# ACM History Committee Meeting
# Face-to-Face Meeting Minutes
# June 13, 2025

## Location: Computer History Museum, San Jose, CA, USA

## Timing: Zoom-connected meeting from about 9am to about noon PT

## Meeting participants

***In-person members from the History Committee***

- Kim Tracy (chair)
- Vicki Almstrum
- Jonathan Grudin
- Mara Mills
- Barbara Boucher Owens
- Dag Spicer
- Jeffrey Yost

***In-person advisors to the History Committee***

- Thomas Haigh

***In-person guests***

- Marc Etkind, President and CEO, Computer History Museum (CHM)

***Zoom participants from the History Committee***

- Troy Astarte (from 11:00 ET)
- Andrew Meade McGee

***Not in attendance from the History Committee***

- Meenakshi D'Souza
- John Tucker

## Welcome, introductions, planning the day's agenda

- We began the day with Marc Etkind, CHM CEO, who introduced himself and welcomed the History Committee to CHM.
    - His background (Discovery Science channel, NASA Associate Director for Communications, 400-person team for news, media, social media, …). He is not a scientist or historian, but works with those folks to inform and inspire.
    - He has been in this position about 2 months and is still learning the team.
    - His goals include putting the audience first, both in the sense of place and storytelling. A challenge the museum faces is telling the developing story of AI. He also articulated educational goals and the re-building of the Museum's Education Department.

- Jonathan asked about the Museum's source of the funding, which Marc explained are generally high-value donors, as well as some companies and foundations. Dag shared that he thinks of CHM as "the museum that DEC built," given that many of the Museum's early funders, especially in its Boston incarnation pre-CHM, had acquired financial security via their work in the minicomputer industry, then centered around Route 128 in Boston.
- Andrew put forth the idea of partnerships and affiliate opportunities with the Smithsonian to support networking. This has proven to be particularly helpful for regional museums. See this list: https://affiliations.si.edu/affiliate-directory/
- Kim provided some background about the ACM and the ACM History Committee as a specialized audience of computing professionals, but with additional tasks of supporting other types of outreach. He put forth the question of what other things the HC might do to improve these goals by working with the CHM.
- Dag put forth the question of the difference between ACM and IEEE.
    - Vicki mentioned the standards work that IEEE carries out.
    - Tom H. mentioned the full organization, the *IEEE Annals of the History of Computing*, and the IEEE History Center, with its wiki and many oral histories. The Centre also manages IEEE Milestones, a historical plaque programme; there are plaques placed in the courtyard outside the front doors of CHM.
    - Jeff talked about what they did while he worked with the IEEE (their budget was much lower than what our ACM HC has).
    - Mara added that the physical presence of the IEEE History Center is crucial. She had a fellowship there, and there is a mentorship programme too.
    - Tom suggests an academic advisory board for the CHM (historians and museum people) and will follow-up with Marc directly.
    - Dag mentions that there is an advisory board already, but that it is different and perhaps not as active as it could be. Mara mentions her experience with this type of board. CHM's board is known as the Honorary Council; their members are listed here: https://computerhistory.org/leadership/.

## Tom Haigh's report on the Turing Project

- Tom begins with a presentation about the roles he has played on this important project. He also took us on a tour of the content and philosophy of the Turing website (https://amturing.acm.org/). The goal for each Turing awardee is that the background biography should be comprehensible to a smart high school student. The DL logo on each awardee's page leads to that individual's DL profile.
- Dag observed that there has been a trend with the awards being given for things that are much more abstract over the years. Tom gave his review of the trends over the years, including AI in the beginning, and computational complexity.
- In the early years, the Turing oral interviews were all ACM-only. The partnership between ACM and CHM is more recent. Dag spoke to the question of what to do about post-interview changes; it is rare to need to edit away content, but sometimes it is desirable to add "footnotes."
- Andrew asked Tom for suggestions for improving the website. He also asked Tom about what might be included as part of the 60th anniversary celebration of the Turing Award

in 2026 (it was first presented in 1966). We will add this as an action item for a future meeting.

- Tom described the recent overhaul of the list of research topics covered by the awards. The list had been built up in an a*d hoc* manner over the years and had considerable overlap among topics. To carry out the process, Tom went through each biography and also conferred with Roy Levin and others for their insights. The new list includes categories that were re-factored and joined as appropriate. We noted during the discussion that education is no longer one of the categories.
- Tom shared a spreadsheet with the current status of the interviews, including the most recent awardees, and discussed the status of collaborations with CHM on certain interviews.
- Mara asked how the Turing Project had started. Tom explained that the HC's former contractor, Dr. Mike Williams (also Editor-in-Chief of *Annals* from 1996-1999), initiated the website and then the interview process.
- The Turing Project includes a separate YouTube channel with the snippets Tom has created from the interviews. At the moment we looked, the channel has 4,173 subscribers (the main channel for ACM has 45K subscribers). We found there had been 3,070 views in the past 28 days, 56,160 views in the past 365 days, and overall 285,875 views since the channel was set up. Tom has discovered that the snippets are most often found via YouTube rather than via the embedded videos on the profile pages.
- Barb asked about the connection between the interviews for the Turing website, the awardee videos that are shown during the ACM Awards Banquet, and the Turing Award lecture video.
- Tom observed that the planners for big anniversaries seem unaware of the importance of including historians, that the focus tends to be on the Big Names and the next X years.
- Tom described the process ACM uses to set up the material and make it ready to publish on the website.
- Vicki asks about Tom's procedure for keeping track of all of the pieces in the HC Ops folders. This led to discussion of the history with contractor work and ACM cloud back-ups. Tom is now able to upload files into ACM's main cloud. Dag, Andrew, and Tom will discuss all of this further.

## Key outcomes from the meeting

- For this portion of the meeting, we focused on the brainstorming document "Brainstorming Jan 2025" (located in the Planning / Ideas / Brainstorming folder in the HC Operations drive; most recently updated the day of the F2F meeting in June 2025).
- We systematically discussed the ideas and used a wall + sticky notes to capture the key areas. A picture of the final result of the sticky note work is given in Appendix A.
- In the end, we prioritized three areas of focus for the History Committee's current work:
    - A process for adding videos of interviews conducted by the HC into the DL, as well as ideas extracting value from the interviews, both preservation and access. This must address the interviews Chuck collected for the Key Awards project and the interviews Sachin collected for the India Technology Leaders project.
    - ACM Heritage, which has two active prongs: 1) SIG survey / activation, 2) *Heritage Insights*.

- CS History and disability connections, with a workshop/symposium to take place during the upcoming 2025-2026 fiscal year.

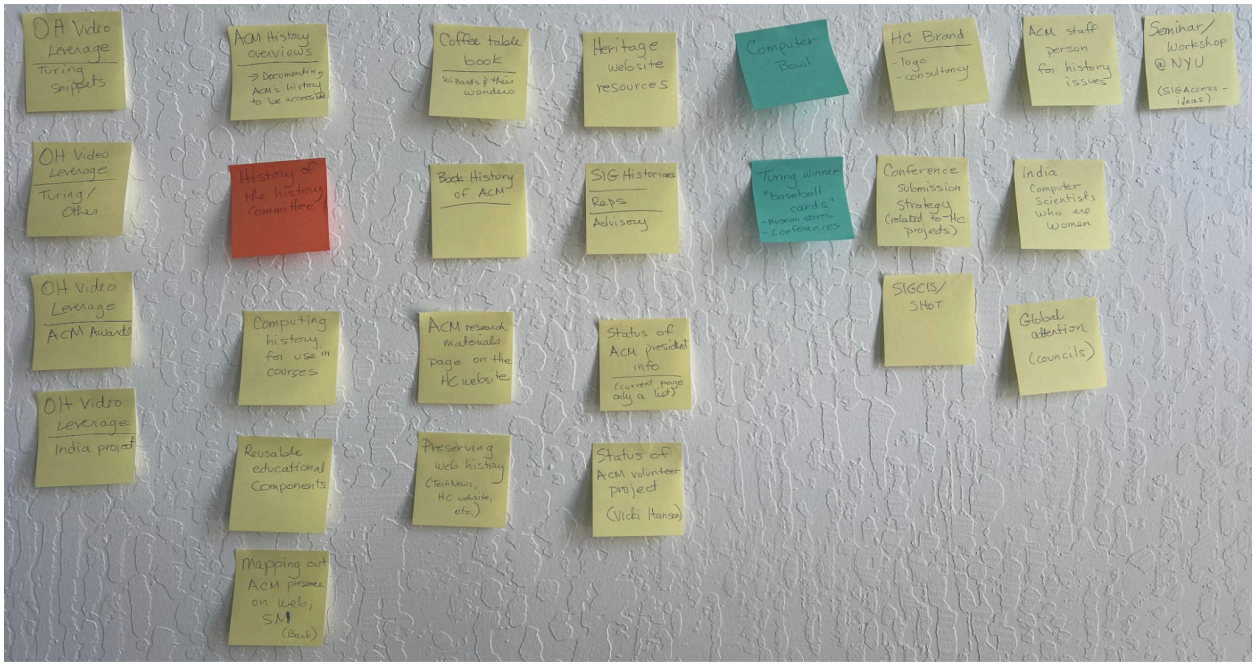
## Other parts of the meeting

- The Thursday pre-meeting dinner was at the restaurant *Il Fornaio*, with Len Shustek, Roy Levin, and Marc Etkind also attending. It offered good opportunities for questions, discussion, and comfortable discussions. A picture of the dinner participants is included in Appendix B. NOTE: Len told us about his project to build the Babbage Analytical Engine. This blog entry by Doron Swade explains the project, although Kim's impression is that Len has evolved to using a different Babbage design: https://blog.plan28.org/2024/02/january-2024-analytical-engine-project.html
- Friday afternoon after the meeting concluded, the HC members explored the CHM exhibit *Introduction to Chatbots Decoded: Exploring AI* .
- Several HC members made the short trip to the Intel Museum in Santa Clara and ended the day with dinner at the restaurant *Scratch* in Mountain View.
- On Saturday morning, most of the HC members at the meeting visited the CHM Storage Facility ("warehouse", a climate controlled off-site storage location). Dag took us through this amazing collection of computing "stuff" and highlighted many of the pieces. It was fascinating! Two pictures from the tour are included in Appendix C.

## Next meeting

- On Zoom Friday, June 20, 12:00 noon ET

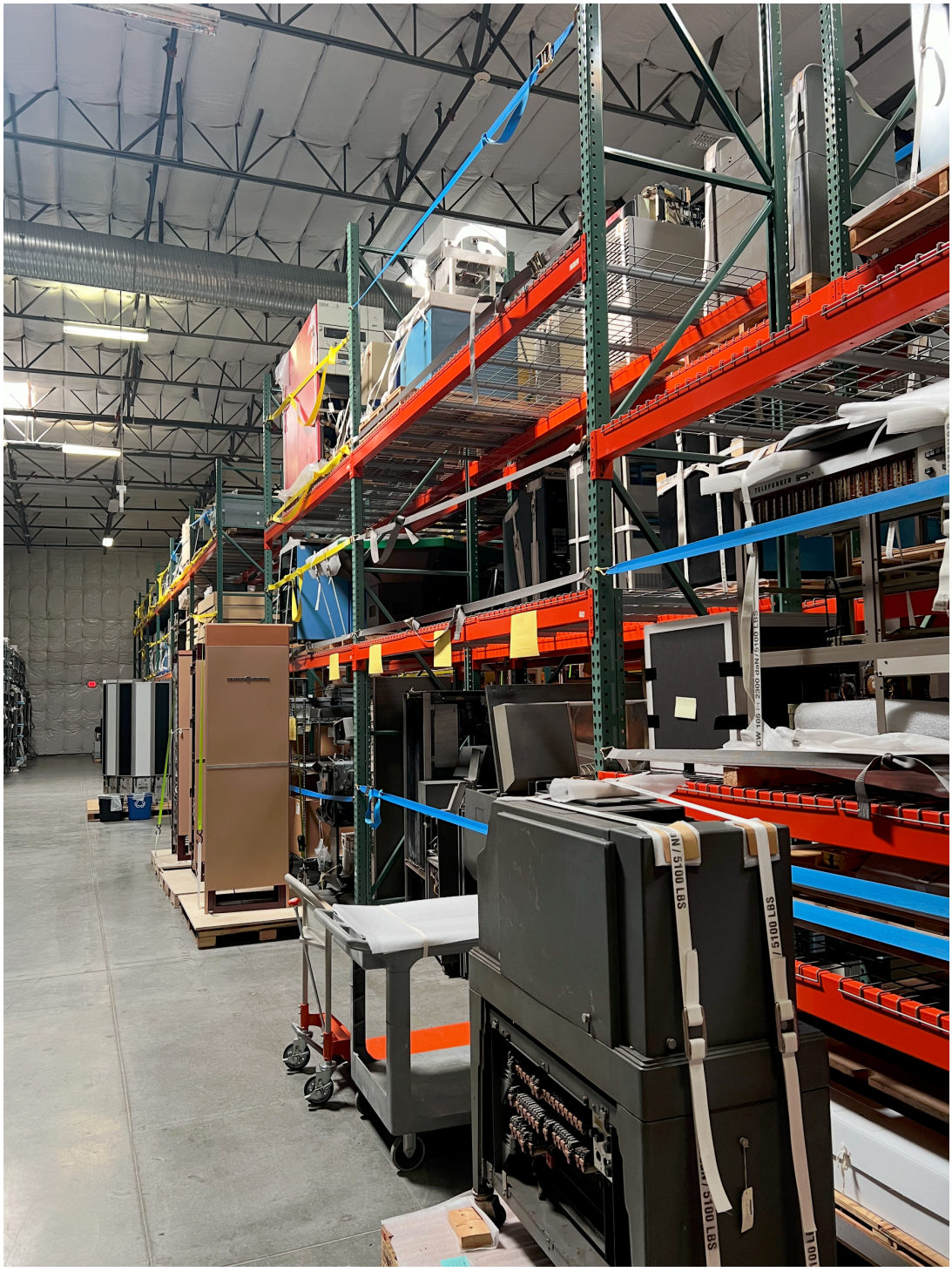
## Appendix A: Brainstorming during the afternoon



## Appendix B: Pre-meeting dinner participants

From left to right: Jeff Yost, Jonathan Grudin, Kim Tracy, Roy Levin, Dag Spicer, Vicki Almstrum, Mara Mills, Tom Haigh, Marc Etkind, Len Shustek, Barbara Boucher Owens

## Appendix C: Pictures from the CHM warehouse tour




A view along one aisle of the CHM warehouse.

Dag Spicer explains one of the many interesting machines we looked at closely during the tour.