
From the president

Boris Veytsman

2018 is promising to be an interesting year for us. The upcoming conferences: April 28–May 2 is BachTeX in Bachotek, Poland; June 25–27 is PracTeX in Troy, NY, USA; July 20–22 is TUG18 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; and September 2–8 is the 12th ConTeXt meeting in Prague-Sibřina. Please do not procrastinate and take advantage of the early bird registration discounts! I would also like to mention that the TUG Annual General Meeting will be held at TUG18.

Broadly speaking, there are two kinds of conferences in science and technology: field-oriented and tool-oriented. The difference is between a conference on breast cancer (how can we tackle this disease?) and a conference on MRI applications (what problems can we solve using this device?). While our conferences are mostly tool-oriented (we have a great tool—TeX!), they have also always attracted talks about things only tangentially related to TeX, but interesting in themselves: fonts, typography, printing history, and many others. The last TUG meeting, at Bachotek, had a bookbinding workshop and a talk about musical notation in old paintings, accompanied by a concert of recovered music. Thus our conferences become somewhat field-oriented, the field being fine & scientific typography in the modern world. I think it is a good feature. So if you have an interesting talk in mind, but are in doubt whether it is TeX-related, consider submitting it anyway.

On the software front, TeX Live 2018 is moving up its schedule this year. Hopefully it will be released before this issue of *TUGboat* is finished. Also, the TeX Development fund made its first award for 2018, for LuaTeX support for the `bidi` package, by Vafa Khalighi. Development fund applications are always welcome; see tug.org/tc/devfund.

We are now discussing ways to help with funding the TeX accessibility project, which will make the creation of tagged PDFs easier. This is a very important development for blind and visually impaired scientists and engineers. It is also necessary if we want TeX to stay relevant: many governments are going to require compliance with accessibility standards from publishers: either those who receive government money, or, eventually, all major publishers. This means that anybody who uses TeX in professional activities is interested in making TeX-produced output compliant. Thus we as stewards of TeX must find ways to fund and steer this development effort.

One of the ways to do this is to organize a consortium of publishers and other stakeholders such as the Unicode consortium and PDF association. This organization, affiliated with TUG, would raise funds for the development *and* steer the development. If this is the path to take, we need to write down the charter of the new organization, establish the dues levels for institutional and individual membership and set up the structure of the consortium. If you want to help with this work, or have contacts among potential stakeholders, please write me or the Board (president@tug.org or board@tug.org respectively). We also have a mailing list for these discussions, lists.tug.org/accessibility, and a Web page with links to relevant standards and papers, tug.org/twg/accessibility.

Another project important for the relevance of TeX into the future is an educational initiative. We have some interested teachers on our mailing list, lists.tug.org/edutex, and have collected information about lesson plans and courses at tug.org/twg/edutex. Among the ideas discussed on the list has been the organization of summer TeX camps for school students. If you want to take part in this or any education-related activities, please get in touch!

Of course, these projects, conferences, publications require money. We are grateful to all members and donors who make this work possible with their dues and generous donations. Our ranks include both individual and institutional members; I'm glad to welcome a new institutional member: Harris Space and Intelligence Systems.

We started several experiments to increase the ranks of individual members as well. First, there is a trial option (new users only): a year of full TUG membership for just \$20. We offer it at a loss: these dues are lower than the physical cost of shipping *TUGboat* and the TeX Collection DVD. If you choose this option and decide TUG membership is valuable enough, please consider a (tax deductible in the US) donation. And, of course, we hope you will renew in 2019. Second, all new members in 2018 will get a letterpress-printed postcard *and* will participate (unless declined) in a lottery for a book by Jerry Kelly and Martin Hutner, *A Century for the Century: Fine Printed Books from 1900 to 1999*.

So, if you are a member and want to help either by volunteering or by donating — or if you are not yet a member, but are TUG-curious — we are always glad to welcome any help!

Happy TeXing!

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