

[E-MAIL SENT SOMETIME AROUND 12/01/2000]

Greetings (as the Gov'mint used to say),

You're receiving this because you're on my "pending request" list. You've asked to either have a connection established with the chi.il.us "clout" machines, to have membership registered with chi.il.us, or to provide some modification to your current connection or information. This note is to both let you know that you've not fallen into the bit bucket, and to give you some information about why it's taking longer than usual to reply to your query.

As you probably know, the University of Chicago has courteously extended the use of one of their university machines--'gargoyle'--as a virtual "clout" node for quite some time now. Times and situations evolve, and it has become inexpedient for them to continue to expend the machine and staff resources of this system to support "clout" Email and the varied newsfeeds that gargoyle has provided over the last few years. Also, as the machine is a "live" computer with real users and students, I/O bandwidth, disk space, and CPU cycles which are increasingly being diverted to clout communications are needed for the real business of the university. Correspondingly, on or about the 15th of March (The Ides Of March!) they've decided they're going to terminate both the "clout" Email feed and the netnews feeds they've maintained. We thank them for their long donation of these services.

They're not throwing us to the wolves wholesale, however. They've donated a Sun 3/50 with 4Mb of memory and a 141 Mb disk drive for the exclusive use as a clout node. In addition, they're providing one analog phone line, power, housing, and access to the University 2400 bps modem pool. This is quite generous, and we again thank them. It wasn't, however, enough to just change over--for one thing, it left us short of a high-speed modem; and for another, 4Mb of RAM and 141Mb of disk isn't enough to pick up the gargoyle newsfeeds.

Although the primary mandate of the clout project was--and remains--guarantee of free, readily available Email connectivity and maintenance of the chi.il.us domain, I (and La Monte) don't want to see degradation in the news distribution system in the Chicagoland area; and this origin point at the UofC is one of the few full, uncensored news sources directly on the Internet in the area. So I put on my Marty Robbins hat and went begging.

TellLabs, through the offices of Darryl Baker (computer center administrator), has most graciously come through for us. They've donated (technically, a loan for an indefinite period of time closely approximating infinity) another Sun 3/50; this, with 141Mb

of disk and 6Mb of memory. Also, they've provided a Telebit T2500 high-speed modem. THIS will give us enough of what we need to pick up the major newsfeeds as well as the Email. THANKS!

However, it will require some juggling, as we could really use another 4Mb of RAM (anyone?) to make the batching/unbatching really sing. Our current intent is to have the two machines operate in tandem, sharing the filesystems on the two disks to optimize the storage pool. To this end, La Monte Yarrol, Randy Suess (of chinet), Darryl Baker (TellLabs), Doug Price (president of /usr/group) and myself are working on installation, configuration, and cutover of the gargoye clout stuff--all before the Ides.

We're also working on a potential donation of literally dozens of trailblazers by an organization who shall remain unidentified at the present time. This is nebulous at the present, but if it jells we're looking at a high-speed modem pool that can be set up to support the clout effort and also to extend the bandwidth of the major clout and news relay nodes. More on this later.

Between my begging, the work on the project and--trivial, no?--my REAL job, then, I've pretty well saturated my bandwidth lately. This, then, is the apology for any delay in answering your request, and an assurance that your message reminds me of my delinquency every time I log in--as I keep it on my active mail queue--and that you will receive my attention as soon as we've resolved the gargoye cutover crisis.

Thanks for the patience!

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