## Editorial comments

Barbara Beeton

### Opus 100[1]

To my surprise and delight, *TUGboat* has reached its 100th issue, and this just after the celebration of TeX's $2^5$th birthday — both causes for great celebration. In this column, I shall set down some musings about the past, and a bit of speculation on the future.

As an aside, Dick Palais, the principal instigators for the adoption of TeX at the AMS, and the first Chair (the office that preceded President) of TUG, turns 80 this year. A celebration in honor of the event, a conference on Geometry and its Applications, is announced at `www.math.uci.edu/~scgas/ Palais-birthday/`. Happy birthday, Dick!

TeX has become firmly established in the math and physics community. LaTeX (with many variations) has become the workhorse for production of books and journals by a number of scientific societies and some commercial publishers as well. TeX algorithms have been adopted for use by other text processing software — line-breaking in InDesign, and the math approach in the implementation of math tables for OpenType fonts. ConTeXt has made its mark on interactive on-line educational materials as well as on paper. And pdfTeX and LuaTeX now provide features not available from the original engine. This is the visible state of things.

There *are* occasional attempts to make TeX more visible. Karl's column cites the report by Dave Walden to the IEEE Computer Society, and representatives of the various European TeX groups regularly participate in gatherings of GNU/Linux and similar groups. There is an active TeX linguistics discussion forum, and at least some recognized typographers acknowledge TeX's existence when asked. But these are all specialists, and thus exceptions.

In these pages we have reported a number of "undercover" uses, where the batch capabilities of (LA)TeX have been leveraged to generate various forms from databases or interactive entry by users who are completely unaware that TeX is involved. An example of the latter, quite different from the "form" concept, was called to my attention by William Adams: `www.customstoriesinc.com/`, based on XeTeX. This is the likely growth area for TeX as I see it — TeX won't disappear, it will just go further underground.

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[1] Title stolen from an admired author, Isaac Asimov: `en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opus_100`. I still remember fondly the reception I got at his book signing.

I hope someone will look back in 2042 — on TeX's $2^6$th birthday — to see whether this prediction comes to pass.

### BBVA award for Don Knuth

The BBVA Foundation in Madrid has announced that Don will be one of the recipients of a Frontiers of Knowledge Award, in the area of Information and Communication Technologies. The announcement on their web page reads, in part,

> U.S. scientist Donald E. Knuth takes the award for making computing into a science. His *The Art of Computer Programming* systematizes the way that human beings talk to machines and is considered the seminal work on computer science.

For complete information about the 2010 awards, see `www.fbbva.es/TLFU/tlfu/ing/microsites/ premios/fronteras/index.jsp`.

The BBVA Foundation "expresses the engagement of financial group BBVA with the cause of social responsibility in the societies where it does business, in pursuit of a better quality of life for all citizens." The awards program "seek[s] to recognize and encourage world-class research and artistic creation, prizing contributions of lasting impact for their originality, theoretical significance and ability to push back the frontiers of the known world." The 2010 awards will be presented in Madrid on June 6.

### Short takes

The occasion of Matthew Carter's MacArthur Fellowship has resulted in an open season on articles and interviews. In *The Economist* he is billed as "the most-read man in the world": `www.economist.com/ blogs / babbage / 2010 / 12 / doyen_type_design& fsrc=nwl`. An interview with *imprint* on "How do you design a great typeface?" is shared by *Salon* at `http://shar.es/HtKeu`.

In the past, fonts tended to be taken for granted, just part of the landscape. With a computer on nearly everyone's desk or lap, they are coming out of the shadows. The Museum of Modern Art in New York has added a number of typefaces to their permanent collection and mounted an exhibition on their place in modern design, as reported here: `observatory.designobserver.com/feature/ standard-deviations-types-and-families -in-contemporary-design/26428/`.

Handwriting, although it is becoming more and more a "thing of the past", is still found to be worthy of study — especially past forms: `nationalarchives. gov.uk/palaeography/`.

Most of these news bits were reported in the `TYPO-L` discussion list. It's a fairly low traffic list, populated by an interesting bunch of type observers and managed by Peter Flynn, who has just launched a discussion on the pros and cons of ragged right setting for dissertations. Subscription requests can be sent to `TYPO-L-subscribe-request@LISTSERV.HEANET.IE`.

The scientific publisher Springer has launched a new resource for mathematical typesetting: `www.latexsearch.com`. This site is populated with several million LaTeX code snippets containing mathematical text, drawn from their numerous publications. Much of the material seems not to be edited for quality of the LaTeX code; it is unclear whether all examples are exactly as input by authors, or might have been constructed with the "help" of various front-end software. In any event, if one wants to find uses of particular symbols or constructs, here is a place to look.

We should also mention that Don Knuth has found some errors in the book prepared for TUG's $2^5$ anniversary. A list is posted on the TUG web site, at `tug.org/store/tug10/errata.html`; if you don't have a copy of the book in which to mark the errors, the book can be obtained as described at `tug.org/store/tug10`, and members can read it online from a link on that page.

Finally, it's not so often that a popular tune is animated entirely by typography. "Shop Vac", animated by Jarrett Heather, can be viewed at `vimeo.com/17419652`. Delightful, both the interpretation and the use of visual allusions.

### Mimi

The passing of Mimi Burbank is reported by several other friends in this issue, and is the subject of several memorials on the web, among them `www.portaltotheuniverse.org/blogs/posts/view/85412/` by Thilina Heenatigala, coordinator of the Global Astronomy Month and the Astro Book Drive, and `kasesestreetkids.blogspot.com/2010/11/sad-news-mimi-has-died.html` by some of the individuals involved with the effort to create an organization for rescuing and educating the many orphans and street kids in western Uganda.

Here I would like to reminisce a bit on what Mimi meant to me.

By 1995, the year in which the annual meeting was held in St. Petersburg, Florida (with Mimi in charge of arrangements), *TUGboat* was falling behind schedule with longer and longer delays (a consequence in part of concentrating too much responsibility in the hands of one person). Mimi stepped forward and offered her site for production and archiving. She rescued our vessel! From then until her retirement in 2005, Mimi was our production manager — always there when needed, a tactful but determined nag, more concerned, it seemed, about the responsibility she had taken on than her own immediate interests. In other words, a good and devoted friend.

For the most part, our communications were by e-mail; we had met earlier only at a few TUG meetings, and we hadn't really had a chance to just sit down and talk. In 1996, we got that opportunity, traveling together to attend the meeting in Russia — and used the time well! We were met at the Moscow airport by Irina Makhovaya, who most generously accommodated us in her apartment until it was time to proceed to Dubna, and gave us a personal tour of Moscow. It was on this trip that I learned how readily Mimi connected with people. She made a number of friends among the Russian attendees, and remained in touch long after we had returned home.

When she decided to retire, Mimi dutifully off-loaded all the *TUGboat* backlog from the SCRI computer at Florida State by moving it to the TUG box in Denmark, and turned it over to Karl. But she didn't disappear. Oh, no! Her communications just changed from *TUGboat*-related topics to news about her new home and friends in Kasese, Uganda. Her stories about goats (she admitted to a weakness for them) were believable only because they came from Mimi.

We last corresponded just a few days before her death. Although she had suffered some health setbacks, and a shipment of her medications "disappeared" as it came through customs, she kept her sunny outlook and showed her Ugandan family how an American Thanksgiving was celebrated. A few days later, we received the news from her son Charles that his mother had passed away.

Mimi was a person who made a difference. I miss her greatly, but treasure the honor and privilege it was to have known her.

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