

CBI Advances Archival Records Bill

Legislation designed to ensure the ability of CBI and other archives in Minnesota to acquire privately donated records was signed into law on June 3 by Governor Arne Carlson. The law makes explicit archivists' authority to negotiate with donors temporary restrictions on access to non-government records. Also, it empowers archivists to withhold access to archival records when the physical or organization integrity of privately donated collections is threatened.

The law was the result of a six-month effort by CBI Archivist Bruce Bruemmer to preserve the authority of archivists employed by state or local government in Minnesota to accept records with restrictions imposed by donors. Such restrictions are commonly used by archivists when donors wish to protect the public release of information that might injure the donor or a third party. Without the ability to restrict access to records, many donors would not consider placing them in a public archives. While restrictions may temporarily limit access to historical records, they are an effective means of protecting historical resources that otherwise might never find their way to an archives.

Recent interpretations of the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act suggested that privately donated records become government data by virtue of being *maintained* by a government agency. As such, they would most likely be classified public, which would run counter to

any agreement with a donor that restricted the use of the records. Furthermore, a strict interpretation of the act might have prevented an archives from temporarily closing a collection while it was being reorganized, microfilmed, or fumigated. So far as could be determined, Minnesota was the only state to place such a handicap on archivists.

Clearly, the situation presented an enormous problem which could be resolved only through new legislation. In January, Bruemmer asked Representative Steve Trimble and Senator Allan Spear to sponsor companion bills. Both legislators are advocates of history and were enthusiastic about the legislation. The bill placed privately donated historical records outside the definition of government data. It specifically gave archivists the right to negotiate restrictions with

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Clark Chosen as Third Tomash Fellow

Mark Clark has been awarded the Third Adelle and Erwin Tomash Fellowship in the History of Computing by the Charles Babbage Institute. Mr. Clark is a Ph.D. candidate in the History of Technology at the University of Delaware. He received a B.S. degree in Mechanical Engineering and Materials Science from Rice University in 1984 and an M.A. degree in Public History from the University of Houston in 1987.

Mr. Clark's research project examines the history of the development of magnetic recording technology and its social and cultural impact. His work to date has concentrated on the early development of magnetic recording prior to 1950. As his dissertation will be a comprehensive history of magnetic recording, his attention is now turning to the period after 1950. His research will focus on the two industries that have been changed the most by magnetic recording: information processing and entertainment. While both of these fields have changed markedly with the introduction of commercial magnetic recorders, the computer industry has been most closely tied to changes in magnetic recording technology.

While documenting the development of an important technology, Clark also plans to address a number of larger themes within the field of the history of science and technology: the nature of invention and development, the impact of government sponsorship on scientific research, national differences in technological style and resulting technological transfer, and the social impact of science and technology.

Mr. Clark will spend part of the 1991-1992 academic year doing research at the Babbage Institute. □



Mark Clark

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Recent Publications

- *Culture technique*, No. 21, (July 1990). Neuilly-sur-Seine: Centre de Recherche sur la Culture Technique, 1990. (Issue containing 30 articles devoted to the history of informatics.)
- Mark Hall and John Barry, *Sunburst: The Ascent of Sun Microsystems*. Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1990.
- B. Baron v. Freytag Löringhoff, *Wilhelm Schickard und seine Rechenmaschine von 1623*. Attempto Verlag Tübingen GmbH, 1987.
- ———, *Computus: Die astronomischen Rechenstäbchen von Wilhelm Schickard*. Attempto Verlag Tübingen GmbH, 1989.
- Donald MacKenzie, *Inventing Accuracy: A Historical Sociology of Nuclear Missile Guidance*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 1990.

Articles of Interest

Albert Amouyal, "The Beginnings of Computing Activities at the [French] Atomic Energy Authority, 1952-1972," *Annals of the History of Computing*, 12:4(1990): 219-225.

Peter Bird, "LEO, the Pride of Lyons," *The British Journal of Administrative Management*, 4(Dec 1990/Jan 1991): 20-21.

Corrado Bonfanti, "Il giorno in cui nacque il software," *il coltello di Delfo*, 4(Sept. 1990): 7-14.

Henri Boucher, "Informatics in the Defense Industry," *Annals of the History of Computing*, 12:4(1990): 227-240.

Michael A. Cusumano, "Factory Concepts and Practices in Software Development," *Annals of the History of Computing*, 13:1(1991): 3-32.

Donald MacKenzie, "The Influence of the Los Alamos and Livermore National Laboratories on the Development of Supercomputing," *Annals of the History of Computing*, 13:2(1991): 179-201.

Paul McConnell, "Some Early Computers for Aviators," *Annals of the History of Computing*, 13:2(1991): 155-177.

Jean E. Sammet, "Some Approaches to, and Illustrations of, Programming Language History," *Annals of the History of Computing*, 13:1(1991): 33-50.

Howard P. Segal, "Computers and Museums: Problems and Opportunities of Display and Interpretation," *American Quarterly*, 42(Dec. 1990): 637-656. (Review of exhibits at the Computer Museum and the National Air and Space Museum.)

Alfred W. Van Sinderen and Michael R. Williams, "Happy Birthday Mr. Babbage," *Annals of the History of Computing*, 13:2(1991): 125-139. (Babbage correspondence.)

Irving L. Wieselmann and Erwin Tomash, "Marks on Paper: Part I. A Historical Survey of Computer Output Printing," *Annals of the History of Computing*, 13:1(1991): 63-79. "...Part 2..." *Annals*, 13:2(1991): 203-222.

Maurice V. Wilkes, "Babbage's Expectations for his Engines," *Annals of the History of Computing*, 13:2(1991): 141-145. □

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donors and to restrict access to records when use would endanger their physical or organizational integrity. After initial hearings, the legislation became part of an omnibus data practices bill and remained relatively unchanged though its passage.

As a result, CBI and other archives in Minnesota will continue to be able to encourage the timely donation of sensitive records, protect the privacy of donors, and ultimately ensure that researchers will have access to historically valuable collections. □

CHARLES BABBAGE INSTITUTE NEWSLETTER

The Charles Babbage Institute, Center for the History of Information Processing, is sponsored by the University of Minnesota and the information processing community. Arthur L. Norberg, Director

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New Archives Personnel

Kevin D. Corbitt joined CBI in February as its new Assistant Archivist. He recently completed his master's degree in American history and Certificate in Public History from the University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee (UWM). While in the graduate program at UWM, Mr. Corbitt took the sequence of archival course work and served for a year as an intern at the Milwaukee Urban Archives at UWM. Previously Mr. Corbitt worked as an intern at the Gallaudet University Archives and received the Frederick Law Olmsted Fellowship, which allowed him to study historical editing under the guidance of the editors of the Frederick Law Olmsted Papers.

At CBI Mr. Corbitt will support reference, processing, and cataloging of collections. Most recently he has been involved in updating CBI's catalog entries on the Research Libraries Information Network and the local library database at the University of Minnesota. □



Kevin D. Corbitt

Workshop on the Technical History of Electronic Information Technology

By Paul Ceruzzi; National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution

The Deutsches Museum, Munich, hosted a "Workshop on the Technology of Information Technology," on December 15-19, 1990. The conference was organized by Harmut Petzold and Oskar Blumtritt, leaders of the Museum's Microelectronics, Telecommunications, Automation, and Computing divisions. The event followed by a few months the opening of major exhibits at the museum on computing and telecommunications.

Twenty-five scholars representing eight countries gave papers; about a half-dozen others representing several other nations also attended the sessions. Papers were presented in French, English, and German, with written English-language summaries of most papers available before the sessions. This attendee noted that this conference was unique in that none of those giving papers, and only one or two persons in attendance, could be classified as computer or telecommunications "pioneers"; nearly all were scholars trained for the most part in the history of their respective technical fields. The participants were housed on the Museum grounds; that setting, combined with the wintery Munich weather, led to intense discussions about the various topics. All in all it was a very productive conference.

Before the conference, all participants were sent copies of so-called "balance papers," which laid the foundation for further discussion. These papers were written by Catherine Bertho-Lavenir of the Postal and Telecommunications Ministry of Paris, Harmut Petzold of the Deutsches Museum, and William Aspray of the IEEE History Center. The first day was devoted to presenting these papers, followed by a lengthy discussion.

Participants were asked to examine their specific topics in view of three themes: device technology (e.g. vacuum tubes, etc.), apparatus (e.g. computers, radio sets, etc.), and networks. Although at first this structure seemed rigid, it proved to be a powerful unifying force that helped set and keep the tone of the conference at a high level. Likewise, the organizers sought to build bridges between those concerned with the history of computing and those concerned with the history of communications. This met

with limited success, but by the end of the conference most agreed that the deliberate inclusion of both groups was worthwhile and that more efforts should be made in this direction. Much more successful was the recognition by all participants of the contributions of scholars from continental Europe to fields that to now have been dominated by American or British views.

The organizers are to be commended for their hard work in making this conference a success, especially for their care in organizing the themes, and for inviting a group that was diverse yet united by a common interest in historical issues. An informal volume of preprints of the papers is available from Dr. Petzold, who is negotiating with a United States publisher for a more formal publication. □

Internet Access to CBI Catalog

Abstracts of most of the archival collections at CBI may be searched on the University of Minnesota library catalog (LUMINA) through internet. The address for the catalog is:

lumina.lib.umn.edu

After initial prompts indicating terminal type, a help screen will display a list of search commands. CBI's records can be located quickly by using a keyword search that limits a search only to archival records. Thus,

k = computer.su. and u.fmt.

will search for all archival catalog entries that begin with the subject term "computer." Currently CBI has over fifty descriptive records available in LUMINA. CBI will be seeking funds to add its oral history catalog to both LUMINA and the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN). □

Computing History Conference in Italy

The International Conference on the History and Prehistory of Automatic Computing and Informatics will be held in Siena, Italy on September 10-12, 1991. The conference is being sponsored by the Accademia dei Fisiocritici, the Associazione Italiana per l'Informatica ed il Calcolo Automatico, and the mathematics department of the Universita' degli Studi di Siena. It will feature five sessions:

- History and Prehistory from "Before the Computer."
- National Policies towards Informatics: A Retrospect Appraisal.
- The Beginnings of Informatics in Italy: Universities, Research, Scientific Computing.
- The Beginnings of Informatics in Italy: Hardware and Software Industry; User Environments.
- History of Automatic Computing and Informatics in the Context of the History of Science and Technology: General Issues and Specialized Approaches.

The conference is part of Siena's 750th anniversary and the celebration of the A.I.C.A.'s 30th year. Professor Konrad Zuse will be the guest of honor of the conference. Papers prepared by the participants will be prepared in a volume and made available to interested parties. □

When You Move...

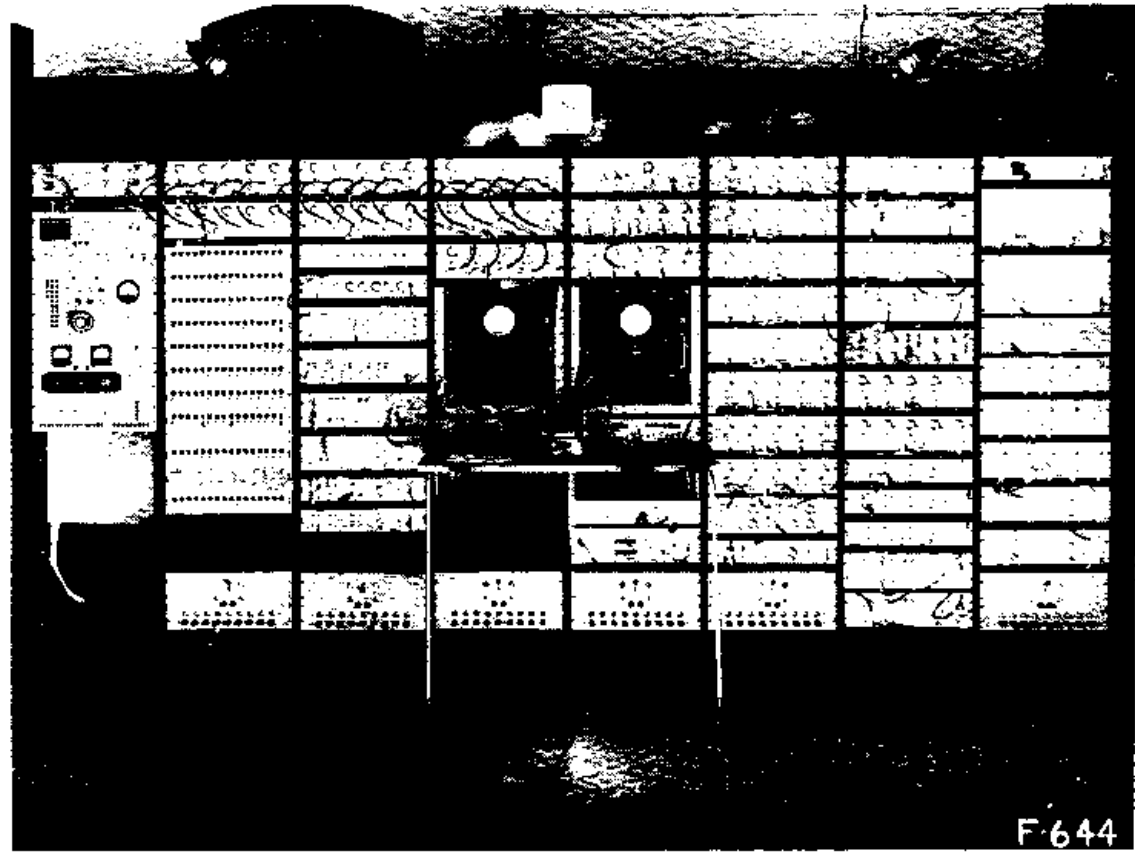
Please let us know your new mailing address. This will ensure your receiving the CBI Newsletter on a timely basis and also save us postage costs. Thank you.

People and Computers: Milestones of a Revolution at the Computer Museum

“People and Computers: Milestones of a Revolution,” an interactive, historical exhibition, opened June 29, 1991, at the Computer Museum, Boston. The exhibition traces the evolution of the computer and its social impact. Visitors travel through “time tunnels” to nine milestones in computer development. The centerpiece of each milestone is a life-size re-creation of a typical computer environment of each major era. The eras range from the punched card equipment of the 1930s through the embedded microprocessors of the 1990s. “People and Computers” also examines the mythical roles into which the computer has been cast over the years by Hollywood and the public. □

Correction

The Winter 1991 issue of the newsletter, featuring an article about the Sammet papers (p. 9), incorrectly listed the tenure of Jean Sammet’s presidency of the Association for Computing Machinery. She was president from June 1974 to July 1976 (not 1986).



An early shot of the Whirlwind Computer test control panel. The Whirlwind is featured in the newly opened exhibit at the Computer Museum. (CBI photograph.)

CHARLES BABBAGE INSTITUTE NEWSLETTER

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