

The memo from Tom is particularly interesting for a number of reasons.

The group really did not have a formal name, despite Tom's publicity (?) document, there was no real formal group prior to 1974, but more of a Toronto (really GTA)-centred "kaffe klatch" to which, from time to time, the IS (DP) folks would come, like Kitchener and Ottawa, largely through contact with Ben Cramer of Toronto, who was known around the world.

As mentioned earlier the group came together to protest the efforts of the province to create a new standard assessment system (the province took over assessment from the municipalities in 1968), as a result of which many municipal *DP/IS* representatives met with the provincial people responsible (Department of Municipal Affairs, originally).

When I first met with them in the early 1970's, there was not a formal name to the group; nor did they take formal minutes. All of the municipalities in Metro were members, as were Bob McKean of Mississauga, John Cushing of Ottawa, Roger Freeborn of Kitchener, Gerry Cuddy of Hamilton and Ollie Vyskocil of Oshawa. Because there was no formal membership in the early days, it was not clear whether people who came to the occasional meeting, such as Walter Bilyk of Thunder Bay, Ray McCloskey of Windsor, Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury and Peterborough were "members" or just people who came to the odd meeting and expressed their opinions.

There was no formal chairperson, although Ben Cramer chaired several meetings as the "elder statesman" with the most clout, but I recall Frank Thickett of Etobicoke chaired some meetings - it was sort of a moving meeting with whoever hosted the meeting taking the chair. Their main focus was a) a discussion of what was happening in municipal systems - specially with i) the provincial ministries and ii) the vendors and b) fighting the endeavours of the province to change the assessment system (and with it, hundreds of programs in each municipality).

Among other things, the informal group began to gather information about the hardware and software that each of them was using, using a form from Bob McKean and with Frank Thickett typing in the information. This was the embryo applications directory.

There had been a previous abortive attempt to form a national municipal data processing group - it was called COMRIM and actually held a conference - but with the small numbers and large distances it died out, although members kept in touch with each other.

I knew Tom Becke well, and we had many discussions on the future of MISA. In fact, I encouraged him to ask for a meeting with the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Tom thought that was aiming high, but he listened to my advice) and the Minister actually met with him for about half an hour. I was present as the provincial person most knowledgeable on municipal systems. At that time, the Minister acknowledged the importance of municipal information systems and suggested that a provincial person from Municipal Affairs should liaise with the group, which meant that I could officially do what I had managed to do for some time without official blessing.

There is lots more about those early days in my files and memory banks (mostly the latter), as I was gathering information for use by the province and in response to work on various municipal systems problems by and for municipalities that occurred with great regularity in regional governments and municipalities of various sizes. Considerable data and other information was gathered for several provincial publications that I authored concerning computers (and information systems) in local government in Ontario. The bureaucracy made me eliminate several references to MISA, other than in the acknowledgements, in the major publications because these were paid for by the province.

The first published directory was created using both provincial resources and those of the City of Toronto - where Ben Cramer assigned Paul LeClerc to work on it. This publication gave much credit to MISA.

These publications, and me being the person everyone called on for information and assistance, helped to publicize MISA and its activities. The publications, being pioneer works, managed to get attention nationally and internationally, which also got MISA onto the larger stage and indirectly to the attention of people who counted - various Ministries and members of councils, including some of the people to whom MISA members reported. Some told me that suddenly bosses approved membership in MISA and attendance at MISA functions.

In regard to minutes for 1971, it is highly unlikely that they exist. Most of the time, no formal minutes of meetings were taken. Usually someone did take notes, generally only when asked to do so. I do know Keith Hall acted as secretary for several of the meetings that he attended. When the group was formalized under the name of MISA, many changes were made and formal minutes were taken, but I do not recall when that practice started.