
Editorial comments

Barbara Beeton

COVID persists

The usual lead article for a regular *TUGboat* issue is a message from the president. However, Arthur Rosendahl, TUG’s current president, has contracted COVID, and isn’t up to the effort for this issue.

We wish him a full and speedy recovery.

Alan Jeffrey, 1967–2024

Alan Jeffrey, an early member of the L^AT_EX Project Team, passed away on 4 July 2024, a victim of brain cancer. He was born on 17 January 1967 in Glasgow. At the time of his death he was Principal Software Engineer at Roblox, Chicago, Illinois. His main interest was in the application of tools and techniques from CS research to practical problems.

The changes file for L^AT_EX 2_ε shows entries by Alan from day one. A lot of his focus was on improving the font handling, including integration of NFSS. He was the original author of `fontinst`, and co-author of the `stmaryrd` Metafont, among other packages.¹ During the early 1990s, he contributed several articles to *TUGboat*, mainly about fonts.²

After his move to Chicago in the late 1990s, Alan had an active presence at `mastodon.scot/asaj`. In it, he confides that he grew up in Glasgow. His later postings mostly chronicle the diagnosis of his illness, and its treatment. Honest, but sad.

This notice was posted online by his brother and sister, earlier this year:

Alan’s Celebration of Life is to be held at Wolfson College Oxford, where Alan completed his DPhil. The event will involve speeches and music, and will be live-streamed, to allow people to join from afar. There will be a buffet dinner, and, for those that wish to, we will go onwards to the pub.

The Celebration was scheduled for Saturday, November 2nd.

Alan’s siblings also posted a more detailed remembrance on his LinkedIn account.³

R.I.P., Alan.

¹ ctan.org/author/jeffrey

² tug.org/TUGboat/Contents/listauthor.html#Jeffrey,Alan

³ www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7215033040614436865/

Errata: *TUGboat* 7:4, “Amsterdam, 13 March 1996//Knuth meets NTG members”, pp. 342–355

First of all, the “//” in the title should have been a double backslash, for a line break. Oops!

- Page 345, col. 1, paragraph 3, line 10: “Everytime” should be “Every time”.
- Page 346, col. 1, paragraph 5, line 10: “be be able”, only one “be”.
- Page 343, col. 2, paragraph 3, line 3: “lionness” should be “lioness”.
- Page 351, col. 1, line 4: “by saing” should be “by saying”.
- Page 351, col. 2, paragraph 2, line 6: “*MetaPost*” should be the symbol \mp , caused by an unfortunate redefinition of the macro `\mp`.
- Page 353, col. 1, paragraph 3, line 5: “Dash” should be “\Dash”, and should continue the previous line beginning with an em-dash.
- Page 354, col. 2, line 7: “gan influence” should be “gain influence”.
- Page 354, col. 2, last paragraph, line 3: “the *The Art*”, omit the lowercase roman “the”.
- Page 355, col. 1, paragraph 2, lines 6–7: “T_EX the Program”, “METAFONT” and “[The] Stanford GraphBase” are the names of books and should be italicized.

Face/Interface conference at Stanford

This series of conferences, organized by Stanford’s SILICON (Stanford Initiative on Language Inclusion and Conservation in Old and New Media) project.⁴ will continue with a third edition, to be held from 13–18 January 2025. The date for submitting a proposal has already passed, but the posted call⁵ holds a link to the application form, which in turn contains a profile of the keynote speaker, Adam Yeo, a font designer from Côte d’Ivoire who holds a Ph.D. in Art and Design from Nanjing University of the Arts, China, and is now Assistant Professor of Graphic Design at the University of Bondoukou, Ivory Coast.

The second edition of the conference, held in December 2023, was reported in an earlier column.⁶ Recordings are still being processed, and will be posted on SILICON’s new YouTube channel.⁷ Chuck Bigelow’s keynote address, “Prediction is Difficult, Especially About the Future”, is already there, at www.youtube.com/watch?v=tIO-ZgkPf-U.

⁴ silicon.stanford.edu

⁵ silicon.stanford.edu/face-interface/

⁶ tug.org/TUGboat/tb45-1/tb139beet.pdf

⁷ www.youtube.com/@StanfordSILICON

A font walk in Rochester

Signs are everywhere; we depend on them to help us get to where we want to go. Sometimes they are easy to read, sometimes not, but when they're not, their intended function can be seriously compromised.

On an evening in July, Chuck Bigelow was walking with a neighbor, and he observed that the font on a street sign was less than optimally presented. One wouldn't be surprised that someone with Chuck's font experience would notice such flaws. What is surprising is that the neighbor wrote about the experience in the local newspaper, the *Rochester Beacon*, so others can benefit from Chuck's observations.

The article,⁸ along with the font analysis, includes a biographical sketch and appropriately illustrative photos as well as a mention of Chuck's article "Oh, oh, zero!",⁹ published here in *TUGboat* in 2013. Both articles are worth (re)reading.

At the end of the *Beacon* article, do continue reading the comments for additional typeface commentary.

Postscript. Other "font walks" can be cited. I've been told by Frank Romano (now the president of the Printing Museum in Haverhill, Massachusetts, but formerly on the faculty of the Rochester Institute of Technology at the same time that Hermann Zapf held the Cary Professorship in Graphic Arts) that he and Zapf took a similar walk through Rochester.

Don Knuth, to celebrate the end of a META-FONT course in 1984, took his students on a field trip to San Francisco, where they "had a picnic on Font Boulevard, then toured the fascinating MacKenzie-Harris type foundry and the Bigelow & Holmes design studio." They capped their tour by forming an "italic font" at the base of an appropriate street sign.¹⁰

And finally, as I was reminded by Lance Carnes after he had read the *Beacon* article, at a TUG conference at Stanford in the 1980s, I spotted and reported that "Santa Teresa St" on a sign near the cafeteria was spelled differently on the signs at other intersections. This is more a proofreading than a font observation, but demonstrates that reading street signs can provide more information than just where you happen to be located.

⁸ rochesterbeacon.com/2024/07/29/seeing-rochester-signs-through-chuck-bigelows-eyes

⁹ tug.org/TUGboat/tb34-2/tb107bigelow-zero.pdf

¹⁰ See the photo on page 109 of the report, at tug.org/TUGboat/tb05-2/tb10knut.pdf.

Accessibility and arXiv

From September 3–13, arXiv presented Accessibility 2024, its second accessibility forum. In all, seven sessions were held online, organized around topics such as HTML papers on arXiv, the applicability of AI, and the deaf community at the Rochester Institute of Technology. One session was directed to the Spanish speaking community. All sessions have now been posted to YouTube.¹¹ Captions are present for all sessions, but some of them may still require editing; this effort is underway.

The session likely of most interest to TUG readers is the session on the HTML papers, in which Norbert Preining was a presenter.

What editor do you use for (L^A)T_EX input?

Earlier this fall, a number of "public" T_EXies received a message with the subject "Research on LaTeX" asking these questions:

1. What editor do you use for work and why? Is it a free version or you pay for it?
2. What functionality do you use/like the most? And what do you lack?
3. What type of work do you use LaTeX for? For example, writing articles for scientific journals, research papers, etc.

The research in question is being carried out by a student at the State Technical University of the Kyrgyz Republic, Alex Surikov. His inquiry ended with the explanation "The problem is that I cannot find enough information to complete my research and would really appreciate your help." He included a list of the text editors that had already been reported. Especially since the list did not include the editor I use, I was happy to answer his questions, and invited him to report his results in *TUGboat*.

Since identifying L^AT_EX users and finding out how to get in touch with them is not trivial, I suspect that Alex's respondent base is not as diverse as the general population of L^AT_EX users. Therefore, I'm suggesting that if you read this, and haven't already sent Alex a response, you consider doing so. He can be reached at surikov_70@internet.ru.

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<https://tug.org/TUGboat>

¹¹ www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLYgeAMJvRZ6ZRUuNQGoeKx0FdjXqEGObzM