



# IEEE Group on Professional Communication

## NEWSLETTER

Newsletter Editor--Emily Schlesinger

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### Letter from the President

As this issue of our Newsletter is being prepared, the state of G-PC seems not quite so gloomy as it looked a few months ago.

First of all, our projects have begun to project. Bob Woelfle's and Mary Fran Buehler's books are selling well and being reviewed favorably. Ron Blicq's courses have been advertized and are being inquired about. Jim Lufkin's committee for planning the 1977 meeting of the Association for Scientific Journals is working efficiently.

Second, we are strengthening and developing relationships with other communicators. PC has applied for membership in the council of Communication Societies, the umbrella organization of non-profit professional (as contrasted with technical) groups concerned with and for aspects of communicating. CCS began in 1967 with four society-members; in 1976, it has 15.

We are also taking a small part, initially, in discussions of a project to establish an engineering/health-services journal proposed by the IEEE Group on Engineering in Medicine and Biology.

More individually, at least three PC-ers will be on the program of the 24th International Technical Communication Conference next May 11-14 in Chicago, and we expect to have an IEEE "information booth" or some other means of publicizing PC's existence.

Third, we anticipate that our Group will be invigorated by the energies, expertise, and resources of those who have been nominated for first-time election to the Advisory Committee--two engineers and one technical communicator will be newcomers to AdCom in 1977. Perhaps "old" AdCom members, remaining or returning, will be able to spend more time and effort on Group activities in 1977, and some non-AdCom members may offer to work on a committee or project. The response to our ad for Home Study instructors has been gratifying, but there are other opportunities. Some of us might promote Ron's Workshop or his Seminar; some might volunteer to help with publication, some might write about a true experience related to communication, or send a letter to the President.

PC still has serious publishing problems. We will issue only two Transactions this year, (instead of four) and have not yet found an editor. The Newsletter too suffers from a lack of experienced, efficient attention and a plan for "total publication." Nevertheless, receipt of a few inquiries has inspired hope that these difficulties too will soon be overcome.

This issue of the Newsletter continues to carry out the policy of printing items on matters of general IEEE interest, information about other groups concerned with communication, personal news, words of wisdom and words of (sometimes inadvertent) humor about writing and speaking, and promotional material, as well as reports of PC AdCom activities and anxieties.

# AdCom Meeting

During the meeting of G-PC's AdCom held at IEEE Headquarters in New York City on October 12, 1976, business was transacted as follows:

1. John Phillips projected a surplus of \$1200 for 1976.
2. Emily Schlesinger reported that under a recent revision of IEEE's Affiliate Plan, members of ten communication societies are eligible for Affiliate Membership in G-PC:

American Assoc. for the Adv. of Science  
American Business Communication Association  
American Documentation Institute  
American Library Association  
American Society for Engineering Education  
Modern Language Association of America  
National Association of Science Writers  
National Council of Teachers of English  
Society for Technical Communication  
Special Libraries Association

According to the Plan, a member of any of these organizations may become an Affiliate Member of G-PC by paying the annual IEEE Affiliate fee of \$18 and the annual G-PC fee of \$6.

3. John Phillips agreed to act as liaison with the IEEE Group on Engineering in Medicine and Biology for the project of organizing a new journal, similar to Spectrum, to serve persons interested in engineering aspects of health care.

4. Dave Dobson reported that a workshop sponsored by G-PC will be given twice at the 24th International Technical Communication Conference to be held in Chicago in May, 1977, by the Society for Technical Communication. The workshop will concern writers' relationships with compositors and printers. When Ron Blicq suggested that G-PC sponsor also a panel discussion on the writer's role as educator, Dave agreed to discuss this possibility with the Conference Program Chairman.

5. Bob Woelfle reported that over 3000 copies of his IEEE Pressbook, A Guide for Better Technical Presentations, have been sold--Japanese engineers in particular seem to have found it helpful. Dave Dobson said that about 20 copies of Mary Fran Buehler's Report Construction are being sold each week.

6. Ron Blicq reported that a full-page ad for his home-study course, "Technically-Write!" has been put in the October issue of Spectrum. Advertisements have been mailed to 7000 IEEE members chosen at random, and fourteen "markers" are ready to correspond with students, for whom instructional material will be ready by December 1.

Ron described his pilot work on two other educational projects, the 16-hour Workshop, "Communication and Report Writing," and the half- or whole-day Seminar, "Communication Guidelines for Managers." See outlines elsewhere in this Newsletter.

7. G-PC's President was authorized to apply for Group membership in the Council of Communication Societies.

8. Jim Lufkin reported that the site and date for the May 1977 meeting of the Association for Scientific Journals are still being discussed.

9. Bill Bullock's discussion of G-PC's future with Dr. Richard Emberson of IEEE's Technical Activities Board will take place on October 18.

10. Three practicing engineers and three professional communicators will be nominated for election to AdCom for the three-year term beginning in 1977.

11. Only the March issue of G-PC's Transactions will be published this year. No editor has yet been found for either the Transactions or the Newsletter, but the Publications Committee will continue to seek candidates. Emily Schlesinger will receive contributions for the Newsletter.

12. The next meeting of G-PC's AdCom will be held on Friday, December 17, 1976, from 10 AM to 1 PM, in the West Board Room at IEEE Headquarters, 345 E. 47th Street, New York City.

## Miscellaneous Notices

1. Bill Wells reports that he has received two original articles since the AdCom meeting of October 12. We will therefore be able to publish a second issue of G-PC's Transactions in 1976.

2. Ron Blicq has received 25 requests to take his home study course, "Technically-Write!" in response to promotion in this Newsletter. Fifteen professional communicators are ready to begin work as instructors.

3. John Wilhelm in New York City and Vince Giardina in Piscataway, NJ, as members of IEEE's organization for Continuing Education, are managing such aspects of the course "Technically-Write!" as putting the full-page ad in Spectrum, having the promotional flyer written and mailed, ordering and storing textbooks and course outlines, sending material to students, and keeping records.

4. Judy Rundle of IEEE's Student Services organization is also a friend of G-PC. She publicized Mary Fran Buehler's Report Construction by sending a full-page notice to all Student Branch offices in September and by putting an ad in the October Newsletter which is sent directly to all Student Members. Judy's ad appears also in this Newsletter. Use it to promote our sales of Report Construction.

5. Sieg Dierk, Associate Editor of G-PC's Transactions, has left RCA (Princeton) and is now at the Ohio College Library Center in Columbus.

6. Jim Lufkin reports that the Association for Scientific Journals will meet May 2-4, 1977, at the Sheraton-International Center in Reston, VA (near Dulles Airport). A preliminary program for the conference will be available before January 1.

FRANCIS LEIB, a Fellow of the IEEE (for his "contributions to overhead line materials and construction practices"), retired recently as Director and Vice President in Charge of the Wire & Cable Division of the Copperweld Corporation. For 15 years before that he was a Chief Engineer. During his employment with Copperweld, Francis was a co-inventor of Alumoweld wire and of a continuous casting process, for both of which he was awarded world-wide patents. He has a BSEE from the University of Illinois and has had a lifelong interest in technical communication.

JIM LUFKIN, Manager of Professional Publication for Honeywell, has twice been President of the Professional Communication Group of the IEEE. He has published about 20 papers and articles in various journals and has written 5 one-act tutorial plays dealing with communication problems. Jim is founder and General Chairman of the IEEE Conference on Scientific Journals which will hold its third biannual meeting next spring.

BERTRAND PEARLMAN has for the past 11 years been Chief Electrical Engineer at the Stauffer Chemical Company, Dobbs Ferry, New York, where he is also Manager of Design Engineering with responsibility for electrical, mechanical, civil, instrumentation, piping, and layout functions. He is also responsible for engineering standards at Stauffer, manages corporate metrication, and represents his company on the Engineering Advisory Committee of the Manufacturing Chemists Association. Bertrand is a Senior Member of the IEEE, and holds patents on the elimination of magnetic field effects and on the use of mercury in high-current chlorine cells. He has published papers on transformer maintenance and on electric safety.

RICHARD ROBINSON earned the B.S. in Physics and the M.S. in Technical Writing at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and has taken additional graduate studies in the psychology and sociology of communication. He has worked as a professional communicator at General Dynamics, Raytheon, Hazeltine, and Sperry Gyroscope Corporations.

For the past nine years, Richie has been associated with the Grumman Aerospace Corporation, where he is now in charge of communications for the Advanced Development Program. He has also found time to teach Report and Proposal Writing at Suffolk County (N.Y.) Community College.

Richie has been a member of the IEEE since 1958, and is a Senior Member of the Society for Technical Communication.

EMILY SCHLESINGER, AB and MA in Physics (Goucher and Mt. Holyoke), MA and PhD in English (University of Maryland), was appointed to AdCom in 1975 to fill the unexpired term of a resigning elected member. She has served as AdCom President in 1976 and is eligible for election.

Dr. Schlesinger writes and edits technical and procedural documents at the Baltimore Gas and Electric Company. She has contributed many articles and book reviews to G-PC's Transactions and is a Senior Member of both IEEE and the Society for Technical Communication.

## Candidates for AdCom

Six PC members have been named for election to fill the six AdCom vacancies which exist for the three-year term, 1977-9. As the number of nominees equals the number of open positions, preparation and mailing of ballots for general member voting will be eliminated, and the Secretary will be instructed to cast a unanimous ballot at the December AdCom meeting.

If other names are proposed by petition (the signatures of 15 Group members, excluding students, are required), voting by all Group members will be necessary.

Members who object to "blanket elections" are urged to signify their displeasure by offering to serve on an AdCom committee.

The nominees are named below in alphabetical order, with their qualifications. Friedman, Lufkin, and Schlesinger, all primarily technical communicators, are present members of AdCom whose terms expire in December. Leib and Pearlman, primarily engineers, will be newcomers to AdCom, as will Robinson, who is primarily a technical communicator.

JACK FRIEDMAN is now Leader of RCA's Missile and Surface Radar Proposal and Contract Documentation Group, in Moorestown, NJ. He has a BS in physics from Lehigh University. Before joining RCA in 1966 as Leader of the Advanced Technology Labs Engineering Publications Group, he was a Project Engineer in Ground Support Systems at Bendix-Peterboro, and a Technical Editor at the GE Valley Forge Space Sciences Lab. Jack has published articles in the IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication and in Technical Communication.

## Recognition

A regular feature of Technical Communication, quarterly journal of the Society for Technical Communication (STC), is "Recent and Relevant," which contains abstracts of articles on technical communication that have appeared in other journals. PC Transactions papers are noted frequently.

Technical Communication for the Fourth Quarter, 1976, contains a thoughtful review of Bob Woelfle's Guide to Better Technical Presentations. The reviewer advises that, "This one should be in your library."

In the October 1976 issue of STC's newsletter, Intercom, a letter to the editor and a brief reply by the editor comment with approval on a passage from Emily Schlesinger's discussion of Johnny's writing problems (PC Transactions for December, 1975).

Communication Notes, monthly newsletter of the Council of Communication Societies, prints generous summaries in its feature, "Notable Articles." The issue for September, 1976, discusses Karl Marshek's article on transitional devices which appeared in the PC Transactions for December, 1975.

Scholarly Publishing (7,3, April 1976) reviewed PC's Transactions for September, 1975--the Record of the 1975 Conference on Scientific Journals--in part as follows:

The problems of efficient dissemination of scientific information are here dealt with by a lively group, with widely varied backgrounds, ... all very much involved in seeking solutions to problems facing the primary journal system.

## Continuing Education

G-PC's Education Committee has already announced the first offering in a four-part program being developed for IEEE members. The other three are in various stages of being ready for presentation.

A full-page advertisement in the October Spectrum and the November Proceedings promotes the Home Study Course, "Technically-Write!", which will be administered by the IEEE Educational Activities Board. Instructors are members of G-PC, the Society for Technical Communication, and college teaching staffs. The course was pilot-tested by over 300 engineers and supervisors before being released to the IEEE.

The second offering, a two-day Workshop, called "Communication and Report Writing," was recently tested and found satisfactory by members of IEEE's Hartford (CT) Section. We are looking for another group of up to 25 engineers who would like to receive in-depth training in how to handle day-to-day writing tasks.

The half-day seminar, "Communication Guidelines for Managers" will be offered soon. This has been planned to help engineering managers and supervisors who are responsible for report writing activities, or who must review and edit the reports of their staff members. One pilot session has been held and another is scheduled.

A fourth course, concerned with techniques of oral presentation, is still being developed.

PC members are asked to promote this educational program within their IEEE Sections and at their places of business. The three courses now available are described separately elsewhere in this Newsletter. For more information, write or call

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(204) 452-6480 (evening)

## Education

One goes to school not for knowledge so much as for arts and habits: for the habit of attention, for the art of expression; for the habit of submitting to censure and refutation, for the art of indicating assent or dissent in graduated terms; for the habit of regarding minute points of accuracy, for the art of assuming at a moment's notice a new intellectual posture, of entering into another person's thoughts quickly; for taste, for dissemination, for mental soberness; above all, for self-knowledge.

- Adapted from William Johnson, Eton Master, 1867

# G-P's Two-Day Workshop WS-21

## Communication and Report Writing

In the fast-paced workshop, "Communication and Report Writing," students work on typical writing problems of scientists, engineers, technicians, and their managers.

Major topics:

### Day One

#### Sharpening Writing Style

- Differentiating between "tell" and "sell"
- Identifying the main message
- Placing the message where it will be seen
- Choosing the right words
- Cutting out "chaff"
- Knowing when to stop

#### Organizing the Writing Task

- Identifying the reader and his or her needs
- Homing in on the facts
- Building an outline
- Writing creatively
- Reading objectively
- Revising one's own words

#### Writing Technical and Business Correspondence

- Clarity
- Brevity
- Sincerity
- Format

#### Writing Short Informal Reports

- Occurrence reports
- Field trip and progress reports
- Inspection reports

### Day Two

#### Taking and Writing Minutes of Meetings

#### Writing Long Informal Reports

- Investigation and evaluation reports
- Feasibility studies and proposals

#### Writing Formal Reports

- Six basic parts
- Seven subsidiary parts
- Standard format

Alternative format  
Discussion: chronological, subject, and  
concept arrangements

#### Writing Other Technical Documents\*

- Requests and suggestions
- Procedures and instructions
- Job descriptions
- Performance appraisals
- Speakers' notes (for a technical briefing)

#### Reading and Revising (Editing) Other Writers' Words\*

#### Handling the Mechanics of Technical Writing\*

- Headings and paragraph numbering
- Abbreviations and numbers in narrative
- Setting up the printing area
- Inserting illustrations and diagrams
- Working with typists

\* Only some of these topics are covered, depending on participants' needs and the time available.

Workshop participants are asked to do some pre-workshop reading and writing, and to write practice exercises and evaluate sample reports during the workshop. The prescribed text is "Technically-Write!" published by Prentice-Hall Inc., supplemented by comprehensive notes on specific topics.

#### Suggested attendance:

16 to 25 persons

#### Workshop duration:

2 consecutive days (four 3-1/2 hour sessions)

#### Alternate schedules:

- Two single days spaced 2 to 3 weeks apart (WS-22)
- Four half-days spaced one week apart (WS-24)

#### Approximate cost (WS-21 only):

Tuition (including lecturer's fee, travel and accommodation expenses) \$1200.00 to 1300.00

Materials (textbook and notes) \$10 per person

Lecture room, coffee, etc. To be arranged locally

# G-PC's Seminar CG-1 Communication Guidelines for Managers

Managers and supervisors attend "Communication Guidelines for Managers" to get suggestions for helping their staff write clearly and concisely. Demonstration of proven techniques show how to set clear writing guidelines that will make simpler and faster editing possible. The aim of the seminar is to improve letter and report writing management in general, and to speed up the whole writing, editing, and revising process.

## Major topics:

### How to Set Guidelines

- Identifying the purpose
- Identifying the reader
- Deciding on writing style
- Deciding on presentation mode
- Setting up a schedule

### How to Help Your Staff Write More Easily

- Deriving an outline
- Getting off to a good start
- Homing in on the main message
- Placing the message where it can be seen
- Aiming for clarity
- Sticking to specifics
- Cutting out "chaff"
- Knowing when to stop

### How to Edit Letters and Reports

- Identifying your role as "editor"
- Planning the editing task
- Reading before revising
- Knowing what and how much to edit
- Avoiding writer-editor conflict

### How to Prepare Job Descriptions and Performance Appraisals

## Suggested attendance:

30 to 75 persons

## Seminar duration

3-1/2 hours (approximately)

## Alternate schedule:

A full day (6-1/2 hour) seminar covering the same topics, but in greater depth (including oral communication)

## Approximate cost:

Tuition (including lecturer's fee, travel and accommodation expenses) - \$800.00 to \$900.00 (half day)  
\$900.00 to \$1000.00 (full day)

Materials: \$2.00 per person  
Lecture room, coffee, To be arranged  
etc: locally

# G-PC's Home Study Course Technically - Write!

Those who enroll in "Technically-Write!" receive 11 packages of instructions that specify reading and writing assignments. Students check some of the work against answer sheets included in the kit, and mail the rest to the instructor for personalized correction and critique. The dialog that develops by mail between instructor and student is a unique aspect of the course.

## Major topics:

### Technical Writing Style

- Establishing the purpose
- Identifying the reader
- Identifying the message
- Differentiating between "tell" and "sell" messages

### Organization of Writing Tasks

### Technical Correspondence

- Homing in on the message
- Setting the right tone
- Using an appropriate format

### Informal Reports

- Occurrence reports
- Field trip, progress, and inspection reports
- Investigation and evaluation reports

### Formal Reports, Feasibility Studies, and Proposals

### Technical Descriptions and Instructions

### Illustration of Technical Reports and Papers

### Technical Briefings and Talks

### Letter of Application and Resume

## Course duration:

3-1/2 months (approximately)

## Course cost:

\$80.00 (IEEE Members) (plus \$2.00 handling & delivery)  
\$105.00 (non-members)

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# Engineering Bicentennials

One element of our past has been notably missing from the Bicentennial hoopla: Science. While our scientific community proposed some Bicentennial plans, all but a few of these died from lack of public interest. Most Americans will see out 1976 knowing little more of our technological heritage than the usual lore about Franklin's kite.

Spectrum wasn't publishing in 1776; George Washington never slept at IEEE headquarters. But the least we can do, as a Public Service, is to identify some of the great inventions and discoveries of, say, 1770 to 1800, whose own bicentennials we ought to be celebrating. It will be a serious list, giving the name and nationality of the inventor/discoverer. Here's what was new in the world when our nation was being founded:

- 1772 Nitric oxide (Priestly, English)
- 1774 Oxygen (Priestly, English)
- 1776 Attack submarine (Bushnell, American)
- 1777 Combustion explained (Lavoisier, French)
- Circular saw (Miller, English)
- 1779 Spinning mule (Crompton, English)
- 1780 Steel pen (Harrison, English)
- Bifocal lens (Franklin, American)
- 1783 Balloon (Montgolfier, French)
- 1784 Shrapnel shell (Shrapnel, English)
- 1785 Power loom (Cartwright, English)
- Parachute (Blanchard, French)
- 1792 Gas lighting (Murdoch, Scottish)
- 1793 Cotton Gin (Whitney, American)
- 1796 Lithography (Senefelder, Bohemian)
- Smallpox vaccine (Jenner, English)
- 1797 Cast iron plow (Newbold, American)
- Carding machine (Wittemore, American)
- 1798 Bleaching powder (Tennt, English)

Probably the most significant of these is oxygen. Before Priestly invented oxygen in 1774, folks had trouble breathing. In 1775 the FDA discovered oxygen is vital to human well-being and established a minimum daily requirement. Our troops were given oxygen tablets in their K-rations, and that's why we won the war.

--Adapted from Bill Minkler (Nuclear News, July 1976), who of course wrote Nuclear News where we read Spectrum, and ANS instead of IEEE.

## Poetry Corner

To Summarize

Americans believe in 'ize'.  
We verbalize, conceptualize,  
strategize and optimize,  
We vitalize and energize,  
minimize and maximize,  
We synthesize and sanitize,  
idolize and canonize,  
And when we cease to visualize,  
we finalize and funeralize.

--Berry Shea in Weston (Mass.) Town Crier

# IEEE Board Action

On September 23, IEEE's Board of Directors approved a no-surplus, no-deficit 1977 budget, following recommendations made by the Executive Committee. Of many substantive decisions taken, none has more important implications to the member--and to staff--than determination to avoid a deficit in 1977.

Coming on the heels of the earlier resolution not to increase the basic Institute dues levels, this decision portends another year of tough economizing in already lean Institute operations. The effects of inflation will be offset primarily by increased revenues in publishing (advertising and single-copy sales), educational services (short courses), and administrative services (data processing and membership list sales). Any unforeseen shortfalls--or unexpected costs--will be offset by deferring \$500,000 in expenditure commitments during the first two quarters of next year.

This plan, to be administered by General Manager H. A. Schulke, Jr., would hold expenditures to 90% of the annual rate until April 1, 1977, by which time it is felt that the ExCom will have a better idea of the state of the Institute's finances--especially income. One question yet to be resolved: What, specifically, can be deferred with minimal effect on either member programs or staff operations?

The Board also acted on such other matters of interest to EE readers as

- Modifications in the dues levels of special membership categories.
- Adoption of two policy statements on ethics.
- Action on an Engineers Joint Council invitation to IEEE to rejoin that body.

On the dues question, the Board approved \$2 increases--from \$8 to \$10--in Student, military, and retired member assessments. It further agreed to assess Affiliates and first-year graduates \$20, as compared to \$18 this year. In the U.S. and Canada, second-year graduates will pay \$30 in 1977 (\$35 in '76), while such members in Regions 8-10 will be billed \$25 (\$30 in their third year following graduation). These measures are designed to decrease the subsidies IEEE affords such members without creating undue hardships or sacrificing incentives.

The ethics policy statements approved by the Board were initiated by USAB. Wishing to put teeth into the Code of Ethics, USAB Vice President James Mulligan proposed that: (1) infractions of the Code be subject to disciplinary action by the Board; and (2) members placed in jeopardy by adhering to the Code may be offered Board assistance. Passage of these proposed policy statements creates a mechanism the Board can make use of in the future.

Lastly, on the subject of EJC's invitation, both the Executive Committee and the Board as a whole decided to decline for the time being. IEEE withdrew from EJC in 1967, feeling that its voice on the Council's Board was not sufficiently influential. EJC had recently agreed to amend its constitution to afford the Founder Societies

greater control of Council activities, but along with this apparent effort to meet IEEE's objections, the newly extended invitation to membership carried with it a \$40,000 price tag.

Unresolved issues that should come before IEEE's Board of Directors in December include

- TAB's proposals to create a seventh Technical Division--namely, a Power Division--and a Board seat for Standards.

- Action on the Long Range Planning Committee and TAB IEEE Organization Reports.
- ExCom's investigative report on alleged violations of electioneering policy.
- Possible Bylaw change permitting censure or expulsion of members for misconduct.

- From Electrical Engineering, bimonthly management newsletter on IEEE operations (October, 1976).

## New Communication Tool

Improving the Dissemination of Scientific and Technical Information: A Practitioner's Guide to Innovation, ed. John M. Strawhorn, is a loose-leaf guide of more than 200 pages prepared by the Capital Systems Group, Inc., for the Office of Science Information Service of the National Science Foundation. The work was issued in 1975; one batch of new and revised update pages has already been sent to subscribers.

IDOSTI identifies six generic activities involving written communication--writing, editing, reviewing, proofing, reproducing, and managing--and describes ways, new ways, and suggested ways of performing these activities. Sections of the book concern

- Conventional Journal and Monograph Publishing
- Print-on-Paper Alternatives to Conventional Publication
- Non-Print-on-Paper and Mixed Media Innovations
- Trends and Prospects
- Innovations Needed

Discussions cover new equipment, concepts, methods, media, organizational approaches, preparation of copy, design, cost control, marketing, and other aspects of communication.

This general "idea book" may be read through, skimmed, or used for reference. Many individuals and organizations, including E. K. Gannett of IEEE and Jim Lufkin of PC, contributed to the "first edition." Up-date pages with new matter from the same or similar sources will be prepared and sent from time to time to subscribers.

Persons who qualify for free subscriptions to IDOSTI include publishers, editors, and others with allied responsibilities, excluding librarians. To obtain a copy, write explaining need/use or send \$7.75 (\$2.25 for microfiche) to Capital Systems Group, Inc., 6110 Executive Blvd., Suite 850, Rockville, Md., 20852.

## Standards

### NEW ATLAS

On 9 September the IEEE Standards Board approved the IEEE/ARINC Standard ATLAS Test Language (IEEE Std. 416-1976). ATLAS (Abbreviated Test Language for All Systems) is a standardized language for expressing test specifications and procedures. It provides a standard abbreviated English language used in the preparation and documentation of test procedures which can be implemented either manually or with automatic or semi-automatic equipment. ATLAS is expected to complement the growing stable of IEEE Instrumentation system standards, as the software counterpart.

Executive Director H. A. Schulke, Jr., represented the Institute in arranging for the transfer of ATLAS to IEEE jurisdiction at meetings held in Munich this September. As part of the close cooperative effort among ARINC, AEEC, and IEEE in publishing this urgently needed ATLAS format, the IEEE has expedited publication procedures and will make the new document available this November.

### IEEE Standards Catalog

The 1976 issue of the IEEE Standards Catalog is now available, free of charge, from the Standards Office at Headquarters. It lists over 350 standards publications in numerical sequence, and provides a subject index to the standards.

### Standard on Metric System

ASTM/IEEE Standard Metric Practice, IEEE Std. 268-1976, was approved as an American National Standard on August 19th as ANSI Z210.1-1976. Approval by the American National Standards Institute constitutes recognition that the document is accepted and approved as the national standard by a consensus of all concerned parties in the United States. Published in January of this year by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Inc., the new standard is the authoritative United States source book on the metric system of measurement.

Recent Congressional adoption of the Metric Bill calling for implementation of the metric system within the U.S. has spurred public interest in metrication, and the new standard is expected to serve as the basic guide for the scientific and technical application and use of the modern metric system. The document includes the most recent developments in the International System of Units (SI) which is the official designation for the worldwide system of metrication.



## Innovations

Developed at the request of the American National Standards Institute, the new document incorporates material from the previous ASTM E380-72 (ANSI Z210.1-1973), IEEE Std. 268-1973, and IEEE Std. 322-1971 (ANSI Z210.2-1972). Significant additions to the new standard include recently adopted prefixes and letter symbols for very large multiples of units, peta ( $10^{15}$ , P) and exa ( $10^{18}$ , E), and SI units used in connection with radioactivity (becquerel and gray).

The standard includes listings of the base units, supplementary units, and units derived therefrom. Guidance is provided on application of prefixes, other units in use with metric units (including units accepted for limited use and units to be abandoned), and unit selection. A section on style and usage covers the writing of unit symbols and names, pronunciation, and recommendations for numbers. Extensive guidance is provided on conversion of linear dimensions, also pressure and stress, along with an extensive table of conversion factors. Background information on the development of SI is provided in an appendix.

Intended as a basis for worldwide standardization of measurement units, the International System of Units has been developed and maintained by the General Conference on Weights and Measures (CGPM).

ASTM/IEEE Standard Metric Practice reflects the latest actions taken within the CGPM and the ISO (International Organization for Standardization) and is a joint effort of the ASTM Special Committee on Metric Practice and the IEEE Standards Coordinating Committee on Quantities and Units. The document is available from both societies; the texts are identical with the exception of the spelling of the words "meter" (metre) and "litre" (litre). The IEEE edition, published in 8 1/2 x 11 size, uses the -er spellings.

Copies of ASTM/IEEE Standard Metric Practice may be purchased from IEEE, 345 East 47th Street, New York, NY 10017; ANSI, 1430 Broadway, New York, NY 10018; or ASTM, 1916 Race Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103. Price of the document is \$4.00, postpaid.

--From Electrical Engineering, October, 1976

## Puzzle

How quickly can you find out what is so unusual about this paragraph? It looks so ordinary that you would think that nothing was wrong with it at all, and, in fact, nothing is. But it is unusual. Why? If you study it and think about it, you may find out, but I am not going to assist you in any way. You must do it without coaching. No doubt, if you work at it for long, it will dawn on you. Who knows? Go to work and try your skill. Par is about half an hour.

A new book on the practical aspects of business communication is The Business Writer's Handbook by Charles T. Brusaw, Gerald J. Alred, and Walter E. Oliu. One author is from industry (Brusaw of HCR Corp.), one from academia (Alred of University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee), and the third from government (Oliu of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission). The book can be of equal value as a textbook or as a reference tool. Its unique "Four-Way Access System" helps individuals find what they need quickly. Featuring alphabetical organization and an amply cross-referenced index, it has a sound emphasis on basic writing skills, the foundation of business communication. One section that may be of particular value to inexperienced writers, "Introduction to Successful Writing", emphasizes preparation, research, organization and revision as much as writing the draft. Another section of value to anyone in the communication business, "Checklist of the Writing Process," focuses on proofreading and revision. Available from St. Martin's Press, Inc., 175 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010.

A new approach to the continuing problem of student writing began this summer when invited representatives of the Rhetoric Society, the National Council of Teachers of English, and the Modern Language Association met in Laramie, Wyoming, at the First Annual Rhetoric Institute. Recognizing that the problem does not lend itself to a short-term solution but requires broader understanding, the participants laid plans for holding institutes during each of the next three summers. They plan to invite experts from various related disciplines to discuss with them theory, research, and pedagogy in composition. The tentative titles for the next three institutes are all keyed to the switch phase "Why Johnny Can't Write." In that context, it is proposed that the 1977 institute consider the relationship between writing and reading, that 1978 concentrate on the development of the composing process, and that 1979 explore setting priorities in research and reward. If you are interested in the institute or have suggestions for its future programs, contact Prof. John Warnock, Chm., Freshman English, University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY 82071. (Rhetoric Society of America)

McGraw-Hill has a new book that might help a lot of us: How to Prepare Professional Design Brochures by Gerre Jones (277 pages, \$16.50). Planning, layout, designing, and reproduction are fully discussed, and illustrations make the instructions graphically clear. Useful also for booklets, newsletters, and promotional flyers, Jones' book should be of special assistance to firms and organizations without in-house graphics and publications departments. It will stimulate new ideas and approaches to designing effective brochures. (Industrial Communication Council)

--From Communication Notes, September, 1976

# Teaching the Boss to Write

It may be old news that "Johnny can't write," but to legions of U.S. executives the problem is no longer in the schools but right next door in the executive suite. So appalling is the quality of written reports in some companies that senior executives are sending their managers--and sometimes themselves-- through writing courses intended to put some point back into the reports that cross their desks and to eliminate the extraneous material that increasingly obscures that point.

"It's hard for me to believe grown men write the kind of things I see in some client organizations," says Jack Shaw, a partner in the accounting firm of Touche Ross & Co. and the head of the New York office of its management services department. To head off such trouble in his own team, Shaw and some of his senior managers this week went through a writing and logic course offered by one of the writing consultants who are themselves becoming a mini-industry.

Report-writing courses are being treated with a new seriousness in industry. Companies are having to learn to cope not only with supervisors and firstline managers who have trouble communicating, but also with senior research scientists, B-school graduates, and otherwise bright top executives who cannot turn out a clearly written, logically organized interoffice memo--and often do not realize it.

## SEEKING CONCLUSIONS

Unfortunately, education and intelligence offer no guarantees. "Those with PhDs may be the worst of all," says Albert Joseph, president of the Industrial Writing Institute, whose tape-and-slide and personally conducted courses have been given at hundreds of companies. "The higher the education, the worse the writing they've been exposed to."

Some of those who are most skilled in their own field are among the poorest writers. "Many people who are good on their feet can't put together four good sentences in a row," says Joan Griewank, director of market planning for CBS Records Div., who put herself and those working under her through the course of Barbara Minto, a London-based writing consultant whose week-long course, stressing logic more than style, costs \$4,300 (for groups up to 10).

The most common complaint of managers about the reports they receive is that the conclusions of the writer are either buried or missing altogether. But there is a whole catalog of other sins: excessive wordiness, poor grammar and sentence structure, atrocious spelling, and general confusion. "I see an erosion of writing skills in a lot of the young people we bring in here who are very bright," says Pepsi-Cola Co. President Victor A. Bonomo. He believes that since some 100 of his managers took Minto's course in the past three years, Pepsi's internal communication has significantly improved.

The payoff is that Bonomo himself spends much less time today going through reports, and he can grasp their point immediately. "And it avoids

mistakes," he says. "We have had instances where material was completely misinterpreted." In one case, a Pepsi executive's reorganization plan that was turned down before he took the writing course was approved when he rewrote it after the course two weeks later.

Time savings can be significant. American Telephone & Telegraph Co., which started using Joseph's tape-and-slide course this spring, finds that managers who take it can cut a 300-word report to 100 words. The time it takes to produce the report is reduced from one hour to half an hour, and reading time shrinks as well. Du Pont Co., which has a similar course, also puts managers through a writing seminar that shows them how to trim the size of reports by half.

## IMPRESSING CLIENTS

The writing consultants say a course must include top executives if it is to have maximum impact in a company. "The people we train in business are mostly managers and professionals," says Joseph. "They're highly educated, but educated people left to their own devices gradually pick up an academic style. It's slow and it causes misunderstanding. And most of them don't know beans about organizing. They never heard of putting the conclusion first."

Some of those who are supposed to know the most about writing reports really know the least. "Management consultants tend to be the frothiest and most pompous, perhaps to impress their clients," says consultant Pauline E. Putnam, whose own writing clinic clients include such companies as Standard Oil Co. of California and Pacific Gas & Electric Co.

Many executives feel that until the schools begin to rethink their own role in teaching students to write, the corporate efforts will amount to little more than skirmishes with the problem. "My course is really for people reading the reports, not the writers," says Minto. "You don't give the course unless somebody is complaining. I'm teaching an elite course for a small group of people, and yes, the impact is limited,"

## WIDER IMPACT

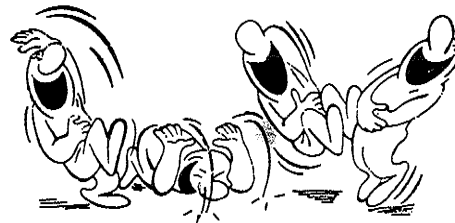
But there are signs that the impact is widening. Those who learn to write better reports tend to become more demanding in what they expect of the reports they receive. "When 800 people took my course at Standard of Ohio," says Joseph, "they began to ridicule the reports that still were written in the old style. The environment has changed."

But there still is much to be done. Edward F. Howard, chairman of Schorr & Howard, a public relations company that produced an elaborate guide to better written communications for one of its clients, gives a recent example. An executive of one of the largest corporations in the world was so insecure about a letter the company was sending to an American ambassador that he hired Schorr & Howard to compose the one-and-a-half pages that would go out above his signature.

--Reprinted from the October 25, 1976 issue of Business Week by special permission. (c) 1976 McGraw-Hill, Inc.

# Get Help with Report Construction

When you write a technical report, do you have trouble organizing your time, effort, or materials? There is a solution. The IEEE Professional Communication Group is making available (at a special low price!) a handy volume designed to help you with this problem--Report Construction: A Handbook for the Preparation of Effective Reports written by Mary Fran Buehler, a technical editor at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. To order Report Construction send a check or money order to IEEE-PC, 6411 Chillum Place, NW, Washington, DC 20012. Prices are \$2.00 each for orders of 1 to 10; \$1.90 each for orders of 10 to 25; and \$1.75 each for orders of 25 - 50.



**YOU WANT IT WHEN?!**

## Publication Specialist Program

George Washington University has a one-year, graduate level, career-certificate program in print communication. Four 8-session courses are being offered in 1976-77, two each on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, to cover writing, editing, production, graphic design, public relations, publication management, picture editing, and copy-right law. Instructors are professionals of the publishing community. Course titles are

Technical Editing  
Pasteup and Mechanicals  
Publication Management  
The Editorial Freelancer

Tuition for each course is \$175 plus cost of materials.

GWU has also scheduled a one-day Seminar in which four panelists will speak about planning, scheduling, budgeting, and formatting newsletters for associations and businesses. The meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 8, 1977, from 9 am to 4:30 pm, in the University's Marvin Center; the fee of \$100 includes lunch.

For further information, write to George Washington University, Library Suite 621, 2130 H Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20052. Telephone, (202) 676-7036.

## Physics Revisited

There would be no need to remind G-PC members of the phenomenon called hysteresis, except to show that the mathematical formula for this property of retaining electrically induced magnetism can be applied also to organizational activities. When terms are re-defined for our Group, we have

$$B = \int_{1200}^{2000} \text{Help}$$

- where
- B = Betterment of G-PC, wavering between 1200 and 2000 members,
  - H = lines of attraction between members and Group activities,
  - e = potential energy of each member,
  - | = level of each member's activity,
  - p = professional obligation of each member.

Perhaps this re-statement will strike a spark from you. Is so, force yourself to overcome that easy-chair inertia and call or write to any AdCom officer. Ask for Committee work or make a suggestion. The resulting momentum will both surprise and please you, and may even accelerate your professional advancement.

--Adapted through courtesy of J. C. Handy, Chairman, and J. M. Politt, Editor of Newsletter (Sept. 1975), Baltimore Section, IEEE.

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