MUUG Lines

Manitoba UNIX® User Group

Newsletter of the Manitoba UNIX® User Group

A Major Transition

By Bary Finch

The Manitoba UNIX User Group is going through a major change. The current board has come to the end of its term, as our year end is October. Typically, there are a number of board members that will continue on for another term, often in another role than the prior term. For this year there are three board members willing to continue on for another term on the board.

The major transition is the fact that there are no new board members to fill the remaining five board positions required to have a full board; as per our constitution. A full board is required to maintain the orderly management, and the continued growth and development of MUUG. The need for new board members has been promoted to MUUG over the last few meetings and newsletters, but unfortunately to no avail so far, as we have had no volunteers come forward for the board.

It is now critical for the MUUG membership to come forward and form the new board. It is time for an endorsement of the group by its members, to make sure that MUUG should continue as it has been. The only way that MUUG can continue to operate is with a complete board. Otherwise no-one will be able to provide all the membership benefits that are currently provided, such as a monthly newsletter, general monthly meetings with presentations on the most current topics in the Open Systems world, and a Linux SIG. This is going to become immediately apparent as we no longer have anyone to be editor, so there will not be a true newsletter for next month. A single page bulletin is more likely.

Actually, there is a real variety of positions available, as no specific position is being taken by the three members that are continuing. For example, I will not be continuing as President, after two terms

in that position, so even that role requires a new person to fill it.

There are five positions required to fill the board, so if you have any interest in helping keep MUUG developing, please let us know as soon as possible. These board positions are very rewarding, as you get the opportunity to meet so many other people in the Winnipeg business and technical communities. The roles really are fairly flexible, so that you can easily make them into what you want to do. For example, anyone wanting to be President could be an ambassador to other businesses and user groups in Winnipeg, or they could put their organizational flair on new ways to run MUUG. Anything is possible!

Have you ever wanted to try your hand at writing articles, or putting together the right blend of images and text to produce eye catching results? Then try being our editor. If you'd rather help organize what speakers are presenting when, for either the MUUG meetings or the Linux SIG, then help us with our Programs. For those that would like to install a database on their PC (with a software license and everything!) and maintain our membership listing, we have the opportunity. No end of choices!

In conclusion, I can't emphasize enough that MUUG really needs you to step forward and take control, because MUUG really IS you. I really believe that we can continue to provide the premier Open Systems forum for Winnipeg, otherwise I would not be continuing on the board as Past-President. Unfortunately there will not be much of a group if no-one comes forward to take on a board position. This is clear from the September meeting, where we did not get a speaker to present, and we had a rather skinny newsletter, which was sent out late. So now it's up to you.   ➡

This Month's Meeting

Meeting Location:
Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 10, at 7:30 PM. Once again, the meeting will be held in the auditorium of the St-Boniface Hospital Research Centre, just south of the hospital itself, at 351 Taché. You don't have to sign in at the security desk — just say you're attending the meeting of the Manitoba UNIX User Group. The auditorium is on the main floor, and is easily found from the entrance.

Meeting Agenda: See inside for details.

Inside This Issue

Number 20

By Andrew Trauzzi

This article will end my stint as newsletter editor for the Manitoba UNIX User Group. More precisely, this will be my final ramble!

Unfortunately, I have no successor, which will leave the group in a mildly volatile state. This brings me to my final ramble — volunteers.

Volunteering?

This topic may seem rather hippocritical given the fact that I will no longer be volunteering my time for the group! In reality, I have spent many hours in front of my glowing screen for MUUG and feel that I require a breather. Recently, there has been a large decline in the membership of all user groups — attributed mostly to employers expecting more productivity from less employees (but that was a previous ramble).

When individuals volunteer their time to a cause or organization they believe in, both sides benefit. The organization becomes capable of helping many, many more people and the individual gets a "warm and fuzzy" feeling. Well, not all the time, but offering your services for free to the community will certainly look good on a résumé! I'm not saying that it's the only reason why people volunteer, but if fattening up your résumé is your only goal, I'm sure the group you are helping wouldn't care. In today's competitive marketplace, every bit counts.

Is that why I became newsletter editor two years ago? Not really, but many opportunities have opened up for me because of it. Mostly, I enjoyed being a larger part of an organization that helped the computing community.

The Canadian Cancer reports that 90% of its volunteers sign up because someone close to them has died from cancer. No one close to you will die from UNIX (I hope not anyway!), so volunteers are hard to come by. (I see the ad now — let's stamp out UNIX before it kills again!)

Seriously, think twice when someone asks you to volunteer your time — someone down the road will thank you for it.

I would like to thank all the past and present board members for their patience and help (esp. Bary, Gilbert, Roland, and Susan). I would also like to thank all the members of MUUG (both past and present) for reading my ramblings and attending our meetings. Good luck to all of you!

Andrew Trauzzi. ◆◆

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Ad copy must be submitted by the final copy deadline for an issue (usually 3 weeks prior to the monthly meeting) in a format acceptable to the editor. (Please make arrangements with editor beforehand.)

Internet E-mail: editor@muug.mb.ca

Group Information

The Manitoba UNIX User Group meets at 7:30 PM the second Tuesday of every month, except July and August. Meeting locations vary. The newsletter is mailed to all paid-up members one week prior to the meeting. Membership dues are $25 annually and are due as indicated by the renewal date on your newsletter's mailing label. Membership dues are accepted at any meeting, or by mail.

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What's Happening These Days

By Bary Finch

MUUG is going through quite a bit of turmoil these days, as our cover article suggests. User groups often face times when there is really no-one wanting to take control of the group, but they survive when the members realize that when enough people volunteer, the work's not so bad for each individual! Hopefully this will become apparent to many of you as well.

We have a lot of plans for the remainder of the year, but it will take a number of people to carry them out. An example is our usual Christmas Wine and Cheese, where we like to get a number of people displaying their technology. It takes a few people to arrange with all the presenters, and arrange for their system requirements: power, network cabling, etc.

We also have speakers lined up for this month and for November, but it will take some help to make sure that the arrangements are all made so that the presentations go smoothly. It is unfortunate that we do not have a newsletter editor to help us get out the information on our topics coming up, as well as the usual other interesting material in our newsletters.

As an example of one of the short topics coming up, I will be presenting on UNIX Expo, which I had the good fortune to attend. This is an event that is one of the premier Open Systems events in the world, with perhaps UniForum being the other major event. UniForum is held in the spring, and UNIX Expo in the fall, so maybe that would be a main criteria for attendance at one of the events versus the other, or both if your company can afford it!

UNIX Expo was held in New York city, at the Jacob K. Javits convention center, in Manhattan. This event combines the traditional show floor of vendors with corporate education. The variety of seminars, tutorials and workshops was quit extensive. I went for the Full Conference package, which combined attendance at three days of 90 minute seminars, as well as admittance to the show floor. My intention for my upcoming presentation is to share some of the information that I gleaned from my seminar attendance, as well as from the Keynote speakers.

The show floor had representation from all the major UNIX vendors: Tandem, Sun, HP, Digital, SCO, IBM, Novell, Data General, etc. Pretty much anything you wanted to see in UNIX was there, hardware or software. Also, the usual variety of trinket giveaways was occurring, so I have a few new t-shirts for washing my car now. I did gain a lot of good information on products that represented technologies that were not included in the seminar presentations I attended.

The size of the show floor made it a busy time to get around to see everyone that you would want to (I didn't manage to do it), as there must have been over 300 vendor's on display. This of course is not the scale of Comdex at all, but it did provide access to all the Open Systems products you could typically want.

Once Canadian company that had a sizable presence was Hummingbird, who makes the PC X-window product eXceed. Their booth had never ending packed presentations, and they could boast having 49% of the PC X-window market, which is over twice the nearest competitor's market share. Not bad for a company from Markham!

All in all, the show was a great experience. Come out to the meetings over the fall, and catch my presentation on UNIX Expo at one of them.

P.S. I expect I will see five of you on the board in the near future! ➡

SIGnificant Happenings

By Gilbert Detillieux

September 19: Our first SIG meeting since May was fairly well attended (15 people), and made for a busy round-table discussion. There were many questions about setting up Linux and X, and working around bugs. There were also some general UNIX questions, and some strange problems reported.

The meeting also featured "Stupid Sound Tricks." This was a simple demo of a sound driver for Linux, which is software compatible with the driver for sound cards (like the Sound Blaster), but which can use the built-in PC speaker, or use a number of simple 8-bit D/A convertors that plug into the parallel port (schematics and parts lists are included in a document in the driver's archive).

As you might have guessed, the sound quality from the built-in speaker is pretty poor, but with a reasonable D/A convertor and appropriate amplifier, you can get acceptable sound via the parallel port (similar to the quality of an 8-bit sound card). It's an interesting option for systems (e.g. laptops) where a sound card may not be available. The driver is available on the net (`ftp://ftp.informatik.hu-berlin.de/pub/os/linux/hu-sound/`).

At the September meetings, we announced a couple offers that have been made to the SIG, from companies providing products for the Linux market. SSC, publishers of the Linux Journal, are selling the LUG/nut CD to user groups only for a mere $6 US per copy (minimum order of 5). MUUG has placed an order for 5 copies of the August edition, which we will make available to our members (we'll keep some copies for loaning out, but will be able to sell 2 or 3 copies). When future editions are announced, we'll let members know, so that you can place your order through us. (Since we last met, we've received word from SSC that our order is being delayed, since they're currently out of stock. We'll be receiving the October edition, when it's available.)

Also, Yggdrasil will be providing the Linux SIG with one free copy of each of their main products (Plug & Play Linux, The Linux Bible, and Linux Internet Archives). We will circulate them at meetings, once we receive them, and will likely add these to our "lending library" as well.

The next SIG meeting is on October 17, 1995, at the usual time and place. (That's 7:30 PM, at ISM, 400 Ellice Ave.) The meeting topic is still TBA, but I'm sure we can expect another lively round-table discussion. Hope to see you all there! ➡️

Agenda

for
Tuesday, October 10, 1995, 7:30 PM
Samuel N. Cohen Auditorium
St-Boniface Hospital Research Centre
Main Floor, 351 Taché

1.	President's Welcome	7:30
3.	Business Meeting	7:35
4.	Short Topic	7:40
5.	Coffee Break and Informal Discussion	7:50
6.	Feature Topic	8:00
	Gilbert Detillieux will present "Writing Software for Portability"	

Note: Please try to arrive at the meeting between 7:15 and 7:30, to avoid disrupting the meeting in progress.

Coming Up

Meeting:
Next month's meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 14, at 7:30 PM. Meeting location will be the St-Boniface Research Centre, as usual. The November meeting topic is TBA. Stay tuned for details.

Got any ideas for meeting topics? Any particular speaker, company, or product you'd like to see at one of our meetings? Just let our meeting coordinator, Doug McLean, know. You can e-mail him at <dmclean@muug.mb.ca>.

Newsletter:
If you are interested in a particular topic, let me know. I'm sure I could coerce you into writing an article! I could use a few articles — especially shorter ones — half a page to one page (400 to 1000 words) would be fine.

Monsieur Ex has also let me know that his mail-box has room for more of your wonderful queries again – please submit your questions to the old guy via e-mail to <m-ex@muug.mb.ca>. He may be old, but he's not ready for retirement yet!