
Introduction

Malcolm Clark

After the Annual Meeting there is the illusion that it is possible to sit back and let events unfold, secure in the warm and fuzzy glow of a successful event. Needless to say, this is indeed an illusion, and there is much still to do before my period of office ends.

The Portland Conference seemed to go well. It mostly ran to time and there was something for everyone. Yes, there were flaws, but any human activity will have flaws. A minor mistake was to forget to ask attendees to tell us what they thought of the conference. Please feel free to say what you liked and disliked about the meeting. If you didn't come, you might like to tell us why you didn't. Is it too expensive, too esoteric, too far away, too long, dull, uninteresting...?

One interesting activity pursued at the meeting was to encourage people to put themselves forward as candidates for the post of Executive Director. The search seems to be progressing well (perhaps the post will be filled by the time you read this), and we on the search committee have every confidence TUG will be in the capable hands of a new ED very soon. The candidates we talked to at Portland were excellent (as you would expect from the T_EX community!).

I won't dwell on all the individual papers at the conference, but I will commend T V Raman's talk to you: 'An Audio View of T_EX Documents'. He is pushing T_EX in a direction which was rather unanticipated. Besides being of great direct practical importance, almost as a by product his work explores aspects of document structure which we have hardly considered before. It was for this reason that we decided to award him a special prize, in recognition of his remarkable and unique work.

The main theme of the conference was graphics. This was well supported by a large number of papers, and naturally a large number of illustrations. There was plenty else there too. If you wanted to get down to the nitty gritty of M68000 assembler code, you could listen to Barry Smith; if you wanted to program at a rather higher level, Bart Childs was there to help you with WEB; and lots of standards were lurking – POSTSCRIPT, X-windows, SGML (and (L^A)T_EX). The Panels were lively (and I would single out Art Ogawa's contribution); the workshops I attended were very informative and productive. The vendors exhibition also made a real and useful contribution to the conference. And at last I had the chance to see an implmentation of Japanese T_EX, thanks to Harumi Fujiura. Excellent.

But what about the social events? We all know that the function of a conference is to bring people together, and that the talks, workshops and all the rest are merely convenient hooks. The real life is in the informal events: I can't single out one single event, they all had some special sparkle, but the Lucky 13 Dinner Party gave us a remarkable panorama of Portland (from the 41st floor of the US Bancorp Tower), and the L^AT_EX3 bowling fundraiser had the twin advantages of an excellent evening and raising over \$700 for the project. And in the background we were never far from one of Portland's gifts to west coast culture, micro-breweries. Somehow we never made it to the other advantage of Portland, hot tubs.

One of the great joys of being President is handing out prizes and honours. One of my tasks was to announce the award of a framed Bibby cartoon to a number of the Board members who retired last year, as a small token of appreciation for the work and effort that they had contributed to the organisation. These former Board members are:

Nelson Beebe	Allen Dyer	Dean Guenther	David Kratzer
Lance Carnes	David Fuchs	Hope Hamilton	Pierre MacKay
Bart Childs	Regina Girouard	Patrick Ion	Craig Platt
John Crawford			

In a more light hearted vein, Doug Henderson donated a number of prizes for the L^AT_EX₃ fundraiser, and allowed me the pleasure of presenting them. The other set of thanks goes to all those who helped to organise the Conference locally. The staff at ETP Services aided us enormously (and we single out Mimi Jett, Dena Kauffman and Dan Olson); as did the staff at Blue Sky Research (especially Doug Henderson, Becky Kaluza and Warren Leach). Pat Rau of Northlake Software assembled a complete and informative dining guide for the city with more restaurants per capita than any other in the US. And, of course, the TUG office (Karen Butler, Cliff Alper, Teresa Pires and Kathy Sheely) provided a good deal of support as well. In addition a number of meeting participants volunteered to help wherever they could and their efforts were much appreciated.

Next year's annual conference will be at Aston University in Birmingham, UK. I hope they can find a bowling alley.

◇ Malcolm Clark
Information Resource Services
University of Westminster
115 New Cavendish Street
London W1M 8JS, UK
malcolmc@sun.pcl.ac.uk