

The year 1995.

This is the third “retro” edition of our Helix Courier Limited Messenger newsletter. In this issue we will take a trip down memory lane to the year 1995. Subsequent issues will be 2000, 2005, 2010, and finally 1968 - the year in which helix was founded.

Sieg Pedde, President

The O. J. Simpson trial

One of the longest and most famous American trials is that of former football star O. J. Simpson. The murder case (officially called the People v. Simpson) was held into the Los Angeles County, California, Superior Court in which Simpson was charged with two counts of murder, following the deaths of his ex-wife Nicole Brown Simpson and her friend Ronald Goldman.

Even with no murder weapon, no good fingerprints, and no eye witnesses, the prosecution was confident that they presented a solid case.

The major reason that Simpson wasn't convicted for the murders was because the investigation was poorly conducted. Evidence was not handled properly and the State of California could not prove that the evidence collected was not tainted

Simpson's defense team, dubbed the “Dream Team” by reporters, argued that LAPD detective Mark Fuhrman had planted evidence at the crime scene. In all, 150 witnesses gave testimony during the eight-month-long trial. On October 3, 1995, after only four hours of deliberation the previous day, the jury returned a verdict of not guilty.

1995 Quebec Referendum

This was the second referendum to ask voters if Quebec should secede from Canada and become an independent state. Literally the following question was asked:

“Do you agree that Québec should become sovereign after having made a formal offer to Canada for a new economic and political partnership within the scope of the bill respecting the future of Québec and of the agreement signed on June 12, 1995?”

The referendum took place on October 30, 1995, and the motion was defeated by a very narrow margin of 49.42% “Yes” to 50.58% “No”.

Guy Paul Morin

Guy Paul Morin had been convicted of the October 1984 rape and murder of his eight-year-old next-door

neighbour, Christine Jessop of Queensville, Ontario. In 1995, improvements in DNA testing led to a test which excluded Morin as the murderer. Morin's appeal of his conviction was allowed (i.e., the conviction was reversed), and a directed verdict of acquittal entered in the appeal.

1995 Movies

1995 brought some Disney Classics to the table such as Pocahontas and Toy Story. Pierce Brosnan played James Bond in the hit movie Golden Eye. Also appearing in 1995:

- Batman Forever
- Apollo 13
- Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls
- Casper
- Jumanji
- Die Hard With a Vengeance
- Braveheart

Popular Music in 1995

Do you remember any of these performers fifteen years later:

- Weezer
- Smashing Pumpkins
- Rage Against The Machine
- Van Halen
- Whitney Houston
- Mariah Carey
- Alanis Morissette
- Madonna
- Garth Brooks
- Blues Traveler
- Janet Jackson

Quiz about the year 1995

1. With whom was Hugh Grant caught in a compromising situation?
2. Why was the Alfred Murrah building in the news?
3. Which bank collapsed after one of its traders lost 167 billion pounds on the Japanese futures markets?
4. For which film did Tom Hanks win an Oscar?
5. Why was Philip Walton briefly a national hero?
 1. Divine Brown
 2. Oklahoma City Bombing
 3. Barings
 4. Forrest Gump
 5. His putt won the Ryder Cup for Europe

An Un-earthly Event in 1995:

A gas giant planet, outside our own solar system, was found in 1995. Scientists looked at the star Pegasi-51 through giant telescopes and discovered that the star wobbled, suggesting a gravitational pull by a planet. This planet is larger than Jupiter and orbits Pegasi-51, a star 15 light years away from our own sun.

Companies Founded in the Year 1995

eBay

eBay Inc. is the American internet company that manages eBay.com, an online auction and shopping website in which people and businesses buy and sell a broad variety of goods and services worldwide.

The majority of the sales take place through a set-time auction format, but there is also now a substantial segment with listings in the "Buy It Now" category.

In addition to its original U.S. website, eBay has established localized websites in thirty other countries. eBay Inc. also owns PayPal, Skype, StubHub, Kijiji, and other businesses.

The online auction website was founded as AuctionWeb in San Jose, California, on September 3, 1995, by French-born Iranian computer programmer Pierre Omidyar as part of a larger personal site that included, among other things, Omidyar's own tongue-in-cheek tribute to the Ebola virus. In 1997, the company received approximately \$5 million in funding from the venture capital firm Benchmark Capital.

YAHOO

Yahoo! Inc. (NASDAQ: YHOO) is an American public corporation headquartered in Sunnyvale, California, (in Silicon Valley), that provides various internet-related services worldwide. The company is perhaps best known for its web portal, search engine (Yahoo! Search), Yahoo! Directory, Yahoo! Mail, Yahoo! News, online advertising, online mapping (Yahoo! Maps), video sharing (Yahoo! Video), and social media websites and services.

In 1994, Jerry Yang and David Filo were Electrical Engineering graduate students at Stanford University. Their early internet enterprise, "Jerry and David's Guide to the World Wide Web" was renamed "Yahoo!" in April, 1994. The official 'backronym' for Yahoo is "*Yet Another Hierarchical Official Oracle*". Filo and Yang said they selected the name because they liked the word's general definition, which comes from Gulliver's Travels by Jonathan Swift: "rude, unsophisticated and uncouth".

The yahoo.com domain was created on January 18, 1995. Yang and Filo realized their website had massive business potential, and on March 1, 1995, Yahoo! was incorporated. The rest, as they say, is history.

The 1995 Terror Attack in Tokyo

On Monday March 20, 1995, at the peak of the morning rush hour, five members of *Aum Shinrikyo* launched a chemical attack on the Tokyo Metro, one of the world's busiest commuter transport systems. The chemical agent used, liquid sarin, was contained in plastic bags which each team then wrapped in newspaper. Each perpetrator carried two packets, totaling approximately 900 millilitres of sarin, except Yasuo Hayashi, who carried three bags. Aum originally planned to spread the sarin as an aerosol but did not follow through that way. A single drop of sarin the size of a pinhead can kill an adult.

Carrying their packets of sarin and umbrellas with sharpened tips, the perpetrators boarded their appointed trains. At prearranged stations, the sarin packets were dropped and punctured several times with the sharpened tip of the umbrellas. Each man then got off the train and exited the station to meet an accomplice with a car. By leaving the punctured packets on the floor, the sarin was allowed to leak out into the train car and stations. This sarin affected passengers, subway workers, and those who came into contact with them. Sarin's low vapor pressure (2.9mmHg) and high boiling point makes it difficult to vaporize at ambient temperature, so very little evaporated to become an inhalant hazard. Sarin evaporates nearly 10 times more slowly than water.

Ten Aum members, including founder Shoko Asahara, were sentenced to hang for a series of crimes committed by the cult, including the murder of a lawyer's family and a deadly sarin attack in summer 1994 in Matsumoto, Nagano Prefecture.

When news spread of the earlier crimes, many blamed the police, saying the terrorist attack in Tokyo could have been prevented if they had thoroughly investigated the prior cases.

Looking Forward and Backward

I hope you are enjoying these retrospective Messenger newsletters. I am the sort of person who never looks back and am always more interested in tomorrow than in what happened yesterday. I often ask my wife Chrystyna, editor of the Messenger, about when we did this or that, or when something important happened, and the answer often astounds me because had I had to venture a guess it would have been years (and occasionally decades) removed from the reality.

Maybe these retro Messenger issues will help me cement a few factoids into my memory banks and I will thus be able to rattle off at least important dates and events without consultation.

One can only hope, right? See you with our Year 2000 retrospective next month!
-- Sieg Pedde