Scenes from Founders’ Day 2008

More than 130 Alumni, Faculty, Staff and Friends of Cogswell met at the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco on April 5th to celebrate Cogswell’s 121st Founders’ Day. A few alumni from the 1920s shared stories about the College’s early days – if you were lucky enough to find a place at their table. Check out more photos from the event at www.cogswellalumni.com. You can also order event photos online. Please contact Rachael Reisdorf at rreisdorf@cogswell.edu for instructions.

Each year Cogswell selects several alumni to recognize for their life achievements and contributions to the college. This year’s honorees were:

James Gilmur (1957): As a teenager, Jim collected Model T Ford components and assembled them into working cars – a hobby that led to summer jobs in Alaska. At age 19 he had total responsibility for keeping a fleet of 30 fishing boats in operation. During the Korean War, he served in the Coast Guard. Coming to Cogswell in 1955 added a technical side to all of his practical experience. After graduating in 1957 in Electrical Technology he found himself back in Alaska building a hydro electric plant and eventually founded his own construction company. For the last 30 years, he also owned Duwamish Marine Center – a facility in Seattle for loading freight for Alaska. At 79, Jim still goes to work everyday. Jim and his wife Jackie have been married for 52 years. They have 3 daughters, 10 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Allen Stetson (1999): Allen’s interest in film making started at an early age when he would make short movies with a video camera and his model train set. He recreated the battle of Hoth in 8th grade with powdered sugar, plastic models and home made explosives. In 1995, he landed at Cogswell where he learned to make things explode in a safer environment - in CG. From there, he started his career at PDI/DreamWorks as a render assistant on Shrek 1. He has managed to have fun year after year as he gradually accepted more responsibility and helped to create bigger explosions. He is now a Lead Technical Director on his eighth feature film with DreamWorks, Kung Fu Panda. He happily lives with his wife Ji Sun and son Asher in Los Angeles.

Demetrious Shaffer (2002): Chief Shaffer has been a lifelong resident of the Bay Area where he currently lives with his wife, Alicia, and three year old son, Campbell. He has earned four degrees including an Associate’s in Fire Science Technology, Bachelor’s in Fire Prevention, Bachelor’s in Fire Administration, and a Master’s in Public Administration. Chief Shaffer is a State certified Chief Officer, Instructor and Fire Investigator and is currently Fire Chief with the City of Newark. Chief Shaffer has spoken before the State Senate Rules Committee and regularly serves as the emcee for large community events and fundraisers. He has been an adjunct faculty member at Cogswell College since 2006 teaching Community Risk Reduction and Advanced Fire Administration.

We hope that you will plan to join us next year at the Fairmont on March 21, 2009!
Cogswell at the 2008 Game Developers Conference

Once again Cogswell had a very successful exhibit at the February Game Developers Conference. GDC is a great opportunity for Cogswell to make contact with potential employers, software and hardware manufacturers, to reach out to Cogswell alumni and talk to prospective students. The 2008 show helped us achieve each of these goals.

For this show we produced a CD of games created by the Cogswell Game Development Club and our Game III class. Two of the games were part of the Game Club's 'game in a month' project. In addition to handing out the CD to people who stopped by our exhibit, staff also distributed this CD to potential employers in the Career Pavilion as part of our outreach efforts. Every year we make it a point to talk to someone from each of the companies, collect contact information for their HR department and learn more about internship opportunities.

On Thursday evening, February 21, more than 50 alumni, staff, students, faculty and invited guests gathered at the Buca di Beppo restaurant for Cogswell's annual GDC After Party. With plenty of food, the chance to network, see old friends – our After Party has become a 'don't miss' event!

Thanks to all who stopped by our booth or joined us at Buca di Beppo. Make plans now to join us for GDC 2009 to be held in San Francisco between March 25 and 27.

Links to Cogswell Events:
- The Gallery at Cogswell Exhibits
  - May 2, 2008 to September 15
  - Cogswell's Senior Exhibit
  - Public reception from 5 to 7 p.m. on May 2
- EA & PDI Alumni Dinner
  - May 8, 2008
- Fusion Awards
  - May 9, 2008
- Commencement
  - May 11, 2008
- Sunnyvale Art & Wine Festival
  - June 8, 2008
- Cisco Alumni Happy Hour
  - June 12, 2008
- Silicon Valley Lunch Bunch (See Back Panel for details)
  - July 12, 2008 or August 9, 2008
- SIGGRAPH 2008
  - August 12 to August 14, 2008
- SIGGRAPH After Party
  - August 13, 2008
  - Place to be determined

For more information about any of these events, contact us at alumnidev@ cogswell.edu.

Alumni Student Referral Program

Do you know someone who is interested in continuing their education at an innovative, cutting edge college? Someone who would like to enter the exciting digital media industry as an artist, animator, audio engineer, software engineer or computer engineer? Then refer these prospective students to Cogswell and receive a thank you gift from us for your time!

We have created a special Cogswell Alumni sweatshirt to show our appreciation for introducing a prospective student to Cogswell’s fantastic educational experience. Once your referral has either toured Cogswell or submitted a completed application, we will send a sweatshirt to you. Not only will you be helping your alma mater but you will open a world of new opportunities to the student you refer.

Simply go to www.cogswellalumni.com, select the “Student Referral” link and complete the form. You can also contact an admissions counselor at 800.264.7955. Alumni referrals are among the best students at Cogswell because you know what it takes to succeed.
Cogswell Enhances Engineering Curriculum

Cogswell welcomed Dr. Hadi Aggoune to its faculty in August 2007 as the first holder of the Roy C. Anderson Chair in Engineering. His initial task required a thorough review of the priorities of the College’s Engineering Programs. His goal was to make the curricula more current, enhance the learning experience, develop ways to give our students a competitive edge and achieve true integration with other Cogswell degree programs.

After careful evaluation, Dr. Aggoune concluded that the College and its students would be best served with focused programs in Computer Engineering, Software Engineering and Digital Arts Engineering and to discontinue the Electrical Engineering Program. Computer Engineering focuses on the hardware and software aspects of computers but many elements of electrical engineering still serve as a foundation for our redesigned engineering programs.

The new computer engineering laboratory accommodates experiments covering the entire cycle of design, development and testing of computer circuits. The lab is set up to provide an integrated learning experience balancing analytical analysis, software simulation and hardware implementation.

Possibly the most exciting innovation that Dr. Aggoune brings to the engineering program is the opportunity for Cogswell students to be involved in research projects for Boeing and other companies. It is highly unusual for undergraduates to have the chance to actively participate in research and development of this caliber. As an example of the type of projects our students will tackle under Dr. Aggoune’s direction, please visit www.cogswell.edu and select the Boeing Project link to see a 2004 project. The project drew on the skills of all our students.

If you would like to learn more about the changes to the Engineering Program, we will be happy to send you our Summary of Revisions and course outline for each major. Please either email Bonnie Phelps at bphelps@cogswell.edu or phone her at 408.541.0100 x 145 to request this information.

Cogswell has a long history of adapting its programs to meet current and future employment trends. We see many new career opportunities in the fields of design, development, testing and evaluation of computer software and hardware systems; modeling and animation; and simulation and game development for our graduates.

Each of our revised engineering programs will place an emphasis on project-based learning. As early as the sophomore year, students will propose and complete a project. In their senior year, students will undertake a more advanced project to complete in two phases. In this way students have the opportunity to produce something tangible that will become part of the portfolio they show to potential employers.

Dr. Aggoune has also added a project management course in which students will learn the basics of economics, budgeting and planning for projects and entrepreneurship opportunities. Engineering Design expands upon this by having students work in multidisciplinary teams to develop a product, a budget and a timeline.
Alumni in the News

Kevin Richardson (2003) led three sessions of a “think outside the box” workshop at the Casual Connect Europe 2008 Conference in Amsterdam February 6 – 8. His presentation was Life Beyond “Me Too” and challenged participants to innovate.

“Right now,” says Richardson, “we are churning a single game mechanism until it’s been smushed into the ground. While it’s fiscally responsible and good to give players what they want, the opportunity to soar above the noise is always there.”

The audience broke up into several small groups. Each team – led by top industry professionals – blue skied, pared down and pitched never-been-done-before game ideas. The sessions modeled brainstorming and how to drive the competition crazy. The goal was to have fun, stimulate thought and move outside of each person’s comfort zone.

Kevin has produced over 30 “E” rated games including the Family Feud Games and several Hasbro titles at iWin.com. He has also worked as executive producer on numerous Read Rabbit and ClueFinders Adventures while at The Learning Company/Mattel Interactive.

Cogswell was pleased to help sponsor Kevin’s participation at this conference and raise awareness about Cogswell’s programs within the casual game industry. Thanks to Kevin’s efforts, Cogswell was recognized as a Media Sponsor for the conference.

Doug Wright (1998). President and CEO of Sonoma Wire Works™, is honored that RiffWorks™ recording software won a Best in Show Trendsetter award at the Winter NAMM Show 2008, the largest music products trade show in the United States. RiffWorks™ was chosen as one of the “hottest” products because of its simple and effective recording interface, online music collaboration capabilities and new social networking site, RiffWorld.com.

An accomplished guitar player, Alan Friedman, is on a new product selection panel called ‘Best in Show’ that happens at every NAMM Trade Show. He selected RiffWorks because he wants to collaborate online with his musician friends and RiffWorks is the perfect solution.

“During my recent search for 5 of my favorite cool new products unveiled at the 2008 Winter NAMM Show, I discovered ‘RiffWorks’ by pure luck and was totally blown away,” Friedman said. “RiffWorks allows me to easily and intuitively collaborate with fellow musicians 3,000 miles away in real time and has given me a brand new avenue for musical creativity. That’s why RiffWorks was a ‘no-brainer’ for one of my all-time favorite Best in Show picks.”

Alumni Videos on YouTube

A search of Cogswell mentions on YouTube uncovered several Cogswell alumni postings.

Matt Graham (2002), Eric Erbes (2001) and Richard Saum (2001) completed Why I’m Moving to Maine in just under three weeks as a student project. The animated short received High Honors at Kalamazoo Animation Festival and on YouTube has surpassed 10,000 views and 100 comments. You can also see Eric’s Mr. Fly’s Fifteen Frames of Fame which won Best Animation at the Hope and Dreams Film Festival in Hope, NJ.

Ben Lazarus (2004) features Taco Salad, about a cooking class for developmentally disabled adults that was shot and edited by students at Cogswell.

Chris Sutherland (2005) created Crazy Ballin by Jay about a basketball player with some great moves.


Of Mutants and Men by Paul Disdier (2005) takes a scene from Steinbeck’s novel and places it in the future.

Jason De Leon (2000) has posted Figure of Speech – “Breaking the Ice” a Maya animation he created at Cogswell in 1998.

Paul Yan (2005) offers Egg Hunt, an animation that won numerous festival awards.

While you are visiting You Tube, you can listen in on the Guerrilla Media Podcast #1 from one of Cogswell’s new collaborative, project-based classes.
Jim Alary (1997) is Creative Director at Breakaway Ltd in Maryland. The company develops games and innovative tools to create experiences. David Anders (2001) works at Locomotive Games as a Senior 3D Artist. Carl Bahor (1999) has found a fascinating niche in which to use his animation skills. He is Director of Animation at Visual Forensics, a video production studio in the forensic and litigation field. Will Bembo (1993) is a Software Test Engineer at Apple. Scott Brookshire (2003) is CTO at 1.framer Energy Group Radio, one of the largest independent Internet radio stations. Dave Chislon (1993) works at Digidesign as a Test Supervisor. Doug Christman (1955) just got back in touch to update his information. He retired from General Motors in 1995 after 35 years and is happily settled in Tennessee. Wayne Conley (1999) works for Alameda County as a Senior Telecom Tech. Orhun Davut (1973) recently stopped by Cogswell when he was in town for business. He is General Manager at Terzo Indukision in Turkey, a company that specializes in Induction heating services. Jason De Leon (2000) is a Production Artist at EFG International. Chris Di Paola (2007) works at HD-Encoding in the LA area as a QC Operator. Michael Esposito (2003) is a Senior Engineer, Team Lead in the Data/Analytics Software Operation at Axcilon in Foster City. Brad Falk (1997) is a Look Development TD at Image Movers Digital. Sam Greer (1998) works at Shaba Games as an Artist. Kevin Geggans (1985) left Sun Microsystems and joined Power Station LLC, a developer of semi-custom designs for facilities that cater to people who are away from their home or office but still need internet or computer services—think airports, malls, etc. Kevin is Senior VP of Sales & Marketing. Tom Griffin (1996) is a Marketing Communications/Packaging and Creative Services Manager at Vasanova Technology, Inc. Christine Hara (2007) joined Tomy Corp in LA as Assistant Localization Producer. Trenton Haskin (1999) works for Micro Technology in Idaho as a PLM Configuration Manager. Donald Hershey (1949) just got back in touch to share that he retired in 1991. During his career he was a surveyor for Whipple Engineering, Assistant Sales Manager for Wehrather Company, and finally Owner of ALLYN, an import/export business in Washington state. Sonia Hilton (2006) is a Litigation Support Analyst at Sidley Austin LLP. Colin Hodges (2000) joined Cogswell for its GDC After Party and told us that he accepted a position with Pendulum Studios as Director of Performance Technology. Austin Ivansmith (2005) was just promoted to Game Designer and Level Designer at Left Field Productions in Ventura, CA. He is currently working on a game scheduled to be released for 2008 holidays. Frank James (1994) is a Design Engineer at Freescale in the Phoenix area. He does SystemC modeling of hardware, specifically security IP that is used in System on Chip designs sold to network equipment vendors. Daniel Kirksey (1997) is Systems Admin at Google. Johann Kristjansson (1990) is Head of IT Services at the National Energy Authority of Iceland. Soren Laulainen (2007) is a Freelance Music Composer at Media Agents, Inc. He composes music beds to underscore corporate videos and case studies for clients such as HP and Dell. Ronnie Mack (1996) works for Xilinx in San Jose as Principal Engineer, Manufacturing Test Engineering. Adrian Majkrzak (2002) is a Concept Artist at Brain Zoo Studios in Los Angeles. Christian McLane (2001) is the Owner of Silver Turtles Productions. Peter Mo (2007) works part-time as a Facebook Application Developer. He helped develop the popular Speed Racer application on Facebook that is currently listed in the Top 20 most active daily users. Peter also filled in at Cogswell when we needed a replacement faculty for Character Rigging and Modeling. Ash Monif (2002) moved to New York and accepted a position with Atari Interactive as a Producer. Toby Newell (2003) is a Freelance Artist/Illustrator/Visual Effects Composer in Santa Maria. You can see his work at www.tobynewell.com. Barry Paul (1999) stopped by Cogswell’s booth at the recent GDC event to reconnect with his alma mater. He currently works for Right Hemisphere as Senior Application Engineer. Mukunda Penugonde (1994) is one of a growing number of Cogswell alumni at Digidesign where he is a Program Manager. Nicole Plumm (2007) is an Associate Artist at Heavy Iron Studios in Los Angeles. Eric Purins (2000) caught up with Cogswell at GDC. He works for Day 1 Studios in Chicago as Content Manager. His job is to make sure the game art doesn’t get in the build and to streamline production. He works on F.E.A.R. for Xbox 360 and PS3. Aaron Putman (1999) is Internet Marketing Specialist at Techxress in Los Angeles. He specializes in search engine optimization, PPC management and affiliate marketing. Jon Putman (2002) is an Independent Information Technology and Services Consultant and Contractor in the Bay Area. Scott Russell (2002) transferred from the Electronic Arts Chicago office to the EA/Black Box office in downtown Vancouver as a Senior Environment Artist. Jeff Samorano (2003) is a Graphic Designer at McGuire Real Estate where he handles print collateral and web design. Chelsey Shuder (2007) contracts out to SchoolVideo, Inc as an Assistant Editor. Greg Smith (2003) is a Freelance Digital Artist at Pizzoli Libri in Los Angeles, PLF pioneered the process of previsualization, recreating the physical production environment in 3D, and animating the principal actions of a sequence well in advance of shooting. Lorraine Starr (2002) is Lead Motion Graphics Designer at Plastic Cow in Burbank where she is responsible for creating promos, lower 3rds, transitions and title treatments for broadcast television and the Internet. Steve Swink (2002) continues to play an active leadership role in the Independent Games Summit. He also authored a book entitled, Game Feel: A Game Designer’s Guide to Virtual Sensation recently published by Focal Press/Morgan Kaufmann. Nik Tehrani (1996) just completed his PhD in Business Administration (E-Commerce) at Northcentral University, Prescott Arizona. His dissertation focuses on e-commerce marketing planning to mature market females. Dan Theade (1996) is the VP of Marketing & Sales for StreetStrider where he is responsible for redesigning the website and setting up dealers on the West Coast. Doug Traeger (1999) is an Independent Consumer Electronics Engineer and Consultant. His experience involves working with large corporations who need one specific task completed to small, startup companies who need help every step of the way. He is interested in doing more on the inventing side of the industry as well. David Trounstine (2006) is Director of Creative Services at MediaTile. Kenneth Valdo (2006) has moved to New Mexico where he is Owner/Operator of Ken Valdo Audio Productions. He does ProTools editing and mixing, composition/arrangement and home studio tech support. Eric Van Huyste (1997) recently joined Adobe as a Producer. Chris Walsner (2007) is a Lighter at Electronic Arts. Matthew Wegner (1999) CEO and Founder of Flashbang Studios, is active in the leadership of Independent Games Summit. He also edits Fun-Motion, a site about physics games and plans to unicycle across Vietnam in March. Katie Welka (2008) is a Quality Assurance Tester/Production Assistant at Multiverse Networks. We’ve been told that she is one of the best ‘game breakers’ they have.
Silicon Valley Lunch Bunch

You and a guest are invited to join local Cogswell Alumni at FAZ Restaurant in Sunnyvale for one of our Summer Lunch Bunch gatherings. The events will take place on July 12 and August 9. While you enjoy a casual lunch, find out what your fellow alumni are doing and what’s happening at Cogswell. At last year’s lunches we had alumni from the 1940’s to 2007 attend and share experiences. Both young and old were intrigued to hear about life in different decades.

Lunch begins at 12:30. Those wishing to tour the campus will meet at Cogswell at 11:45 and then walk over to FAZ at 12:15. You can RSVP online for the lunch date you prefer at www.cogswellalumni.com or leave a message at 408.541.0100 ext 145. Invitations will be in the mail by late May.

Portfolio/Resume Review Volunteers

One of the ways in which alumni can make a big difference in the career prospects of current Cogswell students or recent graduates is to help evaluate their portfolios or resumes. Many of you have seen countless portfolios submitted by prospective employees and know what gives an applicant an edge.

Alumni have provided this service on an informal basis in the past as recent grads and students have asked the Alumni Department for this assistance. The response to the process has been positive on both sides. On Saturday, April 19, Cogswell held a Career Day. One of the highlights of the day was the opportunity for students to sign up and have their portfolios reviewed by a panel of industry professionals. Other students were invited to observe the critiquing session. Our panelists offered advice on the professional presentation of their resume and portfolio, skills to work on, creating a portfolio relevant to the job they are seeking and advice on what work to include and why.

We would like to see more students learn how to make the best impression possible so are asking for volunteers who would be willing to offer constructive feedback. The process would be conducted online and requests would be rotated among volunteers based on specialty—animators, game designers, artists, and modelers. You would not be asked more than once a month to review a portfolio and resume. If you are interested in helping current students and recent grads reach their goals, please contact Bonnie Phelps at bphelps@ cogswell.edu.

Photo Books From Cogswell Archives

The Cogswell archives are a treasure trove of history. Over the past six months I have spent many fascinating hours researching Cogswell lore for various events and visitors. In the process I have decided to create photo books for the 1920, 1930 and 1940 decades and plan to have them ready to present to alumni from those years sometime this summer.

While Cogswell has a fairly extensive photographic record for most of this time period, we have very little from the 1946 through 1949 years. If you have photographs or other memorabilia from these years, I hope you will consider sharing them with the college. I will be happy to scan and then return original photographs to you. Your help will be greatly appreciated. Please contact me, Bonnie Phelps, at 408.541.0100 x 145 with any questions you might have or to help fill in our archival gaps.

Supporting Cogswell Just Became Easier!

Our convenient online donation option is now available! Simply go to www.cogswellalumni.com and select ‘Support Cogswell.’

Every gift is important. Please consider making your donation now.