IEEE Professional Communication Society NEWSLETTER
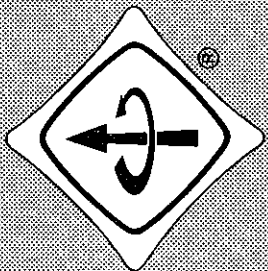
Professional Communication Society Well Represented on IEEE Technical Activities Board

Presiding at four of five regular AdCom meetings per year is just the tip-of-the-iceberg of the volunteer services performed by the Professional Communication Society President. Three times a year, each society president or his representative attends a three-day IEEE Technical Activity Board (TAB) meeting. Although these meetings are often held at such exotic locales as Seattle, San Diego, or New York, partaking of local amenities is rather difficult due to the normal 8:00 a.m.-to-midnight meeting schedule.

IEEE Structure

The Technical Activity Board is one of the two primary areas of IEEE volunteer activity. The Regional Activity Board, actually part of the Field Services Department, is concerned with generalized services for all members; it deals with councils, areas, sections, subsections, chapters, branches, and branch chapters. Other entities, such as Professional Activities, Educational Activities, etc; have more specialized focus. Although TAB is dedicated to meeting the needs of the 60 percent of IEEE members with society affiliations (at an average of two societies per member), it actually does much more than that!

TAB Functions

The technical activities of the Institute are intended to serve the specialized technical interests of individual members and groups of members, and to bring the resources of IEEE to bear on technical questions of local, national, and transnational issues. These activities are conducted by the Technical Activities Board, whose responsibility encompasses coordination of the IEEE societies and councils and technical committees. The major technical activities are:

- Holding general meetings and conferences for the presentation and discussion of technical papers,

- Publishing transactions, journals, and magazines of technical papers, and records of technical meetings and conferences,

- Encouraging geographical chapters of societies to provide for the local exchange of technical information and the development of local technical meetings,

- Assisting in the development and publication of standards for electrical and electronics practices with the involvement of the appropriate societies, subject to coordination and promulgation by the IEEE Standards Board,

- Recognizing excellence among its members in the advancement of the theory and practice of electrical and electronics engineering through the establishment of awards which are administered by the societies and councils, and

- Developing entity position papers on major technological issues.

FROM THE EDITOR

by Deborah Flaherty Kizer

We have an information-packed *Newsletter* for you this go-around. There should be something of interest for everyone.

Ron Blicq has issued a call for papers for the 1991 Colloquium in the U.S.S.R. I urge anyone with an inkling to participate to contact Ron as soon as possible. Like most things in life, international communications must be experienced first-hand. All the reading, seminars, and lectures in cross-cultural communications cannot adequately teach us to be true international communicators. As our books, specifications, and manuals are translated and transmitted worldwide, we too must expand our frame of reference. The 1990 visit was a great success, not only in terms of professional communication, but in moving towards deeper and better understanding of another culture. I'm sure the 1991 Colloquium will provide a similar experience.

Thanks again to our featured columnists who regularly contribute. A section of Michael Goodman's column "On Management Communication" provides timely insight into wartime communications. This is complemented by Cheryl Reimold's "Negotiation and Communications" column. And as usual, Joan Nagle's "Curmudgeon's Corner" provides some interesting and entertaining reading.

As Joan Nagle graciously notes, we are still on the lookout for a new *Newsletter* editor. Don't hesitate to call me should you have any questions concerning the position.

Special thanks to Ronnie Rawls for contributing information from the PCS chapter in Washington D.C. Chapters, we welcome your news and input!

ALL contributions to the *Newsletter* are welcome. If there is a topic of specific interest you would like to address—or would like to have addressed—please let me know. The more feedback we receive from the PCS membership the better we can target the *Newsletter* to meet your needs.   ◄

Letters to the Editor . . .

Mr. David Burkhart from Germany writes . . .

I am a member of PCS and have the following questions:

1. Could you recommend to me a recognized source for standards in technical editing? Does the IEEE promulgate such standards?

2. Does the IEEE publish an in-depth dictionary of computer terms? Is there a periodical update service?

Please send your responses to me for publication in the next issue—the Editor.   ◄

Position Open: *PCS Newsletter* Editor

The IEEE Professional Communication Society is seeking a new Editor for its bimonthly newsletter. Debby Flaherty Kizer has given long and heroic service to this job, even continuing to serve beyond her expected resignation date when her proposed replacement became ill. Under her leadership, the *PCS Newsletter* has grown from four to six issues per year, and matured in both content and format. She will be a tough act to follow, but we must try.

The position of *Newsletter* Editor reports through the Chair of the Editorial Advisory Committee to the President of the Society, at whose pleasure he or she serves. (That is, there is no stated term of office.) The editor is an ex officio member of the PCS Administrative Committee. An editorial fee is paid for each issue, and any expenses incurred are reimbursed.

If you are interested in applying for this position, please send a description of your applicable experience and sample(s) of your work, if available, to the committee chair:

Joan G. Nagle
3404 Oakdale Drive
Murrysville, Pennsylvania 15668

For more information, call Ms. Nagle at (412) 327-1514.   ◄

PCS on Tech. Board

Since TAB is the primary IEEE entity for planning and implementing technical activities, it represents members with no society affiliation as well as those who are more directly involved. The field of electro-technology is currently so broad that not all of the subspecialties are covered by fields of interest of the present societies. Thus, some interests, such as medical imaging and superconductivity, find their major focus through TAB committees. One of the Technical Activity Board's responsibilities is to identify emerging fields of interest and to provide for their evolution within the IEEE structure.

Society and council presidents, by virtue of their significant technical leadership positions within IEEE, are members of TAB and thus take on leadership obligations which extend far beyond the scopes of their societies/councils. Prospective society/council presidents, in preparing for that high office, must take their future TAB service into account. Since all major bylaws and procedures affecting society/council operations come from or are reviewed by TAB, attendance at the TAB meetings by society/council presidents can be of critical importance.

PCS and TAB

PCS presidents generally represent the society at all TAB meetings, although representatives do substitute for them when they are unable to attend. Although all expenses necessary to attend AdCom meetings have thus far been borne by the member or his employer, TAB meeting expenses are reimbursed by the society to the extent that they are not otherwise provided. Expenses are likewise provided for travel of a Vice President or President-elect to a TAB orientation session held in conjunction with the Fall TAB meeting.

TAB Meeting Structure

The three-day series of TAB meetings is especially set up to cover and agree on controversial areas early, and thus enable the official business meeting, on the third day, to proceed expeditiously. The morning of the first day is generally occupied by committee meetings; the afternoon (and evening!) consists of a caucus in which committee reports are heard and issues are informally discussed and debated. Decisions are often made at this time to place noncontroversial items in a "consent" agenda for block voting at the official meeting.

The Technical Activities Board is one of the two primary areas of IEEE volunteer activity.

The second day is occupied by Presidents and Directors Forums, which can cover areas of interest which are not appropriate for action at the TAB meeting. Items discussed at the caucus are often rehashed at these forums. The formal evening dinner is often followed by ad hoc committee meetings into the night.

If the work of the first two days has been successful, the actual TAB meeting on the third day passes uneventfully. Adjournment is frequently possible by mid to late afternoon.

February 1991 TAB Meeting

The February 1991 TAB meeting, held at the Marroitt Marquis Hotel in New York City, dealt with a number of items of significant impact to PCS. These are summarized below:

- 1991 Colloquium—TAB European colloquium to be held in conjunction with Fall TAB meeting

was postponed due to the unsettled world conditions and overall IEEE financial problems. Support for this position was virtually unanimous. Societies may continue their own "outreach" programs, but there will be no IEEE support.

- TAB Meetings—Future TAB meetings will be held on weekends, where possible. No evening meetings will be scheduled. The Fall 1991 meeting has been moved from Italy to Mexico (Mexico City area probably—but possibly Cancun), and will be held on 4–6 October. Technical meeting and "outreach" between societies and chapters will be held in conjunction with the Mexico TAB meeting.

- IEEE Financial Difficulties—IEEE cash flow is in difficulty due to conversion of liquid (cash) assets to physical assets such as the Piscataway facility, electronic publishing equipment, new computers, etc. The following steps have been taken to remedy the current budget deficit:

  –Increase in staff costs will be limited to six percent over the next two years, staff has the option to control this by limiting salary increases or by staff reductions.

  –Staff is required to compare budgeted and actual expenditures on a monthly basis and make immediate plans to correct for overruns.

  –TAB has volunteered to rebate portions of its entitlement, so that it will approach zero after three years; this approach was taken to ward off imposition of G&A surcharge. General feeling was that any level of G&A surcharge would open door to annual increases. Rebate of entitlement will be on a voluntary, annual enacted basis, so that it can be reviewed in comparison to the actions of other IEEE entities.

  –New Publications Charges— Charges for publications ser-

vices have been completely revised and reformatted, so that it is impossible to compare old and new rates directly. This is a major change in that publishing services have been debundled, so it is now possible to get (and pay for) only the services you want (alternately, these services may be obtained outside the

Three times a year each society president attends a three-day IEEE Technical Activity Board (TAB) meeting.

IEEE). This should be of benefit to PCS! Moreover, we have been assured that total cost of producing a periodical will decrease. All editors are advised to get a personal breakdown of costs for their periodicals. And, no special rates will be available; previous agreements are all canceled. (Implication is that some publications have previously received favored status.)

–Financial/Membership Data— Financial and membership data will be available on E-mail— about two weeks earlier than had been available by previous techniques. Format will enable down-loading of financial data directly into a spreadsheet program for further manipulation. Society treasurers are asked to examine the planned format and provide their comments ASAP.

–Travel Arrangements— Committee is currently investigating nonbinding agreements between certain airlines (and travel agents) and IEEE; these agreements would be applicable to all IEEE travel.

–Quality Engineering Council— New council, probably under the leadership of Reliability Society, will be formed to deal with "quality engineering." Most other societies expressed interest. Subject is of definite interest to PCS.

Other business transacted was of less immediate concern to PCS, and will be detailed in the minutes of the meeting. On the "unofficial" side, I am pleased to report that a number of society presidents complemented us on the quality of our *Newsletter* and *Transactions,* and most are aware and supportive of our recent "outreach" activity toward the Soviet Union.   ◀

Voice Mail

by Nancy Friedman

Many telephone users become annoyed when they make a call and are greeted by an automated operator. They find listening to a litany of department names and extensions irritating. But do they miss being bounced from department to department? They are often offended when they are told to leave a message on a machine. Would they rather leave their important message with a harried receptionist who is trying to answer four other calls?

Despite the nay-sayers, automated voice systems have their advantages. They are accurate, and they save time. Statistics from the voice mail industry indicate that half of all business calls convey information in one direction only— making a person-to-person link unnecessary. Also, on the first attempt, many business calls accomplish nothing, resulting in the familiar telephone-tag syndrome.

To encourage "technophobes" to take full advantage of voice mail's capabilities, there are many ways companies and individuals can "personalize" their systems.

• Record your message in your own voice and identify yourself and your department: "You've reached the desk of Carolyn Smith in the sales department."

• Use personal, informational messages. Avoid such messages as "I'm not able to come to the phone right now"—that's obvious. A better statement is "I'm in a sales meeting until 3 o'clock. You can reach my secretary Kelly at extension 445 if you need immediate information, or push '0' to speak with an operator." Specific messages such as this one also indicate that you check your machine frequently.

• Practice recording over and over until you sound conversational, just as if you are speaking face to face with a friend. Don't let the caller know you are reading. *Smile* all the way through while you are recording your message. Nobody wants to listen to a gruff voice on a machine.

• Make sure to change your message if you are going on vacation. Otherwise, when clients' messages aren't returned for two weeks, they will assume they are being neglected.

• When your voice messaging system is installed, inform all key people with whom you do business. A short, personalized letter explaining why the change will be better for them and some brief instruction on how to use the system will be a welcome gesture.

Nancy Friedman is president and founder of the Telephone Doctor, a St. Louis-based customer service consulting company.

Reprinted from Executive Female, *November/December 1990.*   ◀

CHAPTER CHATTER

IEEE Washington/Northern Virginia Sections Joint Chapter of the Professional Communication Society (PCS)

During the Chapter's November meeting, "Technical Issues in Decision-Making: A Conflict Resolution Perspective," Mr. Frank Blechman, the speaker, made a number of points that bear repeating. In summary form, they are outlined below for those of you who were unable to attend.

There are three ways to end conflict: by the use of power ("might makes right"); by deference to established or accepted rights and standards (generally the favorite of scientists and engineers); or by the use of joint actions (such as negotiation, or sometimes just the decision to agree to disagree).

Sources of conflict fall into five areas: relationships; data; interests; structures; values. Obviously, some areas are more negotiable than others.

A conflict may have several valid viewpoints to consider, with corresponding questions and impacts. Examples might include technical (what's best?), political (what's wanted?) and/or ethical (what's right?) considerations. A technical professional may frequently become frustrated and not appreciate why some of the viewpoints seem to weigh more than he feels that they should. Similarly, other professionals may not understand the importance of technical considerations! Often the final answer isn't the first choice of any of the viewpoints, but is a compromise that may be acceptable to all. (Not optimal, mind you, but acceptable.) Occasionally, there will be no answer that satisfies everyone.

There are several "layers" of participants in most conflicts. Immediately surrounding the involved parties are (partial) supporters, followed by (impartial) observers, followed by (objective and unbiased) enforcers. Sprinkled throughout and between layers may be various experts. Once labeled, a participant will find it easier to move from an outside layer inward, than from an inside layer outward. (For example, once labeled as a supporter for one of the involved parties, it is very difficult to declare oneself an impartial observer. It is much easier for an observer to become a supporter.)

There are several "layers" of participants in most conflicts.

Mr. Blechman, from The Conflict Clinic of George Mason University, was an excellent speaker, entertaining as well as informative, and he facilitated a lively "Question & Answer" session after his presentation. He suggested that anyone who needs assistance to resolve a conflict, contact the Northern Virginia Mediation Service at (703) 764-6225. If you missed the meeting, it was definitely your loss! Resolve for the coming year to take advantage of more of the personal and/or professional development opportunities offered through the IEEE, *your* professional society!

For more information about the chapter, contact Ronnie Rawls, Chapter Chair, at (301) 568-3439. ◀

Jolt Your Audience Out of a Snooze

Your speech at a daylong conference is scheduled right after lunch. The audience is flagging. Short of serving up double espressos, how can you keep their attention? The following suggestions from Lora P. Stenard, director of training for Decker Communications, Inc., in San Francisco, will help:

• Use a long, unexpected pause. You may even choose to stop talking midsentence and stare out the window as if you were framing an entirely new concept in your mind. The audience will sense the change in rhythm and await a new direction. Follow through and surprise them with a parenthetic thought.

• Involve people with extended eye communication. They'll realize that your eyes will come back to them and they will anticipate this.

• Involve your audience by asking thought-provoking, open-ended questions or calling for a show of hands.

• Wade into the group and move around. Tie your actions into what you are saying—don't just wander around.

• Weave in human interest, humor, analogies and unusual details.

• End early. Audiences are always delighted when speeches run ahead of schedule.

Reprinted from Executive Female, *July/August 1990.* ◀

ON MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATION

by Michael B. Goodman

This column on management communication appears regularly in the March, July, and November issues of the PCS Newsletter. It covers topics related to the technical, cultural, financial, and political environment that characterize contemporary business. Discussions concern: communication among technical and business disciplines; technical marketing; crisis and emergency communication; communicating technology to the public. Also send in suggestions for topics which interest you.

Management Communication in Times of War

The war in the Middle East has created lots of "management communication." For examples of crisis communications and for ways to meet the press, watch closely the twice daily ritual of the military press briefing. For now, the U.S. and Allied officers and Pentagon officials who step before the cameras and microphones are following the book on communicating in a crisis and communicating with press. They are telling it fast, telling it candidly, and telling the truth—or not telling at all.

Papers on Management Issues in the March *Transactions*

Two papers in the March *Transactions* reflect the increasing importance of visual image of cor-

porate communications. Technology has provided communicators with powerful tools for print and projected media—affordable equipment for electronic typesetting, page layout, and document design; and sophisticated video camera, recorders and projectors. Both technologies have now become available to the novice and amateur. The relatively low cost of such professional quality equipment creates a large problem in a corporate setting, raising expectations among managers that high tech hardware offers a low-cost solution for the production of text and presentations in-house.

The assumption, of course, rests heavily on the misconception that users of these powerful tools have the ability and talent to make high quality communication products using these new tools. If the user understands the process of communication, the art of graphic design, and the business of video production, then the assumption holds. That's a great deal of talent.

Most communicators do not possess such specialized knowledge, and the two of the three papers in this section are included to provide some insight into the process of corporate video and the art of document design. The third paper concerns communication in project teams in a matrix or cross-functional organization.

The articles which continue our annual discussion of corporate and organizational communication issues were presented in May 1990 at The Third Conference on Corporate Communication and circulated there in the refereed *Proceedings*. They are:

> "Visual Literacy: Implications for Information Design," by William Gribbons, Assistant Professor, Bentley College.

> "Time to Make the Donuts: The Role of Video in Corporate Training," by Margaret Whitney, The Albany International Corporation.

> "Between Silence and Voice: Creating Projects in Cross-Functional Project Teams," by Linda Loehr, Assistant Professor, Northeastern Univeristy.

These papers represent a new emphasis on the visual elements of technical communication, and an increase in the importance of oral communication in small work-related groups. Changes in video technology and in desktop publishing, as well as dramatic shifts in the composition of the workforce, make the consideration of visuals not only affordable, but also an essential step in the process of designing successful technical communications. Changes in management structure to meet the shifting demands of industry often require experts to share their expertise in formal and informal oral report settings that cross functional lines if the organization is to survive.

Margaret Whitney offers a case study from the Albany International Corporation on the use of video as a credible tool to bring information quickly, accurately, and forcefully to employees. She explains the company's use of video to train line workers to operate complex machines used in paper making. Her title uses the industry jargon, "donuts," a critical element in the felt manufacturing process.

William Gribbons recognizes the impact of desktop publishing on average workers, giving them the technology and tools to design information. His paper presents a conceptual model for the design of information products. Gribbons' model addresses the reader's cognitive processing of visuals, ergonomic and structural issues in document design, and the impact of cultural and design conventions on both the reader and the document.

Linda Loehr offers another case study. She observed the communi-

cation patterns among the members of a cross-functional project team at a small southeastern manufacturing firm. She notes three areas of concern in the functioning of project teams in industry: equity, trust, and authority.

Also in the March *Transactions* are the results of a survey of graduate management communications curricula in the U.S. It was sponsored by IEEE PCS and Fairleigh Dickinson University. Here is a brief sample of the results.

Overview of the Survey Findings

The survey has provided information to develop a database for further study and, more importantly to clarify issues concerning the graduate communications curriculum, teaching methods, and faculty. Among the findings are:

● Responses to this survey indicate that an overwhelming number of graduate management program administrators (90.9%) desire that graduates of their programs will have mastered the art of written and oral communication. In sharp contrast to this curricular goal, only 27% of those who responded indicated that their curriculum even had a communications requirement. Only 75% who indicated "improved writing skills" as a program goal offered a course in writing; 60% required a course; 19% required a written thesis.

The gap between desired outcome and curriculum commitment clearly indicates the need for a required course in communication. This issue is covered in greater detail in the report, in the various tables and figures, and in the Conclusions and Recommendations.

● Few of the courses and programs which are part of the graduate curriculum incorporate new communication technologies into their offerings. This finding suggests further study into the ways these advances can be introduced into the classroom.

● By omitting communication from the curriculum, graduate pro-

grams seem to assume that matriculants possess the required communication skills before entering the program. This should be the focus of further study, since entrance requirements for graduate management education are often based on undergraduate performance and standardized tests such as the GMAT. A casual look at both gives little confidence that writing and speaking skills are included in the record. Also, few programs require a writing sample as part of their application process.

● Since 26.5% of those responding to the survey required one course in written communication and 42.1% had one or two full-time faculty members dedicated to communication, the responses to our survey indicate that the level of commitment in resources and course requirements is insufficient to meet the desired program goal of improved writing skills.

The gap between desired outcome and curriculum commitment clearly indicates the need for a required course in communication.

● Faculty committed to teaching communication courses have high levels of both academic and business experience: generally a Ph.D. in communications, social science, English, or business; and business experience. For larger programs with ten or more faculty, the responses indicate an M.A. and B.A./B.S. in business.

● Faculty compensation at full-time ranks from instructor to professor are in line with annual surveys published by *The Chronicle of Higher Education.* There is a clear trend of higher salary for higher academic rank.

● Communication was not a predominant factor in program exit requirements: 17.6% required a comprehensive examination;

17% a written project (thesis); 7.8% an oral exam. More programs have no exit requirement, 23.2%, than have a written requirement.

● Term projects, both oral (91.8%) and written (97.8%), are instructional methods used in courses. Further study is needed to determine if these methods are used to develop communications ability, if the programs integrate writing into the curriculum as part of a curricular strategy, whether individual faculty use term projects merely as the vehicle for testing course content, and whether communication skills are given any consideration in the grading.

The Fourth Conference on Corporate Communication

On Wednesday, May 22, and Thursday, May 23, corporate executives and university scholars will meet again to exchange information and to discuss the changing landscape of communications. Essential issues for discussion: the impact if a changing Europe on corporate communicators, ethics, diversity in the workforce, public relations in regulated industries, political communications, communicating technology to the public, corporate video, managing communications with employees, and influencing the corporate culture.

The Fourth Conference on Corporate Communication is intended to:

● Explore new corporate relationships.

● Continue as a forum for the exchange of ideas and information between industry and university representatives.

● Indicate trends and provide information for communications professionals, university faculty, and others interested in corporate communications.

● Disseminate the conference discussions through publication of a *Proceedings.* ◀

Call for Papers

1991 International Colloquium on New Information Technology

Moscow, U.S.S.R.—October 8 to 10, 1991

Co-Convenors:

Professional Communication Group of the A. S. Popov Society, U.S.S.R.
International Center for Scientific and Technical Information, Moscow
IEEE Professional Communication Society

The PCS Administrative Committee is inviting proposals from PCS members who would like to present a paper at the International Colloquium on New Information Technology, to be held at the International Center for Scientific and Technical Information in Moscow, U.S.S.R., from October 8 to 10, 1991. The PCS expects to be represented by 10 to 15 members, but will not be able to underwrite their travel costs.

The Colloquium was proposed initially during last September's visit to Moscow by four IEEE Professional Communication Society Members, and evolved from further discussions between Dr. Rudy Joenk, PCS President, and Dr. Henrich Lantsberg, of the Institute of Radio Engineering and Electronics, U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences.

If you take part, you can expect your visit to the U.S.S.R. to last about 10 days, with the following *tentative* schedule:

Sunday, October 6	Travel to U.S.S.R.
Monday, October 7	Acclimatization
Tueday to Thursday, October 8 to 10	Colloquium
Friday, October 11	Visits to Information Institutes in Moscow
Saturday and Sunday, October 12 and 13	Cultural activities
Monday, October 14	Visits to Information Institutes in Moscow
Tuesday, October 15	Travel from U.S.S.R.

More definitive details concerning the Colloquium and submission of proposals are described below.

Mail (or preferably fax) your proposal so that Ron Blicq, Colloquium Coordinator, receives it not later than April 15, 1991.

Also send Ron a one-line fax *today,* indicating that you will be submitting a proposal and what its focus is likely to be. This will help him integrate PCS's contributions with those expected from the U.S.S.R. societies, and avoid a preponderence of papers in a single topic area.

Ron's Address: Ron S. Blicq, 569 Oxford St., Winnipeg, MB, Canada, R3M 3J2; Fax (204) 488-7294;
Telephone (204) 488-7060.

Introduction

The notes below provide details affecting the IEEE Professional Communication Society's (PCS's) participation in the planned Moscow Colloquium. They represent information available up to the December 15, 1990, PCS AdCom meeting.

Colloquium Cosponsors

The Colloquium will be co-convened by three parties:

• The Professional Communication Group of the U.S.S.R.'s Popov Society.

• The International Center for Scientific and Technical Information in Moscow.

• The IEEE Professional Communication Society.

Colloquium Location, Dates, and Language

The Colloquium will be held from Tuesday, October 8 through Thursday, October 10 at the International Center for Scientific and Technical Information in Moscow. The language of the conference will be Russian and English. There will be simultaneous translation.

Colloquium Participants

Approximately 40 to 55 papers will be presented over the three days of the Colloquium, divided roughly as follows:

• 10 to 15 from the Professional Communication Society.

• 30 to 40 from the U.S.S.R. organizations.

The number of non-presenting delegates who will attend has not been estimated. The conference auditorium can hold up to 200 people.

Colloquium Main Topics

In a letter dated November 26, 1990, in which he indicated that the concerned U.S.S.R. organizations had agreed to hold the Colloquium, Dr. Henrich Lantsberg of the Institute of Radio Engineering and Electronics, U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences, stated:

We suggest the main topic of the Colloquium be: "New Information Technology," i.e., application of personal computers in information systems, international information networks and systems, information resources, etc., and to lay special emphasis on the hypertext information systems: hypertext in database management systems, multimedia applications and use with CD-ROM, navigation in hypertext, usability of computer interfaces and software tools for hypertext systems.

At the November 30 PCS AdCom meeting, the following were also identified as possible additional topics:

- Preparing visuals (slides, transparencies, videos, etc.).
- Screen design.
- International information systems using personal computers.
- Protocols for international communication.
- Establishing international communication standards.
- Creation, storage, and retrieval of databases.
- Desktop publishing.

Proposers are encouraged to offer papers primarily on or related to the above-named topics, but may also propose papers on alternative topics if they consider they will fit the overall thrust of the Colloquium.

Guidelines for Submitting PCS Proposals

Proposers are asked to supply (by April 15, 1991):

1. A 500 to 800 abstract of their proposed paper.

2. A justification defining
   - the target audience they have in mind,
   - why that audience will find the paper of interest, and
   - the type of visual aids they plan to use (i.e., 35mm slides, foils, videotapes, etc.).

3. Confirmation that they
   - can meet the colloquium requirements and submission due dates,
   - will provide a 200 to 300 word abstract of their paper in Russian (Cyrillic alphabet),
   - will have employer approval both to attend the Colloquium and to travel to the U.S.S.R., and
   - will have either employer financial support, or are willing to bear the travel and accommodation costs themselves (including passport and visa).

   (NOTE: Travel and Accommodation costs will probably range from $2800 to $3500. There may be IEEE support of about $500 to $800 per person.)

Selection of Papers for Presentation at the Colloquium

Papers will be selected by a PCS AdCom subcommittee with the following criteria in mind:

- The paper's suitability within the overall theme, and for the expected audience.
- The number of proposals submitted on the same or a similiar topic.
- The relationship between it and other proposed papers.

Proposers will be notified of their proposal's acceptance or non-acceptance by May 1, 1991.

Preparation of Final Papers and Visuals

Presenters will be asked to submit their paper, copies of their visuals, and the Russian abstract, by June 15, 1991. A PCS team will then review the papers and visuals for

their suitability for presentation to a foreign-language audience, and possibly may ask presenters to revise them. Final versions of the papers and abstracts—in camera-ready form—will be due June 15, 1991. (A long lead time is necessary because of the delays that can occur in shipping materials to and from the U.S.S.R.)

Personal Business Cards

PCS members participating in the Colloquium will be encouraged to carry two-language business cards, with an English version on one side and a Russian-language version (using the Cyrillic alphabet) on the reverse. As this courtesy is extended by many U.S.S.R. businesspeople, we also should observe the courtesy. (Similarily, preparing a Russian-language abstract of one's paper is an extension of this courtesy.)

Ron S. Blicq, Colloquium Coordinator ◀

Log on to 1992

A personal computer hooked up to your phone and a password is all you need to find out quickly, at any time, the state of play regarding Europe 1992 and the incorporation of Community directives into the national legislation of E.C. member states.

INFO 92, a new E.C. data base, is available in Danish, Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish. The charge for consulting the data base is 10 ECU ($12) per hour. For the password, contact Eurobases, 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels, Belgium; telephone: 32-2-235-00-01.

A document containing the same information is published twice a year by the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2 rue Mercier, L-2985 Luxembourg. ◀

CURMUDGEON'S CORNER

by Joan G. Nagle

I recently participated in something called an "issues forum"; in another day and another setting (the college dormitory), we would have called this a bull session. But this was a formal, institutional setting, and we were all grownup ladies and gentlemen. The format comprised five research papers, to each of which five or six people presented responses; then we gathered in small groups to discuss the implications of what had been spoken at us.

The paper herein referred to (and plagiarized shamelessly) had to do with a phenomenon that the author, Dr. Tex Sample, called *traditional orality.* "It is my contention," he wrote, "that about half of the people in the United States are people who work primarily out of a traditional orality, by which I mean a people who can read and write—though some cannot—but whose appropriate and engagement with life is oral." Such folk, he continued, are literate (in the sense of knowing how to read and write) but not "printy." They think about things, but they are not discursive. Their focus is not so much on knowledge, except in what it takes to live and work, but on "figuring things out" and on "good ole practical horse sense."

Some statistics: In the United States, middle-class wealth and income are diminishing, as a shift in occupational structure places more

people in low-paying service jobs. In 1987, two-thirds of the baby-boomers, who are the nearly 77 million people born between 1946 and 1964, were found to be in such jobs. The increasing cost of higher education is another factor leading to downward social mobility for many in the United States. Outside the United States, even higher proportions of the population live in an oral culture and tradition.

Walter J. Ong writing in *Orality and Literacy* (New York: Routledge, 1982) maintains that to think of oral cultures from the vantage point of a literate one is akin to "working out the biology of a horse in terms of what goes on in an automobile factory." But Sample says that those of us who are members of the literate cultures are not only unequipped, usually, to work within the oral tradition; "we typically do not even like such people." We think of them as bucolic, redneck, at best unsophisticated; as people who do not do critical, informed thinking. This is not only the conservative or reactionary position, he notes. "In my experience most left-wingers—which is my political positions—don't give a damn about such folks except perhaps as some hoped-for vehicle of change or as prime case evidence for the failure of the U.S. system."

The prevalence of traditional orality has, of course, important implications for those of us who write for users, students, the public. Among our various audiences and constituencies, there are large numbers of people who will strongly resist reading what we write, and/or having been forced to read it, will never refer to it again. So what does this mean?

- Traditional orality owns no such function as *looking it up.* You must recall what you have heard. In an oral culture, what you do not remember, you do not know. Memorization is an art form, and elaborate mnemonic aids are developed. Sample

mentions "sticks with notches," which reminded me of my grandmother's reference to a woman who found herself half way through a pregnancy before she knew what was happening: "She must've lost her nickin' stick." So when was the last time we built a memory aid into a user's manual?

- Ong observes that oral cultures do not study but learn rather by apprenticeship. Study is "extended sequential analysis"; apprenticeship comprises listening, repeating what is heard, mastering proverbs and ways of combining and recombining them, assimilating other formulary materials, participating in a kind of corporate retrospection. Can we build this into a manual? I don't know, but it's interesting to think about.

Outside the United States, even higher proprotions of the population live in an oral culture and tradition.

- Oral people tend to think in operational and situational terms rather than in categories. In research done in the Soviet Union, illiterate subjects were shown four objects, three belonging to one category and the fourth to another, and were asked to pick out the one that didn't fit. You've had this test too, haven't you? Sorta fun, wasn't it? Take for instance the grouping *hammer, saw, log, hatchet.* Clearly (to us, the test-wise) hammer, saw, and hatchet are tools; the log is what tools are applied to, and thus is the odd man out.

But this distinction did not remain among the illiterates. Ong

said, "if you are a workman with tools and see a log, you think of applying the tool to it, not of keeping the tool away from what it was made for—in some weird intellectual game." Are we playing weird intellectual games with our audience?

Where am I going with all this? I have no idea. I just thought it was neat.

Sample, a curmudgeon if ever I heard one, hopes that some day, in some institution of higher learning, a student will discover knowledge as both "exactitude in theoretical construction and as the wisdom to hunker down and make it, through a world where the very stars wander."   ◄

Eschew Obfuscation
Mean What You Say and Say What You Mean

by Donald R. Mack

Read this abstract of a recent technical paper and see if you can understand what it says:

> A general software environment and a control system design approach for multivariable nonlinear plants are motivated and developed. The software environment recognizes the iterative nature of the design process and completely automates it: it is described in functional terms, as viewed by the control system designer. The design method is based on recent breakthroughs in describing function theory that uses a modern algebraic problem formulation to remove all previous nonlinear system restrictions: one may deal with plants having any number of nonlinearities, in any configuratin and of any type, including multiple input nonlinearities, and arrive at quasilinear models of the plant that will serve as a realistic basis for control system design.

The abstract consists of English words that an electrical engineer understands, but what does the whole paragraph mean? Here is an attempt at a translation:

A method of analysis and the required software are presented for reducing any type of control system with any number of non-linearities and multiple inputs to a quasilinear model of the system.

Here's another example, this time a letter from the admissions office of a graduate school:

> Unfortunately, you were not selected for admission or to receive a fellowship or other financial aid during this review of applications for admission to our graduate program for next Fall Semester 1987. Your application is still being considered for admission and for other financial aids: research assistantships, teaching assistantships, and non-resident tuition scholarships.
>
> We hope to have information regarding these decisions before mid-April. Please note, however, that acceptance or declination of these later offers of admission and financial aid are not tied to an April 15 deadline. Applicants offered admission and financial aid after this coming admissions review will have at least three weeks following notification of admission to make their decisions.

Is the applicant in or out? Is she supposed to do something, and if so, what and when? She would know, if the letter were worded like this:

> We did not accept your application during the current review, but we are still considering it and plan to make the final decision by mid-April. If we offer you admission and financial aid, you will have three weeks in which to accept or reject the offer.

The authors of the two examples are intelligent people whose grammar is correct but whose messages are difficult to decipher. Every writer faces the danger of obscure writing. To avoid that danger, organize your thoughts before you write. Ask yourself, "Is this as clear as I can make it? Will a typical reader understand it?" In oral conversation we can forgive each other for saying, "What we're going to do is, we're going to start the motor." Given a little time to think about that sentence before writing it down, most of us would wisely eliminate the phrase preceding the comma. More difficult to forgive is Mr. Smith, the director of development of my school, who wrote, "As a loyal alumnus, I know you will be willing to contribute to the annual fund." Come on, Mr. Smith, I'm the alumnus, not you! Take a minute to think about the sentence before you write it!

Another cause of obscure writing is the use of pompous language to make the writer sound important. It doesn't work. What is your opinion of the writer of this abstract?

> This paper has three major sections. It first lays out the paradigm assumptions which guide the enterprise and elaborates a model of cognitive processing and language use. It then illustrates how some specific semantic problems might be approached from a procedural perspective, and contrasts the procedural approach with formal structural and truth conditional approaches. Finally, it

discusses the goals of linguistic theory and the nature of the linguistic explanation.

Much of what is presented here is a speculation about the nature of a paradigm yet to be developed. This paper is an attempt to be evocative rather than definitive: to convey intuitions rather than to formulate crucial arguments which justify this approach over others.

Does the abstract make the author seem important or just difficult to understand? Examples of obscure and pompous writing abound. You see them on bulletin boards at school and in the mail you receive at home. As an engineer in industry you will find them in your mailbox frequently. But don't *you* contribute to them. Whenever you write, keep these rules in mind:

- The purpose of technical writing is to communicate ideas, period.

- Readers, especially your boss, think kindly of you when your writing is clear.

- In technical writing, the best message is the shortest message that includes what you want to say.

- If a simple word and a pompous word mean the same thing, use the simple word.

Now, to prove that you understand the message of this article, please correct its title.

Donald Mack is the Editor of IEEE Potentials.

Reprinted from IEEE Potentials, *February 1991.*   ◀

Drowning in a Sea of Knowledge

by William F. Allman

What's the major project of scientific research these days? Answer: Paper. More than 30,000 scientific journals now compete for space on library shelves. And hundreds of new journals are being founded each year to handle the flood of research papers cranked out by scientists who know that the road to academic success is a long list of articles to their credit.

While there's no doubt that part of the tidal wave of paper reflects the increased pace of scientific research these days, many scientists complain that papers are becoming less and less substantial, padded with insignificant details and in some cases just plain shoddier. Alarmed by several highly publicized cases of flawed or even fraudulent research that have slipped into print, leaders of the scientific community are proposing steps that would ease the pressures to publish or perish.

In what they hope will be a model for other institutions, officials at Harvard Medical School are implementing guidelines that call for reviewing only a handful of a job candidate's best papers instead of his or her entire paper trail. Elsewhere, a panel of scientists in a symposium at the National Institutes of Health this summer criticized the common practice of listing sometimes dozens of researchers as the authors of a paper, and recommended a several-tier system that credits only the primary researchers involved in a study as authors and acknowledges others as minor contributors. By diminishing the emphasis on the sheer quantity of papers a researcher produces, says Eleanor Shore, associate dean for faculty affairs at Harvard, "we hope to encourage people to spend more time on quality."

How thin can you slice it? Because a lengthy list of scientific publications has long been considered essential to pass muster from academic boards considering promotion or government agencies reviewing grant proposals, scientists often try to squeeze as many papers as possible out of their research. The increasingly common practice is for scientists to release their results in a series of tiny pieces that John Maddox, editor of the eminent British journal *Nature* calls the "minimum publishable unit."

Another resume-expanding technique is for researchers to add their names to papers on which they have only marginal input: A survey of 75 articles that appeared in a chemistry journal 50 years ago showed that more than half listed only one or two authors. Nowadays, research papers often carry the names of 10 or more scientists from laboratories around the world. "A lot of researchers' names appear on papers for political reasons," says Marcia Angell, the executive editor of the *New England Journal of Medicine.* "The researchers don't even know what the paper is about, but they jump on for a free ride."

This combination of a rapid pace of publication and multiple authorship has been blamed for contributing to the production of faulty and fraudulent papers, a number of which have been exposed during the past few years. The rush to publish increases the odds that errors in research may slip through, and having multiple authors on a paper makes it hard to place responsibility for results that are mistakenly—or deliberately—overstated.

Ultimately, however, the damage done to science by the proliferation of papers goes beyond the rare case of flawed research. The breakneck pace at which new journals are being created forces scientists to wade through piles of inflated studies to find the few that actually contain relevant information. Cornell University physicist N. David Mermin recently tallied 32 journals that he never found time to read but would be ashamed to admit to his colleagues that he missed. "Many of the papers written today contain trivial and uninteresting results," he says. "If 80 percent of them weren't written, the progress of science wouldn't be affected at all."

Reprinted from IEEE Industry Applications Society Newsletter, *September/October 1990.*   ◀

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

by Cheryl Reimold

Negotiation and Communication
Part 3: How to Conduct Yourself in a Negotiation Session

So far, we have seen how to take the conflict out of a negotiation through careful communication and problem solving. In most cases you cannot achieve this in a day or even a week. You need systematic long-range planning. And you need actions, not just words, that demonstrate you are honestly trying to meet the other parties' interests and needs.

Gerard Nierenberg mentions an interesting example that illustrates this point.* In 1964, serious racial rioting broke out in New York; Rochester, NY; Jersey City, NJ; Paterson, NJ; and Elizabeth, NJ. But Newark, NJ, was spared, even though its large black population was coping with poverty and poor housing. In fact, when a proposed rally threatened to become a riot, the mayor was able to persuade 86 black leaders to help him turn the rally into a peaceful affair. Here's how he did it:

The Mayor had made it a practice to keep in close contact with the leaders of the black community at all times. He made frequent visits to the Central Ward, the potential trouble sport. Through his consul-

tations with the religious and civic black leaders, he was fully informed of the mood of the black community and well aware of black grievances.

If racial riots can be defused by the power of communication, how much more the everyday conflicts you face at work!

Showtime: Five Cardinal Rules

No matter how well you prepare, negotiation sessions can be tense and full of surprises. But if you hold into just five cardinal rules, you will achieve the best solution possible.

First, keep sight of your goals and priorities. Keeping a good relationship with the other people is always critical. In fact, it is usually much more important than "winning" the current round.

It is important to have a backup goal—what you will try to get out of the session if you cannot reach your primary goal. That way, you will avoid the feeling of total failure. For example, even if you cannot persuade your colleagues to go along with your solution, you may consider the meeting a success if you can get an agreement on what the problems are and a commitment to meet again soon.

Second, focus on problems, not feelings or personalities. Learn to spot the first signs of anger and resentment in yourself, then squash those emotions before they can take control. To steer everybody away from threatening emotions, periodically summarize the problem and review agreements you have all reached so far.

Third, listen carefully and calmly. No derogatory grunts as others speak; no raised eyebrows, smirks, or dismissive hand gestures. Instead, listen attentively to test your assumptions about the other parties' needs and interests. The better you understand the other side, the greater your chances of

coming up with new proposals that might satisfy everyone.

Fourth, think before you speak. You do not have to answer every question on the spot. If you cannot respond convincingly, give yourself time; say something like, "That's a good point. I'll make a note of it; perhaps we can take it up next time." Or ask probing questions to amplify the subject. If someone makes an obnoxious remark, it is best to give no answer, but just change the subject.

Above all, do not argue or accuse; negotiation is persuasion—and arguing does not persuade. Using our example from last column, suppose a colleague snaps out, "I don't see why we should support your budget. We're not asking you to support ours." Do not immediately argue, "But you're not doing any services for my department, whereas my department is serving yours . . ." Rather, empathize, "I fully understand what you're saying. It is an unusual thing I'm asking. But clearly, we have a real problem getting the turnaround time you need, despite everything we've done so far—and I'm asking you to help me solve that problem."

Fifth, always see the best in people—and show it! This is the most important rule of all. Give them noble motives to live up to. Be generous with compliments. Empathize with their position. You don't persuade people by insulting them or battling with them. If you want to come to an amicable agreement with them, be amicable!

Cheryl Reimold is author of more than 100 articles and several books, including How To Write a Million-Dollar Memo and Being a Boss. Her firm, PERC Communications (6A Dickel Rd., Scarsdale, NY 10583, telephone 914-725-1024), offers businesses in-house workshops and courses in communication, writing, negotiation, and creative problem solving. ◀

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*The Art of Negotiating, Simon & Schuster, New York: 1968, p. 86.

How to Set Priorities

Do you know the difference between someone who's efficient and someone who's effective?

The efficient person does things right—that is, without wasted time or effort. The effective person does the right things—the ones that move him or her toward valued, pre-determined goals. And excellence can be defined as "doing the right things right."

Everyday scores of "urgent trivialities" clamour for our attention. You know: An office mate comes in with a routine complaint about the boss or spouse, someone else calls you with a request that should go to your secretary (who isn't available), or a friend in another division wants your help with a presentation he or she has put off to the last minute.

It's all too easy to spend our time on such matters—even handling them with great efficiency—while neglecting that which we truly care about.

Trivia Hogging Your Time?
There's a joke that illustrates this. A farmer called on her neighbor and found him cutting up a big pile of food for his hog, working swiftly and efficiently to chop the food into very small pieces.

So the farmer asked her neighbor, "Why are you cutting that hog food into such small pieces?"

The neighbor replied, "Well, you see, if I cut the food into these little pieces, the hog can eat it much faster."

To which the farmer answered, "Yes, but what's time to a hog?"

The point is to invest only the time and energy in a task that it deserves—and you can't really do that without time-management techniques, such as setting priorities and goals.

Putting your main energies into low priority tasks, by the way, is very fatiguing. You go home at night too drained to do anything but watch television or leaf through a magazine. Spending most of your time for weeks and months, or even years, on urgent trivialities can make life seem hardly worth the effort. On the other hand, completing high-priority tasks that are moving you toward valued goals will energize you.

Lots of people talk about priorities, but few people actually set any and fewer still tie in their daily actions to the priorities they set. Yet setting priorities regularly is one of the best ways to help divert the flood of trivia that threatens to wash away our precious time.

Setting priorities isn't difficult. Simply sit down with your daily to-do list as you're having your morning coffee—or the night before, perhaps while you're watching TV—and mark your top six to nine priorities in red. As you check your list throughout the day, seeing your priorities jump out at you in red ink will be a potent reminder of which activities deserve your attention.

I don't suggest you put off setting priorities until you get to your office. As soon as you walk through the door, the phone will ring, or you'll spot an important-looking memo in your in-box, or your colleague will start to tell you about a great night spot. Before you know it, it's 2 p.m. and you still haven't marked your day's priorities, let alone worked on them.

With practice, you can learn to rank your six to nine highest priorities in a minute or less. The payoff on that minute is tremendous.

Six Easy Questions
Here are some questions to ask yourself as you learn to set priorities or when you get stuck:
• Which task will cause a problem for someone else if I don't do it today?
• Which task would my supervisor consider most important?

• Which task will give me or my company the greatest return on my time?
• Which task is most closely tied in to one of my highest values?
• Which task will move me farthest toward one of my long-range goals?
• Which task will I feel best to be rid of?

If each of your top six tasks answered just one of these questions every business day, you'd be setting priorities effectively. (You may want to cut out the above list and keep it in your calendar or time book until you internalize the questions.)

In one of my seminars, a woman said she felt guilty about putting off taking some old clothes to her local thrift store. I suggested she try the above list of questions on that chore. She quickly saw that it was not a high-priority task; it could be done pretty much any time. That's another bonus of setting priorities: It gets the emotion (guilt or worry, which eat up both time and energy) off low-priority tasks. Postscript: Within a week she'd delivered the clothes.

You'll be more likely to make a regular habit of setting priorities if you're realistic and flexible about the process. You don't need to set priorities for your entire to-do list—which may contain 20 to 30 separate tasks. Setting more than six to nine priorities is unrealistic and will quickly become tedious.

Progress, Not Perfection
See setting daily priorities as your goal, something to provide direction to your efforts. Don't be discouraged if it takes you awhile to get there; progress is more important than speed. Setting priorities once or twice a week at first, or setting only three a day, is still more effective than never setting any. The act of writing them down, giving them a rating, and transferring unfinished priorities to another day's list will give them importance and help you accomplish them.

Also accept the fact that only on rare days will you get all your priority tasks finished—since real-life situations that you cannot possibly foresee will emerge to change your plans. I've learned to be satisfied if I complete four or five of my top nine tasks; the others get carried over to other days.

To help you remember to set priorities, you might try writing this affirmation on a few Post-It notes and sticking them in strategic locations—bathroom mirror, coffeepot, car dashboard:

I SET MY PRIORITIES EVERY DAY SO I CAN PUT FIRST THINGS FIRST.

Remember—there's no getting around priorities. If you can't be bothered to set them, life and other people will set them for you.

Wouldn't you rather be in charge?

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Warm Response to Articles on PCS's Soviet Visit

The articles in the November *Newsletter* describing PCS's experiences in Moscow and Estonia brought a warm response from Terry Burns, IEEE's manager of Section/Chapter Support. Terry wrote (in part):

Your stories brought the experience home for me, and I felt that I had the opportunity to meet Dr. Agur, Dr. Tolbast and her daughter Maria, Yuri the translator, and other attendees. Your admiration for your Soviet colleagues, the country, and the opportunity were delightful to read.

In working with so many volunteers from around the world, especially with frequent changes in Section and Chapter leadership, the staff doesn't always have the opportunity to know as much about the culture, the working realities and the needs of our members around the world. You and your colleagues have brought us closer to knowledge with your reminiscences about your recent Soviet trip.

The four members of the group visiting the U.S.S.R. very much appreciated Terry's letter, and the knowledge that they had in a small way managed to convey more than just the technical details about their visit. ◀

Professional Communication Society Member Wins Top Award

The Association for Computing Machinery's Special Interest Group on Systems Documentation (SIG-DOC) at its annual conference awarded its highest award to William Horton, a consultant in information engineering. The Joseph T. Rigo award recognizes significant ongoing contributions in promoting excellence in software documentation.

Author of *Designing and Writing Online Documentation* and coauthor of *The Writer's Pocket Almanack,* William Horton is president of William Horton Consulting, an independent consulting firm specializing in applying human factors to communicating technical information. He has won international awards for his publications and user-interface designs.

William Horton is a graduate of MIT and the University of Alabama at Huntsville, a registered professional engineer, and an Associate Fellow of the Society for Technical Communication.

William Horton is a member of IEEE Professional Communication Society and other IEEE organizations. ◀

Leap of Faith

Jumping to conclusions is one of those conversational ills that isn't likely to be cured. Knowing where a speaker is headed before she gets there can be as gratifying as correctly anticipating a chess opponent's next move. But, if a listener is not adept at reaching the right conclusion, both the speaker and the listener will suffer the effects of miscommunication.

If you are on the delivering end of a piece of information and feel your message is at risk of being mangled by an unskilled conclusion jumper, follow this simple tip: Verify with your listener that the message you delivered was the one received by asking, "Would you tell me how you interpreted what I just said?" This way the listener will have to repeat your message in her own words, and you will quickly know if she has made an accurate interpretation. Don't ask a yes-or-no question such as "Do you understand?" The listener may simply say yes, and you will have missed your chance to compare notes.

Reprinted from Executive Female, *January/February 1991.* ◀

Some IPCC 90 Delegates Due Partial Refunds

The IPCC 90 U.S. Conference Treasurer will be sending a form letter to each conference delegate providing details regarding a possible partial refund and the procedures for obtaining the refund. Refunds are being offered to delegates who stayed at the Guildford Post House Hotel during the conference and paid the conference rate of 125 pounds per day. The refund amount to approximately 25 pounds per day. Any delegate who does not receive the form letter should contact W. P. Kehoe, JHU/APL, Johns Hopkins Rd., Laurel, MD 20723 or call (301) 953-5000, Ext. 7944. ◀

PCS Needs Book Reviewers

IEEE Press is preparing to publish three new or revised PCS-sponsored books over the coming twelve months, and wants six PCS members to review two of them (three for each book). Ron Blicq (PCS's liaison to the IEEE Press), has been asked to find volunteers.

The books are:

• Bob Woelfle's 2nd edition of *Technical Presentations.*

• Jim Hill and Tim Whalen's new book *Technical Proposals.*

If you would like to be a reviewer, please mail Ron a line or send him a fax indicating which book you would prefer to review.

Contact Ron at:

> Ron S. Blicq
> 569 Oxford Street
> Winnipeg, MB
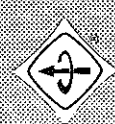> Canada R3M 3J2
> Fax: (204) 488-7294   ◀

Body Language in Print

Anyone who has ever had to appear on television usually already knows the fine points of projecting a good image through appearance and body language. But what about a print interview? Don't underestimate the importance of the image you present to a newspaper or magazine reporter. Body language influences how a reporter perceives you, according to M&L Spokesperson Services in New York City, and may influence how you are depicted and, perhaps, how you are quoted. For example, a journalist for *Savvy* magazine describes Congresswoman Barbara Mikulski at a factory tour as follows: "Mikulski wades right in with her customary duck walk and Maryland twang, talking to the guys on the assembly line as if her next career just might be skinning poultry."

For print, radio or TV interviews, choose your attire carefully and stay conscious of your tone of voice and body movements. To set a professional tone from the start, sit with your tailbone against the back of a chair or couch and lean forward. You'll look cooperative and feel physically alert. You'll be more ready to respond than if you slouch or list to starboard. Try different positions in front of a mirror. Find a position in which you feel natural and look alert. Stay conscious of your movements and appearance throughout the interview.

Reprinted from Executive Female, *May/June, 1990.* ◀