In This Issue:

Director’s Desk

Tatarchenko Named Tomash Fellow

Norberg Travel Grant Recipients

News from the Archives

CBI Photo Contest

Recent Publications

Featured Photograph
Director’s Desk

Every day I see signs of healthy expansion in computer history. When the Charles Babbage Institute was organized in the late 1970s, it was safe to say that CBI was the leading player in the field, though the field was pretty small at the time. Since then, the number of scholars, professional societies, and regular activities has “grown like topsy” and with no sight of a let-up anytime soon.

CBI Archives. To encourage research in computing history, we launched the Arthur Norberg Travel Fund five years ago. Thanks to 20 generous donors, we’ve been able to create a fund that will support research for years to come. In these five years we’ve funded 12 scholars to make research trips to CBI and use our unparalleled collections of archival materials. This year, we had an unexpected bonanza and we made double the usual number of awards, owing to unusual strength in the number of applicants. Amateur computer clubs, the patent system, the origins of OCR (optical character recognition), and digital humanities are the topics that Norberg Fund awardees will be investigating with CBI archival materials (see related article on this year’s awardees).

Professional societies. The major professional societies are expanding their efforts also to sponsor research in computing history. The IEEE History Center awards its annual fellowship in electrical and computer history, while the IEEE Computer Society has renewed its History Committee’s activities in the field, sponsoring research and publications. IFIP regularly publishes conference volumes with history content, while ASIS&T has begun sponsoring history research as well. The Association for Computing Machinery’s History Committee has been sponsoring research fellowships in the past several years. Networking, hypertext, transnational computer science, data surveillance, computing in the federal government, and various aspects of ACM’s storied history—these are just some of the topics being researched today at CBI and elsewhere, too.

IEEE Annals of the History of Computing. At CBI we were immensely proud when our own Jeff Yost was named as Editor in Chief of Annals. He recently completely a busy and rewarding four-year term, increasing the depth and breadth of scholarship published in the Annals as well as building new ties to the IEEE community. Jeff made Annals the #1 choice for scholars seeking to publish historical research in the field. Now, with the Annals editorship in the capable hands of Lars Heide of the Copenhagen Business School, Jeff will have a bit more time to devote to his own research, including a book-length project on the history of the computer services industry.

In this newsletter, we try to keep our community of colleagues, supporters, and well-wishers up-to-date with our activities at CBI. If you’d like additional information, you can always visit our website at <www.cbi.umn.edu> or keep current by “friending” us on <Facebook.com/BabbageInstitute>. If you have a friend or colleague who is interested in
computer history, please pass along their name and contact information. I’d like to send them a personal invitation to join the **CBI Friends**, an amazing group of people who have been supporting us for three decades. (If it happens that you aren’t yet a member of CBI Friends, send me your name, too!) For a basic membership of $100 we are pleased to send our CBI Friends the quarterly issues of *IEEE Annals of the History of Computing* when they arrive straight from the publisher. You’ll have the additional satisfaction of supporting CBI’s leadership in the field.

*Thomas J. Misa*

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*The ‘complete range’ of computing (1949): Ms. Dorothy Mounsey poses in the middle of Burroughs adding machines, calculators, typewriters, stands, desks, chairs, microfilm equipment, paper products, and ink ribbons. [Link](http://purl.umn.edu/62776)*
Tatarchenko Named Tomash Fellow

We are very pleased to announce that Ksenia Tatarchenko, a doctoral candidate in the History of Science Program at Princeton University, is the 2012-2013 Adelle and Erwin Tomash Fellow. Ms. Tatarchenko completed her undergraduate degree in history at State Pedagogical University in Novosibirsk (Russia), received an M.A. from Université de Paris-Sorbonne in History, and was an international fellow at Brown University before starting her doctoral studies at Princeton in 2008. Among other articles and book chapters, she has published scholarship on the history of the International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP) in *IEEE Annals of the History of Computing*, as well as presented her research at prestigious professional conferences (such as the Society for the History of Technology and History of Science Society) and at a number of universities (New York University, Harvard University, and Columbia University).

Ms. Tatarchenko’s dissertation project, entitled, “A House with the Window to the West: The Akademgorodok Computer Center (1958-1993),” challenges notions of Cold War computing and associated “closed spaces” to highlight how the Akademgorodok Computer Center and its scientists interacted with western scientists. In examining computer numerical analysis and computer science—through tracing the lives and networks of Akademgorodok leaders Andrei Ershov (father of the Siberian programming school) and Gurii Marchuk (the Akademgorodok Computer Center’s director)—she finds cultural diplomats and deep East-West connections, not closed off cold warriors. Her dissertation will be a major contribution to the history of Soviet computing, and more broadly to the history of the Cold War.

Ms. Tatarchenko, who is fluent in Russian, as well as English and French, has conducted research in the Andrei Ershov personal archive (Novosibirsk, Russia), the archives of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences (also in Novosibirsk), the Institute de l’Informatique (Roquencourt, France), and the Richard Courant Papers at the New York University Archives. She has made a prior visit to the Charles Babbage Institute, and is planning a return trip in May to conduct research using CBI’s International Computing Collection and the Academic Computing Collection.

*Jeffrey R. Yost*
The Charles Babbage Institute recently awarded four new Norberg Travel Fund awards. The recipients are Kevin Gotkin, Jeffrey Matsuura, Mara Mills, and Madeleine Monson-Rosen. The travel fund, named in honor of CBI’s founding director Arthur L. Norberg, provides assistance for the awardees to visit CBI to conduct research.

Kevin Gotkin, a doctoral student at the University of Pennsylvania’s Annenberg School of Communication, visited us already in March to conduct research for his project on the history of amateur computer clubs and hacker culture. Gotkin is particularly interested in how tinkering and innovation were “sifted through the social bonds born of a distinct amateur devotion to the computer.” Among other collections, he drew upon CBI’s Amateur Computer Society Records, an organization launched in 1966, nearly a decade before the famed Homebrew Computer Club. This small but rich collection contains a complete run of the society’s newsletters from 1966 to 1976, as well as correspondence, meeting minutes, and other materials. The other three awardees will be visiting CBI later in 2012.

Madeleine Monson-Rosen, a doctoral candidate in the Department of English at the University of Illinois-Chicago, is researching her dissertation entitled, “Digital Humanity: The Novel and the Computer, 1965-1995.” Drawing on both the study of works of literature as well as archival material, she is examining a number of topics and themes including computer design and development, battles over intellectual property, and computer networking—all areas where CBI has extensive archival holdings.

Mara Mills is an assistant professor in the Department of Media, Culture, and Communication at New York University. She completed her doctorate in the History of Science at Harvard University and served as a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Pennsylvania before joining the NYU faculty in 2010. Mills, who has published extensively on the history of assistive hearing technology, will be researching the history of optical character recognition (OCR) and the roles of blind inventors, users, and test subjects of this technology. Several of CBI’s large corporate records collections, the U.S. National Bureau of Standards Collection of Computer Literature, the Association for Computing Machinery Records, and others contain materials on OCR technology.

<http://purl.umn.edu/87788>
Jeffrey Matsuura is an attorney with Alliance Law Group and a prominent legal scholar. He has published more than a half dozen books on the law and IT, including *Law of the Internet* and *Global Information Technology Law*. He has received grants and fellowships from the Smithsonian, Hagley Museum and Library, and the Thomas Jefferson Foundation for past research projects. His current research project is to study the evolution of patents in the U.S. computer industry. In visiting CBI, he plans to draw from CBI’s Patent Data Publications, Computer Patent Abstracts, and other collections.

*Jeffrey R. Yost*

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### News from the Archives

For the past six months the CBI Archives has been involved in a significant conservation project. Our *Burroughs Corporation Records* (CBI 90) contains an extensive series of direct mail print advertising. The collection was selected by Minnesota Historical Society preservation specialist Sherelyn Ogden and Archives and Special Collections Director Kris Kiesling to kick-off a jointly administered archival preservation initiative. CBI sent seven record cartons—30 volumes—of direct mail samples housed in bound volumes and scrapbooks to the Historical Society’s Conservation Laboratory for treatment. The scrapbook bindings were breaking or wholly detached, spine covers were missing, and the leather board covers were turning powdery. Printed items in the collection varied in condition from good to poor, with many items worn, split or dirty from handling, and brittle from acid content. The condition of the scrapbook limited researchers’ ability to look at or use the materials in a meaningful way. At the MHS Conservation Lab, over 3000 documents were liberated from deteriorating scrapbook bindings, cleaned of dirt and adhesives, and re-housed in acid-free folders. The second phase of the process—creating older titles and dates and putting the new content into existing finding aids—is underway. Revised finding aids with substantive descriptions of materials will be available by the end of summer 2012. We will continue to look at these materials for possible digitization and inclusion in the University Libraries’ UMedia Archives.

[Burroughs advertisements for ‘Director’ adding machine (1954)](http://purl.umn.edu/62727)
The advertising collection—brochures, flyers, postcards, posters, direct mailers, trade serials, scrapbooks, and manuals—cover a period from 1907 to 1986. Between those years, Burroughs expanded from a single plant in Detroit manufacturing mechanical adding machines to a multinational corporation designing and manufacturing advanced computing technology. The Advertising Samples series collects over seventy years of visual and textual materials showcasing Burroughs products and the business environments they contributed to revolutionizing. Text and illustrations capture changes in commercial, architectural, and industrial design, workplace automation, changes in gender makeup and gender relations in the workforce, and the creation and development of the “sales force” and its role in corporate financial success. In addition to documenting the evolution of Burroughs products, the collection is an interdisciplinary gem, offering a picture of a changing workforce and work environment in 20th century America.

In addition to work on the Burroughs collection, we have finished finding aids for the Robert Ashenhurst Papers (CBI 220) and the Gartner Group Collection (CBI 228), and are adding an important accession of Russian and English language documents from the mid-1950s to 2005 on Russian computing and nuclear development to the Russian, Soviet and Eastern Bloc Computing Collection (CBI 148).

Susan Hoffman
CBI Photo Contest

We are excited to announce a contest that will allow readers to exercise their wits and show off their historical savvy. What would be an historically accurate—yet entertaining and lively caption—for the photo below? Your diligent exploration of the CBI website should turn up the “subject” of the photo. We ask you to creatively caption it!

Recent Publications


*Compiled by Jeffrey R. Yost*
The woman in the photograph is zatocoding, an information retrieval system developed by Calvin Mooers at MIT in 1947. Zatocoding was used primarily in libraries. When a person needed to find information on a subject, they would look up that subject in a list. Subjects had corresponding item cards, each with a pattern of notches or punches representing a book, paper or journal article on the subject. The researcher would find slot patterns by threading wire needles through a stack of cards. All of the cards that had been cut with a similar subject pattern would fall out of the card sequence, forming an impromptu bibliography.