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

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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.

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Computer Science

Dick Conway

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.

David Gries

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 -- uhmm -- snap 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.

77 Sep 05	As soon as there were machines, people wanted to use them.
77 Sep 23	The Dining Philosophers is an interesting problem posed by Dijkstra. Many interesting problems with no practical application were posed by Dijkstra.
77 Sep 30	I'll show you some syntax and you'll go "yuck" -- and that's the state of the art.
78 Sep 08	PL/I is a language that has been used.
78 Sep 08	The idea is simpler to explain with a little handwaving.
78 Sep 08	The question is "does it work"? Well, I should hope so.
78 Sep 28	It would sure be nice to not need another mechanism for every problem.
78 Sep 28	This room is a monitor. One person is active and everybody else is asleep.
78 Sep 29	Now to answer Rick's question. But first, to dispose of Mike ...
78 Oct 11	Packet switching has become more in vogue, but the Army is not in vogue.
78 Oct 16	You're making a non-point.
78 Oct 20	I had a nice clean solution in my paper until the referee told me it wasn't legal.
78 Oct 20	Let me try to be coherent for a change.
78 Oct 25	Gries, you're a sweet rat.
78 Nov 01	Ingber: Excuse me, I've been a little confused lately. Andrews: Like about 23 years?
78 Nov 01	No, we wait until this is truly true.
78 Dec 01	There's no way I can hope to get done today, so I suspect I'll dribble over to Monday.
78 Dec 06	It's amazing how much you can do lecturing, when you realize how little there is.
78 Dec 08	There's a mistake in the notes from the last lecture -- all but the following line is incorrect.

Gerry Salton

75 Feb 13	It's obviously obvious to you.
75 Feb 27	Let's call them A, B, C, D, E, F -- oops -- ...
75 Mar 13	I just don't know, exactly, what we're doing.
75 Mar 13	Incidently, I was Aiken's last Ph.D. student, if you can believe that.
75 Apr 17	Everything that we do is ad hoc also.
76 Sep 23	Now what we were taught to do at Harvard ...
77 Mar 17	From where I sit, and it's total ignorance I'm sure, ...
77 May 05	I certainly didn't know what I was doing.
78 Sep 07	Business people, by definition, are not so smart.
78 Sep 21	Unfortunately, each possibility has sub-possibilities.
78 Sep 26	I am not saying anything new, except what we already know.
78 Sep 28	(On trees:) Each node, except for leaves, may have descendants.
78 Sep 28	(After a loud yawn from a student:) I feel the same way; I do this as a duty to the undergraduates in the class.
78 Sep 28	(After 68 minutes of a 75 minute class:) I haven't told you yet anything of interest.
78 Oct 17	211 TA: Would you like to help grade the 211 exams? Salton: No. I probably am not qualified.
78 Oct 24	In principle, you need to know nothing. In practice, you need to know something, but not much.
78 Oct 26	I could say that this is a [illegible] subject, but then you would wonder why anybody was teaching it.

Bob Constable

75 Oct 15	If you read the proof in Hopcroft and Ullman, and you'll need to read it after this ...
76 Oct 08	Proof: Q.E.D.
77 Jan 26	The only way false can be true is if ...
77 Mar 28	Let me change the theorem to one I can actually prove.
77 Mar 30	Let us recall briefly what it will be.
77 Dec 08	The PL/CV Proof Checker will check that program correctness is correct.
78 Feb 17	Now we only have ten minutes left for hard science. But that's probably enough ...
78 Feb 22	... a really kinky semantics that would support the slickest proof rules ...
78 Mar 08	Blast! I don't have time to look at three copies of Z (the integers)!
78 Mar 27	Student: Number 6 doesn't make sense to me. Constable: Well, let's write it out bigger.
78 Mar 31	What's going to be amazing is that next time I'll be able to prove -- that itself will be amazing -- ...
78 Apr 23	Let me back up to where I believed it.
78 Apr 25	This syntactic sugar is looking terrible -- syntactic pepper.
78 May 11	Stanford gobbled up the really good women.
78 May 11	We had 180 people apply. We call these applicants.
79 Feb 09	We are experimenting with constructive set theory, and so may go wrong.
79 Feb 23	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.
79 May 02	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.

79 Feb 27 I'll call this phi and psi again just to be confusing.

79 Feb 27 You can easily show that any space you can imagine is buried within D-infinity somewhere.

79 Mar 01 There are infinitely many bottoms around.

79 Mar 01 This is probably the most influential paper in semantics that's never been published.

79 Mar 06 (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.

79 Mar 06 Translating your problems don't make them go away.

79 Mar 13 By the time you read the details, you should either be completely lost, or completely understand what is going on.

79 Mar 13 We haven't said anything and we've said everything.

79 Mar 13 Well, I'm not going to talk about string quartets today.

79 Mar 27 (On a language he had designed to be very simple:) It's starting to look like PL/I.

79 Mar 27 He probably wanted to get to the point where he could define PL/I on one side of a 3x5 card.

79 Apr 17 I would like to say we've proven such a theorem for Russell, but Alan's been awfully slow about it.

79 Apr 17 That's why one does type checking -- to prove that theorem.

79 Apr 24 It's got plus and times and all that other neat stuff.

79 May 03 If you spend a lot of time building up the mathematics of the model, by the time you're done, you're tired.

79 May 03 It's clear that the idea of power domains fits in there somewhere.

Alan Demers

77 Sep 28	The key to this is that -- is that -- oh, my ...
78 Jan 31	I'm out of time, so I'm not going to have time this time to talk about the run time stack.
78 Feb 14	It's not as good a semi-colon as PL/I.
78 Feb 16	Teitelbaum: An await on a zombie is a no-op? Demers: No, it gives you back some information on the zombie.
78 Mar 07	Student: Constants do matter in the real world. Demers: Well, especially since infinity here is 4800.
78 Mar 19	Jesus H. Bald Christ!
78 Apr 20	I don't want to sound like I'm avoiding answering your question; I just want to avoid answering your question.
78 Apr 20	Jesus! How do you give a talk like this with Reynolds in the audience?
78 Apr 27	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."
78 Sep 04	(On 681:) This course is supposed to be hot new algorithms, or something like that.
78 Sep 11	This one's a real live Turing reduction.
78 Sep 13	Let me suppose, and this is a big assumption -- it gets an asterisk --, ...
78 Sep 15	Student: Isn't that an inspired construction? Demers: Oh, it is. When I thought of it I was insufferably proud of myself for hours.
78 Sep 18	Let me say what I'm not going to do at the moment.
78 Sep 28	After looking at that for some time, the i and the i are not the same i, are they?
78 Sep 29	Not only is it not obvious, I claim in general it's false.
78 Oct 02	That's in Knuth, volume tree.

78 Oct 04	By the way, if all you people understand this proof it will all but double the number of people in the world that do.
78 Oct 04	When I do it, it comes out that way. When Tarjan does it, it comes out that way. So proof by intimidation.
78 Oct 04	The proof is by obviousness.
78 Oct 06	The precise details are kind of mysterious.
78 Oct 11	(On his notes:) I'm beginning to think this is nonsense.
78 Oct 16	Let's take this whole section of the board and write a big "dubito" over it.
78 Oct 16	The precise definition is motivated by that bow tie.
78 Oct 16	The reason I can't say that is because it's not true.
78 Oct 16	Oh wow, yes, the other one begins to look worse and worse.
78 Oct 27	I'll explain to you why it's not clear.
78 Nov 03	So now let's get to the exciting case in which something has to happen.
78 Nov 06	I sure wish I had a snappy comeback.
78 Nov 06	It's a commutative ring, so I can do a whole lot of cavalier things.
78 Nov 08	It's not in general obvious how to do it, but I was hoping that would slip by.
78 Nov 13	This may be impossible -- at least it's hard -- I don't know how to do it.
78 Nov 15	When I divide b by n what do I get? Well, I get b over n, obviously.
78 Nov 17	A k-tape non-deterministic Turing machine is this umpteen-tuple.
78 Nov 17	Demers: Here is the promised Fast Fourrier 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	Uhmm, 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.

75 Sep 22	It's easy with arrows. But if you write "iff", I never know if I've proved the if or the only if.
75 Sep 24	I even put on a necktie today not to make any mistakes.
75 Sep 24	This is known, as of today, as the "Sticky Fingers Louie" method.
75 Oct 06	This may look to you like my chalk is faster than your eye.
75 Oct 10	Oh, I goofed -- no, I didn't -- yes, I didn't.
75 Oct 29	(On a PDA:) It just brutally stuffs it in the stack.
75 Nov 19	I choose r so fat and big that one won't make any difference.
75 Nov 21	Hopcroft would tell you that this is divide and conquer. To me, that seems like lots of fingers.
75 Nov 24	(On the date of the final exam:) Why don't I tell you it's on Wednesday, and on Wednesday tell you I lied.
75 Nov 24	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.
76 Mar 13	It's a very cheap trick -- which works.
76 Apr 07	Oops, sorry, I need a conclusion.
76 Apr 07	Slight editing will make the proof correct.
76 Apr 14	If you get a proof, you will see it isn't very difficult to prove.
76 Oct 14	(To a seminar speaker who, unlike himself, spoke with an accent:) Will the rest of the talk be in English?
77 Feb 09	Student: Can you go over that again? Hartmanis: I hope it's still true.
77 Mar 04	I could have chosen another proof, but I don't know any other proof.
77 Oct 13	Gerry Salton is going to come back and he's going to ask me what I learned.
78 May 11	He will be working in a group with John Backus -- er, Jim -- no, John ...

John Hopcroft

74 Sep 09 (About the first 60 pages of Aho, Hopcroft and Ullman:) It's kind of leisure reading.

74 Oct 11 Everything in this class is a power of two.

74 Oct 11 I'd have to think about it; I'm not in the mood to think.

74 Oct 11 Not everything I say is correct. It's correct modulo the little details you're going to have to worry about.

74 Oct 11 There's lots of little details I skip.

75 Sep 10 Somebody should warn me when we get to the end of class by walking out, or I'll tend to keep on talking.

75 Oct 27 There's one little catch here -- this is not quite correct.

75 Nov 05 (After two days of Presburger arithmetic:) I mean, I'm writing out kind of ridiculous things.

75 Nov 10 (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.

75 Nov 10 I have an n floating around, which I guess I haven't mentioned today.

75 Nov 10 Without loss of generality, for a reason that temporarily eludes me, ...

77 Sep 07 One thing I like to ignore is details.

77 Sep 07 Two sets of half size -- 1/4 being approximately 1/2.

77 Oct 28 Assume F is a tautology and there is no contradiction. I want to show there is a contradiction.

77 Nov 14 Student: That means zero to the zero is zero.
Hopcroft: Observations like that lead me to believe that you understand what I'm doing.

77 Nov 21 I suppose none of these algorithms are really useful.

79 Jan 24 Whenever it doesn't make sense, stop me, because there's a good chance it's wrong.

79 Feb 02 This seems like a good point to quit. I'm hungry -- I suspect you are too.

79 Feb 09 Now let's do something with ideas in it, rather than numbers.

79 Mar 14 (After messing up a proof by forgetting how to use induction:) I never should do things carefully.

79 Mar 16 I'd hate to leave you for a vacation without showing you how to prove that a problem is NP-complete.

79 Mar 28 I'm going to call that a picture proof.

79 Apr 06 Let me erase some space.

79 Apr 18 I didn't want to make that precise.

79 Apr 18 I think that's the same -- that's a minor detail.

79 Apr 18 This is obvious to an educated person.

79 Apr 20 I'll have you know I spent 13 hours preparing this lecture -- so nobody had better sleep.

79 Apr 25 Let L0 be your favorite NP-complete problem ...

Charlie Van Loan

76 Sep 06 It's a trick. That's what separates NA from ordinary mathematics.

76 Sep 15 3/5 is a calm number.

76 Oct 04 Aij is not Aij. Don't quote me on that -- it sounds like a madman.

76 Oct 06 I don't know what I'm talking about.

76 Nov 03 It's my definition. I can make it anything I want.

76 Nov 15 I have never presented this without getting it backwards. My solution this year is to leave it as a homework exercise.

76 Dec 01 It's a straightforward mess.

Frank Luk

78 Sep 04	Of course we do not wait until i goes to infinity.
78 Oct 02	The accuracy should not be doubted, because numerical analysis sends people to the moon.
78 Oct 06	I think that is going too far, because that research does not have any applications.
78 Oct 06	I won't give you a sketch of the proof because the sketch wouldn't be sketchy.
78 Oct 06	The proof of this is so simple that I'm going to give it.
78 Oct 09	It seems we have transformed a difficult problem into an impossible one.
78 Oct 11	So zero is strictly less than one.
78 Oct 23	Although it's such a simple algorithm, it's still widely used, because very often you have nothing better to do than bisection.
78 Nov 08	If we do not know f(x), its (n+1)st derivative is even harder to come by.
78 Dec 08	So we have to take almost an infinite number of steps to get to Xk.
79 Jan 24	Usually, of course, you stop after a finite number of steps.
79 Feb 16	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 permutate 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 Baumel:) 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, opaquely -- 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.

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.
77 Oct 13	Remember, I live in a simpler world than Constable. Constable lives in a constructible world -- I live in a constructible finite world.
78 Apr 11	I'm in zombie mode, having to teach 106.

78 Sep 13	Computer scientists are so accustomed to reality that, when they are given the opportunity to create an illusion, they won't.
78 Sep 18	After we solve the reliable software problem, we must solve the reliable lecture problem.
78 Sep 18	... so I will eliminate the source of cuteness, which in hindsight, I dislike.
78 Sep 18	Programming languages should not be subject to whimsical variations in semantics that depend on the mood of the person who wrote the compiler.
78 Sep 21	Gries: Why don't you just show us the whole slide? Corky: Can't quarrel with God.
78 Sep 28	This is the list of axioms you can derive from the set of definitions. It's mostly mumbo-jumbo.
78 Oct 25	We should come up with programming languages that don't require a telephone book to describe their little pathologies.
78 Nov 06	Outside this expression language, APL sucks.
78 Nov 08	(On APL:) I want to put up a program chosen to make the language look bad.
78 Nov 22	A program is a comment, a means for getting from a precondition to what you want.
79 Apr 05	I'm getting down to the nubs.

Diane Duke, Admin. Asst.

78 Mar 01	The water's being shut off in an hour, so you'd better go now, or forever hold your, uh, piece.
78 Dec 13	We're trying very hard to make sure that this Christmas tree isn't anti-semantic.

Bernd Reusch, Post-Doc

75 Oct 29	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.

Operations Research

Mark Eisner

75 Feb 27	(Reading what he'd just written on the board:) What does that say?
75 Feb 27	The second term vanishes just as it has been doing all afternoon.
75 Mar 06	What I want to emphasize here is that it doesn't -- what do I want to emphasize here?
75 Mar 20	Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, of course, that means -- uh, no ...
75 Apr 05	Is the picture totally obscure?
75 Apr 10	... which is a contradiction just in the nick of time.
75 Apr 10	Was it a parody of my lecture, or is my lecture a parody of itself?
75 Apr 22	Essentially, all these things follow from writing things down.
75 Apr 22	I've written something absurd here. Oh yes, I'm sorry, it's correct.
75 Apr 22	Let's ride a little roughshod over the technicalities.

Ray Fulkerson

75 Sep 18	Counterexamples are always better than proofs.
75 Nov 13	We now use the Edmonds algorithm, which you don't know and I have forgotten.
75 Dec 02	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 Ai <= Xi <= Bi, 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 Torng

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.

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

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