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MOTD

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The Advanced Computing Systems Association &
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motd

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Ch-ch-ch-changes

“Change is the only constant.”

– Denise McCluggage, U.S. race car driver.

I have a new job. I know what you're thinking; it surprised me, too.

I am the new SAGE Executive Director. I am charged with carrying out the wishes of the Executive Board of the System Administrators Guild. You'd just be amazed at how many wishes one can conjure up when there's someone to carry them out :).

One of SAGE's primary stated goals is to 'raise the perceived level of professionalism of System Administrators'. I think this is a dandy goal and I've taken it upon myself to create plans to accomplish this goal.

One of the interesting parts about such goals is the prerequisites required to accomplish the goal. For instance, in order for SAGE to “represent the interests of System Administrators,” SAGE must acquire some sort of standing in the community. This might mean having enough members to claim to represent some significant fraction of the entire community (20%?). I reckon that one could claim 750,000 System Administrators in the USA alone (that includes network and security admins, but not help desk personnel). That means expanding SAGE's membership to six figures from its current four.

Why would someone affiliate with SAGE? I'm guessing that people do like to belong to clubs and the like, but rational people do enjoy having a reasonable set of membership benefits that are supplied in exchange for any money required as organizational dues.

To that end, I'm working on several projects to expand SAGE's visibility and bring more people into the fold. Hardly any of these is a revenue generator (i.e., they are free for all comers), but they will get SAGE and its good work in front of an ever growing number of people.

David Parter discusses the developing Web site, particularly SAGEwire, in his article later in this issue. This news and discussion forum is an ideal place for users who like to “pull” their news. The website will also feature white papers (1-20 page missives that dissect or digest a relevant topic). Please let me know if you'd like to write one.

I am also working to create an e-mail newsletter (biweekly?) that will be sent to those who prefer to have their system administration information “pushed” to them. If you'd like to be one of the newsletter writers, please let me know. It's a great way to contribute and be recognized.

I am also in the process of contacting other members of the media in order to get SAGE's word out through other publications. As we ramp the number of projects (certification, newsletters, white papers, SAGEwire, etc.), this is the sort of news that other trade publications enjoy publishing.

On another front, “professionalism” also connotes mastery of a body of knowledge. You've probably already heard about cSAGE, the SAGE certification effort (check out the SAGE website to learn more). But a profession not only has certification, it needs two more very important things (among others):

- A body of knowledge that encompasses what its members know
- A way to obtain a university degree in that field

Work continues on the Sysadmin Book of Knowledge. John Sechrest has been leading the charge to design a viable university curriculum. Both Mark Burgess and Alva Couch are assisting in the best possible way by initiating work in the theoretical bases of system administration. When coupled with David Paterson's work, it appears that sysadmin research is becoming a warm topic (if not a hot one).

John and I will be leading a day-long workshop at LISA that will unite those working on the Body of Knowledge and those working on education for system administrators. If you have interests in either of these areas, I hope you will come.

Like any other successful technical/trade organization, volunteers are the lifeblood that makes everything work. If you have ideas or would like to contribute in any way, please contact me and tell me what you'd like to do! Together, we can build SAGE into a world-wide success story.