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Letters

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Lewis Squires

R. G. Justice

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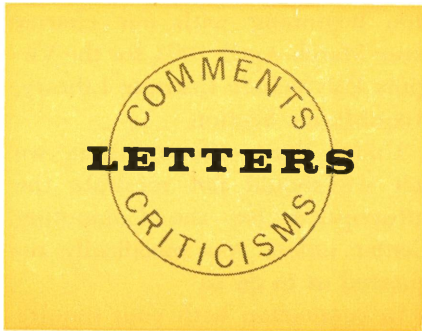
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The following correspondence, chronicling as it does a series of errors on the part of 1) our subscription department, and 2) a member of the Computing Center staff of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute, will, we hope, amuse you as it did us. We note with pleasure that the eventual result was, from our point of view, very good.

THE EDITORS

Dear Mr. Gresser:

Your undated letter to the Virginia Polytechnic Institute IBM 1401 rather amused me. None of the personnel recall having subscribed to your magazine and I am quite sure that the IBM 1401 didn't. Several of us at the Computing Center do occasionally fill out subscription cards that appear in computer magazines and send them in, but to the best of my knowledge this has been done only for free

magazines. As you realize, I am sure, there are a number of these available to people working in the computer industry. If this type card was sent in for MANAGEMENT SERVICES it was done under the assumption that this was another free magazine.

You will find the subscription card returned without payment as we are not interested in your publication.

Sincerely yours,

Whitney L. Johnson
Director, Computing Center
Virginia Polytechnic Institute

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Mr. Gresser, similarly amused by your letter of March 19, has passed it on to me with the question, "Who was the culprit — man or machine?" The culprits are plural, but alas, are man. Herewith the frailties of the flesh.

Man failure 1 —

The compilers of the mailing list used in your solicitation felt it was a fine idea to place the computer model number smack in the middle of the address.

Man failure 2 —

We were foolish enough to rent this list.

Man failure 3 —

R. G. J. of your organization, confident that he was sending for a free magazine, all innocently and unwittingly checked two blocks requesting a subscription be billed at \$7.50, and initialed the order.

Man (woman) failure 4 —

One of our newer girls, not conversant with computer manufacturers and models, interpreted the updating of the stencil "IBM 650" to "1401" as a part of the address. (I am not at all sure that the 1401 did not nudge R. G. J. into making this change, but such pride is forgiveable.)

Until such time as man stops making computers, and computers begin making men, I suppose we shall have these little failures.

I think Miss Julie Newmar, "My Living Doll," is a *remarkably* promising step in this direction.

Thank you for your letter. We shall be pleased to reinstate your subscription upon your further advice.

We have a very good product.

Very truly yours,
Lewis Squires
Subscription Manager

Dear Mr. Squires:

Your letter of March 24th has shamefully denounced me for, and

reminded me of, what I really am — a 4 bit IBM (*Imbecilic Biological Machines*) man-machine with random input and unreliable random recall.

It is quite evident to me now that my configuration is limited to a 30 day, 1T (track) memory and that file protection and memory protection devices are not included as standard hardware.

A rerun through my optical scanners of the Xeroxed input you provided with your letter does indeed match with a faint memory dump. I had reset every mole on my body in previous attempts to reproduce events leading up to your request for payment — but to no avail. My particular make and model did not include (among other things) the same console operating features as displayed on “My Living Doll.”

My man failures certainly overshadow those mentioned in your letter and I apologize to you, Mr. Gresser, your new clerk, the old mailing list, our Mr. Johnson, and our 2½ year old 1401 for having created this mistake in the first place.

To aid in my program of self-embarrassment for self-improvement would you please advise me of the approximate date of the original billing which evidently preceded the notice received this month so that I might retain a

semblance of my “odd” 4 bit parity. Evidently, I have some other loose wires which require remedial maintenance if I did nothing about your original billing.

All excuses aside, I do apologize for the inconvenience I’ve caused and will make certain the requisition for payment is forwarded immediately upon receipt of another copy of your bill.

Absent-mindedly yours,
R. G. Justice
“R.G.J.”

Dear Mr. Justice:

Thank you for your delightful letter, and your stimulating article, which I have turned over to our Editor, Bob Smith.

While we were engaged in correspondence, we received Com-

monwealth of Virginia Purchase Order A16692, dated March 23, 1965, covering a two-year subscription beginning with our charter issue March-April, 1964, for the Virginia Polytechnic Institute Library, Acquisitions Section.

Under these circumstances we felt we should not reinstate the subscription for the Computing Center unless you specifically requested us to do so.

In connection with your inquiry about our first punched card billing, we believe it was prepared February 8, 1965, with the second being sent about thirty days later.

Thanks again for your interest in us and our publication.

Cordially,
Lewis Squires
Subscription Manager

The misaddressed order form that created the problem.

MANAGEMENT SERVICES
a bi-monthly magazine of planning, systems, and controls

Gentlemen: Please send me the current issue of MANAGEMENT SERVICES and enter my subscription as indicated below.

I understand that I may cancel this subscription with no obligation if I decide for any reason after I have seen the magazine that it does not meet my business and professional needs.

Initial here: *JS*

ONE YEAR \$7.50 PLEASE SEND BILL
 THREE YEARS \$20. PAYMENT ENCLOSED (refund on request)

May we have your title or occupation? *John P. Squires, Manager*

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