



the
computer
museum

news

Coming Soon:

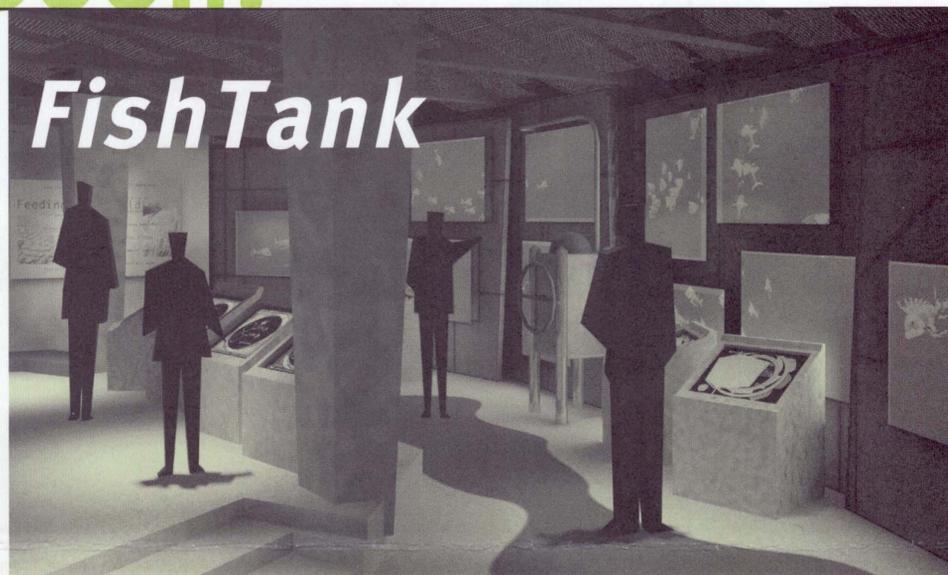
The Giant Virtual FishTank

Be One of the
First to Create
a Virtual Fish!

On June 13, the Museum unveils a 2,200-square-foot virtual undersea world, *The Virtual FishTank*™. In the exhibit, visitors can create and interact with their own virtual fish to gain new insights into how complex living systems work. The project represents the most complicated software development of an exhibit that the Museum has ever undertaken.

The *FishTank* offers firsthand experiences in creating artificial life forms and reveals how simple behavioral rules can produce complex, often surprising, results. "One of the best ways to learn is by building things," says Mitchell Resnick, professor of research in education at the MIT Media Lab and a *FishTank* project co-leader along with the Museum's executive director, Oliver Strimpel. "In this case, you build behaviors for your own artificial fish, and then observe the patterns that emerge as your fish interacts with others in the giant *FishTank*. It's an engaging experience—and also a great learning experience," says Resnick.

Twelve large projection screens form windows into the 400-square-foot central tank—a fanciful, watery world populated with over 100 brightly colored, computer-generated fish. At "Build Your Own Fish" stations, visitors design their fish, choosing behaviors such as appetite for food and responsiveness to temperature, human beings, and other fish.



These choices affect the shape and color of various body parts. When visitors are satisfied with their fish, they launch their creations into the tank, and then experience how the few simple rules they used to design their individual fish lead to complex behaviors and patterns for the entire ecosystem.

By cranking a wheel, visitors also feed the fish, while sensors enable the fish to react to human movement. At "Schooling" stations, visitors interact with entire groups, including predator, friendly and deep-sea fish. While a fish school may seem to have a leader, local interactions among all the individual fish actually determine their behavior. "Diving Deeper" stations reveal that this phenomenon applies not only to fish, but also to other systems such as birds, insect colonies, highway traffic, and market economies.

"*The Virtual FishTank* presents important new ideas about the way the world works, and how we think about it," says Mitchell Kapor, founder of Lotus Development Corporation and president, Kapor Enterprises, Inc. "It is an unforgettable experience to enter and interact with such a graphically rich, sophisticated virtual world."

The exhibit is a collaboration with the MIT Media Lab and Nearlife, Inc. The Museum is building this compelling, simulated aquatic

environment, combining the latest techniques in 3-D computer graphics and real-time interactive character animation. Combining the Museum's expertise in creating large-scale, immersive educational experiences and the Media Lab's knowledge of artificial life and decentralized systems, the *FishTank* has been germinating for five years. But recent advances in software technology, such as Nearlife's Directable Characters™, now enable the virtual fish to interact with visitors and other fish in real time. Nearlife, an MIT Media Lab spin-off, is designing and implementing the exhibit's many complex parts.

The \$1 million exhibition is being developed with a \$600,000 grant from the National Science Foundation—the largest ever to the Museum—and funding from the Kapor Family Foundation, Sun Microsystems, anonymous gifts and other support.

A traveling version of the exhibit is also planned. A dozen science centers and aquaria across the country have expressed interest, including the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia and the Exploratorium in San Francisco.

**THE VIRTUAL FISHTANK
MEMBERS-ONLY PARTY**

FRIDAY, JUNE 19, 6:00–8:00PM
TO RSVP, CALL (617) 426-2800 x660



IN MEMORIAM

We are sorry to report that former Computer Museum Chairman of the Board Charles A. Zraket died on December 3, 1997, in Boston. He was 73.

Zraket was a former Trustee, President and CEO of The MITRE Corporation, where his work involved systems research and the application of computing to air defense and traffic control, space control, health care delivery and educational technology systems. He advised President Reagan on defense and Pope John Paul II as a member of the Pontifical Science Academy, and was awarded the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service in 1990. Zraket was also a Scholar-in-Residence at the Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.

"Charlie was deeply devoted to the Museum," says Oliver Strimpel, the Museum's executive director. As the fourth Chairman, serving from 1993 through 1996, Zraket played a key role in the development and success of the Museum's educational programs and exhibits.

Zraket once explained his commitment to the Museum in this way: "In the early 1950s, as an MIT graduate student, I worked with Jay Forrester and Bob Everett on the Whirlwind. (One of the Museum's most important artifacts, part of the Whirlwind is on display in *People and Computers*.) With barely two dozen computers in the world then, I was excited about the potential of such a tool," Zraket said. "I want everyone to feel this way about computers. It is deeply satisfying to use my 40 years' experience to help the Museum realize its educational mission."

Zraket's wife, Shirley, and his family generously asked that gifts in his memory be sent to the Museum. As a result, the Museum has been the beneficiary of numerous contributions (listed on our Salute to New Supporters page).

"It is a lovely tribute to Charlie and his abiding commitment to the Museum," says Strimpel.

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For Museum staff, email: lastname@tcm.org. Via World Wide Web: www.tcm.org.
Summer hours: Open daily, 10am-6pm, through Labor Day. **Winter Hours:** Open Tuesday-Sunday, 10am-5pm. Closed Mondays, except Boston school holidays and vacations. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.
Admission: Adults \$7. Seniors, students, and children \$5. Half price Sunday 3-5pm. Free to Museum members and children two and under.

Photograph: FAYFOTO



Lotus founder and wizard Mitchell Kapur was named a Computer Museum Fellow at the opening, joining Fellows Ken Olsen, Jay Forrester, and the late Grace Hopper.

...Off to See the Wizards

New Gallery Celebrates Computing's Innovators

The Museum in November opened *Wizards and Their Wonders: Portraits in Computing*, a first-ever chronicle of the people driving the explosive growth of the computer industry. The exhibit consists of intimate photographs of 200 industry visionaries coupled with informative profiles of their backgrounds and achievements. Sparking enthusiastic reactions from both visitors and the press, *Wizards* has been extended beyond May 31 for another six-month run.

Featuring specially commissioned color portraits by noted photographer Louis Fabian Bachrach III, the exhibit, which was underwritten by Goldman, Sachs & Co., reveals the human faces behind many of the inventions defining the second half of the 20th century—from the mouse and the microprocessor to applications software and the Internet. With the exception of a small, key group of "fore-runners," the exhibit celebrates living innovators. The *Wizards* selection panel first identified winners of the National Medal of Technology and other industry awards. This group then nominated others, and so the list expanded.

The Museum collaborated with the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) on the exhibit's companion volume, written by Christopher Morgan. "Both the book and exhibit capture a revolution in progress," says Gwen Bell, the Museum's founding president. "We seized this opportunity to stop time and create a legacy for the future—a core part of the Museum's mission."

The brainchild of Bell and Bachrach, *Wizards* grew out of a smaller portrait exhibit sponsored by the Museum's History Center in conjunction with the ACM's 50th anniversary in March 1997. Selected portraits were also on display at the National Academy of Engineering in Washington, D.C., prior to the full opening in Boston.

The exhibit displays several of the pioneers' inventions alongside their portraits. These

include Federico Faggin's prototype of the Business Desktop Calculator using the first microprocessor, Intel's 4004 chip (Faggin, Ted Hoff); the Apple I board, a single-board computer designed by Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak; and the first laser printer engine designed by Gary Starkweather.

Many of the wizards rubbed shoulders at the Museum during a gala preview of the exhibit. "Let's just call the brain power of this party formidable," noted the *Boston Globe*. Those in attendance included Joseph Alsop, Charlie Bachman, Gwen Bell, Gordon Bell, Dan Bricklin, Wes Clark, Bob Everett, Jay Forrester, Bob Frankston, Gardner Hendrie, Chuck House, David L. House, Mitchell Kapur, Brian Kernighan, Tom Kurtz, Kenneth H. Olsen, John William Poduska, Sr., Ronald L. Rivest, Paul Severino, William D. Strecker, Richard Tennant, Dorothy Terrell, Sherry Turkle, and Larry Weber.

The elegant, four-color *Wizards* book is available for \$49.95 from the Museum Store and ACM Press: (617) 426-2800 x307 (www.tcm.org/store) (e-mail: store@tcm.org).



Wizards Dorothy Terrell, left, and Paul Severino, with wife, Kathy, at the gala preview. Both Terrell and Severino also serve on the Museum's Board.

Photograph: FAYFOTO

MUSEUM BRIEFS

The Clubhouse Wins Award, Expands to Ohio



In October, the Computer Clubhouse was selected from over 200 applicants around the country to receive the prestigious Peter F. Drucker Award for Nonprofit Innovation. In addition, the Clubhouse has just been named a finalist for another national award, the Global Information Infrastructure "Promise" Award, created in collaboration with the President's Summit for America's Future.

The Clubhouse added another pin to its map with the recent announcement that a Clubhouse is opening in Columbus, Ohio. The new Clubhouse will be housed at the Columbus Urban League, which will implement the Clubhouse approach of engaging the creativity of inner-city youth through self-directed projects based on their own ideas and interests.

The Columbus Clubhouse joins six existing facilities in Boston, Brooklyn, N.Y., and Stuttgart, Germany. An international network of Clubhouses is also planned.

Founded in collaboration with the MIT Media Lab, the Clubhouse is free to members and is supported by generous contributions from foundations, corporations, government agencies and individuals.



Photograph: FAYFOTO

Kensington Re-energizes Tired Mouse

Museum visitors can now put the giant *Walk-Through Computer™* through its paces by clicking and rolling a new, four-button Kensington Expert Mouse. The one-ton trackball, which has taken an affectionate beating over the years, was recently refurbished with support from Kensington. The trackball controls the action of the cursor on the giant PC's 108-square-foot color monitor.

The trackball's housing was resculpted to reflect the streamlined design of the current Expert Mouse, with better lighting and optics. Also, a new roller assembly now evenly disperses the weight of the 350-lb. urethane ball so that visitors can roll it more easily—it's four feet in diameter!

"Kensington feels privileged to have been an integral part of *The Walk-Through Computer* from its inception," says Peter Dupont, president of Kensington Technology Group. "It continues to be the most innovative way for people of all ages to learn the inner workings of a computer."

No Red Ants or Poison Ivy! The Computer Museum Camp

Whether it's for your own children or the children of your employees, there's no better way to inspire and educate kids, ages 8 to 15, about technology than The Computer Museum Camp. With 170 hands-on exhibits in eight galleries and special access to the latest high-end technology, the Museum provides a compelling complement to traditional educational efforts. This summer's computer playground expands to include *The Virtual Fish Tank*, where campers will design and launch their own fish, then watch their interactions in a giant central tank. Campers will also learn how to create their own Web pages and explore activities in robotics, simulations, graphics and animation. Off-site visits to nearby Cyber District companies offer a firsthand look at technology at work. Three blocks from South Station on the Red Line, the Museum is well located for easy drop-off and pick-up for working parents.

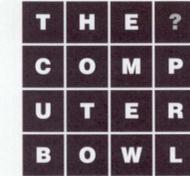
Five-day camp sessions: July 13, July 20 and August 3.

Activities: 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Cost: \$250 per camper. Computer Museum Family Members get a \$25 discount.

Make a difference in a child's life by offering camp scholarships for underserved youth. To register, call Carole Chase at (617) 426-2800 x433 or e-mail chase@tcm.org.

Computer Bowl X



On April 24, ten titans of technology from the East and West Coasts compete for the 10th Annual Computer Bowl®, a fundraiser for the Museum's education and

preservation programs. Facing off in Boston for the first time since 1994, both teams of industry luminaries battle for "cyber-supremacy" in a computer trivia contest. This year's game takes place at Boston's Park Plaza "Castle," with a live satellite link to the audience in Silicon Valley. Actor Robert Ulrich is scheduled to host his second Computer Bowl, which features an "All-Star Pre-Game Show" and an auction of incredible items. PBS's *Computer Chronicles* broadcasts the Bowl the weeks of May 5 and May 12.

For those who follow the bicoastal rivalry, the total of past wins and losses stacks up this way: West 6; East 3. In the next issue, we'll let you know this year's winner and lots more!

For more information, call (617) 426-2800 x399. Also, the Bowl website (www.computerbowl.org) has complete information, games, and Bowl history.

Boston Teachers Power Up

With an \$80,000 grant over two years from Mellon Trust, the Museum is helping Boston Public School teachers learn how to use the Internet in meaningful ways in their classrooms. "Educating with the Internet" workshops are geared to teachers in 19 public schools in Boston's Enhanced Enterprise Community (EEC), a technologically underserved area. The workshops, held in the Museum's Education Program Center, put the newest high-speed, multimedia technology at each teacher's fingertips.

"We are delighted to support this initiative," says Joanne Y. Jaxtmer, vice president and director of corporate affairs at Mellon Trust in Boston. "It gives us the opportunity to join forces with the many educators who work so hard to prepare our young people for the future."

The Education Program Center is available to educator groups, businesses and companies, seven days a week. For information, please contact Carole Chase (617) 426-2800 x433/ e-mail chase@tcm.org.

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WHAT'S NEW

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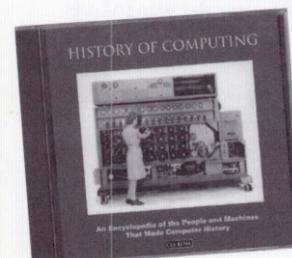
The Computer Museum Store has everything for the wired and wired wanna-be—from the Museum's classic video, *How Computers Work*, and the best kids software to a variety of computer self-help books. A 1,000-page, CD ROM-based *History of Computing* encyclopedia is a rich resource for computer enthusiasts, students and teachers,

with its 7,000-item glossary and over 100 photos and illustrations. And for the wired professional, a circuitboard business-card-holder.

Museum Members get a 10% discount. Call (617) 426-2800 x307; fax (617) 426-2943; e-mail store@tcm.org.

The Computer Museum WebStore:

www.tcm.org/store/



FREE TO MEMBERS

WEEKENDS: 11:15AM and 2:00PM
Wizards of Fortune

Play the Museum's version of the "Hangman" word-game to learn about the inventions of a few of the 200 wizards of computing chronicled in *Wizards and Their Wonders*. After discovering what they look like, explore their actual inventions on display at the Museum.

DAILY: 2:30PM

New Computer Animation Show

The half-hour show of animated excerpts from the 1997 SIGGRAPH Show, comparable to an "Academy Awards" for computer graphics, features realistic scientific simulations, special effects from recent movies and TV commercials, highlights from the Japanese Star Festival, and 3-D animations of the characters of Mordillo, the famous French cartoonist.

WEEKDAYS: 2:00PM

Wizards of the Personal Computer

A tour of the *Wizards and Their Wonders* portrait exhibit reveals the faces of some of the inventors and visionaries behind the explosive growth of the PC.

THE VIRTUAL FISHTANK MEMBERS-ONLY PARTY

Friday, June 19, 6:00-8:00PM

Be among the first to create your own fish and then observe how it gets along with the rest of the fish in the sea. This highly immersive exhibit opens to the public on Saturday, June 13. See page 1. To RSVP, call (617) 426-2800 x660.

We thank BankBoston's *Museums on Us!* program for its support of The Computer Museum. This program offers BankBoston cardholders an opportunity to visit The Computer Museum and eight other participating museums for free during the month of May, which is Museum Goers Month. All BankBoston cardholders have to do is show their BankBoston card for one free admission.

As of Monday, June 22, the Museum will be open daily 10AM to 6PM through Labor day, September 7.

MEMBERSHIP

Members get free admission for one year; The Computer Museum *NEWS*, a newsletter of Museum activities; the *Annual* report; invitations to exhibit previews and members-only events; advance notice of exhibitions and lectures; and a 10% discount on purchases over \$5 in the Museum Store. For more information, call the membership department at (617) 426-2800 x376 or e-mail: members@tcm.org.

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