

President's Corner

By *Eveline Gaede*,
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It is hard to believe that another year has passed for TUG and my term as president will soon be over! Last September, when I wrote my first column for President's Corner, I mentioned that one manifestation of the unexpected economic downturn in 2003, was a decrease in IT spending which affected many companies. From articles I have seen, I am optimistic that we are heading back in the right direction, albeit slowly. By all indications, the economy continues to strengthen. And according to Forrester Research, Canadian IT spending will grow by three percent in 2004.

At TUG, we were concerned about how the reduced IT spending would effect our Users Group. Coupled with this, there have been some articles circulating that user groups are dying out. Peter Norton once predicted the demise of users groups. He believed the technology would become so simple that users groups would not be needed, just like there are no users groups for telephones, vacuum cleaners or other appliances. To find out if there was any truth in this, I typed in "users groups" in google.ca and got over **13 million hits!** Does that sound like a dying forum to you?

To combat some of these issues, and because we always strive to deliver the most value to our membership, we tried some new things this year:

- We had a change of venue for our September and May member's meetings from the Travel Lodge to Woodbine Race Track. From the session reviews, all attendees enjoyed the new locale. (The excellent buffet was much appreciated as well!)
- We had a great year of topical sessions that were applicable to all levels of IT: from typical IT issues like software management; to tech-

nical topics like Websphere, Linux and Remote System Explorer tools and also some "IT awareness" topics like how Sarbanes-Oxley and PIPEDA would affect our roles in the company. Our last session revolved around highlights of the new IBM announcements on i5 and V5R3.

- We added some "extra-value" items to our annual TEC conference, held in April. The two hands-on labs: RSE and Web Facing, were great hits! On the first morning of the conference, we held an executive breakfast with world-renown speaker **Robert Tipton** giving his presentation on "Untangling IT".

Naturally we still had all of the regular networking events such as the bi-monthly meetings and the annual golf tournament. Our "TUG eServer magazine" continually delivers articles on the top technical issues as well as regular updates on past and upcoming events.

If ever there was a year to join TUG, it is the upcoming year! Top and foremost are the new announcements from IBM. It is clear from the announcements on their direction with i5, that IBM is focused on not only the survival, but the re-energizing of our beloved iSeries! And TUG will continue to bring you speakers, articles and conference sessions that will help you keep up with the exciting changes.

Another thrilling item is that COMMON is coming to Toronto. You may be asking yourself, "What does joining TUG have anything to do with the COMMON conference?" First and foremost, if you are planning to attend COMMON, by being a member of TUG, you can save money. One such savings is the COMMON membership fee – a savings of \$395 US!

And even if you are not planning to attend the COMMON conference itself, you can still reap the benefits. Besides the regular five MoM's, we will be hosting a special LUG session during the conference. All TUG members will be able to attend the COMMON Expo, followed by a 75 minute presentation by one of COMMON's top speakers, at no cost.



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Some of the topics we are looking at for our regular MoMs are: Enterprise Application Modernization (EAM), the new CL enhancements in V5R3, Project Management, and WebSphere, to name a few. Although most meetings will be held at our regular meeting facility, we are again looking at a change in venue for a couple of these meetings – namely Woodbine and the IBM Lab. We are already in the planning stages for TEC 2005! Because of the success of this year's labs, we will hopefully be able to repeat this feature.

As you can see, TUG is strong, growing and committed to serving its membership! And we have been doing so for many years. In 2005, TUG will be celebrating its 20th Anniversary!

I hope everyone has a safe and happy summer. Take some time to relax and rejuvenate as next year is shaping up to be a very exciting year! See you all in September!

