Editorial Comments

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For this last issue of 1993, I'd like to indulge in a little wishing. Aside from grandiose wishes for improvements in the state of the world and hopes that people get some sense and learn to respect the beliefs and aspirations of others, I have some more mundane desires for TUG and *TUGboat*.

For TUG I wish many active and enthusiastic members as we enter our fifteenth year.

For *TUGboat* I hope for a deluge of interesting and informed authors, many hands to help, with some way of keeping them organized and directed toward a common goal, and the time to do my job as editor as it should be done. As for specific items, some suggestions are shown in the "wish list" on the next page; you, the readers, probably have some suggestions too — and you might also consider becoming an author or volunteering in some other way. Send in your suggestions, or declare your intentions, in a message to TUGboat@math.AMS.org. Happy holidays!

1   Reminder to potential *TUGboat* authors

We always welcome submissions to *TUGboat*. They can be on any topic related to TeX and its use. The net spreads rather broadly — typography, SGML, fonts, suitable hardware, . . . , you name it!

There are a few things that a potential author should keep in mind:

- Technical articles will be refereed.
- It's easier for the production staff (usually me) if a submission has already been tagged according to *TUGboat* style. The official and up-to-date plain and LaTeX style files can be obtained by anonymous ftp from a CTAN site, in the directory .../digests/tugboat. The files are *tugboat.sty and tugboat.cmn; instructions for their use are in tubguide.tex in the same area. For authors without net connections, the TUG office can supply the files on diskette.
- Actually test the file(s) as submitted. If additional macros or style options are required, send them along, or say where you obtained the version you are using. The same goes for fonts. Nothing is more discouraging than trying to send a file through (LA)TeX and finding out that something is missing, or a control sequence isn't defined (perhaps just because something is spelled wrong).
- An alternative to testing the files yourself is to ask a TeX friend, preferably one with a different TeX system, to run the article and read it before

you submit it. This would not only shake out any site-specific constraints, but would give you the benefit of a second pair of eyes checking your spelling, the flow of ideas, and so forth. This isn't a replacement for the referee process, but a good test of portability and lucidity.

A brief comment on the level to which articles might be directed: contrary to popular opinion, the desired level is not "by some great expert, for the edification of other great experts".[1] I continue to hope for good introductory and elementary material, though no one seems to want to write it, at least not for *TUGboat*. I'd like to be proven wrong! Remember — it isn't possible to publish something in *TUGboat* that hasn't been written or submitted.

2   Call for volunteers

As always, there are more tasks in producing *TUGboat* than can be done by just one person. Many, many thanks to all those people who have been working faithfully behind the scenes — associate editors, referees, and in particular, Ron Whitney, without whose assistance the July issue would have been even later than it was.

There are still areas not tended to as well as they might be. Some of the positions where skilled new volunteers might be of assistance are these:

- Referees.   If you are interested in reading submissions to *TUGboat* before publication, and "assist[ing] authors in creating articles that are of maximum value to the *TUGboat* readership,"[2] this could be a job for you. Send a message to the TUGboat address stating your availability, listing your specific interests and experience, and identifying any restrictions.
- Columnists. *TUGboat* covers a wide variety of subject areas, only some of which appear in any particular issue. Yours truly comes across a lot of ideas through reading the TeX-related network discussions, but only rarely has time to follow them up. A volunteer with a strong interest in a particular subject and fewer distractions than the editor could follow up such leads and twist arms (gently, of course) to bring useful information into print.

There are two tracks that a columnist can follow: actually writing a regular or occasional column, or, for someone with a particularly solid background in the area, tactfully persuading someone else to do the work, and acting as midwife until the article is delivered ready to publish. After a suitable internship,

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[1] Anna Russell, in her analysis of Wagner's *Ring der Nibelungen*

[2] Victor Eijkhout, *TUGboat* 11, no. 4, p. 605

TUGboat wish list

These are some of the topics on which the editor is looking for authors.
Add your own suggestions or volunteer!
Send e-mail to `TUGboat@math.AMS.org` with details.

- interviews with people who have influenced TeX and TUG

- real product reviews of both commercial and PD TeX implementations and other software, also macro packages like `pstricks`, etc.

- surveys of TeX implementations for particular hardware/operating system combinations, with comparisons of features

- "road map" to the CTAN TeX areas

- more tutorials and expository material, particularly for new users and users who aren't intending to become TeX wizards; one possibility — answers to the "top ten" questions sent to `comp.text.tex` by people writing dissertations

- "how to" articles — how to build your own style based on, say, `article.sty`, how to include an abstract and other stuff in the full-width block at the top of a two-column article, etc.

- comparative analyses of style files that address the same problem, e.g., crop marks

- crossword puzzles for the whole TeX community

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columnists of the latter variety may be promoted to associate editor (see the list on the reverse of the title page of this issue). If you are interested in either track, a message to TUGboat would be welcomed.

- Production assistance. This is a more problematic area, as the successful production of an issue of *TUGboat* requires that every file and every font be available to and compatible with the equipment on which the camera copy is generated. However, sometimes it's useful to have someone to call on to generate fonts, vet macro files (I always assume that if the author doesn't specify otherwise, the current version on CTAN will work properly, an assumption that isn't always warranted), and help fight other fires. If you're an experienced (LA)TeX user and are interested in this sort of challenge, send a message to the TUGboat address with the details of the system you're working on — computer, operating system, implementation and version of TeX and METAFONT, output device(s) available. Previous production experience is a big plus, and a direct Internet connection a necessity.

By now, you've seen Christina's solicitations for a new *TeX and TUG NEWS* editor. The editor of *TUGboat* has been having similar thoughts off and on for several years, but hasn't done anything serious about it. After the nearly disastrous failures to meet the publication schedule this past year, it's imperative that I do start looking toward the future. I know that *TUGboat* edited by someone else wouldn't be quite the same, but there are many valid conceptions of what such a journal should be. The criteria that I'd value in a possible successor include, in no particular order:

- broad and thorough knowledge of TeX and its relations;

- fascination with the typographic art and a desire always to learn more;

- literacy;

- a good (native) command of English and some ability to understand other human languages;

- tact;

- a comfortable familiarity with the electronic networks;

- the ability to bend a computer to one's will;

- a well-developed sense of responsibility.

If you think you might be such a person, or know of someone else who is, please contact me directly: `bnb@math.AMS.org`.

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