General Delivery

From the President

Mimi L. Jett

Happy New Year!

Or shall we say New Decade? Some have argued that we are not *really* at the beginning of a new century or millennium, but simply in the last year of the former. Not so with TUG. We are clearly coming into the first year of our third decade, quite an accomplishment for a users group built around a typesetting language that was written at the onset of the digital revolution. The future looks bright for TUG as our growth and stability continue on an upward path. With a score of years comes some level of wisdom and maturity, enough at least to carry us comfortably forward.

Before I leave the subject of the new calendar, may I remind you that TUG has an official Y2K statement written by Barbara Beeton for *TUGboat* 20, no. 1, p. 45. To summarize, we do not expect anyone to experience life-altering trauma from using TEX before or after January 1, 2000. You may still choose to fill the basement with bottled water or place a time capsule in concrete, but TEX should be the least of your worries.

The second half of 1999 was eventful, with the 20th annual meeting in August in Vancouver BC and EuroTEX in Heidelberg just a month later. Both conferences were charged with the energy of new discovery and the joy of sharing. If you were not able to attend either of these gatherings, I encourage you to read the proceedings[1] to take in the breadth and depth of new development happening around TEX. One vital project is the NTS initiative. Originally started in 1991, this collaboration of great thinkers has truly developed a New Typesetting System that provides the things we wanted from TEX but couldn't have. The presentation in Heidelberg by Joachim Lammarsch, Jiří Zlatuška, Hans Hagen, Philip Taylor, and notably Karel Skoupý, laid out the history, emotions, logic and finally the resulting success: A complete TEX implementation running as object based code with Java. Tests showed exact matching files generated through NTS and "old fashioned" TEX. The importance of NTS is the power and extensibility it brings. The entire project has been funded through generous donations from DANTE, UKTUG, NTG, CSTUG, and others. I am happy to announce that the TUG Board of Directors has shown interest in contributing to this important

project and want to encourage you and your companies or schools to help as well. All donations are appreciated; please contact zlatuska@muni.cz to pledge your support. A small investment today will ensure better tools tomorrow.

Speaking of generosity, my mind is drawn to Germany, specifically to the community we know as DANTE. Here is a group of people always ready to help and support those in need, regardless of distance or other barriers. The latest gesture of goodwill from our friends was the donation of an UltraSparc server for use by the TEX Live development team. In addition to the computer, DANTE arranged for space and access through the University of Mainz, with system administration provided by Rainer Schoepf. Thank you very much to everyone who contributed to this wonderful outcome. The TEX Live CD is one of the premier benefits of TUG membership; we rely on the help of many people to make it possible. This gift from DANTE will be appreciated around the globe.

Looking forward into the year we have our 21st annual meeting TUG 2000 to be held at Oxford (UK) in Wadham College, a lovely place with rich history, from Saturday, August 12 through Friday, August 18. Bound to be one of the most memorable meetings yet, not only for the incredible venue, but also the cast of characters is known for high entertainment value. Remember the Poetry Reading in Vancouver?

In our tradition, when the annual meeting is on Europe or another continent, any meeting held in North America will be geared toward training and workshops in order to serve the needs of our members without distracting from the important annual conference. This coming year we are planning a 3-4 day workshop for beginners and intermediate users of TEX and associated tools. Once the venue is established we will send an email announcement to all North American members and post it on our website.

As we close this milestone year and prepare to open the door to the next, I wish to express my gratitude to everyone in our vast and virtual community for the work you are doing for the good of all. Every innovation shared, every patient explanation, and all the humility and kindness makes this a very nice place to be. Thank you, everyone. Happy New Year!

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[1] *TUGboat* 20:3 and EuroTEX'99 books are available from the TUG office.