

I E E E PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION SOCIETY N E W S L E T T E R

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HIGHLIGHTS OF MARCH 1997 AdCOM MEETING

BY GEORGE HAYHOE

The AdCom met on March 7-8, 1997 at the Loews LeConcord Hotel in Québec City, Québec, site of IPCC 98. The most significant issues discussed at the meeting were finances, editorial transition and redesign of the society's *Transactions*, and plans for upcoming and future conferences.

Finances

President Mark Haselkorn's report focused on identifying new sources of income, giving more budgeting responsibility to committee chairs, and anticipating changes in the way IEEE and TAB operate and the impact of those changes on our finances. Haselkorn also emphasized that PCS should be perceived by the rest of the Institute as a full-fledged technical society, not a subsidized, service organization. PCS has the potential to make an enormous difference to the Institute.

Treasurer Bill Kehoe reported that the society's financial situation seems somewhat brighter as a result of figures recently received from IEEE headquarters. However, the books for IPCC 96 have now been closed, and the result is a smaller-than-expected conference surplus. This means the desire to balance this fiscal year's budget, has caused Kehoe to recalculate expected income and expenses in many categories to bring the 1997 budget into balance.

A breakout group on budgeting proposed that PCS commit to adopting a balanced budget for 1998 and beyond. The proposal was approved unanimously by the AdCom, and standing committee chairs submitted their 1998 budgets to the treasurer at the end of March.

To fund the new initiatives the AdCom has planned for the future and to avoid budget deficits, the society must increase its revenues. Two obvious ways of doing this are increasing membership and raising dues. The Membership Committee has proposed several projects that should help increase membership in the coming year. The AdCom also discussed an increase in dues, which are currently in the middle range for IEEE society dues. A motion to raise dues to \$22, effective with 1998 membership renewal was approved unanimously.

The AdCom also discussed the impact of a change in the All Societies Periodicals Package that would reduce PCS' share by nearly half. Since PCS received approximately \$60K from the ASPP in 1996 (approximately 15 percent of our annual operating budget), this change would have a significant impact. PCS' Immediate Past President, Deb Flaherty Kizer, serves on the Transactions Committee of the TAB Products Committee, and hopefully will be influential during TAB's deliberations on this issue.

Transactions

Rudy Joenk reported that interim editor Scott Sanders has enough approved submissions in hand to fill all issues of the *Transactions* through the end of 1997, and should pass on nearly another issue's worth of approved manuscripts to his successor, Kim Sydow Campbell of the Air Force Institute of Technology. Sydow Campbell, who attended the AdCom meeting, plans to solicit and publish applied research by actively involving both academics and practitioners, thereby

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*And if e-mail is
instead to be compared
to conversation,
I'd assume the speaker
to be half-educated
and self-infatuated.*

I enjoyed Joan Nagle's column in the April/May issue of the newsletter. There was one (rather curmudgeonly, perhaps) other thing that I thought she might address, that none of the articles I've seen about e-mail abbreviations have mentioned: They're cliches replacing thought.

What is more, they are often sophomoric cliches—if I read anything else that said “in my humble opinion” I'd suspect the writer of being callow or arrogant. And if e-mail is instead to be compared to conversation, I'd assume the speaker to be

half-educated and self-infatuated, certainly not someone I'd choose to spend my time with.

As a bad typist, I'd rather type or read someone else's bad typing as long it conveys real thoughts. As it is, it has begun to feel (again) that the visible world of computers is dominated by unsocialized 20-year-olds who stay up all night drinking coffee at the computer because they don't have friends.

—Laurel Grove

*I have used computers
for 20 years and have
worked on them from the
chip and machine code
level. Do I want to
do that everyday?—
no thank you.*

I just read your article (“The Dumbing of America”) in the March/April '97 issue of the *PCS Newsletter*. And then I re-read the article several times and I'm still not sure whether I entirely understand your point.

I agree that America seems to be getting ‘dumber.’ It is very sad that our society is doing such a poor job of teaching the fundamentals of science, social science and the arts. Nor do many students come away from the system with a sense of excitement about learning.

I speak as a Boomer, well-advanced in a professional career in engineering. I personally enjoy having an intuitive grasp of the underlying workings of our technology—to a point. I'm just not sure that “The Dumbing of America” makes a clear case.

Your example of replacing rotary-dial phones with touch-tone phones is on shaky ground. I can hardly believe that there is any school district still using rotary-dial technology but if there is then it should be replaced.

More and more, access to our technology depends upon a tone interface. It's not so much that the students don't understand how to use a rotary phone but that the district and its staff and students are severely handicapped with this antiquated technology. The example seems to contradict your point.

You discuss programming VCRs and TVs which I do on a regular basis and that's *my* thing. But I hate the fact that every blasted one has a different way of interfacing with its human host. That's why there are so many blinking clock displays on VCRs in this country.

I have used computers for 20 years and have worked on them from the chip and machine code level. Do I want to do that everyday?—no thank you. In fact, after 10 years of fighting my way through system commands, AUTOEXEC.BAT and Port settings, I rebelled against a technology that required me to think like a machine.

I now depend on a Macintosh which I find intuitive and it doesn't inhibit creativity.

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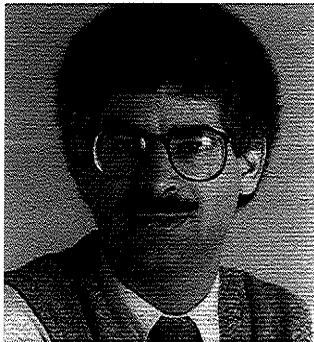
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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



MARK HASELKORN

BECOMING AN AdCOM MEMBER

Our Society is managed by an Administrative Committee (AdCom) currently composed of 20 volunteers who work hard to assure that our Society serves its members, the IEEE, and the field of technical and professional communication. At this year's October AdCom meeting in Snowbird, elections will be held to fill seven vacant at-large positions. If you have a history of professional activity and are interested in a higher level of involvement in PCS, I urge you to consider running for PCS AdCom.

Before telling you how rewarding it is to be a member of the PCS AdCom, let me give you the details. AdCom members must be both PCS and IEEE members (i.e. no affiliate members). AdCom members-at-large are selected by vote of the members-at-large of the previous year's AdCom. The term of office is three years and begins on January 1 following the election.

Typically, AdCom members attend three meetings a year. They also engage in countless e-mail discussions. Each member-at-large carries a "portfolio"—perhaps chairing a standing or ad hoc committee; perhaps serving as one of the four Society officers; perhaps playing a lead role in an upcoming International Professional Communication Conference. While AdCom members are volunteers, PCS covers approximately \$1,000 of volunteer yearly expenses for attending the three meetings.

These are exciting times to be on the PCS AdCom. The rise in visibility of electronic information and communication has meant increased opportunities for PCS, both within and outside IEEE.

Examples include our experiment to improve the usability of IEEE *Transactions*, our participation in an upcoming "summit meeting" with related societies to advance our profession (more on this next issue), international expansion (see article in this issue on the new Madras chapter), increased service to members as part of the overall IEEE restructuring, increased activity in web site design and construction, increased attention to student activities, new educational products, interaction with other IEEE entities (such as our founding member status with the Intelligent Transportation Committee), and, of course, ongoing publication and conference activities.

You do not need to be a member of AdCom to play a key role in these and other PCS activities. There's plenty of rewarding work for anyone who wants to volunteer by contacting me or the appropriate committee chair. But for those of you with special desire and exciting ideas, working with PCS AdCom can be both significant and rewarding.

If you're interested, please contact George Hayhoe, Chair of the 1997 Nominations Committee (803-642-2156; gfhayhoe@scescape.net).

These are exciting times to be on the PCS AdCom. The rise in visibility of electronic information and communication has meant increased opportunities for PCS.



The AdCom takes a break during the March meeting.

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

<i>Awards</i>	Cheryl Reimold
<i>Chapter Relations</i>	Beth Moeller
<i>Editorial Advisory</i>	Rudy Joenk
<i>Education</i>	Janet Rochester
<i>Electronic Information</i>	Paul Seesing
<i>Meetings/Conferences</i>	Roger Grice
<i>Membership</i>	Leann Kostek and George Martin
<i>Publicity/Marketing</i>	Deborah-Flaherty-Kizer
<i>Students</i>	Dave Kemp

CHAPTER NEWS

The PCS chapter of Madras, India was formed on March 12 and inaugurated by IEEE President Charles K. Alexander.

Beth Weise Moeller reports that there is an active chapter of PCS in Moscow and interest has been expressed in starting a St. Petersburg chapter.

Erling Helsa is pursuing the possibility of beginning a China chapter. Helsa will be assisted by Pender McCarter, who travels to China this year.

Some interest has also been shown in starting an Australian PCS chapter.

The PCS chapter of Madras, India was formed on March 12 and inaugurated by

IEEE President Charles K. Alexander during a recent visit.

Dr. S.S. Narayanan established the new chapter. He expressed gratitude to Rudy Joenk, Mark Haselkorn, and Beth Weise Moeller for their assistance in establishing the chapter.

He plans to publish a semi-annual newsletter covering events of concern to the Madras chapter. It will be sent to student branch chairmen and counsels.

STUDENT NEWS

Vishal Sharma, University of California in Santa Barbara, has been very busy with efforts to increase student participation in PCS. Following are some of his accomplishments.

IEEE PCS Student Web

The conception, design, planning, and execution of the PCS Student Web is complete. The URL is: http://spetses.ece.ucsb.edu/~vishal/pcs_student_pages

Sharma suggests that PCS members take a few moments to browse through this site and visit the Virtual Student Chapter, the Hyperdiscourse pages, and the Virtual Conference Center.

PCS Co-sponsorship of Contests with Other IEEE Societies

Sharma has contacted Laura Durett, IEEE Student Services Manager, to obtain her assistance with contact information for SAC Chairs and Student Contest Chairpersons of other IEEE Societies, so that the PCS can seek co-sponsorship of student contests.

A proposal describing PCS' co-sponsorship of student competitions is available on-line (as a postscript file) at: http://spetses.ece.ucsb.edu/~vishal/acad_info/affiliations.html

PCS Student Club at UC Santa Barbara

Sharma reports that, based on a letter from Mark Haselkorn and a proposal submitted by Sharma and Dr. Muriel Zimmerman, Director, Writing Program at UCSB, to the Dean, College of Engineering at UCSB, the Dean agreed to co-sponsor the first IEEE PCS Student Club, at UCSB, for five years starting with the 1996-97 academic year.

The College of Engineering will provide matching funds of \$400 (PCS gives \$400) annually for Club activities, and will also provide administrative support.

The club's first meeting was held Feb. 20. The Dean of the College of Engineering, Venkatesh Narayanamurti and Associate Dean Bob Rinker were featured speakers. For the next meeting, the club has already received confirmation from UCSB Chancellor Henry Yang, who will chair a panel discussion on professional communication and technical writing in the sciences and engineering.

Sharma suggests that PCS members take a few moments to browse through this site and visit the Virtual Student Chapter, the Hyperdiscourse pages, and the Virtual Conference Center.

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.

MORE USEFUL E-MAIL STUFF

In a recent column, your neighborhood curmudgeon expounded on the use of acronyms like BTW (for by the way), and provided a few new ones, possibly useful for technical communicators.

Now across my electronic desktop comes another batch of symbols...pictographs...hieroglyphs. Call them what you will, they do proliferate in our increasingly nonverbal world.

(BTW, what kind of attribution does one use for these bits of humor, usually job-related, that circulate through offices and over electronic networks? I have no idea in the world who came up with the following, but whoever he/she is, I give her/him full credit.)

Emoticons, says the anonymous author, are "a very clever use of standard punctuation marks to express a human emotion."

As an example, suppose you are experiencing pleasant emotions (rare on the job, but one never knows), and want to communicate this. At the end of the sentence you type a colon followed by a closing parenthesis. Your sentence looks like this:

I am feeling happy:)

Someone, somewhere has decided that this looks like a smiley face turned on its side. I suppose that, if we all agree on this interpretation, it will communicate. (Or as they say in the clergy, "It'll preach.") That's the way it is with language.

Now, by extension, we have the following:

Emotion	Meaning
:)	Happy person
:(Sad person
:~)	Happy person with a nose
:~(Sad person with a nose
:—(Person who is sad because he or she has a large nose
:S(Person who is sad because he or she has a large fish for a nose

Emotion	Meaning
:-D	Person laughing
:-D*	Person laughing so hard that he or she does not notice that a five-legged spider is hanging from his or her lip
:~	Person unsure of which long-distance company to choose
;~)	Person winking
.~)	Person who can still smile despite losing an eyeball
:V:~	Person who cannot figure out why nobody wants to talk to him or her, little suspecting that there is an alligator on his or her head
~oE]:~	Fisherperson heading for market with a basket on his or her head containing a three-legged octopus that is giving off smell rays

Look, I didn't make these up. I just plagiarized them. They sorta sound like Dave Barry, don't they? Especially the ones I didn't copy, for reasons that you may be able to guess.

And now for the commercial. Coming soon...to your mailbox...is an announcement of a new IEEE-USA publication, *Today's Engineer*. The magazine will deal with nontechnical issues facing engineers (in all disciplines), like the work environment, technology management, and needed skills for engineers. Primary among the needed skills is...you guessed it...the ability to communicate. Your writer, as an associate editor of *Today's Engineer*, will be contributing a series of articles on communication skills.

Talk this up among your engineer friends and colleagues. I think they'll like it.

Emoticons, says the anonymous author, are "a very clever use of standard punctuation marks to express a human emotion."

WHAT TO DO ABOUT "DUMBING"

BY ALAN STEWART

"The Dumbing of America" in the March/April issue of the *PCS Newsletter* raised many thoughts in my mind, most of them depressing. Like many of us who are parents I thought first of my children and what kind of a world they will live in as they begin their working lives.

Will they feel as comfortable with technology as I did when I was young. Even before I became an engineer I had a good idea of how a locomotive worked, steam or diesel. I understood enough about physics and chemistry and biology to comprehend products and services based on scientific principles and not feel threatened by them.

In my own discipline of telecommunications I was comfortable with most areas outside my own sphere of information transmission. For example, I knew that telephones are not much use without a switching and signaling infrastructure.

Today, I find myself increasingly mixing with colleagues who really do not care to delve into technical areas outside their own narrow focus. For example I recently attended a press conference held in Sergeant Bluff, Iowa at which MCI announced its plans to get into high speed digital telephone access in rural areas. Yet when I asked the presenter about some key Federal Communications regulations that will impact MCI's plans neither he nor any of his colleagues knew what I was talking about.

Later that day I toured Sergeant Bluff-Luton Community School to see how students will access the Internet over these high speed links. Surrounded by expensive computers donated by MCI I was ill advised to ask the superintendent the question, "Do the kids have to keep up a good grade average before they use all this stuff?"

This question was met with an embarrassed silence by the superintendent, the principal, and the program coordinator.

Reluctantly, they finally admitted, students' progress in class is a factor and failing grades might be taken into account. Is it any wonder that our school system is in trouble?

As Donna Wicks points out in her article there is a danger in making things too complex so "there has to be a middle ground." But there's another danger, far more pressing than the concern that too many details will turn people off.

If we do not reverse the process of "dumbing down" a situation will arise where most of us, educated or not, will depend totally on complex machines designed by technologists who have little insight into the impact of these machines on themselves or society.

Is there anything we can do about it or will many aspects of the world so terrifyingly described in George Orwell's 1984 come about two decades later than he thought?

Yes, I believe there is something we can do. We must take the trouble to think about things using basic common sense. Take the Internet, for example. Sometimes I feel that if I criticize the Internet I will be considered a dinosaur. So I was very pleased to hear that Ray Bradbury had the courage to tell a group of Silicon Valley executives that he would rather take a good book to bed than browse the Internet.

The message is clear. I am not saying we should be like Nineteenth Century Luddites who broke up machines they did not understand. I am saying we should all develop the courage to speak our minds without fear or favor when we have something important to say about the explosion of technology and what it is doing to us as human beings.

Alan Stewart is a senior member of IEEE and consults, writes, and teaches about high-speed access to the information highway.

If we do not reverse the process of "dumbing down" a situation will arise where most of us, educated or not, will depend totally on complex machines designed by technologists who have little insight into the impact of these machines on themselves or society.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE



CHERYL REIMOLD

Cheryl teaches courses and workshops for PCS on this and other communication topics.

For information, c.reimold@ieec.org.

Getting properly connected begins with the right attitude. Do you really care about your listeners?

HOW TO DELIVER WINNING PRESENTATIONS

Part 2: The Winning Attitude

Part 2: The Winning Attitude
As we saw last time, the master key that opens the door to powerful delivery is *honest connection* with your audience. Outstanding speakers know that they must at every moment be connected with the real people in the audience, for a real purpose that matters to those people, and without hiding behind any slick stage personality. This is what generates the trust essential for persuasion.

You may object that in most of your presentations, you're only selling technical information, with persuasion rooted entirely in objective criteria. But our experience with many organizations strongly suggests that this is the wrong view. You're always selling a package: people want the facts, but they also want to know that you are *trustworthy* and *committed* to helping them or to seeing a project through. And they get this essential information about trustworthiness and commitment not from the numbers and charts you present but from the way you connect with your listeners.

The Starting Point: A Caring Attitude

Getting properly connected begins with the right attitude. Do you really care about your listeners and about giving them something they need? Once you have that attitude, you'll find it easy to express it with your body, face, eyes, and voice. If you don't have it, even the best "performance" will seem fake and leave your listeners uncomfortable and suspicious.

Check your preparation. From the outset—while *preparing* your presentation—you should have developed a real appreciation of your audience. Just who are they, and what do they want? How does that fit in with what *you* want them to do or believe? As you get ready to deliver your presentation, once more review your material. Have you found the best angle, the one that connects you most strongly to this

audience? If not, are there any quick adjustments you can make in your message?

In particular, keep your message positive, even (or especially) when you bear unwelcome news. Your listeners are never yearning for negative news or criticism. So, if you want them to change, give them positive, not negative reasons for doing so.

Learn to love any audience. Really appreciating your listeners and their needs presupposes that you *like* them. This is where some people have a big problem. Their thoughts are dominated by *fear* of the audience, and that leaves no room for liking. Or they may *resent* a particular audience. This is sure to transmit itself, no matter how polished your style, and the audience will turn against you. Many will not even hear what you have to say, let alone accept it.

I witnessed one corporate staffer (a smooth, experienced presenter) ruining a carefully prepared presentation because of this basic mistake. He was talking to a group of engineers about the importance of Total Quality Control. It soon became apparent, from subtle signals, that he neither liked nor respected his listeners but saw them as *obstacles* to his quality goals. They promptly became resentful and resistant to his suggestions.

So, as you get ready to give your presentation, take a look around and *find something likeable about everybody*. One thing I find helpful is simply to notice how different everybody is. For some reason, this seems to make it easy to start with a smile. Something similar may work for you. (The commonly suggested trick of imagining your listeners in their underwear will *not* do—does it strike you as a nice or respectful way to treat an audience?)

Check the setup. Exceptional presenters do everything they can to make the audience

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*Stephanie Rosenbaum,
1996 Schelsinger
Award Winner*

*Rosenbaum has been
involved with many
projects overseen by
AdCom including the
current redesign of
Transactions.*

1996 AWARD WINNERS

The Schelsinger and Goldsmith Awards were presented during the 1996 IPCC at Saratoga Springs, New York. Both award winners were honored for their active participation in PCS.

Schelsinger Award Winner

Stephanie Rosenbaum is founder and president of Tec-Ed, Inc., a 20-person firm specializing in user documentation, usability research, user interface design (including graphic design), and marketing communication. Headquartered in Ann Arbor, Michigan, Tec-Ed maintains offices in Palo Alto, California and Rochester, New York. Tec-Ed clients include Netscape, Intuit, Xerox, Ford Motor Company, Sun Microsystems, Autodesk, and a wide variety of smaller firms. Tec-Ed celebrates its 30th anniversary this year (Rosenbaum started the company to earn her way through graduate school).

Rosenbaum is a member of the PCS AdCom. "Serving on the PCS AdCom has given me the opportunity to do a wide variety of interesting and worthwhile projects that benefit the Society and the broader engineering and technical communication community as well," she said.

"My first PCS project was leading a committee to develop guidelines for production and printing of our IPCC Proceedings. As a result, the past few IPCCs have been able to print their Proceedings cost-effectively, giving more budget for other activities."

Rosenbaum has been involved with many projects overseen by AdCom including the current redesign of *Transactions*.

In addition to serving on the IEEE PCS Administrative Committee, Stephanie is vice-chair of ACM SIGDOC, a Fellow of the Society for Technical Communication,

and heads the STC's Research Grants Committee. She is also a member of ACM SIGCHI, the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society, and the Usability Professionals' Association; she regularly speaks at conferences and seminars sponsored by these organizations.

Rosenbaum holds a B.A. from the University of Michigan and an M.A. in the philosophy of language from the University of California at Berkeley. Her research background includes anthropology studies at Columbia University and experimental psychology research for the University of California at Berkeley.

When not working, Rosenbaum can often be found SCUBA diving in the warm waters of the Caribbean and Hawaii.

"As a recent convert to SCUBA diving," she said, "I'm especially enthusiastic about my new hobby. Diving is like exploring another world, alien creatures included—it's gloriously beautiful!"

Between dive trips, she studies early choral music and sings with chamber music ensembles.

Goldsmith Award Winner

In her nomination of David Nadziejka for the Goldsmith Award, Laurel Grove wrote: "David has worked hard for the profession, sharing his knowledge through editing the *PCS Newsletter*, writing a column for STC's journal *Technical Communication*, helping develop the latest edition of the CBE Manual "Scientific Style and Format" (which is useful far beyond the original target field of biology editing), and teaching, in addition to his prime job of editing the work of technical staff at Argonne National Laboratory.

For more information on Nadziejka, see the June 1997 Transaction.

I love being a writer. What I can't stand is the paperwork.

—Peter De Vries

FLOCCIANUCHINIHILIPILIFICATION

VALUE WHAT?

BY MICHAEL BRADY

The rules of the marketplace are often held to be paramount. Importance aside, those rules are elusive. They are not rigorous, as are the laws of solid-state physics or of the myriad fields that delineate the daily doings of the members of the IEEE. They delve into economics, as money is involved; into social sciences, as people are involved; and into politics, as nations are involved. That may be why there are so many business books.

Yet there are skeletons that support, much as Darwin's theories back biology and Mendeleyev's table undergirds chemistry. The stalwart of 20th century business theory is the value chain, attributed to Frederick Taylor, who founded the Harvard Business School. It postulates that industrial enterprise comprises a sequence of linked events, from raw material to final product. At each link, the product becomes more valuable. Hence the name. It's most valid for the way cars were manufactured for the first half of the century, starting with excavating iron ore and ending with cars in showrooms.

Then came sectors that differed from the smokestack industries for which the value

chain was contrived. So with time, it was amended with exceptions. The result has been that the latest texts on it rival unabridged dictionaries in bulk.

Yet much of the value chain makes sense, albeit limited sense. By analogy, it's like a flat-earth concept, which is fine for designing a table or rolling out asphalt on a shopping center parking lot, but unworkable for running an airline. Its limitation resembles that of Euclidean geometry, which cannot be extended to complex topologies.

Starting about ten years ago, two management consultants, Richard Normann and Rafael Ram Erez recognized that limitation and set out to overcome it. They went from the value chain to what they called the value constellation, in which customers, not ores, comprise the most common raw materials and in which all pathways are interactive.

The result was a text, *Designing Interactive Strategy* (New York, John Wiley, 1994, ISBN 0-471-95086-6). At 155 pages, it's just five pages longer and five ounces

(continued on page 15)

Floccianuchinihilipilification means "the action or habit of estimating as worthless."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(continued on page 2)

Does that mean I'm dumb? I think it has more to do with the fact that our tools should fit our habits and not make life overly complicated.

I drive but don't do my own auto maintenance. I don't run out every time a new car model is introduced and make sure I understand all of its technology. I'm intrigued by it but don't feel that someone has to understand every nuance to simply take a drive.

I use computers and operating systems every day but don't program or try to understand each subroutine or batch file being processed. It is a tool and one should understand enough to make it work.

Perhaps that's what you were getting at—encouraging curiosity and enough under-

standing about our technology so we're not crippled whenever there is a slight glitch. With that I can agree. As professional writers in a highly technical business, we should clarify and simplify as much as possible and make our documentation and proposals relevant.

At the same time we should occasionally provide a reality-check to engineers or programmers asking if a new complicated gizmo or procedure is worth the customer's effort. We certainly should do a better job teaching the fundamentals of technology. But don't expect all of them to really dig it—only some of us are wired that way.

—Dick Eacker

IPCC 97 CONFERENCE PREVIEW

Speakers

*Karen Shriver—
Keynote Speaker*

In addition to individual break out sessions, we have several engaging speakers and plenary sessions planned. Karen Shriver of Carnegie Mellon is our featured keynote speaker at a joint IPCC/SIGDOC luncheon. Karen has had extensive experience in both technical communication and document design.

*John Brockman—
Celebrating 40 Years of PCS*

As we celebrate 40 years of PCS, we're planning to have an anniversary reception, looking at what we've accomplished in the past. John Brockman, author of a recent book on the history of technical communication, will be a featured speaker who in his energetic way will demonstrate how the past impacts what we do and how it can help us prepare for the future.

*Saul Carliner—
Exploring Communication Crossroads*

During our joint day of conference with SIGDOC, you can participate in a plenary session coordinated by STC past president, Saul Carliner. Saul is helping coordinate a full-day technical communication summit at Snowbird involving five organizations. As part of the summit, we'll invite attendees from both IPCC and SIGDOC groups to participate in a general session to express their views about the technical communication issues and crossroads.

*John Carroll, JoAnn Hackos, Stephanie Rosenbaum, Ginny Redish, Dave Farkas—
Reconstructing Minimalism: New developments in the application of minimalist principles for the education and information of users*

Reporting on a symposium held in November 1995, participants of a this session will explore minimalism as an approach to technical information. Fifteen

years ago, John Carroll and a research group of cognitive psychologists at IBM Watson Research began to develop their ideas about minimalism. Minimalism as a design approach emphasized supporting users in performing realistic tasks from the start and throughout training, learning by doing rather than learning by reading. This approach contrasted sharply with the methods advocated by instructional design and traditional task analysis.

Housing Options for IPCC 97 at Snowbird Resort

We have negotiated excellent rates at Snowbird for attendees of IPCC 97. You will have several options to choose from: The Cliff Lodge, The Lodge at Snowbird, or The Inn. These room rates are available from October 11 to November 2, 1997 for early arrivals or late departures.

Accessibility

All conference events at Snowbird are wheelchair accessible. The Cliff Lodge maintains 15 specially designed rooms providing lodging for the physically challenged. Even some of the outdoor, nature-oriented activities have been made wheelchair-friendly. If you have specific questions about Snowbird's ability to meet your needs, please contact them directly at 801-742-2222 or 800-453-3000.

Special room rates

For housing reservations at Snowbird, or for details about any of the resort's facilities, contact Snowbird directly. They can also arrange ground transportation and even your flight to Utah, if desired.

Snowbird Resort and Conference Center
TEL 800-455-3000
FAX 801-742-3300
7350 Wasatch Blvd
Salt Lake City, Utah 84121
<http://www.snowbird.co>

*As we celebrate 40 years
of PCS, we're planning
to have an anniversary
reception, looking at
what we've accomplished
in the past.*

HIGHLIGHTS OF AdCOM MEETING

(continued from page 1)

making the *Transactions* unique among the current journals in our field.

Stephanie Rosenbaum's *Transactions* redesign team has selected a three-column design with larger text font, new title font, and increased use of white space. As part of IEEE approval for the design experiment, PCS committed to conducting a usability test of the new design. This testing could cost \$50,000 to \$75,000.

PCS will issue an RFP requesting the work. In addition, funding possibilities from the IEEE journal editors' forum, the TAB periodicals council, and the IEEE Foundation are being researched.

Conferences

The program for IPCC 97 (at the Snowbird ski resort outside Salt Lake City) should prove very successful, with more than 80 proposals submitted. Karen Schriver will be the keynote speaker. John Carroll, JoAnn Hackos, and Stephanie Rosenbaum will lead a panel on minimalism.

Haselkorn also briefed the AdCom on the status of the summit of technical communication societies he proposed at IPCC 96. A general session on the first day of the Snowbird conference is being planned by Karl Smart and Saul Carliner, and will be open to all attendees. A smaller all-day meeting will be limited to designated representatives of the organizations.

The planning committee for IPCC 98 (Québec City) is now complete, including a committee member responsible for coordinating French language sessions. They are planning an invitation to participate that will encourage diverse participation in the program.

IPCC 99 and IPCC 2000 will be held in conjunction with the ACM SIGDOC conference in Chicago and Cambridge, MA, respectively. IPCC 2001 will be held in San Francisco.

PCS has the potential to make an enormous difference to the Institute.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

(continued from page 7)

feel comfortable. Be early and check that the room is clean and inviting. Remove extra chairs and get rid of flip chart pages left over from a previous presentation. And, of course, check all equipment and lighting. The cumulative effect on the audience is a sense that you respect them enough to make this a "special occasion." Removing extra chairs and clutter will also make it infinitely easier for you to connect physically with the audience. (How connected can you be when you address a lot of empty chairs?)

Beating Stage Fright

Stage fright is simply the result of caring too much about yourself and not enough about the audience. That implies the best cure: redirect your focus where it belongs.

Most people don't realize how radical you have to be about this. Caring a bit will do

nothing for you; you've got to go all out and love the audience without reservation. As long as you hold back in the least, you invite fear and self-consciousness to take over your mind at the first opportunity. I often observe this failure of half-caring in technical presentations, where many speakers seem to feel it inappropriate to relate strongly to the audience. At first, things may go well; but soon the audience returns the lukewarm feelings. The speaker picks this up and becomes increasingly unsettled, until stage fright has him firmly in its grip.

Don't let this happen to you. Make sure you're well prepared, with a message of value to your audience. Then keep firmly focused on getting that message across to a bunch of people whom you like and respect a lot. There won't be any room left in your mind for that presenter's dread, stage fright!

Exceptional presenters do everything they can to make the audience feel comfortable.

HOW OUR MEMBERSHIP HAS CHANGED

BY LAUREL GROVE

The Members

Although it would be interesting to trace PCS' growth over its entire 40-year history, membership records go back only as far as 1972. At the end of 1972, PCS had 1868 members; of these, 184 were students, eight affiliates, and 1676 in what IEEE describes as higher grades (Associate, Member, Senior Member).

Fifteen years later, at the end of 1987, we had 2607 members altogether, including 190 students, 66 affiliates, and 2351 in higher grades.

At the end of 1996, we had only 2413 members altogether, including 266 students, 109 affiliates, and 2038 in higher grades.

Judging from the data available, PCS has attracted increasing numbers of students and affiliates. Affiliate membership is a special category for people who choose to belong to PCS without belonging to the IEEE as a whole. Many of these are people who practice professional communication but who are not in engineering fields.

Transnational Patterns of Growth

I was unable to get older data for how many PCS members were in various countries in different years but, for 1996 members, I looked at the dates of initial entry relative to nationality. PCS grew most in Asia in the 1980s and 1990s, in the Americas in the late 1980s and the 1990s, in Europe primarily in the 1990s, and in Africa in the 1990s.

Numbers in the Asian Mediterranean and Near Eastern countries have grown steadily since 1981, but especially in the past two

years. There was a burst of enrollment in India in 1993; India is also the home of our longest-running Asian members, two of whom joined in 1950. Growth in Japan has been steady since 1987; Australian growth has been sharp and steady since 1979, and was fairly steady even before that.

Although numbers in Central and South America are low overall, they have grown consistently since 1986; none goes back before 1963.

We have one member in Europe who has been an IEEE member since 1937; only one other European joined before World War II. Growth in Europe has been more sporadic than in the Americas. More than half of our members in Italy joined in the past two years, and almost half of our members in the Balkan countries joined in the same period; nearly all of our Russian members joined in 1994; there were bursts of enrollment in Spain and Portugal in 1990 and 1993.

Growth in Europe has been fairly steady, but our involvement in Forum 95 appears to have had an effect, in that about as many members joined in 1995 as in 1996. (Of course, the normal pattern is that the most recent two years do have the greatest numbers overall.) A burst of enrollment for the United Kingdom is also apparent after IPCC 90, which was held in a London suburb.

Fully half of our few African members joined in the past two years, and almost all of them joined in 1996.

Note: Laurel Grove was PCS secretary and membership committee chair in 1995-96.

Judging from data available, PCS has attracted increasing numbers of students and affiliates.

CELEBRATING

40
YEARS

1957-1997

A good holiday is one spent among people whose notions of time are vaguer than yours.

—J.B. Priestly

HISTORY OF THE PCS GOLDSMITH AWARD

BY JOAN NAGLE

“For outstanding achievement in engineering communication” is the citation on my Goldsmith Award plaque, and perhaps on others.

I like that. It’s what the Professional Communication Society (PCS) is about ... the efforts to achieve, arrive at new plateaus in this difficult business. Recognizing such efforts has been an important function of the Society since 1975, when the first Alfred N. Goldsmith Award was presented.

Dr. Goldsmith, who held a lifetime appointment as associate professor of electrical engineering at the City College of New York and was its first director of research, then vice president and general manager of engineering at RCA, was one of the founders of the Institute of Radio Engineers (IRE) in 1912. From 1912 to 1954, an incredible tenure, he was editor of the *Proceedings of the IRE*.

He was a sponsor and patron of the formation of the IRE Professional Group on Engineering Writing and Speech, forerunner of PCS. After listing the necessary characteristics of the ideal engineer, he said, “...even if he has all [these] characteristics, he may fail dismally through lack of an additional pair of qualifications less frequently considered. He must be articulate. And he must be literate.”

The first (1975) Goldsmith Award went to **Jim Lufkin**, a two-time PCS president and three-time conference chair. Lufkin is fondly remembered by older members as the author of one-act plays dealing with problems of communicating about engineering subjects. The last of these, a sendup of Shakespeare, was seen on an IPCC stage in London (1990).

It’s gratifying to see that **Ron Blicq** was honored early on (1976) for his work as a long-term chair of PCS’ education committee. By that date he had already prepared a home-study course, a workshop, and a seminar on technical writing—activities which he has continued since 1976. These days Blicq busily represents

PCS in international technical communication functions.

John Phillips won in 1977, after serving as vice president and meetings chair and then president of PCS. He was heavily involved in some of our early conferences, and at the time of his award had completed five years as Society treasurer. The award citation noted especially his “imaginative promotion of methods for communicating technical ideas.”

In 1978 **Emily Schlesinger** received the award following two years as president of PCS. During that tenure, she recruited an editor to publish the *Transactions* on a regular basis, and personally served as *Newsletter* editor. She fostered international participation in PCS, as well as cooperation with the Society for Technical Communication.

The international flavor of PCS came to the forefront with the 1979 award to **Eric Openshaw Taylor**, who was an organizer and first chair of the United Kingdom/Republic of Ireland chapter, the first PCS chapter outside the United States. He kept PCS aware of its activities, and maintained official liaison with engineering groups in his own country.

As editor of the *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication* from 1977 through 1984, **Rudy Joenk** “transformed [the] journal from languishing to flourishing, and from unresponsive to influential,” said the citation for his 1980 award. Under his leadership, the *Transactions* became a source of pragmatic and thought-provoking material for engineers. Dr. Joenk later served as PCS president.

Bertrand Pearlman, the 1981 awardee, was president of the Society from 1979 through 1981. An especially visible representative, he worked actively in the IEEE Technical Activities Board and six different IEEE societies. The Society’s membership almost doubled during his presidency. This was the only time the award was given posthumously; Mr. Pearlman died three days before it was to be presented.

He was a sponsor and patron of the formation of the IRE Professional Group on Engineering Writing and Speech, forerunner of PCS.

It is interesting—and significant—to note how many Goldsmith winners have continued to contribute to the Society and to the profession. In that way, the true winner is PCS!

There is no record of an award being made in 1982.

In 1983 the Society recognized **Richard Robinson**, especially for his work over a period of five years as membership chair. During this time, PCS grew steadily while other, younger societies lost membership. "His consistent professional attention [to PCS matters] has done much to ensure our success," said the citation. Robinson later served as PCS president.

Lois Moore took the 1984 award. Her work as chair of the meetings committee was a major force in making the annual Professional Communication Conference both a technical and a financial success. As PCS vice president, she made the Society's influence and concerns visible to other constituencies in IEEE. Moore later served as PCS president.

Daniel Rosich was president of the Society when he received the 1985 award. He also worked on conference activities, and was a member of various standing and *ad hoc* committees of the IEEE as a whole. During his presidency, he was the IEEE representative to the Council of Communication Societies and a member of its board of directors.

General chair of what is widely regarded as the most successful PCS conference ever, at Williamsburg, Virginia, in 1985, **James Hill** was the 1986 awardee. He held many offices in the Society, culminating with the presidency. At the time of the award, he was called one of the most diligent, hardworking members of PCS.

The 1987 award was a total surprise to its recipient, **Lacy Martin**, who was instrumental in founding several local chapters of the Society. He was also a member of the IEEE Engineering Management Society and the Society for Technical Communication, as well as being a fellow of the Institute for the Advancement of Engineering.

Roger Grice, winner in 1988, was program chair for two IPCCs and publications co-chair for a third. At the presentation, history records a notable event: Roger was truly at a loss for words! He is currently vice president of PCS, and a fellow of the Society for Technical Communication.

After a four-year term as editor of the *Transactions on Professional Communi-*

cation, **Joan Nagle** was given the award in 1989. As *Transactions* editor, she had recruited the journal's first staff of associate editors, who covered then-burgeoning areas like graphic design and communication technology, in addition to the traditional writing and speech fields.

At the presentation of the 1990 award, **Herbert Michaelson** was described as an elder statesman and treasure house of communication information and policy. One of the organizers (and first treasurer) of the Professional Group on Engineering Writing and Speech, predecessor of PCS, he edited its *Transactions*. He is a fellow of the Society for Technical Communication.

The recipient of the award in 1991 was **Deborah Flaherty Kizer**, longtime member of PCS and former editor of the *Society Newsletter*. She was a member of the first PCS team to visit behind the Iron Curtain in 1990, when she presented a paper at a communication conference in Estonia. Flaherty Kizer later served as PCS president.

Another surprise came in 1992, when the award went to William Kehoe. Kehoe had, by that time, worked for nearly a decade in the vital (but not highly visible) role of PCS treasurer, a post he still holds. He has also been treasurer and registrar for many of the Society's conferences, beginning in 1986.

Scott Sanders is another former *Transactions* editor who was honored with the Goldsmith Award (1993). Before becoming general editor, he had served as associate editor for education and training. He has returned in 1997 to edit the *Transactions* for one more year, while it is in transition to a new editorial home.

In 1994 the Society honored **Michael Goodman** with the Goldsmith Award. Dr. Goodman has served for many years as associate editor of the *Transactions* for studies in corporate and organizational communication. He was general chair of IPCC 1993, and also helped to organize and maintain the PCS archives.

Cheryl Reimold was given the award in 1995. An especially active chair of the education committee, she initiated and taught a number of courses sponsored by the Society. She is a long-time contributor to the *PCS Newsletter*, with a regular col-

umn on presentation skills, and recently chaired the awards committee.

The most recent recipient (1996) was **David Nadziejka**, retiring *Newsletter* editor. He was responsible for implementing a major redesign of the publication during

his tenure, and worked hard at making it more responsive to members' needs.

It is interesting—and significant—to note how many Goldsmith winners have continued to contribute to the Society and to the profession. In that way, the true winner is PCS!

MEMORIES OF PCS

BY JIM HILL

I have two outstanding memories of PCS: The first one is of the bus trip we took to Stone Mountain, Georgia, during the conference (IPCC 83) in Atlanta. We paid a caterer to supply a pavilion with food and drink, and when the time came to go home, we were just getting started. We couldn't see leaving the lovely food and drink behind, so we loaded it on board the bus. Then we paid the bus driver to take us on a tour of some of the beautiful homes in Atlanta. All the while we were guzzling, quaffing, and singing quite boisterously. Many of us had difficulty delivering our papers and paying attention during the next day's session.

The second memory is when I was given the Goldsmith Award in 1986. I was completely faked out. I was told that Debby Kizer was to receive the award and, since I had taken my video camera to the conference (IPCC 86 in Charlotte, NC), I was asked to surreptitiously tape her during the conference. While I was taping, Lacy Martin followed me around asking how

the camera worked, and I even let him take a few shots.

On the night of the banquet, I was assigned a seat across from Debby and told to keep the camera trained on her to register her surprise when her award was announced. I even put a piece of electrical tape over the blinking red light so she wouldn't know the camera was on.

Imagine my surprise when my name was called out at the banquet! I got up and stumbled forward, and at the same instant Lacy grabbed the camera and finished taping the award ceremony. I was really "had," and the award was most appreciated. I'm looking at it now on the wall over my computer. It's really something to receive such a high honor from one's professional associates.

Note: Jim Hill held many offices in the Society and was president in 1988-89. He is currently editor of the *Eighth Air Force News*. Debby Kizer later received the 1991 Goldsmith Award.

*Imagine my surprise
when my name was
called out at the
banquet!*

VALUE WHAT?

(continued on page 11)

heavier than Albert Einstein's beautifully slim *The Meaning of Relativity* (Princeton University Press, 1950). And it challenges received wisdom as did Einstein's text in its time.

Professional writing, as it is still much taught and practiced, adheres to a value chain of sorts. The chain starts with an outline and ends with a monograph. That approach works in teaching high-school English. In this century, it was used by at least one prominent communicator, Lenin.

Professional communications are neither high-school essays nor political manifestos.

So perhaps the time has come to consider a value constellation.

Two tenets of the value constellation theory apply to professional writing. First, the old distinction between product and service is now blurred. Second, provider-customer relationships are not one-way transactions, but reciprocal constellations in which the parties "help each other and help each other to help each other." That quote is from the foreword by Donald A. Schon of MIT, a bastion of technology; it's a worthy weathervane.

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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

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.

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



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