Events and Sightings

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Computer History Museum Update

The Computer History Museum is always a busy place, and this past quarter a number of important milestones occurred. First of all, the museum has just broken the 100-nation barrier. In mid-April, CHM hosted visitors from Burkina Faso, making them the 100th visitor nation represented at CHM, which receives over 80,000 visitors per year.

CHM's annual Fellow Awards, which honor the best and brightest of the computing world, took place on 26 April 2014. This year's fellows were Lynn Conway, "for her work in developing and disseminating new methods of integrated circuit design;" John Crawford, "for his seminal work on industry-standard microprocessor architectures;" and Irwin Jacobs, "for his pioneering work in digital mobile telephony and data and communications technology." Like all CHM fellows, this year's class has had a profound impact on the creation and development of technologies we use each and every day.

A new exhibit on the history of self-driving vehicles is opening on 9 May 2014. "Where To? A History of Autonomous Vehicles" will chronicle the decades-long challenge of bringing self-driving cars to the general public. Self-driving cars have remained perpetually decades away since the 1930s, while over the past century, autonomous and semiautonomous vehicles have conquered the air and sea and roamed the edges of our solar system. In this timely new exhibit, visitors will learn about the history of autonomous vehicles, enjoy science fiction and popular culture dreams of the driverless family car (see Figure 1), get up close with the Google self-driving car, and learn how this amazing technology works. CHM and Google have also partnered to provide free rides in the Google self-driving car for visitors.

As part of its mission to increase understanding of computing and its history among youth, CHM hosted its first "Pop-Up Pi Day" on 15 March 2014. The program, which is aimed at 8 to 15 year olds, is based on the Raspberry Pi, a credit-card sized single board computer that is now widely used in education in the United States and United Kingdom and which forms a complete computing system for approximately $50. After an historical tour of CHM's R|Evolution exhibit, students began developing programs using the Scratch programming language or using game software like *Pong* and *Minecraft*. Special guest and original *Pong* inventor, Al Alcorn, played Pong with some of the students and regaled listeners with stories of himself and a pre-Apple Steve Jobs, which was an extra treat. In terms

Figure 1. The connected world illustration by Harry Campbell for *The New Yorker*.

of attendance, this was an important pilot program because it was the first time CHM tried reaching out specifically to two of our target audiences: girls and students from low-income schools. Learn more about CHM's Pop-Up Pi Day here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cx8JzH3eQQ0.

A second major educational initiative, called "Get Invested," brought more than 100 high school students from the United States and Mexico to CHM for a multi-day workshop. The program consisted of docent-led gallery activities, a panel during which invited subject matter experts from industry shared their insights on work and the path to high-tech careers, and a design challenge during which student teams prototyped innovative solutions to real-world problems that experts are actually working on in their jobs. For more details, visit the Get Invested webpage: www.computerhistory.org/education/getinvested/.

While the museum accepts approximately 500 donation offers per year, some donations are very special. Arriving in late May 2014 will be a particularly large collection of significant IBM mainframes, unit record equipment, and peripherals from a private collector in Portland. The equipment was kept in an environmentally stable warehouse for several decades and includes the venerable IBM 650 705, 709, and 7094 mainframe computer systems.

CHM is nearing completion of the refresh to its online Timeline of Computing History, the single most popular destination on the CHM website. (Last year, the timeline had 2,351,484 unique page views). The new timeline work will extend and expand the current timeline. For example, the new timeline will end in 2010 (instead of 1994) and will add two new categories: networking and the Web and mobile computing. The timeline is a widely used resource for students, and we expect the update to increase the utility and relevance of the timeline to today's students.

Finally, we recently published a new issue of *Core,* our annual magazine. Much of the issue covers the 25th anniversary of the Web and is an excellent historical resource for understanding how the Web grew and changed over its first decades of existence. You may obtain a free download of this most recent *Core* here: www.computerhistory.org/core/.

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cn *Selected CS articles and columns are also available for free at http://ComputingNow. computer.org.*