



# IEEE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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## PCS AND SCHOLARLY PUBLISHING

BY ELWOOD K. GANNETT, IEEE LIFE FELLOW

As the Professional Communication Society (PCS) observes its 40th anniversary, it is appropriate that we recognize the significant services PCS has rendered over the years to the community at large. High on the list of these accomplishments is the important contribution it made to the field of scholarly communication. For it was the success of a series of unusual PCS conferences in the 1970s that led to another notable event — the formation of the Society for Scholarly Publishing (SSP).

The following account of the genesis of SSP is an amalgam of the perspectives of two participants in the process, namely, the first president of SSP, Mark Carroll, and the author.

In tracing the roots of SSP, the year 1957 becomes doubly significant. Not only does it mark the birth of PCS but also the launching of Sputnik. To appreciate the connection between the launching of Sputnik and the launching of SSP, it is helpful to say a word about the influence of Sputnik on the course of subsequent events in the U.S.

### The Impact of Sputnik

It would be hard to exaggerate the impact that Sputnik had on the U.S. scientific and technical enterprises. It triggered a veritable flurry of major government reports and activities during the following decade. The first of these was the Baker Panel Report in 1958, titled "Improving the Availability of Scientific Information in the United States." This report led immediately to giving the National Science Foundation the leadership role within the government on science information matters.

The Baker Panel Report was followed by the Crawford Task Force Report in 1962, the Weinberg Report in 1963, the activities of COSATI (Committee on Scientific and Technical Information) in the mid-1960s, and the SATCOM (Committee on Scientific and Technical Communication) Reports in 1969 and 1970.

All this government activity reflected a national awakening to the realization that the efficient and effective transfer of scientific and technical information was of critical importance to the nation's welfare. Added to this concern was another powerful factor, namely, the rapid growth of the scientific and technical literature. A major study had shown that this growth was exponential, and had been for many years.

Concern over the exponential growth rate of the literature had a profound psychological effect on the information community during the period after Sputnik, creating a crisis atmosphere that dominated the 1960s. Calvin Mooers invented the term "information retrieval" and it became the byword of a new era.

The term "information explosion" came to the fore and dominated the mood of the period. The crisis atmosphere grew and spilled over into the world of journal publishers.

By the late 1960s and early 1970s the burning question being discussed at virtually every meeting in the science information community was: Will the journal survive? Indeed, one observation then making the rounds was that changing jobs in the journal field was like swapping deck chairs on the Titanic.

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CELEBRATING

40  
YEARS

1957-1997

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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

I agree with the views of Donna Wicks expressed in her article: "The Dumbing of America" (*PCS Newsletter*, vol. 41, No. 2). I would like to add a few thoughts that focus on engineering and technology education.

My concerns arise from what I see as a diminishing interest in "knowing" technology while there is a growing love of "using" technology not among the public but among the students of engineering and technology. It may not be a major problem if the public is not interested in knowing technology; sometimes it is impractical to demand that. However, it is a major concern when the very people who are supposed to understand technology and to contribute to its growth later on are merely interested in using it.

It becomes more alarming when educators are forced to nourish that attitude in the name of hands-on, without brains-on, learning. Many students are led to believe that employment opportunities depend on the ability to use existing technology and not on knowing or understanding anything.

I have heard many times statements to the effect that the lifetime of engineering knowledge now is such and such number of years; usually five! The amazement arises when one sees that the people who believe in such statements are the advocates of learning on a need-to-know basis and the supporters of "using" technology over

"understanding" technology. They do not see that one is the cause, or at least a major cause, and the other is the effect.

Such an environment, no wonder, encourages books that can "squeeze so much words into such a little idea"; CD-ROMs and Internet sites that give numerous moving objects, colored pictures, etc. regardless of their significance.

I think that when we deal with students as if they were idiots, they will meet the expectations. Enhancing the idiocy level of the population, using the best the technology can offer, should not be one of the objectives of any educational system.

We, those who are concerned, have to communicate to the decision makers in industry (people with money and worries about the value of shares) and in government (people with money to spend and worries about re-election) that it is a waste of resources to put the emphasis on only using technology. An educated individual can grow and prosper, a user will be obsolete within a few years (five, I suppose!).

It may appear financially attractive to some companies to hire an individual who can use a certain existing technology immediately and then replace that individual three years later and so on. We have to persuade the decision makers that such an approach is damaging in the long run both financially and socially; can we do that?

— Ahmad Ibrahim  
Ontario, Canada

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*It becomes more alarming when educators are forced to nourish that attitude in the name of hands-on, without brains-on, learning.*

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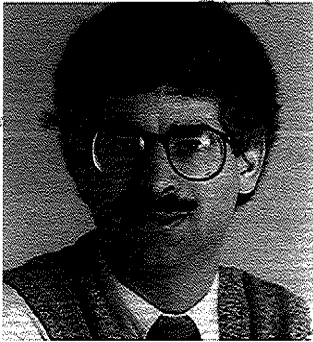
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## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



MARK HASELKORN

## SNOWBIRD SUMMIT

On October 22, 1997, at Snowbird Utah, representatives from five organizations representing approximately 24,000 professional technical communicators and 700,000 professionals from allied fields will meet to explore common issues, opportunities, and practices in the field of technical communication.

The ACM's Special Interest Group for Documentation (SIGDOC), the Association of Teachers of Technical Writing (ATTW), the Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication (CPTSC), IEEE's Professional Communication Society (PCS), and the Society for Technical Communication (STC) will hold a "summit meeting" in conjunction with the overlapping SIGDOC and IPCC conferences. This summit comes at a time that many in our field see as a critical juncture, stimulated by the increasingly prevalent use of electronic information for communication throughout the world.

The summit will begin with an opportunity for input from attendees of the two overlapping conferences. This will occur at an open session that moderator Saul Carliner of STC describes as an Oprah-style discussion about the field. He plans to invite a few guests to be resource

people, but while these people will present brief position statements during the program, the bulk of the program will be an open forum among all of the attendees. (It should be fascinating to see what Oprah would be like as a technical communicator.)

Following the general session, two representatives from each of the five organizations will meet to explore similarities and differences, as well as to achieve some "groupthink" on issues, opportunities, and practices that affect us all.

The current plan is to have this smaller meeting led by a professional facilitator. Currently named organizational representatives are: ATTW, Sam Dragga and Karen Shriver; CPTSC, Steven Bernhardt and Deborah Bosley; PCS, Mark Haselkorn and George Hayhoe; SIGDOC, the new Chair and Vice Chair to be elected this Spring; and STC, Saul Carliner and the "infamous player to be named later."

This is the first time that the five major organizations representing the field of Technical Communication will formally meet together. If these groups can find substantive areas of agreement and mutual action, it will be an historic get together. In the meantime, input from any PCS member on the summit's goals, strategies, and possible outcomes is welcome.

*If these groups can find substantive areas of agreement and mutual action, it will be an historic get together.*

## LOOKING FOR PCS RECOLLECTIONS

Time flies when you're having fun. Arrival of this fourth *Newsletter* of our anniversary year means that it is already deadline time for the fifth issue, and that the deadline for the sixth and final issue of the year is only two months away (September 5).

So there's not much time left to contribute your recollections of the 40 years of the Professional Communication Society and its many-named forerunners. Please send them to, or communicate with,

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CELEBRATING

40  
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1957-1997

## LANGUAGE EXPERTISE?

BY BRADFORD R. CONNATSER

Listening to a commercial doggerel on the radio the other day, I suddenly realized how difficult it is to do good things with words. Certainly this is no revolutionary epiphany. As professional writers and editors, we all suffer when we work with words. But the subject-matter experts with whom we work never seem to suffer enough to satisfy me. They write quickly, confidently. They make bold edits. They bequeath advice to improve us, such as this aphorism I received not long ago: "Fewer, stronger words are better."

Why? Why do lay writers do these things? Because they are language experts. Practically everyone is. People are instinctive language users, and the habitual use of language induces a comfort and ease that leads to a rhetorical confidence I find myself coveting.

For most language users, language is like a cotton shirt that goes undetected by the senses. On the other hand, the language shirt worn by professional writers bears not only a jagged tag that incessantly digs at the skin but also the packing needles that dig even deeper. We are hyper-aware of language. We wear it uncomfortably. We twitch and shrug and fidget, while the lay writer relaxes, hardly aware of language at all, hardly aware of the difference between the language artifacts we create and the ones they create.

In a world where everyone is a "language expert," technical communicators frequently suffer the depreciation of their delicate judgments and refined rhetorical strategies when well meaning subject-matter experts insist upon the clumsy language that is the source of our employment. Here's an example of that language-extreme, perhaps, to bluntly illustrate the point, but only bad enough to have earned me third place in the June 1996 COREComm Worst-Technical-Writing-Sample-of-the-Month Contest:

*The dip in supply voltage to a PC power supply due to the momentary reactive drops in the supply circuit during the high rates of change in currents occurring in power system during commutation of a non-linear loads.*

COREComm's light-hearted contest, which transforms a source of consternation into a source of pride (perhaps somewhat perverted), pokes fun at our word-induced grief. However, the penalty for clumsy language can range widely, from the inconsequential to the perilous.

For example, the intended audience of that excerpt, electrical engineers, probably worked through the sentence and created some sort of meaning, despite the absence of a verb. No significant harm done.

However, in the third-quarter 1995 issue of the *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, Max Loges of Lamar University discloses a tale of woe initiated and perpetuated by inadequate communication skills. During the Civil War, as the tale goes, the inability of General Beauregard to clearly communicate his plans and objectives imperils his troops and ultimately leads to his demotion and banishment to the West after his crude language offends President Jefferson Davis.

Ouch. Perhaps if General Beauregard had retained a professional editor to repair his faulty missives and reports, we would be referring to this soldier of misfortune as General Beauregard, eighteenth president of the United States of America.

If it has taught us anything, our experience with subject-matter experts has taught us that the quality of preverbal thought rarely indicates the quality of verbal expression, especially when that quality is measured against the prevailing standards of professional communication. Our inevitable dealings with subject-matter experts—who are sometimes intractable, sometimes willing to enter negotiations, sometimes in different—requires us to learn a skill not to be mentioned in the curricula of technical communication programs: the fine art of diplomacy and psychological troubleshooting.

Thus, to my point. The journals, magazines, and newsletters of technical and science communication are replete with articles crafted to help professional tech-

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*In a world where everyone is a "language expert," technical communicators frequently suffer the depreciation of their delicate judgments and refined rhetorical strategies when well meaning subject-matter experts insist upon the clumsy language that is the source of our employment.*

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CURMUDGEON'S CORNER



JOAN G. NAGLE

*Joan Nagle has been active in PCS since 1985. She has edited the Society's Transactions and has served on the Editorial Board of the IEEE Press. She is currently working on her second book.*

*The Economist's second point, that the Internet has confirmed English as a global tongue, is underscored by research that indicates 80 percent of the information stored in the world's computers is in English. For scientific subjects, almost all material on the Internet is in English.*

# LE CURMUDGEON FRANCAIS

A late, lamented colleague once had a customer by the name of Peter Paine (I am not making this up) who regularly submitted a particularly unpleasant job. On one such occasion, Rudy asked, "You come in with this stuff once a month, right?"

"Right," Peter replied.

"Then how come I seem to see it so much oftener than my paycheck?"

That's sorta the way it is with bimonthly columns...except that there is no paycheck. To ease some of the pain(e) this time, allow me to summarize an editorial from *The Economist* (December 21, 1996), titled "Language and Electronics: The Coming Global Tongue."

French President Jacques Chirac calls it a "major risk for humanity." AIDS? The bomb? Overeating? No, what he deeply fears is what the Internet may do to language, not least his own country's language.

He is not the first national leader so haunted. In 1898, Otto von Bismarck was asked to name the decisive factor in modern history. His answer: "The fact that the North Americans speak English."

Common standards enable electronic media to work efficiently. Windows is the common operating system for the PC. TCP/IP is the common transmission protocol that hooks together PCs, Macs, computers anywhere in the world. "The English language is now the operating standard for global communication," says *The Economist*.

"Electronic communications have affected, and will continue to affect, language in three distinct ways. First, they change the way language is used. Secondly, they have created a need for a global language—and English will fill that slot. Third, they will influence the future of other languages which people will (perhaps perversely) continue to speak."

In the first effect, we see on our e-mail screens the splatter of abbreviations already noted in a previous Curmudgeon column. They constitute a new jargon that, like other such activity-specific vocabularies, serves to make the communication impenetrable to the novice. Anthropologist Steve Mizrach (University of Florida) says, "Social power is linguistic power in virtual communities." In nonthesis speak, if you know the language, you're in. And conversely.

*Wired* magazine recently produced a style guide for *digerati*, grandly called "Principles of English Usage in the Digital Age." Unlike other style guides, however, this one "seems notably uninterested in being comprehensible to those whose first language is not English—or, indeed, to some of us who had thought that English was our mother tongue," we read.

Its editor, Constance Hale, explains: "I would be very cautious about accessibility being our first requirement, because it seems to me that you then wash out some of the most lively language."

What? Liveliness is more important than accessibility? Oh la. Vocabulary is not the only issue here; grammar and syntax are also on the line. Electronic mail is more like conversation than it is like print communication. Describing e-mail style, one expert says, "There's no social pressure to avoid the broken sentence. The key word is bandwidth—which implies that the Internet will collapse if you use flowery language, but really just means 'Get to the point.'"

Hence the staccato style of much electronic exchange: "The five-word sentence doesn't rattle on the screen as much as it does on paper."

*The Economist's* second point, that the Internet has confirmed English as a global tongue, is underscored by research that indicates 80 percent of the information stored in the world's computers is in

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## PCS AND SCHOLARLY PUBLISHING

(continued from page 1)

### PCS Conferences on Journals

It was against this background of widespread concern for the future of the information system as a whole that PCS, acting on the suggestion of George E. Schindler, Jr., of Bell Laboratories, decided to hold an IEEE Conference on the Future of Scientific and Technical Journals. The meeting, held in May 1973 at the Commodore Hotel in New York City, was organized largely by John C. Phillips of RCA and chaired by James M. Lufkin of Honeywell, aided and abetted by Schindler, Arthur Herschman (American Institute of Physics), Charles Roland (Mayo Foundation), Fred Spilhaus (American Geophysical Union), and the author (IEEE).

To say that this conference was a success would be an understatement. It was received with great enthusiasm by the 157 participants. Moreover, its impact was substantially enhanced by the decision of PCS to publish a record of the conference as an issue of its *Transactions*. Most telling of all, the enthusiasm generated by the meeting was so great that it set in motion the planning of a second conference.

The reason for the great enthusiasm was not only the timeliness of the conference subject but also, and perhaps even more important, the unusual composition of the audience. The audience mix was central to the unique character of the conference. This factor was so well expressed by Lufkin in his preface to the conference record that the preface is worth quoting in full:

"The conference represented by this Record was remarkable in at least two respects. It brought together editors and publishers from the engineering and engineering-related sciences on one hand, and those from the biological and social sciences on the other. It also joined in discussion the editors and publishers on one hand, and the users — librarians and information scientists — on the other. The informal exchanges alone from these unusual encounters were

enough to justify the conference for many of those who attended.

"If the bridges we have built in this way between these quite different 'subcultures' of science are strong enough to last, we may look forward to some strong new traffic in ideas. And to judge by the spirited three-hour debate (transcribed in this Record) we have made a good beginning."

A good beginning indeed. The bridges proved strong enough to support two more PCS conferences on scientific journals and the founding of the Society for Scholarly Publishing. The second conference was held in April 1975 in Cherry Hill, NJ, and the third meeting took place in May 1977 in Reston, VA. The proceedings were again published by PCS, with the aid of grants from the National Science Foundation.

Both meetings were organized by the same committee, with James Lufkin serving as general chairman and Charles Thompson of Northwestern University as program chairman. The program committee was a diverse group that included Roland, Spilhaus, and the author from the previous conference committee plus D. H. Michael Bowen (American Chemical Society), Anita DeVivo (American Psychological Association), and Patricia Stivers (American Educational Research Association).

### Association for Scientific Journals

The ancestry of the Society for Scholarly Publishing involves two other elements that need to be mentioned. The first involves James Lufkin who, after chairing the first of these conferences, sent a newsletter to all the attendees titled "Association for Scientific Journal Editors, Publishers & Users Newsletter." Thus was the Association for Scientific Journals (ASJ) born.

Lufkin endeared himself to the recipients when he announced that all attendees were automatically members of ASJ, and that

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*All this government activity reflected a national awakening to the realization that the efficient and effective transfer of scientific and technical information was of critical importance to the nation's welfare.*

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there would be no dues and no charge for the newsletter. Indeed, he declared, "If the Association gets official, or organized, or starts to incur expenses, the editor will resign."

Although the ASJ began as the figment of a fertile imagination, it quickly took on a life of its own. The newsletter became very helpful in sustaining interest in and providing momentum for the PCS conferences that followed. Indeed, because the ASJ was by definition one and the same as the conference attendees, the subsequent conferences became identified and are best remembered as ASJ conferences, supported by PCS.

### Innovation Guide Project

The other ancestral element of SSP was the Innovation Guide Project. Devised in 1974 and funded by the National Science Foundation, the purpose of the project was to gather and disseminate information on innovative printing and publishing practices of value to the scientific and technical journal community.

The Capital Systems Group of Rockville, MD, was contracted to undertake the project, with John M. Strawhorn as principal investigator. This effort resulted in a publication titled "Improving the Dissemination of Scientific and Technical Information: A Practitioner's Guide to Innovation."

The Innovation Guide was developed over a four-year period with the guidance of an advisory panel of eminent publishers. During the course of their deliberations, there developed a growing feeling among panel members that a new organization devoted to scholarly publishing was needed.

### The Birth of SSP

If the Innovation Guide Project generated the germ of an idea, the 1977 PCS conference in Reston provided the seedbed. An unusual feature of that conference was the creation of more or less spontaneous discussion groups as additions to the formal program. One such group was convened to discuss the possibility of forming

a scholarly publishing society, based on a prospectus and projections prepared by John Strawhorn, Fred Spilhaus, and Spilhaus' associate, Judy Holoviak.

The Reston discussion was encouraging and led to the convening of a small working group on June 16, 1978, in the apartment of Anita DeVivo, who was a member of the Innovation Guide advisory panel as well as the program committee of the PCS conferences. The result was the decision to establish the Society for Scholarly Publishing, with Mark Carroll, Chief of the Professional Publication Division of the National Park Service, as president of the new society. The board of directors that was assembled included three from the PCS conference program committee: DeVivo, Spilhaus, and the author.

The SSP held its first meeting in June of the following year in Boston. As part of the program, the chairman invited James Lufkin to give a luncheon address on the subject "Reflections of a Godfather." Thereafter, he became known as the godfather of SSP.

The SSP's annual meetings became, in effect, a continuation of the three PCS conferences on scientific journals with an expanded scope that embraces the humanities as well as the sciences and books as well as journals. The bridges built by the first PCS conference have indeed proven strong enough to last.

As the Professional Communication Society reaches its 40th milestone, it can view with pride its role as progenitor of an organization, now nearing its own 20th anniversary, that so ably serves the wide world of scholarly publishing.

*Mr. Gannett (IEEE Associate Member '46, Senior '53, Fellow '62, Life Fellow '89) served on the headquarters staff of the IEEE and its predecessor, the Institute of Radio Engineers, for 42 years. Prior to his retirement he was Director of Publishing Services and Deputy General Manager. He served on the first board of directors of the Society for Scholarly Publishing, chaired its first meeting, and is a past president.*

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## STUDENT NEWS

## SEATTLE CHAPTER

*Submitted by  
Margaret Garner,  
Chair*

The Seattle chapter held its first student paper contest in 1995. The contest was open to graduates and undergraduates. The chapter awarded prizes to two graduate students and one undergraduate.

The chapter held its second contest in 1996. Again, the contest was open to graduates and undergraduates, but only one entry was received and no award was presented.

This year, the contest was open to undergraduates only. The chapter selected the following recipients:

- First place (\$500): **Jay Kapur**  
Title of paper: *Design of a surround sound decoder*
- Second place (\$100): **Greta Martin**  
Title of paper: *Cometabolic degradation of TCE*
- Third place (\$50): **Neil Bernotski**  
Title of paper: *Delta.vi users manual*

In addition to the \$300 from PCS, the chapter had \$200 from the Seattle Section, and \$150 from the University of Washington student branch.

Jay Kapur presented his paper at the Area contest on April 26.

## OWED TO JIM LUFKIN (ALIAS KING JAMES)

BY ELWOOD K. GANNETT, IEEE LIFE FELLOW

**Note:** This poetic tribute followed the third of the Professional Communication Society's conferences on scientific journals (1977). It is reprinted from the PCS Newsletter, vol. 20, no. 3, p. 5, July 1977. The context is described in Mr. Gannett's article, "PCS and Scholarly Publishing," on page one of this issue.

As our conference on journals comes to an end,  
We should ask what we've learned; what does it portend?  
We learned roses are red and violets are blue,  
And that journals, like rosebuds, are in the red, too.

We saw publishers thinking their rights were inviolate,  
But copying problems made them blue as a violet.  
When librarians warned us of budget attrition,  
They soothed us by calling it deacquisition.

Editors revealed their referee capers  
Were a Machiavellian way to lose papers.  
We learned production technology that beggared description,  
Even author-typed copy, known as decomposition.

We came with the fear that as computer use spread,  
Journals and publishers soon might be dead.  
But with new library networks and publishing schemes,  
Will librarians then replace the computing machines?

The copyright problem took on a new cast;  
We found the ultimate answer at last!  
We proved beyond doubt it's a law we don't need,  
For our authors can't write and our readers don't read.

For all of this knowledge, for all that we've learned,  
For this wonderful conference, there's one man who's earned  
Our undying thanks. So let the cheers ring  
To our Chairman, Jim Lufkin: Long live the King!



## FLOCCIANUCHINIHIPIILIFICATION

## INGER'S LAW

BY MICHAEL BRADY

Inger Gjers was the only girl in her class at engineering school. That was a generation ago. Times have changed. So has Inger. Though she can still strip a rack of telecom gear in ten minutes flat, she no longer fixes its innards. She's now up front, at the interface between her employer, a major maker of satellite communications earth stations, and the owners and operators of those stations. Inger is a problem solver.

She likens the work to that of an anesthetist: 90 percent routine and 10 percent chaos. She got the job not because of outright engineering skill, which she admits is average, nor because she is a woman in Norway, the country with the world record of women in top positions in technology and government. She's there because she handles the 10 percent just as she handles the 90 percent. She does that not by implanting routine in chaos, but by seeing chaos in routine.

She came to that realization a few years ago, through immersion in the cauldron of professional communications. Her strength to confront the task was that of an engineer coming to the art of exposition in mid-career.

While other course instructors and technical writers were tied to the baggage of their backgrounds, Inger was unfettered. The bulk of her professional life at electronics racks had obliged her to seek a practical shortcut to every problem. Consequently, she became a nuts-and-bolts explorer of the techniques of professional communications.

When she wrote upon or taught a topic, her work reflected the essence of the moment. Like Joseph Conrad, the Pole who came to English as an adult and changed the concept of the novel, Inger Gjers broke with the ponderous hierarchy of telecommunications documentation and made every manual, every lecture a toolbox contrived to equip end users.

In putting together those toolboxes, she evolved a rationale now known as "Inger's Law of Professional Communications."  
*Everything must come first!*

In practice, Inger's Law says that there is no reliable way to predict what should best come first in a manual or in a lecture. No two readers, no two listeners are alike, so no pitch of information has the same effect for all who receive it. Consequently, the question is not equivalent to the venerable "what comes first, chicken or egg?"

It's an admission that any technical documentation invariably is flawed for some users. The goal in compiling documentation then is to minimize but not eliminate the flaws seen by users.

The basic process (should that have come first?) that undergirds the compilation of every manual, every handbook, differs from that of writing a novel or composing a work of music, as Inger knows well: Her hobby is pursuing grand opera and her husband is a musicologist. So the chief corollary to her law says that true precursors and codas are seldom. That observation predates technology: "But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first." (*Matthew 19:39*).

*The goal in compiling documentation then is to minimize but not eliminate the flaws seen by users.*

Our toaster works on either AC or DC, but not on bread. It has two settings — too soon or too late.

— Sam Levenson, In One Era and Out the Other

## CANDIDATES NEEDED FOR PCS ELECTION

BY GEORGE F. HAYHOE, MANAGER, PCS NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Seven member-at-large seats on the Professional Communication Society's Administrative Committee (AdCom) will be filled in the election held at the AdCom meeting on Saturday, October 25, at the Snowbird Resort outside Salt Lake City, UT.

AdCom members-at-large are selected by vote of the current AdCom members-at-large; the term for members to be elected in October begins January 1, 1998, and ends December 31, 2000. AdCom members must be willing and able to attend at least two of the three meetings held each year. The first two meetings this year were held in Quebec City in February and in Washington, DC, in July; the final meeting will be at Snowbird in October.

In 1997, PCS will reimburse AdCom members \$350 per meeting attended, for a yearly maximum of \$1050. AdCom members or their employers must be willing to pay any unreimbursed travel expenses associated with AdCom meetings.

To be eligible for election, candidates must be members of both IEEE and PCS on January 1, 1998. PCS affiliate members interested in being AdCom candidates must be eligible for IEEE membership—that is, they must be active practitioners or teachers of technical communication—and must apply and be elected to Institute membership prior to January 1998.

If you are interested in becoming a candidate for the PCS AdCom, please prepare responses to the following questions:

1. Who are you and what do you do in your career?
2. What other professional organizations do you belong to, and what are your past and present activities with them?
3. If you are currently an AdCom member and are seeking re-election, what will you do, or what would you like to do, during the next three years?
4. Why should you be elected—or re-elected—to the AdCom?
5. How many meetings will you attend each year?
6. What is your current membership grade? If you are an IEEE member, what is your membership number? If you are a PCS affiliate, are you eligible for election to IEEE and do you commit to applying for membership should you be elected to the AdCom?

Submit your answers via e-mail to [george@ghayhoe.com](mailto:george@ghayhoe.com). Alternately, send a Macintosh or PC-compatible diskette containing a Microsoft Word, RTF, or ASCII file with your answers to George Hayhoe, 194 Aberdeen Drive, Aiken, SC 29803.

Completed candidate questionnaires must be received by September 15. Candidates' answers to this questionnaire will be made available to voting AdCom members prior to the election meeting.

Questions regarding potential candidacy may be directed to George Hayhoe at the e-mail or postal addresses above.

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Educational television should be absolutely forbidden. It can only lead to unreasonable expectations and eventual disappointment when your child discovers that the letters of the alphabet do not leap out of books and dance around the room with royal-blue chickens.

—Fran Lebowitz, *Social Studies*, 1981

# THE DUMBING OF THE INTELLECTUALS

BY HANSPETER SCHMID

I have read "The Dumbing of America" (March/April 1997) and found it very interesting, but I disagree with the author's description of the symptoms of, the reasons for, and the importance of the "dumbing."

"Using" technology rather than "knowing" it is very human: Look at how a child plays and learns. The idea which you support, that it should be the other way around, is the idea of intellectuals, and of science as it is perceived by them. This idea is both old and wrong.

In his 1984 autobiography, Paul Feyerabend wrote: "The treasures unearthed by science seem to have an advantage: Being related to each other in lawful ways, they can be manipulated or predicted by using the laws. But that makes them important only if the resulting scenario is pleasant to live in. The objection that the scenario is 'real,' and that we must adapt to it no matter what, has no weight, for it is not the only one: There are many ways of thinking and living."

Likewise, Ludwig Wittgenstein wrote in 1919: "We feel that even when all possible scientific questions have been answered, the problems of life remain completely untouched."

Here the difference between being dumb and being uneducated becomes apparent: The uneducated person cannot tackle the problems of science; the dumb person cannot tackle the problems of life. There are both uneducated people with lots of common sense and dumb intellectuals. Now what is it that a dumb, uneducated person needs most? Common sense or education?

Teachers have of course recognized this, but their reaction is usually the wrong one. "People, intellectuals especially, seem unable to be content with a little more freedom, a little more happiness, a little more light. Perceiving a small advantage, they seize it, nail it down, and in this way

prepare a New Age of ignorance, darkness and slavery," wrote Feyerabend.

They apply their way of life, "their" science, to what it cannot describe, and they fail, for you cannot teach wisdom by rules. But they don't even notice their failure. No wonder that our children are leaving school.

The British comedy series, "Yes, Prime Minister," spoofed that children, "although socially integrated and creatively aware, can't actually read/write or do sums." Children don't even know about the importance of society, culture, heritage, and tradition and they don't know about what we generally call common sense or, in its more advanced form, wisdom.

A simple example: You use a word processor, but do you know how to really use it? Do you know where the different fonts come from, what they are used for? Are you aware of the millenium-long tradition of calligraphy and typography which could tell you how to creatively design appealing and at the same time readable documents? Could you make a document look good even if all you had were a fountain pen and a sheet of paper? Isn't all that much more important than knowing how to change a line in some configuration file?

So don't let the word processor dictate how your document looks! You must know what you want and then make the word processor typeset it for you. But where is the manual that teaches you the basics of typography and how to apply them using this particular word processor? There probably isn't one!

More important: Don't let technology dictate how you live! Look at as many different ways of living and thinking as possible, live your own life, and make technology help you with living it. "We don't need no education," Pink Floyd sings, but we need common sense, and dearly so.

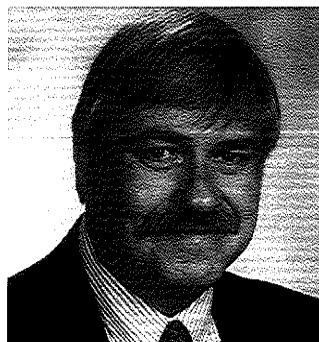
Do you hear me, engineers and technical communicators? This is what you must teach!

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*Here the difference between being dumb and being uneducated becomes apparent: The uneducated person cannot tackle the problems of science; the dumb person cannot tackle the problems of life.*

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## MASTERS OF STYLE



RONALD J. NELSON

## EDWARD R. TUFTE: GRAPHICS GURU

RONALD J. NELSON

The professional communicator who desires to learn about graphics can glean much from superb books in the field, among them Jan V.

White's *Graphic Design for the Electronic Age* (1988) [a manual for traditional and desktop publishing], Stephen M. Kosslyn's *Elements of Graph Design* (1994) [the do's and don'ts], Betty Binns's *Better Type* (1989) [the subtleties of typography], and Robert L. Harris' *Information Graphics: A Comprehensive Illustrated Reference* (1996) [information graphics for operational needs].

But for profound perspectives, one must make three visits to the master, Edward R. Tufte, who teaches courses in statistical evidence, information design, and interface design at Yale. The efficient traveler can consolidate visits by making a trek or writing a check to Graphics Press, P.O. Box 430, Cheshire, CT 06410, for three of Tufte's extraordinary books, published in mystical seven-year intervals: *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information* (1983) [\$40], *Envisioning Information* (1990) [\$48], and *Visual Explanations* (1997) [\$45]. Auditory contact with the guru's assistant can be effected by calling (203) 272-9187. Although the inclusion of pecuniary matters may seem inappropriate for spiritual journeys, such investments are certain to transport the investor to nirvana.

Tufte's talent lies in his unerring ability to illustrate points eloquently and to explain them flawlessly. So adeptly does he accomplish this dual feat that his books are regarded as masterpieces. One trusts what he says because he convinces the reader at every turn of the page that he not only knows graphics thoroughly, but also perceives the essence of the graphical interfaces he presents. Indeed, his blending of form and content is exquisite.

*The Visual Display of Quantitative Information* dazzles the reader by its picturing of numbers: "how to depict data and enforce statistical honesty." And *Envisioning Information* astonishes for its ability to picture nouns, like maps and aerial photo-

graphs (nouns lying on the ground), and to deal with "visual strategies for design: color, layering, and interaction effects." But it is his most recent contribution to graphic design into which we shall delve.

*Visual Explanations: Images and Quantities, Evidence and Narrative* deals with pictures of verbs. According to Tufte, assessments of change, dynamics, and cause and effect are at the heart of thinking and explaining.

Such assessments lead to understanding, and that comprehension forms the basis for representation. Tufte's book describes design strategies—the proper arrangement in space and time of images, words, and numbers—for presenting information that encompasses motion, process, mechanism, and cause and effect. In a typically magnificent passage, he speaks of entering the cognitive paradise of explanation, a sparkling and exuberant world, intensely relevant to the design of information. Those who discover an explanation are often those who construct its representation.

He cites numerous examples of those who have interwoven clarity and excellence of thinking with the same qualities of graphic display, including Robert Burton, who created a striking title page for *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1633), and Christiaan Huygens, who detected the rings of Saturn and brilliantly illustrated his discoveries in *Systema Saturnium* (1659).

The two broad categories covered in this book are the logic of depicting quantitative evidence and design strategies. As Tufte says, the idea is to make designs that enhance the richness, complexity, resolution, dimensionality, and clarity of the content. By extending the visual capacities of paper, video, and computer screen, we are able to extend the depth of our own knowledge and experience.

*Visual Explanations* is replete with engaging examples of visuals, tellingly narrated. One of the most extraordinary is his restoration of quantitative order to a supercomputer scientific animation of a storm in Chapter One. Another is his coverage of

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Clarity and excellence  
of thinking interwoven  
with the same qualities  
of graphic display

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*Ironically, the nutritional value of Tufte's sweets is high indeed. As Francis Bacon would have recommended, they should be "chewed and digested."*

Dr. John Snow's life-saving discovery (and convincing statistical graphics) that ended the cholera epidemic in London in 1854 versus the unconvincing graphics prepared hastily by Morton Thiokol the day before the Challenger disaster of January 28, 1986 (Chapter Two).

Tufte's third chapter explains magic—indeed, suggests how processes can be explained visually—by making verbs visible, an activity that is “at the heart of information design.” Chapter Four focuses on “the smallest effective difference” as a crucial means of avoiding incongruities and irrelevancies in visuals. Tufte's injunction is: “Make all visual distinctions as subtle as possible, but still clear and effective.”

In Chapter Five he explores the nuances of parallelism, which involves repetition and change, comparison and surprise. He compares parallelism in writing, using the example of Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, to the linking mechanisms of parallel designs, thereby producing subtlety and elegance.

Multiple images are wonderfully explained and illustrated in Chapter Six and applied

to such diverse subjects as Huygens' discovery of the rings of Saturn, butterfly fish, luminous glasses, and a remarkable innovation to keep track of medical patients' histories. Tufte's final chapter, “Visual Confections: Juxtapositions from the Ocean of the Streams of Story,” covers “events,” which he speaks of as intersections of nouns and verbs, of subjects and actions. And “a story is a progression of noun-verb incidents....”

He regards the illustrated books of the 17th century as “delightful confections, uniquely concocted mixtures of images.” The confections he offers include A.W. Pugin's work on the Gothic revival in English architecture, “mnemonic emblematic reductions” to assist 17th century law students to memorize the *Digest*, visuals on weeds, de Brunhoff's *Babar's Dream*, a work of Henri Rousseau, Mark Tansey's *The Myth of Depth*, and Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, among other succulents.

Ironically, the nutritional value of Tufte's sweets is high indeed. As Francis Bacon would have recommended, they should be “chewed and digested.”

## IPCC 97 — THE CONFERENCE YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS

IPCC 97 offers a strong program designed to appeal to technical communicators—and individuals who work with the design and delivery of technical information—whether you're a practitioner, researcher, educator, or student.

In addition to nearly 30 technical sessions to choose from, you can gain cutting-edge insights from numerous featured speakers or sessions: Karen Shriver (keynote speaker), “New Literacies: New Challenges for Communicators”; John Brockmann, “Do New Computer Technologies Mean The Creation of New Documentation Methodologies?”; Saul Carliner, general session on exploring the future of technical communication; Mary Deaton, “The Future of Design Help”; and a distinguished panel on Minimalism.

End your conference experience with a post-conference tutorial taught by noted professionals in the field. Or enjoy evening entertainment with a full-course Italian buffet and murder mystery dinner theater or a full-course western buffet with comic musical entertainment. SIGDOC 97 and IPCC are conferences you won't want to miss.

Although IPCC 97 and SIGDOC are two separate conferences, you can enjoy a day of joint sessions from both conferences on the opening day of IPCC 97. Additionally, you can receive a substantial discount by attending both conferences. This year's event will be as exciting and rewarding as those past, so reserve your place early.

**Note:** Look for a registration form in the next *Newsletter*.

## AS WE WERE

BY EMILY K. SCHLESINGER

In the late 1970s the Administrative Committee (AdCom) met several times each year, almost always in the conference room on the 10th floor of the IEEE Headquarters in New York City [345 East 47th Street]. Generally, these meetings were unmemorable except that the members enjoyed each other's company, felt professionally supported in our combined effort, and respected each other's abilities, intelligence, and resources.

In those years, we were "holding on" as an organization, weakly supported, almost insolvent, and unsure of our future.

Most of us, however, belonged not only to the Professional Communication Society (PCS) but also to the Society for Technical Communication (STC)—a kindred organization larger, wealthier, and more prestigious. As individuals, moreover, we took an active part in STC's annual conferences, presenting papers, chairing sessions, sometimes serving on committees. On occasion we even scheduled PCS AdCom meetings piggyback with STC conferences so that we could attend daytime sessions as STC-ers and separately have an afternoon-and-supper meeting as PCS-ers. One such "stolen session" has remained, for me, particularly memorable.

An STC conference was held in Los Angeles in 1979. Our PCS president that year was Bert Pearlman (president 1979-1981), a large man of large ideas and large performance. He rented a limousine and arranged for the AdCom to be transported (he being our chauffeur) *en masse* and in style to a restaurant that promised to serve each of us, for \$20 per plate, the largest baked potato we had ever seen and the largest portion of beef we could eat. There were to be neither cocktails nor green vegetables nor dessert.

Pleased by this challenge, we got through our afternoon business meeting with dispatch, hied us to the vaunted restaurant, and truly stuffed ourselves with delicious beef and potatoes. It was indeed in merry

mood that, afterward, we rolled down the avenue—laughing, joking, even happily singing, to the obvious amusement of other passengers, who now and then rode or waited less exuberantly in smaller cars beside us, as traffic signals changed from red to green in perfect order.

Another memorable AdCom meeting took place during IPCC 85 in Williamsburg, Virginia. After our business session in the afternoon we adjourned for cocktails and dinner to one of the small, local, atmospheric, Colonial restaurants. Many of us planned to go after the meal to some now-forgotten show or event. We sat, as I remember, in small groups at several tables, arrangements having been made duly in advance by our Treasurer. The food was delicious, excellently served, and greatly appreciated.

At the end of the meal, however, I suddenly found myself alone in the restaurant except for a fairly new AdCom member and our waiter, who was presenting his request for payment.

"No! No! Where is our Treasurer? Where is our President? Where is our chair of local arrangements?"

I, most impecunious of PCS-ers, was barely able to pay for my own dinner, much less be prepared to be "officially responsible" for how many? 12? 18? The waiter looked uneasy, if not downright threatening.

"Very well," I spoke firmly to our new member, "You know PCS' President."

"Yes, yes."

"You know [deleted], PCS' Treasurer, when you see him?" He seemed doubtful so I gave a quick description.

"Yes, yes."

"Go find at least one of them and bring him here pronto. Try the conference headquarters. They may be there looking at the commercial exhibits or yakking with salesmen. But make it fast. I will stay here as

*At the end of the meal, however, I suddenly found myself alone in the restaurant except for a fairly new AdCom member and our waiter, who was presenting his request for payment.*

CELEBRATING

40  
YEARS

1957-1997

hostage but I don't want to be washing dishes in my new suit."

Off he scurried into the night, as I tried to smile confidently at the waiter.

Very soon, however, all three "responsible colleagues" returned, and our AdCom dinner ended happily.

But why the disappearance—light hearts? Wandering wits? Blithe spirits? I was so happy to be ransomed that I had no further thought for questions or answers.

**Note:** Emily Schlesinger was President of PCS in 1976-77 and *Newsletter* editor from late 1976 through early 1982.

## LANGUAGE EXPERTISE?

(continued from page 4)

nical communicators better their relationships with subject-matter experts. These articles enable me to understand abstract principles of such relationships, but how do I act upon that knowledge in specific situations?

What I need are examples of how people negotiate with subject-matter experts. Then, perhaps I can extrapolate those anecdotes to my personal travails. I'm talking about a system for recording and retrieving the personal experiences of people like me, in the sense that they are technical communicators, and unlike me, in the sense that they have figured out ways to successfully deal with subject-matter experts.

I can imagine a Rolodex filled with problem/solution cards. When my boss presents me with a particular challenge, I consult my handy Rolodex. Ah, Susan from Boston had a similar problem, but her solution seems a bit too subversive for me. Here's Jim from Atlanta. His solution seems applicable. This is much better than the Magic 8-Ball Web page, which has served as my personal advisor in pinches (see: [www.mainstrike.com/mstservices/handy/mag8bal.html](http://www.mainstrike.com/mstservices/handy/mag8bal.html)).

Now, all of this may seem extravagant, but I've seen such a system for cataloging problems and solutions. For example, every issue of *Technician News*, the newsletter of the Electronics Technicians Association, features TEK-TIPS, which are printed on the inside covers. Each of the four TEK-TIPS per page contains fields for a symptom, a cause, and a cure for misbehaving electronic appliances.

Perhaps the *PCS Newsletter* could feature TECHCOM-TIPS for misbehaving subject-matter experts. Is this too ambitious? Can't we all just get along? The Magic 8-Ball says... "Better Not Tell You Now." Thanks a lot.

*Bradford R. Connatser is a member of the Professional Communication Society of the IEEE and a senior member of the Society for Technical Communication. He is currently the publications manager for the EPRI Power Electronics Applications Center in Knoxville, Tennessee.*

**Editor's Note:** The *Newsletter* is interested in pursuing Connatser's suggestion. If you have any tips, please e-mail them or send them to Donna Wicks, 6480 Grand Blanc Rd., Swartz Creek, MI 48473 or [dwicks@odo.gmi.edu](mailto:dwicks@odo.gmi.edu)

*For most language users, language is like a cotton shirt that goes undetected by the senses.*

Progress might have been all right once but it has gone on far too long.

—Ogden Nash



# THE OFFICERS OF PCS

BY RUDY JOENK

**A**s temporary, self-appointed historian, I decided that among the volunteers who make an IEEE society run, the officers deserve a little extra recognition. So here are names and information I extracted from the minutes of the Professional Communication Society.

The President and the Vice President are elected for one-year terms by the elected members of the Administrative Committee (AdCom). The President then appoints the Secretary and the Treasurer (with the approval of the AdCom) for the same term.

Through 1971 the presiding officers were the Chairman and the Vice Chairman.

These titles were changed with the adoption of our current Society name. However, our constitution didn't catch up with the changes until 1977.

The longest serving President was Daniel Rosich with four terms, 1982-1985; next was Bertrand B. Pearlman with three terms, 1979-1981.

The longest serving individuals were Society pioneer Eleanor M. McElwee, the first—and for a long time only—woman to take a leadership role, as Secretary for about 9.7 years with a concurrent 2.5 years as Treasurer; and our current Treasurer, William P. Kehoe, who is in his 12th year as Treasurer.

The first Administrative Committee meeting was 28 May 1957, and the term of office initially was from July through June. In 1967 the officers continued in office through December and thereafter their terms coincided with the calendar year and became consistent with IEEE practice.

Until the early '70s the AdCom meetings were held bimonthly. Thereafter they became quarterly meetings, and now we are experimenting with three meetings per year with greater use of electronic communication. Many of the early meetings were hosted in east coast locations by General Radio, IBM, McGraw-Hill, and RCA. Later, the IRE and IEEE offices in New York City and Washington, DC, were favored locations, and now AdCom meetings are held in all areas of the country as well as in Canada due to our broadened base of membership and leadership.

At the AdCom meeting on 14 May 1962, which was the fifth anniversary of the approval of the formation of the Group

on Engineering Writing and Speech by the Institute of Radio Engineers executive committee,

Joseph D. Chapline, Jr., presented the group

with a hand-made walnut gavel and block, the

whereabouts of which are unfortunately not known.

The AdCom meetings, as reflected in the minutes, were initially identified

by number and we got to number 49 on 16 September 1966 before the practice was dropped.

The first goof with the minutes occurred for the very first meeting: The minutes refer to "officers elected...earlier in the meeting" but their names are not given and the election is not otherwise mentioned.

The first and for a long time only two-day AdCom meeting was 22-23 September 1967 in Suffern, NY, a brainstorming session led by then-Chairman Edward E. Grazda. This practice was revived in 1990 and has since become a more frequent event.

CELEBRATING

40

YEARS

1957-1997

*Society pioneer  
Eleanor M. McElwee  
was the first—and for a long time only—woman  
to take a leadership role.*

| YEAR                          | PRESIDENT                        | VICE PRESIDENT             | SECRETARY                                       | TREASURER  |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|---|--|
| 27 May 1957 –<br>30 June 1958 | Daniel J. McNamara               | Charles DeVore             | Eleanor M. McElwee                              | Herbert B. Michaelson                            |
| 1 July 1958 –<br>30 June 1959 | Joseph D. Chapline, Jr.          | Theodore T. Patterson, Jr. | Eleanor M. McElwee                              | Herbert B. Michaelson                            |
| 1 July 1959 –<br>30 June 1960 | Theodore T. Patterson, Jr.       | John M. Kinn, Jr.          | Eleanor M. McElwee                              | Herbert B. Michaelson                            |
| 1 July 1960 –<br>30 June 1961 | John M. Kinn, Jr.                | Milton S. Kiver            | Eleanor M. McElwee                              | Eleanor M. McElwee                               |
| 1 July 1961 –<br>30 June 1962 | John M. Kinn, Jr.                | Chester W. Sall            | Eleanor M. McElwee                              | Eleanor M. McElwee                               |
| 1 July 1962 –<br>30 June 1963 | Chester W. Sall                  | Frederick T. Van Veen      | Eleanor M. McElwee                              | Harold H. Lisk                                   |
| 1 July 1963 –<br>30 June 1964 | Frederick T. Van Veen            | Walter B. Dennen, Jr.      | Eleanor M. McElwee                              | Harold H. Lisk                                   |
| 1 July 1964 –<br>30 June 1965 | Walter B. Dennen, Jr.            | Charles A. Meyer           | Eleanor M. McElwee;<br>J. Richard Johnson 11/64 | Harold H. Lisk                                   |
| 1 July 1965 –<br>30 June 1966 | Charles A. Meyer                 | Edward E. Grazda           | Chester W. Sall                                 | Harold H. Lisk                                   |
| 1 July 1966 –<br>31 Dec 1967  | Edward E. Grazda                 | James M. Lufkin            | John S. Donal, Jr.                              | Harold H. Lisk                                   |
| 1968                          | James M. Lufkin                  | John S. Donal, Jr.         | Eleanor M. McElwee                              | Harold H. Lisk                                   |
| 1969                          | George E. Schindler, Jr.<br>3/69 | John S. Donal, Jr.         | Eleanor M. McElwee                              | Harold H. Lisk                                   |
| 1970                          | Louis M. Cole, Jr.               | Robert V. McGahey          | Emily K. Schlesinger                            | George E. Schindler, Jr.                         |
| 1971                          | Robert V. McGahey                | John C. Phillips 3/71      | Emily K. Schlesinger                            | George E. Schindler, Jr.                         |
| 1972                          | John C. Phillips                 | James M. Lufkin            | Emily K. Schlesinger                            | George E. Schindler, Jr.                         |
| 1973                          | Thomas E. Nunan                  | Mason P. Southworth        | Craig R. Harkins                                | George E. Schindler, Jr.;<br>William Arrott 3/73 |
| 1974                          | Thomas E. Nunan                  | Mason P. Southworth        | Craig R. Harkins                                | William Arrott                                   |
| 1975                          | James M. Lufkin                  | Marvin A. Thurn            | Craig R. Harkins                                | William Arrott;<br>John C. Phillips 8/75         |
| 1976                          | Emily K. Schlesinger             | Theodore T. Patterson, Jr. | Craig R. Harkins                                | John C. Phillips                                 |
| 1977                          | Emily K. Schlesinger             | Theodore T. Patterson, Jr. | John E. Friedman                                | John C. Phillips                                 |
| 1978                          | Theodore T. Patterson, Jr.       | Bertrand B. Pearlman       | Daniel Rosich                                   | John C. Phillips                                 |
| 1979                          | Bertrand B. Pearlman             | Daniel Rosich              | Craig R. Harkins                                | John C. Phillips                                 |

(continued on page 18)

| YEAR | PRESIDENT              | VICE PRESIDENT         | SECRETARY  | TREASURER        |
|------|------------------------|------------------------|--|------------------|
| 1980 | Bertrand B. Pearlman   | Daniel Rosich          | Craig R. Harkins   | John C. Phillips |
| 1981 | Bertrand B. Pearlman   | Daniel Rosich          | Craig R. Harkins   | John C. Phillips |
| 1982 | Daniel Rosich          | Lois K. Thuss          | Lacy R. Martin;<br>Patricia Chaffee 3/82;<br>Daniel L. Plung 10/82 | John C. Phillips |
| 1983 | Daniel Rosich          | Lois K. Thuss          | Daniel L. Plung;<br>Deborah L. Flaherty 6/83                       | Leon C. Pickus   |
| 1984 | Daniel Rosich          | Lois K. Moore          | Deborah L. Flaherty  | Leon C. Pickus   |
| 1985 | Daniel Rosich          | Lois K. Moore          | Deborah L. Flaherty  | Leon C. Pickus   |
| 1986 | Lois K. Moore          | James W. Hill          | Salvatore J. DeAmicis  | William P. Kehoe |
| 1987 | Lois K. Moore          | James W. Hill          | Salvatore J. DeAmicis  | William P. Kehoe |
| 1988 | James W. Hill          | Rudolph J. Joenk, Jr.  | Nancy C. Corbin  | William P. Kehoe |
| 1989 | James W. Hill          | Rudolph J. Joenk, Jr.  | Nancy C. Corbin  | William P. Kehoe |
| 1990 | Rudolph J. Joenk, Jr.  | Richard M. Robinson    | Nancy C. Corbin  | William P. Kehoe |
| 1991 | Rudolph J. Joenk, Jr.  | Richard M. Robinson    | William B. Giesecke  | William P. Kehoe |
| 1992 | Richard M. Robinson    | Deborah Flaherty Kizer | William B. Giesecke;<br>Frank P. Ortolani 6/92                     | William P. Kehoe |
| 1993 | Richard M. Robinson    | Deborah Flaherty Kizer | Frank P. Ortolani  | William P. Kehoe |
| 1994 | Deborah Flaherty Kizer | Mark P. Haselkorn      | Frank P. Ortolani  | William P. Kehoe |
| 1995 | Deborah Flaherty Kizer | Mark P. Haselkorn      | Laurel K. Grove  | William P. Kehoe |
| 1996 | Mark P. Haselkorn      | Roger A. Grice         | Laurel K. Grove  | William P. Kehoe |
| 1997 | Mark P. Haselkorn      | Roger A. Grice         | George F. Hayhoe   | William P. Kehoe |

Occasionally there has been an additional appointed officer:

- From January 1987 to March 1988, Leon C. Pickus was Director of Technical Activities and Conferences.
- From June 1988 to December 1989, Kimberly S. Manthy was Corresponding Secretary.
- From March 1996 to the present, Steven E. Robinson has been Assistant Treasurer.

**Note:** Along with the officers there have been many other hard working volunteers, for example, the editors of PCS publications and the organizers of our conferences. The *Transactions* editors are acknowledged in *IEEE Trans. Prof. Commun.*, vol. 40, no. 1, pp. 1-3, March 1997. The *Newsletter* editors and the conference organizers will be acknowledged in later *Newsletter* articles during this 40th anniversary year.

Sattinger's Law: It works better if you plug it in.

— Arthur Bloch, Murphy's Law and Other Reasons Why Things Go Wrong

## HISTORY OF THE PCS SCHLESINGER AWARD

BY JOAN NAGLE

In 1995 the Professional Communication Society (PCS) added a second honor to its award program, the Emily K. Schlesinger Award for outstanding service to PCS. At this time, the Goldsmith Award was targeted to recognition of outstanding contributions to the field of technical communication.

Naming the new award for Dr. Schlesinger, the 1978 Goldsmith Award winner, was most appropriate, since it is doubtful that anyone has ever given more outstanding service to the Society.

A member of PCS since 1964 and a Life Senior Member of IEEE, she was President of the Society in 1976 and 1977. During that time, she regularized publication of the PCS *Transactions* and, when she could find no one to edit the *Newsletter*, took on the job herself, producing some 80 pages annually.

On a personal trip to Europe and Great Britain, she met with professional communication people in London and Paris, thus widening the sphere of the Society to include those who communicate in English as a second language. We now have many

members, and several chapters, outside the United States.

She helped the PCS education committee to launch home study, conference, and workshop writing courses. She was an effective liaison with the Society for Technical Communication and other professional communication organizations.

Dr. Schlesinger, now retired, was an honored guest at IPCC 95, where the first Schlesinger award was given to **David Kemp**, honoring his work with PCS local chapters. While PCS Chapter Coordinator, he maintained regular contact with each of our chapters. He was instrumental in the restoration of dormant chapters and the formation of new ones.

The 1996 Schlesinger Award went to **Stephanie Rosenbaum**. Her hard work and notable technical expertise have enabled PCS to take a lead role in a pilot program for redesign of not only our own *Transactions*, but potentially all those the IEEE publishes.

PCS is proud to honor Dr. Schlesinger and those who have followed in her footsteps through service to the Society.

*Naming the new award for Dr. Schlesinger, the 1978 Goldsmith Award winner, was most appropriate.*

## LE CURMUDGEON FRANCAIS

(continued from page 5)

English. For scientific subjects, almost all material on the Internet is in English.

One doesn't have to think about this very long to infer that there are a lot of non-native speakers of English out there. The proportion is growing, and it is influencing (third point) other languages.

"People are finding ways to overcome the difficulty of sending and receiving accented characters." For example, Italian hackers have invented *scrollare* and *deletare* to replace the Italian words for *scroll* and *delete*.

Within a decade, we are told, the number of people who speak English as a subsidiary language will exceed the number of mother-tongue speakers. Cambridge don Peter Strevens predicts a time when "English will be taught mostly by nonnative speakers of the language, to nonnative speakers, in order to communicate mainly with non-native speakers." The language won't be ours any more. "It will change, and it's not clear what the consequences will be."

Not good, I'm afraid, unless those of us who care about accessibility as a first requirement maintain eternal vigilance.

*Electronic mail is more like conversation than it is like print communication.*

## VISIT OUR WEB SITES

## PCS' HOME PAGE

<http://www.ieee.org/pcs/pcsindex.html>

## PCS STUDENT HOME PAGE

[http://spetses.ece.ucsb.edu/~vishal/pcs\\_students/pcs\\_students.html](http://spetses.ece.ucsb.edu/~vishal/pcs_students/pcs_students.html)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

## ADCOM MEETING

Washington, DC • July 18, 1997

## IPCC 97

Salt Lake City, UT • October 22-24, 1997

## ADCOM MEETING

Salt Lake City, UT • October 25, 1997

## IPCC 98

Quebec City, Canada • September 23-25, 1998

## NEWSLETTER SCHEDULE

*To submit articles, write:*

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Contributions are welcome. Send proposals for columns to the editor.  
E-mail and ASCII files are preferred.

| Issue          | Deadline    | Issue          | Deadline    |
|----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| Nov./Dec. 1997 | 5 Sep. 1997 | May/June 1998  | 6 Mar. 1998 |
| Jan./Feb. 1998 | 7 Nov. 1997 | July/Aug. 1998 | 8 May 1998  |
| Mar./Apr. 1998 | 9 Jan. 1998 | Sep./Oct. 1998 | 3 July 1998 |



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