



McGill

C e n t r e f o r

Intelligent Machines

Volume 9, Number 2, February, 1995

Newsletter

MOSAIC, the INTERNET and CIM

You have probably heard about the World Wide Web (written www, W3 or Web for short) or at least about Mosaic. If you have not yet encountered the Web, the best way to do so is by activating mosaic from your X terminal (this can be done by typing "mosaic &" from your xterm window).

Mosaic is a user-friendly, graphical interface that allows you to access the many resources on the Internet. You can download music and videos, for instance, with a click of a button. It will even play them on your machine once it's downloaded.

We are currently working on organizing the CIM information pages for the Web. We would like to create a "home page" for all the members of CIM. The information provided will be exactly the same as in the CIM Phone Directory, i.e. name, username, room & phone number, supervisor & degree; some of which is already available on the Web through the McGill pages. However, you will have the opportunity to provide other information about yourself should you so desire (eg, current research topics, interests, a picture of yourself, etc) for other folks who are browsing our W3 pages. If you want to include a picture of yourself on your home page we have decided to help by having a "picture gathering drive". To have your picture added to our archives, you can do one of the following:

- 1) Submit a picture of yourself to Kathleen in MC410. We will then scan them and convert them to the appropriate electronic format.
- 2) Come to see us during one of the following times and we can take a photo of you.
Feb. 14 from 16:00 to 18:00 hr.
Feb. 15 from 11:00 to 13:00 hr. in Room 416

3) Or, if you prefer, you can create a picture of yourself (.gif format, recommended dimensions 160x160). Be sure to:

- a) name it <your_login_name.gif>
- b) create a directory ~/public_html/ for it
- c) place it in the above mentioned directory and make sure it is "world readable" (ie, chmod a+r).

If you would like to see our prototype Web Home Page, it is at the URL address: <http://www.cim.mcgill.ca/~baron/CIMweb/CIMHome.html> or contact a member of the CIM Web Tiger Team for help or information: Thierry Baron <baron>, Benoit Dubuc <benoit>, Nigel Ayoung-Chee <ayoung> and Nadim El-Fata <zick>.

Hope to see you all – in some format or the other. This effort will only be worthwhile if we get a good response from everyone.

Submitted for the Team by Nigel Ayoung-Chee

CIM on the move

After months of planning and negotiating the anticipated renovations finally began on Monday January 30. When the date was announced an urgent call went out for strong, willing and able volunteers to help move a rather large & bulky amount of furniture. If you were here that Thursday you will have noted that once again CIM students showed their willingness and ability to work together. Desks, tables, couches, countless chairs, filing cabinets and magazine files as well as the fridge were moved out of and/or into rooms 400, 420, 435, 437, 444. Meanwhile the Systems Staff managed to move equipment out of the Machine Room (you may 'bump into' a few elements temporarily stationed outside Mike Parker's office) into various storage areas. It was indeed a professional moving experience due to all the various people who

participated. Our heartfelt thank you to Jonas, Thierry, Stephen, Marc, Franco, James, Ahmed, Tony, Thomas, Paul, Gal, Hamid and Gilbert ... please accept my apologies if you helped and I've left out your name, you were SO efficient that we had difficulty keeping track of everybody.

One of the results of all this is that the Centre has a new Lounge. Room 400 is now the renovated, re-equipped, intimate place to have lunch & socialize ! When the renovations are completed there will be a new lab in room 444 and 445, and a renovated lab/office area in rooms 438 & 439.

Here's another chance to get involved in renovation fun: we would like to make our new lounge a little more attractive by painting the room. Any volunteers? Paint will be supplied. Contact <jmb> if you would like to volunteer your time and talents and help choose a color !!



What IF disaster struck ?

A question more often than not ignored; until it's too late. Yet the daily news abound in natural and provoked disasters. Here at McGill, a fire ravaged the Lady Meredith House several years ago thus destroying the entire contents of the building. Subsequently, an Internal Audit Report on Contingency Planning in the Computer Center and ISR has recommended that a comprehensive risk analysis be carried out for ALL the different segments of McGill's operations. In other words we are all being asked the question: what should we do and how would we continue to operate in the event of a fire, a flood or civil unrest?

As we at CIM discovered in January of 94, even on the fourth floor the Centre is not immune to floods. We were lucky in that equipment damage was minimal and that records which were damaged

were not lost. But the question arises: what if a water pipe burst in one of the labs or if a fire broke out in one of the offices? Prevention, of course, is the number one objective but today it is also necessary to draw up a contingency plan in case of a breakdown. CIM relies heavily on computers. If the computers are destroyed can the Centre continue to function?

To fulfill the University's request on this issue, our Safety Committee is being asked to make an inventory of the Centre and to draw up some ideas for our own contingency plan. The committee will be asked to deal with the following questions: What impact would a disaster have on the Centre? How can we minimize the risks? Who should be called to deal with emergencies and what procedure should be followed depending on the type of emergency? This Committee is composed of Martin Buehler, Hannah Michalska, Janet Burghardt, Jan Binder and student volunteers. Anyone who would like to participate in this study or who has suggestions should contact Janet <jmb>.

Third CIM seminar

Finding that perfect job ...

Registration is now under way for the third seminar in the series for CIM students. The first two workshops dealt with how to write a CV and how to look for job opportunities, and hopefully if you followed the advice from the first two seminars you are ready for the third seminar entitled **Interview Skills**. It will be held on **March 1** (note date and time change) in Room 437 from 3:00-4:00. Everyone is welcomed but *must* register in order to receive the handouts. For info & registration please contact me at <jmb>.

Like to sing?

Would like the opportunity to sing with your friends? Or, like to sing, but think you can't?

The newly inaugurated CIM Choir is seeking music aficionados who would like the pleasure of

learning and singing songs in a friendly group environment, and at the same time exploring and improving their voices and learning some vocal technique. No experience necessary, only enthusiasm required.

For more info, please contact Anna at anlin@cim.mcgill.ca. All welcome!

NEWS AND EVENTS

Prof. Sue Whitesides sends greetings from the south of France, where she is spending a sabbatical at INRIA Sophia-Antipolis, working with the computational geometry group in Projet Prisme. While on sabbatical, she has decided to resign from CIM in order to focus on her primary involvement with the computational geometry group in the School of Computer Science. However, she looks forward to continued interaction with CIM students and faculty upon her return to McGill in September 1995.

Prof. Laeeque Daneshmend has informed us that he has been offered, and has accepted, the Noranda-Falconbridge endowed Chair in Mine Mechanical Engineering at Queen's University effective this spring. He explained that this is a joint appointment in the Mining and Mechanical departments (75%:25%), and is ideally matched to his teaching and research interests. Queen's, he says, has a unique undergraduate program in Mine Mechanical engineering, where the students take about 2/3 of the regular courses from the mechanical curriculum, with the remainder in Mining - giving them a good grasp of Mining operations while building a solid technical base they can apply to equipment maintenance/selection/design as well as mechanization and automation. The Mine Mechanical program at Queen's has elicited widespread support from the Canadian mining industry. This is evident from the funding of the Mine Mechanical chair, which received contributions from a dozen other mining companies in addition to Noranda and Falconbridge.

Congratulations, Laeeque, and all the best in your future endeavours !

Hats off to:

The champagne was flowing in the new Lounge on Thursday afternoon, January 30 in honour of **Pierre Breton** who had just successfully defended his PhD Thesis entitled *Recovering Shape from Shading and Contour*. Congratulations Pierre !

Congratulations to **Peter Whaite and Petra** on the birth of their beautiful son! (whose name has not yet been determined). This bundle of joy, weighing 7 pounds, 14 oz. at birth, is a healthy and happy baby, sleeping most of the time. Proud older sister, Maxime, is happy with the arrival of her new brother, although "disappointed that he doesn't do much". Peter and Petra, we wish you lots of happiness with your new family!

Mike Parker, who recently attained over 10 years of service at McGill. Way to go, Mike!

Articles & ideas are welcome. Please send them by e-mail to the editor. Deadline for publication is the 7th of every month.

Editor: Janet Burghardt (e-mail: jmb@cim.mcgill.ca)

Associate Editors: Paul Mackenzie
Kathleen VanderNoot

The rabbit, the fox and the wolf -- A Fable

One sunny day a rabbit came out of her hole in the ground to enjoy the weather. The day was so nice that the rabbit became careless, so a fox sneaked up to her and caught her.

"I am going to eat you for lunch!," said the fox.

"Wait!" replied the rabbit, "You should at least wait a few days."

"Oh yeah? Why should I wait?"

"Well, I am just finishing writing my Ph.D. thesis."

"Hah! That's a stupid excuse. What is the title of your thesis anyway?"

"I am writing my thesis on '*The Superiority of Rabbits over Foxes and Wolves*.'"

"Are you crazy? I should eat you up right now! Everybody knows that a fox will always win over a rabbit."

"Not really, not according to my research. If you like, you can come to my hole and read it for yourself. If you are not convinced you can go ahead and have me for lunch."

"You are really crazy!" But since the fox was curious and had nothing to lose, it went with the rabbit into its hole. The fox never came back out.

A few days latter the rabbit was again taking a break from writing and, sure enough, a wolf came out of the bushes and was ready to eat her.

"Wait!", yelled the rabbit, "you cannot eat me right now."

"And why might that be, you fuzzy appetizer?"

"I am almost finished writing my Ph.D. thesis on '*The Superiority of Rabbits over Foxes and Wolves*'."

The wolf laughed so hard that it almost lost its hold on the rabbit.

"Maybe I shouldn't eat you, you are really sick in your head, you might have something contagious," the wolf opined.

"Come read for yourself, you can eat me after that if you disagree with my conclusions." So the wolf went to the rabbit's hole and never came out.

The rabbit finished writing her thesis and was out celebrating in the lettuce fields. Another rabbit came by and asked, "What's up? You seem to be very happy."

"Yup, I just finished writing up my dissertation."

"Congratulations! What is it about?"

"It is titled '*The superiority of Rabbits over Foxes and Wolves*.'"

"Are you sure? That doesn't sound right."

"Oh yes, you should come over and read for yourself."

So they went together to the rabbit's hole. As they went in, the friend saw the typical graduate student abode, albeit a rather messy one after writing a thesis. The computer with the controversial dissertation was in one corner, On the right there was a pile of fox bones, on the left was a pile of wolf bones, and in the middle was a lion.

The moral of the story is: The title of your dissertation doesn't matter, all that matters is who your thesis advisor is!

Submitted by Oliver Astley from UMBC CS HOME



Power transfer epidemic

As some of you may have noticed, we seem to be having a few more power transfers-shutdowns-outages than normal, both scheduled and accidental. Here is a list of steps you should follow if you are working at CIM when the power goes out:

1) Grab a flashlight, a candle, a torch or a piece of white-hot metal to use as a visual aid.

2) As tempting as it may seem, DO NOT stick your tongue into the electrical sockets just because you think you may never get another chance.

3) Shut down ALL of the following: sparc-stations, workstations, train stations, Macs, snacks, Suraks, disc drives, floppy drives, hard drives, limp drives, printers, splinters, video monitors, monitor lizards, screens, SGIs, VCRs, TVs, HMMVs, PTUs, SMUs, SameToYou's, robots, gobots, androids, modems, ethernet transmitters, video transmitters, bubonic-plague transmitters, CCD cameras, video cameras, pin-hole cameras, Lego helicopters, dumb terminals, dumb and dumber terminals, power bars, sushi bars, soldering irons, fighting irons, Jeremy Irons fans, fan clubs, power supplies, air supplies, lamps, overhead lights, northern lights, and pilot lights.

4) Go home.

Suggestions by Paul Mackenzie

CIM TOP TEN

Top Ten rejected Valentine's Day cards:

⑩ "Roses are red, violets are blue, my thesis is finished, and so are you."

⑨ "My darling, I love you almost as much as Matlab."

⑧ "May our happy times together be as numerous as McGill power transfers."

⑦ "A Happy Valentine's Day to the guy whose idea of romance is playing computer combat games over the Internet. Log off, will ya?"

⑥ "Happy Valentine's Day to my lovely wife: I hope you enjoy your new spark plugs."

⑤ "On this most precious day, when love is like a flame, I hope you can forgive last night, when I forgot your name."

④ "So here's your %\$@*!& Valentine's Day card. Can I have my VCR back now?"

③ "I am Seductress, of Borg. Resistance is futile. Prepare to be appropriated."

② "Of all my current girlfriends, you're definitely in the top five!"

① "I'd love you more if you didn't leave the #@!%\$& toilet seat up!!"

Submitted by Paul Mackenzie

Happy Valentine's Day!

