

Highlights of the Fall 2002 COMMON Conference

A USERS GROUP

By *Léo Lefebvre*

First of all, the registration process was slick and fast! I had received my badge by mail so I only needed to get my holder. I was done in 30 seconds! No problem there. Next step was a short visit to the expo room. For those not familiar with expo, it opens on Sunday at Noon and closes at 2:00PM on Tuesday. There were 90 exhibiting vendors and a huge area for IBM.

The conference kicked off at 3:45PM Sunday afternoon with then-President, **Charlie Massoglia**. After reviewing the scheduled events and a brief video of IBM CEO Sam Palmisano, he introduced the famous motivational speaker **Keith Harrell**. Keith's presentation was incredible, not a single dull moment. He literally ran to the stage after the introduction and was always "pumping up" the audience. When he left the stage, the attendees were all fired up and ready for a great conference.

On Monday morning, **Buell Duncan** introduced a panel of 12 IBM specialists who answered questions from concerned iSeries people.

They did not necessarily have all the answers but promised to find them and to communicate with the requestors. Then, at 11:00AM the actual educational conference started, (the real reason for our visit to Denver.) There were more than 35 rooms for tutorials and lab sessions, which ranged from introductory to advanced technical topics, managerial and personal development. There were many sessions for anyone who has a direct or remote interest in the eServer iSeries. COMMON also held its first IT management sub-conference, as well as the Notes/Domino Road show.

Unfortunately, the conference conflicted with Canadian Thanksgiving. Because of that, there were only 75 registrants from Canada, compared to an average of 300 at previous ones. At the Wednesday evening MoM, it was announced that there were 2413 paid attendees, delegations from 14 "Fortune 100" companies, and 56 Users Groups in attendance.

The COMMON Board of Directors welcomed a new director at the conference: **Beverly Russell**, also Director and Treasurer of TUG. She really jumped into the "COMMON bath." She was kept busy all the time with meetings and other COMMON board functions from the day before the conference to the day after. On the last day of the conference, October 17, she also celebrated her birthday.



*COMMON Motivational speaker,
Keith Harrell*

Photos by Léo Lefebvre

COMMON now honors its speakers and special volunteers at an Awards Ceremony and Banquet where all the conference attendees are invited to join for free. An excellent idea they copied from some European COMMON groups! Copy or no-copy the evening was fantastic! The events took place on Tuesday evening, after two full days of intensive sessions. The banquet was good but the band did not play long enough. I assume that the band did not play too long to give the people more time to rest before engaging in the last two days of the conference.

One of my goals in attending the conference in Denver was to collect new speakers' names and session topics for TUG's own TEC2003. I can tell you that the harvest was great, and you should see many new faces next April!

In general, Denver was great and the conference was superb. I had a great time and I cannot wait to go back to work and try all the tricks & tips I learned. The next COMMON Conference will be held in Indianapolis, March 9-13. (They call it the "Spring Conference", but in my books, those dates are still in the winter season...) So many things happened during the week in Denver, I could continue to write about the conference for a long while. But space is limited, so I will stop here. If you want more info, send me a note.



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*New COMMON Director,
Bev Russell with new
COMMON President,
Robert Boyson*

