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IEEE Professional Communication Society NEWSLETTER

A Brief Visit to Banff

by Ron Blicq

In mid October, Pamela Kostur (IPCC 94's General Chair) and Ron Blicq visited Banff to make arrangements for the conference with Catherine Hardie-Wigram, Director of the Banff Center for Conferences. Here, Ron records his impressions to give Newsletter *readers an idea of what they can expect when they arrive next September.*

The nearest international airport for Banff is at Calgary, a city of some 400,000 residents 60 miles east of the conference center. It's a modern, spacious, pleasantly laid out airport served by both main Canadian airlines and several U.S. airlines (American, Delta, and United, for example).

You can choose to take a bus to Banff, or you can rent a car from any of the major car rental agencies. (I'll give specific bus and car rental details in a future article, nearer to the conference time.) Either way, the journey takes about 90 minutes. We chose to rent.

At the Banff Center, every room has a magnificent view: that's guaranteed!

Exiting from the airport was accomplished easily: within two minutes we had turned south onto Barlow Trail, heading toward Calgary, and within another five minutes—before reaching the town center—we turned west onto Highway 1: the Trans-Canada Highway. From here it's a direct route to Banff, and within 30 minutes we were in the mountains.

A point to consider: if you can possibly arrange it, plan to arrive at Calgary by 5 p.m. so you can enjoy the breathtaking beauty as you enter the mountains and remain deep within them for the remainder of your drive. It's an arrival sequence you'll not forget.

There's a two-lane highway in each direction, and the two highways are separated by a broad central divider—essential for a mountain-gazer like me! The speed limit for most of the way is 110 km/h (= 68 mi/h).

If visibility is good—and in Alberta it often is—you will be able to see the mountains from the moment you start driving. Immediately ahead of us we could see the peaks of the Fisher Range and, to our right and left, the Palliser and Livingstone Ranges. In mid October the peaks were snow-covered, but the lower levels were still a mixture of green, slate, and brown. Water was running in the small streams we passed, but the edges of shallow lakes were already frozen. You can expect similar conditions next September, with daytime temperatures often creeping up to the high 50s and nighttime temperatures dipping into the mid 20s. (In Celsius-driven Canada, the equivalent temperatures will be about 15° and −6°.)

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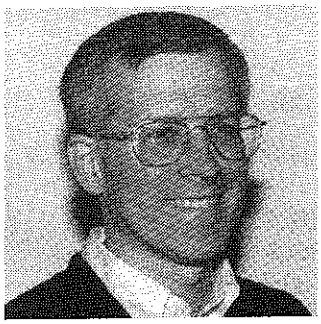
From the Editor



I've always liked things that made logical sense, and one of the most puzzling conventions of writing to me has always been the U.S. punctuation of quotations, with periods and commas inside the quotes and other punctuation outside. I thought a lot about the logic of this convention and never came up with a good reason for it. When I asked others, the answer almost always was, "Because that's the way we do it." That answer I never found convincing. And although the rule is simple, most writers (and not a few editors) I have worked with have a time remembering which punctuation goes where.

It wasn't until I started editing that I found out that British convention does not agree with ours. They punctuate according to sense, the period or comma (or other mark) being placed within the quote marks if it is part of the quoted material and outside if it is properly part of the containing sentence. This, when I learned of it, made eminent sense. It does require thought rather than simple application of a rule, but the reader never has to wonder whether that last punctuation mark goes with the quoted matter or not.

The 14th edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style* still comes down for the U.S. style, although it does admit the use of the British convention in fields such as linguistics and philosophy. The *Chicago Manual* does not mention other fields, however, in which the terms, when quoted, also demand exclusion of extraneous punctuation. In genetics, for example, gene symbols carry punctuation that expresses specific meanings: for example, "45,XX,-?8", "46,Y,t(Xq+;16p-)", and many others using colons, slashes, and double underscores. To set such codes in a series without quotes is confusing—it looks as if something might have been left off—yet to put the comma within the quotes doesn't help. Setting the codes in italics is not an option, because italics also carries meaning in genetics. As another example, the increasingly important world of the Internet uses addresses like "d.nadziejka@ieee.org", which shouldn't carry a confusing comma or dot after the "g", even if the address ends the sentence.

In short, I believe that the British convention of punctuation with quotation marks is more useful for science and engineering writing than the traditional U.S. practice, and I will be using the British style in editing this *Newsletter* starting with this issue. Anyone with strong feelings, pro or con, is welcome to write to me and express their views.

—D.E.N. ◄

New Chapter

A new chapter has been established to serve PCS members at the local level in Vancouver. The chapter chair is Adam Creery, Universal Dynamics, Suite 900, 1441 Creekside Drive, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada; Tel: (604) 736-3381; facs: (604) 736-3110. Welcome! We look forward to hearing about the goings-on in the new Toronto and Vancouver chapters in future newsletters. ◄

Congratulations!

Congratulations to PCS member Raymond D. Findlay of McMaster University, Ontario, Canada, who has been elected an IEEE Fellow. Professor Findlay was elected as a 1994 Fellow on the basis of his contributions to the analysis and measurement of electrical machine characteristics. ◄

IEEE Professional Communication Society

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Advertising correspondence: IEEE Service Center, Attn: Susan Schneiderman, 445 Hoes Lane, Piscataway, NJ 08855. Phone: (908) 562-3946; facs: (908) 981-1855. Internet: s.schneiderman@ieee.org. The publisher reserves the right to reject any advertising.

On Management Communication

by Michael B. Goodman

This column on management communication appears regularly in the PCS Newsletter. *It covers topics related to the technical, cultural, financial, and political environment that characterize contemporary business. The discussions concern communication among technical and business disciplines; technical marketing; crisis and emergency communication; and communicating technology to the public. Send in suggestions for topics that interest you.*

I. Special thanks: IPCC 93, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

To Janet Rochester and David Milley, Program Chairs, for their superb efforts in shaping the content of the presentations; and to Ed Podell, who lit up the skyline, literally, with a special welcome sign: a lighted "IEEE IPCC 93" from the top of the PECO (Philadelphia Electric Company) Building.

II. Issues in Corporate and Organizational Communication: Approaching 2000

As the end of the century approaches, the issues that face technical communication professionals focus on human interaction—both with machines and with other people. The use of contemporary communication technologies in an environment of accelerating change, political uncertainty, economic stress, and uncertain corporate direction places new demands on the communication professional. No longer is mere superior talent with the written word sufficient for the technical communicator. The need to understand the ethical conflict of individual rights and corporate goals is now a necessity for survival. With increased emphasis on team action and the proliferation of empowerment programs through TQM, the need to work effectively with others, rather than in isolation, is also a necessity in corporate life for technical communicators.

In meeting challenges in a dynamic world, professional communicators and managers need more information about how to interact with machines and with others in an increasingly interdependent network of ideas, people, and machines. Scarce resources have forced managers and technical communicators to depend on global computer networks as both information resources and communication tools, to consider interpersonal skills as essential in reaching corporate objectives, and to think ethically in response to increased economic pressures brought on by the forces of change in international business activity.

The five articles in the March 1994 issue of the *Transactions on Professional Communication* will explore the impact of technology, ethics, motivation, and an interdependent environment on the process of communication in organizations. These articles, which continue our annual discussion of corporate and organizational communication issues, were presented in May 1993 at The Sixth Conference on Corporate Communication and were circulated there in the refereed *Proceedings*. They are:

- Kristen Bell DeTienne, "Big brother is watching: computer monitoring and communication";
- Leslie Hitch and Gerald Miller, "Historical perspectives on technology, ethics, and privacy";
- Paul Baard, "Psychological fusion: its impact on employee motivation";
- Jo Procter, "You haven't heard a word I said: getting managers to listen"; and
- Mary Guindon, "Understanding the role of self-esteem in managing communication quality".

These papers explore the interrelationships among people, machines, and information in the pursuit of communication. Also, the three papers with an interpersonal communication emphasis have particular significance for technical communicators, many of whom work for corporations undergoing the stress of re-engineering or reinventing themselves to meet the challenges of the next century.

III. The Seventh Conference on Corporate Communication

The Seventh Conference
on Corporate Communication

COMMUNICATION AND CHANGE

sponsored by

Fairleigh Dickinson University
Madison, New Jersey

Wednesday, 25 May to
Thursday, 26 May 1994

The marketplace, as well as evolving political and national ideologies, has focused on change. Communication processes and products have not only created the environment of change but have also fueled the rapid rate of change.

Understanding these forces and the people involved with them is a necessary first step in dealing with this change.

The Seventh Conference on Corporate Communication—devoted to exploring **Communication and Change**—will be held 25 and 26 May 1994. Panels of corporate executives and university scholars will focus on communication in the European Community; Japanese business communication; ethics; the changing workforce; public relations and advertising issues; the impact of communication technology; corporate video; crisis as change; altering the corporate culture; and TQM and communication. Fairleigh Dickinson's Schering-Plough Distinguished Visiting Professor, Sandy Sulcer of DDB Needham Worldwide, will deliver one of the two scheduled headline addresses: "While you were looking the other way". The best papers from the conference that are relevant to IEEE members will appear in the March 1995 issue of the *Transactions.*

For further information and to be added to the conference mailing list, write to:

The Conference on Corporate Communications
M.A. Program in Corporate Communication
Fairleigh Dickinson University
Madison, NJ 07940
Telephone (201) 593-8709 or 593-8710; facs, (201) 593-8510; e-mail, goodman@sun490.fdu.edu

IV. Coming Up . . .

In the next "On Management Communication", a look at "Information Politics". Which of these models describes your organization's approach to information: monarchy, anarchy, technology utopia, feudalism, or federalism? Look for some clues to help you understand the information politics in your organization.

V. IEEE/PCS Archive

Papers, *Transactions*, and *Proceedings* are among the items held in the IEEE/PCS Archive at the Madison campus of Fairleigh Dickinson University. The archive is open to PCS members and scholars. If you have questions, call Michael Goodman at (201) 593-8709 or Ron Blicq at (204) 488-7060. ◄

A Call for Help!

Four issues ago in this *Newsletter,* I started a series of articles describing distinguished communicators. These were people who have made—and are still making—significant contributions to technical communication. But if I am to continue the series, I need help from you.

If you know of a communicator we should write about—one who has contributed much to our field—please write to me or to the *Newsletter* editor. Tell us why the individual should be featured and give us as much information as you can about the person. Note that we are especially interested in people who are not already well known within the Professional Communication Society. Better still, draft the article yourself (we'd really like that!).

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Grammar, n. *A system of pitfalls thoughtfully prepared for the feet of the self-made man, along the path by which he advances to distinction.*
Ambrose Bierce

And the Winner is...

The atmosphere at IPCC 93's banquet on 6 October was comparable to that of a key moment at the Academy Awards! The 163 delegates and their spouses and friends had been wined and dined. They had listened intently to the invigorating keynote address of Dr. Patricia Peacock, Director of the Regional Small Business Development Center at Rutgers University. Now they waited to hear who had won the prize of free accommodation at Banff Park Lodge, adjacent to the 1994 conference site.

The entry forms were poured into a silver punch bowl and Pamela Kostur—IPCC 94's General Chair—asked Michael Goodman, the IPCC 93 Chair, to stir them and draw out the winning entry.

Pamela opened the form agonizingly slowly—the hall was very quiet!—and then announced: "The winner is ... **Carolyn Boiarsky!**"

There was a shriek from the audience and Carolyn leaped up and bounced onto the platform. "I've never won anything before!" she told the applauding audience.

Carolyn, who is from Peoria, Illinois, will receive two days free accommodation at Banff Park Lodge either immediately before or after the 1994 conference. The Banff Park Lodge is a prime hotel in a central location in downtown Banff.

Congratulations, Carolyn! We look forward to seeing you in Banff in September. And thanks to Tracey Duke of Banff Park Lodge for graciously donating the prize.

—Ron Blicq
Publicity Co-Chair, IPCC 94 ◄

A Visit to Banff

(continued from page 1)

We slowed down and pulled over more than once to gaze at the sheer majesty of the mountains, each sweeping turn in the highway giving us a new view. Some 15 miles before we reached Banff we passed the town of Canmore, a fast-growing community of 7000 people, quite of few of whom work in Calgary but have chosen, rather than live in the city, to build a home in a quieter residential haven that has immediate access to the mountains.

Ten miles before reaching Banff, we entered Banff National Park and handed over a $10 vehicle fee (Canadian $; currently equal to about U.S.$7.75).

The town of Banff is nestled in a valley, and no matter which way we looked there were mountains towering above us. We parked and walked along the streets, acutely conscious of the mountains' presence, as if they were leaning over, looking down onto the town. Indeed, I felt as though I could almost reach out and touch them.

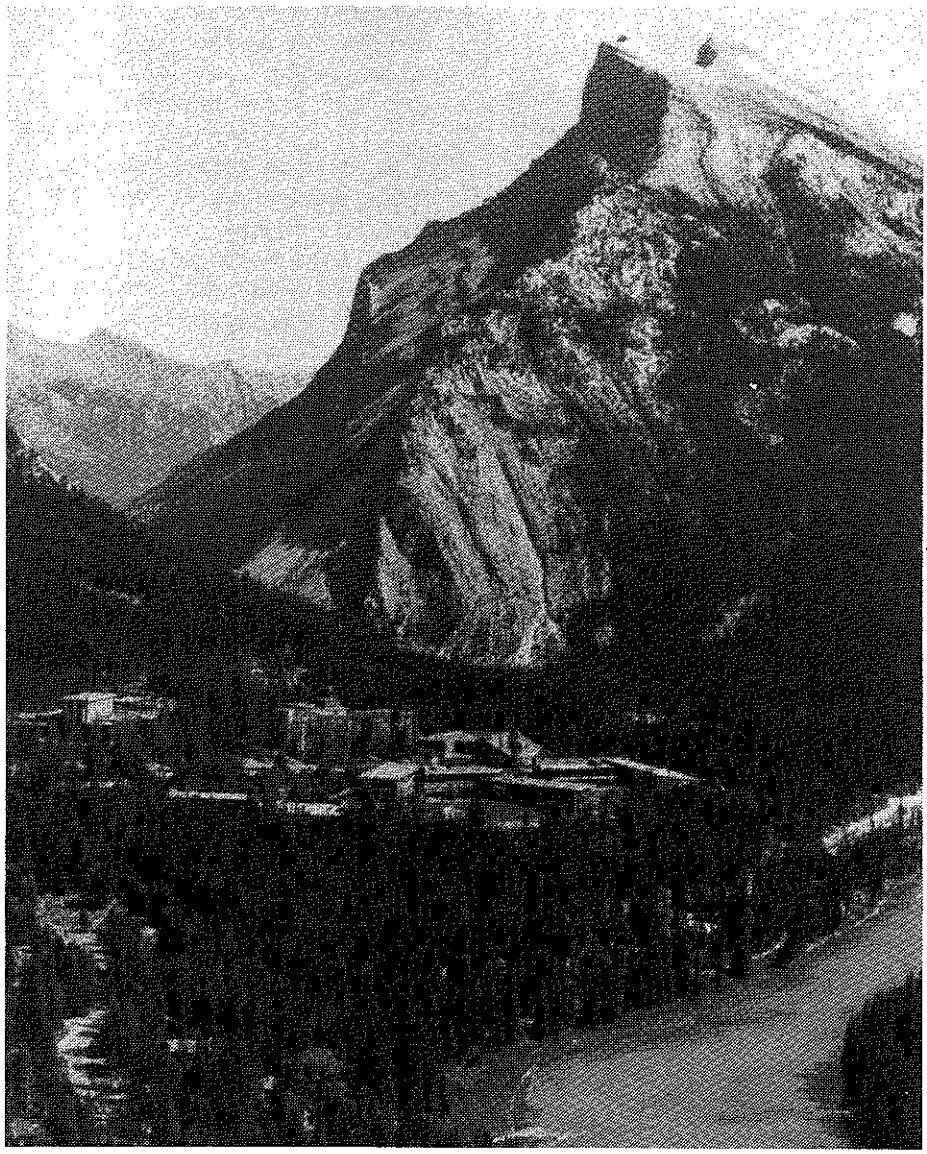
The Center for Conferences, where IPCC 94 will be held, has been built on a hill across from the famed Banff Springs Hotel and is separated from it by the winding Bow River, which skirts the town. (We'll be sending maps and driving directions to every conference registrant.) The Center is self-contained, with residences, cafeteria, sports center, swimming pool, two theaters, and state-of-the-art television facilities.

In 1993, the Banff Center celebrated its 60th year. Originally established as the Center for the Arts—for which it is best known—it has since created three more significant facilities: the Center for Management, the Center for Conferences, and the International Institute for Innovation.

The residences are comfortable and spacious, and every room has a magnificent view: that's guaranteed! Every morning I sleepily pulled back the window drapes and looked up onto snow-tipped mountain peaks, the rising sun—still invisible behind the mountains on the other side of the valley—gradually suffusing the brilliant white with a gentle pink aura.

On more than one morning I could see a cluster of at least a dozen elk on the grass below my window: some standing, heads lowered, pulling at the turf, and others lying in graceful curves, absolutely still, their heads held high like statues carved in gray stone by a midnight sculptor. Half an hour later, walking down the hill toward the breakfast hall, I had to skirt around them, for they are so accustomed to living in a protected environment that they exhibit no fear.

Three days at Banff seemed hardly long enough. In no time we were driving east toward Calgary and



The Banff Center for Conferences, site of IPCC 94, 28–30 September 1994.

our respective flights. Yet we kept wistfully glancing back, still overwhelmed by the grandeur of the mountains. Gradually they dwindled in size in our rear-view mirror, until by the time we turned north onto Barlow Trail they had diminished into a line of stately peaks along the horizon. Peaks that seemed to be beckoning us to turn back, to forget about the Air Canada flights and tomorrow's appointments.

Yes, I will be going back, not only for IPCC 94, but also to take a few extra days to tour, to shop, to swim in the sulfur springs, to dine in the Banff Springs Hotel, and to visit Lake Louise and its famous Chateau. And to talk to the elk. ◄

The man who writes with no misspelled words has prevented a first suspicion of the limits of his scholarship or, in the social world, of his general education and culture.
Julia Norton McCorkle

Newsletter Schedule

The *Newsletter* publication and deadline schedule is:

Issue	*Deadline*
May/June	1 April 1994 (no foolin')
July/August	3 June 1994
Sept./Oct.	5 August 1994
Nov./Dec.	7 October 1994
Jan./Feb.	2 December 1994
March/April	3 February 1995

Contributions are welcome; ASCII e-mail and ASCII IBM-compatible diskettes are preferred. Please send them to:

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The Career of James W. Souther

by Mike White

James W. Souther, one of the best-known and most influential figures in technical communication, died on 5 November 1993. Jim had been ill for over a year; nevertheless, his death of a brain tumor at 73 came as a shock to those who had known of his illness, as well as to hundreds of others who had not—former students, members of the Puget Sound Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication, and his many friends and colleagues throughout STC and the profession.

Jim was born in San Bernardino, California, in 1919. He entered the University of Washington, where he earned first a bachelor's degree in English in 1947 and then a master's degree in the same field in 1948. In the autumn of that year, Jim began a lifelong, many-sided career as a member of the faculty in the University of Washington's College of Engineering. He began as an Instructor in the Department of Humanistic-Social Studies, which taught courses to engineering undergraduates in the humanities and social sciences and in technical writing. He was promoted from Assistant Professor in 1953 to Professor in 1969. When he retired in 1987, he was made a Professor Emeritus, with the opportunity, however, to teach part-time—an opportunity he took advantage of until 1992.

Jim was the author or coauthor of over thirty articles on communication that appeared in professional journals, anthologies, or proceedings. Over 24 of them dealt with aspects of technical communication. Among the very first of these was "Applying the engineering method to report writing", which appeared in a 1952 issue of *Machine Design*. The article, which stressed a design approach to writing reports, received an unexpectedly enthusiastic response. And this, in turn, led to a contract with Wiley & Sons for the book *Technical Report Writing*, first published in 1957. A second and considerably revised edition, coauthored with M.L. "Mike" White, appeared in 1977.

Jim's efforts in the mid 1970s to develop and teach new courses in technical communication helped lead to the establishment of an interdisciplinary Program in Scientific and Technical Communication at the University of Washington in the early 1980s. While Jim was the program's Director, he also worked to establish a master's degree program; then, in 1985, he stepped down when Mark Haselkorn became Director.

Jim was an active, long-time member of the Society for Technical Communication and some of its predecessors. He led the effort to found the Puget Sound Chapter in 1959, he served as a member of STWP's board of directors from 1963 to 1966, and in 1984, he was co-manager of the 31st ITCC held that year in Seattle. The Society for Technical Communication elected him an Associate Fellow in 1974 and a Fellow in 1980. The Puget Sound Chapter established its Souther-White Scholarship Fund in 1986, and the Professional Communication Society of the IEEE gave Jim its Lifetime Achievement Award in 1988. This year, STC honored the Jim Souther and Mike White team with one of its first two J.R. Gould Awards for Excellence in Teaching Technical Communication.

Jim Souther's tireless energy gave much to those of us who remain in the profession. We shall miss him. ◄

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

by Cheryl Reimold

The 30-Minute Memo that Gets Results

Can you spare half an hour, right now? Can you think of a memo you need to write?

If so, I suggest you pull out a pad of paper or start your word processing program. You can put this column to use immediately!

Everyone in business today needs to know how to write a useful memo in a short time. Everyone needs to master the 30-minute memo. The good news is that everyone can. This is how you do it.

Determine your purpose (2 minutes)

Question: Do you know where the first two minutes of writing usually go?

Answer: To just about anything other than writing—staring out of the window, sharpening a pencil, remembering an urgent phone call, reorganizing the word processor directory, discovering an acute thirst or hunger that requires immediate access to the water cooler, coffee machine, or cafeteria. The possibilities are almost endless, since their only criterion is escape from writing. Writers are moved to take these detours when they are not clear on their purpose.

Since effective business or technical writing consists of telling someone something useful, you must first know *what* you want to communicate, to *whom*, and *why*. You must know your purpose.

To define your purpose quickly and easily, spend your first two minutes answering two questions:

1. Why am I writing this to this reader (these readers)?
2. What do I want my reader(s) to do or know as a result?

The first question will give you a general statement of intent, with a focus on your reader. The second will clarify the results you want and remind you to tell your readers what you need them to do.

Everyone in business today needs to know how to write a useful memo in a short time.

Do an imaginary dialogue (3 to 5 minutes)

Once you know your purpose, imagine your reader sitting down with you. The reader says, "What did you want to tell me?"

What is your main message to the reader—in one sentence? Write it down. It is your answer to the reader's first question and the start of your memo.

Next, image the questions your reader would have after hearing your opening sentence. Briefly note your answers to those questions.

Finally, imagine your reader asking, "What happens next?" Note the action required: what you will do next or what you need the reader to do next. If there is no planned action, end with the outcome of the subject of your memo.

If you have multiple readers, start with the principal reader. This is the reader who will act on your memo. If several readers will take action, imagine a typical one. Answer that reader's questions first; then open the floor and consider the questions your other readers might have. If these are many and varied, you can connect them later in your draft by grouping your answers under a few subheads.

Your answers to these questions form the outline for your draft.

Freewrite your draft (10 to 15 minutes)

Freewrite your answers to the readers' questions, taking up the questions in order of their importance to the reader. Try to write your answers in the words you would use to speak to the reader. Do not think about the writing—word choice, sentence or paragraph structure, punctuation, or grammar. Just concentrate on getting your thoughts on paper as you answer the questions conversationally, as if you were having a real dialogue with the reader. You can improve the style, tone, and grammar when you come to the editing phase.

Pause between writing and editing (1 to 2 minutes)

You need a break to switch roles from writer to editor.

Edit your draft: (5 to 10 minutes)

Edit your draft in two steps. First, read it over from start to finish, without stopping to change anything. This run-through is to read for general effect, to see if the memo would achieve your purpose. Read it all through.

Now start reshaping your memo. Note any changes prompted by your initial read-through. Then, see that you have been faithful to your imaginary dialogue. Have you put your main message first,

answered your reader's probable questions, and asked for action if appropriate? Finally, look at your paragraphs and sentences. Does each paragraph develop one clear message? Are your sentences varied? Is the style honest, clear, and conversational? Is the grammar correct? Make any necessary improvements.

Check your final copy (1 to 2 minutes)

Read it over once more to check that you have make all the required changes. Then sit back and relax. You have produced a truly effective memo—in just 30 minutes!

Cheryl Reimold is a member of the PCS Administrative Committee and the author of more than 200 articles and several books, including How to Write a Million-Dollar Memo, Being a Boss, *and* The Language of Business. *She is president of PERC Communications—6A Dickel Road, Scarsdale, NY 10583, (914) 725-1024—which offers businesses in-house workshops and courses in writing, presentations, and on-the-job communication skills.* ◄

Quailty Control

My 2-year-old daughter sometimes counts like this calendar does. But if I were to receive a large bequest with the stipulation that it be made on 2 January 1994, this is not the calendar I'd want the lawyers using!

—D.E.N. ◄

JANUARY 1994

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
DECEMBER	FEBRUARY					1
3	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

AdCom Meeting

The PCS Administrative Committee (AdCom) met in Washington, D.C., on 3 December 1993. Outgoing President Richie Robinson, along with Deborah Kizer and Bill Kehoe, attended the November review of PCS by the IEEE Technical Activities Board Review Committee. PCS seemed to do well in the review and Kizer said that the committee's comments will provide information that will be useful for planning and society improvements. Results of the review will be published in a future *Newsletter*.

Bill Kehoe was appointed Treasurer for 1994 and Frank Ortolani was appointed Secretary. Committee heads will remain the same for 1994.

Expense reimbursements for AdCom members and conference fee policy were discussed. For 1994, AdCom reimbursement will continue at $1000 per member per year; for a member living outside North America the rate will be $2000 per year. A conference fee schedule for 1995 was recommended by Kehoe and accepted in principle by the committee. A budget planning session will be scheduled for one of the 1994 AdCom meetings.

A final report was presented from Stephanie Rosenbaum's committee on *Proceedings* publications costs. The committee has gathered information for the costs under various scenarios so that future IPCC committees can make sound choices about how to publish the *Proceedings*. The largest savings potential appears to be in choosing a printer that is familiar with this type of document.

Transactions publication is being delayed by difficulties at IEEE Publications. Efforts are underway to get the publication dates back on schedule.

An agreement has been reached between PCS and the Russian A.S. Popov Society, Professional Communication Section. Details will be forthcoming once the agreement is formally signed.

Future meetings of the AdCom will be on 4 March 1994 in Piscataway, New Jersey; 3 June 1994 in New York City; 28–30 September 1994 at the IPCC 94 in Banff, Alberta; and 2 December 1994 in Washington, D.C. ◄

CALL FOR PAPERS

ICSC '94 International Conference:

Satellite Communications that Unite Nations

20–23 September 1994
Moscow, Russia

Organizers.

- Russian Popov Society for Radioengineering, Electronics and Communications
- Institute of Radioengineering & Electronics, Russian Academy of Sciences
- Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE)
- IEEE Russia Section
- IEEE Region 8
- IEEE Communications Society

In cooperation with

- Ministry of Communications of Russian Federation
- Russian Space Agency
- International Center for Scientific and Technical Information

The Conference will explore the theme "Satellite Communications that Unite Nations". Representatives from industry, research institutes and universities from all over the world will gather together to discuss recent advances and future trends of development in satellite communications. There will be visits to research centers and space establishments. Scientists, engineers and communication managers are invited to take part and to submit papers related to the following basic topics:

- Advanced fixed communications
- Personal-mobile communications
- Mini-microsatellites
- Platforms-launchers
- Broadcasting satellite service: direct reception and sound broadcasting
- Satellite navigation and radio determination systems
- Satellite-based systems in high elliptical and low Earth orbits
- Satellite-based systems for remote sensing and Earth observation, ecological monitoring
- VSAT/USATs and business television
- Distress and safety communications
- Network management/telecommunications networking
- On-board technologies
- Satellite-based personal communication systems (e-mail, video conferences, computer networks, access to remote data bases and banks, etc.)
- Cooperation between East and West countries for the development of telecommunication infrastructures in Eastern Europe

Deadlines.

10 March 1994: Abstracts of papers due for review (500 words)
15 April 1994: Notification of acceptance
15 June 1994: Full version of camera-ready manuscript due (4000 words)

Abstracts and papers should contain name, post address, phone and facsimile numbers, and e-mail address.

The Conference will be organized in the form of presentations of papers at plenary and problem-oriented sessions, combined with tutorials, panels, and round-table discussions.

Language: The written and spoken language of the Conference is English for an international audience. Special help with language is also available from Conference Translation service.

Workshops.

To maximize contact with Russian technical experts and businessmen, ICSC'94 will feature individual company workshops and product reviews. This program is designed to help participants and sponsors present their products or technology to technical experts and decision makers. Each workshop will include a presentation session and a question-and-answer session to allow ample time for complete coverage of the topic.

Companies presenting approved workshops and product reviews will contribute U.S.$300 toward the cost of arranging each workshop, which includes invitations to the audience, workshop room rental, equipment rental, and interpreter.

The General Chair of the International Conference "Satellite Communications" is Prof. Yuri Gulyaev, Director, Institute of Radioengineering & Electronics of the Russian Academy of Sciences; President of the Russian Popov Society; Chair, IEEE Russia Section.

For additional information please contact the Conference Co-Chair:

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Vice-Chair, IEEE Russia Section; Head of the Department,
Institute of Radioengineering & Electronics, Russian Academy of Sciences
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Phone: 7(095)203-4985 • Facs: 7(095)203-8414 • E-mail: hlants@ire.uucp.free.msk.su

Submissions.

Please submit two copies of abstracts and papers (on laser printer or diskette or by e-mail) to the Conference Program Committee:

Prof. Fulvio Ananasso
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Alphabet Soup

by Jean Paul Revel, Ph.D., Caltech, Pasadena, California

This article is a follow-up to Ken Werner's "Alphabet soup", which was published in the last issue of the Newsletter. *The article here is reprinted, with permission, from* Microscopy Today, *September 1992 issue.*

I have just attended the 50th anniversary of EMSA [Electron Microscopy Society of America; Ed.] in Boston, and what a grand show it was! Appropriately enough the organizers had brought together an impressive number of the pioneers in microscopy, and Sterling Newberry even prepared a book describing the early days of electron microscopy and a video in which said pioneers reminisce about how things were.

How are things now? Very exciting indeed! Many new microscopies have emerged and all fields of microscopy are growing like Topsy. On the way Topsy seems to have been feeding on a very hearty alphabet soup, leaving acronyms as crumbs in its wake. Unfortunately all these little cute short cuts of speech and writing are fairly fast turning (FFT) into big impediments to communication. No one really had problems with EM, SEM, and STEM. They sounded like magic incantations. One could clear one's throat by speaking of HREM, or HRSEM, but what to do with HRLVSEM? Everyone got used to Normarski = DIC and only a few eyebrows were raised AVEC-POL. No problem. But consider the situation today. With the greatest of AESe we have been LED to a rather SED state of affairs. By now I find it hard to RHEED a paper without a glossary (if you need one too, see below). I guess the IMFPs are to blame. The other day I came across TED and SAM and thought it odd that coauthors of the paper would be referred to by first name. It turned out to mean Transmission Electron Diffraction and Scanning Auger Microscopy. I was LED to ponder if these approaches would be better than EFTEM? or ESEM? Actually I like EELS best, especially the way they prepare them in Kyoto. SAM and TED also seem to use an STC where I use a specimen transfer chamber. As we say in French, "Quel CHI CHIs!"

Before the main meeting in downtown Boston, Linn Hobbs of MIT, with the help of Polaroid, had organized a meeting on "Future Directions in Microscopy & Imaging" in Southboro, which turns out to be off most MAPS (Microtubule Associated Proteins), but that is another story. I was totally spLEED and in fact somewhat SICMed by the FEGs, TOFSIMS, and UVPEMs and had to take to CBED. On reflection (REM), it SIMS that acronyms saved time and, when combined with very long sessions and draconian session leaders, allowed us to survey almost all of microscopy. The problem with the acronyms is that they only allow those people already familiar with a particular field to get much from what is being SED. I tried to relax by taking a cooled CCD but still ended up with NSOMnia and a PMT-like state trying to FEG it all out, including PTM. Who knows where it will all LEED?

Many of the acronyms are PIXE-ish, and I am sure put a gleam (not a GLEMA) in the perpetrator's eye, a bit like the messages on automobile vanity plates. They also help to sort who is with it and who is not. Many acronyms are useful as they save space, and therefore trees. But abbreviations should not be used at the expense of clarity. They are too often used when not needed. A recent paper I saw introduced the concept of QF-DE-RS (Quick Freeze, Deep Etch, Rotary Shadow), never to use it again, choosing wisely to spell out "quick freeze, deep etch, rotary shadowing" when called for in the body of the paper. A paper is a way to try to communicate with others, not to hide what one has done. If that takes a few more pieces of wood, that might be better than the forest needed to print an encyclopedia to explain the space-saving tongue- and mind-twisting acronyms.

Enough of this. I think I'll go home now and take a PIMS with a twist of orange PEELS, and let OSA come after Topsy for endangering our collective mental health. May the Force be with you, the AFM of course—oOPC! I meant to say SFM, natch!

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Glossary. Many of the acronyms below are found in *Microscopy, the Key Research Tool*, ISSN 0146-6119, published by EMSA, 1992.

AES	Auger Electron Spectroscopy
AFM	Atomic Force Microscopy
AVEC-POL	Allen Video Enhanced Contrast Polarization microscopy
CBED	I saw that somewhere but can't remember what it means; I favor Confocal Ballistic Electron Dispersion, but it is more likely a prosaic Convergent Beam Electron Diffraction.
CCD	Charge Coupled Device
CHI	Concentration Histogram Image
CHIs	Concentration Histogram Images
DIC	Differential Interference Contrast
EELS	Electron Energy Loss Spectroscopy
EFTEM	Energy Filtered TEM
EM*	Electron Microscopy
ESEM	Environmental Scanning Electron Microscopy
FFT	Fast Fourier Transform
GLEMA	Great Lakes EM Association
HREM*	High Resolution Electron Microscopy
HRLVSEM*	High Resolution, Low Voltage Scanning Electron Microscopy
HRSEM*	High Resolution Scanning Electron Microscopy
IMFP	Inelastic Mean Free Path
LED*	Light-Emitting Diode
LEED	Low Energy Electron Diffraction
NSOM	Near-field Scanning Optical Microscope
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
OPC	Oxygen Plasma Cleaning
OSA	Optical Specimen Annealing
PEELS	Parallel Electron Energy Loss Spectroscopy
PIMS	Precision Ion Mill System
PIXE	Proton Induced X-ray Emission
PMT	Photo-Multiplier Tube
PTM	Photon Tunneling Microscope
REM*	Rapid Eye Movement
RHEED	Reflection High Energy Electron Diffraction
SED	Secondary Electron Detector
SEM*	Scanning Electron Microscopy
SFM	Scanning Force Microscopy
SICM	Scanning Ion Conductance Microscopy
SIMS	Scanning Ion Mass Spectroscopy
STEM*	Scanning Transmission Electron Microscopy
TOFSIMS	Time of Flight SIMS
UVPEMS	Ultraviolet Photo-Electron Microscope

**Editorial additions. —D.E.N.* ◄

Call for Book Reviewers

The IEEE Press needs a dozen more reviewers for the six PCS-sponsored books it has in preparation.

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Quailty Control

Lead line from a local newspaper caption to a photo of a student who competed in the state Latin tournament finals.

Veni, vidi, vinci.

For those of you who took French or German, Caesar's quoted line of "I came, I saw, I conquered" is "Veni, vidi, vici." ◄

Does Anyone Know Where Editing Is Going?

by David E. Nadziejka

Language changes, everyone says, and you have to keep up with the changes. So what does the word *quality* mean today? This question has been at the back of my mind for years, slowly moving toward the front of my consciousness as more and more examples show up that I cannot rationalize.

About three years ago, I bought a book put out by a publisher I wasn't familiar with and found as I read through it some surprising writing errors and editorial misses: *mitigated* used in place of *militated*; a pilot *bales out* of an aircraft (perhaps he was counting on hay to cushion his fall?); and temperatures in Thailand averaging 85°C (185°F)! Errors such as these made me wonder about the accuracy of the rest of the book and whether anyone had bothered to edit the text at all.

Then about a year ago, I bought one of the new books on scientific writing from a major publisher, and—the same thing happened. Reading through about 100 pages brought to light a surprising number of problems in spelling, spacing, punctuation, and even scientific conventions (e.g., the abbreviation for hertz, Hz, written as H_z and also H). This book and its problems bothered me a lot more. Although the content of the book was good, the editing certainly hadn't been; the errors seriously detracted from the book, and I found the errors to be quite unexpected in a book from a large publisher.

The latest in this series of thought-provoking events was an article by Barbara B. Lamb entitled "Do university publishers still do 'serious editing'?" The article, published in the May 1993 *Editorial Eye*, was reprinted from *Scholarly Publishing* (Oct. 1992). Lamb, managing editor of The Johns Hopkins University Press, answered no, scholarly publishers today do not give manuscripts the type of editing that was common "twenty, fifteen, even five years ago". Competition, pressures to meet publishing schedules, and lack of editor's time all force publishers into "serious editing" that does not involve all of the tasks it used to; the key is management to determine the "level of edit a manuscript needs and *can afford*." [Italics in original. D.E.N.] Nonetheless, writes Lamb, "... if 'serious editing' no longer means what the old-guard copyeditor used to think, it does have meaning, which must be carefully defined in accord with the needs of the individual list."

Are high standards of quality in writing and editing passé?

Now, this article really gave me pause. With all of the publicity given in the past 10 years or so to quality programs, what is going on in the writing and editing field? We are producing more and more, faster and faster, and we are therefore redefining quality as whatever we can get done? That seems neither wise nor useful to client or reader, and yet here is a managing editor of a press who seems to be saying exactly that.

What *is* the meaning of *quality* in terms of writing and editing? *Is* it just the best one can afford, regardless of what does or doesn't get done? Are no standards to be reasonably considered inviolate? If an author gives you a first draft, can you simply spend the same x hours that a similar manuscript required when that author had worked through three revisions, and then say that the two products are equally good?

All editors know that a deadline is a commitment that one often has to meet, but meeting that deadline is a single measure of an editor's effectiveness. Although meeting a deadline may indeed involve compromise of the tasks the editor would normally perform, such a compromise must be recognized as what it is and not taken as a convenient redefinition of quality. If you meet a deadline, you've met a deadline; that says nothing about the quality of the document that went out the door. The deadline and the quality of the product are not an identity, and managers who try to define them so eviscerate the concept of *quality*.

The frenetic pace of our society and the short-term view of industry make quality difficult to attain in any case. When the question is the quality of prose and documents, the difficulty is multiplied by the indifference of so many people to the value of making documents easy for the reader (until, of course, they are the reader having the tough time).

Are high standards of quality in writing and editing passé? Or are they just unreconcilable with a view that makes the publisher and profits more important than the reader of the document? If the scholarly presses are giving in to the pressures of the industry and lowering their standards, is there hope that anyone will resist this step? And whom might they be? I'd like to hear your opinions. ◄

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CURMUDGEON'S CORNER

by Joan G. Nagle
(acknowledging the valuable assistance of Elliott V. Nagle, co-curmudgeon)

The Advantages of Writer's Block

It used to be the horror of that clean white sheet of paper, rolled into the typewriter or lying on the desk. Waiting for entry of the first word or sentence. Demanding that the entries be as pure and uncluttered as the paper itself. Silently reproachful: "You mean you haven't started *yet*?"

Suddenly, there was nothing in our heads that seemed worthy of setting down, especially on such a pristine surface. There was nothing there at all, as a matter of fact. We were suffering from writer's block, the curse of the empty page.

Is this anything like stage fright, I wonder? I read yesterday that Barbra Streisand suffers terribly from stage fright, to the extent that she has not been able to sing before an audience for years. If she is being paid for the job, that is ... strangely, she has no such problem with benefit performances. The analogy, if there is one, may be that it is the importance of the thing that sets up the block. Except in the most extreme cases, we can write notes to newsboys or letters to lovers without difficulty. It's the fact that our fortunes may hang on what we are about to do that gives us such extended pause.

Now we stare at a blank computer screen instead of a blank piece of paper. The report is due at 8 tomorrow morning; panic sets in. It's exactly the same sort of panic as we faced with pencil or typewriter, only now a machine is doing the reproaching (which is worse).

There are *advantages* to this pain and suffering, you say? Well, actually, I never said that, but my husband recently pointed them out to me. "We used to sharpen every pencil in the office, just to put off starting to write a report," he recalled. "We'd arrange all the books in the bookcase, by subject and author's surname. We'd straighten the piles of paper on the desk, maybe even sort and file them. If we were working at a typewriter, we'd clean the keys ... remember digging inky gunk out of the o's and p's?"

The professional writer is one who can write professionally when the muse isn't there.

"At the computer, we procrastinate by ordering directories, deleting obsolete documents, backing up essential stuff, polishing the screen. You'd never get all this stuff done if it weren't for writer's block!"

He pointed up even more significant advantages to writer's block if one is working out of a home office, as we both are these days. You convince yourself that what will clear your brain is fresh air, which means going outdoors to rake leaves or wash cars. I've even been known to bake a pie or sew on a button, hoping for the same therapeutic effect. It could be said, and might be, that these periods of writer's block are the only times that we rake leaves or wash cars or bake pies or replace buttons. So there you are ... blocked from writing, but accomplishing all sorts of Good Works thereby.

I don't know any cures for writer's block, but there are "workarounds". We had a friend who kept a list of ten all-purpose opening phrases/sentences for monthly reports posted above his desk. For instance, "During the last report period, efforts were directed toward...." Each month he'd choose one he hadn't used for a while, set it down, and find he could move smoothly forward from that point.

Ron Blicq, veteran technical writer, teacher, and mainstay of IEEE/PCS, uses a similar trick to get into a letter. "Start off with 'The reason I am writing you this letter is that ...,'" he recommends. "Fill in the rest of the sentence and the rest of the letter, then go back and erase 'The reason I am writing you this letter is that'."

It must be said that writer's block on the computer is not quite the handicap it was in "paper-full office" days. What made the blank paper so frightening was the difficulty of changing anything once you'd set it down. (Especially at the 11th hour, which was when the symptoms were worst.) With paper, we felt that we had to start at the beginning and work our way in perfect order, syntax, and orthography to the end.

The blessing of word processing is its flexibility. We don't have to make it perfect; we can get our thoughts down and then go for perfection on the next iteration. Even better, we don't have to start at the beginning ... which, because of its importance, is the most off-putting part of the whole job. We can begin by writing a paragraph or so about the part of the project that's closest to our heart or to our consciousness at this moment. This eases us into the job, makes the rest a snap. (Outlining programs are especially helpful for this kind of nonlinear composition.)

The common feature of these workarounds is the push to write *something.* Writing something, anything, gets us off dead center. Pulitzer-prize-winning author Greg White Smith tells of an intellectual debate he was having with himself and an elderly editor about one of his works. She finally lost patience and said, "Oh, just write the $#%&*#% thing!"

Smith says, and this is the heart of the matter, "The professional writer is one who can write professionally when the muse isn't there." Go do it. ◄

Say Again?

An article in *The Scientist* (18 Oct. 1993, p. 11) presents the opinions of six undergraduates on U.S. science education. They see a major problem stemming from secondary education, and they say in their second paragraph, "No matter what field is being considered, the problem rests in verbal skills. And this simple fact is overlooked by even the most sensitive and well-meaning authorities in the broad field of education." They go on to propose some solutions, and the final sentence of the article is, "These suggestions are from the students' perspective, rather than from that of educators who have long since lost contact with the classroom."

These two bits from opposite ends of the article were combined in a display box as "Simple facts are overlooked by even the most sensitive and well-meaning authorities in the broad field of education—including experts who have lost contact with the classroom." ◄

An expert is someone who knows no more than you do, but who has it better organized and uses slides.
Unknown

Worth Reading

Beder, S. Engineers, ethics and etiquette. *New Scientist,* 139:36–41 (25 Sept. 1993). The difficulties with professional codes of ethics are discussed in light of several cases from Australia and the United States in which engineers have been censured for public criticism of other engineers. The question raised is whether engineers are really expected to put the public welfare first, as codes of ethics usually state.

Limerick, P.N. Dancing with professors: the trouble with academic prose. *The New York Times Book Review,* pp. 3, 23–24 (31 Oct. 1993). When a listener doesn't understand what a speaker is saying, the usual reply is, "Let me try to say it more clearly." But in scholarly writing today, according to Limerick, the exchange is completed by the academic writer replying, "Too bad. The problem is that you are an unsophisticated and untrained reader. If you were smarter, you would understand me." This exchange remains implicit because no reader wants to say, "This doesn't make any sense." Limerick, an academic herself, suggests reasons that academic writing is so tortu(r)ous and opaque.

Matthews, R. When seeing is not believing. *New Scientist,* 140:13–15 (16 Oct. 1993). Now that digital technology allows easy and virtually undetectable manipulation of photographs, Matthews asks, "Can we ever trust the camera again?" [I've had this question nagging me for 10 years, ever since a popular science magazine published a southwestern U.S. landscape with the moon *in front of* the clouds. They confessed to trying to make the photo more interesting after a reader queried them about it. Ed.]

Swazey, J.P., M.S. Anderson, and K.S. Lewis. Ethical problems in academic research. *American Scientist,* 81:542–553 (Nov.-Dec. 1993). Results of a survey of doctoral candidates and faculty from 99 of the largest graduate departments in chemistry, civil engineering, microbiology, and sociology.

Thimbleby, H., and C. Neesham. How to play tricks with dots. *New Scientist,* 140:26–29 (9 Oct. 1993). A description (and illustration) of three-dimensional images without stereo pairs or a stereoscope. The images are formed from overlapping patterns of dots generated by a computer program, and the 3D effect is startlingly vivid, even from a mass-printed reproduction. ◄

1994 Calendar

24–28 April

European Association of Science Editors 5th General Assembly and Congress, Budapest, Hungary. Contact Maeve O'Conner, EASE, 49 Rossendale Way, London NW1 0XB, U.K. Tel: +44 (0) 71-388-9668; facs: 383-3092

14–16 May

Council of Biology Editors 38th Annual Meeting, Quebec City, Canada. Contact CBE, One Illinois Center, Suite 200, 111 East Wacker Drive, Chicago, IL 60601-4298. Tel: (312) 616-0800; facs: (312) 616-0223

15–18 May

Society for Technical Communication 41st Annual Conference, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Contact STC, 901 N. Stuart St., Suite 3-4, Arlington, VA 22203-1822. Tel: (703) 522-4114

6–7 June

42nd Technical Writers' Institute, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, NY. Contact Elizabeth Keyes, Dept. of Language, Literature, and Communication, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, NY 12180-3590. Tel: (518) 276-2828; e-mail: elizabeth_keyes@mts.rpi.edu

28–30 September

IPCC 94, Banff, Alberta, Canada. Contact Ron S. Blicq, RGI International, 569 Oxford Street, Winnipeg, MB, Canada R3M 3J2. Tel: (204) 488-7060; facs: (204) 488-7294; e-mail: r.blicq@compmail.com ◄

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