Editorial Comments

Barbara Beeton

Since this issue didn't get sent to the printer before I left town for the annual meeting, let's take this opportunity to catch up on a few items that were announced in Aston, as well as those of which I was already aware earlier.

1 TeX 3.1415 / METAFONT 2.71 on the way

TeX and METAFONT have both added a digit in their progress toward π and e. Early in June I received a package from Don Knuth containing his responses to the last year's worth of bug reports. The technical details have been sent to the implementors, and system-specific implementations should be making their way to an archive near you, or onto the shelves of your commercial supplier.

These are the features of the new release that are important to system managers and users.

1.1 All volumes of *Computers & Typesetting* have been "frozen"

The final versions of these volumes were printed late in 1992. The numerology is, in part,

- the 22nd printing of *The TeXbook* (softcover) and the corresponding edition of Volume A;
- the 5th printing of Volume B;
- the 4th printing of Volume D.

No more changes will be made to these volumes even if they are reprinted again. Errata will continue to be recorded and posted (no more often than annually) to the file `errata.tex` in the TeX archives. There are now eight numbered errata files, `errata.one` through `errata.eight`, covering various time periods from 1982 to the printing of the final versions. For anyone wishing to obtain this information who doesn't have ftp access, check with the TUG office for information.

1.2 This release is internally consistent

Important changes have been made to nearly all files in the TeX system. In addition to the updated TeX and METAFONT programs, there are new versions of `plain.tex` (3.1415) and `plain.mf` (2.71) as well as of the trip and trap tests. Some of the changes: In `plain.tex` the changes relate to the `\b` accent in slanted fonts and to the `\upbracefill` and `\downbracefill` macros; in `plain.mf` there are two corrections to the `cutdraw` macros.

When upgrading, please upgrade *everything*! Don told me, "Please encourage everybody to install this version ASAP."

2 LaTeX 2e coming in October

It was announced at the meeting that the release of LaTeX version 2e is expected in October, to replace the ever-confusing version 2.09 of various dates.

This version of LaTeX will incorporate the NFSS2 (described in the article by Sebastian Rahtz, page 132) and many features provided for enhanced flexibility in a multilingual environment. It is intended as a full replacement for version 2.09, for which maintenance will cease.

The release is timed to coincide with the publication of a new book, *The LaTeX Companion*, by Frank Mittelbach, Michel Goossens and Alexander Samarin. Proofs of the book in its current state were the reference material for a LaTeX course taught by Frank and Michel just before the meeting, and I understand that the intense scrutiny of the students was most welcome in helping to eliminate bugs.

After the release of LaTeX 2e, and until the appearance of LaTeX 3, there will be regular maintenance, with updates scheduled twice a year. LaTeX users can become used to the principle that they should upgrade, or at least consider upgrading, their system every six months, and not just check for the latest update when something goes wrong. At the very least this should help cut down on questions about old versions that now appear too frequently on `comp.text.tex` and friends.

3 The annual meeting at Aston University

The meeting — TUG's first annual meeting outside North America — was a good one. Although the weather didn't always cooperate, there were plenty of attractions to hold the attention of at least this devoted attendee.

A novel feature was a daily "newspaper", *The TUGly Telegraph*. (Actually, the masthead was set in one of Yannis Haralambous' old-style Fraktur fonts, and there were puzzled expressions on some faces until they figured out what it said.) Congratulations to Steffen Kernstock on making it happen; I understand that he arrived with the idea just before the meeting and put it together on the spot.

The last issue of the *Telegraph* listed the participants, and it was a wide-ranging crowd — 162 names (registrants for both the meeting and the courses before and after) from at least 23 countries! I saw a lot of old friends, and am happy to report that I made some new ones too, in the process attaching faces to quite a few names I knew only from e-mail. I do recommend the meeting to anyone who can manage to attend; it's only at meetings of TUG or the other user groups that one will find such a concentration of serious (well, not *always* serious!)

and enthusiastic TEXers, ready to discuss just about any topic with anyone who is interested.

The conference program had a lot of good material, and the pace was sufficiently relaxed that there was usually plenty of time to ask questions, and to talk to the speakers at coffee and tea breaks afterward. As in previous years the program was "single thread", so it wasn't necessary to decide which presentations to attend or skip. For those who couldn't attend, the editors of the Proceedings (Mimi Burbank and Sebastian Rahtz) have been working hard to get the papers into good shape; the results should arrive in your mailbox sometime in October. And thanks to these two good people for giving me a bit of rest.

Unfortunately, I did miss a number of the presentations. Shortly before the meeting, a Technical Working Group on the 256-character math encoding was constituted, and we spent quite a bit of time putting together a preliminary report for presentation at a workshop late in the week. See below for more details.

A number of vendors had displays and demonstrations set up, and I saw quite a few people asking questions. Along with the "active" displays, a rather large table contained a wide range of books on TEX and related subjects. New publications included the two LATEX books reviewed by Nico Poppelier in this issue (page 127), and, wonder of wonders!, at long last, Stephan von Bechtolsheim's TEX in Practice, all four volumes of it. A reviewer has been assigned, and a book review will appear in an upcoming issue.

There was one truly special event: an excursion to Stratford on Avon for a performance of *King Lear* by the Royal Shakespeare Company. Before the performance (which was stunning), we were treated to a private showing at the Shakespeare Centre Library of a copy of the First Folio and a number of other books that were related in some way either to Shakespeare or to *King Lear*. These included a couple of herbals (books about plants and their uses; these described plants mentioned in Shakespeare's works), a compendium of literary personages in the Stratford area contemporaneous with Shakespeare (his entry isn't even particularly long, while the other names there have faded from common memory), several fine editions of the plays, some books that might have been source material for the Bard, and various other rare items. The curator of the collection was both enthusiastic and knowledgeable, and she readily answered our many questions, sometimes leafing through the displayed volumes for other relevant examples. What a wonderful time I had! The idea for this excursion was inspired.

Finally, I'd like to extend my thanks to the Program and Arrangements Committees, to the TUG office staff, who were also on hand to help "person" the registration desk, and to the staff of the hosting institution, Aston University. Good show!

3.1   And next year's meeting ...

A proposal regarding meeting sites was accepted by the TUG Board of Directors, recommending that locations be varied in a regular cycle of western North America, eastern North America, and Europe. Since this year's meeting was in the U.K., next year's should be in the west. 1994 will be TUG's 15th year, and Santa Barbara, new home of the TUG office, was chosen as a tentative site. A committee is being formed, and a call for papers will be distributed when information about dates is available.

4   CTAN — the Comprehensive TEX Archive Network

A new wrinkle has been added to our friendly TEX archives, as announced at the meeting. Three major sites, with the possibility of expansion, are now fully synchronized, their contents mirrored within 24 hours. George Greenwade, archivist extraordinaire and Chair of the Technical Working Group on TEX Archive Guidelines, in cooperation with Rainer Schöpf, Sebastian Rahtz, Karl Berry, Joachim Schrod and others, has not only established workable guidelines, but also put them into effect.

The three sites that now comprise CTAN are

`ftp.shsu.edu`

`ftp.tex.ac.uk`   and

`ftp.uni-stuttgart.de`

I understand that some site changes may be in the works, to get access to faster, more reliable network connections (the traffic to these sites is truly overwhelming), so keep a lookout for announcements.

A preliminary note can be found in TTN 2,3:15, and a full report from George will appear in the Proceedings of the meeting.

4.1   Part of the `labrea` archive superseded

With the regularization of these reliably maintained archives, the authoritative sites for some classes of files will move away from `labrea.stanford.edu`, the last connection of the TEX archives to their original home. For a long time, `labrea` has been without an on-site archive manager, and updating of files there is irregular at best. `labrea` will remain the canonical site for the core of TEX — Knuth's files — but LATEX maintenance is now in the care of the LATEX 3 project group in Germany, and George has

given me an account on the SHSU machine to maintain the *TUGboat* files that have been released for public access.

5 *TUGboat* tables of contents on-line

The *TUGboat* area in the SHSU archive is

    tex-archive/digests/tugboat

It contains, among other things, the plain and LaTeX styles for *TUGboat* and the TUG meeting proceedings, complete tables of contents for all issues, and Nelson Beebe's explosion of this information into a BibTeX file and permuted index.

The tables of contents are stored by year in files named tb*vvyy*.cnt (*vv* is the volume number and *yy* the year); they can be run through TeX in 5-volume chunks with "driver" files named tbc*vv*.tex where *vv* is a multiple of 5 giving the number of the last volume in the group. To process the tables of contents, the file tbcont.def is also needed.

The file of *TUGboat* contents in BibTeX form is tugboat.bib; tugboat.kwic and tugboat.ptx present the same information in keyword-in-context and permuted index form respectively.

I've done some work toward creating a "real" index for *TUGboat* but it is still quite a way from completion. Until that is available, anyone looking for a particular *TUGboat* article should be able to find it with the help of one of these files if they know either the author or some word(s) from the title.

6 Encoding of 256-character math fonts

A project is underway to define an encoding for math symbols in the form of 256-character fonts to accompany the 256-character text fonts in the Cork encoding. This is a joint effort of the TUG Technical Working Group on TeX Extended Mathematics Font Encoding (of which I am chair) and members of the LaTeX 3 project. Active participants include

- for the TWG: Alan Jeffrey, Jan Michael Rynning, and myself;
- for the LaTeX 3 project: Justin Ziegler (a French student whose services have been provided for the summer with support from GUTenberg), Frank Mittelbach, and Chris Rowley.

On the basis of e-mail discussions before the meeting and a lot of working sessions at Aston, a preliminary proposal was presented at a workshop. Since then, an electronic discussion list has been set up to continue to gather ideas, and the traffic has been heavy. A completed proposal is expected by early September, when Justin must return to school. The report of the group will be published in an upcoming issue of *TUGboat*.

7 Gimme an A !

Earlier this year, a contest was announced (TTN 2,2:28), soliciting contributions of macro definitions that would produce a robust, well-behaved A in the LaTeX logo. The winners were to be announced at the Aston meeting. Sadly, perhaps because insufficient time was available between the time the announcement reached its audience and the time of the meeting, there were almost no entries and no winners. Instead, the contest has been extended until December 31. Read the new announcement (page 103) and start writing.

8 A comment on font naming

Although it should be well known by now that the CM prefix should be applied only to fonts that use Don Knuth's Computer Modern shape programs without change, an occasional announcement appears in the electronic discussion lists to the effect that some new font, with new shapes in it, is being added to the repertory available to TeX, and a name proposed with CM at the beginning. The last such instance, early in April, was the subject of this message from Pierre MacKay to the author of the new shapes and to the TeX archive managers:

> [...] I am extremely uneasy about appropriating the CM prefix without a reference to Don Knuth. When AMS adds to the CM repertory, it is by changing parameter files, not by supplying new designs. [...]
>
> My own practice, even for fonts that are only of interest to a limited clientele, and even for fonts that do not seriously alter the character programs of Computer Modern is to change the first letter. The relation to Modern, which is a well-known family of designs, should remain part of the name, but unless Don officially adopts a new set of character designs into the Computer Modern typeface, I think we should be cautious about adding an entire set of new glyphs to the known set that we now call Computer Modern.
>
> At very least, I should like to be assured that Don is aware of, and consents explicitly to the addition of these glyphs to a set that is otherwise almost entirely his own creation. It may be a rendering of Monotype Modern No. 8, but it is **his** rendering.
>
> Don't change the font — just the name.

Now, let's get this off to the printer.

◇ Barbara Beeton
American Mathematical Society
P. O. Box 6248
Providence, RI 02940 USA
bnb@Math.AMS.com