



McGill

C e n t r e f o r

Intelligent Machines

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Newsletter

University Holiday Closing

The University will be closed from Monday Dec. 25 to Tuesday Jan. 2 inclusive for the Holiday season.

I'd like to take this opportunity to wish all our readers a very joyful and safe holiday season and all the best for 1996.



McGill Security Matters

The following is a summary of a memo from V.P. Tavenas regarding Security involving the MUC, RCMP or SQ. If approached by members of any police force, McGill staff and students are requested to inform McGill Security (4556) and the McGill Legal Advisor (3952) to obtain their input and advice before taking any action. McGill's Department of Security and the Office of the Legal Advisor have both the expertise and the mandate to determine how McGill units may best follow-up on a request from one or the other police departments. Of course, we should act as a responsible "corporate citizen" by cooperating with the police. It is also equally important that such cooperation occur in full recognition of the rights of our staff and students and of the obligations of McGill as an organization.

InfoMcGill update

A new semester is fast approaching and that will mean student (and staff) use of InfoMcGill will increase. This semester, as in the Fall, students are encouraged to use InfoMcGill rather than buying the out-of-date Timetable. If anyone would like copies of the InfoMcGill "how-to" poster, please call 6134 or send email to:

<vickic@ums1.lan.mcgill.ca>

From the Systems Administrator

Password: The password to your computer account should be changed regularly, or at least once a year. Since we are approaching the end of 1995, I would encourage all those who haven't done so this year to change their password before leaving for the Christmas Holidays. In order to change your password, type: `passwd` and follow the instructions. For tips on how to choose a good password please type "?" at "New password" prompt. We can ensure data integrity and security of our computer systems only with the cooperation and understanding of all computer users.

The second point is a reminder that a password is a key to your computer account that was set up for your personal use only. Sharing a password and accessing a computer account without proper authorization is against McGill policy. For a complete set of rules governing the use of computing facilities at McGill, please refer to the *Code of Conduct for the Computer Users at McGill*, which is printed on the last page of this Newsletter. An on-line version of the Code as well as an Interpretation Document is accessible from CIM WWW Home Page. Additional printed copies of the Code are available in Room 410.

Copyrights: This is a warning that software piracy and copyright violation is against the McGill Code of Conduct and the criminal law. It was brought to our attention that some engineering students were involved in such activities. The seriousness of this violation can be demonstrated by the response from the company whose copyrights were violated, which included the following paragraph: "Such conduct constitutes copyright infringement and exposes the infringer to possible criminal and civil proceedings. In particular, under the Offenses and Punishment provisions of the Canadian Copyright Act, copyright infringement is punishable, on conviction or indictment, by a fine not exceeding one million dollars or by imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years, or both."

Submitted by Jan Binder

The CIM Christmas Party

On December 4th, CIM gathered together its friends and folk and descended on *La Cabane Grecque* for an evening of fun and frolic. The night began as we straggled in to the restaurant from the four corners of the fourth floor of McConnell, welcomed by our own ministering angels/bouncers, Kathleen and Janet.

For the first hour or two, we wine and chatted and mingled, until the food began to emerge from the kitchen. Leek soup and platters of pikilia (which John Zelek assures me does, in fact, mean "Greek appetizers") were followed by the dinner of choice - the food was excellent, and plentiful to boot.

After dinner, Santa Claus, who bore an uncanny and unmistakable resemblance to a certain tall M.Eng. student who shall remain nameless (unless you ask Linda), paid us an early and welcome visit, distributing gifts to all deserving. Unfortunately, it seems no one who actually works at CIM was deserving, but there's always next year...

Once jolly old St. Oliver had left, we were treated to the "piece de resistance" of the evening, the event which we had all been awaiting with bated breath - the premiere of *"The Ph.D. Express"*.

Written, directed and produced by **Anna Lin** and performed by a star-studded cast, we were entertained by the zany antics of **Don Bui**, the suave sophistication of **Jonas August**, and the stone-faced reserve of **Marc Bolduc** as Frankenbot. **Paul McKenzie** could be seen delivering a cameo as the frightening Captain Ahab, a caricature we can only hope Paul drew from imagination and not real life. **John Zelek** as the riotous ethnic waiter, **Bin Mu**, **Noga Arenson**, **Carlos Martinez-Mascarva**, **Franco Callari** and **Anna Lin** all added an incredible array of organization and talent with their amazing display of props, settings and vocals. Also **Cristina Rizzuto** and **Pierre Tremblay** are to be congratulated for their excellent impromptu participation. The only casualties of the evening were Gilbert and Sullivan, whose "Three Little Maids from School Are We" may never be the same.

Seated above the Prince Arthur street scene as the snow gently drifted down from the heavens, and with a good meal of steak, souvlaki or lamb chops under our belts, the bonhomie that is the brother-and-sister-hood of CIM shone brightly through the night. Let's do this again sometime!

Submitted by Nicholas Roy



NEWS AND EVENTS

Hats off to ...

✂ **James Elder** very successfully defended his Doctoral Thesis entitled "The visual computation of bounding contours" on Nov. 20. James is currently a Post Doctoral Fellow at NEC Research Institute in Princeton, N.J. Congratulations, James!

✂ **Hamid Taghirad** is very proud to announce the birth of a little daughter named *Matin* (meaning Calm and Patient). Both mother and baby are doing fine. *Matin* is growing fast, and unlike the human made robots with flexible joints and links, has a very advanced control on her arms and legs and has especially beautiful smiles. All the best!

☛ After two hectic months of job searching, **Joey Menitto** is happy to announce that he will be starting work at CAE in Montreal doing design work. **Farzam Ranjabaram** is now working for Bombardier Canada while finishing his thesis. Way to go, guys!

Thank you to...

☛ Special thank you to **Iyad, Oliver, Noga, Bin and Mojtaba** for the outstanding job that they courageously undertook in cleaning out the CIM lounge, including the two very smelly fridges and the very grimy microwave. Let's try to keep the Lounge an inviting and pleasant place.

Your Safety & Cleanup Committees wish to remind you to please use common sense when using the Lounge. Keep the fridges clean by throwing out last week's lunch before it grabs someone! If you use the microwave, please take a few seconds to wipe it clean. Remember also that empty bottles and cans must be deposited in recycling bins downstairs or in garbage cans in order to avoid unwanted visitors in the Lounge and offices! Thanks for your cooperation.

A call for all singers and would-be singers

Want to sing but don't know where to go or could never find the time? Want to sing but were always too shy, or were told you had no voice, or always thought you couldn't, or never had the opportunity? Want to sing with your friends from CIM, but never thought they would go for it? Here's the answer to all your hopes and dreams - the **CIM Choir**!

Come join us for fun, relaxed sessions of music-making every week. The aim of the choir is to help people learn about and develop their voices in a friendly, non-judgmental environment, and at the same time learn new songs and music. No experience is necessary, only enthusiasm and a positive attitude is required. When: Thursdays 4:30 PM, Where: CIM Seminar Room 437

For more info: email anlin@cim

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: Michael Daum <mdaum>, Nicholas Roy <nickr>, Kathleen VanderNoot <kathleen>

Progress report on the high school robotics competition

On Saturday December 2nd, Vincent Massey High School competed in the Canada First robotics competition. For those who missed last month's newsletter, a group of students from CIM have been volunteering as engineering mentors to the school in their quest to build a robot. The students were given just one month to build the radio-controlled robot from scratch.

During the last two weeks, the students put in very long hours. Both **Ahmed Helmy** and myself visited the school to lend a hand and give our "worldly" advice. We were both very impressed by how hard the students had worked and the problems they had overcome. The problems they had to face included: fitting a round peg in a square hole, tracks coming off, wheel alignment, chassis design, and picking up balls, to name a few. Overcoming these problems served as a great experience for both the students and the mentors.

After the preliminary competition inspection the team was one of the favorites. Unfortunately the day of the competition was very disappointing for the students who had worked so hard. The radio control unit, which was supplied by the organizers worked intermittently at best. For this reason several of the teams had trouble controlling an otherwise perfectly functional robot. Ahmed, myself and former CIM student **Pedro Gregorio** took the robot apart, rewired, and gave new meaning to the word "patch"-- but to no avail; the robot functioned perfectly under direct (tethered) control but not when using the radio control. Therefore the team lost not because of their design, but because of the radio control unit supplied by the organizers.

Everyone was very disappointed (and angry); however, the students had learnt a lot, which was the main idea of the competition. I am also pleased to say that several of the students expressed an interest in pursuing engineering studies in the future thanks to their experiences with this competition.

Thank you very much to the CIM people who helped over the course of this project.

Submitted by Oliver Astley

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE...

ACHTUNG!

Das Machine is nicht fur Gerfingerpoken und Mittergraben. Is easy schnappen der Springenwerk blowenfusen und poppencorken mit Spitzensparks. Is nicht fur gewerken by Dumkopf. Das Rubbernecken sightseeren keepin Hands in das Pockets. Relaxen und watch das Blinkinlights.

Submitted by Jonas August (via his father, via IBM who used to post this near their now defunct copiers in their own offices!)

CIM Horoscope for Month of December

Hey folks, this is the first installment of a new feature, the CIM horoscope. Send in your birthdays if you want future horoscopes tailored to your personal needs. And remember, have a good holiday...

Aries (March 21 - April 19)

Now is the time to exalt in your superior capabilities. You have paid your dues, and now it is time to reap the rewards. Deal fairly with any obstacles which stand between you and your goal, but remember that currently, you can brook no resistance. Live your life by Ohm's law.

Taurus (April 20 - May 20)

As usual, your charm, wit, and good looks will carry the day. Focus rather on life's pleasures. December is a good time for you to indulge your every whim and desire. Money is no object, as others will provide for all of your wants and needs, and research funding. The letters for your month are F, C, A, and R.

Gemini (May 21 - June 20)

Your birthstone is rising into Virgo this month, and you can expect December to provide you with many surprises. Be on the lookout for fat guys in red suits. The bipolarity of your nature may lead to problems in timing. Don't flip-flop too much.

Cancer (June 21 - July 22)

Love is in the air, and your allergies will act up. If life hands you a lemon, make lemonade. If life hands you a gator, well, you know what to do. Steer clear of difficult mathematics this month, as your moonstone is equidistant from both its Martian and Solar projections on the 15th - instead rely on Maple.

Leo (July 23 - Aug. 22)

In December, you will find yourself at a turning point in your life. Events will conspire to force you inexorably towards a decision that you are not ready to make. Fortunately, it's not an NP-complete problem. Hint: Look for a dynamic programming solution.

Virgo (Aug. 23 - Sept. 22)

December will reach out like an angry god and step on your neck. Take the opportunity to appreciate the new perspective. The world must be a very strange place for a mouse or a worm, eh? What does this mean? Only you know. We sure don't.

Libra (Sept. 23 - Oct. 22)

Navigation will suddenly become an issue. Questions that you once took for granted now seem to have no answers. Is the room at its center, or its

doors? What exactly is the clutter value, denoted by k , of your life? You find yourself spending hours pondering these weighty issues, particularly on Monday afternoons.

Scorpio (Oct. 23 - Nov. 21)

As your caffeine addiction grows, expect to get less sleep each night. People around you will begin to notice that you are jittery, and unfocused. Simply telling them you have comprehensives is not enough. Have you tried drinking Kalman-filtered coffee?

Sagittarius (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21)

As you may have noticed, your biorhythms developed an arrhythmia in November. By now this will have become a serious condition. You will experience wild fluctuations in mood and ability. On the other hand, your supervisor will think you've finally settled down to your thesis. Don't let him know that you're keeping up with every news group your NNTP server carries.

Capricorn (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19)

Big cars are the order of the day. The city is covered in snow, and the only way to protect yourself from a fatal accident is to surround yourself with tons of high grade steel when you're on the road. Laugh at people who drive holonomic vehicles, for they do not understand curved motion.

Aquarius (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18)

Leave this high tech world behind and return to your roots. The only way for you to be happy is to enter a career as an avocado forager. Sightseeing tourists will provide an ample market for the supple, green, fruit which you pick each evening. If you sell out by midday, you can lie on the beach all afternoon! The only alternative is to sell out to Microsoft, and go lie on a rain-soaked beach in Seattle.

Pisces (Feb. 19 - March 20)

You, on the other hand, would love a rain-soaked beach in Seattle. But then, you're a fish. You slip

effortlessly through the Gates that block your upwardly-mobile progress. Don't get cocky, though. Too many Jobs are at stake.

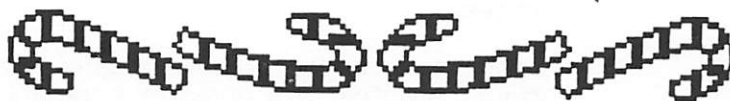
JoJo Cimvard

CIM TOP TEN (Guest List)

Top Ten things overheard at the 1995 CIM Holiday Party:

- ⑩ "How much does Greg Dudek pay his kids to smile all the time?"
- ⑨ "Uh-oh, I've got something in my eye..."
- ⑧ "Hmmm, looks like Santa's been taking steroids again..."
- ⑦ "Say, are those PROFESSIONAL actors? (chuckle, chuckle)"
- ⑥ "This is some steak -- my jaw's never had a more rigorous workout."
- ⑤ "I'll have the *homme fries* with today's special desert."
- ④ "What d'ya say, Yiannis, want to go hiking?"
- ③ "Nice bow tie."
- ② "Hey Santa! Where's Linda?"
- ① "You can call me Dick."

Submitted by Prof. Ahab (whose tenure is now under review...)



CODE OF CONDUCT for USERS OF MCGILL COMPUTING FACILITIES

McGill Computing Facilities (MCF) are intended to support the academic mission and the administrative functions of the University. This Code of Conduct states the principles regarding the use of MCF. They complement and supplement rather than replace other policies concerning appropriate conduct of staff and students.

McGill Computing Facilities include any computer, computer-based network, computer peripheral, operating system, software or any combination thereof, owned by McGill University or under the custody or control of McGill University.

The following principles apply to all McGill staff, students and other users of the McGill Computer Facilities. Users shall:

1. Be responsible for using these facilities in an effective, ethical and lawful manner.
2. Use only those facilities for which they have authorization, whether these facilities are at McGill or at any other location accessible through a network.
3. Take all reasonable steps to protect the integrity and privacy of the MCF including software and data. In particular, users shall not share with others the access codes, account numbers, passwords or other authorization which have been assigned to them.
4. Respect the copyrights of the owners of all software and data they use.
5. Respect the policies established by the administrators of external networks such as RISQ, CA*net, NSFNET when using such networks. They shall also respect the policies established by the administrators of local computing facilities at McGill.
6. Respect the privacy of others. This includes, but is not limited to, respecting the confidentiality of E-mail, files, data and transmissions.
7. Refrain from using MCF for unauthorized commercial activities.
8. Refrain from using MCF for any unauthorized or illegal purposes. Such purposes might include destruction or alteration of data owned by others, interference with legitimate access to computing facilities or harassment of users of such facilities at McGill or elsewhere, unauthorized disruption of MCF, attempts to discover or alter passwords or to subvert security systems in MCF or in any other computing or network facility.
9. Properly identify themselves in any electronic correspondence and provide valid, traceable identification if required by applications or servers within the MCF or in establishing connections from the MCF.

Users have a right to a reasonable expectation of privacy. However, system failures or design faults may compromise this privacy and users should also recognize that authorized McGill personnel may have access to data and software stored on MCF while performing routine operations or pursuing system problems. Users should further recognize that, as specified in the relevant administrative policies at McGill, authorized McGill personnel have the obligation to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure the integrity of MCF and to ensure that this Code is observed.

Any violation of this Code may be prosecuted in conformity with the relevant University policy (Code of Student Conduct, Personnel policies, etc.) and the principle of due process.

A companion interpretation document is available giving specific and current details about this policy. Any questions concerning this Code should be directed to the user's local system manager or the McGill Computing Centre.