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MPLA PRESIDENT'S REPORT
SEPTEMBER, 1999

In my part of the world, I hope that summer is over. It's been too hot and too dry. When "Indian Summer" comes, it is my favorite of all seasons.

The life of a work group can be said to resemble the seasons. We start by barely knowing how, by questioning why we are here, by wondering who is going to describe to us what we are supposed to do. We back away, fading from a full blown commitment. But the seasons do change, we change by making mental models of our job until we are swept up in it, warming fully to our task and the year before us. We begin experimentally tinkering, not just what we think we are told to do, but also what we'd like to do. Then it's not only a job to be done, it's MY job.

We go into full bloom, working our way around the parameters, cleaning out the debris, finally focusing in on where we will spend our energy this year, and how we will want our term to change those before and after us. We find ourselves operating in a dynamic web, vibrations from one part of it radiating out to tell us what is going on here or over there. We chose how to use resources, perhaps storing them away for a period of incubation we might think of as a team's winter season which gathers energy and builds strength for a growing season, a time of extensive effort.

And then there is a final season; a great idea made into an action, a report for the Board, a fantastic program found. The year's grand finale comes - a Joint Conference which makes a terrific end to a productive year.

So now you see we really do have a cycle that expresses itself in work. You are back from summer. Team subgroups are named. The celebrations of June in Big Sky are fading, and you are again wondering how to get there from here. Trust yourself. You will organize yourself into productive partnership with the rest of your MPLA work group or you would not be the person entrusted with this task.

Trust the team. Remember that it is a supporting web. Seek out a mentor if you feel stranded. There are many people within the group who have been with MPLA for the long term. Ask if you need advice, talk by phone, email, or in person with those who have been there before you. If you find a hole in the web, I will help you patch it by putting you in touch with someone who can help you do your tasks.

MPLA is its people, its work group. Who and what we are is expressed everyday in your efforts. Together we will make 2000 a year of renewal, and most assuredly a year to remember.

See you in Cybertime until I see you again in real time!
Marilyn Hinshaw

