The Computer Museum
NEWS

May/June 1989

"Bending and Twisting" Bertol

Janice Del Sesto New Development/PR Director

Corporate sponsorship consultant Janice Del Sesto became the new Director of Development and Public Relations of The Computer Museum in March, 1989.

Jan's "skills and accomplishments demonstrate that she can clearly lead our efforts to increase our visibility and broaden our base of support," said Museum Executive Director Joseph F. Cashen.

With over a decade as a fundraising and public relations consultant to corporate and non-profit institutions, Del Sesto created and produced The Computer Bowl, the Museum's highly successful, internationally recognized fundraising vehicle.

Challenged by the Museum's need to establish a stable financial foundation that will ensure its future, she now says, "We need to see that our international audience is aware of and takes advantage of the Museum's resources, that both public and private sectors recognize the importance of the Museum as a unique resource and support it."

She is responsible for all fundraising and external communications. Her goals are to increase public awareness and expand the Museum's base of support by developing individual and corporate membership and completing Phase II of the Capital Campaign.

She has watched the Museum grow from a repository of artifacts to a vibrant educational institution. The Computer Bowl gave her a new view of the Museum. "I could see that it was ready to take off. Everyone involved in the event believes in the Museum. Now I will have a great time encouraging others to get involved in an exciting, 'hot' new third-wave museum."

Her experience with the Museum's Board of Directors, staff and volunteers introduced her to what she calls a "great team committed to the challenge of taking the Museum to the next stage of development."

▲ Del Sesto may only measure 5'3" but she has "big" ideas for The Computer Museum (shown at our popular "How Tall Are You?" exhibit).

Computer Art Show Opens

The SIGGRAPH'89 Traveling Art Show, a high-quality juried exhibition of new computer art works, opens Friday, June 30, at The Computer Museum.

Featuring over 50 works by leading computer artists from around the world, the show will run through September 5, 1989. Concurrently, the 9th Annual SIGGRAPH Art Show will be on display at the Sheraton Boston Hotel from July 31-August 4, 1989, during ACM SIGGRAPH's 16th Annual Conference.

Art Show Chair, Professor Mark Resch of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, declares that the show is "one of the most important juried exhibits of computer art." He assembled a prestigious international panel of artists and curators to make selections from among the finest works of the day to show their range, diversity, aesthetic content, and technical virtuosity.

The exhibition represents a variety of media from static plotter and photographic output to video, animation, sculpture, and interactive installations. They offer a "new perspective on art-making, involving exciting new applications of computer technology," according to Oliver Strimpel, the Museum's curator.

"The medium uses new colors, textures, and tools. As more and more artists express themselves with this technology, it is moving into the mainstream of art."

The Art Show catalog, "Computer Art in Context," is a special issue of *LEONARDO*, the journal of the International Society for the Arts, Sciences and Technology. It includes essays by social critics and authorities on computer and traditional art. This richly illustrated catalog will be available at the Museum Store.

Resch sees the show as a harbinger of things to come. Describing himself as an "artist who works in a technological environment," he believes "we're entering a new time when more scientists will do art and more artists will do science. I hope for a new way of looking at the world and ourselves that doesn't prevent computer art from having more dialogue with the larger fine arts community. Society needs to value artists as much as we do scientists and engineers."

NEW FACES
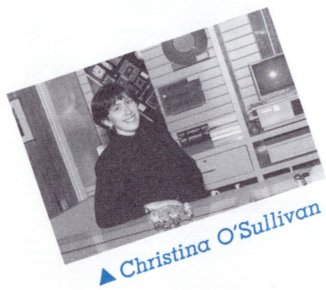
▲ *Christina O'Sullivan*

In March, **Christina O'Sullivan** signed on as the new Store Manager. She is responsible for selecting imaginative and educational products of interest to our visiting public. A 1981 Smith College graduate, she comes to us from The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA) in Boston.

Her goal is to provide useful educational products that will help our visitors take a little piece of the Museum home with them.

Also a warm welcome to new Museum interpreters **Jennifer D'Amico**, **Robert Krikorian**, and **Brian Wallace**, who joined us in March.

Up & Running

How long does it take to sort 1000 names? 1.7 days. If you're a human being. But if you're a Cray Y-MP supercomputer, it takes 1.6 thousandths of a second! You can also discover how fast you add numbers, compared to a computer, at the new "How fast are computers?" interactive station in the Cray exhibit.

The "Computer Speed" program is one of three new interactive programs recently added to the galleries. To keep current, the Museum constantly upgrades exhibits.

"Asking Questions in English" is a new program in the Smart Machines Gallery where you can question a computer in plain English instead of a computer language like FORTRAN.

The newly enhanced "Core Memory" station in the SAGE Computer Exhibit shows how information is stored in magnetic core memory. This program helps the visitor understand the core memory artifacts displayed.

▲ *Exhibits Technician Dan Griscom (standing in front of a core memory unit) discusses the enhancement of the Core Memory exhibit with Marc LeBlanc (seated). LeBlanc, an MIT sophomore, has developed this and many other programs for the Museum since he was a high school senior.*

Be a Player...

Just seven years ago, The Computer Museum became a non-profit institution. And only four years ago, we moved to our present building in Boston.

Since the move, the Museum has attracted thousands of visitors from around the world. Its new site also provided us with the space to display more of our historical collection, as well as state-of-the-art, hands-on exhibits designed to offer a window on future technology.

The Museum has ambitious plans to develop new and exciting exhibits and educational programs, and to purchase the site that houses them. These projects together represent a major capital challenge.

To realize the funding goal, the Museum launched a nationwide search for a new leader of our development and public relations activities. I am very pleased that Janice Del Sesto has taken on the job and the challenges.

All of us have seen the fruits of her leadership with The Computer Bowl. It accomplished three important goals: first, it topped its projected income by 50 percent; second, it brought more international news than any other Museum event ever has; and third, it involved hundreds of volunteers who gave many hours of time.

Now, she will bring her enthusiasm and energy to spreading the good word about the Museum and building new partnerships to fund its programs. She has the full support of the staff and the Board, and now I am asking you—the Museum's friends—to join us in working with Jan to surpass our ambitious goals for the future.

Sincerely,

Joseph F. Cashen

Joseph F. Cashen

▲ *Volunteers put their heads together last year to plan The Computer Bowl.*

Kids Computer Fair

NECC '89

Founders of the National Educational Computing Conference (NECC) will present a 10th anniversary retrospective in a special panel at The Computer Museum June 21, 1989. This is in conjunction with NECC '89, the nation's oldest and largest educational computing conference, which is meeting in Boston for the first time.

More than 2,000 educators from across the United States and abroad will gather at the Hynes Convention Center to discuss the use of computers in instruction at all levels. Leading national computing societies will cooperate in the event, sponsored by Lesley College and co-hosted by the Museum. NECC '89 includes three days of sessions featuring papers, panels, and special events, and two days of pre-conference workshops.

Museum Board Member Mitchell Kapor will deliver the keynote address. Adeline Naiman, the Museum's Director of Education, will chair a panel on "Informal Learning in Museums."

The retrospective at the Museum will be followed by a reception and dinner for preregistered participants. For more information, call Sara Burke at Lesley College, (800) 999-1959 extension 294.

Governor Meets With Software Execs ▶
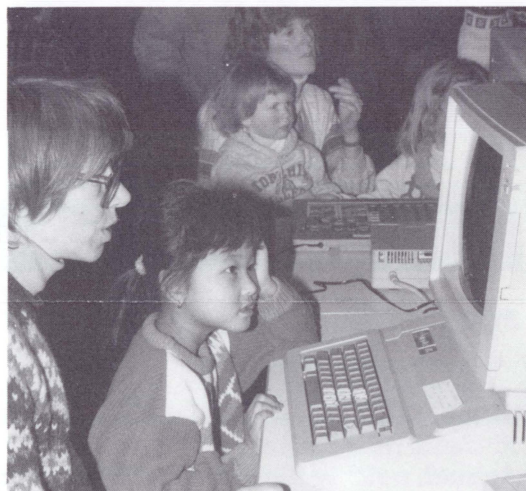
Governor Michael S. Dukakis met with Massachusetts software executives in March at The Computer Museum to discuss ways of promoting the state's software technology industry at home and abroad.

He also talked with students visiting the Museum, urging them to study geography and foreign languages. He told them that software executives say it is hard to find high school graduates who know geography and foreign languages, both necessary to operate in a global marketplace.

▲ Hundreds of families braved the snow last February to enjoy nearly 40 special interactive exhibits (including 10 touchscreen kiosks from AT&T's Info-Quest Center), and the Robot Playpen at the Museum's 4th Annual Kids Computer Fair. Adding to the excitement, an Associated Press news photographer and Cable News Network crew covered the event.

Several exhibits offered handicapped visitors the chance to write stories, do math, even bowl! "MacJuggler" Adam Lavine showed kids and parents how to juggle the old-fashioned way and a la computer. Then on a personal computer, he demonstrated the principles and patterns of juggling.

David Durlach's whimsical "disco haystacks," little furry clumps of iron powder, undulated before people of all ages. The sculpture moved because of a computer that controlled the current in electromagnets manipulating the iron fur. Visitors could also relive the 1988 presidential election with an interactive videodisk system enabling them to select video footage of the candidates and "produce" their own network news show.

Next year's Kids Computer Fair, February 24-25, 1990, needs ideas, volunteers, and you to mark your calendar. Call if you can help.

Software visionary Mitchell Kapor wants the Museum to continue its efforts to make computers accessible to the general public. ▼

Mitchell Kapor:

Software Visionary Urges Museum to Expand Vision

"We're in the midst of an important cultural revolution based on a technological innovation in computing," says Mitchell Kapor. Kapor has played a part in the revolution himself. With Jonathan Sachs, he created 1-2-3, today's standard spreadsheet program. In 1982, he formed Lotus Development Corporation to sell the software and in 1986 he designed Agenda which helps people sort and order tasks. In 1987, he launched ON Technology to design software that will make computers easier to use.

A student of philosophy and linguistics, Kapor has degrees in cybernetics and psychology. Featured on a PBS special called, "The Entrepreneurs," he is also known for his stellar performance in last year's Computer Bowl. As a boy he had always wanted to be on the TV classic *College Bowl* and was the "man to beat" during The Computer Bowl, according to *Fortune Magazine*. He scored more points than any other panelist in every round.

When Kapor joined the Museum Board in 1984 just after it moved to Boston, he emphasized its original mission.

"The Museum is preserving living history that we who are a part of it day-to-day tend to forget. The Museum through the preservation of the most comprehensive set of artifacts in the world is creating a sense of history for posterity."

Kapor has continued to be an active Museum proponent, moving it in new directions.

"The Museum needs to broaden its reach, to develop another part of our charter. While it was natural to be more inwardly focused at the start, now it's time to increase our efforts to demystify computers and reach out to the general public. Since the changes wrought by computers are global, the Museum needs to increase the involvement it already has with Europe and Japan. Our traveling exhibit to Japan, for example, helped people better understand the industry. Many of our artifacts come from Europe and the Far East. As the composition of our Board and Trustees shows, we are an international institution. Many nations have contributed to the computer revolution."

During the last four years, the Museum has moved to broaden its reach, and Kapor has become a father.

"I want my children to have a place they can go to learn that this is a worldwide effort with a worldwide impact. It's also essential for the Museum to continue expanding its base of support to reflect this widening constituency."
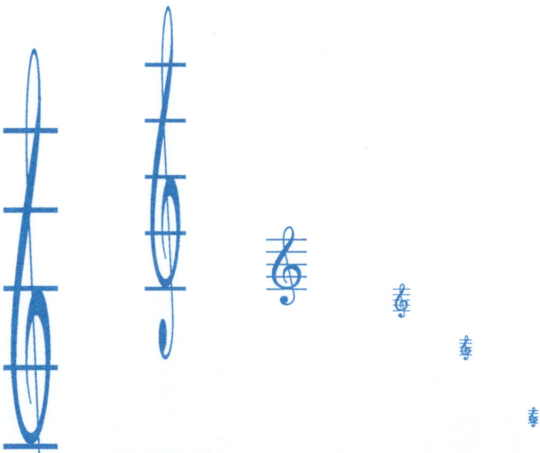
Confounding Computer Sounds

Remember M.C. Escher's drawings? A visual illusion showing a cascade of water flowing downhill but ending up where it started? At The Computer Museum on March 5, electronic music composer Jean-Claude Risset presented equally surprising auditory illusions—sounds that seem to get lower and lower but actually end up higher than they started. Rhythms that seemed to slow down but ended up faster than they started were even more paradoxical.

Risset demonstrated these and other illusions with taped excerpts from many compositions, including his own. Most of the sounds were created via frequency-modulated synthesis, a technique invented by John Chowning at Stanford University in the 1960s.

A former director of computer music at the renowned Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique-Musique in Paris, Risset was also the MIT Media Laboratory's composer-in-residence this year. His talk was supported in part by a grant from the Mass. Council on the Arts and Humanities.

Saving Soft Wear

The Computer Museum has accepted more than 100 t-shirts from *Release 1.0* publisher Esther Dyson's collection, accumulated over a decade of reporting on the software industry.

Professor Brian Randell, author of *The Origins of Digital Computers* and member of the Museum's Collections Committee, believes that today's computer ephemera will be of critical importance for future historians as they try to understand the dawn of the computer age.

Dig down in the closet and up in the attic for pre-1980 t-shirts, buttons, advertising cards, and other marketing trinkets to provide the cultural material of computing's early days. Then, please send us a list of your objects so we don't collect duplicates. The Collections Department wants to hear from you! ▶

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Individual and corporate membership income supports the Museum's continuing educational and exhibit programs.

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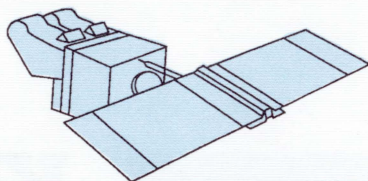Mary Lou Walsh
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UPCOMING EVENTS

30 EXHIBIT

Through May 30, 1989

"Terra Firma in Focus: The Art and Science of Digital Satellite Imagery" Tour the Earth from the "eye" of the French satellite SPOT. View spectacular digital images — the sharpest now available to the public — taken from more than 500 miles in space. Learn how computers create and process the images for valuable data about natural resources, floods and fires, while also often producing works of art. In the William C. Norris Gallery.

14 SYMPOSIUM

Sunday, May 14, 1989: 1-4:30 pm

"Creativity in the Computer Arts: A NEWCOMP Symposium"
England Computer Arts Association features six artists using computers who will present their works in the visual arts, music, dance, and poetry. Sponsored by NEWCOMP, a society to promote computer arts, and The Computer Museum. In the auditorium. Museum Members free. Reduced combined admissions for non-Members, $8.00 adults, $6.00 students and seniors.

30 EXHIBITION

Opening Friday, June 30 through Tuesday, September 5, 1989

"SIGGRAPH'89 ART SHOW" Spectacular exposition of over 50 contemporary art works from leading artists around the world. The show features two-dimensional wall works, sculpture, installation, and interactive pieces, as well as animation and poly-dimensional works on videotape. (See story, page 1.)

HOURS: Visit The Computer Museum Tuesday-Sunday, 10am to 5pm (Fridays until 9pm). Closed Monday except Boston school holidays and vacations. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. Public tours Saturday and Sunday at 1:30 and 3pm. Summer hours: daily.

ADMISSION: Adults $5.00, students and elders $4.00. Half price Friday evenings. Free to Museum members and children under five.

For more information, call our talking computer at **(617)423-6758**.

The Computer Bowl

N Days And Counting...

To sharpen your wits in preparation for the Second Annual Computer Bowl in 1990, the *NEWS* tried to stump you with this technological teaser in the last issue:

Which high tech center has a higher divorce rate—Silicon Valley or Boston's Rte. 128 area? The answer is...Silicon Valley.

Here are two more:

What's the significance of the following date—January 12, 1992?

And...what will happen on Friday, April 27, 1990?

Look for the answers to both in the July/August *NEWS*.

SUMMER HOURS BEGIN JUNE 19, 1989! Visit The Computer Museum DAILY, 10am-5pm (Fridays until 9pm).

To Join:

Members get free admission for one year; The Computer Museum *NEWS*, a bi-monthly newsletter of Museum activities; the *Annual*, a richly illustrated journal of computer history; invitations to exhibit previews and member-only events; advance notice of exhibitions and lectures; a 10% discount on purchases over $5 in The Computer Museum Store; and the opportunity to buy admission pass booklets at significant savings.

The Computer Museum
Museum Wharf
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(617) 426-2800

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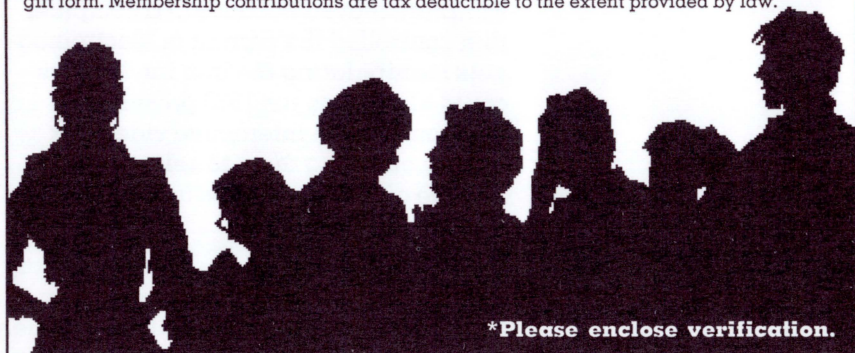
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