

# Additional Benefits of Being a Member of TUG



Jay Burford

By Jay Burford

## Could An Individual Membership to TUG Help You To Help Yourself?

This is the fourth in an occasional series of commentaries discussing some of the less frequently considered benefits of TUG Membership. In the first article we looked at the Hot Topic Sessions provided free to TUG members by ASTECH Solutions Inc., and in the second article we talked about using your TUG Membership to attend the twice-yearly Conferences held by COMMON, the largest IBM User Group in the world. The third discussed some of the advantages to a company of taking a Gold Membership in TUG.

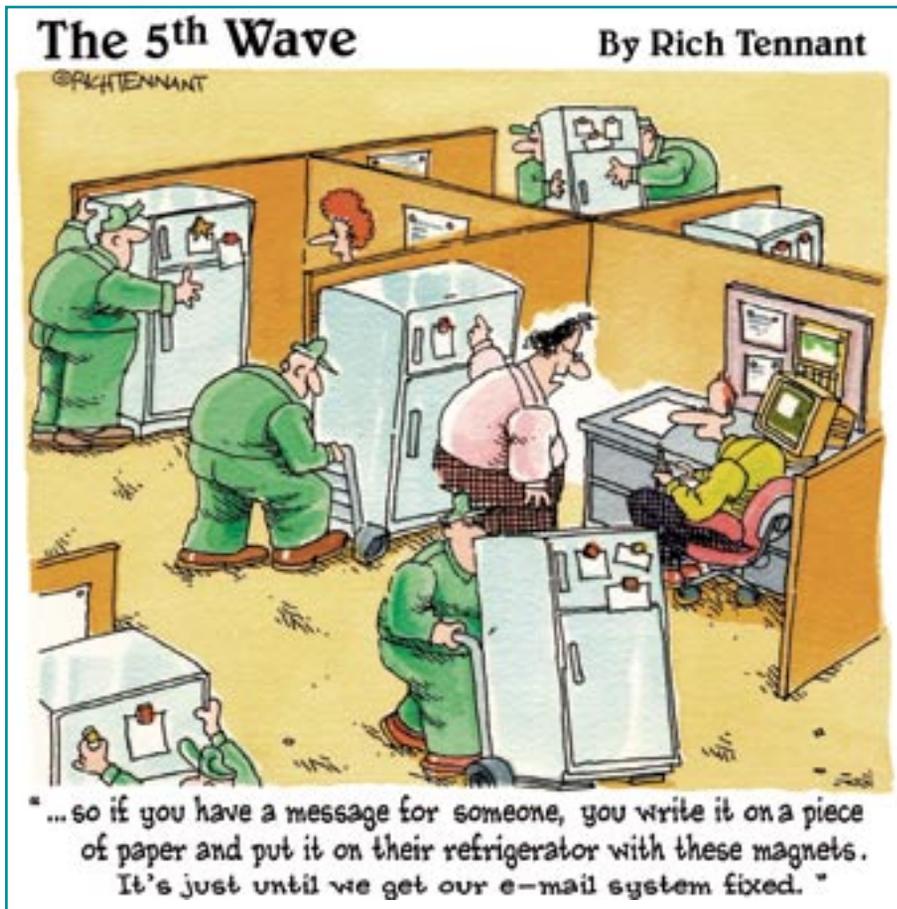
This time I would like to explore some aspects of the other end of the membership spectrum, the Individual Membership. In particular I would like to talk about an all too common phenomena in our industry – being between jobs or between contracts. This is certainly a time when many of us watch our expenditures very closely. Naturally we don't wish to spend any unnecessary dollars and burn up our "nest egg" until we know when a regular income will resume. That is a very reasonable approach. However, I would like to suggest that a TUG Membership is one area that you may wish to consider as a necessary, perhaps even a mandatory expense in order **to invest in yourself!**

You may have just left a company that had a TUG Membership. That Membership brought you many benefits including among others, the TUG eServer magazine, the Salary Survey results, an invitation to the TUG TEC, the Annual Golf Tournament, and perhaps most importantly at this moment in your career, attendance at all the "Meeting of Members" evenings throughout the year.

I mention the Meeting of Members evenings in particular, as I cannot think of a better place to meet new people, and make important business contacts. As they say in the "Showcase" or "Exposition" area at any conference: "The people attending here are our 'target audience'." Or, "The people we meet here are already 'qualified leads', they wouldn't be here if they weren't already interested in this product." This is certainly true at every TUG event; we know that everyone there has a "qualified" interested in the iSeries. Aren't these people, as a group, the most likely people in this area to be looking for someone with your skills and knowledge? If they are not looking for their own company, then perhaps they may know about an opening in the company of a friend or an acquaintance. This is an opportunity to access the "hidden job market", the career marketplace where the positions are **often** never advertised openly, i.e., an opportunity to network with your "target audience" just brimming over with those "qualified leads".

Now I am not suggesting that you go around the meeting handing out your resume; a practice, which I believe, is against the TUG code of ethics. However, before and after the meeting, and especially during the dinner break,

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you can certainly talk to other attendees about your strengths, your skills, and your availability. Further, the information that is made available to you about their companies may be useful for future job, or contract interviews. During the sessions, in addition to learning about new technology, or in-depth techniques for use on the iSeries, your knowledgeable questions during these presentations may demonstrate your interest, and enthusiasm, to prospective employers.

Similar opportunities exist at all the other TUG functions. One is the TUG TEC, especially during Showcase, where many companies have their owners, or their representatives at booths in the expo area. (Please note: your TUG Membership will save you \$100 on the Registration fee.) Another is the Annual Golf Tournament – a perfect opportunity to do some serious networking while playing golf and enjoying a wonderful dinner in a relaxed atmosphere. And if you're willing to look for opportunities farther a field, your TUG membership provides you with an "umbrella membership" in COMMON, which would allow you to attend their twice yearly conferences and network for a week with thousands of iSeries professionals.

When you are between positions and therefore no longer with a company that has a TUG Corporate Membership, you are still able to enjoy most of the benefits of TUG Membership by taking out an "Individual Membership" in TUG. The cost is only one hundred and ninety-nine dollars (\$199). While this may sound like an expense at the moment, I would suggest that it should actually be viewed as **an investment in yourself, and in your future.**

Don't miss an opportunity, remain a member of the TORONTO USER GROUP! 

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