

AN OBITUARY FOR BREAKPOINT

BY PREACHER OF BRAINSTORM

zine
BEHIND THE SCENE

“You need to come to Breakpoint”, said Gargaj to me in an e-mail, and I was absolutely terrified. Even though I had already made a bunch of demos and was really interested in the demoscene, I wasn’t actually a scener yet in the sense that I consider myself a scener now. Aside from my own group, who were mostly old high school friends, I knew very few people in the demoscene. I’d only visited Assembly and one really small

**IT’S LIKE WOODSTOCK EXCEPT
THAT IT’S FILLED WITH WITH
GEEKS AND DEMOS**

Finnish party (Escape 2000) before, and hadn’t really socialized a lot even at those. And yet the idea was really intriguing to me. To attend one of these party things where all those great productions come from... and to actually go abroad to do it? It seems funny now, but back then, I thought that I was out of my mind to even consider it. And yet, when I was asked what I’d



want for Christmas, I said that I'd like some money for plane tickets. And so I booked my flights, packed my bags, and went to Breakpoint 2005.

The way I used to describe Breakpoint to people (after attending) was that it's like Woodstock, except that it's filled with geeks and demos, instead of hippies and bands. And like Woodstock, I can feel that I was a part of it even though I lack specific recollections. I remember the atmosphere and the excitement: the blur of people, places, discussions, strange drinks and a sense of a world that's opening up before my eyes.

People who I knew only from info files and pouet.net were walking by. I learned the basics of C64 coding

from a person whose name or appearance I don't remember, but with whom I felt instant friendship, and when the party was finally over, I felt like I had made a hundred new friends. It took me a week to recover from it all and I don't think I have been the same person since. After a long stretch of Assemblies, I'd finally attended a proper demoparty and had been initiated.

Now that I'm looking back at it, the most important thing about Breakpoint wasn't that it was the biggest, the coolest, or the most prestigious demoparty. It wasn't that it had the best atmosphere, the best competitions, the best inside jokes, or the best Slengpung material. It was naturally all of these things, but the most important thing about it was that Breakpoint was

THE demoparty. It was the focal point of the scene year and the party that you could always rely on: You could always say "Let's do that at Breakpoint" or "but hey, screw this, let's have a beer at Breakpoint" or even "Tell you what, you come to Breakpoint and I'll introduce you to a lot of other sceners", and all of these things would just *happen*. It always required an explanation if you weren't showing up, it was the place for barter of strange food and drink, and it was the place where you had the best chance to meet your friends from all over the world, no matter where they lived. That was the magic of Breakpoint, and now it's gone.



At the time of writing this article, I don't know what, if anything, will replace Breakpoint. To be honest, I don't believe that Breakpoint can be replaced. I don't believe it should be replaced. It

inherited the status and a lot of the magic from Mekka & Symposium, but turned them into something bigger and even more

I DON'T THINK I HAVE BEEN THE SAME PERSON SINCE

important. Doing the same thing for Breakpoint will be an immense task and I believe that those shoes are too big to fill, no matter who is organizing the successor. A lot of parties could step up and try to expand in size, but they'd need to move themselves to Easter: The summer party season is booked full



and it's probably, aside from the Christmas weekend, the only long weekend when most working sceners have a holiday. A lot of us have also managed to convince our friends and fami-

lies that there is one weekend in the year that is off limits for any other activity. I don't see any current party doing that, but I am keeping my hopes up.

Despite all the bittersweet farewells and special moments at Breakpoint 2010, I say it out loud: the end of Breakpoint might, in the end, prove to actually be a boon to the scene. For years Breakpoint has been one of the few parties where you submit your best work, where you really challenge your peers, where you release the masterpiece you have been working on all year, where you bust out the old Amiga and show the world what it can do. I do hope that we will have an awesome new party that will replace it for Easter, and

I promise I will be there, but I also hope that maybe some of the effort that's been directed towards Breakpoint productions

I'VE HAD SOME OF THE BEST TIMES OF MY LIFE IN BINGEN

and attending the party itself, will now be directed toward other parties. Smaller, local events have a better chance of recruiting new sceners and they're more accessible for many people, because not everyone of them will take the trouble and the expense to travel. It would also be nice to see great productions released more evenly throughout the year and the Breakpoint product swarm, no matter how excellent and

anticipated it has been every year, has drowned a lot of productions that would have deserved their 15 minutes in the spotlight. Perhaps the end of Breakpoint, and the void that it has left, will encourage party organizers to develop their parties further and to compete for their place in the sunshine.



In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Scamp and the rest of the team for organizing the best demo-party known to man, and for having the wisdom to end it while still being on top. I've had some of the best times of my life in Bingen. I've made some of my best friends there, and I am sad to see it go. Years from now, we will still be talking about Breakpoint, laughing about it and remembering the silly inside jokes. And that's the real magic of it all.