

## General Delivery

### Opening words

Christina Thiele

It's summer. Beginning of July. What could I write about for this issue of *TUGboat*? You've been anxiously awaiting your copy of 14 #1, and it has finally arrived. Shortly after that, TTN 2,3 turned up—and now this issue of *TUGboat*. Information glut!

Should I suggest you take your copies with you on vacation? No ... that would be pushing our mission too far! True, we want to spread information about  $\TeX$ , but ... at the beach? We're like everyone else—we want a vacation away from our favourite program too! So what can I tell you today?

Well, I've begun having some fun again with  $\TeX$ . "Well," you say, "don't you work with it all the time? Isn't that enough?!" No ... what I do is *work* with  $\TeX$ . But *play*? Not often. And usually, it's with a specific project/problem in mind.

Nevertheless, I've been having fun playing with fonts: one was to address a need for some Hebrew text (complete with vowel diacritics) in an article on Roger Bacon's knowledge and use of other languages; the other was to try and bring "an Irish flavour" to a collection of articles.

The Hebrew fonts I used are by Joel Hoffman and come complete with a little user's guide.<sup>1</sup> Having just that little bit of documentation, which itself then serves as a model of how to use the macros, made it so easy to introduce something entirely new into what was otherwise quite a mundane file. And it reminded me that no matter how beautiful or exciting or clever a macro or font or style file is, without documentation it's just not a lot of fun to try to use it. So for all of you who are putting out style files or macros or designing fonts, do give serious thought to writing up some simple little samples and explanations of what you're offering—you'll have some extremely grateful users sending you nice notes of appreciation and thanks.

The other bit of fun was to try using a font which had been suggested as a way of adding some "Irish-ness" to a collection of conference papers: using Irish knotwork as accent pieces—some call them dingbats. Jo Jaquina has designed 7 fonts, variations of one another, and provided a few samples of

<sup>1</sup> Available as `hclassic` at a variety of servers; I picked up my copies from `noa.huji.ac.il`.

their use.<sup>2</sup> The results? Quite spectacular, or so it seems to me. This is the first time I've used a font which isn't letters and numbers and symbols, but rather, each "character" is a design element which are then combined, with fairly seamless results, into complex patterns (rather like taking some of those ASCII symbols on a DOS machine, the ones which define corners and lines and shaded boxes and all). Manipulating the font elements hasn't been all that easy, mainly because I may be missing some basic  $\TeX$  concepts (I do have some interesting gaps ... well, ok, chasms ... in my knowledge of the beast). But I am getting the results I wanted, and hoped for. So tip of the hat to his efforts, and for generously placing his fonts onto the  $\TeX$  archives.

### 1 TUG '93

Many of us are preparing for the Annual Meeting, writing papers, re-writing papers (!), working on overhead slides, thinking of all the questions we have for this or that person; maybe some vacation time *away* from all this  $\TeX$  stuff! If you aren't able to make it to this meeting, remember that the *Proceedings* issue of *TUGboat* will bring you all the details. And while I'm talking about the meeting: the Conference Planning Committee has put out a call for proposals for future meeting sites. See TTN 2,3:26 for more information.

Speaking of conferences ...

### 2 Another society

... let me tell you about one I attended a few weeks ago, in June. It was the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for Scholarly Publishing, held this year in Washington, D.C. They count some 1,000 members, and over 400 were registered for one, two or all three days of the meeting this year! That's an astonishing figure—and one which I certainly envy! Of course, being on the east coast, where a large proportion of the publishing and printing industry resides, made such a high turnout possible. We ourselves experienced this at the TUG'91 annual meeting, "Inroads into Publishing", where some 240 attendees came for the first day, and overall attendance hovered around 200. I believe the potential exists within our own user group to see attendance figures still grow. But back to the SSP meeting ...

I was initially drawn to the program because I saw, for the first time that I can recall, mention of " $\TeX$ "; it was part of a session entitled "Alphabet Soup: SGML,  $\TeX$ , PS, DTD, FOSI, DSSSL ..." After contacting the organiser, saying how delighted

<sup>2</sup> I acquired the fonts from the Stuttgart server in `/soft/tex/fonts/knot`.

I was, as TUG's president, to see  $\text{\TeX}$  on the program, I ended up offering to put together a poster display on the use of  $\text{\TeX}$  for humanities journals — a counterpoint to the usual stereotype of “ $\text{\TeX}$  is for math and all that technical stuff.”

I've managed to locate a total of 16 publications, but surely there are more! I went through our membership directory of last year, and there were several addresses there which seemed to carry a hint, a whiff of a humanities involvement ...

I would like to see this type of information collected and made available to all users, current and potential, of  $\text{\TeX}$  for the non-math/technical side of things. So I'm turning this into what one might term “a personal on-going project” — sounds rather grandiose!

I would therefore like to enlist your assistance in identifying more humanities journals which are currently using  $\text{\TeX}$  or which once used it: contact me at `cthiele@ccs.carleton.ca`, and I'll send you a form which asks for the basic information. This is for journals which use  $\text{\TeX}$  either as a purely in-house tool, or which accept  $\text{\TeX}$ -encoded files from authors.

There is a large bibliography maintained by Nelson Beebe on publications produced with  $\text{\TeX}$ , or about  $\text{\TeX}$ , and I'll be passing along the information I collect to Nelson so that the collection will be as up-to-date as possible (Nelson's heard this promise before, but now that it's been done publicly ...). As for books produced with  $\text{\TeX}$ : do try to send in your particulars to Nelson Beebe and add to the bibliography.

To step back a bit from the details ... the SSP meeting was well worth the time and money spent. For me,  $\text{\TeX}$  is a terrific tool — but I'm using it in the larger context of scholarly/academic publishing. And that's where I need additional information and guidance. I urge everyone who is in the same situation — using  $\text{\TeX}$  as a tool within a larger context — to look around and consider joining a user group or association or society which is mainly about that context. It's not your  $\text{\TeX}$  knowledge which will improve so much as your knowledge in applying  $\text{\TeX}$  well.

And with that final urging, it's time to bring the column to a close. Enjoy reading this issue. Have a wonderful summer. Take a break from your keyboards. And we'll see you in September.

### 3 Elections coming up!

Well ... we didn't get this issue off to the printer before the Aston meeting, so I have a chance to insert one final note.

This fall we'll be having elections for the board. There are 15 positions open, and it's going to be a bit tricky as we move the entire board onto staggered terms; that is, this is the beginning of the move to have 5 board positions come up for election at any one time, rather than all 15 positions at once.

The terms of the present board members expire December 31, and the terms of the new board members begin January 1. The ending dates of the terms will be shifted ahead to the annual meeting, and the slate is being split into three groups of 5 (after ballots are counted and it's clear which 15 have been elected) so the shortest term will be 1½ years and the longest, 3½ years. The president's term had already been shifted to coincide with the annual meeting. What this will mean is that eventually we will have elections in the spring, before the annual meeting. First spring election will be in 1995, at which time 5 board positions, along with the position of president, will be decided.

But right now, we have a fall election. Nomination forms had to be at the TUG office by September 1st. Ballots will be mailed to all members about 30 days after that date. Marked ballots must be returned within the following 6 weeks. Results will be published in the next available issues of TTN and *TUGboat*.

Take the time to read the election material when it arrives; this user group of ours is very important to us, and to all  $\text{\TeX}$  users. Contributions you make to the group often are contributions which then travel out further: look at the Technical Council's working groups, look at the archives, think about the ways in which material published by TUG has become the main source of information on such software as  $\text{\PCTeX}$  and  $\text{\edmac}$ . It is very important for you to participate in TUG in whatever way you can. Elections are one direct way to do that; a direct line between you, the member, and those who help set the direction for the user group. What happens to TUG matters a lot to me — show that it matters to you, too.

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