

Reactions to Lloyd Anderson's article relative to the Maya meetings:

As a Maya groupie and person who has attended the Austin meetings several times, the Univ. of Penn Maya Weekend and several Nick and Katherine workshops I lament some of the changes mentioned and applaud efforts and attempts to maintain a high intellectual standard.

It appears to me that the increased growth and popularity of Maya Studies has in part changed the nature of meetings by stimulating an increase in the number of meetings. It's reminiscent of baseball or football expansion. Cities want the Major leagues. It sends a message; "we are ____." (fill in the blank as you see fit). Universities want to say something similar. Oftentimes the expanding clubs don't have as many stars to draw the crowds, not to mention the fact that the established teams have lost some of their appeal by spreading their best players more thinly in the expansion. So where the reduced number of meetings/teams of the past would have an abundance of stars available they were able to draw all the 'real fans'; those that played well and knew the game well. But with 10 conferences/teams on the international scene there is bound to be a dilution of talent and a reduction in paying fans at any one game which in turn reduces the amount of tee-shirts sold and, in general, dilutes income for maintaining the 'teams'. I can just imagine the deals made behind ivy walls and dug-outs, "If you come to my __ I'll go to yours. Sure we'll pay your ____" But the stars can't be away from their teams too often. They have Spring Training (spelled 'digs') and teaching obligations so they can't go to many conferences/games where they are not playing/presenting.

What's a conference executive to do to bring in the fans? The answer is bat day, kids day etc. in the case of pro-sports, to fill the stands and coffers. In the case of Maya conferences you can't give away pots. What can you do? You can open the doors to a larger (of course less sophisticated/knowledgeable) audience. To do this, the content must be, shall we say, 'adjusted'.

I am afraid to say that it appears that the die has been cast. I imagine that we would like at least one conference (but whose?) set aside for a no-holds-barred well attended professional meeting held at the highest level. A real allstars game. I hope we get that but where? East coast? West Coast? Austin? Germany? For locations not mentioned, excuse me please. I think the answer is "all of the above" Perhaps it is time to think of the electronic conference of tomorrow with electronic/video interaction. The presenters will be paid handsomely for they will be required to submit reports in digital format that will be available for immediate download (perhaps for a fee) along with their digital power point support material (also immediately available for download perhaps for a fee) each of which shall be juried or approved by an organizing committee. Finances? Make it a pay-for-view to university auditoriums. Make it internet based, paid for by benefactors or advertisers or though Pay Pal for downloaded materials. Think of the savings in terms of transportation dollars, fuel costs, lodging and registration costs.

But think of the quantity and caliber of the presenters and the presentation. Also think the timely distribution of knowledge. Perhaps data dispersed before years of fine tuning (of course with a note and asterisk: "*Preliminary* comments, suggestions and/or interpretations welcome.*")

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