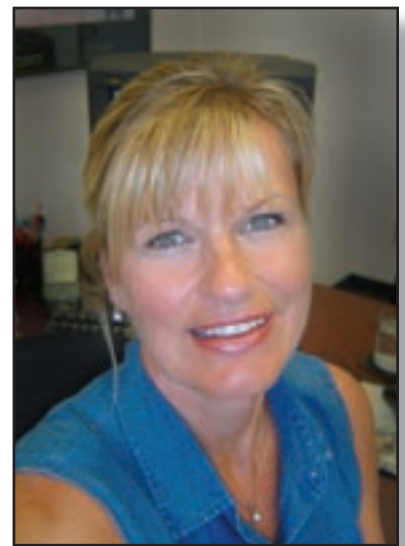


President's Corner

By *Eveline Gaede*,
President, Toronto Users Group for Midrange Systems



A New Year – A Fresh Start!

September has always been a month of new beginnings for me — reminiscent of years ago, when starting a new school year was akin to receiving a clean slate. Once again I had another chance to accomplish everything I hadn't the previous year! Looking at my new, crisp, blank notebooks, I had a clear vision of well-organized, neat and esthetically pleasing notebooks. My homework, taking minimal effort, would be done on time and always result in straight A's. I'd be the lead in the school play, the star on the basketball court and the most sought-after dance partner. (Did I ever reach this nebulous state of perfection? Well, my notebooks stayed "neat" until the first time I wrote in them; I did get a couple of A's but have yet to find a use for Latin and trombone. As far as the school play, the closest I got to the lead was putting on her makeup, as part of the makeup team; and I was certainly noticed on the basketball court, when at a pivotal at-home game, on a break-away with nary an opposing player nearby, I tripped and fell flat on my face! With grace like that, it was lucky for me that the music of the early seventies was heavy metal and not at all conducive to dancing!)

This September brings new challenges — not only for me personally but also for all members of the I.T. community.

As newly elected President, I find myself with some mighty big shoes to fill. During the five years that I have been a member of TUG, this position was held by both Richard Dolewski and Léo Lefebvre — two men for which I have the utmost respect and admiration. Richard and Léo are known far and wide by the TUG membership, by the IBM community and other User Groups across the country. They, as well as all the board members, devote countless hours, time and energy for the betterment of the group. If you add up all the years of experience of the TUG Board of Directors, the sum total is well over 250 years!

So I find myself wondering, "How on earth will I ever measure up?" It seems like only yesterday that I joined TUG as a newcomer to the iSeries. I was a confirmed UNIX'er with little thought or desire to know anything about what I mistakenly thought was old technology. That was four short years ago when, after a company-wide business decision in 1997, I was thrust into the world of Big Blue. With little knowledge of anything to do with iSeries, I joined TUG. The MoMs were very beneficial so when an election call was made, two thoughts ran through my mind: "*Run for the board - what better way to gain connections than to sit on a Board with 14 seasoned, experienced iSeries users?*" and "*You're crazy - what could you possibly contribute?*" Needless to say, my impulsive side overcame my rational side, and I became a member of the Board.

While I have contributed in whatever capacity I could over the past four year, what I have gained, both personally and professionally, far out-weighed my contributions. I have developed friends and contacts far beyond what I ever imagined. And although I am now cursing my impulsive side for getting me involved four years ago, I am looking forward to this new challenge. (The good news, is that those 250+ years of experience are still there to ensure TUG continues to fulfill the needs of its membership!)

As an industry, we have faced an extremely tough year. What started strong and positive for many companies across all industries last September, ended up very different than earlier indications. The economy slowed, fuel and insurance prices sky-rocketed and the strong Canadian dollar forced businesses to curtail excess spending.

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This unfortunately, had a trickle-down effect on many facets of the I.T. industry. While these things are out of our control to change, at times like these, it is important to take stock of how we do things and examine what we can do to change to be prepared for the next period of growth. Now more than ever, it is important to be aware of what is new and exciting in our industry, and TUG is here to help.

This is a year of change for TUG as well. To jump start the year, we have changed the location of our September MoM to a new, exciting locale — Woodbine Race Track. Our first topic covers one of the hottest operating systems to run on an iSeries — Linux. This topic is a "must-know" for all levels of I.T., whether you are in a technical role or a decision-making role.

So, why the change in location? And what does a racetrack have to do with I.T.? To answer both questions, here is a quote directly from Woodbine's brochure — "*Experience the Excitement*". We all need to generate some new excitement in our jobs and careers and that's what TUG is trying to do — the iSeries is exciting, Linux is exciting and this year **will be** exciting. And of course, it goes without saying that Woodbine is **very** exciting! See you in September. 