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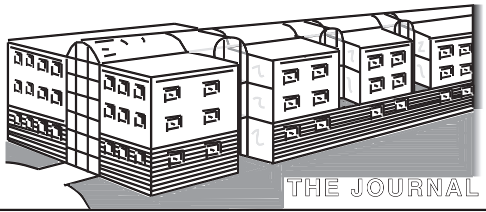

BANKS OF THE BONEYARD
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Contents:

INSIDE:

SORF Funding

ACM is dealt a blow by the funding process; find out in From The Chair.
Page 2.

Sig Updates

New information from SigArch, SigArt, SigGraph, SigMicro, and the Software Development team.
Page 3.

National ACM News

Topics which are covered in the latest Communicatons of the ACM.
Page 4.

Vaporware

Get the latest industry dirt from around the country.
Pages 6-7.

Internships in Computer Science

There are many students on this campus who go home in mid-May only to find that life at home with Mom and Dad just isn't as much fun as they thought it'd be. If they're working at all, many of these students are working at day-camps or construction sites. Somehow, Camp Tonawanga doesn't seem like a place for a computer science major to get some good experience for the future. You may ask, "Where can I get this experience?" The answer is summer internships.

Every week, the Engineering Placement Office puts out a bulletin with a list of employers who are specifically looking for summer interns. The list contains employers from all over the country, and even a few overseas. There are internships for people in all engineering curriculums, including Computer Science.

You may now ask, "What do I have to do?" This part is even easier. Simply go through the list and find the employers that you like. In with the job description, there were either be an address to which you should mail a cover letter and resumé, or it will say "place resumé in mailbox by such-and-such." There is a large bin of mailboxes just outside of EPO just for this purpose. Find the mailbox with the name of your company, slide a resumé in, and you're all set... well, almost.

This whole process looks really simple, but you still haven't gotten an internship. The real task involved in getting an internship or any job is going after the job that you want. A contact person is listed for every company. If you don't hear from a company in a couple weeks, send this person a letter! If they hear from you, it will show them that you are really interested in working for them, and they should take a close look at you. Don't be afraid to call up and say, "I haven't heard anything in a few weeks, I was just wondering how things are progressing."

(Continued on page 5)

Law, Ethics, and Computer Science

Part II: Intellectual Property

An important disclaimer: I am not a lawyer. While I believe the legal opinions I write in this column to be correct, they are nevertheless a layman's view of the law. If you have important legal questions, you should discuss them with a lawyer.

Many areas of computer science are affected by intellectual property law. Intellectual property is property whose value lies not in a physical object but in its ideas or expression. It is also commonly property which could easily be duplicated (unlike physical property).

Examples of intellectual property include the content of books, patents, software, music, and trademarks. There are three common means of protecting intellectual property relevant to computer science: copyrights, patents, and contracts. These will be discussed in this column; later columns will deal with issues and applications of each of these areas.

Copyright law is concerned with the right to copy a specific work of intellectual property. Copyrights protect the copyright holder's right to control the copying of their work for 75 years; they also protect so-called "moral rights", such as the right to claim authorship of a given work. The copyright law was changed in 1990 so that works are now copyrighted by default (before 1990, works not explicitly copyrighted were in the public domain). While an explicit copyright notice and proof of authorship are useful, anything written is now automatically copyrighted by the author. Copyrights can be granted on a concrete expression, but not on an idea,

(Continued on page 4)

Not Paid For By SORF...

The Student Organization Resource Fee committee has decided to keep this University back in the stone ages. For those of you who don't know, the SORF board determines how much of **your** student resource fee money to give to each registered student organization on campus. This semester, the SORF board has chosen to give ACM next to nothing. Well, actually we received $100 to use for communications. This minute sum would barely pay for two DI ads!!! ACM has budgeted approximately $17,000 in expenditures for this year, and you can see how much this means to the SORF board. They are going to fund less than 1% of ACM's needs for the year! We have a gap of nearly $2000 for this semester alone in the amount of funding we receive from the computer science department, fund raising, and membership dues.

After seeing the SORF allocation process in action, it baffles me how it can survive as it is. Each organization that submits an application for funding is interviewed by a small panel. A few questions are asked about the funding application and then the meeting is over. The people in this sub-committee are then expected to answer any questions that the SORF board has about the application. This can easily allow personal bias into the system as well as just plain ignorance of what the group is asking for and why it may be so desperately needed. It is difficult enough for the actual leaders of an organization to justify every one of their expenditures, let alone someone who's only knowledge of the group comes from a 5 minute interview. Added to this is the apparent disorganized nature of the SORF board.

From the Chair

We requested to speak before the SORF board itself, knowing that ACM needed to clarify our expenditures to the board directly. We were told that we would be notified before the meeting, so that we could attend. Well, after calling a week or so later, it turned out that the board had already made its decisions for our funding, without ever notifying us of the meeting. Pointing this out as soon as we learned about it, we were informed that the recommended funding could only be changed if we submitted a request for reconsideration, even if a mess-up like this had been made. This means that we will have to argue with the board and tell them that their initial allocation was wrong, and that we deserve more. Trying to change a decision that was based on wrong or misleading information will be very difficult, but we have no choice but to try.

Realizing that each student on campus has paid a $5 SORF fee, and even assuming that each member of ACM is a member of another organization, that works out to over $600 that should be earmarked for ACM. In previous semesters, we have applied for sums of $5-900 and received about half that each time. The money for this semester was budgeted for new reference material for our library, subscriptions to popular computing magazines and journals, computer software for our lab, an IBM compatible computer for software development and many other items that our organization desperately needs to meet the demands of our growing membership. With the tiny sum of money appropriated to ACM for this semester, we will have to cut back the events and services that we offer our members.

I wish that there was an easy way to change this situation, but unfortunately, there isn't. We are following 'proper channels' to make sure that we do everything within our rights as a student organization to obtain funding. I want to recommend that everyone collect their SORF refund, donate it to ACM, and tell the board how disgusted we are with this situation, but that would not be fair to other organizations, so please don't. You can be sure that we will not let these mistakes continue. When you see familiar names on the ballot for the SORF board in next year's election, please support them.

It is unfortunate that a group which really decides the fate of most registered student organizations on this campus can be run so poorly and make such misinformed decisions.

- Alex Bratton
Chairman

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Special Interest Group Updates

Sig Arch

SigArch is an interest group formed for people interested in computer architecture and digital design. We have already discussed a few design possibilities: a parallel processing computer, a computer incorporating both the 68030 and the 80386 processors allowing communication between them, small micro-computers for different project applications such as sound processing, and many others. If some of these topics seem a little beyond your reach, don't worry; SigArch has members ranging in experience from graduate students in computer engineering to no digital design background at all. This group is dedicated primarily to learning about and having fun with the design of computers.

If you would like to learn more about SigArch, please attend our next meeting on Thursday, Oct. 24 at 7:00 in the ACM office.

- Alex Bratton
bratton@cs.uiuc.edu

Software Development Team

The ACM Software Development Team has decided on our first project for the year: a graphically based, networked, multi-player, fantasy role playing game for the Macintosh. It will certainly involved a great deal of work, but our fearless 10+ person development team is equal to the task. We have already started to divide the project into manageable chunks. If you are interested in learning about Mac programming, we will be addressing many user-interface and networking issues. We also have programmers building the core program in C, independent of Mac-specific programming requirements. We are currently still in the design stages of the project, so this is the perfect time to join the team.

We are very excited about the potential of this project. Please join us at our next meeting on Wed. Oct. 23 at 6:00 in the ACM office, 1225 DCL.

- Alex Bratton
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SigArt

SigArt is currently addressing many important issues in Artificial Intelligence. We've already covered expert systems and AI basics. In future meetings, we'll cover neural nets and other topics of interest. Other plans include possible faculty speakers and LISP workshops. SigArt would like to address the issues and interests that YOU have concerning Artificial Intelligence. If you would like us to discuss a topic that you are interested in, or if you just have a question, comment, or suggestion, don't hesitate to e-mail me at sigart@uiuc.edu or just check us out at the next SigArt meeting.

- Andrew Vernon
SigArt Chairperson
sigart@uiuc.edu

Sig Micro

Sig Graph

SigGraph has started weekly programming meetings to work on two of our projects, Data Flight and Space Dogs. The meetings will be on Mondays at 7:00pm at the Oil Chemistry Building (the new home of the NCSA Software Tools Group.) OCB is the red brick building on the northeast corner at the intersection of 6th and Healey in Champaign. We welcome programmers at all levels of C, assembly, or graphics programming skill; if there is something you need to know to help us, we will teach it to you. Another project we are working on is a graphical 3-D modeller for DKBTrace (or its successor, PVRay.) This program should allow the user to design 3-D scenes and output them in a format that can be read to be rendered by the ray-tracer. Scott Rodgers is heading up this project. Contact him at sjr50638@uxa if you would like to help out. Design and programming meetings will be on Wednesdays at 7:00pm at OCB.