

Professor Lou

In 1993 Jordan Seidel, a very bright 20 year old student at West Chester University, launched a project to make the power of the Internet available to the community. One of his goals was to make it available at no cost to anyone in Chester County who had a telephone connection. With assistance from the university and the Chester County Hospital he succeeded in forming Chester County Inter Link (CCIL). It was to be a volunteer operated operation. I was one of the early volunteers.

My first endeavor was to teach myself to use the Internet. Prior to this time the principal users of the net were the military and academic communities. The available browser was text only - no graphics. I don't think the term "user friendly" had been coined yet. So... it was a steep learning curve.

I was involved in a missionary project setting up computers with access to CCIL at several sites which were frequented by significant numbers of people. One such site was the West Chester Area Senior Center. I began a regular schedule of being at the Center at 10:00 each Thursday morning to give demos and answer questions. During this first year it evolved into a more formal course. We called ourselves The Thursday Gang.



It began with from four to eight eager neophyte students gathered around the computer. It rapidly grew to the point that this arrangement was inadequate. The senior center provided a projector and wired me for sound. Attendance rapidly grew until it averaged around twenty. On a few occasions it was as high as forty.



One of my best students was my wife, Mary.

I spent a lot of time preparing for these sessions. This involved emailing a written agenda each week to the participants. I began each session by asking if they had problems during the week. On some days we never got around to the agenda. I had convinced them that there was no such thing as a stupid question, although there might be some stupid answers.

I taught the course for eight years, and enjoyed every minute of it. Most of the participants had begun as total neophytes. From this beginning, the computer for most of them had become a useful tool. Some were writing their own web pages.

It ended when Mary and I moved to Granite Farms Estates.