Maxine Brown to administer UIC interactive graphics exhibition

Maxine D. Brown has been named associate director of the Electronic Visualization Laboratory in the College of Engineering at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Previously a consultant in marketing and technical communications for the computer graphics industry, Brown will administer a multimillion-dollar project that will culminate in an exhibition at Chicago’s Museum of Science and Industry.

“The Interactive Image” is an educational exhibition designed to teach lay audiences about current advances in science and technology—especially in the realm of computer graphics. According to Brown, the exhibition will contain a variety of image-based, hands-on teaching machines that will make the concepts accessible to children as well as adults. Visitors will create their own “Zanimation” cartoons, interact with a Cray X-MP supercomputer, transmit images over phone lines, and design their own laser light shows.

Tom DeFanti, associate professor of electrical engineering and computer science, and Daniel Sandin, professor of art and design, are implementing the exhibition, which is scheduled to open in September 1987. The installations being

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planned share one common design principle: They are all interactive teaching machines based on computer graphics technology.

Chicago’s Museum of Science and Industry, the nation’s largest museum of its type, attracts about four million visitors annually. David A. Ucko, the museum’s vice president for programs and director of science, anticipates that “The Interactive Image” will be a prototype for educational computer installations at science museums nationwide.

Equipment donations and research grants are being solicited for this project, which has already received contributions from UIC, the National Center for Supercomputing Applications, ACM-SIGGRAPH, AT&T, Editel Chicago, WMAQ-TV in Chicago, and Frederiksen and Shu Laboratories.

NCGA turns spotlight on VARs

Recognizing the importance of value-added resellers, most major computer graphics manufacturers have established VAR or value-added distributor (VAD) programs. Many small and mid-size companies, however, are still trying to develop this distribution channel for their products.

NCGA has introduced a VAR program to bring together vendors and qualified industry VARs and to establish guidelines enabling them to work together successfully. The first event in the program is a symposium scheduled for March 21-22, 1987, in Philadelphia. The symposium will feature a review of general VAR business practices and offer vendors a chance to make presentations outlining their products and marketing requirements.

In addition, NCGA is compiling a directory of computer graphics VARs and corporate members offering VAR programs. The directory will be updated semiannually.

In August 1986, the NCGA Board of Directors approved a new category of corporate membership for VARs. Membership is open to individuals or organizations involved in packaging computer graphics hardware, software, and peripherals to meet user needs.

Further information on the VAR/VAD program is available from NCGA’s Corporate Activities Department, 2722 Merrilee Dr., Suite 200, Fairfax, VA 22031; (703) 698-9600.

NCGA seeking student volunteers

Volunteers interested in computer graphics are needed to help register attendees, do light clerical work, answer phones, and act as monitors for tutorial and technical presentations at NCGA’s Computer Graphics ’87 to be held in Philadelphia March 22-26.

Depending on the amount of time they work, volunteers can earn such benefits as free admittance to the exposition floor, complimentary registration for technical sessions and tutorials, a free 15-month membership in NCGA, and complimentary copies of proceedings. Lunch will be provided to every volunteer for each day worked.

Interested students can contact Bob Scheller, NCGA’s Computer Graphics ’87 volunteer coordinator, at (800) 225-NCGA.

ANSI publishes standard for a Computer Graphics Metafile

A format for storing and transferring picture description information usable by many graphics-producing systems and applications is specified in the recently published Computer Graphics Metafile standard.

The file format contained in ANSI X3.122-1986 consists of a set of functional elements that can be used to describe pictures in a device-independent manner. The standard is designed to allow the easy transportation of graphics data between computer graphics devices and installations, to aid computer graphics software implementers in understanding and using graphics data storage methods, and to guide device manufacturers regarding useful graphics capabilities.

The standard provides for sequential access to the entire metafile as well as random access to individual pictures. It also allows the transfer of data by either media or telecommunications (magnetic tape or line protocol, for example).

ANSI X3.122-1986 is being processed as a Draft International Standard by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

Copies of the 300-page Computer Graphics Metafile standard are available from ANSI’s sales department for $30 each.

Resource grants available to educators

Following a successful pilot grant program in 1986, ACM-SIGGRAPH has announced its 1987 program of resource grants for computer graphics educators. The grants will support 25 educators in beginning or updating computer graphics courses or programs. Applications are welcome from any educational discipline involving computer graphics, including the arts, computer science, engineering, and applications.

Grants will provide full participation in the 1987 SIGGRAPH conference in Anaheim, California, July 26-31. The total value of each grant will exceed $1000.

Applications must be postmarked by March 20, 1987; awards will be announced by June 1. For information and application materials, contact Steve Cunningham, SIGGRAPH Education Committee Chair, Computer Science Department, California State University, Stanislaus, Turlock, CA 95380; (209) 667-3176.