

General Delivery

From the President

Mimi Jett

Greetings TUG Members,

This issue represents some major improvements in the way we create and produce *TUGboat*. Starting with the organization of the TUG Editorial Board, formed at the Annual Meeting in Newark, Delaware, last August, and creating the position of Managing Editor, we are anticipating a higher level of participation from a greater pool of volunteers.

For many years, the entire set of tasks needed to create and produce one issue of the journal has been handled by a small set of dedicated members: Barbara Beeton, Mimi Burbank, Christina Thiele, Sebastian Rahtz and Robin Fairbairns. I know many others have helped, but these five people have really given life to *TUGboat*. Thank you all, for many years of service and devotion to the community.

Our objective in creating the Editorial Board and Managing Editor position was to copy the model of most professional scholarly publishers: a managing editor is responsible to recruit content and deliver content to the Editor-in-Chief (EIC) for vetting and to the production manager for formatting, and printing/mailing. The managing editor also keeps the production schedule and coordinates the activities of the editorial board. TUG is lucky to have Robin Laakso, our excellent Office Manager, also skilled in the organizational and communication requirements of a Managing Editor. Robin has embraced the challenge. We are very pleased to report that this double issue is the result of our new strategy. The goal is to continue to involve more people, maintain a high quality publication and get *TUGboat* back on schedule. We plan at least one other double issue in 2002.

Involving more people with *TUGboat* takes not only organizational tools, but also you, new and renewing members — people who have an ongoing interest in \TeX and \TeX -related research and products. You may be interested to know that the total number of TUG members has remained steady at approximately 2000 for the last 4-5 years. Member categories represented include individual, student, senior, subscriber, institutional and joint memberships worldwide. TUG members are located in 54, 58, 66, 65, and 59 (and counting) countries respectively, from 1998 to 2002. Each year new user groups are linked to the TUG website allowing people in all corners of the world to access \TeX users locally, or in nearby countries.

The relative stability of membership numbers is a welcome trend; however, we think we can do better. Another forward-moving decision made at the 2001 Annual Meeting in Delaware was to re-apply for the 501(C)(3) non-profit status. For those of you unfamiliar with US tax codes or if you were not a member of TUG 15 years ago when we first applied for the 501(C)(3) non-profit status, let me explain. After TUG, the association, ceased to operate under the umbrella of the American Mathematical Society in 1987, the organization incorporated. With the corporate filing came a set of by-laws and decisions to be made about taxation. Hence TUG applied for the 501(C)(3) non-profit status. Unfortunately, after a great legal effort, TUG was denied the request and given a 501(C)(6) “trade association” non-profit status instead. Fifteen years ago we were living in a world much different than today. Indeed, the concept of “open source” used in the production of “computerized typesetting software” was very difficult to understand let alone compare to other not-for-profit organizations operating at that time.

The importance of the 501(C)(3) status cannot be underestimated. The (C)(3) status offers US members a tax deduction for their membership (minus the cost of materials) and contributions. For US members this means dues and contributions are fully tax-deductible to the amount allowed by law. It also means a potential increase in membership as many institutions require the (C)(3) status to join a not-for-profit membership-based organization. The (C)(3) status would make TUG eligible for a low cost non-profit mailing permit. Currently, under the (C)(6) status, TUG is not eligible for the lowest bulk mailing rates. The TUG Board of Directors believes that TUG qualifies for the (C)(3) status; that is why we recently hired an attorney to file a new application. If awarded (the IRS review can take 6–12 months), \TeX User Groups worldwide will potentially benefit from grant monies, equipment donations, and the lowest shipping costs available from the US.

The TUG Board of Directors would like to know about \TeX -related projects that you or someone you know is working on — and encourage you to submit an article about those projects to *TUGboat*. We cannot, after all, recognize the efforts of those in our community if we are unaware of your work!

As always, we welcome your comments and thank you for your support.

◇ Mimi Jett
IBM Research
Institute for Advanced Learning
jett@us.ibm.com