

# WAVV '98

BY LEO J. LANGEVIN

The year is nearly over, and you know what that means? There are less than 400 days of Y2K seminars left! I don't know about you, but I'll be glad when the next millennium starts just so I can stop hearing about Armageddon, how LE will save your company or why you need to buy XYZ product. Actually, a lawyer friend of mine has attended several Y2K seminars as well. He said there were presentations such as "How to sue vendors" and "Forget the contract, they're all liable!" (Well, I'm not sure if those were the exact titles, but that's the gist of it.)

The last big event of the year was the WAVV conference in Albany, N.Y. While it was great to be there, it was a tad stressful for me. First, when I arrived at the hotel, I wound up waiting in line behind dozens of pregnant women. Apparently, there was another conference going on at that time, unless there was some sort of tie-in with WAVV that I wasn't aware of. After waiting for more than 30 minutes, the hotel clerk informed me that they had given my room away. I then spent the next hour looking for a different hotel that wasn't full. I got a new room at Brand-X hotel, right under the landing area for the local airport ("zooom!"). And, to top that off, the last day of WAVV was held on Kol Nidre, the eve of Yom Kippur, so I was in a frantic rush to get home. When I arrived at the Chicago airport, I found that I had left my lights on for the past four days. (OK, they probably turned off by themselves after a few hours!)

WAVV focused on the issues that we have great interest in and should (connecting VSE to the Internet), little interest, but should (MQSeries update), great interest, but shouldn't (ICCF update), and everything in between. (OK, I just tossed that

ICCF entry in.) But don't laugh too hard at ICCF. I had at least five different people ask me how to FTP ICCF data, set up web pages in an ICCF library, and why NFS, which can access Power, LIBR, BIM-EDIT and VSAM, doesn't do ICCF! Considering the need for new seminars, maybe I should put one together and call it "ICCF Cosmic Enlightenment." And for a logo, I could use broken chains.

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Considering the number of sessions at these conferences, it's not surprising that the majority of them dealt with TCP/IP or products that use TCP/IP. If you were looking for a VSE internals focus, there were a couple of sessions, but the basic three: linking computer hardware or software, sharing data and Y2K, were the predominate areas covered. The days of calculating the perfect Power DBLK size are over. Now it's all about catching up to the rest of the world. Several companies provided hands-on classes before and after the actual conferences for those people who wanted to have a greater understanding. In short, attending these conferences is a must for any serious VSE-er. And no, there isn't a version of iccf (in lower case, of course) for unix, but there is a cics.

## CHANGING FOCUS

Remember when these conferences focused on such topics as VTAM tuning?

It's obvious that VTAM is out and TCP/IP is in. CSI announced a replacement for VTAM; BIM and Inteliware demonstrated accessing CICS from the Web. Also demonstrated are Java applets, GUI front-ends, network configuration tools, and a number of other software and hardware solutions that play an exciting role in the future of VSE.

Speaking of excitement, how many VSE people are really familiar with MQSeries? It's a great idea, but alas, the presentation was at 8 a.m, the day after the "Comedy Night" sponsored by Computer Associates. Attendance was small, which either means that VSE folks aren't interested in having applications communicate at different platform levels or the folks at WAVV just need to schedule the newer technology at a more reasonable time. Overall, however, I was impressed by how well the conference functioned, and I tip my cap to the organizers.


Nineteen ninety-eight has also been a year of mergers ("It's 2 a.m., do you know who your vendor is?"). In fact, many of these vendors were represented at WAVV. I've spoken to people who weren't even aware that their product was (1) no longer supported, (2) owned by another company, or (3) available from more than one vendor. So, if you haven't spoken to your sales rep in a while, now might be a good time to do it.

My findings, from talking to numerous people, both in attendance at WAVV and in general, ranks the number one complaint users have about vendors as being documentation (or the lack of). Frankly, I don't know of too many companies that are exempt from this. It goes from one extreme (a two-page "README.TXT" file) to the other (30 pounds of manuals and a four CD-ROM set organized so that only the people who wrote the code can find what

they need). Now I know why technical writing has become a lucrative career.

So, besides all the important stuff, let's take a cue from the TV show "South Park": "You know, Stan, I learned a lot today. I learned":

1. Some people still like ICCF.
2. Testing a release before going into production status is a good thing.
3. There are too many Monica Lewinsky jokes.
4. VSE systems programmers don't go to health clubs (CA-comedy night question).
5. MQ has nothing to do with "Star Trek: The Next Generation."
6. A double-espresso only looks like a small amount of coffee.
7. Customers read documentation, no matter how obsolete it is.
8. The Albany airport is not in Albany.
9. Technical conferences thrive on beer and greasy food.
10. VSE systems programmers are a lot older than NT network administrators.
11. People still remember the chicken wings in Chattanooga.
12. What you get for lunch on the first day is what you get for lunch every day.
13. WAVV is also a local radio station. Wear a WAVV shirt and impress the locals.
14. If you become a WAVV project leader, you get to wear a special shirt.

15. Beta does not mean it's ready for production.
16. Important people don't wear pagers.
17. Y2K doesn't mean the year 2048.
18. Some guys still know Hollerith code.
19. People want software that requires no installation, customization, maintenance, or training.
20. Pregnant women don't like line cutters. 

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