



And now, clown free—*finally!*—here's something...

# completely different

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**Some Forgotten Python Society History**

**an e-mail from Maureen K. Pierce**

**former Python Society member and officer (1980-1984)**

I joined the Python Society in 1980 as a freshman. I can't for the life of me remember the president's name right now. I think it was John Bomba. Bomba was a shortened form of his last name. Everyone just called him Bomba. He abruptly abdicated when he fell in love. Got married two months later. Jon Pinchock (aka Cosmic Jon), the vice president, took over the club. Jon was, well, an egocentric, chauvinist-pig, control freak. There, I've said it, and I don't regret it. He had a lot of personality though. We had some elections in the spring and the club made Jon president and me vice president (although we always called me president of vice).

During this time period, we decided to highlight student apathy by running Wimpy the Gerbil for president of the student government. There were no actual rules preventing us from running a gerbil, but the student government was not too thrilled with us, to say the least. It was a fun time. We had all sorts of posters of Wimpy with his human running mate (somewhere I have a poster, I'll have to dig it out to find out the running mate's name [**Fred Schiller—ed.**]), who was actually prepared to take office if Wimpy won.

We had planned to "assassinate" Wimpy if he won and then the running mate would step in. However, we were extremely relieved when Wimpy came in second because a few days earlier there'd been an assassination attempt on Pres. Reagan. We just thought it would be in really bad taste to try and assassinate Wimpy after that. I've always felt so sorry for the poor girl who came in third. She just stood around crying and crying. Imagine losing to a gerbil. We, however, were thrilled when we made the Associated Press newswire.

The next year, a club member named David Hake (it's really funny, I saw him on "Win Ben Stein's Money" a few years ago) wanted to overthrow the student government altogether and replace it with a new body with a whole new constitution. We actually had USG officials beg us not to go through with our plan. They were afraid we'd actually succeed. So, after procuring some concessions about how the USG would conduct itself, we agreed not to proceed with our plan. (Only a handful of people ever knew about this, by the way.)

We also did the usual stuff, like climbing the Mall. I remember putting on some deranged play called "The Trojan War" in which we used condoms like finger puppets. One of our members altered signs around campus so that the Grange building became the "Strange" building, Please Use Underpass For Safety became "Please Use Underpants For Safety" and the Natatorium became the "Gnatatorium." He did a really professional job too. The lettering matched perfectly.

Homecoming parades were always great fun. But we got in big trouble once. The Greeks threatened to ban us from future parades. Apparently they didn't think it funny when we rolled a big wooden cart through the parade route while club member Tim Biancalana, (dressed like an executioner) shouting "Bring out your Greeks!", would toss people dressed like preppies onto the cart. Some of the preppies were plants from the club, but others were

complete strangers who got into the spirit of the event. Cosmic Jon—who was rather geeky and hence a wee bit obsessed with trying to be popular—couldn't handle the censure from the Greeks. He apologized profusely (interpret that as groveled). So, that's why the Python Society is still, apparently, allowed in the parade. Quite frankly I would have been happier to have us banned from the parade than grovel before the Greeks.

Anyway, Jon quickly tired of being president. He actually told me that he was going to deliberately bankrupt the club so he could go out with a big bang. I told him he had no right to dismantle the club just because he wanted to leave. We had some really fierce arguments. Lots of yelling. I finally convinced him that all the club officers should resign (myself included because I've never been terribly power crazed) and we should hold an early election. Tony Leshinski became president, Laurie Palmer became vice president, and a guy named Dave Williams became the treasurer. Jon left the club and didn't tell the new officers anything about what they needed to do to run the club. The club limped along for awhile, struggling to rebuild its diminished funding (Jon had always spent a lot of money on advertising). But they survived, in part by running the original 1960s extremely campy "Batman" movie as a fundraiser a few times. It was a really cheap movie, but for some reason it attracted hordes of students.

We had tried running Monty Python-type movies, such as "Time Bandits," but they never fared very well. After sitting through six showings in one weekend, we were all a bit punchy. At one point, we were so desperate to attract moviegoers that several of the club members said to me, "Maureen, you're the best looking one of us. Go outside and show off some leg. Try and fool them into thinking we're showing porno in here." (I refused. You have to have some standards in life.)

Other than the "Bring out your Greeks" escapade, my favorite homecoming parade was in 1983. We built a giant Trojan Rabbit and wheeled it through the streets. This was during a time when quite a few Python members also belonged to the Penn State Science Fiction Society (PSSFS), which I've heard no longer exists [**They're just hiding.-ed.**]. Of the overlapping membership, all of us who belonged to Python insisted upon marching with the Pythons. There was no contest. Our loyalties were always with the Pythons first. However, we did have some tailgate parties with PSSFS just because of the overlap.

Have you ever heard of Amy Baggott? She was probably the most notorious club member in my time. She was about 5' 2", always wore a cape, knee-high stockings, knee-high boots, blue eye shadow, and spoke with an affected English accent. All the freakin' time! We had a little saying about her: "Baggott—emphasis on the first syllable!" She was nuts. She thought she was a Jedi Elf.

This was never official club business, but it involved three club members. Cosmic Jon, a really nice guy nicknamed "Colonel" (I know his actual name, but was sworn to secrecy years ago), and Steve Luttrell. They decided to map the entire system of

underground steam tunnels. So they used walkie talkies and a map of the campus. While Jon went underground, Colonel and Steve followed along on the sidewalk making little marks on the map. They spent a few nights doing this, must've been out around 4 a.m. just mapping the tunnels. A few years later, one of Jon's friends, a guy named Dave Schmidt, used this map to help his little crime ring, which involved stealing typewriters and other sundry

items from the university. Dave ended up in jail for 2 years on felony charges. Meanwhile, all the engineering and compsci majors had to retake all their exams because Dave had stolen some of the tests and sold them.

There you go; four lost years of the Python Society to contemplate. Hope you and the club enjoy it.

## The Monty Python Society Today as told by Marc Fiddler

Traces from distant eons arrive at us in the form of cosmic microwaves. And, in the case of the Monty Python society, in the form of a letter from Utah. It came from a web page long forgotten, probably dating from the late cretaceous period, where we were only as advanced as small invertebrates. Or it's from the '80s. In either case, we were small invertebrates.

"We could charge him dues, like a case of whiskey. He could get two a week with that" suggested Fred, editor and BMF. Yes, many creative endeavors have been the unholy byproduct of booze and writing; followed by public urination and arson. A former president, Brad, would churn out barely lucid sketches while in the throes of black label Jim Beam. The presidency has a tradition of drinking and channeling spirits. Ex-president Fred shares his body with a Pepperpot, which occasionally wins a bloody coup for consciousness. When heavily intoxicated, Brad reverts unintentionally to Hunter S. Thompson; along with explicit sexual descriptions and drooling. The odd thing is that these spirits are either fictional or still alive. What possession will former president Veronica take? If annunciation becomes increasingly worse, as the trend seems to be, it could be Ozzy Osbourne or the mother from *Peanuts*. She has already set a record with 0.22% blood alcohol and public nudity. She has yet to mix it dangerously with writing, spot welding, or moose; however there is still time. In fact, I don't think she's combined writing with anything. Oh well, I have no room to talk. So, the moral of the story is that, yes, we will write inane drivel for cheap, cheap hooch, or at least make someone write about us in the police blotter.

For some reason the public service aspect of the club was brought up last meeting, or at least the last meeting I attended.



While some liked the street, it was agreed that our club keeps us off of it, or at least on the sidewalk and out of traffic (while not primal screaming). Indeed, it's a dangerous thing to leave a python to their own devices, especially when the device is a Hello Kitty vibrator (just \$35). But the Python society is more than just a club. It's like a service fraternity, but with less womanizing and ritual hazing. Not that the womanizing part's by choice, but there is less. As for hazing, that implies that people actually want to join our club.

Yes, we help the community in service of our dark masters: the Cthulhu plushy and the shiny golden lemur. For those of you asking "what golden lemur?" those rituals are for the inner circle of the Python Society. From the lemur we learn to rise above the shackles of the earth, until we are so used to being apart from it that we hop around awkwardly when trying to talk (hence the silly walk). And from Cthulhu we learn recipes. Should they be displeased, the typical punishment is lashing with vinyl siding. For the most heinous of crimes, such as aiding and abetting PHROTH or Dr. Lotta, you must face the full fury of a salad shooter, or making Matt mad. When angered, Matt shouts "Anger transform!" and goes into a minute-long transformation sequence (while his enemies are forced to watch

and do nothing) involving brief nudity, a blurry background implying fast movement, and "ka-ching" noises. The result is even more horrifying than the nudity. As for plushy Cthulhu, he prefers the less formal method of breaking a bottle and going for your throat.

The university and town have reaped the rewards of our silliness, and can feel safe at night thanks to our vigilance. Well, safe as long as you keep the littler ones away from Jack.



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