Editorial comments

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R.I.P. Kris Rose, 1965–2016

Kristoffer Høgsbro Rose was a native of Denmark, born 5 April 1965. He discovered computer science when he was very young, and spent the rest of his life involved in this pursuit. He was an early contributor to AUC-TeX, and the author of XY-pic.

In Aarhus in the mid-1990s, after receiving his degree from the University of Copenhagen, he was teaching at and working with the Basic Research in Computer Science (BRiCS) center; he would from time to time visit with Kaja Christiansen and have a chat. Kaja reports:

> We'd talk TeX, XY-pic, Debian or Emacs, or he would sit down and read my copies of *TUGboat*. In 1997 we happened to talk about TUG; the same year I decided to join the board at TUG'97.

Kris joined the TUG board at the same time, and was elected Vice President for a term through 2001; he remained on the board until 2003. In addition to his TUG participation, he was active in the Debian open source and free software community.

Also in 1997, Kris moved with his family from Denmark to France, taking a teaching position at the École Normale Supérieur (ENS) de Lyon, from which position he was invited in 2000 by IBM to join the TJ Watson facility in New York as a Research Scientist. It was at this point that he left the TeX community, but continued to be active in Debian. In 2013, while still at IBM, he joined the adjunct faculty of New York University, where he taught compiler construction. In 2014, he left IBM to become a research scientist in the financial industry, at Two Sigma Investments, while continuing to teach at NYU, and becoming more active as a Debian contributor. Late in 2015 he was diagnosed with a very aggressive form of leukemia, which took his life on 17 September 2016. He was far too young.

A book fair. . . and another passing

The first weekend in October, my husband and I attended the Oak Knoll Fest XIX in New Castle, Delaware, hosted by Oak Knoll Press.[1] (Some attendees at the 2001 TUG meeting, held at the University of Delaware, may remember my recommendation to visit the bookshop.) This book fair is held every other year, and I look forward to it eagerly. So it surprised and saddened me to learn of the death, just

a week earlier, of Oak Knoll's proprietor and guiding spirit of the Fest, Robert Fleck; nonetheless, the Fest went on as planned, following Bob's admonition to his son Rob, "Hell no! We've already paid for it!" (Rob and his mother, Millie, intend to continue the work Bob started, Bob's plans are solidly in place for the next several years.)

Oak Knoll is both a bookshop and a publisher, with a very specialized focus — books about books. I first became familiar with Oak Knoll in the early years of TeX when I was looking for some of the books listed in the bibliography of Don Knuth's Gibbs lecture, "Mathematical Typography".[2] In addition to the (very few) publications devoted to math composition, the shop is full of publications about fonts, composition and printing, bibliography, bookbinding, papermaking, fine press books, ... A most valuable resource for information on the history of type and printing.

Bob Fleck also recognized an interest in contemporary hand-set and artists' books, and in 1996 encouraged the founding of the Fine Press Book Association (FPBA).[3] The biennial Oak Knoll Fest comprises a symposium on book-related topics as well as a book fair where book-makers, most of them FPBA members, exhibit their creations and works in progress. The array of books and ephemera to be seen is dizzying in its variety.

The topic for this year's symposium was the question: what are the most important criteria for a private press when selecting texts to print? While this matter is undoubtedly secondary for most TeX users, the opinions and experience of the participants were interesting and enlightening for any active or prospective book collector.

For anyone who loves books and is in the Delaware vicinity around the beginning of October (in even-numbered years; it alternates years with the Oxford Book Fair, in the UK), attending the Fest is a recommended activity.

Another honor for Don Knuth: the SIAM John von Neumann Lecture

On 12 July 2016, the John von Neumann Lecture prize was awarded to Don Knuth "for his transformative contributions to mathematics and computer science". Knuth delivered the associated prize lecture, "Satisfiability and Combinatorics" on that day to the

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[1] http://www.oakknoll.com

[2] *Bulletin of the American Mathematical Society* (*new series*), **1**:2, 337–372 (March 1979), https://www.ams.org/bull/1979-01-02/S0273-0979-1979-14598-1; republished in *Digital Typography*, pp. 19–65.

[3] http://fpba.com

Some typography links to follow

On the illegibility of street signs in New York, in verse:
`http://flip.it/HLIMY`

How typeface designers made room in the *New York Times* for President Eisenhower's long last name:
`http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2016/06/`
`eisenhower-and-the-skinny-s/486965/`

Selections from the blog of St Brigid Press, in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia:

How type is made, in two parts:
`http://www.stbrigidpress.net/blog/how-type-is-made-part-1`
`http://www.stbrigidpress.net/blog/how-type-is-made-part-2`

A letterpress lexicon, in (so far) three parts:
`http://www.stbrigidpress.net/blog/a-letterpress-lexicon-part-1`
`http://www.stbrigidpress.net/blog/a-letterpress-lexicon-part-2`
`http://www.stbrigidpress.net/blog/a-letterpress-lexicon-part-three`

The blog itself:
`http://www.stbrigidpress.net/blog`

Videos from Type@Cooper — Lectures presented in conjunction with the Cooper Union typeface design program, in New York and San Francisco:
`https://vimeo.com/coopertype/videos`

Donald Knuth, "32 Years of Metafont" (Type@CooperWest talk):
`https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0LR_lBEy7qU`

Announcements of upcoming lectures:
`http://coopertype.org/`

annual meeting of the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics (SIAM) in Boston, Massachusetts. This is the highest honor awarded by SIAM; "the flagship lecture recognizes outstanding and distinguished contributions to the field of applied mathematical sciences and the effective communication of these ideas to the community."

A fitting memorial for Sebastian Rahtz

The Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) has announced the creation of the Rahtz Prize for TEI Ingenuity. The prize is described in part as follows:

> The TEI Consortium has created the Rahtz Prize for TEI Ingenuity in memory of Sebastian Rahtz (13 February 1955–15 March 2016). The award is intended to honour Sebastian's major technical and philosophical contributions to the TEI, and to encourage TEI innovation by the TEI community.

The full announcement can be read at `http://www.tei-c.org/Activities/rahtz.xml`; nominations for the first award are due 1 April 2017.

Second annual Updike Prize for student type design

On October 17, safely outside of the winter storm season,[4] the award ceremony for the second annual Updike Prize for student type design was held at the Providence Public Library. The invited speaker was Dr. Fiona Ross of the University of Reading.

Four finalists were announced, and their entries were on exhibit, along with information about the sources they had consulted for inspiration. Here are their names, and the names of their typefaces.

- June Shin, *Ithaka* (First Prize)
- SooHee Cho, *The Black Cat*
- Cem Eskinazi, *Mond*
- Íñigo López Vázquez, *Erik Text*

A brief announcement is at `https://pplspcoll.wordpress.com/2016/10/20/congratulations-to-june-shin-winner-of-the-2016-updike-prize/`, and includes several related links.

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[4] Last year's presentation, on 19 February 2015, was accompanied by a fierce snowstorm. The event was reported in my column in *TUGboat* **36**:1, `http://tug.org/TUGboat/tb36-1/tb112beet.pdf`.

Talk by Fiona Ross

Fiona Ross is on the faculty of the University of Reading, where she lectures on non-Latin typeface design in the MA Typeface Design program, and is curator of the Non-Latin Type Collection. (She is also an Associate Designer for Tiro Typeworks, the organization which is polishing version 2 of the STIX fonts.) Her talk, on the occasion of the Updike Prize ceremony, entitled "Collections-based research for contemporary typeface design — with special reference to non-Latin scripts", dealt with the resources necessary when designing fonts for languages in which one is not a native speaker, and how to make most effective use of them.

Dr. Ross used the Bengali script as her main example. Bengali has a long history, longer even than Latin, with the oldest representations being carved in stone, and more recent, though still old, examples produced with a broad-edge pen that has the writing edge slanted in the opposite direction from that of the broad-edge pen used for italic script. Although the Bengali script is strongly alphabetic, the glyphs are based on consonant clusters, with vowels relegated almost to diacritic status. The order of written phonemes is not necessarily the same as how the phonemes occur in the spoken word. Wide elements at the top or (less frequently) bottom traditionally overlap what occurs next to them; the overlap can occur on either side. The setting of these features in type is strongly influenced by what is possible with the available technology.

Dr. Ross' studies in Sanskrit prepared her for her first assignment at Linotype (UK), where she undertook to redesign the Bengali font for use with a filmsetter. The existing Linotype Bengali font was designed for use on a hot-metal typesetter, which had no real ability to kern adjacent characters. Without this ability, the only alternative would be to provide ligatures, which for Bengali would increase the number of glyphs to several hundred; with a physical capacity of only 90 characters at a time, the Linotype was incapable of accommodating this requirement. For this reason, many shapes were restricted to a width narrower than tradition would dictate. But the desire for printed material (India is still devoted to reading the daily newspaper) was stronger than the requirement for typography that embodied traditional elegance.

The design of a new font, even for a new technology, should not be simply a clone of an existing font, even if it is meant to fill the same niche. Especially if a new technology provides possibilities that were not available under previous technologies, the opportunity should be taken to create something that matches the expectations of the culture whose language it will be used to exemplify. So it was possible, with the enhanced capabilities of the filmsetter, to ignore the limitations that had heretofore restricted the font design.

The UK Linotype company held a collection of manuscripts and printed materials in the relevant script, as well as having a branch in India with personnel willing to supply not only more examples, but also the expertise of native language speakers. Together, these resources fulfilled the three criteria that are required for development of a new font (besides the efforts of a skilled designer): relevance, significance, and reliability. For Bengali, the available materials covered a broad period as well as a significant variety of likely applications. The staff of the office in India were enthusiastic about the project, allowing work on the new font to be a true team venture. Despite Dr. Ross' lack of native competency in Bengali, the ability to ask the right questions and attention to the opinions of those native speakers resulted in a product that was readily adopted by the major Bengali newspapers, and even today, more than thirty years later, it is still the predominant font used by the newspapers.

The image below was kindly provided by Dr. Ross to illustrate this report. It says, in Hindi transliteration, "Typographic Design" in Adobe Devanagari Regular and Bold, designed by Tim Holloway, Fiona Ross, and John Hudson.

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Every slide illustrating Dr. Ross' talk included the Bengali letter "ka" (Unicode U+0995) as an icon. An inquiry elicited the information that "ka" is auspicious; this is the first glyph that she designs in every script.

On 17 July 2016, Dr. Ross presented a lecture on a related topic at Typographics 2016, held at The Cooper Union in New York City. A video of that talk can be viewed at `https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3_MbN_pBuy0`. In her slides, starting at 3:29, the iconic Bengali "ka" can be seen, usually in the lower left-hand corner.

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