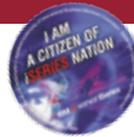# President's Corner

By Léo Lefebvre,
President, Toronto Users Group
for Midrange Systems

Photo by Wende Boddy

TUG: Coming of Age

In a June 20th article published by MC Press Online and prepared by **Joe Pluta**, (http://www.mcpressonline.com/mc/.6b2565fb) the author was asking if midrange users groups were "Out of Date" or "Coming of Age." As Joe explains, the article had its origins in a mailing list posting regarding a couple of east coast local users groups, Charlotte (North Carolina) who closed their doors on May 17 this year, and Washington (DC) Area Midrange (aka WAM) who is moving from monthly meetings to quarterly meetings.

Some of the reasons suggested for the disappearance of Charlotte's "Application System Forum" and the change in the WAM program are: low interest in the audience base, and some key companies leaving the midrange market. WAM also blames the lack of IBM marketing and lack of education in the colleges, thus a dearth of RPG talent.

But, it's not all "doom and gloom" in the midrange market. As Joe pointed out, "Midwest is going strong." As for TUG, the group certainly fits Joe's second description: "Coming of Age". As you know, TUG is already in its 21st year and it's still thriving. One of the main reasons for its strength is the ability to offer its members the services they are looking for. With its 12 board members, a devoted association manager, many regular contributors and volunteers, a continuous link with IBM through the TUG-IBM liaison, and regular contacts with many IBM divisions (Toronto Lab, Education, Marketing, Rochester Division) – TUG knows how to stay current. Attendance at the Meetings of Members is steady.

The annual Technical Education Conference (TEC) also gets great support from the membership as well as the general midrange community. Vendor support of TEC is also expressed, through its companion event – Expo – which has been a sell-out event year after year.

Again this year (TUG's 21st) the lineup is getting better and better. We start this season on September 28 with two excellent speakers and topics. **Nahla Kor** will kick things off with a special presentation which will appeal to anyone in your company: "Dealing with Difficult People". I know you won't want to miss it. I saw her presentation and I knew I had to invite her for one of our sessions. Plus, **Carol Woodbury** (a regular speaker at TEC and COMMON) will take the stage for the second session and will discuss a growing topic of interest: "IFS Security." Not to be missed either!

Once in a while, TUG presents a Special Education Event. On Wednesday October 26, 2005, **Skip Marchesani** will tell you "Everything You Need to Know about SQL in Five Hours." Starting at 1pm, it's a whole afternoon session at Woodbine Racetrack followed by the famous Woodbine buffet dinner. The cost is ONLY $249 for TUG members or $349 for non-members. The cost includes free parking, refreshments and dinner. (See "TUG Notes" – page 28 for more details on this exciting "October Special.")

Keeping a long tradition, TUG will have its 13th Technical Education Conference (aka TEC) on April 18 & 19, 2006 at the Sheraton Parkway hotel. It's never too early to book for TEC!

As you can see, TUG is still going strong – thanks to all of its members, supporters, and sponsors. As I said at the end of the boat cruise celebrating TUG's 20th anniversary, "Let's make sure that TUG celebrates its 40th anniversary, too!" TUG

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