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### BACK ISSUES MAY BE AVAILABLE

(PLEASE INDICATE THE MONTH(S) DESIRED.)

JUNE 1999 \_\_\_\_\_ MEASURES AND METRICS

AUGUST 1999 \_\_\_\_\_ SOFTWARE ACQUISITION

SEPTEMBER 1999 \_\_\_\_\_ DII COE

OCTOBER 1999 \_\_\_\_\_ BEST PRACTICES

NOVEMBER 1999 \_\_\_\_\_ CHANGE MANAGEMENT

DECEMBER 1999 \_\_\_\_\_ SOFTWARE EVOLUTION

FEBRUARY 2000 \_\_\_\_\_ RISK MANAGEMENT

MARCH 2000 \_\_\_\_\_ EDUCATION & TRAINING

APRIL 2000 \_\_\_\_\_ COST ESTIMATION

MAY 2000 \_\_\_\_\_ THE F-22

JUNE 2000 \_\_\_\_\_ PSP/TSP

JULY 2000 \_\_\_\_\_ CMMI

AUGUST 2000 \_\_\_\_\_ PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

SEPTEMBER 2000 \_\_\_\_\_ COTS

## Three Cheers for Big Brother

"I returned and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill: but time and chance happeneth to them all."  
—Ecclesiastes

"Objective considerations of contemporary phenomena compel the conclusion that success or failure in competitive activities exhibits no tendency to be commensurate with innate capacity, but that a considerable element of the unpredictable must invariably be taken into account."  
—George Orwell's "modern" translation of the above.

"One of you will be voted off the island and must leave immediately."  
—host of *Survivor*

It was a bright cold day in March, and Windows clocks adjusted themselves for daylight savings time. Winston, his cell phone at his ear, slipped quickly through the security door of Bldg 101, though not quickly enough to drop off the screen of his GPS. The hallway smelt of silica and/or asbestos. At one end of it was an enormous color poster from Kinko's. It depicted an enormous face of a man of about 45, with a heavy black moustache and ruggedly handsome features. Winston turned on his computer. It was no use trying to log on to the network. Even at the best of times it was seldom working, and at present the Herbie virus shut it down most of the time. It was part of the security drive in preparation for Complacency Week.

Fortunately the surveillance camera above his cubicle and the recording devices were hard-wired to a remote location, for the doubleplusgood of Winston and the Party. His login screen was the same as the poster in the hall, BIG BROTHER NEEDS YOU . . . the caption beneath it scrolled. From his speakers emanated a digital voice reading out a list of how he was to spend his day, and how it should be billed. When the voice said, "Nice haircut, Winston," he waved at the two-way mirrored glass on the opposite wall. He felt strangely welcomed by his telescreen at work; it was far better than the one at home that lately had only shown him *reality*-based programming. He found it to be nothing more than a bunch of Proles fighting for attention. This morning he was welcomed to work by a streaming video of the weekend's parade. He had thought about going but it had been hot and he knew the edited version would be more efficient.

One of the majorettes caught his eye until he saw the pink sash identifying her as a member of the junior antivirus league. At the end of the parade the MC spoke about how things had improved since 1984. Now we had sharp razors and antibacterial soap. Besides, we had peace in our time. Instead of two-minutes-hate, we now had two-minutes-indifference. There seemed to be no color behind the speaker aside from the tremendous Big Brother posters.

His face gazed down from every commanding corner. There was one on the house-front immediately opposite. BIG BROTHER NEEDS YOU . . . TO TRY OUT FOR THE NEXT REALITY-BASED SHOW. The poster's dark eyes seemed to have dollar signs for pupils. Down at street level another poster, torn at one corner, flapped fitfully in the wind, alternately covering and uncovering the phrase IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH. In the far distance a helicopter skimmed down between the roofs, hovered for an instant like a satellite, and darted away again with a curving flight. It was a film crew, snooping into people's windows. Privacy didn't matter. Only the Thought Police mattered. Winston checked for stubble real-time in his huge monitor.

—Matt Welker, *Shim Enterprise Inc.*