My vision at the time was that what DARPA and the country needed was an off campus university based information sciences research center with the skills and commitment to be both a first class research center and a university-based center committed to creating directly militarily relevant research, while being responsible for technology transfer directly to the military via experimental programs.

At that time (March 1972), four members of the RAND crew were anxious to move. They were Tom Ellis, Robert Balzer, Rod Frederickson, and Keith Uncapher, and others were likely to follow.

A very fast start
Prompted by this activity, I wrote a two page white paper expressing the need for a new university based institution which would commit itself to spending whatever money DARPA/IPTO would provide, with 40% of available funds spent on research and 60% on direct transfer of technology to the military. The response to the white paper by IPTO (Larry Roberts, Director of IPTO and Steven Lukasik, DARPA Director) was, "how soon can you get started?" My response was, "as soon as I can find a university to host a new off campus institution." The contingent liability was too risky for UCLA and UCI to move quickly. I contacted Professor George Bekey at USC on a Monday, and he arranged an on-campus meeting for me on Tuesday with Professor Jack Munushian, Clark McCartney, head of Contracts and Grants, and himself. I briefed them on the concept of an off-campus institute, why it had to be off campus; for competition - XEROX PARC et al, and considerable space would be needed, and a location ten minutes from LAX to encourage DARPA and military visitors to spend time at the institute.) The site we chose was Marina Del Rey.

Dr. Bekey and Dr. Munushian liked the ideas expressed in my brief as well as in the white paper I provided. The next day, Wednesday, they asked me to meet Dr. Zorab Kaprelian, Executive Vice President and number two person at USC.
The briefing on Wednesday for Dr. Kaprielian was short and the questions few. Clearly, he thought the concept was just right, and he wanted the institute to be a part of USC - but on campus. I told him it would not work on campus due to space, politics, and the inability to move quickly on hiring people, not to mention the challenge it would be to acquire first class space and substantial computing equipment. Dr. Kaprielian and I met at Ship’s Coffee Shop in Westwood that Wednesday and by Thursday evening, we were working out the details. I informed him of the fact that I had no money for the venture, but I was sure that once the pending institute was part of a university, funds would flow. The next morning, Friday, at 10:00 A.M., Dr. Kaprielian called me and said that the USC Board of Trustees was meeting the next day at Annenberg’s Rancho Mirage for its annual meeting. That’s when Dr. Kaprielian said he was going to tell them about their new institute—(go!)

The following Monday we borrowed space in the building ISI now occupies. The building was empty, and the crew gathered and sat on the floor and wrote a proposal - a very good one. In thirty days we had a three-year, three million dollar contract! On Monday I borrowed $6,000 from USC and paid it back in thirty days. The money went for telephone installation, to hire a secretary (Chloe Holg), and a desk and chair for her. The rest of us sat on shag carpeting for a while.

Bob Balzer and Tom Ellis were terrific at establishing a great research culture almost from day one. Bob Balzer headed the effort to name the place and Nelson Lucas designed the logo. A key DARPA/IPTO person, AI Blue, asked me what we were going to name the place and I said, “ISI,” at which time he said, “I have a feeling this place is going to be expensive for IPTO so I’ll squeeze the letters together to give you my view of the logo $.”

For the first fifteen years it was by design, almost totally funded by IPTO, and ISI was able to hire very good people and be competitive in r/d, while creating a remarkable reputation for technology transfer into the mainstream military, as well as blazing a marvelous trail which set the national pace for ARPA Net-based computer resource sharing.

At the outset, one goal was to influence Carnegie Mellon University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Stanford University to be more relevant to the needs of both the nation and the Department of Defense. We were successful, among other universities too. But it took awhile to witness any impact.

Once ISI existed, others from RAND joined us and were indeed welcome. Virtually the day ISI was launched, XEROX PARC announced a doubling of its research staff. On balance, ISI did well in competing with PARC in recruiting very good people. No one in the IPTO contractor community was able to capture enough funding in basic research. For ISI, funding was less of a struggle, since at the outset we were committed to an aggressive research program, and were given a chance to prove our uniqueness.

From 1972 - 1986, ISI was a marvelous blend of research, military transfer programs, and unique support programs. As some may recall, for a while, ISIA was the primary computer for e-mail for all of DARPA and the US based military. As such, it was pure risk for ISI because Larry Roberts, then the director of IPTO, refused my requests for a back-up machine on the basis that “ISIA was never down.” Thanks to MacKinley and crew, it was largely true. The research accomplishments were terrific - specifically in software AI and complex hardware systems (MLP900). Later, MOSIS started and it is truly a national resource. These efforts and others deserved the stable funding which was available to support them.

From 1972-1986, ISI’s total funding grew to over 25 million/year from IPTO and involved two to three contracts, with reserves to spend under the supervision of the director of IPTO.

ISI’s hit rate on proposal acceptance was unmatched. I do not recall anytime when across the board IPTO cuts negatively affected ISI. I do, however, recall some general cuts resulting in more money for ISI.

Today, ISI is still unique and I believe is treated and acclaimed as such now by three to four directorates of DARPA, as well as by the US information sciences research and development community. Herb Schorr, Ron Ohlander, and the entire ISI crew are to be congratulated. I remain deeply grateful to Bob Balzer and Tom Ellis for great effort in launching ISI, and to Larry Roberts, Steve Lukasik, and Allen Blue for the instant trust and commitment to a two-page white paper proposal.
I consider ISI as a truly unique national resource and I am very proud to have been part of it.

The Editorial Staff of the InSiDer would like to thank Dr. Keith Uncapher for sharing his memories about ISI’s early days, and his assistant Lucille Stivers for her efforts to coordinate interviews with Dr. Uncapher. We would also like to thank Claire Jansa and Robert Balzer for their contributions to this article.

The 25th anniversary logo was designed by USC’s Internet Publishing Center. More information about ISI’s 25th anniversary can be found at: http://w3.isi.edu/anniversary.html

Getting to Know ISD

The LOOM Group

In an effort to get to know each other better we have been highlighting members of the ISD staff in each newsletter. In this issue, we are highlighting the members of the Loom Group.

A Brief History of Loom

Bob MacGregor

The Loom project began in 1986, with an ARPA contract to build a new and improved knowledge representation (KR) system based on the NIKL system previously developed jointly by ISI and BBN, and implemented at ISI (NIKL stands for “New Implementation of KL-ONE”). The kickoff for the project was a meeting held at MIT of interested parties (many of them were developers or users of NIKL) to decide what new features were needed that were missing in NIKL.

NIKL used a (KL-ONE style) concept classifier to perform most of its reasoning. Improvements decided on at the MIT meeting included: (1) more expressive power, (2) the ability to assert and classify instances as well as concepts, (3) the ability to change definitions without necessitating a reload of the knowledge base. Early on in the project we decided to go beyond the wish list specified at the workshop. Back then, our competition was perceived to be the commercial systems KEE and ART—our goal was to produce a better KR system than either of them.

Initially, the project consisted of Ray Bates and myself. Fairly soon into the project, Ray moved over to the SIMS project and I hired Dave Brill (who is now at ISX). Our first release came about a year and a half into the project; our first customer was an ISI project managed by Bob Neches. The first system featured a revisable concept classifier, more expressive power than NIKL, and a backward-chaining reasoner that executed queries against an assertional knowledge base. The number of users grew slowly at first; four or five of our first users were other ISI projects, including the SIMS and PENMAN projects.

We continuously added new features to Loom, including more expressive power, an alternative worlds (context) mechanism, a default logic, and a production rule facility. The context mechanism was produced with the help of Bob Kasper, loaned to us by the PENMAN project. Bob had the goal of adding to Loom those features that he perceived necessary for supporting a natural language parser. A important milestone for Loom was its adoption as the common KR system for phase one of ARPA’s Planning Initiative.

The addition of Tom Russ marked an increase in the size of the project. When Tom arrived, Loom had an active community of external users that kept him busy with bug reports and questions about how things worked. Tom added a lot of features that improved Loom’s robustness and made it more portable. Around that time, we found the time and money to produce the first (and last) set of user manuals for Loom. Major additions added by Tom included a new, much more efficient context mechanism and a temporal reasoning capability. The community of Loom users continued to grow, until we had delivered a copy of Loom to virtually every major US university, as well as many overseas universities.

In late 1994, we convinced (D)ARPA to fund a follow-on to Loom, to be named PowerLoom (Bill Swartout gets the credit for that name). The Loom language had pushed the limits of how expressive a description logic could be, and we felt that it was time to move beyond that paradigm. Note: Originally, Loom and similar systems were collectively referred to as “KL-ONE-style” systems. Later, that family of KR languages was rechristened “terminological logics”. (An unsupported rumor has it that this was the original source of carpal tunnel syndrome—it’s a phrase only Demosthenes would love). Thankfully, a conversion by ourselves and others to the phrase “description logics” has permanently supplanted all previous monikers.
Eric Melz was hired on early in the PowerLoom contract. Eric had the priviledge of being the first human being after myself to program in the language we now call STELLA. PowerLoom is being coded entirely in STELLA, a strongly-type Lisp-like language that translates into both Common Lisp and C++ (and someday, Java). Hans Chalupsky joined the project, and did for STELLA what Tom Russ did for Loom, upgrading it into a mature system (albeit with a few unfinished pieces still remaining). Eric wrote the STELLA-to-C++ translator, and then a translator-writing frenzy seemed to invade our corner of the DARPA world, so we had Eric writing quite a few more translators.

While STELLA was maturing, Tom Russ was collaborating with Ramesh Patil on the development of the Ontosaurus system, and occasionally polishing Loom a bit more. Ontosaurus provides a Web-based interface to Loom. Recently, we demonstrated Ontosaurus interfacing to a prerelease version of PowerLoom; the first release of PowerLoom is imminent. PowerLoom will feature an enhanced-version of the KIF language as its representation language, and the ability to execute in Lisp and C++. While we have ambitious plans for scaling up PowerLoom to support much larger applications than those manageable by Loom, it will be quite a while before PowerLoom has acquired all or most of the capabilities that we coded into Loom. We still get requests for Loom licenses at the rate of one every week or two, and we expect that Loom still has quite a bit of life left in it.

A note on the name “Loom”. Its not an acronym, even though most people write it in uppercase. Very early on, we used the name Turbo-NIKL, but then we came to our senses. When I first looked around for a name for our KR system, I discovered that almost all of the “Ks” had already been taken by other developers of KR systems (e.g., Kandor, Krypton, Kodiak). Naming it KAPPA didn’t occur to me. A while after I chose the name Loom, someone else released a system named “Large Object-Oriented Memory”. Then Lucas Films came out with the game Loom, which I bought (its not bad). Recently, an irate someone e-mailed me a letter, claiming that I had wasted his time by christening my system after the game and then having the effrontery to put up a Web page with that name.

Eric Melz

Velda said I could write about anything I wanted, so I think I’ll talk about my pets. I have two cats, Al and Tipper, and two fish, Foo and Bar. I got Tipper from my mother, who found 3 abandoned kittens in her driveway. She named the kittens Zanzibar, Zulu, and Zaire, respectively. I adopted Zanzibar and Zaire. I renamed Zaire to Tipper because I couldn’t stomach calling my pet “Zaire” and because the tip of her black tail is white, as if it was dipped in paint. Sadly, Zanzibar got run over shortly after I decided to let my cats roam free around the neighborhood instead of keeping them locked up inside all day. Al adopted me. I learned that he had been the pet of the former tenant of the house that I live in. He was hanging around all the time and eventually he moved in. My neighbors told me that the cat’s name was Eric. I felt weird calling him Eric so I renamed him to Al. Foo and Bar are fish. There’s not much to say about them except that they swim around inside an aquarium all day.

Velda also suggested that this would be a good opportunity to say farewell to my fellow ISDers. I’ll be leaving ISI sometime this summer (probably early August) to attend graduate school in Pittsburgh. I came to ISI four years ago figuring the day would come when I’d leave Los Angeles to pursue a Ph.D., but back then, the act of leaving only had the status of an idea that sounded good. I also had another idea that I’d pursue my interests in music and see what happened with that. Since I was a teenager, I have been a big fan of rock and music in general. In parallel with my desire to be a successful and productive computer scientist, I had dreams of becoming a big rock star. After I graduated from college (UCLA), I figured that if I postponed applying to graduate school for a few years, life would sort itself out and I’d know what to do. Four years and three bands later (Modern Myth, the Naked Picassos, and Lizard Sun), the decision is no easier. I’ve become more interested in creating music, and I’ve become more interested in artificial intelligence and technology. I’ve also developed some very meaningful relationships, in particular with my girlfriend Randi, who wants to stay in LA to pursue a career in film. Fantasy collided with reality last year when I realized that my test scores expired in Fall of ‘97, so I had to either (a) apply to graduate schools, (b) decide to not go to graduate school, or (c) postpone the graduate school question and retake the tests sometime in the future if I made up my
mind someday. Option (c) seemed pretty unpalatable (I think those GRE brain cells are dead by now), and after some initial waffling, I chose option (a). So I applied and I got accepted and I decided to go to CMU, in their brand-new Language Technologies program. At CMU, I plan to study Information Retrieval, and hopefully, the application of AI to problems in IR.

I've made some great friends and have been fortunate to work with some great people at ISI. In particular, I'd like to thank Bob Macgregor for giving me a great deal of independence and responsibility, Hans Chalupsky for putting up with endless trivial questions about Stella and Emacs, and Yolanda Gil for her encouragement, enthusiasm, and endless patience with my procrastinatory tendencies. I'll miss you guys.

I've been maximizing the time I have left in LA. My current band, Lizard Sun, is on the verge of getting signed by Polydor and we had several shows and recording sessions lined up in May and June. The lead singer is (generally acknowledged to be) the son of Jim Morrison, and we play a few Doors tunes, which tend to go over pretty well.

I also plan on finishing an unfinished project with Yolanda, spending time with my girlfriend, and hopefully I can find some time to create otherwordly gurgling sounds on my keyboards. I also have to figure out how I'm going to transport myself and some subset of my stuff from here to Pittsburgh!

(But who knows, I could become a world-famous rock star and stay in LA.)

Tom Russ

I came to ISI in 1991, driving 8,000 miles across the US in six weeks with my wife Ellen. I joined the Loom project. I'll continue in the style of biography that has tantalizing little paragraphs about some interesting things that have happened to me.

I am one of the very few people with a full humanities degree from MIT -- a BS in German Studies with a minor in History and Political Science. This is a bit unusual, and I must confess that I didn't set out to get a Bachelor’s in humanities. In fact, I accidentally satisfied all the course requirements for the degree.

I have crossed the Atlantic Ocean three times on a ship. (I've also crossed about 14 times by plane, but that isn't nearly so exciting.) The first time was on a troop transport (USS Rose) and twice on ocean liners (SS Bremen and SS United States). On the United States I had the interesting experience of trying to swim in a small indoor swimming pool that had roughly eight foot waves in it. One would alternately be standing on the bottom of the deep end and then get sloshed out of the pool entirely. I couldn't swim then, so I got to do all of this while wearing a life jacket.

I've been stopped for terrorism in Germany. Apparently the car I was in was “acting suspiciously” while near the German border with Austria. (And everyone knows what trouble those Austrians are! [Hi Hans! :]). I guess I looked like someone on a wanted poster, because the police officer who stopped us carefully examined my US passport, all the while muttering to himself: “Ich muss mich geirrt haben, ich muss mich geirrt haben...” [Footnote: “I must have made a mistake, I must have made a mistake”] Apparently, German terrorists don’t travel on US passports.

I've spent one night in Italy, having ventured less than 30 meters [Footnote: 100 feet] into that country. It was at an altitude of 3000 meters [Footnote: 10,000 feet] in the middle of the Alps. Conveniently enough there was a hut there. On my way there I slipped and started sliding down a glacier on the Austrian side of the mountain. I was able to save myself with an ice ax, leaving a scar on my wrist. The only real disappointment is that the scar is so tiny that it doesn’t really help support a story of harrowing adventure in the mountains. I exaggerate a bit, but it was pretty scary at the time.
I appeared on the Jeopardy! show. I placed third, losing big time near the end on a movie-related question in the category "Sound and Silence". The answer is: “Film which won an Oscar for Best Picture in 1965 and 1991.” (Doo doo doo doo-de-doo doo doo, doot doot doot doot doot-de-doot de doo....) I still enjoyed appearing. I was able to take solace in my defeat by using my prize of a Limousine ride to do some wine-tasting in Temecula.

New Faces in ISD
We are pleased to announce ISD’s new arrivals:

Bora “Cenk” GazeD

After getting my B.S. degree in computer science from Bogazici University in Istanbul, I started working toward my Ph.D. at USC in 1995. During the last two years, I’ve worked with Ari Requicha in the Laboratory for Molecular Robotics. Since June of ’97, I have been at ISI, and am presently working with Craig Knoblock on a “planning preprocessor” that transforms domains defined in a high-level language, into those defined in a simpler language. Our goal is to be able to use the relatively recent planning techniques (such as planning graphs and constraint satisfaction) on domains that are normally written in high-level languages. At the end of summer, I will be leaving for CMU, where I will continue my studies.

Other than “planning”, the other thing in my life that’s worth mentioning is tennis, as it takes whatever time is left. Admittedly, I am still a beginner having started just a year ago, but I’m trying really hard. (And I guess I should, because it will soon start raining, then snowing...)

Uli Germann

Ulrich Germann was born in Freiburg, Germany, on September 25, 1969. In 1975, his family moved to Stuttgart, where he lived until he graduated from the Karls-Gymnasium (high school) in 1988. The next eight years he spent studying linguistics and Japanese at universities and college in Marburg, Germany (Philipps-University, 1988-1990), Claremont, CA (Pomona College, 1990-91), Bochum, Germany (Ruhr-University, 1991-92 and 1993-1996), and Sendai, Japan (Tohoku University, 1992-93.)

He finally received the degree of Magister Artium in General Linguistics, Research into Foreign Language Teaching, and Japanese Language and Literature from the Ruhr-University, Bochum, in November, 1996.

Currently, he works as a computational linguist on the JapanGloss project. His general research interests include Natural Language Processing, Machine Translation, Semantics, Information Extraction and Processing, and the relation between language, mind and brain.

Besides linguistics, he is interested in photography, cookery, and traveling.

Jonathan Graehl

The farthest I’ve ventured from California since my birth in Santa Clara has been to the ancestral home in Utah. I am the first child of five, and, as such, my mom fretted constantly over me, teaching me to play piano, and bribing me to read my first books. I would watch my dad do mysterious things to computers, and, more or less, I’m still doing the same things that filled my childhood—reading science fiction, listening to and playing music, tampering with computers, and, occasionally, learning something. I was raised a devout Mormon, but grew out of it some time after my parents’ divorce. I played Grieg’s piano concerto with the New West Symphony before I left for college, which was exhilarating, but at the same time, I’m glad I’ll never have to practice piano again. Next fall I’ll be nineteen-years-old and a senior in the USC undergraduate Computer Engineering / Computer Science major. At ISI, (in the Machine Translation Group) I’m programming some finite state, graph, and learning algorithms and applying them to problems in natural language.

Venk Natarajan

I was born in May 1976 in Inverness, Illinois, the second of two children. I went to William Fremd High School in Palatine in 1990, moved over to the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy in 1991, and graduated from there in 1994. I then enrolled in Carnegie Mellon University, where I am majoring in Computer Science. I will be
entering my senior year there this Fall. I am presently working with the SIMS Group.

Hunter Payne

I was born and raised on a farm near Danville, Kentucky. I currently attend Carnegie Mellon University, where I am a Computer Science major. I will be a senior this fall. This Summer, I’ve been working with the SIMS Group. During the school year I work for 6dos Inc.

Bruce Jakeway

I have been very busy since leaving ISI last year. I went to the International Natural Language Generation conference in England, where I demonstrated work I had completed for my Master’s thesis from the University of Waterloo. I then returned to Canada and started school at Trinity Western University, near Vancouver, BC, taking a Master of Linguistics and Exegesis degree. Having completed the linguistics portion this past year, I will return again in the Fall to work on Biblical interpretation. I hope to apply my linguistic and Biblical skills to the task of Bible translation somewhere in the world, perhaps following in the footsteps of ISI’s Bill Mann.

This summer, I returned to ISI to work with Eduard Hovy. We are trying to combine various ontologies into a single merged ontology, in a semi-automatic process. We are currently working with the CYC, EDR, MIKROKOSMOS, and Sensus ontologies. I have also returned to the soccer crowd.

One big change this year is that I have a car, so you may see me driving to work on occasion instead of navigating my bike through LA traffic. The drive down the I-15 from Edmonton, Alberta was fabulous, including stops at Yellowstone and the Grand Canyon—you only get one chance in life to do certain things, carpe diem!

Joshua Margulis

I am originally from San Diego, California, and have been at USC for one year. This fall I will begin my sophomore year in Computer Engineering and Computer Science.

So far this summer, I have done a lot of “data massaging,” while working with the SIMS Group, in order to run machine learning algorithms. The data that I have been working with involves past weather and flight data for nearly two hundred airports in the US. Apparently, I am almost done with my phase of this particular project, and plan to embark on a different set of tasks soon.

Some activities I enjoy include: volleyball, basketball, people watching, doodling, cooking, watching movies, doing community service, flying kites, and bunches of other stuff, too.

If you are interested further, you can stop by. I am in room 960 most weekdays from 10:00 AM to 6:30 PM.

Jay Modi

Hello. I am a recent graduate of (surprise) CMU, with a bachelors in CS/Math. I’ll be working with Craig Knoblock and Steve Minton on the Ariadne project. I am new to the West Coast and I got to say...the weather is mighty fine. Sure beats Pittsburgh anyway. I like to play soccer, drive fast, my turns on are.....whoa, wrong biography. Anyways, ISI seems like a great place so far, and I am glad I came here.
Ben Moore

This summer I will be integrating a speech recognition system with the VET project. In January, I will start undergraduate studies at Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts.

My other interests include the study of the Japanese language and culture (in particular origami (paper folding) and shodoo (Japanese Style calligraphy.) My favorite food is sushi. As a snack I love rice crackers.

Hajimemashite doozo yoroshiku.

Andrew n marshall

I work here too. Room 949.

Maria Muslea

I was born and raised in Cluj (Romania), which is the un-official capital of Transilvania (you know, Dracula and all that stuff).

I started “studying” German when I was just 3-years-old, and after some time I became really good at it. Unfortunately for my German skills, when I was 11-years-old I came to the US for two years. Since I didn’t speak any English at that time, learning the English language became a priority. By the time I started to speak English well, I realized that all my German had drifted away and I couldn’t even mumble a single sentence in German.

In high school I loved Math and Biology, but mostly I loved my group of friends. High school was probably the most wonderful time of my life. After high school came college and with it, Ion. We met in my first month of college at a meeting of the rock-climbing club, and we have been together since. He taught me to love the mountains, so throughout my college years, we spent all of our summers hiking or backpacking in the mountains, and all our winters skiing ... in the mountains, too.

I come from a family of Linguists, so when I decided to major in Computer Science, my whole family was shocked. But in the end, they got used to the idea and accepted my choice. When college was coming to an end, I started to worry about what I would be doing next: should I go to grad school or should I start working? I was lucky enough to have the choice made for me: Ion was accepted at West Virginia University, and immediately after, I got my BS, so we left for the US. After a month of staying home, I made up my mind: I was definitely ready to go back to school! Consequently, I volunteered to work at the Concurrent Engineering Research Center as a programmer, hoping to eventually get a research assistantship. By the end of the semester, I had the RA-ship, and I had been accepted at West Virginia University in the MS program. After one-and-a-half years of school, and I was ready to give the real world a try.

My first job was as a software engineer at 2-Way Media, Inc., a company that produces a bi-monthly entertainment CD-ROM, and my next stop was ISI. Here I worked for 4 months in the Dealmaker project, and very recently I started working in the SIMS project, where I took over the “CORBA compliance” part. My main task within SIMS will consist of porting SIMS to C++.

In the Spring ’97 semester, I also taught a course at USC, “Principles of Software Development” (CSCI-201). As I had never taught before, I was a bit worried about my teaching skills. However, I found that teaching can be extremely rewarding, and I enjoyed it a lot.

Katya Shuldiner

My full name is Yekaterina Vladimirovna Shuldi-ner, but I don’t expect you to pronounce that. Simply call me Katya. I was born in Latvia, a Baltic state that used to be a part of the former Soviet Union. 50% of the population in Riga, the capital of Latvia (with about 1 million residents), speak Russian, and so do I. So when I turned 15 years of age, during the heat of perestroika, I was very surprised to find out that I was a Soviet occupant, despite the fact that my parents moved to Latvia with their families as little kids. (Actually, my grandfather was indeed in the military, but I have no idea whether he participated in any nasty acts of the Soviet army). I entered my adolescence at a time when nobody knew what the truth was, or what was a lie. I remember my history teacher in high school, who had an old history book in one hand and a newspaper in the other,
presenting us with completely contradictory facts. My parents decided that I would have a better future in the US, so we left Latvia five years ago. Now, I think that I understand the feelings of native Latvians, whose country was occupied by the Soviet Union 40 years ago, yet I still cannot fit the label “occupant” to myself.

While living in Latvia, I studied German at the University of Latvia, and worked as an interpreter (unfortunately, following the law of “if you don’t use it, you lose it,” I can barely speak German now).

I lived in New York for a few years and then moved to Los Angeles, to study at USC. Two months ago I finally graduated with a B.A. in Psychology and I plan to continue my education in the field of Clinical Psychology. While focusing on research in schizophrenia, in fact, I conducted a study on hallucinations, using a dataset collected in Denmark by my mentor, Dr. Sarnoff Mednick. I find it fascinating to learn how the human brain works, and why it sometimes does not function properly.

I always wanted to be a dancer, but it just wasn’t my destiny. I took ballet classes very seriously for seven years, but failed in the third round of examinations for entrance to the ballet school when I was nine-years-old. That was my first big disappointment. I was told that I wasn’t skinny enough to be a ballerina. I guess I am really not that skinny, but now I dream about gaining a few pounds. After that big disaster in my ballet career, I continued to take classes, and then switched to Ballroom dancing. There is a great Ballroom and Latin Dance Team at USC, and I had been dancing there for almost two years until I had a baby.

My husband Mikhail (Michael) is from Ukraine. Accidentally, we moved to New York almost at the same time, lived in the same neighborhood, volunteered in the same hospital. I even worked in a pharmacy right across from his house, but we did not know each other until our friends introduced us. A few months after that, I moved to LA, and we had a long-distance relationship for 1.5 years. It was very romantic and very painful, but we went through the difficult time, and now we are blessed with a wonderful 10-month old son, Vladimir. Baby Vlad loves to read my books, to open my drawers and cabinets, to turn on the maximum volume on the stereo, and to turn off the TV at the most interesting scenes. He also processes all information about the world through his mouth, including things like flowers, sand, and garbage.

I am a new Project Assistant at ISD, so please stop by my office if you need any help (including psychological :)).

Diana Sidarkeviciute
(pronounced di’ana, sidarkevi’chu:te)

My life-story begins in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania (if you want to refresh your knowledge about the country, check http://neris.mii.lt/.) I studied applied mathematics at Vilnius University (one of the oldest universities in Northern Europe, established in 1579.) I graduated during the summer that the last Soviet tanks were withdrawn from the streets of Vilnius, as well as from the rest of Lithuania. This lucky turn of events entirely changed the rest of my story. I came to the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm as a visiting researcher, and was later admitted as a graduate student. I defended my Licentiate degree of Technology (partial Ph.D.), just one month ago and came to ISI for the summer.

My research work started in Lithuania, where I participated in an industrial project for the development of a knowledge-based system for the automatic production of the drawings of electroplating lines. It was there that I became interested in languages for specifying graphical views. Recently, I worked on issues concerning the declarative specification of program analysis & visualisation tools - the subject of my licentiate thesis. I am currently working with Lewis Johnson on the MediaDoc Project.

I still keep my room in Vilnius, but live permanently in Stockholm (temporarily in Santa Monica). So, don’t ask me to where my heart belongs.

Marcus Thiebaux

Primarily I am here to work with our new Idesk virtual environment and develop new ‘interdisciplinary’ channels so that a broader range of information fields can take advantage of immersive graphical display technology, and site-to-site interaction.

I’m split between Lewis Johnson’s VET project and Carl Kesselman’s Globus project. This basically means that I’m scrambling to get up to speed
in some unfamiliar territory on two fronts, which keeps me on my toes, and stimulates those under-exercised parts of the brain.

Right now I’m still adjusting to the California lifestyle. I grew up in Nova Scotia, Montreal, and Maryland, and went to college in Ohio and Chicago. I suffer from vague nostalgic recollections of the Colorado Rockies from early childhood. Home is where my hat is.

My latest hobby is learning how to commute safely around the marina on bicycle, and I seek out any opportunity to climb big hills, or play with airborne objects on the beach.

Upcoming ISI AI Seminars:

There are no seminars scheduled for the next few weeks. Please see the Artificial Intelligence Seminar Series Web page at: http://www.isi.edu/~gil/isi-ai-seminar.html

Computer Trivia

(Companies, Business, and Money)

1. In 1980, the largest public offering since that of the Ford Motor Company in 1956 was made by what computer company?

2. As of 1993, approximately how many Microsoft employees owned more than $1 million apiece in Microsoft stock: 15, 150, or 2000?

3. What famous economic advisor appeared in an ad for Apple Computer in 1985?

4. From the date of its inception, how many years did it take Compaq to make the Fortune 500 - in the process becoming the fastest-growing corporation in history?

5. Before it changed to its current name in 1924, what was IBM originally called?

6. Dick Heiser opened the world’s first microcomputer store in West Los Angeles in 1975. Was it called Computerland, or The Computer Store?

7. According to The Red Herring Investment Monthly, what high-tech company raised the most venture capital in 1993?

8. During the late 1980’s and early 1990’s, what computer company had the largest average growth in both sales and earnings per share?

9. In 1972, Nolan Bushnell and Ted Dabney pooled their available funds to start Atari Corporation. How much did each put in: $250, $1,000, or $5,000?

10. For each of the following stock symbols, name the computer company: BROD, COMS, CS.

All questions come from The Official Computer Bowl Trivia Book by Christopher Morgan.

Travel Tips

Vacation n.
A period of time devoted to rest or relaxation, as from work or study.

Everyone knows that ISDers are some of the hardest working people in the Marina South Tower, so we (the Editorial Staff) thought it appropriate to give our busy crew some hints on how to make the most of vacation time.

General Safety

Get as much information as possible about the destination (foreign or domestic), especially if you will be traveling alone. If you are unfamiliar with the local language, carry a card or matchbook with the hotel’s name and address. You can show them to a cab driver or police officer in the event you get lost. If leaving the United States, make up several pocket cards with key phrases in the local language. (i.e., “Which way is the airport?” and “Where are the restrooms?”)

Early Planning is Essential

Book as early as possible. Airlines, hotels, cruise ships, tours and trains fill up rapidly prior to holidays, and peak travel season. Plan your departure for off-peak hours to avoid the heaviest crowds. If possible, try to plan around holiday black-out dates when the lowest fares are usually unavailable.

We hope these tips were helpful, and look forward to lots of vacation stories for next edition of The InSiDer!
Soccer Anyone?

There is a group of ISIers who regularly get together to play pickup soccer games on Fridays at noon (12:00 P.M. to 1:30 P.M.). If you would like to play with us, please send email to Pedro Szekely <szekely> and he will add you to the mailing list. It is a lot of fun, and the skill level is not important (the games are very friendly.)

ISD Birthday Celebrations

August 1997

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Computer Trivia Answers

1. Apple Computer Company
2. (2000 was also reported)
3. Alan Greenspan
4. Four Years
5. The Computer Science Company
6. The Computer Store
7. (An Indian restaurant located in the area)
8. Sun Microsystems
9. $250
10. Broderbund, 3Com, Caberion Systems