

Additional Benefits of Being a Member of TUG

By Jay Burford



Is TUG Part of YOUR Ticket to COMMON?

This is the second in an occasional series of commentaries discussing some of the hidden, or to be more precise, the not so obvious, advantages of being a member of TUG. In the first article we looked at the Hot Topic Sessions provided free to TUG members by ASTECH Solutions Inc.

This second piece is about COMMON, the largest IBM User Group in the world. Every spring and fall, COMMON holds a one-week Conference in various locations in the United States and occasionally in Canada. At each Conference there are over eight hundred (800) plus education sessions and a three-day "Expo" with hundreds of booths and displays. Primarily two (2) groups provide the extensive education programs. The first, are IBM'ers from worldwide locations, including many from Rochester and the Toronto Lab. The second group is comprised of many industry experts, the people who work with IBM to produce the Redbooks, and who write the numerous articles and books, that you regularly read, or use as references, when you have a problem.

There are many other attractions and opportunities available at a Conference. Just a couple of them are Birds of a Feather (BOF's) and the COMMON User Discussion Sessions (CUDS). BOF's occur when a few people with a common (no pun intended) problem, post a notice and call a meeting to discuss the problem, and possible solutions. Often IBM'ers will attend these sessions to act as advisers and/or to take back requests for changes. In the evening, at CUDS, you have the opportunity to meet with other attendees including the speakers. Perhaps you need to explore totally different concerns in order and resolve some issue that has created a problem at your location. If so, COMMON has an

"Ask the Expert" night at CUDS, where recognized experts are seated at different tables to answer your questions and discuss possibilities for solutions. You will often find someone from



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another company who has already installed the new product that interests you, and can give you the "scoop" on results and possible concerns.

The whole Conference, including the education content is aimed at the mid-range user, primarily the e-server iSeries 400 user. In one week you can obtain an intense education, including many focused education tracks, at a very reasonable price.

Why is this a "hidden" benefit to TUG members? Well, normally you can only register and attend the Conferences if your company is a paid up member of COMMON. HOWEVER, there is another option. TUG to the rescue! As a member of TUG, you are already a member of COMMON. You can register for the COMMON Conferences using your TUG Membership. You must still pay the full Conference Registration fee, but you don't have to pay for a membership. All you need is the TUG membership number in COMMON, which any TUG member can get simply by calling Wende at the TUG office (905-807-2546.) You put this number in the field called "COMMON ID #", just above your name on the Conference Registration Form. Then you are all set to receive as much intense education as you can handle in one week at an exciting and fun conference. TUG

Jay Burford, currently a Senior Consultant at ASTECH Solutions Inc., retired from the IBM Canada Laboratory in 1997. He is an active Manager of the COMMON Training Program, and next month he will be featured as an example of a volunteer, in the "COMMON News" magazine.

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Future Conferences

SPRING 2002:
April 14-18, 2002 Nashville

FALL 2002:
October 13-17, 2002 Denver

SPRING 2003:
March 9-13, 2003 Indianapolis

FALL 2003:
October 26-30, 2003 Baltimore

SPRING 2004:
May 2-6, 2003 San Antonio

FALL 2004:
October 17-21, 2004 Toronto

