BUREAU OF
BIS
INFORMATION SERVICES

NEWSLETTER

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OUR GOAL IS TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY INFORMATION SERVICES IN A
PROFESSIONAL MANNER THROUGH A RESPONSIVE PARTNERSHIP WITH OUR CUSTOMERS

TRULY TQM

BY MARY K. SILVA

What do you call a process action team that isn't a PAT? That doesn't have a charter, doesn't schedule formal weekly meetings, and doesn't report back to any Council? You call it what total quality management is supposed to be, and the team I'm referring to, I'd also call a success.

I'm referring to a team which included members from our Department and some of our customers. A team that was "built" by peers going to peers for assistance in improving the quality of their work. A team that crossed lines and functions without worry because they knew they had management support to do what was needed to get the job done. A team that wasn't named by any management personnel or a TQM Council.

This "team" began when we requested **Dale Blake** and **Ed Morancie** dedicate several weeks to reviewing CASS certification software packages

that could assist the State in realizing some savings in postage costs. In order to get some background Dale met with **Andy Vellani** and his staff at the State Postal Service. While sharing information on the process, they also shared problems they were running into. Together, they worked to find the resources needed to make some quick fixes that resulted in immediate savings for the State. Within a matter of two weeks thousands of dollars in postal savings were realized by a team that really was never meant to be. Cumulative savings are projected at $40,000 annually.

Currently, their efforts have been further expanded as they work together with customers to resolve issues that will include bringing vendors on board. Such an effort will not only improve how the internal process is run, but also will allow us greater influence with the vendor. Another Win/Win situation.

I referred to this team as a demonstration of what quality management should be, yet they appeared to break all the rules that those of us who have participated in TQM PAT training have learned so diligently. They shared leadership roles as objectives changed, they skipped the storming and went right to performing, they had no timekeeper, no facilitator, no sponsor, and their "mission" changed

INFORMATION SERVICES POLICY BOARD

The Board held a full day meeting on August 10th. A number of work groups have been formed and will be preparing work plans and deliverables schedules for presentation at the September meeting.

The results of the PC survey were reviewed and a decision made that more information was needed. A work group will formulate a follow-up survey to get data on: 1) total IS budgets for each agency, 2) geographic distribution of agency personnel, 3) training needs, and 4) maintenance issues.

The single suite office product decision has not been made yet. In addition, the Board has launched a hardware procurement process as a companion to the software selection. The software decision should be made during September.

The Board also expressed interest in improving the relationship between Information Services staff and their clients. Items discussed were setting up agency steering committees to guide IS, increasing senior management's computer system awareness, and encouraging IS staff's active involvement in the work of program staff. Board members were asked to find ways to lend IS staff to agency programs and vice versa.

The Board has a number of active policy-setting work groups. Among

Truly TQM, continued

frequently as new issues arose. So how could this be considered a success? Why document this effort at all?

It should be documented because someone told me last week, "TQM should just go away. It's a waste." I understood why the individual made the statement (and he's not the first who's voiced this sentiment). He said it because he's observed multiple TQM Councils being set up, PATs that go on forever, the "mystery" that sometimes surrounds how members are chosen for teams, and the frustration of having to manage the extra work load when many staff members have their time committed to formal TQM efforts. And, what's most important is what he hasn't seen. Results.

So is TQM a failure? Should it "just go away"? Is it a buzz word and no more? Of course not. Total quality process management is critical to our success - but - we must stop to honestly evaluate how we've been promoting it to date. We appear to have focused on many of the formalities of TQM, rather than focusing on how we can begin to change mind sets in order to create an environment where peers dedicating time to fixing a process is accepted and valued. Brian Warren explained to me that the Councils were the foundation on which you build your TQM efforts. Seeing where we are a year later, I disagree. I think trust and support from management is our foundation. That support and trust was given to this team, and I think their success speaks for itself.

So let's applaud all of those on this informal team who have worked, and continue to do so, to improve some of our processes and save us dollars. And, let's determine how to create more of these success stories. Let's talk and share ideas about what TQM really can mean to us, and how to make it not just an acronym, but the manner in which we all work.

A FOLK TALE FOR THESE TIMES

ADAPTED BY TOVA STARBIRD-DEVOS

Once upon a time there was a poor old farmer, who lived with his only son in a small village in China. One evening, the son came home from the field unusually late, covered with dirt and scratches. He fell to his knees before his father and, trembling with shame and anger and fear, reported that their only horse had run away. The father listened and nodded. Then, in a gentle voice he bid his son rise, wash, and eat some rice.

This being a very small village, the neighbors poked their noses in the door of the little hut and chattered: "Ooh, such bad luck. You must buy a charm to change your fortune." "You should beat that boy for his carelessness." "How will you survive now, without your horse to pull the plow?"

The old farmer shook his head slowly and said, "Bad luck? Who can tell whether it is bad or good?" The busybodies snickered at the old man's foolishness and then went back about their business.

A week passed. The old farmer was washing vegetables for the evening meal when he heard a commotion outside his door. The whole village seemed to be milling about in great excitement. Now the son appeared, leading the horse who had run away, AND a herd of wild horses from the mountains. "Father!" he shouted, "Our luck has changed! Our stallion has brought his whole family back with him!" The villagers clapped the young man on the back and exclaimed over the family's fabulous good luck, (although a careful observer might have noticed a certain lack of sincerity in some of their smiles, perhaps a tinge of envy colored some of their congratulations.)

The old farmer nodded slowly, as was his habit, and murmured, "Good luck? Who can tell if it is good or bad?
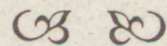
Wait and see." Wondering at the old man's apparent ungratefulness, the villagers returned to their homes. Many wished to trade places with the old man, and grumbled among themselves. Some even went so far as to slap sons whose only fault was not bringing home a string of wild horses.

Another week passed. As the farmer returned from the village well, he found a crowd around his door once again. "Grandfather, your bad luck is back", one of the villagers cackled. "Your clumsy son was trying to ride one of the wild horses, and now his leg is broken!"

Those standing close by heard him quietly rebuke the villagers, "Good, bad? When will you learn?" Then, shaking his head, he ducked into the hut to tend to his son.

A week later, when the old man returned late from doing the son's chores, he found a throng of villagers wailing and moaning. "Father!" his son shouted from his bed, "What good luck we have! The army came to the village today, and they have taken all the young men off to the war! I was spared because of my broken leg!"

The old man embraced his son. "We shall see. We shall see," he whispered, and bent to wash the rice for supper.

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MAINE "I.S."...ON THE MOVE!

BY GLENDA WINN

Have your heard about GIS (Geographical Information Systems) but wondered how your agency might tap into this resource? Have you read something about a PUC directive to NYNEX involving the schools and libraries and asked yourself, "What's the fuss?" Do you think the Internet is just an electronic surfboard riding the "pipeline" through a vast ocean of global information? (Cowabunga!!!) Is the public at your door demanding access (free access!) to your agency's information and you're wondering where to draw the line? Have you heard of the Maine Telecommunications and Information Infrastructure Planning Project or the Maine Telecommunications Forum, and wondered "And what are they doing?" And aren't you just a little curious about how other state agencies are applying the latest technology in an effort to be cost-effective, productive, and better serve Maine's citizens?

Believe it or not, the answers to these musings (and much more) can be discovered at *Maine "I.S." On The Move!, A Government Technology Conference*, scheduled for September 19-20-21 at the Augusta Civic Center.

Conference sessions and panel discussion are focused on the topics of geographic information systems (GIS), public access, the Internet, archives and records management, electronic funds transfer/electronic benefits transfer, and the uses of technology in economic development. An Exhibit Hall will showcase existing systems making innovative use of technology to solve business problems and deliver services. Vendors will also be on hand to exhibit how current and future technologies can be applied to challenges facing all levels of government to improve the quality and efficiency of services provided. The Exhibit Hall is open, free of charge, to the general public as well as conference participants.

A sampling of the GIS panel discussions will include a case study in economic development, local government applications, implementing GIS in state programs, and GIS applications, analyses, and technology trends. A workshop is also planned on accessing and using state spatial datasets. *Day 3 of the Conference has been designated as Maine GIS User Group Day*, and will open with a plenary session on "Partnerships, Coordination, and Cooperation". At press time, the featured speakers will be Kathy Covert (State Liaison for the Federal Geographic Data Committee) and Harlan Onsrud (National Center for Geographic Information and Analysis, University of Maine System).

On the topic of public access, sessions will include a look at the process of implementing network services to schools and libraries, state agency and academic perspectives on selling state-generated information resources, and a discussion on the priorities and problems faced by agency providers and public users of information. There will also be a demonstration of current online services focusing on federal information resources.

Sessions about the Internet will include a discussion on active projects (such as the Maine Telecommunications Forum and the Maine Telecommunications and Information Infrastructure Planning Project and Implementation Grant Request), Maine's Internet "communities", business uses of the Internet and its role in Maine's economic development, and also a look at the technologies, policy issues, and problems of the Internet in Maine.

Maine State Archives has organized a session on "Electronic/Machine Readable Records - Records Management and Archives Concerns" that will focus on records retention, integrity, and archival preservation.

At press time, additional sessions are being planned to cover electronic funds transfer/electronic benefits transfer and the uses of technology in economic development. A number of state agencies are planning to exhibit their innovative use of technology. A *partial* list includes: Bureau of Information Services, Drinking Water Program (Human Services), Women, Infants, and Children (Human Services), Department of Labor, Bureau of Medical Services (Human Services), Secretary of State, Bureau of Taxation, Bureau of Elder and Adult Services (Human Services), AMHI, Office of Substance Abuse, Department of Education, and the Bureau of Accounts and Control, to name but a few. The University of Maine System will also have several exhibits.

This is definitely an event you won't want to miss!!! The cost to attend is $65 for the 3 days, or $30 per day. For registration information, please contact **Carmen Fournier** at **624-7840**. **Registration deadline is September 13**. Up-to-date information is also available on the State's World Wide Web Page (http://www.state.me.us).

> *A citizen of America will cross the ocean to fight for democracy, but won't cross the street to vote in a national election.*
>
> — Bill Vaughan

TELCO NEWS

The following location has been added to the State's Wide Area Network:

Alcoholic Beverages/Lottery, in Hallowell.

THE DBA'S DESKTOP

A Forum for
Database-Related Discussions

BY JIM LOPATOSKY

On Monday, September 11, the Maine State Oracle Users Group will hold its quarterly meeting in the York room of the Holiday Inn, in Augusta. Special guest Gary M. Lewis, author of *ORACLE Reporting*, will present an overview of his book, which describes ad hoc reporting using SQL Objects. At the time this article was written, the other session was still in the planning stages, so information could not be provided. Materials will be sent out by the first week in September.

The Maine State Oracle Users Group will also be represented at the government technology conference, September 19-21. If you would like to find out more about the group, please meet us there.

Question and Answer – Oracle's TO_DATE function

This question was asked via the Maine State Oracle Users Group World Wide Web page. I thought I'd share it.

Question:

We would greatly appreciate it if one of your members would kindly forward information to us that clarifies the usage of the "To-Date" statement.

Answer:

The TO_DATE is a quick way to load date information into columns with date datatypes, regardless of what the default date format of the database is. For example, let's say you have a table called DUMMY with one column defined as a date datatype. (The following script will create the table.)

create table dummy (col1 date);

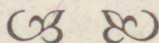Now, you can insert dates into the table in any format you wish using the TO_DATE function.

*insert into dummy values (
to_date('05-30-1995','mm-dd-*

*yyyy')
);*
*insert into dummy values (
to_date('28-02-93','dd-mm-yy')
);*
*insert into dummy values (
to_date('1999-06-19-
11:00','yyyy-mm-dd hh:mi')
);*

If you run a query to retrieve all the information from the table, it would look something like this:

*select col1 from dummy;
COL1

30-MAY-95
28-FEB-93
19-JUN-99*

Notice the first parameter is the date being inserted and the second parameter is the format of the date. Without this, you would be forced to input the date in the default format of the database, which is database dependent. It is also very handy when the data being input is the column from another table, and the date is in character format. You just code the insert using the to_date function and the conversion is handled for you.

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COMPUTER CORNER

Microsoft Excel for Windows 5.0

If you have a file that is password protected, but the password won't let you in, the first thing that you should check is your Caps Lock key. If it is turned on, turn it off (or if it is off, turn it on). Excel is case sensitive where passwords are concerned.
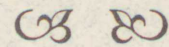
To import a Quattro Pro file into Excel, you must first save the Quattro Pro file as a Lotus 1-2-3 (WK1 or WK3). This will allow you to bring the file into Excel.

Microsoft PowerPoint for Windows

When you translate a PowerPoint for Windows presentation that has graphs in it to the Macintosh, the graphs will be converted to PICT images and will be translated as pictures. The data is stored as well, so if you translate back to the PC, it will become a graph again.

– Above Tech tips from Tech Flash-Stream International Inc., June 1995

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SEPTEMBER CHALLENGE

A man wanted to cross a river while carrying a fox, a duck, and a bag of corn. He has a boat, in which he can take one of the three items with him at a time, but he can't leave the fox alone with the duck or the corn. And, of course, he can't leave the duck alone with the corn, so how did he get it all across?

Mail your answer with your name, phone number, and the organization for which you work, via OfficeVision to **CCNEWS**, or, if you prefer, call **Barbara Buck** at **287-3631**. The winner will be drawn from all the correct entries and will receive a **FREE** pizza from **Pat's Pizza**. All answers must be in no later than the **20th** of the month.

Last month's Challenge brought many correct responses – 29 to be exact! **Charlotte Heath** from DOT wins the free pizza from Pat's Pizza for correctly answering that a hole contains no earth. A hole is a hole – no matter what size it is, as many who responded reminded us! Congratulations to all who answered correctly.

We can't resist printing this response from **James MacFarland** (DOT): "Thanks for the opportunity to enter the monthly challenge. I enjoy these challenges as well as the informative articles in the BIS Newsletter. Keep up the good work." Thank you very much! We appreciate all comments – whether they be praise or criticism of the BIS Newsletter. Please send your comments to the editor at CCNEWS (OfficeVision).

BIS NEWSLETTER FEEDBACK FORM

We are interested in your feedback on our newsletter. Will you take a few minutes to fill out this form, and send it back to us? Please feel free to elaborate on any item, or attach more sheets if necessary.

Note: This form is preaddressed for State mail service only. If you send this through the U.S. Postal Service, you will need to affix a first class stamp.

Use the following scale for answering the questions on article content.

1 = always useful and interesting,
2 = usually interesting or useful,
3 = seldom useful or interesting,
4 = don't read this column/article.

	1	2	3	4
1. Lead Article (authored by Dick Hinkley or Art Henry)	—	—	—	—
2. Security Beat	—	—	—	—
3. Computer Corner (technical tips)	—	—	—	—
4. DBA Desktop	—	—	—	—
5. Monthly calendar of events	—	—	—	—
6. Puzzle/Challenge	—	—	—	—
7. Biography	—	—	—	—
8. Transitions (personnel changes)	—	—	—	—

9. What did you like best about this month's newsletter?

10. What did you like least?

11. What would you like to see added/dropped to/from the newsletter?

12. Do you have any suggestions or other comments about the newsletter?

13. Would you be interested in contributing articles to the newsletter either regularly or occasionally?
(if so, please give us your name and a phone number so we can contact you)

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Division of Data Processing, RM 414
61 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0061

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TRAINING NEWS

Office Product Course Offerings

It's been a busy summer for training and the Fall looks just as hectic! Training is being offered both at BIS (in the basement of the State Office Building) and at Capitol Computers in Augusta. If there is a course you'd like to take but don't see on our list please call. Courses can be added as needed. Contact **Karen Knox** at **624-7837** to arrange your training.

Access
  Introduction
  Intermediate
  Advanced
Excel
  Introduction
  Intermediate
  Advanced
Lotus for Windows
  Introduction
Microcomputers and MS-DOS
  Introduction
MS-Mail
  Introduction
Power Point
  Introduction
Schedule +
  Introduction
Windows
  Introduction
Word
  Introduction
  Intermediate
  Advanced
WordPerfect for Windows
  Introduction

You can view the course calendar using Schedule+. Choose Open Others Appt from the File menu. The schedule is called Master Training List.

Courseware

Are you interested in providing training for your agency? Are you worried about having to create your own course materials? Well, BIS/Training now has courseware available for agencies to use for training. All you need to do is have copies made. Titles include *Intro to Word, Intro to MS-Mail & Schedule+, Intro to Windows, Intro to WordPerfect for Windows, Intro to WordPerfect 5.1,* and *Intro to Lotus for DOS.* These materials include a comprehensive student manual, student exercises and a class diskette. More titles may be added to the library in the future. Contact **Karen Knox** at **624-7837** for details on arranging to use the materials.

Upcoming Training for Information Systems Professionals

Myers and Associates will be offering the following courses in Yarmouth, Maine, October-November:
  Systems Analysis
  Systems Design
  Small Project Management
  Designing Client Server Systems

Themis Education Services and the I/S Training Consortium of Maine will be offering the following courses in Portland, Maine, September - December:

  DB2 & SQL Application
    Programming
  DB2 Design
  CICS Command Level
    Programming
  Intro to Client/Server & Database
    Environment
  Designing Client/Server
    Applications
  DB2 Application Performance &
    Tuning
  Introduction to Powerbuilder
  DB2 Version 4 Migrations &
    Implementation

For information on these courses, please call **Glenda Winn**, BIS Training and Staff Development, **624-7839**.

There is no reason for any individual to have a computer in his home.

— Ken Olson, President, Digital Equipment, 1977

Life was simple before World War II. After that, we had systems.

— Grace Hopper

CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR SEPTEMBER

Thursdays	IBM Users Meeting, 9:30, State Office Bldg., Room 414
7th	Technical Coordinator Meeting, State Office Bldg., B8 at 8:30
13th	BIS TQM Council Meeting, 9:30-12:00, Room 315
14th	ISPB, 9:00-11:30, Governor's Cabinet Room
27th	BIS TQM Council Meeting, 9:30-12:00, Room 315

OCTOBER

5th	Technical Coordinator Meeting, State Office Bldg., B8 at 8:30

John Armentrout, Child Mechanic? BY JANEY BARTON

As a child and teenager, John Armentrout read mechanical and technical manuals. He started working on vehicles, and, when he was just thirteen, he replaced a timing chain in his parent's automobile, with the help of Chilton's automobile manuals. Even today, he has a fascination for engines and works on them part-time. He owns an old motorcycle, an old Jeep (1947 station wagon), and parts of an old airplane.

John was born in Portland and has one brother and two sisters. He is a graduate of Deering High School and the University of Maine at Farmington, with a Bachelor of Science in geology, math, and physics.

John is a Geographical Information Systems (GIS) Programmer Analyst, working with Unix scripting, Arc Macro Language (AML), and Avenue for Arc View II (a GIS software package). His job is a blend of consultation, programming, and follow-through, helping people view their data in a map-oriented way. John says, "I love the way my job allows me to work alone to some degree and still work with other people to accomplish something. It is a challenge to work with computers and stay on top of technology and developments."

Early jobs included working as a page at the Portland Public Library, and as a mechanic at a garage, servicing lawn mowers, farm tractors, and the occasional Mercedes. John worked part-time while in college as a conservation aide for the Department of Environmental Protection's Water Bureau and also worked digitizing maps for Maine Geological Survey.

An old farmhouse in Somerville is home. It sits on 82 acres, which are roughly half woods and half fields. John says, "I am not a city person. I can be comfortable there for a while and look like I fit in, but it's not where I choose to be."

Some interests include fly-fishing in the Moosehead area and hiking Mount Katahdin. John has even served as a Katahdin guide. He has been a member of the Appalachian Mountain Club, helping to maintain trails. John likes winter hiking. His idea of a great time? "Mount Adams in February at eighteen below or a nice quiet motorcycle ride along the Coast near Blue Hill."

Current reading: Tom Brown's books, outdoor manuals, and non-fiction American Indian spiritual books.

Travels have included trips to Wyoming and the Grand Tetons, Vermont, New York, and Newfoundland. He has also traveled to Washington, D.C., and Virginia to visit his grandparents. Dream trips: British Columbia, Alaska, and Labrador.

Would he change anything in his life? Life's responsibilities can overtake us and keep us from exploring new opportunities: "I might have looked around and explored more before I got tied to a job."

One of the most important things that John has learned in life: "It might be how to be sensitive and care for people. Also, how important friends are."

TRANSITIONS

Sandra Hood joined the MFASIS group as a Systems Analyst July 31st. Welcome, Sandra.

Nancy Allen is leaving BIS. She will join DOT as GIS Manager on September 5th. Congratulations!

Debra Tavernier became Mrs. Darrol Everett on August 11th. Best wishes to both of you.