

## The C++ Experience

Let me begin by welcoming Miro Samek as a new columnist. The Embedded Angle will give bi-monthly insight to the world of embedded programming, something I personally want to know more about. If you think it's going to be a look at C-only techniques (not that that would be bad), think again and read this month's installment. I saw C++ techniques that were new to me. (Time yourself to see how long it takes you to understand that he's not doing infinite recursion in line 12 of Listing 1—and be honest!).

Speaking of which (i.e., innovative C++ stuff), last October I was favored to attend *The C++ Seminar*, three wild and crazy days with five wild and crazy C++ experts<sup>1</sup>. I continue to be amazed at what one can do with C++, and how much there is to know. While some moments bordered on Too Much Information<sup>2</sup>, it was at once enjoyable and enlightening. Part of the fun was watching the experts try to work out questions between each other in real time, or, failing that, to at least call each other names. Scott Meyers boldly proclaimed that reverse iterators are really not iterators after all, and it turns out he was at least half right (or so it looked to me). Dan Saks revealed things about friends in C++ that I believe most people have never considered.

Though I may someday forget many of the gems imparted, I doubt I will ever fail to recall the Trivia Contest, moderated by the singular Bobby Schmidt (whom you can always count on to bring Balance to any Force). Names were drawn at random in groups of five, which nominees proceeded to the front of the room to get weeded out of the running for prizes (I already have a CUJ T-shirt, thank you). It was fun to sit in the back of the room and answer all the questions under my breath, but when my name was chosen, I did what most anyone would do: commenced porcine perspiring. I handily eliminated the other four by being the only one in the group who knew the answer to the first question: Who wrote a landmark paper in the mid-1990s that raised doubts about the safety of exceptions? (Tom Cargill). Sometimes it pays to be old.

I then proceeded to embarrass myself—something I'm always wont to do while sitting in the Hot Seat. I won't recount in detail what happened (I don't know that I can), but please believe me: I really do understand zero-initialization of PODs in C++ (have for years). I just chose that moment to space it out (of course, the question was not direct enough to know that was the "gotcha"). They say (and I have to believe them, since it was all a blur to me) I answered enough questions correctly to win both a CUJ T-shirt and a Japanese version of *Effective C++*, both of which I passed on immediately to someone more interested, uh, I mean deserving. Having been previously introduced to the group as the editor of CUJ contributed to the festive outcome, I'm sure.

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<sup>1</sup> viz. Scott Meyers, Herb Sutter, Dan Saks, Stephen Dewhurst, and Andrei Alexandrescu. Visit <http://www.thecppseminar.com/> for more information.

<sup>2</sup> Don't ask me, or anyone for that matter, about the intricate pseudo-balance between templates and Koenig Lookup (aka Argument-dependent Lookup, or ADL). Believe me, you don't want to know.

Would I attend again? In a minute. Would I put my name in the hat again for public humiliation<sup>3</sup>? I'll have to get back to you on that one.

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<sup>3</sup> Scott actually *made* me do it.