

The Sun Shines

by John F. Covin



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In the Midwest, the sun is shining again. The long winter of snow, ice, and lack of sun is passed. The long-absent warmth returns. I hope the sun is shining upon your world right now. Sometimes in the M community it seems like we go through seasons. I'd like to share some sunshine.

I recently received program materials announcing the happenings at the upcoming Spring COMDEX. Flipping through the pages, I noticed a bright spot coming from the M section in the alphabetical listing of exhibitors. A closer look revealed a familiar name in an unfamiliar setting: M Technology Association is listed as an exhibitor.

How can this be? The best-kept secret for the past twenty years is emerging for all the world to see.

There are those of you that will surely say, "Well, it's about time!" And there are those of you that might possibly say, "I wouldn't waste my time or money at COMDEX." Believe me, Peggy Hoffman (MTA's communications director) and the people serving

on the Promotions Advisory Board have heard it all. They have been working together to make this happen for more than a year. If you've been following the story, you know that several members of this Association who are M vendors comprise the Promotions Advisory Board. The amazing thing about this group is that while they compete with one another in the marketplace, they realize that they share a common goal of expanding M Technologies into other segments of the public and private sectors. They continually and diligently work together for our common good. Indeed, they are an integral part of what makes the MTA community go.

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But I want to point out that a COMDEX exhibit is not the ultimate goal of this group. Spring COMDEX is merely a means to an end and a big second step on the journey to wider acceptance and usage of M's technologies. (The first major step was changing the organization's name.) The group's process of getting us to COMDEX is like sunshine. Surely there will be cloudy days ahead that find some of us doubting that our technology will ever be widely accepted. Yet, even on cloudy days, I know how M's technologies have served the businesses I have been associated with: MUMPS, in the hands of tal-

ented and creative individuals, has enabled accomplishments not possible with other tools.

Is there something innate at the chromosome level that allows us to see what MUMPS can do for us? And if so, then there must be more people out there with the M chromosome that have not yet seen the light. Can you imagine the frustration M chromosome people must feel if they do not know about M Technologies? If this makes sense to you, then you'll understand what COMDEX means for MTA. COMDEX will not be our sole vehicle for locating these people with the M chromosome, but it is an important one.

There is another light source I want to mention, and that is the MUMPS Development Committee (MDC). The MDC continues to work as hard, consistently, and anonymously, as any group I have ever observed to accomplish anything. Its members must have the Double-M chromosome. The next language standard is imminent because each of them labors (it must be a labor of love) to move our technology forward. On behalf of all current and future users of M Technologies, I say thank you for all that you do.

Thomas Salander, MDC's chair since 1988, has just turned over his duties to Jamie Crumley. Thomas, your guidance and leadership through these years is very much appreciated. You brought order to potential chaos. You initiated movement and established momentum. And while you had an incredible supporting cast, you

were the point person. To you, also, go thanks from all current and future benefactors of M Technologies. You must have the Triple-M chromosome.

Please take a few minutes to read the tribute to Thomas from Dr. Ichiro Wakai on page 39. It was written as Thomas stepped down as MDC chair during the MDC meeting in February 1994. Dr. Wakai's words give the best description of Thomas's work on behalf of M.

The third source of light happens to be each of you as members. In the February issue of *M Computing*, I wrote about listening, understanding, and delivering from our perspective as "servants." I encourage each of you to fulfill your role as customer to your vendors. When they ask, tell them what you need. When they do not ask, tell them what you need. The other side of being a good servant as systems people is our responsibility to "manage" our suppliers. In addition to giving them your list of immediate needs, give them a sense of your long-term needs.

Those of you who are familiar with management guru Stephen Covey's concept of important versus urgent will recognize that we tend to provide feedback only on our urgent needs. When I apply this concept I realize it takes more time and thought to effectively give feedback on our important needs. It is this latter kind of feedback (beacon to success) that keeps our suppliers on the right track to reach our collective success.

In the MTA community, the sun shines. **M**

John F. Covin has chaired the M Technology Association since 1991. He is the senior vice president for information and client services at SciCor, Inc., in Indianapolis.

1993-1994

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CALENDAR

May 23-27, 1994

COMDEX/Spring '94, World Congress Center, Atlanta, Georgia. Call Interface Group at 617-449-6600 for more information. For information on MTA participation, call 301-431-4070.

June 8-10, 1994

Conference on Medical Image, Information, and Communication Management for Healthcare. Sponsored by Georgetown University Medical Center. Call 202-687-7955 for details.

June 13-17, 1994

MTA-NA 23rd Annual Meeting—Windows of Opportunity, Reno, Nevada. See the registration booklet for course offerings, meeting details, discussion sessions. Call 301-431-4070 for materials.

October 26-28, 1994

USENIX Symposium on Very High Level Languages, El Dorado Hotel, Sante Fe, New Mexico. Call 714-588-8945 for details.

November 7-11, 1994

MTA-Europe Annual Meeting, Luxembourg.

January 16-20, 1995

USENIX Winter 1995 Technical Conference, Marriott Hotel, New Orleans, Louisiana. Call 714-588-8943 for details.

To have your organization's meeting(s) listed in the *M Computing* Calendar, send details to *M Computing*, Managing Editor, M Technology Association, Suite 205, 1738 Elton Road, Silver Spring, Maryland 20903-1725. Materials must be received four months prior to the date of the event(s).