Actually, it's very difficult to explain this in ten words or less.

Glenn Skinner

78 Apr 11  They used to be wonderful until something better came along. They were wonderful by default.