

General Delivery

From the President

Mimi Jett

Greetings TUG Members!

As the year draws to a close and the new year arrives, we pause to reflect on the events and accomplishments we have enjoyed in 1998. I will review the year from my catbird seat, then go on to tell you about the fantastic meeting we had in Toruń, and our plans for a celebration—and opportunities for discovery—at our 20th annual meeting in Vancouver, BC, Canada, in August 1999. Once again, there is a good deal of administrivia to discuss. But, finally, we have the people and the plan in place to provide great service and benefits to our membership. We have elections coming up again, so please pay special attention to the words of wisdom from Barbara Beeton, and take the initiative to nominate yourself or someone else to the board, or for president. The more participation we have from our entire membership, the stronger we are. At this time, we have an extremely wonderful board; active in many aspects of creating benefits and learning for our members; willing to work across barriers; and gracious and respectful to each other; this group is a delight to work with. Most of our board has agreed to stand for re-election, that is good news! There are open seats on the in-coming board even if our standing group stays, so please think about it.

1998: The year in review

Release of T_EX Live 3 to TUG members fantastically successful!

The first issue of *TUGboat* for 1998 included the CD T_EX Live 3. This was one of the most outstanding benefits we offered this year, and it was the fulfillment of a goal to include it in the first issue of the year. The combined, almost heroic, efforts of Sebastian Rahtz, Olaf Weber, Mimi Burbank (who provided many different testing platforms at the Florida State University Supercomputer Research Institute), Kaja Christiansen, Robin Fairbairns, Eitan Gurari, Fabrice Popineau, Andreas Scherer, Thorsten Schmidt and Eli Zaretskii were involved in assembling and testing the collection. Karl Berry, Thomas Esser, Graham Williams, and (as Robin puts it) “hordes of others” were the source of the software and packages. Together, they all brought forth the best T_EX Live release we have

ever seen. Indeed, this is one of the best things we have done for our members. Compilation and distribution of T_EX Live was a joint effort by UKTUG, GUTenberg, DANTE and TUG, with additional support from the Czech/Slovak, Dutch, Indian and Polish groups. Thanks to all! Truly, without the combined efforts of everyone, this would not have happened.

DANTE provides CTAN archive to all TUG and DANTE members

A three-CD set of the complete CTAN archive was distributed to all TUG members in *TUGboat* 19:2, thanks to a very generous donation from DANTE. We are indeed grateful to DANTE for this very valuable resource. The importance of CTAN was immediately clear to me when I heard Anita Hoover exclaim “I haven’t written a macro in years. . . everything I need is on CTAN.”

NTG release of 4allT_EX provided to TUG members

In addition to the software and data resources already mentioned, we were also fortunate to have the opportunity to deliver 4allT_EX, the popular Windows T_EX program, to our members. The program was developed and donated by Erik Frambach and Wietse Dol at NTG, with the cost of manufacturing and duplication covered, once again, by DANTE. Isn’t it nice to have generous relatives?

Confusion reigns after Microsoft announcement

An amusing, and all-too-believable article was posted as an April Fools’ Day prank claiming that Dr. Knuth had sold out T_EX to Microsoft. Complete with in-depth reporting, background, and quotes from the victims of this tragedy, it is no surprise the article was taken as genuine news by several people around the world. In the 10th anniversary edition super-issue of MAPS, NTG reprinted the article as it was originally written, and included color photos of Dr. Knuth and Bill Gates with serious expressions on their faces. This added credibility and fuel to the flames. I received messages from other groups asking what TUG will do, continue or disband, now that Bill is our leader? Up to that point, I didn’t realize that it was taken seriously. Of course, once the joke was realized it was appreciated as good humor.

Renewed interest in T_EX and TUG apparent

This year has been another growth year for us, thanks to the great developments that are happening in Europe, Australia, and literally dozens of

countries around the world. With the migration of publications to the World Wide Web, \TeX is being discovered anew by authors and publishers of technical material. The ability to use live math for display or coded content is quite desirable in the world of database storage and delivery. All of this translates to more inquiries and requests for information about TUG. We have had a steady flow of new members, including both individuals and institutions.

Complete turnover in office staff

Probably the most important thing that has happened for TUG this year is the lucky fate that sent Dick Detwiler to us. Dick has been managing the office since early summer, and it is finally beginning to feel like we are organized. Several times we have thought we had things figured out, just as another alligator surfaced from the swamp. The membership database was terribly inaccurate, with records of payment for dues confused for more than 500 members. We spent many hours editing, reviewing, and correcting the data. I think we have now fixed all records, and mailed the missing *TUGboats* and CDs to most members. If you have been billed or credited erroneously, I apologize.

TUG '98 in Toruń

The 19th annual meeting was held in Toruń, Poland, August 17–22, and what a meeting it was! Several people commented that it was “the best TUG meeting ever.” Not having been to every meeting, I cannot say. But it was an incredible week. Every session was started pretty much on time and ended on time. The quality of all the papers was very good. Hans Hagen was exceptional in all of his presentations. Hans was voted the best in all three categories; content, presentation, and overall, by the

audience. The workshops were well organized and highly informative. Everything was orchestrated by the GUST team; all events, meetings, and facilities were perfect. Visiting the Teutonic Knights’ castle was quite an experience, not only feeling the history of the place, but watching Gilbert breathe fire and hearing Boguslaw leading folk songs, made the night one to remember for a lifetime. Thanks to our friends at GUST for a wonderful time, and to the people of Poland for their gracious hospitality.

Board News

We are fortunate to welcome Mr. Philip Taylor to our board. Phil has been active in TUG and UK TUG for many years, and brings a depth of experience and knowledge to us. The following directors have resigned: Cameron Smith, Donna Burnette, and Jiří Zlatuška. We thank them for their service to TUG. Please don’t forget the upcoming elections. We would love to have more members standing for the board.

Plans for 1999

TUG '99 — 20th Annual Meeting in Vancouver, BC, August 15–20

This will be an outstanding conference, based on the papers that have been accepted and the training, workshops, and events that are planned. (See the conference preliminary schedule on page 434.) The conference and program committees are actively creating an itinerary you will enjoy. Please stay tuned to the TUG website (<http://www.tug.org/tug99/>) for additions and announcements.

See you in Vancouver!