The continuing TUG membership drive

Boris Veytsman

Any organization is only as strong as its membership. Thus one of the important metrics of the health of TUG is the number of our members. The historical data for this metric are shown in Figure 1. They tell a worrying story of a steady decline. There are many possible explanations for this decline. One of the most probable might be the growth of the Internet. In the 1990s, the best decade for TUG, the membership was provided a number of clear benefits. First, there were CDs (and later DVDs) with the latest TeX distributions, which every TUG member got in the mail. Second, *TUGboat* and TUG conferences were among the rare possibilities for exchanging TeX experiences and learning about TeX.

Nowadays, almost everyone can download a TeX system for free: the traffic cost is (usually) low and the connections are (usually) fast. While *TUGboat* is still a great journal (full disclaimer: I am an Associate Editor, so my opinion may be biased), and TUG meetings remain highly useful, the growth of virtual meeting places like StackExchange has created many alternatives. It is now easily possible to become a knowledgeable TeX user without being a TUG member. Thus while TeX usage as measured by CTAN downloads and traffic on TeX-related sites is far from declining, TUG membership is slowly dropping.

Nonetheless, it seems that the role of TUG as the steward and advocate of the development of TeX and TeX-related software is still important (this role was the topic of a heated discussion at the Darmstadt conference; see Stefan Kottwitz, "TUG 2015 conference report", in *TUGboat* 36:2, `tug.org/TUGboat/tb36-2/tb113kottwitz.pdf`). The loss of *TUGboat* and TUG meetings would be felt by the community. Thus the TUG Board and the Membership Committee are trying to make our society known and attractive to the new generation of TeX users.

In doing so we try to learn from the experience of other professional societies. For some time, the American Chemical Society has conducted a very interesting campaign which recruits the existing members to promote ACS. Those members who attract new ones get modest thank you gifts. At the end of 2014 we on the Membership Committee decided to try this approach.

Thus, we started the 2015 membership campaign, publicizing the following rules:

1. Any new member can indicate on the member-

Inviter	Points
Kai Von Fintel	1
Julian Gilbey	1
Jim Hefferon	0
Humberto Madrid	1
Fritz Scholz	1
Juan Luis Varona Malumbres	1
Edward Baudrez	1
Peter J. Pupalaikis	1
Francoise Mulhauser	1
Joseph Wright	1
Jean-luc Doumont	1
Michael Henning Juul Stæhr	1
Robert L Knighten	1
C.V. Radhakrishnan	8
JFQA	1

Table 1: Inviters in 2015. The "points" column corresponds to drawing rules, see text.

ship form the name of the existing member who invited or inspired her to join TUG (the "inviter").

2. Each inviter gets a beautiful postcard printed by Peter Wilson on a letterpress (Figure 2).

3. At the end of the campaign a randomly chosen winner would get the main prize: a specially commissioned drawing by Duane Bibby (Figure 3). All inviters except members of the TUG board would be eligible for the drawing, with a chance of winning proportional to the number of invited members; each institutional member counted as eight individual ones.

The campaign was announced at the end of 2014 and continued throughout 2015. At the end of the year, we counted fifteen inviters, two of them bringing institutional members. Evidently the campaign contributed to the small uptick at the right end of the curve on Figure 1.

The inviters are listed in Table 1. The column "Points" corresponds to final drawing:

1. Jim Hefferon and C.V. Radhakrishnan each invited an institution, which gives eight points in the scoring.

2. Jim, being a board member, was ineligible for the final prize, so in the end he got zero points.

I volunteered to devise the procedure for the final drawing. I wanted it to be open source, verifiable and TeX-related. At the end I decided to use the popular free program *R* (`r-project.org`). The package *knitr* provides a literate way to program in *R* and outputs the results in LaTeX, so it is well suited
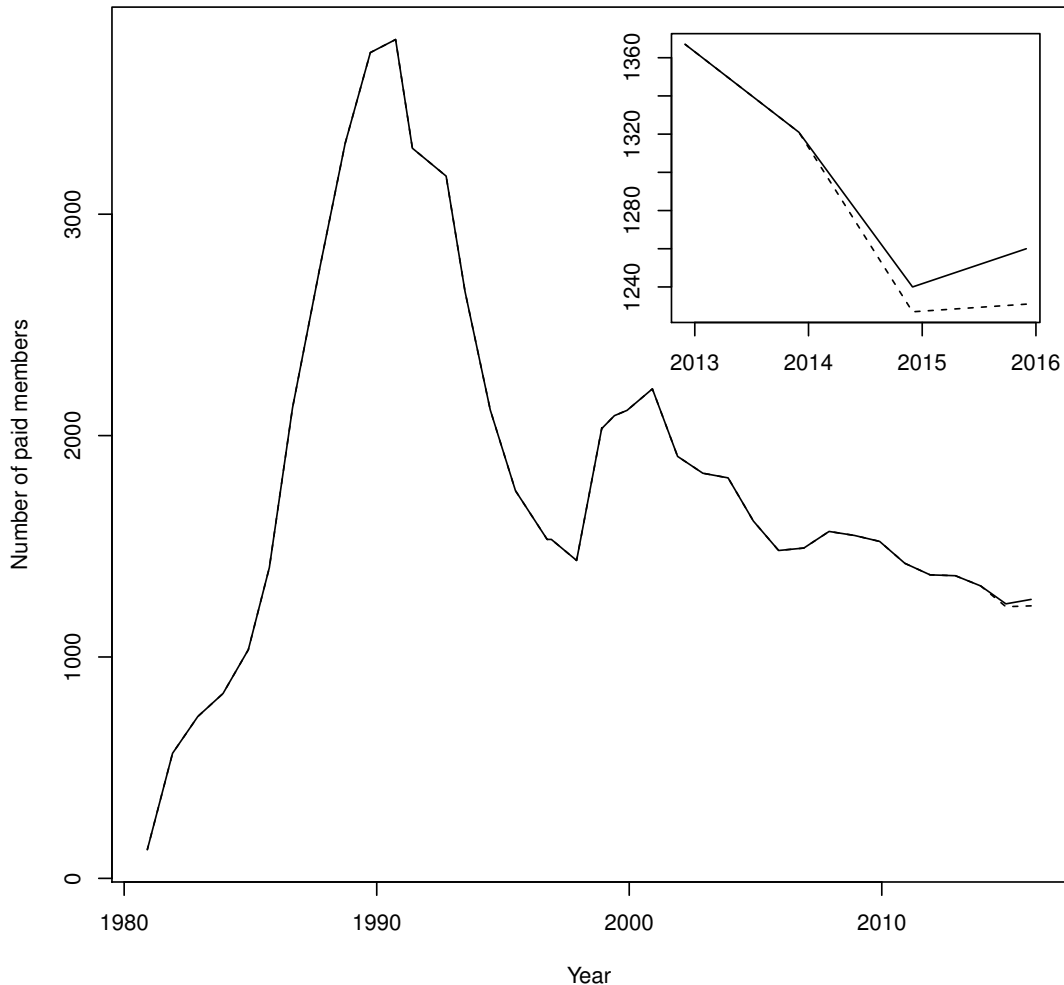
Figure 1: TUG membership at the end of a calendar year (I am grateful to Karl Berry and Robin Laakso for the data for this figure). The dotted line is the predicted membership without invited members.

for the task (I reviewed a book about the package in *TUGboat* 35:1, 2014, `tug.org/books/reviews/tb109reviews-xie.html`). *R* has a handy function `sample` which does weighted random sampling from a given list of entries. The only remaining problem was verifiability. To achieve it we need to explicitly set the seed of the random number generator. Using the current version of TeX (from the current TeX Live) written as an integer seemed a good idea.

The full program in *R* for the random drawing and its result are shown below:

```
inviters <-
  c('Kai Von Fintel',
    'Julian Gilbey',
    'Jim Hefferon',
```

```
    'Humberto Madrid',
    'Fritz Scholz',
    'Juan Luis Varona Malumbres',
    'Edward Baudrez',
    'Peter J. Pupalaikis',
    'Francoise Mulhauser',
    'Joseph Wright',
    'Jean-luc Doumont',
    'Michael Henning Juul St\\ae hr',
    'Robert L Knighten',
    'C.V. Radhakrishnan',
    'JFQA'
    )
weights <- c(1, 1, 0, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1,
             1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 8, 1)
```

```
set.seed(314159265)
winner <- sample(inviters,
                 size=1,
                 prob=weights)
cat('And the winner is: \\bfseries',
    paste0(winner, '!'))
```

And the winner is: **Jean-luc Doumont!**

Congratulations to the winner and many thanks to all participants!

Onward into 2016

Now to the present. It seems that our 2015 campaign had at least some success. Thus we decided to extend it through 2016. We again ask TUG members to invite TeX users and typography lovers to join TUG. As in the previous year, each inviter will get Peter Wilson's beautiful postcard (Figure 2).

Some words about the main prize, which, as in the previous year, will be given to a randomly-chosen winner at the end of 2016. In 2016, it will be a limited edition book, *Manuale Zapficum*, printed in 2009 on the occasion of the ninetieth birthdays of Hermann Zapf and Gudrun Zapf (Hermann's death in 2015 was a profound loss for the worldwide typographic community). The book was designed by Jerry Kelly. About it, the publisher says (`ritpress.rit.edu/publications/books/manuale-zapficum.html`):

> The *Manuale Zapficum*'s innovative specimen pages employ timeless Zapf faces such as Diotima, Optima, Palatino, and Zapfino, while including fresh uses of proprietary typefaces such as Hallmark Uncial and Hallmark Textura. A variety of the specimens were letterpress printed using historic metal type from the Cary Collection. Each is printed in traditional red and black on Hahnemühle Biblio paper. The Campbell-Logan Bindery of Minneapolis, MN, bound an edition of 100 copies in luxurious vellum and Fabriano paper.

We need to make our community stronger. A healthy and vibrant TUG is one of the ways that supports our technology and ensures the future of TeX as well as computer typography. Thus let me finish this note by asking our members to go forth and spread the word about TeX and TUG.

⋄ Boris Veytsman
  Computational Materials Science
     Center, MS 6A2
  George Mason University
  Fairfax, VA 22030
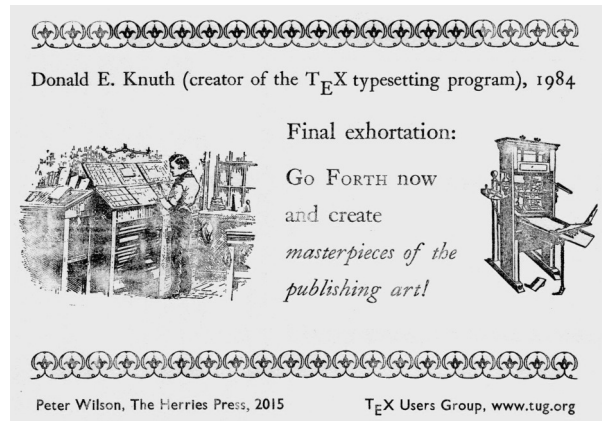 borisv (at) lk dot net
  http://borisv.lk.net

Figure 2: Peter Wilson's postcard, for all inviters.

Figure 3: 2015 main prize: Duane Bibby's drawing.

Figure 4: 2016 main prize: *Manuale Zapficum*.