

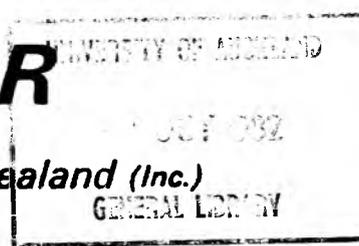
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NEWSLETTER

Operational Research Society of New Zealand (Inc.)

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EDITOR: P.J. Gargiulo

21 MAHER STREET
UPPER HUTT

SEPTEMBER, 1982

conference

CONFERENCE '82

As reviewed by BRUCE BENSEMAN

The 18th Annual ORSNZ Conference was held at the University of Canterbury on 23-24 August. Christchurch turned on beautiful weather. I had forgotten how good the snow-covered Southern Alps could look.

We should congratulate John George on his fine job as Conference Organiser. He packed 20 papers into two days, but the session chairman managed to start and stop their speakers on time. Question-time was occasionally trimmed - and sometimes slaughtered.

The Conference got off to colourful and highly entertaining start with Don McNickle's talk on Queuing Models of telephone betting the TAB. A few papers later Sue Byrne gave an excellent survey of the current non-linear programming techniques.

Wolfgang Kreutzer began the simulation sessions by setting out the theoretical requirements of a good simulation language. Unfortunately, the real clock prevented him comparing the commercial packages available. He was followed by three student projects and two AMD (shipping) studies. The simulation speakers easily produced the best crafted slides. Top honours went to Yours Truly, followed by Paul Margetts and Bill Baker.

The programme was somewhat dominated by 8 forestry papers. However these sessions attracted a welcome number of participants from both the private sector and the NZ Forest Service. Most of the speakers described large scale mathematical programming hybrid models - with too few pictures and

too many equations. As expected, Fred Baird won the wooden spoon prize for size. His 25,000 variable model "rather depressed" High Barr, who had earlier described his ideal "model". This was a two-dimensional graph of an LP feasible region.

It will be interesting to see what effect the university effort in both national and regional forestry models has over the next few years.

The Conference keynote speaker was Professor Rolfe Tomlinson from Warwick University (ex I.I.A.S.A., ex UK National Coal Board). I think he was the best we ever had. You may find his "Six Principles for Effective OR" in "Operational Research '78" edited by K B Haley and published by North Holland.

The afterdinner speaker was also superb. He was Alex Lojkin, a Canterbury Reader in Russian, and a perennial OR student. Naturally, I cannot remember anything he said, but he was hardly sombre - more like hilarious.

Neither Auckland nor Wellington seems to be able to match the freindly warmth of the Canterbury Staff Club.

Of course, the best thing about the Conference was being able to train in crisp still conditions, over flat country, at 6 o'clock in the morning. What other time could I see a stranger dressed only in running shoes and a pair of jockeys.

Bruce Benseman.

3 September, 1982.

SITUATIONS VACANT

PROJECT ACCOUNTANT

UPPER HUTT

THE
EURO V- TIMS XXV
Lausanne,
Switzerland
July 12-14 1982

ICI Tasman Limited has a vacancy within its Management Accounting team in Upper Hutt.

The position calls for a person who has some experience in programming desk-top computers and who has an interest in using this knowledge to facilitate solutions to various on-going problems of a company-wide nature.

The position requires a person who is able to provide support for the existing applications software, but who can additionally become a resource to assist Management investigations into various aspects of profitability.

The applicant should desirably have some knowledge of accounting but full qualifications in this area are not essential.

A more important prerequisite is a studied, analytical approach to problem solving.

An attractive salary commensurate with experience and qualifications will be offered, together with opportunities for advancement. The position also provides participation in the Company Superannuation and Medical Benefit Schemes.

Applications which will be dealt with in full confidentiality, should be addressed to:

Mr J.B. McNaughten
Personnel Manager
ICI Tasman Limited,
Private Bag,
UPPER HUTT.

Telephone 287-139 Extn.878

The Fifth European Congress on Operation Research and the Twenty-fifth meeting of the Institute of Management Sciences was held in Lausanne, Switzerland, from July 12 to July 14, 1982. About 600 registered participants attended the opening session to the sounds of Swiss cows, cow bells, Mozart played by a professional quartet and an interesting address by Art Geoffrion. He talked of the future of OR and specifically the impact of the electronic revolution and the growth of related fields such as Decision Support Systems. He seemed paranoid over the effect of the growth of the latter on the OR community.

The 12 streams of contributed papers were of only average standard. However a few efforts stood out like beacons.

Dr Rinnooy Kan of Erasmus University gave a brilliant 90 minute exposition of combinatorial optimization. Dick Francis of the University of Florida came up with an innovative model of building evacuation (appearing in Management Science). John Westwood of Manchester Business School presented practical experience with the idea of distribution via buildingless trans-shipment points.

It was a happy conference with the World Cup being a constant theme. Indeed, more than one speaker and chairman exchanged shirts at the end of sessions.

The organisation was excellent and the Social program included a Congress dinner on a boat on Lake Lemman and a visit to a Vineyard. Both were memorable although some participants remember less than they care to say. However, who could forget R. Rosenthal jumping ticketless onto the boat as it was leaving the quay!

The closing session including a very good talk by Professor R Tomlinson of Warwick who spoke on Euro, Europe, and the World.

The Sixth Euro Conference will be held in Vienna in August, 1983. The next International TIMS meeting will be in Copenhagen July, 1984. If either are anything like the Year's Conference they will be well worth attending.

LES FOULDS
UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY



MEETINGS

Letter Of The Year

1. Wellington Branch AGM

VENUE: Shell Theatrette,
Shell House,
The Terrace.

DATE: Wednesday, 6 October.

5 pm - Refreshments. Free drinks
provided.

5.15 - AGM

6.00 - Talk

George Stuart, Physics and Engineering Laboratory, DSIR, will speak on "International Trends for Innovation Policy and Implications for New Zealand".

2. Operational Research Society AGM

VENUE: Shell Theatrette,
Shell House,
The Terrace.

DATE: **Thursday 18th November.**

5 pm - Drinks.

5.15 - AGM

6.00 - Talk.

Andrew Smith and Frances Sutton, Management Services Unit of the Department of Health, will speak on Resource Allocation.

For further information contact John Hayes 729-729, ext. 525.

Non members welcome.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

At last an article with something to say. Could we please have more articles like the one about the disgusting and degrading performance of public sector OR analysts and less wishy washy crap like that shit from "Julie and I"

KJB
Auckland

Dear Ed,

Who the.....is Ackoff? Is he a man or a mouse?

BRA
Wellington

(slightly abridged - Ed)

Dear Sir,

I was horrified to see a fictitious letter to the Editor over my surname in the June 1982 Newsletter!

For other readers' benefit, the "in AMD joke" cruelly edited from the end of my "OR in the Antipodes" article (in the March 1982 Newsletter) was actually "Ackoff knows what happens to OR groups that do not measure up". I am sure Ackoff is known outside AMD, and is no joke.

Yours faithfully,

Bruce Benseman,
ORSNZ Vice President.

Dear Ed,

Must our newsletter continue to be used as a platform for the depraved and sick mentality of the public sector. Although I feel your editorial went too far in suggesting separate organisations surely we could have separate newsletters. I'm sure "Julie & I" will be only too happy to edit a quarterly volume of in jokes for the mice.

TC
Wellington.

Dear Sir,

Enuf is Enuf. I thinks sum of us in the govment do not a bed jobæ and Sam my boyfriend thinks the same. Xpecialy when you consiter sum of the phackwits we have to work with like that their July and her mate.

AJW
Wellington

REMEMBER !!!

A G M

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 18TH.

EFFECTIVE OR

This was the theme of a management seminar given by the Conference visitor, Prof Rolfe Tomlinson at BP House, Wellington on 25 August. The seminar was concerned with the management of an in-house OR team although the principles enunciated were equally applicable to consulting groups, practising academics and individuals.

Rolfe started off by asking:
What is OR trying to achieve?

He suggested that OR is:

- i) NOT finding applications for mathematics.
- ii) NOT providing management with the answers to their problems.
- iii) NOT to justify its costs.

That the aims of OR should be in this negative manner is indicative of the misconceived way in which some of us see our roles. It is indicative also of the way in which many potential users of OR view the profession.

OR is problem-oriented, not technique-driven. We are decision-aiders, not decision-makers. WE should not be deterred with the occasional relative failure so long as we learn from it and prove to be effective in the long run he said.

The seminar revolved around Prof. Tomlinson's six principles for effective OR.

- i) PARTNERSHIP - OR should be done with (not for or to) the group it is seeking to serve. This ensures that the analyst develops an understanding of the system that is the subject of the study. Hidden assumptions can be explored as they become apparent. The analyst's role is adaptive, dynamic and one of "interaction" with the client.
- ii) CATALYSIS - OR is a change agent. As such it challenges the establishment and is interventionist. There was the story of the computer that had been packed away because it had served its purpose by modifying the client's way of thinking. The OR practitioner has to sell the acceptability and worthiness of change.
- iii) INDEPENDENCE - Objectivity is essential. The analyst must not be tied to factional interests. This may mean being apolitical. Independence means that research fact must not be submerged by dogma. OR should be scientific.

- iv) INTERPENETRATION - OR should operate at all levels and functions within an organisation. It is concerned with "systems"
- v) CATHOLICITY - An OR program must be wide-ranging in the problems it addresses and the methods it is prepared to use.
- vi) BALANCE - An OR program must be balanced between long and short project between tactical and strategic work, between old (established) and new (perhaps speculative) work.

There are lessons to be learnt, here, in New Zealand where the size of companies often cannot justify employing (not supporting) OR teams let alone individuals. We must truly be multidisciplinary, "catholic" and "balanced". Those of us who wish to specialise in LP or strategic modelling or quick-and-dirty techniques may find themselves down the eternal mineshaft (which the rest of us might perceive of as good OR). The same can be said for those who do not recognise the immense power or the severe limitations of the computer.

Rolfe then briefly outlined a basis for project control. The 25 or so participants

then broke into groups to discuss issues arising from the seminar. My group attempted to find out who was or wasn't doing OR which lead inevitably, to the question of what constitutes OR. I was left with the conclusions that the answer to the latter remains as elusive as ever and that many OR trained people would like to but are seemingly not doing OR.

GARY ENG
AMD, DSIR

NEWS OF MEMBERS:

Patrick J Garguilo, the famous author of fictitious letters and very good friend of Bruce Benseman has recently transferred from his position as Management Accountant ICI Tasman to take up the position as Regional Accountant for Fletcher Steel Ltd.

NEXT EDITION

Thomas A Moore reviews "OR in the US"