Newsletter

IEEE Professional Communication Society

Goldsmith Award for 1984 to Moore

The Alfred N. Goldsmith Award for 1984 was presented to Lois Moore (SM) at the PCS Conference in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on October 11.

Lois was cited for her efforts and contributions in advancing the goals of the Society. She is an active member of the PCS Administrative Committee, currently serving as its Vice President. Lois chaired both the 1982 Boston and 1983 Atlanta Conferences. Her most recent responsibilities include serving as a member of the Communications Committee of the United States Activities Board, and as Associate Editor of *Impact Magazine*, covering the activities of the Government Affairs Committee.

Lois is a technical writer and editor of *McClure Center Magazine* for the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory. She has over a quarter century

Inside

PCS Education: What Next? (Round 2)

In the October 1984 *Newsletter* I described the lack of response by the IEEE members to PCS's education programs and the dilemma this created for the education committee, mentioned the panel session that would discuss the problem during the PCS conference in Atlantic City, and asked *Newsletter* readers to send me their views. In this edition I will described briefly what happened during the conference.

The four members of the panel session who addressed the problem of teaching technical writing were:

* Gina Burchard, who teaches technical writing at Texas A&M University,
* Leon Pickus, who is an RCA Technical Editor at Moorestown, New Jersey, and a primary instructor of PCS's *Technically-Write!* course,
* Jim Hill, of HRB-Singer, Inc., State College, Pennsylvania,
* and myself, an instructor of technical writing at a two-year college and PCS's education chairman.

Panel session chairman was Emily Schlesinger, previously a technical editor for Baltimore Electric Company and currently an itinerant instructor of technical writing at Drexel University. Emily is also a past president of the Professional Communication Society.

The main thrusts of the four speakers' remarks were:

* Gina described computer-assisted-instruction techniques for teaching technical writing,
* Jim suggested that a pragmatic, much shorter writing course in undergraduate technical writing is sufficient, rather than the 80 to 120 hour courses normally taught,
* Leon suggested that PCS should concentrate on teaching undergraduate and recently graduated engineers, rather than try to reteach older, established engineers, and

From the editor . . .

When I was asked if I were interested in editing the *Newsletter,* a thousand reasons why I should say no raced through my mind. I was about to begin a new job, was taking two graduate courses toward my MBA at New York University, and would be busy finding a new home to cut down on the commuting time to work. However, I said yes, and only later thought about why.

We all question our involvement in the many areas that bide for our time—family commitments, work, community involvement, and professional activities, to name a few. Why, might you ask, should you get involved in PCS. As a relatively new member, I can only offer what PCS has done for me and why I chose to get involved. PCS provides many opportunities for both personal and professional advancement. The conferences I attended gave me the chance to speak before large audiences and meet many respected colleagues in the technical communications field. This PCS network is a valuable asset, at any stages of one's career. PCS involvement also gives me the opportunity to help the technical communication profession. Through the sharing of ideas at conferences and other forums, we can influence and guide further growth in the profession. An important part of my organization is the social aspect. I have enjoyed meeting other PCS members, and many friendships have evolved from these associations.

However, to reap the benefits of PCS, you must get involved. Many possibilities exist. For example, you can become a member of AdCom or be a regular contributor to the *Newsletter* and *Transactions.* The annual PCS conference requires a great deal of planning, and the Conference Committee would welcome your help. One job that we all can do is recruit members. Many of your colleagues at work may not be aware of PCS—how about introducing them to the organization?

PCS's growth and success depends upon its members. Get involved!

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Newsletter Deadline

Articles, news, and comments for publication must reach the editor by the following dates:

Issue	Deadline
April	February 23
July	May 25
October	August 24

Send your contributions to Deborah Flaherty, AT&T Technologies, One Oak Way, Rm. 3WC110, Berkeley Heights, NJ 07922.

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IEEE Professional Communication Society

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Membership Development News

Although total Institute membership grew by 6.2 percent from October 1983 to October 1984, Society memberships grew by only 4.7 percent. PCS, after several years of 10+ percent annual growth, has leveled off over the last two years, with current membership at 2335 (plus 40 Affiliates)—a 3.5 percent increase over 1983. The PCS Membership Committee and AdCom are very concerned about this recent leveling off of growth, and are investigating potential methods of stimulating interest in an aspect of the Electrical Engineering/Electronics discipline that should be of concern to all IEEE members.

The Institute Membership Development Committee (MDC) is naturally interested in the broader subject of general lag in Society memberships. A number of items of direct interest to the Societies was discussed at the MDC meeting held in Toronto, Canada on August 10-11. As a result, one membership incentive plan has already been implemented: IEEE Sections receive a $5.00 rebate for each Society member they recruit and Societies receive a $5.00 rebate for each IEEE member they recruit. Alternative plans being considered are "buy-one-get-one-free" and "buy-one-get-one-at-half-price" incentives, as well as mandatory Society membership for all IEEE members.

One item of especial interest to IEEE Societies is their relation to the Institute Membership Development Committee. As currently structured, the MDC is under the Board of Directors and is administered by the Regional Activities Board (RAB), which consists of geographic Regions and Sections. No formal relationship exists between MDC and the Technical Activities Board (TAB), which comprises the Societies. Fortunately, this deficiency has finally been recognized. Eventual bridging of this schism is likely to result in greater cooperation between MDC and TAB and, hopefully, increased emphasis in Society membership recruitment.

—*Richard M. Robinson*
  PCS Membership Chairman

☐

PCS Education: What Next?
(continued from page 1)

- Through a seven-minute playscript enacted by panel members, I drew attention to the difficulty we experienced in convincing established engineers that they need to improve their written communication skills.

Before the panel session we had hoped the delegates would particularly take issue with Leon's and my viewpoints, so that we could sense the direction the audience felt we should pursue. However, we were surprised (and encouraged) to hear a warm discussion develop around Gina's and Jim's presentations. The delegates were clearly concerned about undergraduate education, and also were clearly divided: some felt that writing instruction at college level should retain a strong literature component ("Where else in an engineering curriculum are undergraduates introduced to the humanities?", one delegate asked); others felt there should be much greater commitment to structure and grammar; while a third group felt that technical writing instruction should focus primarily on preparing undergraduates to communicate in a technical/business environment.

No concensus was reached, and the delegates left the session still discussing the three viewpoints. So Leon and I agreed to wait for your views to come rolling in, but now we would like your opinions on three topics:

1. Which opinion expressed by the delegates do *you* think is most important?
2. Where do you think PCS should concentrate its direction in teaching technical writing? (Who do you think we should target as our audience? And what topics should we concentrate on, for that audience?)
3. How can we encourage IEEE members to take advantage of the courses we have designed for them?

Please drop me a line, and I'll use your viewpoints as the starting point for a short article in the April 1985 *Newsletter.* The address: Box 181, Postal Station C, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3M 3S7.

I look forward to hearing from you.

—*Ron Blicq*
  PCS Education Chairman

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PCC 84—Where Were You?

Our 1984 conference in Atlantic City's Trump Plaza hotel is now behind us. We would like to say it was a huge success, but attendance did not live up to our hopes and expectations. The papers presented and workshops conducted were of high quality and there were enough speakers to more than fill our allocated time. What has disappointing was the small number of people there to hear our speakers.

This year, for the first time, we tried a massive mailing campaign, sending out more than 10,000 pieces to PCS members, and selected IEEE and Society for Technical Communication members. But our attendance was less than it was at PCC 83 in Atlanta.

We thought the brand new hotel, in an exciting place like Atlantic City, close to the major cities of Philadelphia and New York, was attractive. We thought our conference theme would be of interest to many people. We thought our massive mailing would be effective. We thought wrong three times.

What did we do wrong? What should we have done? How about those of you out there who didn't attend, PCC 84 (or any of our other conferences) letting us know why you don't participate? Without some feedback, there's not too much we can do to get better. How about it? Send your comments and ideas to:

> Leon C. Pickus
> RCA MSR
> Module 5
> Moorestown, NJ 08057

Or, if you wish, call Leon on (609) 778-3660.

□

Electrons go where and when they must
in response to demonstrable law,
but people dance to all together
less understandable music

NCTE Competition

The National Council of Teachers of English has announced its fifth annual awards competition for excellence in writing about technical and scientific communication. The competition is open to works published from January 1, 1984, to December 31, 1984.

Three copies of each entry should be submitted by May 1, 1985, in one of the following categories: best book, best collection of essays, best article on methods of teaching, best article on philosophy or theory, or best article reporting formal research in pedagogy, theory, or philosophy. Send the entries to Virginia A. Book, 108 Agricultural Communications, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE 68583.

Last year a *Transactions* paper by Carol M. Barnum of Southern Technical Institute won in the teaching category.

□

Bits Of Humor

If you think computer jargon is confusing, take a look at the following sentences. Buried beneath the high-faluting language are some common cliches you've all heard. See how many you can recognize.

1) The prudent avis which matutinally deserts the coziness of its abode will ensnare a vermiculate creature (Hint: If you get to work before 7:00 a.m., you can get terrific response time on the terminal and fast turnaround for your jobs.)

2) A large round earthenware vessel subject to the observation of a plethora of persons on no occasion reaches a temperature of 100 degrees centigrade. (Hint: Checking on the status of your job every five minutes won't make it run any faster.)

3) It is futile undertaking to lament the evacuation from a container of bovine nutrient matter. (Hint: If your program does not run correctly the first time, don't be upset; just try, try again.)

Were you aware of the fact that there are the names of 26 states shown on the back side of a five dollar bill?

□
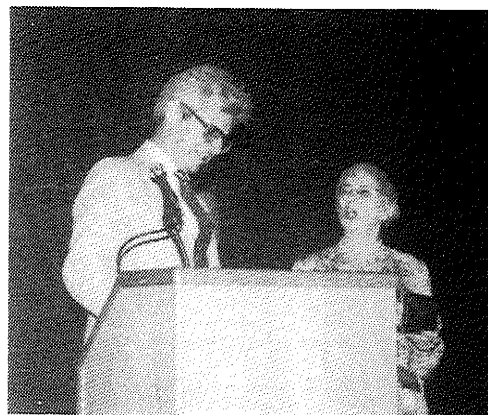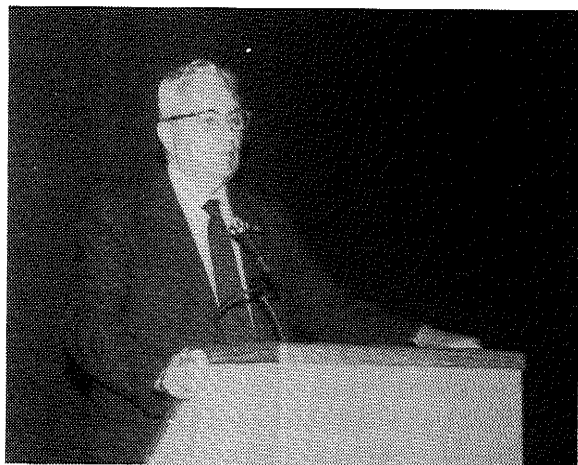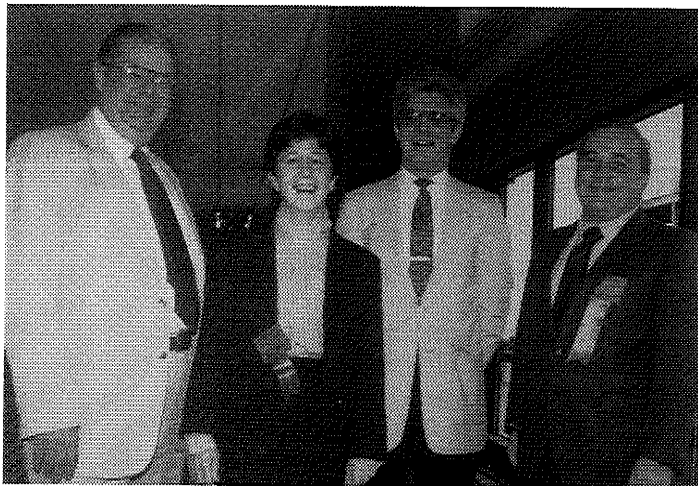
Professional Communication Society Conference 1984

Goldsmith Award for 1984
(continued from page 1)

experience in the communications field, and has pub-
lished numerous articles on communications and com-
puter-related topics.

The memorial Goldsmith Award was established in
1974 and is given in recognition of service within the
Professional Communication Society to improve the
quality of engineering communication.

☐

Observations

* At the source of every error which is blamed on the
  computer, you will find at least two human errors
  including the error of blaming it on the computer.

* A system tends to grow in complexity rather than
  simplification until the resulting unreliability
  becomes intolerable.

* The really productive ups and downs are getting up
  in the morning and down to work.

* Always behave like a duck—keep calm and unruffled
  on the surface, but paddle frantically underneath.

—*IEEE MTT* Newsletter
Summer 1984

☐

The ability to exercise good judgment is probably
the most important engineering skill.
Without it an engineer is like a walking textbook
that opens easily to the wrong page.

Industry-University Collaboration

How can technical communicators in industry and academia help each other and their professional field?

At every opportunity I have been asking colleagues
from both industry and academia for their ideas. Their
responses indicate that many are collaborating with
counterparts from the other area and that their
activities and projects benefit all participants.

Several discussions of various collaborative efforts
have led to plans for a panel at the 32nd ITCC in
Houston this May. Dorothy Amsden of Los Alamos
National Laboratory coordinated this group effort
under the title "Collaboration for Communicators in
Industry and Academia: Challenges and Benefits." Our
general goal for this session is to stimulate construc-
tive dialogue that can lead to more effective inter-
actions benefitting the field of technical communica-
tion.

Similar discussions with colleagues at PCC 84 in Atlan-
tic City suggested this article. My purpose is to share
with readers the views expressed by professional com-
municators, to solicit feedback from readers who want
to share their ideas on ways we can help each other and
our field, and to promote interest and involvement in
PCC 85, for which a main topic is "Industry-University
Collaboration."

Here is what our fellow professionals have to say.

Eva Dukes
RCA/David Sarnoff Research Center

First, professionals in industry and academia need to
recognize the high degree of correlation between their
interests. Second, they must implement this realization
by personal contacts and mutual feedback to broaden
their knowledge base and to train their sights on some
common goals.

Professionals in industry can learn about the most re-
cent research in universities, find out where their own
training needs updating, and gain inspiration from the
enthusiasm of students. Professionals in academia can
reshape curricula in light of the needs of "the real
world," can provide live role models for their students,
and can better facilitate their graduates' entry into the
workforce to the mutual advantage of employer and
employee.

Barry Smith
Lawrence Livermore Laboratory

Universities give any profession legitimacy and definition. This is another way of saying CERTIFICATION. This has been a taboo topic for technical communicators (technical editors and writers) for a long time, but it is also a fact that there are standards for good technical editors and writers that are a matter of folklore and tradition rather than official sanction. Without the universities to train the young people in these disciplines we will go on turning teachers, economists, and psychologists as well as scientists into something they had no notion of becoming when they began their professional careers. Physicists in the industrial world still regard their academic cousins as sources of knowledge. So do chemists and other scientists. Technical writers and editors do not look to universities for much of anything. Not yet.

Academics need the industrial workers' imput in order to create a structure worthy of respect. At present, technical communications efforts at universities are the brainchild of the English departments who have had to create work for their faculties. The subtle change to respectability is only dimly perceptible. But it is there, and it should be fostered. The professional in the industrial world needs to admit the need and work with schools to set up curricula that include meaty courses in editing, design, print shop management, and all the increasingly technical skills the modern editor and writer must have.

The two sides are far apart. Industrial people call their work the "real world" and academics go on giving papers at conferences that seem designed for MLA. How do we get them together?

Technical communications societies should make 1985 or 1986 the year when industry and academia come together. They can do this by making this the theme of their conferences. They can do this by getting their legislators to write into government contracts the obligation to work with universities by giving internships. They can do this by pressing colleges and universities to grant degrees in technical communication. They can do this by giving grants to industry to do studies on an academic level of their technical communications operations.

Patricia Barkman, Ph.D.
Clarkson University

Today, three people whom I had met at recent professional conferences telephoned. Ernie Mazzantenta asked me to speak to fifteen new editors at General Motors Research Laboratories in Warren, Michigan,

January 15, 1985, on interpresonal communications between writers and editors. Edward Guiliano, Coordinator of Program in Technical Writing, asked if I would speak at Old Westbury, New York Institute of Technology, December 18, 1984. Topic: Transactions in Technical Communications: Paradigms and Progress. And then Susan Dressel, Publications Administrator, Physical Science Laboratory at New Mexico State University, asked if I would contribute to the IEEE article on what technical communicators from industry and academia can do for each other. Susan, one hundred words are not enough to discuss the mutualism between not-so-ivory profs and industry's professionals; but then, one words sums it up: contacts.

Joel Haness
RCA/Government Systems Division

In order to survive, academia and industry must collaborate on improving student communication skills. Academia's "Publish or Perish" and industry's "Document or be Destroyed" are analogous. Without good communication skills, an engineer's chances of being promoted are lessened. Approximately 25% of the manager's job involves either generating or reviewing written material and about 50% of the job is verbal communication with subordinates, peers, and superiors. In a typical month a manager will generate: one vu-graph presentation, a proposal, one performance review, a manpower forecast, a funding report, a progress report, one meeting minutes, one memo to associates, and four sets of instruction to subordinates. If each averages 3 pages at 1 hour/page, the manager spends 36 hours per month generating information. In addition, the manager will review 4 reports from other organizations and 6 reports from subordinates, at approximately ½ hour per report (5 hours)—total hours 41 per month—and that does not include any technical or managerial trade publications the manager wants to read.

O. Jane Allen, Ph.D.
New Mexico State University

Technical communicators in industry and academia can communicate with one another through exchange programs. This fall semester, for example, Dr. Susan Dressel, Physical Science Laboratory (PSL), is teaching a course in New Mexico State University's graduate program in technical/professional communication in exchange for time that I spend working with PSL's Publications Section. My work with interns and technical people at PSL should be valuable in helping me integrate the concerns of industry and in academia in future curriculum development.

New PC-ers June–October, 1984

AFRICA

Libya
Belgasm, A.M.

Nigeria
Adebodun, V.O.

ASIA

Hong Kong
Chan, W.-Y.

India
Sundararaman, R.
Ugar, N.

Japan
Geller, L.S.

Malaysia
Chen, C.K.

Singapore
Ho, A.Y.T.
Stephen, K.T.P.
Tan, J.T.
Worsley. M.D.

Thailand
Prempraneerach, Y.

CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA

Bahamas
Adderley, K.E.

Chile
Arredondo, P.S.
Carreno, T.H.

Honduras
Baeza, R.L.

Panama
Rodriguez, M.
Serracin-Cano, C.A.

EUROPE

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Fischer, P.H.

Belgium
Majelijne, R.M.

Italy
Tolusso, G.

Spain
Muriel, M.A.

Switzerland
Ersan, K.I.

West Germany
Beckstein, C.M.
Fassbender, A.
Gehring, L.
Hackstein, H.
Kegelmann, H.

MIDDLE EAST

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Rosen, H.N.
Tamir, D.

Jordan
Nabilsi, M.S.

Saudi Arabia
Arain, M.R.
Bennett, J.

United Arab Emirates
Santosh, J.

NORTH AMERICA

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Connor, D.J.

Manitoba
Cunningham, P.R.

Ontario
Ash, R.P.
Job, T.V.
Mansour, R.R.
Terrel, P.A.

Quebec
Harling, G.
Stuart, G.D.

United States
Alabama
Bendolph, C.O.
Combs, R.W.
Gist, R.A.
Jackson, M.A.
Link, D.N.

Arizona
Williams, C.P., III

Arkansas
Cornelius, B.J.

California
Barnes, W.M.
Bass, D.A.
Boylls, J.C.
Cheng, C.-K.
Daou, G.
Eurek, L.M.
Gibbs, D.D.
Guarnieri, R.L.
Kemp, K.P.
Kephart-Urei, G.S.
Patterson, M.A.
Pinkston, S.D.
Rathfon, J.B.
Walker, S.T.
Zazkowski, C.L.

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Askew, J.C.
Ellison, R.E.
Knight, E.G.
Losey, C.L.
Robinson, S.M.

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Carroll, M.J.
Doheny, M.E.
Gianni, T.R.
Harris, W.C.
Keegan, D.A.

Delaware
Nejako, D.G.

District of Columbia
Baell, R.T.

Florida
Cheng, C.J.
Coston, E.
Fresco, J.M.
Frijouf, J.A.
Russell, M.S.

Georgia
Franklin, B.L.
Wages, R.E.

Hawaii
Watt, D.L.

Illinois
Feist, R.J.
Melton, J.B.
Whelan, S.G.

Indiana
Alonzo, G.J.
Colbert, R.O.
Hanover, C.P.
Hood, K.N.
Myers, R.
Rife, T.L.

Kansas
Gormly, W.H.

Kentucky
Berry, T.
Elliott, S.M.

Louisiana
Cardinal, M.C.

Maine
Ram, G.V.

Maryland
Bishop, W.B.
Cooke, C.M.
Johnson, T.W., Jr.
Lumsden, M.K.
Marth, K.F.
Zelubowski, S.A.

Massachusetts
Cahill, L.G.
Dobrin, D.N.
Herzfeld, R.W.
Keller, R.J.
Kirsch, J.
Krenitsky, P.
Lands, J.S.
Rakyta, P.
Sinclair, J.M.
Walters, D.E.

Michigan
Alghuwainem, S.
Campbell, C.A.
Coin, M.
O'Donnell, J.W.
Randolph, D.A.

Minnesota
Boyd, M.C.
Gelperin, D.H.
Trulson, T.W.

Missouri
Alcorn, M.

Nebraska
Casari, L.E.
Williams, R.

New Hampshire
Oppenheimer, C.P.

New Jersey
Anson, D.T.
Feller, M.
Kohut, E.N.
Kudyan, H.M.
Leavitt, H.M., Jr.

New York
Baller, E.H.
Davis, J.B.
Dropkin, S.R.
Evanzia, W.
Fiorillo, J.
Fleischhaver, F.W.
Gonsa, W.T.
Grice, R.A.
Hammonds, A.
Killick, R.H.
Marden, M.J.
Schaeffer, A.J.
Smith, B.J.
Stroud, M.
Verga, M.G.
Verrilli, G.

North Carolina
Armstrong, C.C.
Brown, R.A.
McKenna, D.J.
Stacy, M.L.

Ohio
Ismail, E.J.
Karaba, P.J.
Rheinfrank, J.J., IV
Thompson, J.B.
Warren, D.T.

Oklahoma
Roe, D.M.

Oregon
Conwell, W.

Pennsylvania
Arms, V.M.
Hamrick, D.P.
Josephs, G.
Oesterle, P.H.
Opeka, F.J.

Rhode Island
Stasko, S.E.

Tennessee
Goodroe, E.J.

Texas
Hamiter, J.W.
Middleton, J.L.
Sextro, G.L.
Smith, C.E., Jr.

Vermont
Klose, G.F.

Virginia
Alderman, B.M.
Broome, D.R.
Pollak, P.

Wisconsin
Manni, M.E.

—Emily Schlesinger

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What's A "Strategy"?

A strategy is not necessarily a way of doing something smart but rather a choice that has to be made beforehand for any kind of successful enterprise. At least that's how it was defined in a talk given by our Senior Member, Herb Michaelson, to the Brooklyn Engineers' Club in a New York City meeting on September 20.

The title of Herb's talk was "Strategies for Engineer Authors." Herb suggested that writing clearly, accurately, and in good style does not guarantee the success of a manuscript. Perhaps even more important are the strategic choices that have to be made, for example, by the author of a magazine article. Some of the examples discussed in the talk included:

The best time to start writing.
(Should an engineer wait for the work to be finished or start writing before it is even completed?)

The proper emphasis of technical matters.
(Should the author concentrate on the "goodies" or throw in everything including the kitchen sink in an attempt to make the article look complete?)

The right sensitivity to audience.
(Should the author sense the needs and interests of readers beforehand or else ignore them and write "in a closet"?)

The flavor of credibility.
(Should the author candidly state the technical limitations or instead make global claims in an attempt to impress the readers?)

The time to contact an editor.
(Should the author sound out a trade journal editor while writing an article or send it when finished, hoping the editor will like the subject and the treatment of it?)

The selection of a journal.
(Should an author choose a journal beforehand and write for its readers or else finish the article first and then try to find a journal that could carry it?)

The right choices, according to the speaker, will save the aspiring author a tremendous amount of time and nervous energy.

These strategies are discussed at length in Herb's book, *How to Write and Publish Engineering Papers and Reports,* ISI Press, Philadelphia.

□

How To Know You're Growing Older

1. Everything hurts, and what doesn't hurt, doesn't work.
2. The gleam in your eye is from the sun hitting your bifocals.
3. You feel like the night before, and you haven't been anywhere.
4. Your little black book contains only names ending in M.D.
5. You get winded playing chess.
6. Your children begin to look middle-aged.
7. You finally reach the top of the ladder, and find it is leaning against the wrong wall.
8. You join a health club and don't go.
9. You begin to outlive enthusiasm.
10. You decide to procrastinate, but never get around to it.
11. You're still chasing women, but can't remember why.
12. Your mind makes contracts your body can't meet.
13. You know all the answers, but nobody asks you the questions.
14. You look forward to a dull evening.
15. You walk with your head held high trying to get used to your bifocals.

—Western Engineer
November, 1984

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Society needs good communication, transportation, and health; not better telephones, automobiles, and hospitals.

Communication Theory

I'm trying to communicate.
Do you hear what I say?
Or is my message clouded
By noise in some bad way?

Communication system elements
Consist of message source,
An adequate message medium,
And a receiver, of course.

The message may be made up
Of letters, words, or tones.
The medium used to send it
May include some telephones.

Each medium is restricted,
There are no infinites.
Information goes through channels,
The bandwidth sets limits.

May I give you an example
Of a communication link?
It is one used most often
In our daily lives, I think.

The message source is my voice,
The receiver is your ear,
The message medium is the air,
As I speak, you should hear.

The message is propagated
By disturbances in the air.
First the little molecules
Are compressed, and then made rare.

Once your ear picks up the signals
That I send through the air,
Communication is established
And your brain must go from there.

My thanks to Claude E. Shannon
For if he had not taken the time
To develop communication theory
I could not have written this rhyme.

—*Willis J. Tompkins*
 IEEE Potentials
 October 1984

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PCS Sponsors New Anthology on Marketing

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  (301) 953-5000, X8313

☐

Conference: "Writing for the Computer Industry"

The Second Conference "Writing for the Computer Industry," Saturday, June 15, 1985, will be a practical working conference to meet the writing needs of

- Writers, editors, designers, consultants, publications managers, and publishers in the computer industry
- Teachers of technical communication in colleges and universities

This conference will be held on the campus of Plymouth State College in the lakes and mountains region of New Hampshire, two hours drive north of Boston.

The Second Conference on Writing for the Computer Industry will explore ways experienced communicators can broaden their professional competence. The conference will focus on the perennial problems of communicating in the computer industry: writing, editing and publishing documentation, writing for international audiences, managing publications, and the training of writers. In addition to traditional topics and approaches, this conference will emphasize innovations in two areas of computer documentation: electronic user aids and the visual design of computer screens.

About 240 participants are expected in this conference, one third from colleges and universities, two thirds from the computer industry. They will be familiar with established writing practices and will seek information about recent developments and new directions for communicating technical information in the computer industry.

Preference will be given to proposals by experienced lecturers who present new material. While much material presented at the conference will be of perennial interest, the emphasis will be on material developed in the past year, especially presentations that discuss new and promising practices, the future of the profession, and ways that communicators can prepare to meet the challenges of the coming decade.

Proposals for presentations at the conference should be addressed to Dr. Richard Chisholm, 1 Reed House, Plymouth State College, Plymouth NH 03264; (603) 536-1550 X301 or (603) 786-9759 (evenings).

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New Members Wanted!

As PCS members, we are well aware of what PCS offers in terms of knowledge and development in professional communication. PCS provides information on effective communication techniques, reinforces the importance of communication as art and science, and develops personal writing and speaking skills along with organizational skills.

Why not tell your co-workers and management about the benefits of a PCS membership if they have not already joined? An application form is provided for your convenience. (See form on page 15.)

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Oh Double Quote

Oh quote, thou double quote,
Whenist art thou used?

Oh writer, dear writer, if ye
　American be,
Use me for special emphasis or for
　special use of a word.
But be ye of the British kingdom,
　my friend,
The single quote be thy
　choice.

And quote, thou dearest double
　quote,
Wherest does the period sitteth
　when its time cometh?

The period be ye to the right or
　left of me, my dear,
To the left, my writer dear, if
　ye a Yankee be,
But to the right, if ye be from
　across the sea.

Oh quote, thou double quote,
　as our words transcend,
Your rules shall er be ever
　at our fingertips,
And ever in our hearts.

—*Mary E. Carasso*

☐

Shun Words

Do you feel obligated to sound "formal" when you write? Do you think "formal" writing is the same as "professional" writing? If that's your thinking, you're wrong; formal writing generally sounds awkward and pompous, and inhibits rather than creates rapport with your readers.

When we are not comfortable with our writing, we tend to rely on words that end with "tion," what I call formalized verbs, or "shun" words. For example, some people write, "I would like to voice an objection," when they could simply say, "I object." There is nothing grammatically wrong with "shun" words; the problem is that we overuse them:

"Due to the ramifications of the dissemination of the objections to the qualifications of the definitions . . . "

The reader has to wonder if that sentence ever came to an end. This example of "shun" words is a exaggeration—to most people—I hope. But you can see that overuse of them can make the reader wonder just what the writer is trying to say.

The key is that if you use those words ask yourself if it wouldn't be better substituted with a verb (or made part of the predicate). For example:

"Determination of the source of the problem was made."

Sounds a little awkward, doesn't it? The sentence reads much better as, "We determined the source of the problem," or "The source of the problem was determined," or depending on the context, "We found the problem." (Always keep in mind that you never want to revise to the point that you change your true meaning.)

Another example is:

"Organization of the energy group was organized"?

Sometimes a "shun" word is used at the beginning of a sentence to emphasize the actions of "organizing" or "determining"; this can be effective. The point is, do not overuse the words. They clutter our writing, tend to make us sound pompous, and do not contribute to the conciseness and clarity of what we are trying to say.

—*Susan R. Quinn*
  Western Engineer
  November, 1984

☐

Translation Troubles

A recent issue of the American Translators Association's *ATA Chronicle* shares some examples of the double-nightmares foisted on us by amateur translators.

Russian to English
Earl Bennett of Charlottesville, Virginia, sent in this English-language ad for the "LADA," an automobile made in the Soviet Union:

> "Who likes speed and comfort are well advised to buy a new car LADA-2105. Modern interior of saloon, noiseless work of motor well please while driving and decrease tiredness of the driver and passengers. Progressive design of motor and additional systems increase the economy of the car and decrease the harm of let-out gas. LADA-2105 will take a well-deserved place in the raw of best cars in the world and will win heart of car lovers."

Japanese to English
When Ms. Marjorie P. Coull received a Japanese hot-beverage pot for a wedding present, she found the following instructions:

1. For boiling water. Water will begin boiling within 5 cups of 8 minutes.

2. No scorching of hand no steins on table.

3. Pot in no water so as not to care of electricity.

—*IEEE Aerospace and Electronic Systems*
  Newsletter
  September, 1984

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THE INSTITUTE OF ELECTICAL AND ELECTRONICS ENGINEERS, INC.

IEEE

Announces the 13th Annual Competition for

1985-1986

Congressional Fellowships

A CONGRESSIONAL INTERNSHIP
FOR MEMBERS OF IEEE

PROGRAM: Electrical and Electronics Engineers and Allied Scientists are competitively selected to serve a one-year term on the personal staff of individual Senators or Representatives or on the professional staff of Congressional Committees. The program includes an orientation session with other Science-Engineering Fellows sponsored by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).

PURPOSE: To make practical contributions to more effective use of scientific and technical knowledge in government, to educate the scientific communities regarding the public policy process, and to broaden the perspective of both the scientific and governmental communities regarding the value of such science-government interaction.

CRITERIA: Fellows shall be selected based on technical competence, on ability to serve in a public environment and on evidence of service to the Institute and the profession. Specifically *excluded* as selection criteria shall be age, sex, creed, race, ethnic background, and partisan political affiliations. However, the Fellow must be a U.S. citizen at the time of selection and must have been in the IEEE at Member grade or higher for at least four years. Additional criteria may be established by the selection committee.

AWARDS: IEEE plans to award two Congressional Fellowships for the 1985-1986 term. Additional funding sources may permit expansion of awards.

APPLICATION: Further information and application forms can be obtained by calling W. Thomas Suttle (202) 785-0017 at the IEEE Washington, D.C. Office or by writing:

Secretary, Congressional Fellows Program
The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Inc.
1111 Nineteenth St., N.W.
Suite 608
Washington, D.C. 20036

Applications must be postmarked no later than March 30, 1985 to be eligible for consideration.

Answers to Bits of Humor

(continued from page 4)

1) The early bird gets the worm.

2) A watched pot never boils.

3) No use crying over spilled milk.

As for the 26 names of states on the back side of a five dollar bill. Yes Martha, they are there but you will need a magnifying glass to find them. The names appear on the Lincoln Memorial in two rows. One row is on the frieze above the twelve columns. The second and smaller row appears on the upper indented part of the Memorial. So now, find a $5 bill, the newer the better, get a magnifying glass and behold.

—*IEEE MTT* Newsletter
Summer 1984

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Light Traffic

"Light Traffic" is a regular feature in the IEEE Communications Magazine, devoted to the lighter side of communications. In addition to items of recreational mathematics, limericks, poems, cartoons and humorous articles are welcome. Some typical samples appear in the May, August and November 1984 issues of the magazine. Articles should be submitted to: S. Pasupathy, Editor "Light Traffic," Department of Electrical Engineering, University of Toronto, Toronto Canada M5S 1A4.

☐

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP in the PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION SOCIETY

IEEE

Use A, B, or C; print name and address

A____ My IEEE Membership Number is _____, Grade _____. My fee for membership in the Professional Communication Society (PCS) is enclosed: full year—$10 ($5 student); half year, paid March 1 to August 31—$5 ($2.50 student).

B____ I am interested in joining IEEE and the Professional Communication Society, IEEE annual dues is $65 in the U.S.; $59 in Canada, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East; and $52 elsewhere. Entrance fee is $15 everywhere (one-time charge). PCS annual dues is $10.

C____ I do not want to join IEEE but would like to become an Affiliate Member of the Professional Communication Society. ($24 Affiliate dues + $10 PCS dues, annually.) Please send more information.

Name_____ Company_____

Address_____

Send to IEEE Service Center, 445 Hoes Lane, Piscataway, New Jersey 08854   **1985**

Industry-University Collaboration
(continued from page 7)

Chris Pearcy
Physical Science Laboratory

Collaboration between educators and practitioners in technical communication is vital to preparing beginning communicators for the profession. The intern program at NMSU is a good example. Practical experience gained from writing projects at the Physical Science Laboratory, combined with writing and editing course work, gives me a deeper understanding of the problems that the communicators confront daily. The importance of a strong educational background in writing and the technical disciplines becomes apparent as I work closely with scientists and engineers on documentation projects. Conversely, the training received as an intern allows me to gain utmost benefit from my course work. Through collaborative efforts of communicators in the university and the laboratory, I am entering this professional field with an invaluable combination of education and experience.

—Susan Dressel, Ph.D.
  Physical Science Laboratory

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Your Input Requested

I am working for a Master of Fine Arts degree at Syracuse University. My thesis subject is colour matching systems, their backgrounds and application in design. If you would like to help me in compiling information on colour theory, and systems such as Munsell, Ostwalk, CIE, etc. please write me:

Art Winstanley
364 Chestnut Street
Kearney, NJ 07032

☐

> It is to bad that scientific generalizations are described as laws, because from this term the engineering student can reasonably infer that the world is a well ordered place.

Newsletter
IEEE Professional Communication Society