Welcome to the first edition of the MARCH newsletter!

We're working on a prettier, more professional means of delivering this news, but for now, plaintext will have to do.

For quite some time now, there has been a feeling that the general membership of MARCH (formerly known as VCF Mid-Atlantic (formerly known as MARCH)) oftentimes does not have a good impression of the situation 'on the ground' at Infoage, while those of us who are in the loop - the steering committee, museum docents, and other local volunteers - oftentimes feel out of touch with the wider membership, who are not at Infoage quite as frequently - perhaps they only come to the workshops, or to the festivals, etc. Whatever the reason, there is a definite disconnect.

After much frustration over constant miscommunications, repetitive explanations, and general confusion, the steering committee has decided to (hopefully) remedy the situation by publishing a monthly-at-minimum newsletter, detailing all the work that the steering committee, docents, volunteers, etc. have accomplished in that time. The task of delivering this newsletter has been given to the acting chairman of the committee - yours truly, Thomas Gilinsky.

First off - a quick refresher of who we are, and what we do!

The MARCH (Mid-Atlantic Retro-Computing Hobbyists, a chapter of the Vintage Computer Federation) steering committee consists of five members, elected by the membership, who serve to guide the operations of MARCH at Infoage - our museum, our collection, the restoration of items in our collection, our events & fundraisers, our club, and so on. For the past year, the committee members have been Dave McGuire, Doug Crawford, Ian Litchfield, Jeff Salzmann, and myself, Thomas Gilinsky. Our three largest priorities this year have been:

1. The opening & acquisition of a Certificate of Occupancy for 'Broadway' - a hallway on Infoage connecting a number of buildings together; acting as a main thoroughfare between the various museums,

2. The repair of our warehouse's roof, which has had severe leaks since it was replaced in 2017, and

3. Acquiring a certificate of occupancy for the 6500 square foot building which is to house 'Museum 4.0'! [This is a CCO permit which allows for people to pass through the building and not a full blown use]

Broadway

Currently, only one active museum - MTM (the Military Technology Museum) - connects directly to Broadway, though two future museums - the Association of Old Crows' electronic warfare museum, and our very own Museum 4.0 -will be right off Broadway. MTM proved to be instrumental in helping us to get Broadway ready for a C.O., as Rick Wark - MTM's curator - has a wealth of knowledge in construction and contracting, and helped us get Broadway to a point where it could pass inspection this past summer, allowing it to finally be open for the public for the first time since Camp Evans was decommissioned in the late '90s! We're still working on sprucing things up a bit, as the original interiors were torn out years ago due to water damage. Currently, two thirds of Broadway only have temporary lighting with no ceilings - we're working to install sheetrock ceilings with recessed lighting. We're also hoping to put up some visual exhibits on the walls, so visitors have something to learn about as they walk down the hallway - Jeff Jonas and Bill Inderrieden have been hard at work putting together a slide rule display for this purpose. If you'd like to help out with labor or designing exhibits, please reach out to the steering committee at `steering_vcfma@vcfed.org`!

The Warehouse

The building where we keep the VCF collection has had a leaky roof for a long time. In 2017, Wall Township (the owners of the property, which is leased by Infoage and subleased by us) sent out a contract to the lowest bidder to replace the roofs on the "H" building complex which our warehouse is a part of. While the new roof was sorely needed, the contractors in question did a very poor job - using insufficient flashing sealant, failing to replace the siding on the cupolas covering the attic vents, using shingle nails that were too long, etc. In addition, the contractors did not repair the building's soffits or gutters. Between all of these factors, the roof kept leaking in spite of the repair!

When the steering committee was first formed in 2019, one of the number one priorities was to save the most critical parts of the collection from leaks in the warehouse. Shelves full of artifacts were relocated to other buildings on campus, while System Source and the Large Scale Systems Museum both graciously agreed to store some of our larger items in their warehouses until we could figure out a more permanent solution. Initially, a plan had been formed to relocate the collection to another now-unoccupied building on campus, which, at the time, was believed to be in better condition. Following a cleanup effort in Summer of 2023 (the building was full of props from the Camp Evans Base of Terror, a halloween event which Infoage used to host up until 2019) it was determined that the new building was in even worse condition than our warehouse - the roof leaked even more, the soffits were ruined, many windows were broken, the doors were missing, etc. The decision was made to cancel the move and start shopping for quotes from contractors to repair our current warehouse.

For the past several months, thanks to the invaluable help of Jeff Brace and Rick Lewis, a number of contractors were brought to our warehouse to give us quotes on building repairs, and

to our surprised relief, many of the estimates were for far less money than we had feared. We are currently in the process of coordinating with Infoage regarding the specific contractors to be hired, and, with fingers crossed, we hope to get the roof, soffits, and gutters all repaired in 2025.

Museum 4.0

After Infoage finally bestowed the building to us following the opening of Broadway, we immediately got to work getting the building ready to pass inspection for an official Certificate of Continued Occupancy - which we were granted on December 5th! We have a long road ahead of us, but the massive new space - the largest we will have for our museum since we first set up in two little rooms in the Marconi Hotel in 2005 - will grant us a wealth of new opportunities for exhibits, machines to run, you name it.

The steering committee has been engaged in a number of other efforts, however, if I were to try and list all of them, this newsletter would take hours to read. We'll hopefully discuss more of them in our newsletters down the line.

Manager Reports

Now, while the steering committee serves to guide operations regarding the MARCH at large, the nitty gritty of how many things get done is left to the individual managers, who operate largely at their own discretion, with guidance and oversight from the committee. At the present moment, these managers are:

Collections Manager (responsible for the collection & collections policy, archival efforts, upkeep of the warehouse, inventorying, and deaccessioning surplus) - Thomas Gilinsky `[thomas.gilinsky@vcfed.org]`

Museum Manager (responsible for curation of museum exhibits, training and organization of docents, and upkeep of the museum) - Doug Crawford `[douglas.crawford@vcfed.org]`

Restorations Manager (responsible for organizing & documenting restorations of artifacts, maintaining stock of components and supplies, and determining restoration policy) - CJ Reha `[cj.reha@vcfed.org]`

Fundraising Manager (responsible for running fundraising events, such as the swap meets, and showrunner for VCF east) - Jeff Brace `[jeffrey@vcfed.org]`

Club Manager (responsible for organizing club meetings/workshops, Festivus, and other club events) - Jeff Salzman `[jeff.salzman@vcfed.org]`

Donations Manager (responsible for coordinating rescues, and determining which donations to accept or reject) - <u>Dean Notarnicola</u> [dean.notarnicola@vcfed.org]

Doug Crawford - Museum

2024 continued the process to bolster the historical and activity content to the museum. Many of the microcomputers now have a historically significant demonstration or activity. Many are games, but there are also productivity activities, and programming. This year we instituted that the Apple II must run Oregon Trail- and this has delighted many, many visitors. I love showing the TRS-80 Model three generating computer screens used in the sets of Star Trek The Motion Picture. The walls are now also quite covered with artifacts and posters that follow the general flow through the museum. We brought the computer games and toys out of the warehouse and put them on the wall. We posterized the 8 Bit microprocessor exhibit with the designers and the principle machines they were used in. We have a sampling of the ISA boards and Apple II boards on wall racks. We integrated some new significant artifacts- IBM plugboard, a SAGE tube module, J. Presper Eckert's Novachord (tied into the ENIAC history), a Silicon Graphics Indigo 2 computer- to name a few.

In practical terms, today we can now tell a good story of computing from the 1940s to 2000 and when appropriate can go into quite a bit of detail about how the computer construction and components changed over time, including background details on tubes, transistors, digital logic, delay line memory, core memory and semiconductor memory, and ICs. The grand idea has been to increase the interest to the general public and be more of a STEM experience for school tours. Our aim is to be a must see place in NJ for all technology interested families and students.

One event that happened this year that points the way of our future is we had a small group from NYC come specifically to visit our museum. The manager of the group treated his team for a day away to see how their craft started. They spent about half the day in the museum. We can do this kind of work and it's a real joy.

To encourage more return visiting, we have theorized being able to give different tours through the museum covering different subject matter but using the same exhibits. For example, first visit might be how the machines shrunk and reduced in cost, another about by how user interfaces evolved, another about operating systems, another on the microcomputer revolution specifically, or why and how certain computers were so influential. Bringing the historical information up to the level of the quality of the restored computers is expected to really increase our reputation in the community and in NJ. Why do we care? We are striving to attain a high level of visibility in order to attract far more visitors, garner a healthy supply of artifact and monetary donations, and perhaps grants.

Some things for 2025: We are now exploring a new layout to the museum to showcase the

artifacts better. And we are really looking forward to the IBM 1130 being back in our hands- and if things work out we'll have a complete working set of punch, reader, computer and printer!

Thomas Gilinsky - Collections

This past year has been very busy as far as the collection is concerned. Aside from the efforts to repair the warehouse detailed above, I have been working tirelessly, alongside a team of local volunteers (such as Andrew Mattera, August Culbert, Wesley Fegen, Steve Lagotte, Doug Megill, and Jason Li) to reorganize and clean up the warehouse and make it far more hospitable to artifacts and volunteers alike. We've been doing 'warehouse days' once a week, typically on sundays, to get artifacts off of pallets and onto storage racks, make improvements to the building's wiring, clean up the bathrooms so that we may hopefully re-activate them soon, and set things up for the eventual installation of a proper HVAC system, allowing us to reliably climate control the entire building. Once that is done, in addition to the roof being repaired, a number of environmentally sensitive artifacts can be brought back into the warehouse, where we will no longer be concerned about them being damaged by heat, humidity, or extreme cold.

Aside from this physical labor, we have also been coordinating with LSSM and System Source to finally set up a proper inventorying system - Collective Access, a free open-source product that is something of an industry standard for museum collections management. Using server hardware donated to us by LSSM and racks and networking hardware donated by Andrew Mattera, we will be able to self-host our own instance of Collective Access at Infoage. Once we get fiber ethernet run to our warehouse - an effort jointly undertaken by Martin Flynn and August Culbert - we will be able to set up terminals in our warehouse and begin the full effort to inventory our entire collection, at long last!

For any inquiries regarding the collection or warehouse, please email me at `thomas.gilinsky@vcfed.org`.

Jeff Brace - Fundraisers

VCF East 2025 preparation is underway!
- Keep checking https://vcfed.org/events/vintage-computer-festival-east/ for the latest information.
- Volunteers are needed for planning. Send an email to vcfeast@vcfed.org if you want to volunteer. General volunteer registration will be available soon.
- Exhibit registration has been finalized so go to Exhibits under VCF East's website: https://vcfed.org/events/vintage-computer-festival-east/vcf-east-exhibits/ .
- For speakers we will have Brian Kernighan (co-creator of UNIX and author of the first C Programming book). We are waiting for confirmation on many other speakers.

- There will be a CoCo 2 classroom this year in the 9059 Classroom. Dean Notarnicola will be the manager. We have Henry Gernhardt (The Break Key) and many other CoCo enthusiasts as instructors. #FujiNet for the CoCo will be shown off as well.
- There are two hotel blocks available now through this website: https://vcfed.org/vcf-east-hotel-blocks/ and a third reserved soon. Volunteers get first pick of the third hotel block.

Swap Meets
- June 7, 2025
- October 18, 2025
- More information: https://vcfed.org/vcf-swap-meet/

CJ Reha - Restorations

This past year has been a whirlwind, and things are looking up in a big way! The recent creation and outfitting of the Dimitry Grabbe Laboratory has enabled us to start tackling wide-scale projects never considered possible before. Our first project is a simultaneous restoration of many of the graphics workstations and mini-supercomputers in the collection, with hopes of outfitting the museum (and future East shows) with working examples of high-performance computing from days past. We currently have systems from Apollo (DN570 Turbo), Silicon Graphics (IRIS 3120 x2 on loan from the Large Scale Systems Museum, Personal Iris), Stardent (Titan 3000/750), Sun (3/260), Symbolics (3620), Tektronix (XD88/30), and Xerox (Daybreak) in the laboratory, actively being worked on and prepared for demonstrations.

All of the machines have had their power supplies reconditioned, and have been powered up in some capacity. The Sun-3/260 and Personal Iris are restored and loaded with an OS and programs; they are practically "ready to go." The SiliconGraphics IRISes and Tektronix XD88 have intact copies of their respective operating systems on disk, and have both been booted, but we are looking for parts for each before they can be considered fully functional. The Apollo and Stardent are awaiting power supply repair; the DN570's VME backplane supply failed catastrophically three times in a row, and I am working on other projects at the moment to alleviate frustration. Finally, the Symbolics 3620 and Xerox Daybreak have good power supplies, but are missing major components hindering restoration until we can source them; the Daybreak needs a monitor and peripheral set, and the Symbolics 3620 is missing half of its boardset and console, being built up from a completely empty case as-found.

We are looking for information, documentation, software, and hardware for all of the above systems - if you have something you think could be helpful, no matter how insignificant, PLEASE e-mail me at `cj.reha@vcfed.org`. We would love to hear from you! More detailed restoration notes on any of the machines (or what we specifically need) are also available upon request.

Upcoming Events

Festivus

our annual holiday party, begins two days after this newsletter comes out - Saturday, December 14th, 2024, at 10 AM. The steering committee will be conducting a town hall Q&A session at 6PM, just before which the results of this year's steering committee elections will be announced! The winners will also be announced both on our mailing list, and the January newsletter.

Our January workshop

will be held on January 11th and 12th - both days beginning at 10 AM - in the large exhibit hall (some of you may know it as building 9032A) at Infoage, 2201 Marconi Road in Wall, NJ. Lately, our monthly workshops have been attracting more and more new members, to a point where we can no longer house everyone in CDL! As such, we're finally returning to the larger space which our workshops used to be held in, though there are some caveats - as we will no longer be directly adjacent to CDL, it will no longer be feasible for us to borrow their tools and equipment during the workshops.

We would like to build up our own stock of gear that we can keep right by the old-new workshop room. We already have some things stockpiled (such as a pretty hefty collection of oscilloscopes, thanks to our new volunteer, Andrew Mattera), but we are a bit thin on more basic supplies, so if you can donate any of the following items, they would be greatly appreciated!
- Soldering irons, Solder, Solder suckers, Solder wick, etc.
- Screwdrivers, Wrenches, Hammers, etc.

- Multimeters
- Solvents (IPA, Acetone, Deoxit, Spray cleaners, etc.)
- First aid (Bandaids, Antiseptic spray, etc.)
- Anything else that you think may come in handy!

Moreover, we will officially be somewhat expanding the scope of the monthly workshops from pure repair to more of a general "Vintage Computer User Group" - you don't *just* have to bring things to fix, you can also bring things to buy and sell, tour the museum, set up your systems for other people to play with, do a LAN party, share software "backups" - if it's somehow related to vintage computing, it's fair game! The repairs will still continue, of course, but they will now (hopefully!) be one activity among many.

We will also be holding general meetings of the membership at the monthly workshops to discuss and decide future MARCH policy with the general membership, much akin to our steering committee town hall sessions at Festivus - for now, these meetings will only be conducted in-person, but we hope to be able to allow remote connection, either over Zoom, Google Meet, InPerson, NetMeeting…

For inquiries about the workshops/meetings, send Jeff Salzman an email at `jeff.salzman@vcfed.org`!

System Source's winter repair workshop

will be held on January 18th & 19th, System Source at 338 Clubhouse Road Hunt Valley, MD from 9 AM to 9 PM Saturday and 9 to 5 Sunday. At the System Source repair workshop weekend, you can bring in your computers to work on, receive help from other enthusiasts, and tour our museum. There will be tables set up, all complete with power, just bring your tools and supplies, and there will be plenty of help from other hobbyists. The Computer Museum at System Source is now charging for admission, and the workshop events will be $10 for one day, and $15 for two days. Payment can be made ahead of time, or during the event. If you would like to work on a museum artifact, please contact them ahead of time.

The next newsletter

will be a bit more 'professional' than this one, and while I won't play the whole hand quite yet, I will say that there will be a classifieds section. If you have vintage-computing-related stuff you want to sell, or items you're looking to buy, or offer some form of service, or *whatever*, shoot me an email at `thomas.gilinsky@vcfed.org` with the text "[CLASSIFIED]" in the subject line, and let me know what you'd like to say and what contact information you'd like interested parties to reach you at.

Endut!
Hoch Hech!

Thanks for reading the Inaugural MARCH newsletter! We hope to make this a regular, monthly occurrence - hopefully we don't all end up with MARCH madness! Until then, see you next time!

-Thomas Gilinsky
 Chairman of the MARCH Steering Committee & Collections Manager