

The Name Change . . .

by Catherine N. Pfeil

Over the past year, there has been a lot of activity about the name of our organization. The Board of Directors and the M Technology Association staff have tried hard to keep the members informed of the issues and actions throughout this period. This effort was not always as successful as we had hoped, and we find that we still are working to respond to the concerns of some members.

At the Board meeting in December 1992, Ed de Moel was an invited guest and, consequently, was invited to submit an article to reflect on his reactions and conclusions about the past year. Ed had been very active in his objections to the name change. As the meeting concluded, he expressed the opinion that he could help others to understand the complex issues that motivated the name change and reassure them that our goals and essence have not changed.

Ed has written a chronological review of the entire event from his perspective. He also has examined how his own reactions influenced the perceptions he formed versus the actual information that was trying to be conveyed. You may find the article to be a bit of a surprise. I encourage you to read it. Read all of it, especially the final section.

We really are still the same underneath all the names. ❖

Catherine Pfeil, Ph.D., is a member of the Board of Directors of the M Technology Association, and is based at the VA's San Francisco Information Systems Center.

M . . . Have We Lost Our UMPS?

by Ed de Moel

I have come to the conclusion that it is important that our name change will benefit us all. As a vocal and active objector before, let me relate my experiences and discoveries that lead me to this conclusion.

Opposition? No, We're Not on Opposite Sides

Over the past fifteen years, a discussion has divided the MUMPS community. Some of us like and love the name MUMPS, some of us don't. In the past two years, this discussion has been forced to a conclusion: the membership voted on a name change. The outcome of the vote: 88 percent in favor of a new name . . . And a few were in favor of keeping the old name.

As of now, there no longer is a platform to discuss the merits of a specific name. The vote has been cast, and the outcome is unambiguous. Being internally divided can be only detrimental to the goals that we all want to achieve.

Having said this all, why this article? Well . . . whose name did we change? The language? No, we didn't. We changed the name of one of the MUMPS Users' Groups, the North American one. The name of the language has not been changed. Some of the other MUMPS Users' Groups around the world prefer to keep their old name. Some companies have invested beaucoup bucks on name recognition for something that they sell

with a name that has the word MUMPS in it, and they don't want to lose their investments.

Angry—But Not Anymore

So, why are some longstanding members still angry? Because their views were defeated in this vote? We don't think so. Of course, many find it frustrating that their views didn't win, but that's not the point. The anger really deals with some details of the process that led to this result.

Polarization—Or Simply Confusion?

So far, the tone of this article has set the stage for some serious bashing—I'm angry and whoever is responsible for it will pay for it. Is that the goal here? No, of course not. That course of events will only prolong the division within our membership and make the polarization stronger and more obvious. Still there are a few unanswered questions:

- Is everyone who voted aware that the name of the language is and remains MUMPS?
- Is everyone who voted aware that a MUMPS Users' Group has no authority to change the name of the language?
- Is everyone who voted aware that [the vote was] to change the name of the organization, and that the vote had no effect whatsoever on the name of the language?