



THE OMNI USER

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March is Here Already

It seems like just a few day ago that we put out a newsletter... of course, maybe that's because it pretty much *was* just a few days ago. No matter, because the March issue is here and on time!

As always, we have a ton of stuff to bring to you this month. But first I'd like to take a brief moment to let you know about what's going on here at OMNI. The winds of change are sweeping through the halls of OMNI (okay, OMNI is about the people, not a building, but the wind whistling between

our ears is not exactly the vision I wanted to plant in your mind). Mirth aside, we really are changing. For example, our newsletter is going electronic, emailing PDFs to folks rather than killing trees and overburdening postal carriers. To that end, we're going to have a serious membership verification and subscription drive -- so serious that we're asking for volunteers (see page [9](#)).

Other things are changing, too. You'll see more interaction between OMNI and other local (and maybe not so local) user groups. For example, this month you'll see a promotion for the WMCPA, a great Wisconsin user group (check out page [6](#)). Even our March dinner meeting is different -- it's being held at COMMON (page [3](#))!

Speaking of announcements, how about the IBM announcement last Thursday? It may be the most significant iSeries announcement in a decade, and we've got some recap on that as well as some insightful commentary from a good friend of the program, the Grumpy Old Programmer. So read on, and enjoy!

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Edited by Joe Pluta - omni-comm@plutabrothers.com

President's letter

By Dale R. O'Leary, OMNI President

Hello,

As many of you may know, I have been involved with OMNI for several years now, most recently as Webmaster. I have enjoyed being active in the organization, and recently decided to see if I can contribute in a different way as the board's president. This time of year is exciting for OMNI as we welcome a newly-elected board of directors, all of whom bring with them a lot of new ideas.

I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank last year's OMNI board members for their help in making 2004 a great year for OMNI. I would also like to welcome the new board and I am looking forward to working with them.

Our most recent Day of Education conference was a great success. Thanks to the many Day of Education volunteers and speakers, this year's attendees were treated to a wide range of educational topics surrounding the iSeries platform and supporting solutions. If you were not there you missed a great conference.

For our March meeting we are taking advantage of the fact that Common is in Chicago. The March meeting will be held at Common. OMNI members that participate in the Meeting will also be allowed to visit the Expo. Please note that the March Meeting will take place on Monday March 14th instead of Tuesday March 15th.

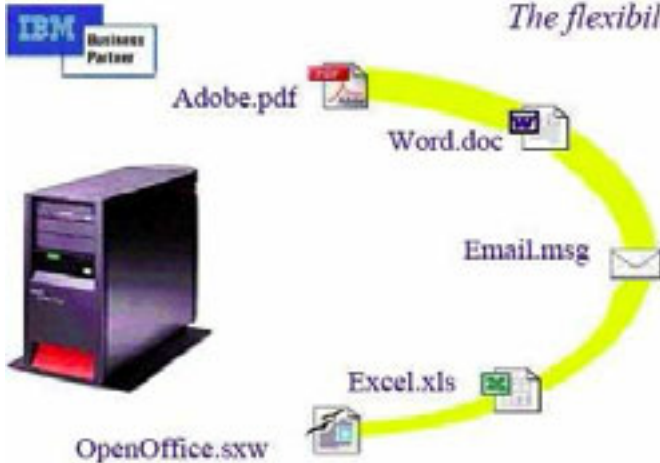
It's also that time of year to renew your membership for 2005. This year we are going to do something a little different. For those of you that have a registered email address we are going to send your invoice via email. You will be able to print off the Invoice and pay it or you can renew your membership on-line using a credit card via the OMNI website.

Hope to see you at an upcoming meeting,

Dale

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March not-a-Dinner OMNI/interLUG Meeting Monday, March 14, 2005

5:00PM Snacks/beverages in the EXPO
6:30PM Meeting in Crystal Ballroom C

This month's meeting is unusual in that it will be held at the COMMON conference in downtown Chicago. You'll be looking for session 28CB, which will be held in the Crystal Ballroom C of the Hyatt Regency Hotel. Location and directions for COMMON can be found at their web site:

<http://www.common.org/conferences/conf.html>

Beverages and snacks will be available in EXPO starting at 5PM. Badges must be picked up before entering EXPO. We're going to try to gather the badges for everybody who registers so you can pick them up at the OMNI booth. If not, you can at least come to the OMNI booth to get more information.

You don't have to be registered at COMMON to attend this presentation! In that case, the normal \$25 cost will apply. If, however, you're already registered with COMMON, there will be no additional charge to attend the presentation.

The meeting itself will start at 6:30, with a brief presentation about the state of the iSeries (which ought to be interesting given the recent announcement!) from John Reed, Director of iSeries Product Development and Business Operations. Then Al Barsa will present the featured topic, It's About Time, a summary of the new time management support added in V5R3.

Presentation: It's About Time

Come hear Al Barsa discuss the newly added time support for OS/400 in V5R3. Topics will include automated changes, automatic transformation of the system internal clock from local time to UTC (with no change to your normal operations), multiple time zone support, automated daylight savings time and other time adjustments. This is the first of two stages of enhancement to time support, with a later stage occurring in a subsequent release.

Speakers:

John Reed -- John holds a Bachelor's Degree in Mechanical Engineering from Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa. John began his IBM career in Rochester, Minnesota in December of 1983 as an engineer in Manufacturing. While in Manufacturing, John held several technical and management positions including managing the Systems Manufacturing lines. John then joined the iSeries (then AS/400) product management team in 1998. He was the project executive responsible for delivery of V4R5 and the industry's first introduction of silicon on insulator (SOI) technology. John also managed the transition of the AS/400 product line to eServer iSeries. John is currently the Director of Product Management and Business Operations for the IBM iSeries server. John's organization is responsible for product positioning, strategic product requirements and direction, and product launch and marketing for the iSeries product line.

Al Barsa -- Al Barsa, Jr. is President of Barsa Consulting Group, LLC and Barsa Systems Distribution, Inc, which specialize in the i5 - iSeries - AS/ 400. Al is the President of the Long Island Systems User Group and covers new hardware and software announcements for iSeriesNews. Al is very active in the COMMON organization as a frequent speaker at both US COMMON and COMMON Europe, as an Editor of the COMMON technical library and as a member of the Speaker Excellence Committee, and has addressed other user groups throughout the world. In the past, Al has been voted COMMON's Best Speaker", won Gold, Silver and Bronze medals, and has received COMMON's highest honor, the COMMON Distinguished Service Award.

For the year ending 2002 and in six prior years, Al was named on the 'AS/ 400 Insider Weekly's' "10 Biggest AS/ 400 Market Influencers" list, making him the only person in the world ever to be named seven times!

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Coming Midrange Events

March 13-17	Common Spring 2005 Conference Registration here!	Hyatt Regency Chicago 151 East Wacker Drive Chicago, IL
March 14 5:00 pm	OMNI Special COMMON Meeting (supersedes March Dinner Meeting)	At Common Conference Hyatt Regency Chicago 151 East Wacker Drive Chicago, IL
March 22 6:30 pm	OMNI Board of Directors Meeting <i>all are welcome</i>	Hosted by IBM Two Lincoln Centre Oakbrook Terrace, IL

Don't forget our booth! Drop by, stay awhile!

	<u>LUG Booth Hours</u>	<u>Registration Hours</u>	<u>Expo Hours</u>
Sunday	9:30 am to 8:00 pm	8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.	1:00 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.
Monday .	9:00 am to 7:00 pm	7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. 5:00 p.m. -7:00 p.m.	10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Tuesday ..	9:30 am to 3:00 pm	7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m



WMCPA Spring Technical Conference

Presented by
Wisconsin Midrange Computer Professional Association



April 6 & 7, 2005
Lake Lawn Lodge Resort
Delavan, Wisconsin

Conference speakers include:

Warren Acker, Marcela Adan, George Farr,
Susan Gantner, Jim Herring,
Bob Klingelhoets, Carol Miner, Jon Paris,
Fant Steel, Debbie Saugen, Robert Tipton,
Guy Vig, George Weaver, Claus Weiss,
Dennis Zimmerman

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7:00pm – 10:00pm
for
“Casino Night” with Mr. Blackjack
Try your luck at Blackjack, Craps, Roulette
and Let It Ride tables!

Visit www.wmcpa.org for more information


February Dinner Meeting

The Omni Group was treated to a special presentation by Mr. Trevor Perry from Clear Technologies during our February Meeting. Trevor is renowned for his ability to take a typically dry technical topic and turn it in to a humorous and informative presentation, the Omni Group was not disappointed. Trevor provided us a cornucopia of opportunities for application modernization. Because today's businesses demand greater accessibility, communication, and mobile computing, Trevor's presentation hit the mark. We thank Trevor for taking some time to spend with our group and hope to see him back in the near future!


Be sure to catch Trevor's Gold Medal Winning performances at the COMMON conference this month in Chicago.



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<http://www.arbsol.com/>

OMNI 2005 Board Election Results

Elections for the OMNI User 2005 Board of Directors were held during OMNI's Day of Education in January. At the Wednesday, February 4th board meeting, the new board held elections to determine who would serve in each board position. Here's your new OMNI User 2005 Board of Directors:

President	Dale O'Leary	doleary@zysolutions.com
Vice-President	Ed Booth	ebooth@suncast.com
Secretary	Yvonne Enselman	yenselman@comcast.net
Treasurer	Bill Parks	wparks@worldnet.att.net
Seminar Vice-President	Rodger Greif	rgreif@ciber.com
Membership & DB Director	Sal Stangarone	sals@mrc-productivity.com
Communications Director	Joe Pluta	joepluta@plutabrothers.com
Advertising Director	Matt Gross	prgg1@sbcglobal.net
Conference Director	Mike Pavlak	mike@pavlak.com
Webmaster	Dave Andruchuk	dandruchuk@sungardfutures.com
Past President	Paul Nelson	pnelson@arbsol.com
IBM Liaison	Joe Thompson	jwthomp@us.ibm.com
Advisory Member	Jerome Hughes	jromeh@comcast.net

All positions are covered this year, but please think about whether you might want to participate in next year's board. And for this year, we still need plenty of help for everything from manning the booth at COMMON to liaising with other user groups and vendor product groups to help get the word out.

Feel free to drop comments and ideas on us; you can send them directly to me, Joe Pluta, your Communications Director. Email me, or any of us, at the address listed above.

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HAVING TROUBLE KEEPING BUSY?
WANT AN EXCITING CAREER OPPORTUNITY?**

Well, okay, forget about the exciting part. But if you have some time and want to do something for your local user group, we could use your help. One of our initiatives this year is to make sure we get our database completely up to date, and to strengthen the communications channel with all our subscribers. To do that, we're going to need to send out some snail mail, maybe make some calls, that sort of thing. If you're interested in helping in that sort of activity, please contact our membership director, Sal Stangarone. You can email him at sals@mrc-productivity.com; we're sure he'd love to hear from you.

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March 2005 COMMON Corner

Reprinted from the March 2005 issue of COMMON.CONNECT

New COMMON Member Benefit Announced

COMMON Member Directory to Debut

Soon you'll be able to connect with your fellow COMMON members across the country – and around the world – to get answers to your IT questions, follow up on a conference discussion, or network between conferences. The COMMON Online Member Directory will be launched soon and will create an entire new community within COMMON – a community you can turn to for advice and support year round and 24/7.

Here's how the directory will work:

Step 1: Populating the Directory

By now, all active COMMON members (including Local User Group representatives) have been contacted via email with a request to provide their information for the Online Member Directory. Only active members will be included in the Directory. Note that "active members" include individual, corporate, and Local Users Group members who have paid their membership dues for 2005.

If you wish to participate in the directory, either by providing your information for others to access or by searching for members, and you didn't receive the email notification, please check with your Local User Group representative. In order for individual LUG members to participate, their LUG must have a current COMMON membership, and must have provided the names of all individual members to COMMON so we can provide each with an ID number to sign up for the directory.

<http://www.rjsssoftware.com/>

Only those people who enter their demographic information into the Web interface will be included. Members who choose not to be included, or who neglect to provide their information, will not appear in the Online Member Directory.

Step 2: Searching the Directory

Once the member directory is populated with enough members, COMMON will make the tool available to all active members. (Note that you'll need to know your COMMON ID and password to access the directory.) When you use the directory, you can search by one or a combination of the following criteria:

- First and last name
- City, state and/or country
- Type of software used (25 choices)
- Industry
- Functional responsibility
- Title

Step 3: Contacting Another Member

Say you have a question about installing Lotus Notes; you can query the member directory to find an IT manager who's already using that application. You can even search for someone in your immediate area if you want to suggest meeting in person.

Once you find the COMMON member you want to contact, you can click on an anonymous email link. The sender can't see or access email addresses (or mailing addresses) in the directory, and the email is sent through the online form, so all directory participants can enjoy their privacy until they respond to an inquiry.

The COMMON Online Member Directory is easy to use and it will be updated dynamically. Join it today, by providing your own professional information, and soon you can connect with IT professionals with similar interests and problems – and maybe get the answers you need to face your next challenge.

Renew Your Membership So You Can Participate

If you're interested in taking part in the new Online Member Directory, but your LUG's COMMON membership has lapsed, it's easy to renew. There's a link on www.common.org under "Become a COMMON member ... or renew your membership" that allows you to renew or join online. You can also download a PDF to print out, fill out and return. Or you can call COMMON's membership team at 800.270.8223 or 312.279.0192.

Note that individual LUG members can participate in the directory only if COMMON has their names on file. Your LUG representative must provide COMMON with a list of all current members in order for those members to be given ID numbers.

However you decide to renew your membership, as soon as your information is processed you will be eligible to participate in the directory.



Notes from the Field

- The Grumpy Old Programmer

*Editors's note: On February 24th, IBM made an announcement that may well have been the most significant iSeries announcement in a decade (at least that's what they said!). I was going to just give you the highlights, but given the fact that we try to be an equal opportunity newsletter, we've decided to let one of our, um, **stodgier** members chime in. Please welcome The Grumpy Old Programmer.*

Biggest announcement my foot. Removing the MOVE opcode, now *that* was a big announcement. Getting rid of WebSphere 3.5 Standard Edition, replacing it with Tomcat, and then removing support for Tomcat, *that* was a big announcement. This is more hoopla. Hot air. Blowing smoke.

*And given the history of the iSeries "marketing" efforts from IBM, we might agree if it weren't for the fact that the following Monday IBM published a **4-page spread** in the Wall Street Journal that specifically touted the iSeries to C-level executives. This is supposed to be repeated in other corporate-level magazines like Forbes and Fortune in the coming weeks.*

Humph. Okay, fine, they published an advertisement. It's about time. Maybe, just *maybe*, we can forget about the burger-flipping nonsense. But still, we need more from IBM. We need IBM to help us, the little guys, and the vendors that built this box. We're tired of IBM pandering to the big guys. Java and SQL and Linux. Who needs 'em?

Well, there are two different issues here. First, IBM has opened up a number of initiatives to make available literally millions of dollars to SMBs and their ISVs. No longer are these programs reserved just for the big customers or the big vendors. Anybody with an iSeries product or a need for one can get in touch with IBM and get hooked up with a solution, or so they say.

*And second, despite the grumbling, **you** need Java, and SQL, and maybe even Linux. Because if you want to compete, you're going to need those technologies. You're going to need to get to the Web, you're going to need to let the Web come to you, you're going to need to be able to provide ad hoc access to parts of your data. And that means new technologies. More importantly, this is what the kids know coming out of school, and if you intend on hiring new staff, you'll need the tools they know how to use.*

Yeah, well that's the problem, isn't it? IBM just wants to take away my RPG and my green screen and my native I/O and turn my box into some kind of gussied up Microsoft video game. Pretty soon RPG will be gone and so will native I/O!

That's simply not true. RPG and native I/O are the core strengths of the iSeries, and IBM knows it. Heck, they've been dumping huge amounts of money into the RPG compiler. No, the education may not be there like it used to be, but then again, how many RPG programmers really learned it in college? And while there may not be a lot of IBM education, there's plenty of stuff on the web, including iSeries-specific stores like MCPressOnline, where you can find education.

So I have to learn all this stuff myself, huh?

*Actually, I think the main thrust of the announcement was that IBM is going to help you find partners that can get you through this, and help those partners find you. Yes, it's a brave new world and a lot of new technology to learn and apply, but with the community pulling together, I think we have a shot at recapturing the best-of-breed predominance that the midrange held for so long in IT. Remember, the iSeries is the **only** box that provides both the legacy technologies of RPG and native I/O as well as all the new stuff, from PASE to Java to SQL. The problem was never which box is best, but how to sell it to the C-level executives. And now that IBM is committed to doing just that, **we** can concentrate on doing what we do best: writing killer applications!*

Yeah. Well, still... back in my day, we didn't have fancy Java stuff.

We programmed in assembly language.

Sometimes we toggled the program in from the front panel.

In the snow. Uphill. Both ways...

Editors's final note: The Grumpy Old Programmer provides a certain point of view that all of us feel at one time or another. But in this editor's opinion, if IBM manages to accomplish just a third of what they are attempting, then this could be a very, very good year.

Contact me with questions or comments: omni-comm@plutabrothers.com