

Come and Enjoy TUG TEC 2004

By Jay Burford

Have you ever attended TUG TEC? It is the Technical Education Conference presented by the Toronto Users Group for Midrange Systems. If, like me, you have attended before, you are probably already excited about the upcoming 11th Annual TUG TEC being held on Tuesday, April 20th, and Wednesday, April 21st, 2004.



TEC 2003 speaker: Grace Wong

If you have never been before, you should be asking yourself – **WHY NOT?** (And more importantly – **What are MY plans for attending this year?**)

This probably sounds very presumptuous of me. However, I have been to a number of TUG TEC's, as an attendee, volunteer, exhibitor, and Showcase manager, and

therefore feel somewhat qualified to encourage you to attend. **Why attend?** There are a number of reasons, including the fact that it is educational, beneficial to your career, and cost effective, as well as entertaining and enjoyable, with something for everyone.

Educational is an understatement! With six tracks, most of which have eleven different sessions over the two days, the biggest problem that I always have is choosing which sessions to attend or speakers to follow, or alternately how to clone myself. (Speaking of cloning, that suggests a possible solution. If you bring more people from your company and agree ahead of time on the different sessions that you will each attend, you will be able to bring more of the first hand knowledge back to your company). And talking about the speakers providing these sessions! These are some of the best in the industry, not only from Toronto, but international. Many of these presenters have won Speaker's Awards at COMMON Conferences, and will be giving these presentations a few weeks later at the COMMON's Spring Conference in San Antonio.

Benefits to your career are always an important consideration. TUG TEC can provide many possibilities. Bring your company's current problems, needs, or concerns to the conference. Ask for help with resolutions in the sessions, at the Vendor Showcase, over lunch with other attendees, vendors, or the speakers. If you don't know who to ask, go to one of the volunteers and they will match you with the right expert to help you resolve your problem. As a registered attendee you will also receive a "Certificate of Completion". Another way to benefit your career

is to bring some of your company's executives to attend the Executive Breakfast and to listen to Robert Tipton's presentation on "Untangling IT". I have heard Robert Tipton speak many times at COMMON and I have never heard anything but the highest praise for his presentations. (Robert Tipton has won 7 Gold Medals, 13 Silver Medals, and 1 Bronze Medal as Speaker Awards for his wonderful presentations at COMMON.)



Jay Burford



TEC 2003 speaker: Alison Butterill



TEC 2003 Keynote: Randall Munson with Bernard Gough

After the executives from your company come for this session, get them to stay for the Vendor Showcase and the lunch that will be provided. This is an opportunity to see the latest products and to find solutions for the current problems that your company may be experiencing. Remember, if you find a solution for your IT needs at the Vendor Showcase, and you have some of your company's executives available, they will be able to see the demonstration, or discuss the product with the vendor and make the buying decision right on the spot. This will save you the extra effort of doing the selling back at the office. In addition, invite your fellow workers, even those that are unable to attend the whole conference, to come to the Vendor Showcase during the lunch hour (lunch is provided), or after work. This part of the event is open to everyone, not just registered Conference attendees, and it is always entertaining and informative. (The free-of-charge lunch is great too!)

Why is it **Cost Effective**? The price for the conference is excellent, and perhaps importantly to your company, you are only away two days. As the conference is on a Tuesday and a Wednesday, you are available on Monday to resolve any problems that surfaced over the weekend, and you are back in-house for the end of the week rush. Travel expenses should be minimal as we are "local" for a huge number of companies in the Greater Toronto Area, and even if you are traveling from the northern United

States you are still probably able to drive and enjoy the effective purchasing power of our lower dollar to cover the cost of gas, food, and lodging if you should require an overnight stay. (**Note:** There is a special Conference room rate at the Sheraton and the Best Western.) Therefore, this is not only a terrific conference, but it will also be attractive to the manager of the Education Budget at many companies.

Did I say entertaining and enjoyable? YOU BETTER BELIEVE IT! From the moment that you arrive on Day One

to find a well-organized registration desk, served by a group of enthusiastic volunteers, you know that this is going to be a great Conference. Come early and after you register, enjoy a complimentary continental breakfast (available both days) and start to chat with your fellow attendees. Who knows, some of them may have experienced the same problems that you are encountering at your company, and hopefully they might even have one or more possible solutions to suggest. (If you are going to the Executive Breakfast, you will have a chance to discuss common issues, and draw on the accumulated experience of the other executives, as well as benefit from Robert Tipton's vast experience.)

Attendees will then be going on to their selected sessions. I know that it may be important for you to talk to the speaker at the end of a session, to get clarification on a point, or to ask questions concerning an area that didn't get covered, but **remember** to get up, walk around, stretch and have a drink during the break between sessions. Otherwise, you may suffer from "information overload", and miss meaningful input in the later sessions.

The Vendor Showcase will open at lunchtime. I find this part of the



Hungry attendees sample the complimentary buffet during Showcase 2003

conference exciting, not for the “free lunch”, but because there are a large number of vendors gathered together in one location. This means that we can do some one-stop comparison-shopping. The vendors are there because they want to help you resolve your company’s problems. If they are able to help you, and sell their product or service at the same time, then it’s a win-win situation. Add to the expertise provided by the vendors, the availability and experience of the many speakers who will be in the same room, and accessible to answer your questions, and you have an unbeatable resource to resolve problems. The Vendor Showcase is also the place to meet old friends who are also attending the Conference, but perhaps have been in different sessions than you.



TEC 2003 Keynote Luncheon

On Day Two, take pleasure in the camaraderie of talking to new and old friends while you enjoy the complimentary continental breakfast. Some of you will then be going to a bus to travel to the IBM Laboratory to participate in a two-hour hands-on lab. This is a new event at this Conference and I am sure that it will be exciting. (The new IBM laboratory is a “not to be missed” experience in itself, a fact to which the many members who have attended a TUG Meeting of the Members at that location will attest.) Other attendees will then be off to the sessions. Again, remember to make use of the breaks to refresh and restore your energy.

No matter, this presentation will be new and fresh for everyone, and it will be an excellent ending to a terrific lunch. Then it’s back to the sessions, or the bus to the lab to finish off the conference.

Something for everyone! You bet! I have no doubt at all that there is something for everyone at the TUG TEC:

- Company executives will benefit from both Robert Tipton’s presentation on “Untangling IT” during the Executive Breakfast, and the information and solutions available at the Vendor Showcase.
- Attendees will gain knowledge from the sessions, and this education will help them to further their career. More information will be obtained at the Vendor Showcase during the lunch break, and later during the hors d’oeuvres and passport draw.
- The companies that send the attendees will benefit from their new knowledge.
- Vendors will gain access to a number of qualified contacts from a variety of companies, while they also enjoy lunch, and hors d’oeuvres.



Irvin Kovar and Tom Napier at the Automation Associates Inc. booth

Don’t forget to come back to the Vendor showcase during the afternoon breaks, and especially at the end of the day. There is a terrific draw for prizes (supplied by various vendors) at day’s end. In order to enter you take a passport to various vendors who will mark your attendance at their booth. When the passport is full you enter it into the draw. (Be sure to put your name and other requested information on the passport.) Also later in the day there will be an hors d’oeuvres table and a cash bar for your enjoyment while finishing your tour of the Vendor Showcase. It makes for a fun ending to a long and productive, but busy day.

Next comes the Keynote Lunch. This is an exciting event as it is the first time that all the attendees at the Conference are gathered together in one room. Robert Tipton is the Keynote Speaker. A number of you may have attended one of Robert Tipton’s sessions on Day One and you will have some idea of what you might expect from his Keynote Address at this Day Two Lunch. Other attendees will be hearing Robert Tipton for the first time.




Ed Jowett, Charlie Massoglia, and Jay Burford

Photos by Léo Lefebvre



Troy Bleeker learns a new trick

- Everyone will have a magnificent Keynote Lunch and enjoy a great speaker with a wonderful presentation.
- Volunteers will end the conference tired, but with the knowledge and satisfaction of knowing that they have done another great job and completed another successful TUG TEC, the 11th.

Make sure that you are one of the fortunate attendees at TUG TEC on Tuesday, April 20th and Wednesday, April 21st! SEE YOU THERE! 

Jay Burford holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Toronto. He retired from the IBM Laboratory in 1997 and is currently a Senior Consultant with ASTECH Solutions Inc. He is a member of the COMMON Finance Committee and Manager of the COMMON Training Program, as well as a TUG volunteer. Jay can be reached at jburford@astech.com.



Ron Love mans the Syntax booth

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TORONTO USERS GROUP

for Midrange Systems
36 Toronto Street, Suite 850
Toronto, Ontario M5C 2C5

Telephone: (905) 607-2546
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