

## Editorial Comments — A TUG '98 Trip Report

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The 1998 TUG meeting took place at the Nicolas Copernicus University in Toruń, Poland, from August 17–20, hosted by GUST, the Polish Grupa Użytkowników Systemu  $\text{T}_{\text{E}}\text{X}$ .

Although Toruń itself is a (restored) medieval walled city, the Nicolas Copernicus University is a rather new university outside the walls. Established in the middle of this century, it is named for Toruń's most famous scientific son, the founder of modern astronomy. The campus is largely wooded, with paths and trails leading off in many directions; by the end of the conference, when I had finally figured out the most pleasant routes between the dorms, the dining room and the lecture halls, I was sorry to leave.



The theme of the conference, “Integrating  $\text{T}_{\text{E}}\text{X}$  with the Surrounding World”, was quite well explored, from using  $\text{T}_{\text{E}}\text{X}$  to generate on-the-spot anesthesia charts for patients' records, to tools for solving various  $\text{T}_{\text{E}}\text{X}$ nical problems, to a wide-ranging discussion of what the future might hold. Although the number of participants was not as great as at some previous meetings, everyone who attended was well supplied with interesting things to think and talk about.

A highlight of the sessions was the presentation by Hans Hagen of his visual debugging tool, developed as an adjunct to  $\text{CON}_{\text{T}}\text{E}_{\text{X}}\text{T}$ , Hans' macro system that fills the same niche as  $\text{L}_{\text{A}}\text{T}_{\text{E}}\text{X}$  — a user interface based on logical markup and a multiplicity of document styles. The audience response to this was overwhelmingly positive; in the voting for the conference “bests” (best content, best presentation,



and overall best paper) there was simply no contest. Hans took home with him several fine old books provided by the local organizers, and the more highly distilled Cathy Booth memorial prize, provided by UKTUG.

One of my personal favorites was the presentation by Dick Nickalls, “ $\text{T}_{\text{E}}\text{X}$  in the Operating Theatre!”; although the text appears in these proceedings, the slides that accompanied it in person added a good bit of immediacy and “local color”.

The last presentation was a joint event led by almost the entire contingent from the Netherlands, a highly interactive session on “futures”: what are the directions of work currently underway, what new features are wanted and needed, is there any hope for standardization of  $\backslash\text{specials}$ ?, ... These topics appear here in the papers entitled “ $\text{T}_{\text{E}}\text{X}$  in 2003”, and are well worth mulling over.

However, not all was business. An evening outing to the castle at Golub-Dobrzyn found us gathered around a bonfire in the courtyard, eating slices of a pig roasted over the fire by two yeomen clad in “chain mail” (actually, loosely knit hooded overshirts, coated with metallic paint). After a tour of the castle, which had been a headquarters of the Teutonic Knights before their ejection from Poland, and later a home to Polish royalty, we were treated to the spectacle of a fire breather (Gilbert van den Dobbelsteen, who has other talents besides his expertise with output device drivers). The evening ended with guitar playing and folksong.



The gracious hospitality of our hosts was surely appreciated. The local committee included Jerzy Ludwichowski (chair), Jolanta Szelatyńska, Stanisław Wawrykiewicz, Marek Czubenko, and Mariusz Czerniak. The programme committee consisted of Bogusław Jackowski, Chris Rowley, Phil Taylor, Jiří Zlatuška and Hans Hagen. Mariusz Olko, Tomasz Przechlewski and Bogusław Lichoński were responsible for producing the preprints. The office staff included the daughters of two committee members as well as several students, all competent, cheerful, and ever-helpful.



Another evening was spent in the newly restored Artus' Hall in the center of Toruń, where we were serenaded by a string quartet, and wined and dined in a grand manner. This hall, a Neo-Renaissance building from the late 1800s, is on the site of an older hall, dating to the 14th century, where a treaty was signed in 1466 ending a 13-year war between the Poles and the Teutonic Knights, and establishing Poland as an independent state.



A number of sponsors contributed to the success of the conference: the State Committee for Scientific Research; several departments of the Nicolas Copernicus University: the International Center for Information Systems and Services, the Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics, and the Faculty of Economic Sciences and Management; Wydział Kultury Urzędu Miasta Torunia; Acer Polska; Artgraf Warszawa; BOP s.c. Gdańsk; VIA Publishing Toruń-Wrocław; Sun Microsystems Poland; the 4all $\TeX$  Team; DANTE e.V.; GUTenberg; UKTUG; NTG; GUST.

Thanks to all.

Editor's note: The photos are included for those of you who were unable to attend the meeting. They were taken from the TUG'98 web site <http://www.gust.org.pl/TUG98/photos>, and were provided by Luzia Dietsche. You *must* see them in color!

Mimi Burbank