

Message From the President's Desk – Michael Olin

Winter, 2008

As we approach the 25th anniversary of the founding of NYOUG, I had planned to devote this President's Message to providing a brief history of our users group. Although I was there when the group was conceived, in a "newsletter" of sorts that was first sent out in 1984 to a mailing list of users of the Oracle RDBMS who were running the database on Data General hardware, I was not one of the handful (about 10) of users at the first NYOUG meeting the following year.

A Bit of History

Looking back through the NYOUG archives (mostly a collection of old newsletters), I realized that while I had a pretty good memory of the general direction that the group had taken over the past decades, (and I even remembered most of the people who had been involved in leading the group), the timeline was not exactly how I remembered it. There were members of the steering committee with short tenures whose involvement I misplaced by five years or more. There were others whom I thought had been only briefly involved, who turned out to have been leaders of the group for extended periods of time. Finally, my research indicated that there were some very active members of the group who arrived on the scene much later and left much sooner than I had remembered. All in all, what I thought would be a brief one page write-up has grown to be a fairly detailed and lengthy history of NYOUG. After all of this, I am still barely halfway through our history. I hope to complete my work on our "official" history at the beginning of our 25th year. Then, I will have to find a way to distill it to one page. You can expect to see the result of this effort in early 2009.

So what do I write about now? Perhaps I can still convey a little bit of NYOUG history. Many years ago, when the number of companies using Oracle's software was relatively small, NYOUG would set up a simple bulletin board outside the room during our general meetings. By the middle of the day, there would be many announcements of job openings posted on that board and members who were looking for employment opportunities gladly copied down the contact information that was posted and even sought out the member(s) who posted the information in order to discuss the opportunity. This worked quite well for a short time, as our community was rather small. As the number of companies looking to employ Oracle professionals vastly outstripped the supply of capable candidates, two things happened:

1. First, a few IT managers who had been happily allowing the members of their department to attend NYOUG meetings and even paid for their memberships, noticed that some of the members of their team were leaving their departments, having found another opportunity through their membership in NYOUG. This made the managers very angry and not only did they stop paying their employee's membership fees, they refused to allow anyone from their department to attend NYOUG meetings. Since NYOUG was a relatively small organization, the impact

that managers at even a few large Oracle shops could have on the group was significant. Even more distressing to NYOUG was that just about every technical recruiter in town figured out that our group was a great way to locate that scarce resource, experienced Oracle professionals. These recruiters signed up to join NYOUG in droves and that caused the second problem.

2. As soon as a recruiter paid his/her membership fee, a copy of our membership list was demanded. The officers patiently explained that we did not share our membership list with anyone, not even other members. Many of the recruiters would berate us for this unreasonable policy, demand a refund of their membership fee, and leave, never to be heard from again. Others, however, appeared to have chosen to take matters into their own hands. On several occasions, members of NYOUG would start receiving cold calls from recruiters and body shops the day after a meeting. Coincidentally, the membership list that was being used to check in people at the meeting could not be located. These two developments led to our policy of not allowing job postings at our meetings and strictly limiting the use of our membership list.

NYOUG is LinkedIn

Times have changed. NYOUG currently has well over 800 paid members and an e-mail list of close to 4,000. Job prospects for Oracle professionals in our area, already negatively impacted by the rise of outsourcing, have been hit again by the turmoil in the economy. Now, more than ever, NYOUG needs to concentrate on using the strengths of our network to help our members who are out of work. We have no intention of running a job posting board or selling our membership list. Quite frankly, we would be quickly overwhelmed. In the past, we would frequently receive calls from multiple sources regarding the same job, and we really do not have any mechanism for the steering committee to manage such a venture. However, we do want to provide a way for NYOUG members to network and share information about job opportunities.

To that end, we have set up an official NYOUG group on the professional networking site LinkedIn. We sent an email with details about this group to the membership in November and in just a week or two several dozen members have already joined. For now, anyone on the NYOUG email list can join the group. Group members can start and contribute to discussions on the site, and share information about opportunities with their fellow members. The next logical step would be for us to promote the group to companies and recruiters who would be interested in posting open positions to the NYOUG. LinkedIn already has a mechanism for members to post job opportunities. We just need to determine what the best mechanism would be for inviting such participation while avoiding the types of intrusive contacts that caused problems in the past. Expect to hear more about NYOUG on LinkedIn and possibly other social and/or professional networking sites in 2009.

NYOUG Leadership for 2009

We will hold our annual election of officers at our December General Meeting. Surprisingly, all of the current officers are the only nominees and all have agreed to continue (if elected) in their positions for another year. When I complete my history of NYOUG, you will see that it is indeed possible for any member to become involved in the NYOUG Steering Committee and even become an officer of the group. Perhaps our 25th anniversary year would be the right time for you to step forward and volunteer.

Upcoming Meeting Dates

RMOUG Training Days 2009

DATE: February 11-12, 2009

LOCATION: Denver, CO

REGISTRATION:

http://www.teamycc.com/RMOUG_2009_Conference/Registration.htm

IOUG COLLABORATE 2009

DATE: May 3-7, 2009

LOCATION: Orlando, FL

REGISTRATION:

<http://www.ioug.org/collaborate09/index.cfm>

ODTUG Kaleidoscope 2009

DATE: June 21-25, 2009

LOCATION: Monterey, CA

REGISTRATION:

<http://www.odtugkaleidoscope.com>

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