Introducing.. Aram Galstyan
ISD’s newest researcher

By Aram Galstyan

I was born on July 4, 1973 in Yerevan, Armenia (an ancient and tiny country in the region between Black and Caspian seas). As a regular teenager I dreamed to become someone rich and famous, so I started playing guitar and drums in my house. After a couple of years and little progress (to the relief of my family and neighbors), my ambitions were strongly shattered. Then someone told me that an alternative way to become famous was to win a Nobel Prize. So I decided to become a physicist and applied to the Yerevan State University. My first experience with a physics lab was disastrous. The supervisor had unwisely left me alone in a lab full of fancy equipment (lasers, microscopes, etc.), and I couldn’t help turning different knobs on and off until I short-circuited a very expensive electronic microscope. As a result I was banned from the lab, and was suggested to seek a career outside of experimental physics. I gladly followed the advice, and in 1995 I obtained my BS “Diploma with Honors” in theoretical solid state physics.

In 1996 I went to pursue my doctorate degree at the University of Utah. In the course of my graduate career I consumed around 150 gallons of beer, scored 31 goals for the department’s soccer team, and cheered for the Utah Jazz as they swept the Lakers in the NBA

(Continued on page 13)

Tales from the dark-side

By Jonathan Gratch

As some of you may have heard, I recently jumped ship from ISI to work for this peculiar place down the road called the Institute for Creative Technologies. Two factors were key in this decision. First, I am left-handed and everyone knows that left-handed people are more creative than right-handers (though we are more prone to flunk out of school or end up in mental institutions). Second, it’s clear that in the new millennium, the entertainment industry will be a much more effective tool of American imperialism than American military power. The writing is on the wall; the future of AI funding will be in the hands of Mickey Mouse.

For those that don’t know, ICT is a federally funded research center paid for by the U.S. military and intended to bring

(Continued on page 12)
### November 2000

**1** — IJCAI 2001: Workshop Acceptance Notification

**4** — IJCAI 2001: Tutorial Acceptance Notification

**8** — The 2001 AAAI Spring Symposium Series: Notification of Acceptance for papers.

**12** — Erin Shaw’s Birthday!

**14** — Andrew Philpot’s Birthday!

**15** — IJCAI 2001: Deadline for receipt of Call for Participation.

**23 & 24** — ISI Holiday

**26** — Ulf Hermjakob’s Birthday!

**28** — Dan Rosenberry’s Birthday!

**29** — Richard Whitney’s Birthday!

**December 1, 2000** — IJCAI 2001: Deadline for receipt of the Title, Abstract, and Speaker Biography for Tutorials.

**4** — AI-ED 2001: Call for participation submissions deadline.


**8** — Autonomous Agents 2001: Deadline for Workshop and Tutorial Proposals.

**13** — Fanny Mak and Paul Rosenbloom’s Birthday!


**25** — Wei-Min Shen’s Birthday! & ISI Holiday

**29** — Richard Whitney’s Birthday!

**December 25, 2000** — Fanny Mak and Paul Rosenbloom’s Birthday!

**December 26, 2000** — Ulf Hermjakob’s Birthday!

**December 28, 2000** — Dan Rosenberry’s Birthday!

**December 29, 2000** — Richard Whitney’s Birthday!

**December 1, 2000** — IJCAI 2001: Deadline for receipt of the Title, Abstract, and Speaker Biography for Tutorials.

**December 4, 2000** — AI-ED 2001: Call for participation submissions deadline.


**December 13, 2000** — Fanny Mak and Paul Rosenbloom’s Birthday!


**December 25, 2000** — Wei-Min Shen’s Birthday! & ISI Holiday

### December 2000

**3** — Autonomous Agents 2001: Paper notification mailed.

**4** — Autonomous Agents 2001: Deadline for Workshop and Tutorial Proposals.

**10** — Fanny Mak and Paul Rosenbloom’s Birthday!


**24** — HOLIDAY

**25** — HOLIDAY

**26** — HOLIDAY

**27** — HOLIDAY

**28** — HOLIDAY

**29** — HOLIDAY

**30** — HOLIDAY
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<thead>
<tr>
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**ISD Publications**


M. Tallis, J. Kim, Y. Gil.
User Studies of Knowledge Acquisition Tools: Methodology and Lessons Learned. *Journal of Experimental and Theoretical Artificial Intelligence* (accepted)

**Schedule of Events**

- January 1, 2001 — ISI Holiday
- January 14, 2001 — Kevin Knight’s Birthday!
- January 15, 2001 — ISI Holiday
- January 17, 2001 — The 2001 Spring Symposium Series: Material to be included in the working notes of the symposium must be received by this date.
- January 22, 2001 — Larry Kite’s Birthday!
- January 24, 2001 — Deepak Ravichandran’s Birthday!
- January 26, 2001 — AI-ED 2001: Paper Notifications received by this date.
Hi Folks,

Since this is an academically focused research lab, I decided to craft my biography in a familiar format, namely as an exam. You can drop by room 948 for the answers, or if you prefer a more asynchronous method, email me at: fraser@isi.edu.

Alex Fraser...

Section 1 (True or False)
=================================
1) is from Arlington, Massachusetts
2) is a high-school drop-out
3) has lived various places in Europe and the Middle East
4) spent 9 years doing systems programming for commercial and non-profit organizations
5) studied Translation at the University of Granada, Spain
6) most recently worked at BBN
7) has begun the pursuit of a Ph.D. in CS at USC.

Section 2 (Multiple Choice)
=================================
1) speaks:
   A) German
   B) French
   C) Spanish
   D) Some Arabic (MSA)
   E) A few words of Klingon after he has had something to drink
   F) All of the above
2) has political views including:
   A) Anarchist
   B) Communist
   C) Libertarian
   D) Very, very confused
   E) All of the above
3) did undergraduate work involving
   A) Economics
   B) Computer Science
   C) Linguistics
   D) German Literature
   E) Indonesian Music
   F) All of the above
4) implemented satellite communications projects for health-care workers on location in:
   A) Eastern Africa
   B) Southern Africa
   C) Western Africa
   D) Bolivia
   E) Haiti
   F) His dreams
   G) All of the above
5) has been known to be
   A) interested in Machine Translation
   B) a “Turist”
   C) a hopelessly addicted player of board games
   D) a sailor
   E) an aficionado of the game Assassin
   F) a breakfast cereal in a former life
   G) All of the above

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Hi! My name is Brent Lance. I am a graduate student working for Jeff Rickel. If you would like to know more about me, please visit me in my office or email me!

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Born and raised in Detroit, Michigan,
New Faces, cont.

Brian Oakes is a recent transplant to Los Angeles. Before moving to LA, he was a high school art teacher for several years in St. Clair Shores, Michigan. He also taught English as a Second Language in Ulsan City, South Korea for one year. His background is in graphic arts and education but his growing interest in animation and computer graphics led him to USC’s School of Cinema Television. He is starting his second year in USC’s MFA Program in Film, Video, and Computer Animation. Brian is still trying to acclimate himself to Los Angeles. Like most Angelenos, he enjoys the weather and the close proximity to the Pacific, hates the traffic and reckless driving, but most of all he likes the food, hamburgers in particular. He says, "LA is #1 for hamburgers. After a stressful day, a good Double-Double will cure just about any of problems".

If you have specific questions or need help, one of the other admin support people can help you navigate through my menus to accomplish your tasks!

CHANDRASHEKAR RAMANAN
RAMANAN@ISI.EDU

Hi! I am a graduate student working for Milind Tambe. If you would like to know more about me, please visit me in my office or email me!

DEEPAK RAVICHANDRAN
GDEEPAK@ISI.EDU

Hi! My name is Deepak. Deepak in Sanskrit means light (does that name really suit me?) I am new PhD student in Computer Science working under Dr. Eduard Hovy.

Since this is supposed to be an autobiography...I begin. I was born on 24th January, 1979 in a small Indian town called Salem (Tamil Nadu, India). I have been entirely brought up in the western city of India, Bombay. Bombay is a very lively city with a population of more than 10 million! Though Bombay is quite a congested city with lots of pollution and dirt...believe it or not...it is the heart of Indian film industry (the country that produces the maximum number of films in the world...yeah more than Hollywood!) You can call Bombay the Hollywood of India.

Like all Indians I do love cricket. Cricket is my passion. I studied my Undergrad in the University Of Bombay with Bachelor of Engineering (B.E.) Degree in Computer Engineering. Having spent 21 years of my life in India, I moved from the Hollywood of India to the real Hollywood!

America.. in the first week had a big sur-

(Continued on page 9)
Guess Who!!

Five members of the division were randomly selected to be featured in this section. Try to determine who these individuals are based on the answers they provided. The identities of these individuals are located at the bottom of page 13.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>ISDer #1</th>
<th>ISDer #2</th>
<th>ISDer #3</th>
<th>ISDer #4</th>
<th>ISDer #5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. My height:</td>
<td>5’8”</td>
<td>1727 mm</td>
<td>If you’re reading this seriously, then you are probably taller than me</td>
<td>5’ 9” (I think)</td>
<td>5’8” 176 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Eye color:</td>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>See hair color</td>
<td>ISD does not have paper-writing pens in this color</td>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Hair Color:</td>
<td>Blonde turning gray</td>
<td>See eye color</td>
<td>V=0 in RGB system</td>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Birthplace:</td>
<td>Madison, WI</td>
<td>The country that has the .ua domain.</td>
<td>Dig a very very deep hole in the Marina</td>
<td>Maldon, UK</td>
<td>Taipei, Taiwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Hometown:</td>
<td>Madison, WI</td>
<td>The Big Apple</td>
<td>Where the most famous item is “Ham”</td>
<td>Chelmsford, UK</td>
<td>Taipei, Taiwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Pets</td>
<td>HRCH Cocoa, CDX (Labrador Retriever) and Tammy (turtle). HRCH stands for Hunting Retriever Champion, and CDX stands for Champion Dog Excellent (she holds as many degrees as my wife and I combined)</td>
<td>Do significant others count?</td>
<td>dao.isi.edu</td>
<td>Use to have a cat called Bela (after the graph theorist Bela Bollobas)</td>
<td>Gold Fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Been to Africa?</td>
<td>Nope</td>
<td>In dreams</td>
<td>Nope</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. If I had to choose.. I would prefer (croutons or Bacon Bits):</td>
<td>Bacon Bits</td>
<td>Actually, I kind of like imitation bacon bits.</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>Bacon Bits</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. 2 or 4 doors (on your car):</td>
<td>2 doors and no roof</td>
<td>2, but my next car would definitely be 4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. On the 9th floor my office is located:</td>
<td>West-side</td>
<td>South-side</td>
<td>West-side</td>
<td>East-side</td>
<td>East-side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I put these things in my coffee:</td>
<td>Irish Whiskey</td>
<td>2% milk, or 1/2 &amp; 1/2 when I feel decadent</td>
<td>Salt and Pepper</td>
<td>That talcum powder stuff in the lounge</td>
<td>Sugar, Cream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Favorite salad dressing:</td>
<td>Blue Cheese</td>
<td>Caesars, as long as the anchovies are real</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Blue Cheese</td>
<td>Thousand Island</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Continued on page 7)
Ed Hovy Gets Own Parking Space

Extracted from ISI announcements

On August 15, 2000 the title of ISI Fellows was created to recognize members of the ISI staff who achieved a high level of external distinctions through notable contributions to science and/or technology. One of the first two ISI Fellows is Eduard Hovy.

Ed Hovy is a world expert in natural language processing. His work has significantly influenced a number of research areas, including language generation, machine translation, text summarization, ontology development and maintenance, and multimedia interfaces. Ed is known for articulating new questions that set the agenda for the field and for his management of influential software prototyping efforts. In addition to leading the Natural Language Group at ISI, Ed is a research associate professor in the USC School of Engineering and co-director of Master’s Degree Program in Computational Linguistics. He currently serves as president of both the Association of Machine Translation in the Americas and the International Association for Machine Translation, and is vice president of the Association for Computational Linguistics.

Ed has been elected to the presidency of three leading professional organizations in his field (the Association of Machine Translation in the Americas, the International Association for Machine Translation, and the Association for Computational Linguistics). Now, ISI is providing its own form of well deserved recognition.

Simultaneously with his existing titles, Ed will hold the title of ISI Fellow along with its associated responsibilities and benefits – his own parking space!

Guess Who!!, cont.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
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<th>ISDer #3</th>
<th>ISDer #4</th>
<th>ISDer #5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13. Lucky Number and why:</td>
<td>23, don’t know why</td>
<td>9, because if you sum up the digits of any number, the presence of a 9 will never change that sum</td>
<td>9, for it last long</td>
<td>I can see why you made this question number 13.</td>
<td>14, the date I got married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Favorite quote from a movie:</td>
<td>“I always give myself good advice, but I rarely follow it” - Alice in Wonderland</td>
<td>“This snakeskin jacket here is a symbol of my individuality and my belief in personal freedom” - Nicholas Cage in Wild at Heart</td>
<td>“Do or do not, there is no try.” - Yoda</td>
<td>“Mrs. Murphy, would it help if we told you that we are asking Matt to do is a Holy Thing?” - The Blues Brothers</td>
<td>“I’ll be back.” - Terminator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Favorite TV Show:</td>
<td>MASH</td>
<td>Oz</td>
<td>Friends (for now)</td>
<td>Right now, Malcolm in the Middle. Ever, probably Fawlty Towers</td>
<td>Discovery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Favorite Type of Ice Cream:</td>
<td>Fudge Brownie</td>
<td>Lappert’s Pecan Praline</td>
<td>Vanilla</td>
<td>Starbucks</td>
<td>Vanilla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Favorite Sesame Street Character:</td>
<td>Oscar the Grouch</td>
<td>Oscar</td>
<td>Ernie</td>
<td>Elmo</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Sprite or 7-Up:</td>
<td>7up</td>
<td>Sprite</td>
<td>Sprite</td>
<td>Sprite</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. The color of my bedroom’s carpet:</td>
<td>Light gray (the kind real estate agents always install)</td>
<td>Hardwood floor &amp; rugs</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. How many times did you fail your Permit and/or Drivers License Test?</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>1 for Permit, 0 for Drive test</td>
<td>Once...</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Where in ISD?

Do you look around your colleague’s offices when you visit them? Check out the neat things they have? Test your observation skills! Where in the division can you find these items?

The answers are located on the bottom of page 13.
prise in store for me. I really had some bad experiences in the Metro Bus (wow!!!..drunken men throwing abuses!) and after my friend got mugged near the USC campus, I thought, what next?

But I am happy that things have gone fine since then. I really love working in ISI. It has a very friendly atmosphere! I have one big problem in America. I can’t still find how to decode the telephone bill. Could somebody please tell me what those figures (there are many of them!) actually mean?

JIGNESH MEHTA
JIGNESH@ISI.EDU

I was born in Gujarat, India. I obtained my bachelors degree in computer engineering at L.D.College of Engineering, Ahmedabad, India. I came to US to pursue my Masters degree. I joined USC because of its reputation and its faculty. Bachelors was easy and fun, while masters is no fun and not at all easy. I ended up staying at the computer labs at the school rather than at home. I do wonder sometimes that why did I rent an apartment when I could have easily managed without it.

My hobbies do not include reading. Isn’t it boring to see those 26 characters ordered in a different algorithm by different people called the authors of those arrangements? I love soccer and I like seeing it as well as playing it. When I was in India I played a lot of soccer (it is called football there) and I also did end up with a few medals.

Back home in India I used to hate cooking. After coming to the United States, I have developed a new hobby and that is cooking. I was tired eating pizza and other junk food and realized that the only way to survive here was to start cooking.

It has been a year since I came to LA and I have not seen much of LA. For me LA just means the labs at USC and ISI. This semester I have decided to explore LA a bit so that I at least have something to talk about when I go back home in December 2000.

LIZ HALL
LIZH@ISI.EDU

My life started in New York where I was born 23 years ago. I was quickly uprooted and found myself heading for the state where the bugs are just as big as the cowboy hats--Texas. The rumors about the bugs proved to be true after a year my parents decided to keep moving west and we ended up in LaVerne, California. It would take only two years before we were up and moving again. This time to the east—The Middle East, Yanbu, Saudi Arabia. For the next eight years my weekends were filled with camping trips, fishing trips, sand storms and even one very unexpected locust attack!

In 1989 after missing out on all the ‘80’s style and fashion in the US it was finally time to come back. We moved back to our house in LaVerne and tried to get re-acquainted with life in California.

In the fall of 1995, I started my freshman year at Loyola Marymount University. The next four years I managed to keep myself busy playing lacrosse, volunteering, being in a sorority, CLC (Christian Life Community) and even managed to study finance in my spare time. All good things must come to an end and in May 1999 I graduated with a degree in Finance and was ready for the real world.

I spent the next year at British Airways in outside sales and discovered that the benefits of the job did not outweigh the job itself. I had a great experience there, but knew after a year that it was time to move on. I took a couple months off and traveled to Florida and Europe. When I came back I had two choices—move home with Mom and Dad or find a job, I chose the latter and the rest is history.

(Continued on page 10)
Nowadays in my spare time I travel, take Spanish and have recently discovered the world of arts and crafts (I am no Martha Stewart yet, but give me a few years!) I also love going to the movies, where I believe that the previews are one of the best parts! I am excited to be a part of ISD and look forward to getting to know all of you better.

MAHINDRA PAI
MPAI@ISI.EDU

I came to LA in Fall 00, LA being the second city I visited in US after Bloomington, which is near Illinois. I got my Bachelor’s degree in Computer Engineering (’99) from the University Of Pune, (INDIA) from the college Pune Institute Of Computer Technology. Was working for a year after my Bachelors’ with WIPRO Technologies, India. During this last one year, I have enjoyed my work a lot. I had a chance to visit some places in Europe like Paris, Rome, Pisa, Antwerpen, Amsterdam and the nearby places during my assignment for Wipro in Belgium.

Music is something I love besides people, and music can be any kind except something what people call HEAVY METAL. I like to explore new things in life, not necessarily related to Computers, I have yet to explore LA though. Cooking good Indian food is something I do when I get time. I try to visit new places on weekends, but have not got many free weekends since I have joined USC.

I am working with Yolanda Gil, James Blythe and Jihie here at ISI on the EXPECT project.

MIRUNA TICREA
TICREA@ISI.EDU

My biography:

Name: Miruna Tircia
Country of origin: proud to be a Romanian
(for the time being)

Age: somewhere between 20-30 (still rowing up)
Hobbies: haven’t figured out yet
Interests: I can’t figure out my hobbies.
What makes you think I know anything about my interests?!

PABLO YANEZ
PYANEZ@ISI.EDU

I have came just for a few times to ISI, and this is my first visit to USA too, so I will try to enjoy as much as I can in my visit although is not the best moment for an European to come here( -> $) . I think, this time is enough to feel how is the life in ISI, it is really nice place to learn if you want it, but the most interesting thing is to see the great variety of people who is working here.

PRIYANKA PUSHKARNA
PRIYANKA@ISI.EDU

I grew up in a small but beautiful city called Gandhinagar in the state of Gujarat. I spent most of my life in Gandhinagar and I simply loved my school. I am still in touch with many of my high school friends and teachers. I really miss my family and friends a lot. One of my favorite hobbies is reading. Like most other Indians I love watching Cricket and am a strong supporter of the Indian Cricket team.

I obtained my bachelors degree in computer engineering from Gujarat University, India and was awarded the gold medal for topping the university. I came to Los Angeles in the fall of ’99 to pursue my Masters degree in computer science and I have had a wonderful time here. I will be graduating in December 2000 and am really looking forward to it.

SUBASHIS AIKAT
SHISH@ISI.EDU

I am a student in the MFA program in

(Continued on page 12)
Kevin Knight and Daniel Marcu receive the Meritorious Service Award.

Milind Tambe was a speaker at Aether Systems Distinguished Lecture Series at University of Maryland Baltimore County

Milind Tambe was elected to the board of directors of the International Foundation for Multi-agents Systems.

New Research Contracts at ISI

Congratulations to Ed Hovy and Yigal Arens on the DGO2000: dg.o Workshop and Publicity award September 25, 2000. Last year, ISI was one of six groups funded by the NSF to kick off its new program in Digital Government. This program sponsors research in technology that will make it easier for citizens to obtain information in various forms from the Government (Federal, State, and local). With the new grant, NSF funded ISI to hold three conferences (the first was held in LA in May 2000). These conferences bring together researchers, Government officials, people from industry, and social organizations in an attempt to establish a new community that spans research, development, and usage and promotes interaction with Government at all levels.

Congratulations to Lewis Johnson on the Pedagogical Agent Review award June 28, 2000. Under the AGENT REVIEW project, the Naval Air Weapons Center Training Systems Division has commissioned ISI to review the state of the art in pedagogical agent technology. We will also make recommendations as to how the Navy should best invest its research funds in pedagogical agent technology in order to best meet the needs of future Navy training applications.

Congratulations to Kristina Lerman on the POWRE99 award September 1, 2000! The POWRE99: Mathematical Modeling of Multi-Agent Systems proposal explains a novel physics-based approach to the study of multi-agent systems. The goal of the research is to propose a feasible mechanism in which interactions between agents with simple local strategies lead to desirable group behavior in two domains: coalition formation in a multi-agent system and dynamic routing in a sensor network. The proposed mechanism is then analyzed and a mathematical model of the process is constructed. Mathematical analysis will focus on the following questions: What are the important global parameters describing each system? How are these parameters related to individual agent’s behavior? Is it possible to derive the model from the microscopic behaviors of agents? What are the properties of the solutions of the mathematical model? Do they possess a steady or an equilibrium state? Are they stable to perturbations, such as agent failure and environmental changes? The answers to these questions will be valuable to MAS designers, who may want to control the global properties of a large system.

Congratulations to Daniel Marcu on the CONUNDRUM award May 1, 2000! CONUNDRUM: Discourse Treebanking and Tools. Much of the recent progress in natural language processing is due to the existence of large linguistic corpora. Syntactic parsers are nowadays built by collecting statistics over large sets of manually constructed sentence structures. Machine translation systems are built by automatically learning word translation probabilities from large collections of sentence pairs, which are mutual translations of each other. The Conundrum project will build and make available to the natural language community the first large corpus of discourse structures. Such structures reflect the logical organization of coherent texts and can be used to improve the performance of summarization, information retrieval, and machine translation systems. The focus of the project will be on text summarization.
Tales from the dark-side, cont.

(Continued from page 1)

together ideas from Hollywood and the e industry to create more realistic training simulations. Paul Rosenbloom was instrumental in helping USC get this contract and a bunch of folks at ISI work on contracts through ICT (Lewis, Jeff, Stacy, Kate, Kevin, Ed, Richard, Marcus Thiebaux). What this means in practice is we get to work on very expensive video games. It also means we get to work far too hard – nobody told me how much was actually involved in starting up a new institute. My titles include: project leader, demo runner, administrative assistant, program manager, hardware technician, corporate liaison, bat boy...

Jonathan Gratch

If the above-mentioned folks have seemed scarce of late it’s because we all were working towards the official opening of the ICT, which happened a few weeks back. In the matter of a few months the institute went from empty concrete floors to a glittering space-aged (looking) office space and we created out of whole cloth a, if I might say, very cool software demo. We’ve since been visited by the Secretary of the Army, the head of all defense research, about thirty high-tech CEOs (from lycos, amgen, etc) and a hoard of other people that would normally have been considered VIPs before I became so jaded (Oh, another secretary…).

Needless to say, we’re all burnt out. I’ve been asked to write about the experience but rather than trying to create a coherent description, which I’m utterly incapable of doing, I thought I’d string off a list of totally unrelated anecdotes: The institute is headed by Dick Lindheim who was formally an executive vice president at Paramount in charge of Star Trek. The institute definitely has a Star Trek feel. The office was designed by Hermann Zimmerman, the set designer for Star Trek who has personally informed me that he’s never designed a office before (someone recently questioned if he’s every worked in one). The place looks like a starship, complete w/ sliding doors. Each office also contains a bed (standard practice in Hollywood I’m assured). They also don’t contain such mundane 20th century artifacts as desk drawers or file cabinets. Alas, no “Jeffery’s tubes” for those star trek fans.

The opening night was entertaining. Nine hundred people were invited to come to a space that could reasonably entertain maybe 200. Tour guides showed up wearing star trek uniforms. The USC marching band showed a subset I believe). At one point, someone attempted to prevent the secretary of the army from entering a room, not knowing who he was. “I’m the secretary of the Army and I’ll go wherever I want,” was the response. Some items on display: a thermal site for a gun that I was assured “can detect what type of underwear a person is wearing” ; a robot that could detect sounds and aim said thermal site at the person making the noise; a device you strap to your neck that detects you heart rate, breathing, if you are speaking and sends it back to headquarters.

In more serious note, one Army Colonel, after seeing our demo (which illustrates a common dilemma facing peacekeepers in foreign countries), related a similar event that he was involved with in Bosnia, became quite emotional in the telling of the story, and concluded by saying, “You’ve got a system here that makes people feel, and we need that.” I general people seemed quite impressed by our work, which now means we have to give demos to EVERYONE. If you want to know more about what’s going on over here, drop me a line.

New Faces, cont.

(Continued from page 10)

Film, Video, and Computer Animation at USC Cinema-TV and I am working on the visual development and animation in the IMPACT game project at CARTE. My background is in mechanical engineering and software development and I am interested in the art and science of movement as applied to animated visual effects.

The deeper I delve into the art of movement, the more I discover how closely it ties in with kinematics, statics, and dynamics that we studied in mechanical engineering. Where I would like to take it is to bend these rules just enough to create a world and a perception that is based on real forces of nature yet free to bend the rules that dictate these forces. A few weeks ago, one of our teachers, Tom Sito was explaining the concepts of follow-through, overlap, and secondary action in animation and I realized that, essentially, the principle guiding these animation concepts is Newton’s First Law of Motion.

One of my goals is to learn how to create animated narrative for kids via time-based media (film, video, multimedia, etc.) and I feel fortunate to be involved in the interactive game for kids in the IMPACT project here at ISI. I grew up in India and the IMPACT project also allows me to soak up on kids’ culture here in the U.S. Last summer, while trying to understand the fashion design of kids, I spent hours at the 3rd St. Promenade observing and sketching kid attires while sipping latte at the Border’s outdoor cafe. And that’s my job…what a life!
Urban Legends... Commonly found in email...

I was on my way to the post office to pick up my case of free M&M’s, (sent to me because I forwarded their e-mail to five other people, celebrating the fact that the year 2000 is “MM” in Roman numerals), when I ran into a friend whose brother’s girlfriends neighbor, a young man had just been involved in a terrible accident. This guy went to sleep one night and when he awoke he was in his bathtub and it was full of ice and he was sore all over and when he got out of the tub he realized that HIS KIDNEYS HAD BEEN STOLEN. He saw a note on his mirror that said ‘Call 911!’ but he was afraid to use his phone because it was connected to his computer, and there was a virus on his computer that would destroy his hard drive if he opened e-mail entitled “Join the crew!” He knew it wasn’t a hoax because he himself was a computer programmer who was working on software to prevent a global disaster in which all the computers get together and distribute the $250.00 Neiman-Marcus secret cookie recipe under the leadership of Bill Gates. Luckily he was only a few blocks from the hospital -the one where that little boy who is dying of cancer is, the one whose last wish is for everyone in the world to send him an e-mail and the American Cancer Society has agreed to pay him a nickel for every e-mail he receives. I sent him two e-mails and one of them was a bunch of x’s and O’s in the shape of an angel (if you get it and forward it to more than 10 people, you will have good luck but for 10 people you will only have OK luck and if you send it to fewer than 10 people you will have BAD LUCK). So anyway, the poor guy tried to drive himself to the hospital, but on the way he noticed another car driving without its lights on. To be helpful, he flashed his lights at him and was, promptly shot as part of a gang initiation.

When you just can’t take the stress of research anymore, we morbidly provide.....

... Top Ten Ways to Commit Suicide at ISI

By Jay Modi

10. Try to get past the ever-alert lobby security guards without signing in
9. Succumb to hunger waiting for the elevators at lunch time
8. Get blown into on-coming traffic at the corner of Mindinao and Admiralty
7. Perish in the stairwell after forgetting to take your key card with you
6. Accidentally eat one of those 5-year old candy canes tacked to someone’s door
5. Attempt to drive UP the parking garage at 5:00 pm
4. Go broke and starve after losing job because you failed to form strategic alliances within the pagong tribe and got voted out of ISI.
3. Get caught stealing coffee supplies by Yigal
2. Die in deadly west-side office riot after the next project leader leaves to start a company and finally,
1. Join the project leader in his new company (career suicide :)

Get caught stealing coffee supplies by Yigal”

Aram Galstyan, cont.

(Continued from page 1)

Western Conference Finals. I also wrote a dissertation about electronic and photonic states in inhomogeneous media, which earned me a Ph.D. in theoretical condensed Matter physics last May.

Recently I joined the Intelligent Systems Division at ISI, where, together with Dr. Kristina Lerman, I’ll be working on mathematical modeling of multi-agent systems. In particular, I’m interested in developing physics-based approaches to model local interactions among autonomous agents. Such local (microscopic-level) interactions can give rise to a global (macroscopic) patterns and “emergent behaviors”, a phenomenon that occurs in various physical systems (the Ising model of nearest-neighbor interacting spins is a good example).

I like the atmosphere at ISI, and the life in LA in general. LA has the biggest Armenian community outside of Armenia (300,000 by some accounts), which makes it easier for me “to feel at home”. Also, LA is the home to some of my favorite musicians and bands (Red Hot Chili Peppers, Perry Farrel & Jane’s Addiction, to name a few), that I consider being a big plus too. Outside of work I enjoy reading, playing soccer, and going out to clubs with live music and good beers (see above). And I still play my guitar, though without the previous enthusiasm.

Answers:

1. Object 1: Paul Rosenbloom
   Object 2: Lewis Johnson
   Object 4: Wei-Min Shen

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3. Go broke and starve after losing job
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By Jay Modi

EASTERN CONFERENCE FINALS

Byway Lakehores of the year.

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Byway Lakehores of the year.
A Walk on the Lighter Side…

A service desk for computer users in England once received the following phone call:

**Customer:** Hello, can you help me. The cup holder of my computer broke of.

**Operator:** Did you say cup holder?

**Customer:** Yes, it’s on the front of my computer. It’s to put on your drinks. It broke of.

**Operator:** Was that cup holder on your computer when you bought it or did you buy it later?

**Customer:** No. It was on my computer when I bought it. The name on it is 4X.

On this point the service desk operator begins to laugh. He realizes that the man used his CD-rom player to put on his drinks.
Hey LH — Welcome aboard!! We’ll try not to torture you too much! - FM, KL, LG

Hey LG — did you and EH get into a fight over the parking space? I think he won!!

YKW — Did you know November. 19 is Bad Hair Day?! WATCH OUT!

Have a dandy day!! - ME

Dear DM—Stop singing in your office.. We can hear you!!

Submit to The InSiDer

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Have you fulfilled your COMMUNITY SERVICE?! SIGN UP NOW!!!

How big is yours?

Somewhere something went terribly wrong...

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