

# 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Computer Games Weekend



Mike Harrison chuckles while Ken and Laura Morse crash their "F-15 Strike Eagle."

Jerry Babnowitz

**T**wenty-five years or more of computer games? That may be hard for people raised on "Pong" or "Asteroids" to believe. It seems like just yesterday video games invaded the arcades of America with their blinking lights, blips and beeps.

But for the flock of game aficionados and members of the press who descended upon The Computer Museum November 6-8, twenty-five years sounded just right.

Why? Because three of the inventors of the world's first interactive computer game were there. In 1962 a group of M.I.T. hackers working on the school's recently-acquired PDP-1 computer collaborated to create the game, known as Spacewar! It was perhaps as humble in its origins as it was powerful in its impact. With a multitude of computer and video games now solidly in place in homes, offices, schools, bars and arcades throughout the country, it seemed entirely appropriate for The Computer Museum to host an anniversary celebration.

## The Computer Museum Report

While the weekend's spotlight focused first on Spacewar! and the historical side of computer games, it then went on to highlight a range of other events. Panel discussions on both the past and future of games, micromouse robot demonstrations, a birthday party, Core War tournament, and lots of representative computer games — all were ingredients of the Anniversary Weekend.

The weekend lifted off with a Gala Birthday Party, Friday night, when three of the original Spacewar! inventors — Steve "Slug" Russell, Alan Kotok and Martin "Shag" Graetz — were reunited. They were joined by a number of other prominent game inventors and experts who reminisced about computer game history and explored some of the industry's latest trends. Mingling with 150 of the Museum's guests and game devotees, these pioneers added to the catered dinner's general mood of festivity and nostalgia.

In addition, almost two dozen games were located around the Museum's fifth floor galleries for public use the entire weekend. They gave active testimony to the evolution of computer games: from Spacewar! and its unwieldy PDP-1 mainframe (part of the Museum's permanent collection) to the three-dimensional colored sights and stereo sounds of "Marble Madness" or "The Halley Project" on an Amiga personal computer.