

From the TUG President

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TUG and the NTG

I would like to thank Gerard van Nes for offering me this page to write about TUG and our activities. Two years ago, Kees van der Laan had approached me to write some words of greetings on the occasion of the NTG's 5th anniversary, the Lustrum. At that time, I wrote about the good relations which existed between TUG and the NTG; indeed, good relations amongst all user groups are critical to our continuance. We are all essentially volunteer organisations; while some have paid staff in order to deal with administrative issues, the main thrust of each group comes from its volunteers, particularly those who offer to work on committees and boards.

A volunteer 'job' is quite different from other jobs. We do things because we want to; we work late because we want to; we help people, give advice, share coding secrets and shortcuts — because we want to. It's a matter of good will. What we also find, as volunteers, is that goodwill can sometimes be derailed by misunderstandings, by a lack of communication, by an absence of recognition of our efforts. When you add to that mix factors such as e-mail (great, but it still lacks that human quality not even a smiley ; -) can bring to the screen), and a few language transitions, then the potential for difficulties must be recognised.

And occasionally there have been some hiccups in the relations between our two groups. Last year saw some confusion about TUG's support of the NTG's 4AllTeX CD (still the first CD with TeX ready to go); there was never any question of TUG's support for the idea or the necessity of having such a CD available. However, we were not in a position to offer financial support (subsidising the CD for conference attendees, or selling it directly from the TUG office). Nevertheless, we *have* been able to offer support in other ways. CD orders can be made directly to TUG for forwarding to the NTG; information about the latest editions appears in TTN; and we are hoping to even see a 4AllTeX demonstration at the upcoming TUG meeting in Florida.

What the NTG has offered the entire TeX community in its support for the production of the CD is a major achievement. What other groups can offer is support in whatever form is available to them.

Where's TUGboat?

'TUGboat is delayed.' You've been seeing that phrase now for several months. And as difficult as it is to say, it is necessary to say yet again: 'TUGboat is delayed.' The delays, however, are not easily solved. We have depended

on one person for 15 years to edit and produce the issue; one person and one site. And while I had wanted to see a gradual transition away from both of these sole-source dependencies, that has not happened. It may well be that there will be a serious revamping of *TUGboat* in the coming year. For now, all we can ask of our members is that they continue to be patient. TUG does not have the resources to hire a team of production specialists to get the issues out. And so we are facing the other side of volunteerism: other obligations have to take precedence over what we want to do. TUG and the *TUGboat* editor are now in just such a corner, with very little room to move. We can offer our apologies, our sincere promises to ensure that all issues will eventually arrive, but that is small comfort to someone who wants to get *TUGboat*. We are all very aware of this — and none more so than our beleaguered editor.

TUG elections in progress

The TUG elections are drawing to a close as you read this. There were five board positions open, as well as that of president, the position I have held for almost two and a half years. There were four candidates for the board positions; when this happens, the candidates become board members 'by acclamation' (there is no election necessary). They are Barbara Beeton (returning board member), Karl Berry, Judy Johnston, and Jiří Zlatuška.

There are two candidates for president — Michel Goossens and Mimi Jett — the results will be known in late May/early June.

TUG'95 in Florida — July 24–28

Conference materials are now available via CTAN in *tex-archive/usergrps/tug* in .ps and .asc formats — look for the *tug95** files. The conference has a different slant this year: mainly papers presented in the mornings, and demonstrations and workshops mainly in the afternoons. This should provide attendees with a much broader range of information and experience which they can more quickly use back at their places of work — and play! And it's often more fun to see someone using TeX than to hear or read about it! Pick up a copy of the preliminary program from CTAN and see what we mean.

And two wishes . . .

If I could squeeze in just a bit more here . . . I'd like to wish the NTG best of luck with the organizing of EuroTeX'95 in Arnhem this September. And I hope that we continue to work together, keeping one another informed of our activities and initiatives, sharing experiences and information.