⚜Interesting & Funny Apple Tidbits⚜

This chapter is here to tell interesting and funny stories behind easter eggs, code names, and those who make your Mac.

DogCow Poem in TechNote #31
(see "Technote" in the Applications Chapter)

In the following Dog Cow poem if you take the first character of each line of the poem you see APRIL FOOLS!

A dogcow is what I want to be.
Pictured in dialogs,
Running through the weeds,
In and out of advertisements,
Loving my naughty deeds.
Feeling in black and white.
Over the edge of cliffs,
Out with the tide in the sea.
Living life to the fullest,
Sweet survival in 2 D.

Here's why (from an employee at Apple):
"Sports Illustrated had run a great fake story about a Zen baseball pitcher sometime earlier and we borrowed the idea of having the words 'April Fool's' spelled out within the article from them -- in our case using the first letter of every line of the poem at the closing."
D. Bruce Yolton (dbyolton@interport.net)

ou can see the original technote   page at:
http://www.info.apple.com/dev/dts/tn31.html.

There is a detailed DogCow page at:
http://www.info.apple.com/dev/dts/dogcow.html

Explanation of the Blue Meanies
Of course everyone knows that the Blue Meanies are those mean furry guys that were killing the peace in the Beatle's movie "The Yellow Submarine". Yet, the real question is: why use the Blue Meanies as a name for the System developers? or how was the name thought of?   Bryan Temmermand (bt@aimnet.com) sent me a message that may explain it...

"I grew-up in Cupertino, and for many years, shot my BB Gun in the orchards where parts of the Apple Campus now stand. I remember for many years passing a shopping center on a major expressway just a few miles from the campus. Spray painted on a wall there were the words "Blue Meanies".   I remember having seen this fora long time. It is very visible and it has always caught my attention.   When I drove by, it made me think, 'What kind of 'gang' would have the name Blue Meanies?'   I will bet that

this is where the name comes from. It has been there for at least 10 years."

The fictional story behind the Blue Meanies can be found at:
http://www.spies.com/greg/bluemeanies.html

The Story Behind "Sosumi"
From: Macworld's Mac Secrets (For more info. see credits at last chapter)

Have you ever wondered what the name of the staccato E-flat diminished triad sound called "Sosumi" means?   Okay, well I haven't either, but there is a story behind its existence....

Early in Apple's career as a computer-making superstar, there was a little legal trouble.   That trouble was with, believe it or not, the Beatles.   The Beatle's lawyers claimed that Apple, in making a computer with sound capabilities, was trying to get into the recording industry, causing confusion in customers' minds. Afterall, there companies had the names and were doing the same thing, right?

So Apple sighted and promised Apple Records, in writing, that it would never get into the recording industry.   Apple Records backed off, and Macintosh went forth in the world.

A few years later, however, Apple started including a microphone with most Mac models.   And guess what your suppose to do with that mike?   Yup-make recordings!   It certainly would take a hypersensative record company to interpret giving away a free microphone as "entering the recording industry."   But you never know.   Some wily Apple Engineer, recognizing the potential litigation, gave the alert sound a name that serves as a subtle tribute to Apple Records; Sosumi!

Stories Behind the Code Names
Find the complete list of code names at: http://www.macworld.com/tccafe/codenames.html

A little History Perhaps...
From: The Mac Bathroom Reader (See below) by Owen W. Linzmayer

Before Apple publicly announces a product by its official name, internally it is referred to by a code name. Usually lead engineers or managers get to name their own projects whatever they want, but a few recurring trends are evident. Early in its incarnation, Apple favored female names for projects. More often than not, the projects were named after the children, girlfriends, or wives of the team members (for example, the Lisa was named after Steve Jobs' daughter born out of wedlock). Jef Raskin rebelled against the sexist notion of female code names and looked instead to apple varieties as the inspiration for his Macintosh project, purposely misspelling McIntosh. For a

while, the names of different types of apples (Pippin, Johnathan) were often whispered in the R&D labs. Having exhausted the apple varieties, project managers now tend to choose whimsical code names that either reflect pop culture or contain awful puns. Perusing the list of code names is like walking down memory lane, checking out the fads and trends that swept through Apple cubicles and lab benches over the years.

Apple takes the code-naming business seriously, often assigning the same project different code names, one to be used internally, and another for external use. Also, a single project may have separate code names associated with hardware, software, documentation, and marketing. Furthermore, outsiders - - such as developers and the press - - may be told about the same project, but each will be told a different code name. And just to keep everybody guessing, Apple sometimes changes code names in the middle of a project, or reuses old code names for new projects. Not only does all this create confusion in Apple-watchers, it also serves as an audit trail to trace leaks to their sources.

BOB W-Powerbook Duo
The code name was known as "BOB W".   This confused people for a long time until they showed the title of a popular Star Trek show which said "Best of Both Worlds."   It shouldn't be hard to figure out the connection.

Can This Bird Fly?
From: The Mac Bathroom Reader by Owen W. Linzmayer (see below)
Apple's top-of-the-line, 68040-based PowerBook 540/540c project was code-named Blackbird, after the high-flying SR-71 reconnaissance plane because both feature dark colors, curves, and speed. However, it's known informally inside Apple as the Spruce Goose because some people feel that introducing a 7-pound laptop in 1994 is as ill-fated an idea as Howard Hughes' huge aircraft which flew only once. On a related note, the Blackbird's innovative new trackpad was code-named Midas, after the Phrygian king who had the power of turning whatever he touched into gold.

Cosmos Carl Code Name Complaints (Power Macintosh 7100/66)
From: The Mac Bathroom Reader by Owen W. Linzmayer (see below)
The November 29, 1993 issue of MacWEEK featured a cover story on three computers Apple would later introduce on March 14, 1994, as the Power Macintosh 6100/60, 7100/66, and 8100/80. The story mentioned in passing that the computers went by the code names PDM, Carl Sagan, and Cold Fusion, respectively. Upon reading this tidbit of information, the real Carl Sagan fired off the following letter to MacWEEK:

"I have been approached many times over the past two decades by individuals and corporations seeking to use my name and/or likeness for commercial purpose. I have always declined, no matter how lucrative the offer of how important the corporation. My endorsement is not for sale. For this reason, I was profoundly distressed to see your lead front-page story 'Trio of PowerPC Macs spring toward March release date' proclaiming Apple's announcement of a new Mac bearing my name. That this was done without my authorization or knowledge is especially disturbing. Through my attorneys, I have repeatedly requested Apple to make a public clarification that I knew nothing of its intention to capitalize on my reputation in introducing this product, that I derived no benefit, financial or otherwise, from its doing so. Apple has refused. I would appreciate it if you would so apprise your readership."

Carl Sagan
Director, Laboratory for Planetary Studies
Center for Radiophysics and Space Research
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY

Sagan's letter appeared in the January 10, 1994 issue of MacWEEK and elicited howls of derision from the Macintosh community. Most people wondered why Sagan was complaining; he should have been honored to have a computer named after him, they felt. Besides, it was never meant to be the final product name, so lighten up. It has been suggested that what upset Sagan the most was being grouped with two discredited scientific discoveries/hoaxes, Piltdown Man and Cold Fusion.

In deference to the noted star-gazer, Apple changed the Power Macintosh 7100/66 code name to BHA. Things were beginning to return to normal when Sagan learned that BHA supposedly stood for Butt-head Astronomer. He put pressure on Apple's lawyers, who insisted the project engineers come up with a new code. They settled on LAW, which stands for Lawyers Are Wimps. Nonetheless, in the third week of April, 1994, Sagan sued Apple in U.S. District Court in Los Angeles, charging it with defamation of character. He sought unspecified damages, probably hoping to reap "billions and billions" of dollars.

Fortunately for Apple, judge J. Baird dismissed the suit, finding that "Plantiff's libel action is based on the allegation that Defendant changed the 'code name' on its personal computer from 'Carl Sagan' to 'Butt-Head Astronomer' after plaintiff had request that Defendant cease use of Plaintiff's name….There can be no question that the use of the figurative term 'Butt-Head' negates the impression that Defendant was seriously implying an assertion of fact. It strains reason to conclude that Defendant was attempting to criticize Plaintiff's reputation or competency as an

astronomer. One does not seriously attack the expertise of a scientist using the undefined phrase 'butt-head.' Thus, the figurative language militates against implying an assertion of fact... Furthermore, the tenor of any communication of the information, especially the phrase 'Butt-Head Astronomer,' would negate the impression that Defendant was implying an assertion of fact."

PDM (Power Mac 6100/66)
From: Macworld's Mac Secrets (For more info. see credits at last chapter)
The code name for the PowerMac 6100/66 was PDM which stands for Piltdown Man.   This was the name for the the man whose skull was   found by an archeologist in 1909 in Susses, Englang.   It was believed to be the missing link between man and ape.   In 1953 it was found to be a fake.

Gibbly - System Enablers
From: Develop Magazine, issue 14, p108
Avi Drissman (ad406@detroit.freenet.org) [http://www.science.wayne.edu/~adrissmn/]

As you may know, there is a hamster named Gibbly in the story of the Blue meanies (http://www.spies.com/greg/bluemeanies.html).   His name comes from the System enablers that have a file type of "gbly", and actually had a code name of "gibbly" or "gibblies" for plural.   Here is the story....

Gibbly History by Chris Derossi
        When system enablers were being designed, it was clear they were going to be a mechanism for extending the system. Engineers began calling them INITs, since they served much the same purpose. This caused some confusion with people who thought we really were talking about INITs, and issues were raised about possible conflicts with other INITs, loading order, and so on.   (These issues don't apply to system enablers at all.)   It was obvious to me that we needed to change the name to differentiate system enablers from other types of system extension mechanisms. We couldn't use the term extension because that was the public name for INITs.   We couldn't use addition because that term already referred to things like QuickDraw GX and AOCE.
        So, I decided to use a made-up word. I wanted a word that would be memorable and one that would sound funny when used in all seriousness by executives and upper management. Hence the name "gibblies."   The engineering documentation for gibblies states that the singular is "gibbly" and the plural is "gibblies." It also states that the "g" may be pronounced hard or soft depending on the speaker's preference. In practice, the hard form (as in "give") became the one used by those in the know. There you have it. And, yes, it was very amusing to hear the made-up word being used all over the company in serious conversation.

The Mac Bathroom Reader

Owen W. Linzmayer has put a lot of work into his book, The Mac Bathroom Reader, and the code names.   It seems only appropriate to tell you how to obtain it...   The Mac Bathroom Reader, published by SYBEX, is available in better bookstores for $12.99. If your local bookstore doesn't carry it, ask them to place a special order for ISBN #0-7821-1531-4. Or you can order an autographed copy direct from the author, Owen W. Linzmayer (71333.3152@CompuServe.com).