
Editorial comments

Barbara Beeton

Passings:

Patricia Monohon

(30 May 1941–6 April 2018)

Vytas Statulevicius († July 2018)

Patricia Monohon was a long-time member of TUG, and served on the board from 1997 through 2002. More importantly, she was responsible for moving the TUG office from Providence to San Francisco in 1993, and remained in charge of the office until 1997. During that period she was instrumental in selecting the sites for the annual meetings in Santa Barbara (1994) and San Francisco (1997). Patricia also proposed the site for the 2003 meeting on the Big Island, Hawaii, and served on the organizing committee.

Dr. Statulevicius was president of the Lithuanian T_EX users group. He attended a number of TUG meetings along with colleagues from V_TE_X, a service organization that readies L^AT_EX manuscripts for publication for numerous book and journal publishers.

T_EX and the history of desktop publishing

I've never quite thought of T_EX as a prime example of desktop publishing. However, it's quite true that T_EX makes first-class typography available to anyone willing to expend the effort to learn how to use it properly. And it's also true that T_EX is fully functional on one's desktop—thus a suitable candidate for an overview of the topic.

This was a pertinent question when the IEEE joined with the Computer History Museum in Menlo Park, California, in staging a two-day meeting on the History of Desktop Publishing in May 2017. Participants in the meeting representing T_EX included Don Knuth, Chuck Bigelow, and Dave Walden; Dave's prior status as historian and editor of anecdotes for the *IEEE Annals of the History of Computing* was instrumental in having T_EX considered for inclusion. The success of the meeting was sufficient to warrant a two-issue record in the *Annals*; the first of these two issues has just been published. (The TOC can be found at <https://www.computer.org/csdl/magazine/an/2018/03>.)

The relevant record of T_EX's history in this context is the subject of a two-part article by Dave, Karl Berry, and myself. The first part, entitled "T_EX: A branch in desktop publishing evolution, Part 1", covers the development and adoption of T_EX until it was cut loose from Stanford, and appears in the

first issue; the second part, covering the growth of the T_EX user and developer community, will appear early next year in the second topical issue.

In addition to the published proceedings, the discussions and several ancillary interviews have been recorded and transcribed. This material is (or will be, when ready) posted online at <https://history.computer.org/annals/dtp/>. What I've read so far is fascinating. The history "extras" by and about the Seybolds, father (John) and son (Jonathan), reveal how much easier we have it now that computers are so much larger and faster.

I've been privileged to be involved at the AMS in efforts to bring the Society's publications from traditional typesetting to full composition by computer, and many of the names that appear in these recollections are familiar to me—I've even worked in various contexts with some of them. (For example, I remember the day I first heard the term "WYSIWYG", written on a blackboard in big, bold letters, at a meeting of the Graphic Computer Communications Association in Philadelphia. Even then, the approach desired by the industry was "structural" and content-driven, not based solely on appearance.) So, in this way, T_EX is *not* a typical desktop word processor, but it is still personally accessible publishing, and thus a worthy member of this assemblage.

Open season for lectures on typography

This fall has been filled with events celebrating font design, typography, and typographers. I was pleased to attend three such events in Providence and the Boston area that turned out to be more closely related than one might have expected from their announcements.

Daniel Berkeley Updike and the Janson font

August 25 was the occasion for a lecture at the Museum of Printing in Haverhill, Massachusetts (<https://museumofprinting.org/>).

Daniel Berkeley Updike is best known as the founder and proprietor of the Merrymount Press in Boston. This press was one of the (if not *the*) most distinguished U.S. scholarly printing offices in the late nineteenth–early twentieth century. John Kristensen of Firefly Press (a small "fine press") told the story of Updike's printing of the authorized 1928 revision of *The Book of Common Prayer* using the Janson font.

Updike, a scholar and historian as well as a printer, chose a typeface from the seventeenth century, contemporary with earlier editions of the *Prayerbook*. The typeface was one attributed (mistakenly) to Anton Janson, and given his name. It had recently

been revived and was available from the Stempel type foundry (in Germany), cast from the original matrices. However, not all the sizes needed for the *Prayerbook* were available, so Updike—in contrast to all his earlier projects, which used type from the original foundries—chose to duplicate the type, creating new matrices from original types where they existed, and having additional matrices made for the “missing” 18-point, interpolated from the existing sizes.

The Janson matrices made for the Merrymount Press are now in the possession of Firefly Press, and Kristensen characterizes himself as “the world’s last D. B. Updike ‘wannabe’”.

Kristensen’s talk also covered other fonts used, and works issued, by the Merrymount Press, as well as Updike’s relations with other printers and institutions of the period. A comparison with the works designed by Bruce Rogers recognized the sheer beauty of Rogers’ title pages and text, but pointed out that they were not easy to read, whereas Updike designed books that were not only beautiful, but meant to be read and used, an absolute requirement for works such as the *Prayerbook*. (An attendee at the lecture had experience conducting services from the *Prayerbook*, and confirmed that it is indeed eminently suited for that use.)

When the Merrymount Press ceased operation, its holdings were distributed to several sites, mostly outside Massachusetts—to keep them away from Harvard. (It wasn’t explained why Updike was adamant about this.) The bulk of the fonts, most matrices, and other materials were relocated to the Huntington Library in San Marino, California. The matrices for the Mountjoye (Bell) font went to the Bancroft Library at Berkeley. The matrices for the Janson font passed through several hands, ending up with Firefly Press. The matrices for two fonts (Merrymount and Montallegro) created for the Press, along with much historical material, specimen sheets, and related papers were donated to Special Collections at the Providence Public Library, where they became the foundation of the D. B. Updike Collection. Updike was a native Rhode Islander, and his legacy is now a resource for aspiring type designers, as reported in other *TUGboat* issues, as well as later in this column.

W. A. Dwiggins—Making orders

A review of the book by Bruce Kennett—*W. A. Dwiggins: A life in design*—appeared in the previous issue of *TUGboat* (<https://tug.org/TUGboat/tb39-2/tb122reviews-kennett.pdf>). On October 13, Kennett appeared at the Museum of Printing to

talk about the period of Dwiggins’ life during which he worked with many of the paper mills in Massachusetts, producing advertising and promotional materials aimed at printers, the principal users of the paper products.

Dwiggins’ approach was not a “hard sell”, but provided information that would assist printers in making best use of each type of paper. Among the techniques he recommended were the use of line cuts rather than halftones to present illustrations; the contemporary technology did not render halftones cleanly, whereas line cuts were capable of producing sharp, attractive images. Other recommendations included matching fonts and paper to the intended final product and audience. What he provided was a toolbox, not a recipe. An attractive broadside in fact unfolded to display the image of a functional carpenter’s toolkit, inviting the viewer to choose the best tools for the job.

In a related comment, Dwiggins voiced the opinion that the lowercase of available sans serif fonts was simply dreadful. On hearing that opinion, Linotype asked “can you do better?” Rising to the challenge, Dwiggins produced designs that were indeed superior to anything already available; as a result, Linotype put him on retainer, accepting unseen anything that Dwiggins produced that was applicable to their line.

A quite broad selection of examples of Dwiggins’ work was on display, to be handled and inspected directly. This gave a wider appreciation of the work than can be obtained from images in a book, no matter how carefully produced.

The Updike prize for student font designers

Special Collections at the Providence Public Library is the home of an extensive typography collection that grew from a legacy of Daniel Berkeley Updike’s correspondence and books on the subject, and is named in his honor. Since 2014, when a prize for student type design was launched with a lecture by Matthew Carter [1], a ceremony has been held every year [2, 3, 4] to recognize the finalists and winner of the prize, accompanied by a talk by a current practitioner of font design [5]. This year’s celebration was held on October 24, and the speaker was Victoria Rushton.

Rushton is an illustration graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD).

During her undergraduate studies, she discovered that, more than anything else, she liked to include words in her drawings. After graduation, she determined that font design was much more suited to her interests and undertook training at Font Bureau to design typefaces. Three of her typefaces have been

released commercially [6], and she accepts custom lettering commissions. The style of her work tends toward script styles rather than typefaces intended solely for the setting of text.

Rushton’s talk was the story of her personal journey into typeface design. It concentrated on three “unreleased” typefaces, and the inspirations for their creation.

The first typeface was a swirly, romantic script, created in the aftermath of a breakup.

The second face was based on her sister Cecilie’s handwriting. Cecilie is a fabric artist, and the typeface was originally used for all the text on her web pages, as shown in slides accompanying the talk. However, even though the pages still mention the font [7], the only remaining evidence online is the logotype in the top right corner.

The third face was based on a handwritten letter by Oswald (“Oz”) Cooper, a type designer, lettering artist, and graphic designer active during the early 20th century. Cooper is known largely for bold display typefaces, many of which were based on his handwriting. The typeface created by Rushton accentuated various features of Cooper’s script, in particular the rounded terminals, resulting in a quirky but pleasing informal appearance that worked surprisingly well for text.

After Rushton’s talk the results of the student competition were presented. Four designs were chosen for recognition, although only three of the participants were in attendance; the typeface created by the fourth was not shown.

Top honors were awarded to the “Frisk” family of fonts by Gene Hua. The family consists of numerous weights in both upright and italic forms. His inspiration was the content of old playbills. While suitable for text composition, the impression left by the design is lively rather than sober. (One of the judges did characterize the italic form as “frisky”.) In addition to other prizes, the award included a trophy — a composing stick (with the winner’s name on a plate on its side), which was a source of consternation to all the student competitors: what *is* this thing, and what is it used for?

In second place was the “Altar” font created by Stephanie Winarto. This text face was inspired by an Episcopal altar book set in the Merrymount font designed for Updike’s Merrymount press. (The book is reminiscent of productions by William Morris, with highly decorative marginal graphics.) The new face is characterized by diamond-shaped elements, with the dots on “i”s set in red in the example of its use.

A runner-up was “Updike Nouvel” by Annibel Braden. This was based on a sign-painter’s guide, which shows only uppercase letters that appear to be incised rather than printed. The example of the new typeface in contrast appears to be raised, three-dimensional, and is multi-layered, shaded, and gold-colored. The “Glyphs” tool was used in its creation.

A question and answer session followed the presentations, moderated by Matthew Bird, a member of the RISD industrial design faculty. In addition to discussing sources of inspiration, topics included the importance of choosing an appropriate name for a font (it should not already be in use), and whether the participants intend to make font design a full-time career (probably not).

A “brand” new font

A font constructed entirely from logos representing well-known brands is highlighted at <https://www.engadget.com/2018/09/01/corporate-logo-font-typeface-digital-studio/>. Most of the letters look familiar, but I failed at the attempt to identify them all. Can you do better?

References

- [1] Updike prize for student type design and talk by Matthew Carter, *TUGboat* 35:1 (2014), 3–4, tug.org/TUGboat/tb35-1/tb109beet.pdf
- [2] First annual Updike Prize and talk by Tobias Frere-Jones, *TUGboat* 36:1 (2015), 4–5, tug.org/TUGboat/tb36-1/tb112beet.pdf
- [3] Second annual Updike Prize for student type design and talk by Fiona Ross, *TUGboat* 37:3 (2016), 257–258, tug.org/TUGboat/tb37-3/tb117beet.pdf
- [4] Type designer Nina Stössinger speaks at 3rd annual Updike Prize event. *TUGboat* 39:1 (2018), 19, tug.org/TUGboat/tb39-1/tb121walden-updike.pdf
- [5] Announcement of the Updike Prize. <https://www.provlib.org/research-collections/historical-collections/updike-prize-student-type-design/>
- [6] Three fonts by Victoria Rushton. <https://victoriarushton.typenetwork.com/>
- [7] Cecilie Rushton’s web page. <https://cecilierushton.com/>

◇ Barbara Beeton
<https://tug.org/TUGboat>
 tugboat (at) tug dot org