

1999 St. Pat's Proclamation Signing

Cast: Dr. Viets, St. Pat, St. Pat's court member (Court 1), a student, Far Dirrig (FD 1 to 4), laptop committee (LC) and facilities crew (FC).

Dr. Viets: Welcome to MSOE's 1999 St. Patrick's Day proclamation signing. It is always a pleasure to honor St. Pat and (his or her) court. You students have worked hard on you posters and booths (Pause). Well, at least some of you worked hard.

As most of you already know, we honor St. Patrick because he is the patron saint of engineers.

This proclamation that I am about to sign gives our fairly elected St. Pat and (his or her) court authority to rule over MSOE for the rest of the day. I'm glad to see that those annoying Far Dirrig (fear dearg) faculty and staff members aren't here today to cause trouble. You know, they've tried to prevent the proclamation signing every year since I've been president here at MSOE. Last year, they kidnaped Dean Valley and we almost didn't get him back.

Well as I was saying, it is now my privilege to sign . . .

(A student arrives breathlessly)

Student 1: Wait. Stop the proceedings.

Dr. Viets: What's going on?

Student 1: (Still breathless) the laptop committee has been kidnaped!

Dr. Viets: You mean the people that have worked so hard to get MSOE a great deal on laptop computers for all the freshmen next fall?

Student 1: That's them.

Dr. Viets: I bet I know who's behind this dastardly deed.

(A disturbance is heard in the hallway next to the game room as the Far Dirrig arrive making their usual commotion. They march to the stage.)

**FD 1: We are here to demand a halt to these misguided proceedings
(Other FD's shout their agreement).**

**FD 2: We have your laptop committee and you wont get them back
unless this assembly is dismissed and (pointing to the
proclamation) that proclamation is destroyed (Again the
other FD's shout and hoot and otherwise make noise in
agreement).**

**Dr. Viets: (To St. Pat, in despair) What can I do? Without the laptop
committee how can we complete our deal with Compaq?**

(Beat) I think they've got us this time.

St. Pat: There must be something we can do.

**FD 1: Oh, there are alternatives to those fancy Compaq Armada laptop
computers the committee has chosen.**

FD 2: Yeah, in fact we have some alternatives with us today.

**FD 3: (Stepping forward and holding an abacus over his/her head)
Here's our first alternative. (pause for laughter, I hope)
What are you laughing about? Abacuses never hang up and
have to be rebooted and they don't need electrical power.**

**Dr. Viets: I'm not sure our students would be able to handle all the
homework they have to do here with one of those.**

**FD 4: (Stepping forward and holding a slide rule over his/her head)
Okay, we have another alternative.**

(Other FD's pull out their slide rules and wave them over their heads).

**FD 4: (continuing) Slide rules like these were good enough for
generations of engineers so they should be good enough
for our students.**

(FD's shout in agreement)

**FD 2: In fact, we can implement some of the latest ideas in computing
with these puppies.**

Dr. Viets: (Skeptically) Like what?

(FD's with slide rules line up facing the crowd and start computing.)

FD 2: Like parallel processing.

**Dr. Viets: Okay, I'll give you that one. But what other modern
computing techniques can you implement with those
things?**

**(FD's in line do a left face, perform a calculation and pass their slide
rules to the person behind them)**

**FD 2: (After pausing for the action to become clear to the audience.)
How 'bout pipelined execution?**

**FD 3: And for really big problems we have this one (FD holds up giant
slide rule).**

**Dr. Viets: Well, I guess you've got me. Slide rules don't seem to be as
out of date as I thought. Maybe our freshmen could get by
with those. (Beat) How much will they cost to lease?**

St. Pat: Wait Dr. Viets. You can't be serious. Students could get their homework done using slide rules even if we knew how to use them.

FD 3: Ah, so you want something a little faster than a slide rule. I think we have something here that might be just perfect, the HP Model 46 Calculator. (He/she pulls out the calculator and holds it up and then begins to read from its manual.) I'll read from the manual to convince you this is the all you need.

“The HP-46 has far more computing power than other desktop calculators. In fact, its 10-digit accuracy exceeds the precision to which most of the physical constants of the universe are known. In addition, you (can use it) to work with transcendental functions, such as logarithms, sines and cosines, and polar/rectangular coordinates.”

(Beat) What more could you want?

St. Pat: How about something a little lighter weight?

FD 3: Why would you want something lighter? After carrying one of these to all your classes, you wont need to go to the gym.

Dr. Viets: I still think we need to stick with the Compaq Armadas. We may just have to give in to these hooligans and cancel the rest of the St. Patrick's activities.

Court 1: (Desperate) Even the dance? You can't. I finally got a date.

Dr. Viets: What else can we do? They've got us this time.

(Noises are heard off stage. Facilities crew arrives with laptop committee members and make their way on stage).

FC: (Addressing Dr. Viets and motioning towards LC's.) We found these people in the old C building as we were starting demolition. They say they're the MSOE laptop committee and that they were kidnaped by the Far Dirrig (pronounced Fear Dearg). We thought you might want 'em back.

(St Pat and the court cheer.)

Dr. Viets: Thank you very much. You've saved the day.

FD 1: I hate it when this happens (pause). (Defiantly) But, there's always next year. (FD cheer defiantly).

Dr. Viets: (To FD's, loudly) Silence you red and orange ruffians. You failed again to stop MSOE's St. Patrick's Day festivities. In penitence for trying to disrupt these festivities again this year, I want St. Pat and his/her court to collect 65 ties from the MSOE faculty and staff.

(Students present the Proclamation to Dr. Viets. FD 1 offers Dr. Viets a red or orange pen with which to sign. Dr. Viets refuses the pen and accepts a green pen from one the students. Dr. Viets signs the proclamation. The students begin cutting ties.)