



# TUG MoM Review –



Eveline Gaede

## The Jan. 2001 Meeting of Members

By Eveline Gaede

What is the main difference between Elvis, Tupac and RPG? Elvis and Tupac, although both very dead ... are rumored to be alive. RPG, although very much alive ... is rumored to be dead. If there was ever any doubt about RPG's good health, Jon Paris dispelled them during the last Meeting of Members 7:00pm session. (Now regarding the Tupac rumor.... Does anyone else find it a little strange that he has released about 4 or 5 new albums since his "rumored" death?)

during one of our MoM's last year,) power protection is something that is often not discussed. And as we found out during Chuck's talk, not only the lack of power can cause problems, but "dirty" power and power spikes can also create havoc with our systems.

Power protection is a critical component for improving on the reliability of mission critical systems. Chuck stressed the high cost of downtime – how it can easily, depending on the systems and length of outage, run into 6 figures. It is important to pinpoint the points of vulnerability and build a "Bubble of Protection" around your systems.

According to Chuck, some installation considerations are:

- Power backup time desired
- Security and assuring clean power
- Doing it fast and foolproof
- Sizing – protecting not only the existing systems but planning for growth in the future
- Method of powering down everything immediately – the 'Magic Button'

Unfortunately, the manufacturers specifications, although a good start, tend to focus on the quantity of the power not the quality. For instance, what is a safe "spike"? A power spike can, from the worst-case scenario to the minor-

annoyance scenario: destroy your system by blowing out chips, drives, etc; degrade your system; disrupt of your data by introducing unwanted electrical charges. I was surprised to learn that most of these events, about 80%, are generated on the customer's side of the meter. Types of power problems include: outages (less than 1%); transient noise (present more than 99% of the time); and high line voltage (rare in the US/Canada).

So what needs to be included in your "Bubble of Protection"?

- iSeries 400 – power and communications connections
- Modems and other communication gear
- RF Access points
- Printers
- Workstations – power and any additional modems
- Phone line protection – protect any line that comes into your building

Chuck walked us through three steps to consider when designing your Power Protection Policy:

**Step 1:** Select the appropriate UPS – Contrary to another urban myth, not all UPS's are created equal. Wire the right way – clean power, dirty power and communication lines should all be housed in their own conduits.

Photos by Léo Lefebvre



Chuck Heller

At 5:00pm, Chuck Heller, from ONEAC started the evening with a presentation entitled "Keep your Servers... Serving". Without power, the world as we know it today would be unrecognizable. Yet, until you have a problem (as we did



**Step 2:** Design an Auto Shutdown – How do you plan on shutting down the systems if no one is in the building?

**Step 3:** Remote monitoring of the UPS – Many now have network interfaces al-

lowing you to access your UPS through a web browser. Chuck did a live demonstration, where he “logged” in to a UPS, faked a power shortage forcing the UPS to kick in and send an email message to his mobile phone.



*Jim Cooper*

We often take our good, clean supply of power for granted. Chuck’s presentation made it very clear, however, that you only have to be without power once (and without proper protection,) to recognize the

importance of building a “Bubble of Protection” around your systems.

After a short break for sandwiches and dessert (thanks again to Precision Logic), Glenn Gundermann and Jay Burford reminded all attendees on the upcoming TEC Conference and Showcase. With an added track for Linux and NT/400 issues, a new group of sessions for management and some of the best speakers in the industry, TEC is lining up to be one of the best ever!

Jim Cooper, from Lambton College in Sarnia, also took the opportunity to ask for help on how to drive their program to the next level.

Since we all know that RPG is NOT DEAD and that the iSeries 400 is THE VERY BEST SERVER EVER, it is important that we support the schools that are bringing new blood and interest in the industry. →



*Jon Paris*

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We are a non-profit, mostly volunteer, industry association. Our purpose is to provide a professional forum for the presentation and exchange of ideas that pertain to IBM midrange computers (mainly AS/400), and related subjects for users; from the technical, management, and end-user perspectives.

The TUG membership roster consists of over 350 corporations, representing over 3,000 individual I/S Professionals. Every second month since 1985, TUG has been setting up meetings for its members.

Meetings are usually scheduled for the second last (penultimate) Wednesday evenings of the month.

The regular meeting location is at the Howard Johnson Plaza-Hotel on Keele at Highway 401, in Toronto. We are known throughout North America for the quality of our meetings and speakers, and we also know how to have fun.

For more information, contact our Association Manager, Wende Boddy at one of the following:

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*TUG member, Margitta Jabs*

is still using RPG III.” (Been there.) “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” (What about when it does break?) “I’m too busy.” (and according to Jon... You always will be!) “We don’t have the time to learn it all.” (Do you have time NOT to?) “We are waiting for Java.” (and waiting and waiting...) “My manager doesn’t understand it.” And the classic: “RPG/400 is ‘Good Enough!’”

Before the presentation, I was confused as to the different names for the different versions of RPG. Due to the nature of my job, I do very little programming these days. The language I programmed in before moving to the AS/400 and RPG was very readable and powerful. When I first looked at the software we purchased for the AS/400 – and it was definitely RPG III or older – I can honestly say I lost any desire to learn RPG. After some of Jon’s examples I am going to make the time to learn RPG IV.


Just what is the difference between RPG III, RPG/400 and RPG IV? And why should we move to RPG IV? RPG/400 is just another name for RPG III. It has not been enhanced since V2R2 and there will be NO enhancements to it. The reasons to move to RPG IV greatly outnumber the 7 excuses not to. Things like:

- Greater functionality
- Future IBM enhancements
- Faster development and maintenance
- RPG IV participates in ILE with C, CL, COBOL and JAVA

- RPG IV and ILE facilitate modular applications
- Modernization (i.e.: web enablement, multinational applications)

Perhaps one of the most important reasons Jon pointed out was, that as a programmer, consider your career. The further behind you fall, the less marketable your skills. (I think Jon missed one item on his list – it definitely looks like more fun programming in RPG IV than the earlier versions!)

Jon spent time discussing some of the features in each version of RPG IV and some of the enhancements due in the next OS release. He ended the session with some examples of the web-type applications that are possible using RPG IV. He left us with food for thought – **The limit of what we do with RPG is up to us!**

Your next steps? Make sure you get the RPG IV Redbook – “Who Knew you Could do That With RPG IV”. And make sure you plan on attending TEC on April 24 and 25<sup>th</sup>, where Jon Paris will present several different sessions on RPG IV. I’ll see you there! 

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→ This brings us to the 7:00pm session: **RPG is Dead, Long Live RPG!** presented by Jon Paris. What can I say about Jon Paris? He definitely leaves no doubt in anyone’s mind how he feels. This was my first opportunity to hear him speak, and I found his candor very refreshing. He immediately made his feelings on RPG and why historically it had not progressed as it should very clear. According to Jon, part of the problem is the RPG user community – we are to a large extent as much to blame as IBM because of our reluctance to use new tools. His top 7 excuses for not moving to RPG IV struck a chord with me – I’ve heard some of them before and I’m sure many others in the audience have too. Recognize any of these? “Our software vendor



*January 24, 2001*

