

# THE SAGA OF THE BINARY BRIGADE OF G.E.

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The story that we are going to tell you  
It's true; I'd tell you no lies  
I'm conned into doing by Duster  
You'd think by I'd be wise!

Since Vern repeated it twice the last time  
To a chorus of hooting and jeers  
I promise that this is the last time  
That fact alone should bring cheers.

It was corny enough the last time  
Now fermented another two years  
Decayed a more likely description  
Either way, a pain to the ears.

But let me get on with the story  
It's a story to be told at all costs  
And duly recorded in history  
'Ere the memories fade and are lost.

If at points the meaning seems hidden  
And the humor hard to abide  
I'm sorry for the limited interest  
For some stories considered "inside."

If our metered format seems awkward  
And the rhyme scheme is somewhat pathetic  
The errors they cover are worth it  
And I blame it on license poetic.

Our saga begins with the people  
"The binary brigade of GE"  
The volunteers they were many  
Many more were shanghaied by Bill D.

Their visions, their backgrounds, their motives  
Were many and varied you'll see  
But somehow they all came together  
"The binary brigade of GE."

Recruits they came from all over  
Good troops to the cause they would be  
In spite of the perils before them  
They all flocked to mother GE  
"And into the glare of the valley of the sun rode  
the formation.

They brought us all to the desert  
Where the sun shone down unabated  
It fried our brains to compliance  
With objective never quite stated.

'Pache Junction brought us together  
To raise spirits and calm all our fears  
"Twas the first of our annual sales meetings  
That happened one every eight years.

When old friends all come together  
It's time to offer a toast  
My reverence somehow is lacking  
I'm here for the purpose to roast!

I hope that you're all in good humor  
As you'r honors I loosely assail  
SI won't count among my few credits  
Being ridden from here on a rail.

We had Oldfield, Lasher, Van Aiken  
And other top guns quite a few  
We had Wengert, and Radar and Haausra  
To led the assault on Big Blue.

Their leadership challenges many  
Their responsibilities great  
In spite of their lofty positions  
In our roast a line they too rate.

As Van sped to work every morning  
In his rag top created by Cad  
Was a major cause of Dust Devils  
Even road runners knew they'd been had.

Lou came to Phoenix from Erie  
As Management changes repeated  
Some eloquent words he taught us  
Expletives were never deleted.

He used some colorful language  
For that achieved quite some fame  
I wouldn't say it was salty  
But he gave our river its name.

Behind these brave few there were many  
Many roles they were oft asked to play  
But the first task that faced us each morning  
Was to find who we worked for that day.

We had Goosetree and Sheely and Cooper  
To lead the Marketing throng  
We had McGuckin, Hogg and Thompson  
And Barnes to lead us in song.

There were DeGabrille, Prince and O'Rourke  
And Norrises two, three and four  
After getting one we called Nathan  
It's a wonder they hired some more.

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O'Rourke went into time-sharing  
The use of computers sublime  
Some say he just might have made it  
If only he'd learned to spell time.

Next we go to DeGabrielle  
If it's history you're wanting to know  
Cause I've personally seen him make history  
Three or four nights in a row.

There was Spielberg to design our 200's  
Ere off to Big Blue he did flee  
In addition to design of computers  
He became the grand dad of E. T.

George Smith went into the prisons  
Computers to teach all about  
Now we know why he went in there  
We wonder how he got out.

One manager took off to scratching  
His trousers some more room to yield  
His actions so lively and constant  
You'd think he was playing right field.

I haven't heard of Bill Thompson  
I take no pleasure from this  
But one thing I'm certainly sure of  
He's on a diet where ever he is.

George Snively's business was leasing  
In Phoenix he established his roots  
He might preferred other places  
If he had learned to get out of those boots.

He introduced us into leasing  
Programs numbered five, four and three  
A plan designed to sell millions  
But the dogs wouldn't eat it you see.

There are dozens more I would mention  
If the program were less tightly packed  
But I'm certain you are better off this way  
Your reputations to maintain intact.

Most of the troops are still with us  
A few have gone on 'fore today  
We'll shed but one tear in their passing  
I'm sure they would want it that way.

Now G.E. itself is the story  
Our forecast at the last has come true  
It took acquisitions to do it  
Now they make more bucks than Big Blue.

The troops are one part of the story  
The products were there to be sold  
Some were unique and exciting  
Their story must also be told.

The computers came by the numbers  
The two, the four and the six  
304 A & B, and ERMA  
Made up an incredible mix.

Compatibles a term we promoted  
With fingers crossed well 'hind our backs  
The idea we knew was faultless  
Implementation suffered some lacks.

The 200 line was a winner  
With word length of some twenty bits  
We captured the market for that one  
While dealing the programmers fits.

The 400 was set for announcement  
When Honeywell upset our plans  
Their 200 was far less expensive  
So our price lists we promptly re-ran.

The 600 came with great promise  
With memory directly addressed  
IBM sent in spies 'Guised as prospects  
With their muscle, well you know the rest.

One printer design was exotic  
With water that raced through its core  
Others printed lines that were wavy  
While paper stacked up on the floor.

Our disk drives were big and heavy  
To make programs easy to run  
While others measured theirs by the digits  
We measured ours by the ton.

One storage device was unusual  
Stram as I remember it best  
Data were on big loops of Mylar  
It resembled the shape of Mae West.

And bankers requested encoders  
That recorded data full field  
We announced it a wee bit too early  
The design was never revealed!

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Elliott built for us a card reader  
That shook and rattled and trembled  
It's choreographic so very dynamic  
It was hard to keep it assembled.

But people and products are worthless  
Minus users that costs to defray  
So we searched for prospects all over  
From New York out to L. A.

The prospects were a great many  
In winter they'd flock to our door  
In summer they'd flock to Poughkeepsie  
And our plans for orders ignore.

We had staunch supporters like Rude  
In GE a very long list  
Their patience we stretched to the limit  
With schedules we routinely missed.

We entertained the high and the mighty  
While we countered competitors lies  
We ate and drank with abandon  
And at Pinnacle Peak left our ties.

One sales campaign called for vultures  
Boarded where sales suffered slippage  
Denver was the winner of record  
They're still cleaning up all the drippage.

The elephant campaign was a winner  
Pachyderms were there to eat bite by bite  
It must have been grossly successful  
'For the critters are all out of site.

One program called for conversions  
From standard leasing to sale  
As a means of raising new dollars  
There was hardly a way it could fail.

Included were many card punches  
At least a dozen or two  
One flaw in the program deterred us  
They all still belonged to Big Blue!

When GE abandoned the struggle  
And their losses decided to end  
570 turned out in a hurry  
Their business plan to amend.

Honeywell was the victim of choice  
To take over where we were to leave  
The opportunity so brightly presented  
It was like getting an apple from Eve.

The companies once in computers  
Have mostly gone by the way  
Univac merged their losses with Burroughs  
And GE bought out RCA.

SDS became part of Xerox  
In a merger designed to impress  
In spite of being experts in copy  
They couldn't copy success.

And Ford has a better idea  
For Philco they paid quite a sum  
They very soon came to realize  
That quality's really job number one.

Honeywell stayed in the business  
In a way for them is far better  
In their computer business remaining  
Was their name reduced to one letter.  
(Out of the glare of the Valley of the Sun rode  
the forsaken)

Then why did success so delude us  
"The binary brigade of GE"  
The reasons not always apparent  
The causes not easy to see.

We've been analyzed over and over  
Why our efforts all went to pot  
But I'm satisfied in the knowledge  
That we gave it our very best shot.

Perhaps we needed foot soldiers  
To respond to recruiters lures  
I guess what we had in stead of  
Was a group of entrepreneurs.

But of all the Groups that have tried it  
In computing's earliest years  
I'm quite sure that there are no others  
Who meet like this with ex-peers!

So the people somehow were special  
I can state without being remiss  
Else why would they all come together  
And sit still for nonsense like this.

Yes, ours was the age of computers  
You may think you have known quite a few  
And feel that you are quite clever  
To get them to do things for you.

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Their speed keeps right on impressing  
Their flexibility too  
While you slow down on both measures  
With the years creeping up on you.

If you find yourself at the keyboard  
And forget what you went there to do  
You'd better get out of computers  
'Fore they kick the bits out of you.

I our story's been too long and boring  
And from sitting you hurt down below  
Remember that Bill made us do it.  
On him the blame I bestow.

But now my story's repeated  
"Of computers by mother GE"  
I'll see that this is committed  
Exactly where it ought to be

Thrown in the waste paper basket!