

Notes from the
AJCU Conference
in
St. Louis
October 1990

The first day of the conference, October 8, was not especially interesting or productive. The second day more than made up for that.

The following are notes I made during the conference sessions and the individual items are not necessarily related.

October 8

❖ Both Fr. Biondi (President of St. Louis Univ.) and Fr. Sauve (VicePresident of AJCU) recommend that we work with our respective presidents to foster their use of computers and communications, such as Bitnet. The challenge: how can we interest Fr. Demske in e-mail and JesuNet?

❖ At the Medical School at St. Louis Univ. they use a product called Chatterbox. It attaches to the WAN and from there you can login to the LAN server that you want. In other words, it is used to allow logins to the LAN from off-campus. Students have started to ask me about this. Contact person is either Peter McGehee or Elliot Haugen.

At a different session, it was noted that Word Perfect running at 1200 baud over Chatterbox and the LAN is a dog. PC software in general running at 1200 or even 2400 baud over a modem from a LAN can be very slow.

❖ Concerning computer center organization: our organizational charts always show the vertical reporting structure, but that is not how a lot of work gets done. Are we actively dealing with the horizontal "reporting" or horizontal "cooperation" that must exist within an organization? For example, the operators have to go to the administrative programmers for various types of information; I go to the operator for certain information or services; the programmer/analysts in user services need the help of many different people in the computer center. Are we running on anything more than a "seat of the pants," informal spirit of cooperation? That may be fine when it works, but what about when it stops working due to personality conflicts, turf wars, and other such undesirable but real concerns.

October 9

❖ Netware VMS - Jack Corliss uses it a lot and likes it. He has very good luck with it.

❖ Should we have a separate LAN or just a separate LAN server for administrative users? Or perhaps a separate server for administrative and academic departments vs the labs? That is, do we really want to run the Secretarial Pool and the Communications Dept. off the same servers as those serving the labs? Or is it just administrative users who should be separate?

Many of our sister schools run completely separate LANs for administrative offices. Some of these LANs do not connect to the campus network. They like the security that comes from being separate. Storage requirements are also very different for student users compared to academic or administrative users.

❖ LAN support - you need systems people and technical people just as you do for mainframe support!! How do you know who may people? One way to figure is that if a VAX takes n many people and k type of support, then a LAN like Novell also takes n many people and k type of support.

We have a VAX system administrator. Don't we also need a LAN manager?

❖ Enterprise-wide electronic services:

Boston College - Bernie Gleason - is using a universal ID card, a 5 digit PIN, same name on all e-mail servers (VAX and LAN), X.400 protocol, and X.500 directory service (not fully implemented). They then turn services on or off as students need or pay for them.

Santa Clara Univ. - Ron Danielson - they have their VAX mail server tied to the voice mail server so that new e-mail causes the v-mail light to go on on the phone so people know they have e-mail.

❖ AJCU publishes a Directory of AJCU/JSEA for 1990-91. Since I have never seen a copy of this around Canisius, I ordered one from Fr. Sauve for \$6.

❖ Business meeting:

First we voted to change the by-laws so that our annual meeting would be in the spring rather than the fall. The vote was 15 to 2.

Next item: did we want the next meeting to be in the spring of 1991? Vote was unanimously yes.

Gonzaga University offered to host the 1992 meeting. The offer was accepted.

The date for the meeting at Canisius was discussed. One of the last three weekends of April was preferred. May and June were pretty much ruled out. There was a discussion (and maybe a vote) on whether the meeting should be on Monday and Tuesday or on Thursday and Friday. We agreed to stick with Monday and Tuesday. (Since many people arrive on Saturday to take advantage to the lower air fares, I suggest we plan an optional, extra cost event for Sunday, like a bus tour of Niagara Falls with lunch at Queenston Heights. Remind people to bring passports or other documentation if their citizenship status is unusual.)

Election of officers:

Chair: Joel Cohen

Vice-chair: John Bujosa

Secretary: Jack Corliss

Treasurer: John Bujosa

Information Officer: Jack Corliss

Challenges for the Chair for next year:

- broaden the range of officers, involve more people
- make an effort to get representatives at the next meeting from Univ. of Detroit, Wheeling College, and other schools that have not been attending.

Ron Danielson (I think) suggested that we consider changing the name of our organization. We are a lot more than just computer center people. One quick suggestion was that we change 'computer center directors' to 'information systems managers'. It was soon pointed out that such a name change would require many small changes to the by-laws which could not be easily dealt with at the business meeting. Elliot, as chair for another couple of weeks, will appoint a committee to

select a new name, rewrite the by-laws, and make the necessary proposals to the whole group at the next meeting.

❖ BOF on Academic Software Development

Ray Pitsker - USF is using Mathematica with freshman calculus. Results are great. Our math department may want to contact them. Advise Rich Escobales.

Bill O'Hearn has a classroom with a video projector, just for demonstration. How did he set it up and secure it? Call him; I didn't get a chance to talk to him at the end of the meeting.

Bernie Gleason - we should come to BC some time to see his video set up -- laser disks with production facilities, jukebox for laserdisk, satellite down link, and much more. An open invitation.

❖ Suggestions for topics at the next meeting:

(These ideas came from the whole group, not from me; although I admit to a high degree of sympathy for them.)

What is happening to academic computing? Is it being diluted by combining it with user services?

After receiving less attention or perhaps just being less visible, will academic computing reemerge in the '90s?

Are we giving too few resources to support academic computing?

Isn't all our planning for the sake of students and therefore shouldn't instruction be at the top of our list? (Contact Elliot Haugen or Ron McCleary for ideas from the Tuesday 1:00pm BOF that discussed planning and this area in particular.)