

THE GEO-SAMPLER



MARCH 2024

All of us here at Geotechnics are thrilled to celebrate our fortieth anniversary. Specifically, we are grateful to all our friends who have relied on our accuracy and integrity in testing over the past four decades. A lot has changed since our humble beginnings in 1984. So, on this auspicious occasion, we thought we'd take a step back in time and reminisce about all things 1984-ish. Come enjoy the time travel with us.

1984 WAS SO, UH, 1984.

No discussion about 1984 would be complete without a reference to the George Orwell novel of the same name. Published in 1949, the dystopian tale takes place in an imagined future, believed to be 1984, when much of the world is at war. A serious novel that Orwell called "satire," the book's themes center around totalitarianism, mass surveillance, and the role of truth and facts within societies and the ways in which they can be manipulated.

A popular read in English classes – and bane of many book report writers over the past few decades – the novel introduced terms that endure today. "Big Brother," for example, is a character and symbol in the story wielding absolute power as the citizenry are constantly reminded "Big brother is watching you." Seems a fitting preamble to reality TV of the same name.

Reverberations of the novel echoed through the year. In fact, when an asteroid was discovered in July 1984, it was named after Orwell. And Orwell's novel inspired the legendary commercial of the same name that launched the Apple McIntosh computer. The spot was directed by Ridley Scott, fresh off his dystopian theatrical hit, "Blade Runner." The ad aired just once nationally, during the 1984 Super Bowl, leading to \$3.5 million in Mac sales and forever transforming the concept of advertising on the big game.

The year that was

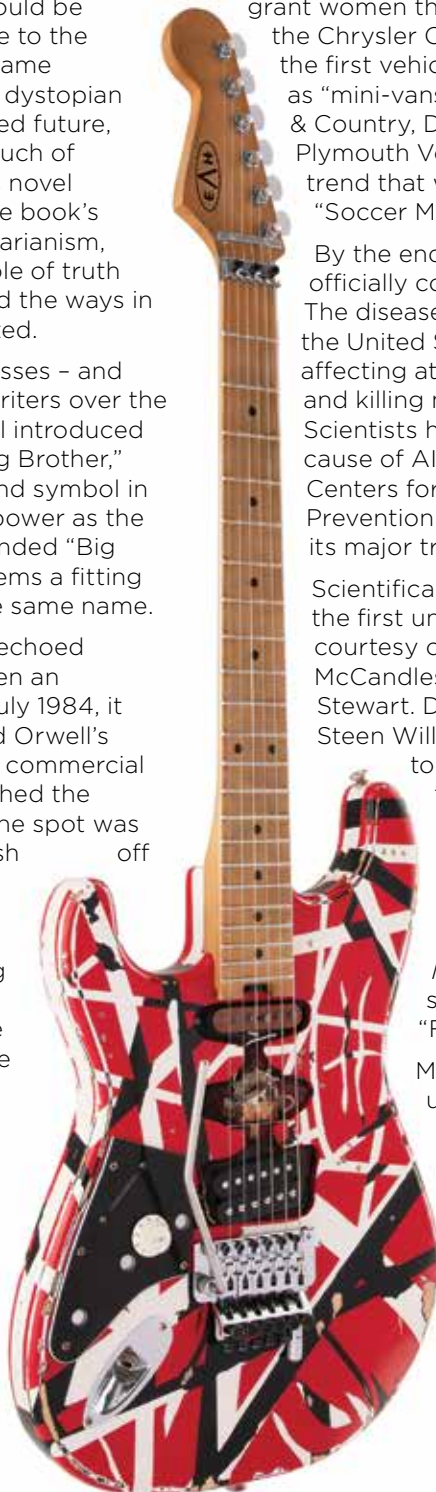
In 1984, incumbent Ronald Reagan defeated Walter Mondale in a contentious U.S. presidential election. Liechtenstein became the last country in Europe to

grant women the right to vote. And the Chrysler Corporation introduced the first vehicles officially labeled as "mini-vans," the Chrysler Town & Country, Dodge Caravan, and Plymouth Voyager, setting off a trend that would be known as "Soccer Moms."

By the end of 1984, AIDS was officially considered an epidemic. The disease had already ravaged the United States for a few years, affecting at least 7,700 people and killing more than 3,500. Scientists had identified the cause of AIDS—HIV—and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) identified all of its major transmission routes.

Scientifically, 1984 brought us the first untethered space walk, courtesy of astronauts Bruce McCandless II and Robert L. Stewart. Danish physiologist Steen Willadsen was the first to successfully use cells from early embryos to clone a mammal as we all looked on "sheepishly." And Bill Gates was on the cover of *Time Magazine* showing us something called a "Floppy Disk."

Musically, 1984 provided us with a few gifts. For example, Bob Geldof's "Band Aid" recorded the charity single "Do they know it's Christmas?," raising more than \$24 million worldwide to combat hunger and



"I was fine with aging until someone told me that 1970 and 2024 were as far apart as 1970 and 1916."



It's Just a Number

Forty is the only number in English which has its letters in alphabetical order.

There are 40 spaces on a Monopoly board.

"40" is a song by U2 from their album *War*, whose lyrics are a modification of Psalm 40.

Each team in Major League Baseball is allowed to have 40 players under major-league contracts at any given time.

The origin of timing football players for 40 yards comes from the average distance of a punt and the time it takes to reach that distance. Punts average around 40 yards in distance from the line of scrimmage, and the hangtime averages approximately 4.5 seconds. Therefore, if a player can run 40 yards in 4.5 seconds, they will be able to leave the line of scrimmage when a punt is kicked, and reach the point where the ball comes down just as it arrives.

Famous 40 year olds, born in 1984: Air Jordans, Cinnamon Toast Crunch, Birkin bags, The Clapper, HP LaserJet, Dune (the board game), Slice soda, *Miami Vice*.

Costco hot dog (the menu item, not the actual weiner) is 40 years old. The dog has remained steady at \$1.50 in a combo deal including a soda at United States locations since its introduction in 1984.



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launching a series of philanthropic concerts and events over the following 20 years.

Van Halen rolled out its sixth studio album, "1984," giving us the song, "Jump," among others. And Prince introduced us to the concept of "When Doves Cry," which ended the year at the top of the charts. Also making its way to the charts that year was Bruce Springsteen's "Born in the USA."

Cinematically, 1984 provided not just some of the best movies of the decade, but of all time. This would be a perfect time to stream one of these classics: *The Karate Kid*, *Gremlins*, *Ghostbusters*, *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, *Footloose*, and a personal favorite, *This is Spinal Tap*.

What was the hit TV show that debuted in 1984 in its current

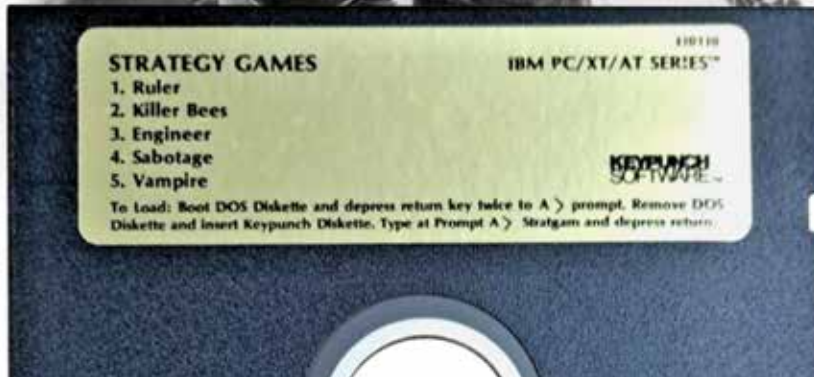


syndicated format? By phrasing that in the form of a question, you likely already know it was *Jeopardy*, which introduced the new concept of "thinking music."

The year 1984 also brought us the founding of the TED conference, Cirque du Soleil, and, very near and dear to our hearts, Geotechnics.

If you're of a certain age, you'll have enjoyed this 40-year-old retrospective. (We hope.) If you're a bit on the younger side and cannot fathom what 1984 was like, consider this: it's the era of the hit TV show "Stranger Things."

Here at the lab, we'll spend the whole year walking down memory lane. Uh, that is, when we're not doing our actual testing. We hope you'll don your jean jackets, parachute pants, and fluffy hair to celebrate with us.



We are fully energized.

Here at Geotechnics, we've been humming away on a wide range of projects for the energy industry, including wind, nuclear, and coal throughout the United States and beyond. Whether you are generating energy with coal, shale drilling, windmills, atoms, or Wheaties, we can probably lend some expertise. To apply some Geotechnics energy to your next project, call Nate Melaro at 412.823.7600.



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