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## Editorial comments

Barbara Beeton

### A pledge of support

The American Mathematical Society has a policy of keeping in print “classic” books formerly published by the Chelsea Press. One such book, *Introduction to Complex Analysis*, by Rolf Nevanlinna and Veikko Paatero, is about to be republished. As both authors are deceased, their heirs have expressed the wish, formally agreed for the period of one year from the publication date, that the royalties be donated “to an organization that advances techniques for disseminating and publishing mathematical and scientific information, for example to the T<sub>E</sub>X Users Group”. We thank the authors’ heirs for their support.

### Helvetica — 50th anniversary

2007 is the 50th anniversary of the font Helvetica. Developed at the Haas Type Foundry in Münchenstein, Switzerland, by Max Miedinger and Edward Hoffman, the font was originally called “Neue Haas Grotesk”, as a revival of older sans serif, or grotesk, typefaces. Looking toward international distribution, it was renamed *Helvetica*, derived from *Helvetia*, the Latin name for Switzerland.

The anniversary is honored by a feature-length documentary film directed by Gary Hustwit. It has been screening at film festivals, museums, art schools and other venues worldwide. I had the pleasure of viewing it at the Rhode Island School of Design in April, where it was followed by a Q & A session with the director. I greatly enjoyed it, and encourage anyone with even a smidgen of interest in type to see it.

The film has its own web page, with a schedule of screenings, clips from the film, and other information, at <http://www.helveticafilm.com>.

Two other sites recognizing this milestone are Slate at <http://www.slate.com/id/2166887/>, and the *Toronto Globe and Mail* at <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20070418.whelvetica18/BNSStory>.

Happy anniversary, Helvetica!

### Another font anniversary — Souvenir, 93 years

Souvenir is more often associated with the 1960s and ’70s, but it was actually designed in 1914 by Morris Fuller Benton, director of typeface development for the American Type Founders Company. It wasn’t particularly successful at its first release, but after

a reimplementaion as photo lettering in 1967, with complementary italic designs drawn by Ed Benguiat, it became one of the most popular offerings of ITC (the International Typeface Corporation). Overuse made it a pariah for a while during the latter years of the 20th century, but it is being re-examined with a new appreciation for the wide range of possible applications.

Souvenir is highlighted at <http://www.fonts.com/FindFonts/HiddenGems/ITCSouvenir.htm>.

### Another honorary doctorate for Don Knuth

On October 29–31, the University of Bordeaux is organizing a colloquium in honor of Donald Knuth, with an honorary doctorate *Honoris Causa* to be presented on October 30.

Several notable speakers have been invited; the topic of the conference is algorithms. For more information, go to <http://knuth07.labri.fr/>.

### How to shrink a box as much as possible

Here’s a “pracnique” from Don, “that may or may not be well known to T<sub>E</sub>Xies:”

If you want to shrink a box as much as possible, in order to see why T<sub>E</sub>X refuses to typeset something on a single line (even with `\looseness=-1`), you can use the “spread” feature. For example, try

```
\hbox{a little test}
\hbox spread-1pt{a little test}
\hbox spread-2pt{a little test}
\hbox spread-3pt{a little test}
\hbox spread-4pt{a little test}
```

In general you can say `\hbox spread-100pt`, say; you’ll get an overfull box, but the amount by which it’s overfull tells you how close you came. And by eyeballing the result, you may be able to figure out where it’s safe to kern away some space.

### How to use a book

It’s the middle of the fourteenth century, and you have just obtained an example of the latest technology... a book! How do you use it? Go to <http://www.devilducky.com/media/57946/> and observe a technical support session. It’s a lesson you won’t soon forget.

### Save the signs!

Joe Clark reported on the T<sub>Y</sub>P<sub>O</sub>-L list the projected demise of some historic signs designed for the Toronto Transit Commission. Some of these signs, now displayed at the St. George station, are the

only remaining examples of a redesign by the Canadian graphic designer Paul Arthur from the 1990s, when the TTC commissioned both new signage and a user test to see what worked best; all tested groups (including average riders, non-English speakers, visually impaired, and low-literacy riders) preferred the new signs. However, the redesign was never implemented, the prototype signs remained in the St. George station, and the signage in the Toronto transit system remains a hodgepodge.

Some of the stations have aged poorly, and repairs are necessary. Current plans include removal (and destruction) of both the Paul Arthur signs and others whose design is unique.

It would be quite feasible, given cooperation from the TTC, to preserve most of the signs as museum pieces, but public support is needed to encourage the Commissioners to prevent the destruction. Historical notes and details of the write-in campaign are posted at <http://joelclark.org/TTC/>.

### Practical $\text{\TeX}$ 2006 recordings

Kaveh Bazargan and his colleagues at River Valley Technologies have created a multimedia presentation of the talks from the Practical  $\text{\TeX}$  conference held at the Busch Campus of Rutgers University in midsummer 2006.

The recording was experimental, and assorted hardware problems prevented completion of all presentations, but most are there with both audio and video.

The recordings are at <http://river-valley.dreamhosters.com/practex2006/>.

Many thanks to Kaveh for envisioning and carrying out this project. He hopes to do the same for this year's TUG meeting.

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