

;login:

THE MAGAZINE OF USENIX & SAGE

February 2002 • Volume 27 • Number 1

inside:

SAGE NEWS

From the SAGE President

by David Parter

SAGE STG Viability Review

SAGE Certification Update

GUUG/SAGE Group Founded

A Selection of Papers from LISA and
Computing Systems Published

2001 SAGE Outstanding Achievement
Award

USENIX & SAGE

The Advanced Computing Systems Association &
The System Administrators Guild

From the SAGE President

by David Parter

President, SAGE STG
Executive Committee



parter@sage.org

Welcome to 2002, and the first of a series of presidential messages to SAGE members.

My first topic is, obviously, SAGE, and the state of SAGE, and I would like to offer some explanation of some recent events affecting SAGE's governance. More up-to-date information should be available on the SAGE Web site – (<http://www.usenix.org/sage/>) – please look for it there.

I have learned from recent developments that the large disparity in speed between electronic and non-electronic media poses a challenge in trying to communicate news and timely information to all members.

By the time you read this, it may be old news for some of you. In mid-November, as part of the every-few-years “viability review” of SAGE, the USENIX Board of Directors took several specific actions with regards to SAGE. The STG Viability Review is on the Web at <http://www.usenix.org/sage/restructuring> (and also on the following page of this issue of *login:*). As a result of the viability review, Peg Shafer and Barb Dijker graciously resigned from the SAGE Executive Committee, as requested by the USENIX Board. The Executive Committee accepted their resignations with

regret and deep respect for the time, effort, passion, and commitment to SAGE that they have both shown over the years.

At our meeting at the start of the LISA conference in December, the Executive Committee unanimously adopted the following response to the viability review:

The SAGE Executive Committee considers that the process used in conducting the review was flawed.

Further, we believe that the removal of two elected Committee members by the USENIX Board of Directors was heavy-handed and damaging.

We do appreciate the constructive action that the USENIX Board has taken in providing additional resources for carrying out the SAGE mission.

We remain committed to working constructively with the USENIX Board of Directors and the SAGE community.

We also adopted a plan to appoint two members to fill the vacancies on the Executive Committee. This process will allow the Executive Committee to move forward in a thoughtful and timely manner. The full Executive Committee will have an in-person meeting in mid-February. More information about the appointments and the meeting can be found on the SAGE “What’s New” page (<http://www.usenix.org/sage/whatsnew/whatsnew.html>).

We are working with the USENIX Board to correct the procedural and communication problems which led to this situation. In addition the Executive Committee is committed to improved communication with the membership. One aspect of that will be a regular column in *login:* by the SAGE President, and more frequent contributions to *login:* from other members of the Executive Committee. Other steps include

more frequent “memos to members” with timely news and information, and making Executive Committee meeting minutes available (on the Web) to members.

We are also working with the staff to determine how best to utilize the additional staff resources we have been given, and how to best work with the staff and other volunteers to carry out SAGE programs.

An Executive Committee focus on effective delivery of our programs is only part of the picture. We also need your involvement. You can contribute in many ways – volunteer for one of our programs, contribute to *login:*, submit a paper to LISA, or help with a SAGE local group. Please also contact us with ideas, comments, and suggestions.

SAGE STG Viability Review

USENIX Association policies regarding its Special Technical Groups (STGs) require a viability review for each STG every five years. The second viability review for SAGE was conducted on November 6, 2001. The attendees were Andrew Hume and Mike Jones (USENIX STG Committee minus Dan Geer, who was absent), Dave Parter and Trey Harris (SAGE Exec president and Secretary), and Ellie Young, Gale Berkowitz, and Jane-Ellen Long (USENIX Staff). Parter opened with a statement and a question and answer session followed. Parter and Harris were then thanked and excused, and recommendations were prepared for the USENIX Board.

The findings were

1. SAGE membership is active and growing in numbers.
2. SAGE has a number of achievements, including a certification

project, and a strategic plan for SAGE.

3. There is profound concern by the USENIX Board over the effectiveness of the current SAGE governance, a concern shared by both the SAGE Exec and the USENIX staff.
4. The SAGE Exec believes that SAGE programs would be better carried out by staff members than volunteers; the USENIX Board and Staff concur.
5. There has been an extraordinary amount of work expended around the issue of splitting SAGE from USENIX with very little to show for it.

The USENIX Board meeting was held on the next day, and during an Executive session, considered carefully the above findings and unanimously adopted the following points:

- a. the USENIX Board strongly believes in SAGE as an organization, in its programs, and in SAGE as the premier professional organization for systems administrators.
- b. the USENIX Board agrees with the SAGE Exec that SAGE programs are best carried out by staff members rather than volunteers, and therefore explicitly changes the role of the SAGE Exec from both conceiving and carrying out SAGE programs to conceiving and overseeing SAGE programs as implemented by paid staff.
- c. in light of b., the USENIX Board will fund the following additional staff resources for SAGE:
 - A fulltime SAGE Projects Director position (to be filled by Gale Berkowitz)
 - one new full-time position, devoted to SAGE-specific activities, e.g., mentoring activities, local group activities, Web content editing.

- d. the USENIX Board has a lack of confidence in the effectiveness of the current SAGE governance. While significant time and energy has been spent considering restructuring alternatives, related action items intended to allow all parties to assess the viability of these alternatives have been repeatedly accepted by SAGE Exec members but not carried out.
- e. in light of d., the USENIX Board has considered the SAGE Exec's motion of intent to split off from USENIX (dated 11/4/2001) and rejects it. To discourage wasting more time and energy on this issue, the USENIX Board will not consider any proposal to split SAGE from USENIX prior to 11/1/2003.
- f. in the course of considering various restructuring plans over the last 18 months, the USENIX Board has repeatedly asked for a business plan covering splitting SAGE off from USENIX. Despite repeated assurances that it would be produced, this business plan still does not exist. Accordingly, the USENIX Board has requested the resignations of Barb Dijker and Peg Schafer, who held responsibility for these action items, as per Article 10.5.5 of the USENIX STG policy document.

These actions were unanimously adopted by the USENIX Board in the hope and judgment that they best use both SAGE Exec and USENIX resources in accomplishing SAGE's programs.

SAGE Certification Update

We are pleased to report that the first-level SAGE certification is nearly ready for release. Here is some important information about the SAGE Certification Project.

WHAT IS cSAGE?

cSAGE is the first level of certification offered by SAGE Certification. The program is geared for junior-level system administrators (as defined by SAGE).

cSAGE certification will first require a candidate to agree to a basic statement of a candidate's applicable system administration experience prior to taking the exam. cSAGE testing will then consist of two exams, a core plus a module, which should be completed in the same sitting. The core exam is neither platform- nor vendor-specific; the modules, however, are platform-specific exams (e.g., UNIX). cSAGE certification testing lasts approximately four hours.

Future certifications will be developed that include higher levels of testing. Descriptions of those levels will be announced by the time we go live in March 2002.

WHEN WILL cSAGE BE "LIVE"?

cSAGE will be offered as a complete certification program on March 26, 2002, through VUE testing centers worldwide.

WHAT IS AVAILABLE BEFORE MARCH 26, 2002?

Before that time, there are two opportunities to participate in the development process:

The core beta exam took place at the LISA conference in December. While this core beta was very successful, we are looking for more junior-level individu-

als to take the core exam to complete the demographic spread needed in the analysis process. Therefore, another session of this beta may be made available through VUE testing in late January. Please check the Web site for more information as it becomes available.

The UNIX beta exam is available through VUE testing worldwide from Monday, January 28, through Wednesday, February 13, 2002.

Both the core and UNIX beta exams WILL count towards the cSAGE certification. The betas include more questions than the actual live exams, and the results will not be available right away. We are using the betas to eliminate less appropriate questions from the exams, so scoring cannot take place until the proper item analysis is complete.

WHO WILL BENEFIT FROM SAGE CERTIFICATIONS?

The SAGE Certification program is useful to individuals and corporations who wish to evaluate and promote system administration in real-life work situations. The program is well suited for:

- Junior-level system administrators seeking verifiable validation of their abilities
- Recent college graduates strengthening their marketability
- Channel partners, resellers, and authorized service provider programs seeking confirmation of their remote site capabilities
- Corporations who wish to assist their system administrators in furthering their career development

WHAT IS RECOMMENDED FOR PREPARATION FOR THE cSAGE EXAM?

Current information about study materials can be located at

<http://www.usenix.org/sage/cert/study.html>. This information will be expanded as we go live, so please check back monthly.

WHO IS INVOLVED IN THE CERTIFICATION DEVELOPMENT PROCESS?

The primary vehicle for the SAGE Certification Project is the Certification Interim Board, formerly known as the Policy Committee. The Board also makes appropriate use of professional certification consultants. SAGE has conducted an analysis of skill requirements and has evaluated testing methodologies and implementation logistics. To accomplish this in an objective manner, SAGE engaged the services of Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO) and Galton Technologies to develop the exams using proven methodologies.

WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE ABOUT SAGE CERTIFICATION?

The SAGE Certification Web site is located at <http://www.sagecert.org>. The site includes the cSAGE Candidate Handbook, which is particularly useful for obtaining more information about the program.

For further information, or if you wish to volunteer your time, please contact:

Stacy Gildenston at stacy@sage.org.

GUUG/SAGE Group Founded

On September 22 a new SAGE group was founded in Germany. The older German UNIX Users Group (GUUG, <http://www.guug.de>), members of which attended the meeting, will form the framework for the new organization to be named GUUG/SAGE.

The primary contacts for this new German SAGE group are Wolfgang Sachs (<mailto:sachs@atkins.swb.de>) and Martin Schulte (<mailto:schulte@guug.de>). Other volunteers, such as Jochen Topf, who set up the <http://sage.guug.de> Web site, are contributing to the new mailing list (sage@guug.de). A basic element of this initiative are regular meetings called Stammtische. Please consult our Web pages at <http://sage.guug.de> for details and schedules of meetings. We plan to offer links to tools useful to sysadmins, and to discuss them at meetings. We also want to have localized "best practices" references.

The new group is, of course, in need of help from volunteers willing to help and share their knowledge. As we plan to have a SAGE track at GUUG conferences we particularly need speakers and people willing to represent us there. If you can help, visit our Web site or contact Wolfgang or Martin directly.

A Selection of Papers from LISA and Computing Systems Published

Selected Papers in Network and System Administration, a volume edited by Eric Anderson, Mark Burgess, and Alva Couch, has just been published by Wiley, in cooperation with USENIX and SAGE. The volume includes key contributions to the discipline of Network and System Administration originally presented at LISA and in *Computing Systems*. The papers are accompanied by a commentary reflecting on their larger significance.

USENIX and SAGE purchased a number of copies to be made available to its members. If you were lucky enough to attend LISA 2001 in San Diego, you were

given the opportunity to receive the volume for free. But members can order the volume from USENIX for \$30 per copy, a considerable discount from the \$55.95 list price. See <http://www.usenix.org/publications/ordering/>

2001 SAGE Outstanding Achievement Award



The 2001 SAGE Outstanding Achievement Award was presented to Hal Pomeranz at this year's LISA Conference in San Diego. This annual award goes to someone whose professional contributions to the system administration community over a number of years merit special recognition.

Hal Pomeranz was selected for his exemplary contributions as an educator of system administrators, through works such as the Perl Practicum series, and for his years of leadership in the system administration community.

Congratulations, Hal!

New SAGE Executive Committee Members

by **Trey Harris**

Secretary, SAGE Executive Committee

trey@sage.org

On January 8, 2002, Strata Chalup tendered her resignation from the SAGE Executive Committee, citing time commitments that she felt would keep her from fulfilling her responsibilities. The Executive Committee accepted her resignation with thanks for her outstanding service to SAGE.

The SAGE Executive Committee has appointed three new Executives to fill the vacancies on the Committee. They are:

Bryan C. Andregg, andregg@sage.org

Gabriel Krabbe, gabe@sage.org

Josh Simon, jss@sage.org

We wish to extend our congratulations to them and also our thanks to all the nominees for participating in this process. The next meeting of the SAGE Executive Committee will be February 23-24 in Monterey, CA.

The SAGE Executive Committee is now comprised of:

David Parter, President,

parter@sage.org

Geoff Halprin, Vice President

geoff@sage.org

Trey Harris, Secretary

trey@sage.org

Tim Gassaway, Executive

gassaway@sage.org

Bryan C. Andregg, Executive

andregg@sage.org

Gabriel Krabbe, Executive

gabe@sage.org

Josh Simon, Executive

jss@sage.org