

General Delivery

Opening words

Christina Thiele

Hello and welcome to you all — hello to those of you renewing your memberships, and welcome to those of you who are becoming TUG members for the first time. You arrive at an interesting time — but then, there's always something interesting going on!

This time, it's a new year with a new President, and a new Executive Director. It's a year where the office has moved from the east coast to the west. It's a year where we'll see our first annual meeting located outside North America.

In the last issue of *TUGboat*, Malcolm Clark, the outgoing president, warned against expecting that the new president, and new executive director, be seen as magic bullets ... Speaking for myself, I just don't move that fast, and as for magic, well, I think solid effort and involvement are going to be more effective in the long haul.

Perhaps a bit of background first ... I've been a TUG member since 1986, and attended my first meeting the following year, in Seattle, where I also gave a paper on my own proud beginnings with \TeX ... the audience was very kind that year. Like many of you, I had to work things out for myself, while avoiding learning things that I didn't think I'd need (!), and was pleased as punch when a file only tripped five times over errors.

Following that first encounter with other like-minded \TeX users at the University of Washington, I became a member of TUG's board in 1988, served on the program committee for four years, was editor of our proceedings for three years (writing the first guidelines, and then promptly overhauling them each year, or so it seemed), and finally felt I could retire from conference activities after 1991. Besides, I'd acquired a new job: editor of the fledgling newsletter *\TeX and TUG NEWS*.

And now I have arrived here, as TUG's president. Along with Pat Monohon, our Executive Director, I hope to inject new life and interest — and fun — into TUG.

We are now in our 14th year. That's quite an age, in a sense. It means we have a history (more on that as the year progresses ...).

I used to carve that history up into pieces: "the days of the implementors" — site coordinators, people who were working hard to get \TeX up and

running on this or that machine; followed by "the days of the users" — \TeX applications to real everyday situations on the job, in the production office, around the world via e-mail and ftp.

But ... have we really left the days of developers behind? Look at the work being done on \LaTeX 3 and the New Font Selection Scheme; the discussions, both heated and reasoned, on changing \TeX ; the advent of DC and virtual fonts. Development has taken on a new face, that's all. In a sense, we're renewing, reinventing ourselves. Revitalising \TeX , revamping the way we use it, learning to be a bigger player in the electronic field.

We're 14 years old — what \TeX will eventually turn into is being shaped right now. There's almost too much happening! How can we, the users, keep up? I myself only just got a PostScript printer. I'm about to embark on using non-CM fonts. This is a mental lurch for me: I'm not really in a position to say to someone else: "Look. You set it up for me. I'll just do the encoding as usual — but you take care of the \TeX nical details." So for me, I'm extremely grateful that I belong to TUG — *as a user*, this is where I know I can look for help, for support, ... for solutions.

And that's where I think TUG has its greatest role to play: in serving its members (in serving all \TeX users, really). Providing information, helping make contacts, finding answers. Not just via publications such as *TUGboat* or *TTN*, but directly from fellow members.

If you're a renewed member, go look in last year's membership directory (new members — you'll be getting a treasure trove of information when the directory arrives this summer). Don't look at the alphabetical listing of members — go to the Listing by Institutions and see who else at your university or company is a TUG member. Amazing, isn't it! Better yet — go look at the section which lists TUG members by their city and country. Did you know we have someone from the Canary Islands?! Saudi Arabia?! Look at how many members there are in Sweden and Japan, and at Los Alamos Laboratories in New Mexico! Amazing. Thinly spread around the globe, granted. But no matter where you are, there's a TUG member playing or working with \TeX .

And yet ... we know that the number of people actively using \TeX is an even greater horde — invisible to us, but facing exactly the same problems, enjoying exactly the same thrills of accomplishment.

\TeX is everywhere. TUG isn't ... yet! But we are becoming more and more the focal point for information on \TeX and its relations. That is one of my goals, and one shared by Pat — to work on ways

of improving our ability and our capacity to provide and distribute information. We have had recent inquiries from people involved in developing software which hopes to address many users, including those working with T_EX. What is so encouraging is not only that they're making sure to include T_EX, but that they are also coming to TUG to signal their work, and ask for comments and suggestions. We must continue to extend our presence, T_EX's presence, into adjacent development work. If we aren't part of new product solutions, we'll be left stranded. Something to keep in mind as we approach the mid-point in our second decade.

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And now is perhaps the moment to introduce the new office to you. Santa Barbara is a long way from Providence, and moving a lot of boxes (350 or more, at last count) has proven to be quite an operation. But everyone — and everything — is more or less settled in now, and things should be in full gear by mid-Spring.

TUG's offices (there are three rooms) are on the 3rd floor of a 6-storey restored building at 735 State Street, Santa Barbara. Other tenants in the building include Mission Research Corp. and Condor Engineering, both of whom are T_EX-aware. Nice company, indeed!

Pat Monohon has been a member of the T_EX Users Group since 1984, with several years' experience working in various European locations. She has virtually taken up residence in the offices — and has given more than one international caller a shock when they connected with her rather than the answering machine.

Along with Pat, there are two full-timers in the office: Lisa Ward and John Berlin. If you phone the office, it's most likely Lisa or John who will take your call. Lisa will be handling bookkeeping, filling orders, and being the PC contact person. John will be mainly concerned with class scheduling and serving as the Mac contact person.

If you're ever in Santa Barbara, they extend a warm welcome to you (1-805-963-1338).

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The meeting at Aston University (Birmingham, UK) is shaping up into a glorious international gathering of T_EX users and luminaries: they'll be giving papers, acting as course instructors, providing workshops. Set on a modern campus, TUG '93 will be

an exciting place to be that last week of July (the 26th to the 30th). The booking form is now out, so get your copy and fill it in. And pay particular attention to the courses being offered this year, both before and after the meeting week: they're a combination of some of the regular courses associated with TUG meetings, along with some new ones.

The organising committee has been hard at work coming up with some interesting options (there's a trip to Stratford to attend a performance of Shakespeare's King Lear), so plan on making this a grand holiday.

Something else which is new this year: three conference rates. It used to be that there was one rate for TUG members, and one for everyone else. But we've been seeing an increasing number of other user groups whose members attend TUG meetings. To recognise the fact that, while they aren't members of TUG, they certainly are supportive members of a T_EX user group, TUG meetings will now have a third rate, midway between those for TUG members and non-members. A small point, but one which has been somewhat irksome in the past. TUG, and the organising committee, extend a particular welcome to these people, and invite them to come and attend our meeting.

I hope to meet many of you at Aston this summer. Please come and say hello.

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