Akletter.cls
Manual

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1 Preface

In the beginning there was Lindner-TEX for the Atari St computer. It came with a letter style called `liletter.sty`. I adapted the style to my liking and saw that everything was good.

On the second day, my roommate came, saw my letters and wanted a similar style for his correspondence, thus a second letter style was created and everything was good.

On the third day, I had to write an official letter for the students group I was working with and I had to create a third letter style. And I said onto myself "Well, that's a fine mess you got yourself into."

And than came the June of 1994 and They released LATEX 2$_\varepsilon$. I realized immediately that I had to adjust my letter styles. And I decided to separate the class from the user defined settings and put the class into a `.cls` file and the user defined settings into a `.cfg` file. And again everything was good.
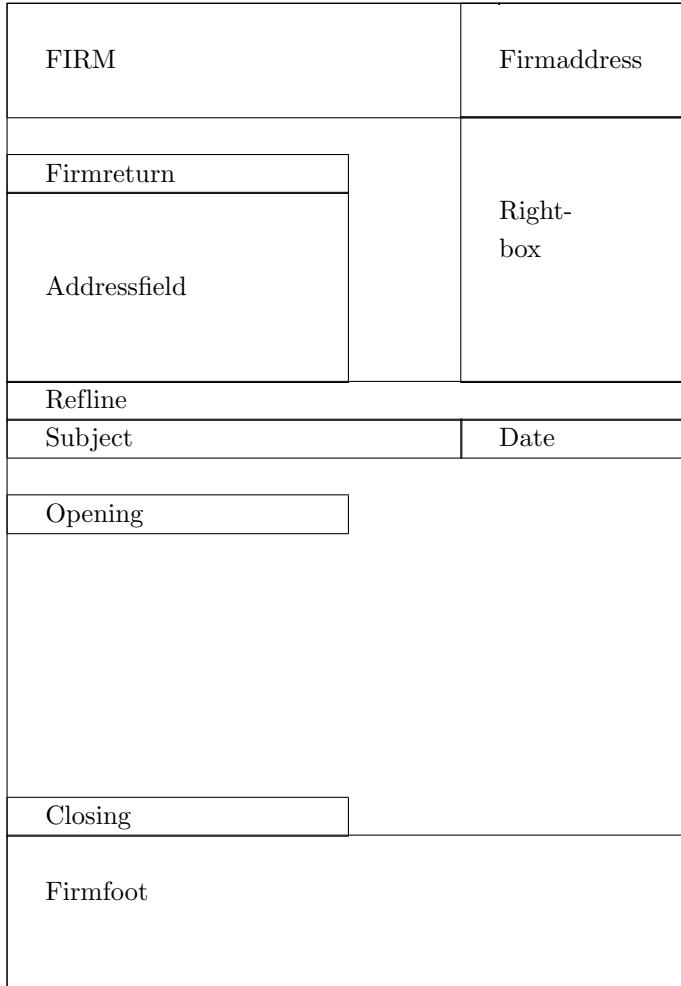
After someone asked in `de.comp.text.tex` for a letter class suitable for ISO A4 paper that will work with envelopes with windows, I said onto my letter class "Go out into the world and show the people out there how to print letters with LATEX." And my letter class was distributed throughout the internet to every user who has to print letters on A4 paper. And it was not only used in the german speaking countries but spread even to Norway and Italy where the german tongue was not well known, except in some holiday centers where you find few LATEX users.

And a cry came onto me "Dear Axel, who has made `akletter.cls`, can you give us, who do not read nor speak german, an english version of the documentation to your class?" And I said onto me "Oh bugger, that will be a lot of work, but it is raining outside and I have nothing better to do, so why not?" And this is the story of this document. If you don't like it try `scrlettr.cls` from the Koma-Script packages which is a very nice letter class and even shares some code with `akletter.cls`.

2 What does `akletter.cls` do?

`akletter` implements a fixed layout for the first page of a letter. This layout consists of boxes at fixed positions with a more or less variable contents. This

picture will give you an impression about how the layout looks:

FIRM	Firmaddress
Firmreturn	Right-box
Addressfield	
Refline	
Subject	Date
Opening	
Closing	
Firmfoot	

Some of these boxes are static. They are created once (at the `\begin{document}` command) and cannot be changed later.

- FIRM
- Firmaddress
- Firmreturn
- Firmfoot.

The other boxes are created for each letter (did you know that you can have more letters in one document? Well, don't bother, it is easier to have one document for each letter).

- Refline
- Subject

- Opening

- Closing

The layout of these boxes is defined in the `cfg` file. You can select different `cfg` files with the `\usename` command. If you omitt it, `akletter.cfg` will be used. Thus all the user specific data is separated from the class file and you should be able to update the class without changing the `cfg` file. This didn't always work because I change the interface to allow for new configuration options but in theory it was a good idea.

3   The `cfg` file

This file contains all the user specific options. You should never have to edit the class file.[1] You usually create this file once when you install `akletter.cls` and never touch it again. (Unless you move, change your ISP, marry or whatever). You should keep a copy of `akletter.cfg` because it contains a lot of small code-fragments that you may want to use later.

```
\makeatletter
```

You may have to redefine some internal commands.

```
\telephone{0800 / 12 34 56 }
\telefax  {}
%% You may include logos and other graphic-material into
%% your letterhead:
%%
%%\RequirePackage[dvips]{graphics}
```

Define your phone and fax number, thus you don't have to type it for every new letter. If you want to include a picture in your letterhead (or a scanned signature) you may need the graphics-package.

```
%% You may redefine the following variables
%%

%\renewcommand*{\yourrefname}   {Ihr Zeichen:}
%\renewcommand*{\yourmailname}  {Ihr Schreiben vom:}
%\renewcommand*{\myrefname}     {Unser Zeichen:}
%\renewcommand*{\mymailname}    {Unser Schreiben vom:}
%\renewcommand*{\customername}  {Kundennummer }
%\renewcommand*{\invoicename}   {Rechnungsnummer }
%\renewcommand*{\subjectname}   {}  %{Betr.}
%\renewcommand*{\ccname}        {Kopien an:}
%\renewcommand*{\enclname}      {Anlagen:}
%\renewcommand*{\headtoname}    {An}
%\renewcommand*{\datename}      {Datum}
%\renewcommand*{\pagename}      {Seite}
%\renewcommand*{\telephonename} {Telefon}
%\renewcommand*{\telefaxname}   {FAX}
```

---

[1]This may not be true if you want to add a new language or some fancy option.

You can change the text `akletter.cls` inserts into your letter. This does only work with `german.sty`. When you use `babel.sty` you may need to add some more code to your `cfg` file to make it work. The code below may help you getting it to work:

```
\let\savedcaptions\captionsgerman
\def\captionsgerman{\savedcaptions
   \renewcommand*{\myrefname} {Mein Zeichen:}
   }

%% Alternate definitions for the reference-line.
%% Use this if you do not need a mymail-entry.
%% In fact you can do a lot of things with these
%% 4 entries, e.g. setting \mymailname to {InvoiceNo}
%% and using \mymail to display an invoiceno.
%% You may change these lines but make sure that
%% the combined length of the 3 fields is 1\leftfield
%% or less.
%\def\yref#1{\def\@yref{\parbox[t]{.33\leftfield}
%    {\scriptsize \yourrefname\\ \normalsize #1}}
%     reftrue}
%\def\ymail#1{\def\@ymail{\parbox[t]{.33\leftfield}
%    {\scriptsize \yourmailname\\ \normalsize #1}}
%     reftrue}
%\def\myref#1{\def\@myref{\parbox[t]{.33\leftfield}
%    {\scriptsize \myrefname\\ \normalsize #1}}
%     reftrue}
%\let\mymail=\@gobbleone
```

The reference line is build according to DIN 676 but can be redefined according to your needs. The normal layout uses 4 fields unless you use the `refdate` option, then it uses 5 fields. The code above changes that to 3 fields.

```
%%% Top of first page: left
\sbox{\FIRM}
   {\parbox[t]{\leftfield}
   {\fontsize{17.28}{22pt}\fontseries{bx}\selectfont%
    Mein Name\hfill}}
%%% Top of first page: right
\sbox{\firmaddress}
% Use either Text:
   {\parbox[t]{\rightfield}{%
    \fontsize{9}{10pt}\selectfont\normalfont
    Meine Stra{\ss}e 1\\ 12345 Meindorf}}
% or graphic:
% {\includegraphics{ourlogo}}
% and don't forget to adjust FIRM and firmaddress:
%%% Top of first page: left + right
%%% You may want to adjust the raisebox
\sbox{\FIRMHEAD}
   {\usebox{\FIRM}\raisebox{3mm}{\usebox{\firmaddress}}}
```

The letterhead on the first page consists of the two boxes `FIRM` and `firmaddress` which will be put together into `FIRMHEAD`. I use this approach because it enables me to shift the `firmaddress` up and down to make it look correct and to make it easier to include a logo in one of the boxes.

```
%%% Top of every other page
\sbox{\firm}
   {\fontsize{10}{12pt}\selectfont\normalfont
    Mein Name}
```

The following pages do not need such an elaborated layout, simply put your name on it. If you really want to use some fancy headings look into the `cfg` file for suggestion or use `fancyhdr.sty`.

```
% \if@twoside % Twoside definition
%   \def\ps@headings{%
%       \def\@oddfoot{\hfil Text on the odd page}
%     \def\@evenfoot{Text on the even page\hfil}
%       \def\@oddhead{\usebox{\firm}
%          \headfont\hfil\@date\hfil\pagename\ \pnumfont\thepage}%
%       \let\@evenhead\@oddhead}
% \else % Oneside definition
%   \def\ps@headings{%
%       \def\@oddfoot{\hfil Text for one-side layout\hfill}
%       \def\@oddhead{\usebox{\firm}
%          \headfont\hfil\@date\hfil\pagename\ \pnumfont\thepage}}
% \fi

%%% Return address
%%% one line version
\sbox{\firmreturn}
   {\underline{\fontsize{7}{8pt}\selectfont
    \hskip5mm Mein Name $\cdot$ Meine Stra{\ss}e 1
    $\cdot$ D--12345 Meindorf\hskip5mm}}
%%% two line version
%\sbox{\firmreturn}
%   {\underline{
%       \fontsize{7}{8pt}\fontfamily{\sfdefault}\selectfont
%       \hskip3mm\parbox{65mm}
%       {\makebox[65mm][c]
%   {Fachschaft -- Maschinenbau $\cdot$
%    \mbox{\raise .75ex \hbox{c}\kern -.15em /\kern -.125em
%        \smash{\lower .3ex \hbox{o}}}
% AStA TU Braunschweig}
% \makebox[65mm][c]
%    {Katharinenstra{\ss}e 1 $\cdot$ D--38106 Braunschweig}}
%    \hskip3mm}}
```

It is always nice for the addressee to see the sender of the letter before opening it. If you don't happen to have envelopes with your name and corporation printed on them, you may want to use a line above the address to show who you are.

```
%%% Firstpage footer
%%% The code should be controlled by @banklo
\sbox{\firmfoot}
   {\fontsize{9}{11pt}\selectfont
%%% The following line may look nice in a FAX.CFG :-)
%%% If you have a bad telephone-line try snail-mail!\\
     \if@banklo
       \ifnum\language = \l@german
  Bankverbindung:
  \hspace{5mm}
  \parbox[t]{\rightfield}{\raggedright
  Undeutsche Landesbank Frankfurt,
  BLZ~123\,456\,78, Konto~1\,111\,007\\}%
  \hspace{5mm}
  \parbox[t]{\rightfield}{\raggedright
  Die Sparkasse Meindorf,
  BLZ~007\,123\,10, Konto~08\,15\\}
       \fi
     \fi}
```

The footer of the first page is quite complex because it contains vital information if you are a company. (But then you will have your own stationary and don't have to print this every time.) According to DIN this is where information about your bank connection, the type of your company, the registration number in the register of commerce and all this should go. Since you won't need this information for a private letter, there is a switch to enable it. Use the option `banklow` if you want this information to appear.

Some amateur designers put this information in the letter head, right of the address. Since this place is dedicated for a "received" rubber stamp it should remain free. But if you want to use it, see below:

```
%%% Text displayed below the header on the right side
%%% This should be controlled by @bankhi
%%% This is the only place that will be re-evaluated for
%%% every letter! Everything that changes for different
%%% letters (in the same document) must go either here
%%% or in the ref-line.
\newcommand{\rightbox}
   {\parbox[t]{\rightfield}
   {\fontsize{9}{11pt}\selectfont
    \raggedright
    \ifx\fromname\@empty
    \else
      \ifnum \language = \l@german
  Sachbearbeiter:
      \fi
      \fromname\\
    \fi
    \ifx\telephonenum\@empty
 \ifnum \language = \l@german
```

```
    \telephonename: 040 / 44\,17\,77
\else
   \telephonename: 49--40--44\,17\,77
\fi
    \else
\telephonename: \telephonenum
    \fi\\[1.5ex]
    \ifx\telefaxnum\@empty
\ifnum \language = \l@german
   \telefaxname: 040 / 44\,17\,77
\else
   \telefaxname: 49--40--44\,17\,77
\fi
    \else
\telefaxname: \telefaxnum
    \fi\\[1.5ex]
    \ifx\@email\@empty
e-mail Kein Mehl\\[1.5ex]
    \else
e-mail: \@email \\[1.5ex]
    \fi
    \if@bankhi
      \ifnum \language = \l@german
 Bankverbindung:\\[1ex]
 Undeutsche Landesbank Frankfurt,
 BLZ~123\,456\,78, Konto~1\,111\,007\\[.5ex]
 Die Sparkasse L\"uneburg,
 BLZ~007\,123\,10, Konto~08\,15 \\[.5ex]
      \fi
    \fi
    %% Finally fixed it!
    %% If you want to have the date here, set the
    %% rightdate option.
    %% (With a big excuse to Markus and many others, who
    %% had to wait that long)
    \if@rightdate
      \vspace{0.5ex}
      \normalsize\@date
    \fi
    }}
```

This rather complex code prints some text to the right of the address field. It will be evaluated for every new letter thus things that change from letter to letter has to go here. Some of the text shown in the example above should really be in the footer, but since people keep asking me how to put it into the rightfield I include it here. You have to set the `bankhigh` option to enable some of the code above. Note that `banklow` and `bankhigh` are not exclusive, you can define both if you want.

```
%% The labels defined in akletter.cls are what my printer likes:
```

```
%% Onecolumn, 100mm * 50mm, 3mm separation.
%% If you have different lables edit here:

%\renewcommand*{\startlabels}{\labelcount\z@
%   \pagestyle{empty}\let\@texttop\relax
% The margins are calculated from the 1in,1in point,
% thus negative values will occur if the margins are smaller
%   \topmargin -60\p@
%   \headsep \z@
%   \oddsidemargin -35\p@
%   \evensidemargin -35\p@
%   \textheight 10in
%   \@colht\textheight \@colroom\textheight \vsize\textheight
%   \textwidth 550\p@
% You may have to increase columnsep if you use twocolumn
% This is what letter.cls uses.
%   \columnsep 26\p@
% This does almost nothing since there is an explicit
% fontsize-command in the text written.
%   \ifcase \@ptsize\relax
%      \normalsize
%   \or
%      \small
%   \or
%      \footnotesize
%   \fi
%   \baselineskip \z@
%   \lineskip \z@
%   \boxmaxdepth \z@
%   \parindent \z@
% This is obvious, isn't it?
%   \twocolumn
%   \relax}

%% This is how the label will look like when printed.
%% Note that specialmail will be written to the .aux-file
%% when the letter is processed. The width used here is
%% what letter.cls uses.

%\renewcommand*{\mlabel}[2]{%
% \parbox[b][2in][c]{262\p@}{%
%    \strut\ignorespaces\usebox{\firmreturn}\\
%    \fontsize{12}{14pt}\selectfont
%    \parbox[t][1.2in][c]{3in}{#2}
%  }\par%
%}
```

The code above overrides the normal code for printing address labels. It has
to be adjusted for the kind of labels you use. You may even have to include some
specials to tell the printer to select the labels from a different tray. This is left

as an exercise to the reader. (But note that you can get envelops with windows in C5 and C4 (if that means anything to you) thus you may never need to print labels.)

```
\makeatother
\endinput
```

You may want to include something like the following into your `.cfg` file:

```
\email{A.Kielhorn@tu-bs.de}
\mailbox{}
\name{A. Kielhorn }
\signature{(Axel Kielhorn)}
```

4   The first letter

You can't define everything in the `cfg` file, otherwise you would be writing the same letter again and again. Thus there are many settings you have to define in every letter:

The following commands have to appear in the preamble, before `\begin{document}`.

`usenamedefault` selects the `cfg` file.

`pagestyle{headings}` Style of the following pages, can be headings, plain or empty.

`makelabels` Do you really want to generate labels?

`selectlanguage{english}` The language you want to use (obvious, isn't it?) You *have* to set it in the preamble because the boxes containing the fixed text are defined by the `\begin{document}` command and they have to know the language of the letter.

Since version 1.5e there are some additional options to change the layout of the letter, if you really want to (These commands have been added to enable one user to copy a certain WinWord design):

`reffont \renewcommand*\reffont{}` changes the font that `akletter` uses to print the text in the reference line, the default is `normalfont`

`reftextfont \renewcommand*\reftextfont{}` changes the font used to print the arguments (i. e. the user supplied text) in the reference line, default is `normalfont`

`headfont \renewcommand*\headfont{}` changes the font used to print the heading on every page but the first. This will only work with the pagestyle headings, default is `slshape`

`pnumfont \renewcommand*\pnumfont{}` changes the font used to print the pagenumber, default is `normalfont`

The following commands are letter specific. If you change them inside a letter environment they will not affect subsequent letters.

`telephone{0800 - 12 34 56}` Overriding the default telephone number

`telefax{0800 - 12 34 57}` the fax number,

`email{A.Kielhorn@tu-bs.de}` email address

`mailbox{ }` and mailbox.

`name{A. Kielhorn}` When you have `.cfg` file for the whole company, you may want to set the name of the individual user here instead of generating lots of cfg files.

`signature{(Axel Kielhorn)}` usually the name, but you can specify any signature.

`specialmail{Recommandé}` This will be printed in bold above the recipients address. (Hey, I know some french!)

`refdatename{Braunschweig, den}` The location where the letter was written.

`yref{ }`

`ymail{1.6.1994}`

`myref{ak/AK}`

`mymail{1.6.1994}`

`subject{LaTeX2e Letter-style}`

`invoice{Invoice number}` still experimental

`customer{Customer number}` still experimental

`opening{Dear friends,}` This command generates the letterhead you must not omit it, but you can use an empty argument if you don't want to address the reader.

Here comes the text. . .
The end:

`closing{mfg}` This command closes the letter, it must not be omitted but may contain an empty argument.

`cc{comp.text.tex}` A copy for the archive

`encl{akletter.cfg}` And an enclosure

`ps` Hey, the letter is finished. No long postscriptum please.

5   Mass mailings

Version 1.4 of `akletter` introduced a way to generate mass mailings. This is compatible to `scrlettr.cls` from the Koma-Script package. If you want to know how to use it read the Koma-Script manual.

6 Options

`akletter.cls` understands some options

a4paper Selects the page format. A4 is the default.

a4offset This layout ist shiftet 24 points to the right and 24 points narrower than a4paper. It looks better when you put the letter into a binder that covers the left margin of the page. These binders are often used for job applications.

letterpaper This options adapts the layout to US letter paper. Since I haven't seen an envelope with a window for the address in the US I'm not sure if it is usable, but you can put the letter into a german DIN 680 DL envelope.

banklow and

bankhigh are two switches to enable some code that depends on these switches. In the cfg file distributed with `akletter` this set the bank connections either at the bottom or in the right field.

foldmarks This shows where to fold the letter to make it fit into the envelop. It doesn't work on some printers like my Deskwriter:-(

refdate The date will be printed in the reference line thus changing the layout to 5 items.

subjectdate The date is printed in the same line as the subject (default).

rightdate Prints the date in the rightfield unless you change the code:-)

Version 1.5 h of `akletter` supports the date format according to ISO 8601 which looks like YYYY-MM-DD, e.g. 2000-05-28 for the 28th of May 2000. You can activate this format with `\dateiso` in the preamble. When you change the language the format is reset to the default for that language, thus you have to put the `\dateiso` after the `\selectlanguage` command. This format is recommeded by the Chicago Manual of Style.

7 Thanks

I would like to thank Donald E. Knuth and Leslie Lamport for creating TeX and LaTeX, Stefan Lindner for porting it to the Atari, Andrew Trevorrow for porting it to the Mac and the LaTeX3-Team.

Special thanks to the beta testers who found lots of bugs in previous versions and suggested a lot of new features thus keeping me busy on rainy afternoons.