



IEEE Group on

## Engineering Writing and Speech

# NEWSLETTER

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Vol. 13

NOVEMBER 1970

No. 3

### TUMULTUOUS APPLAUSE

That's the way Jim Lufkin reported on the reception accorded our playlet, "Not Invented Here," by the audience at IEEE's IGA convention in Chicago, October 5. Actually, Jim said, "If you ask me I'll swear there were a thousand people there and that they greeted every line of the play with prolonged, tumultuous applause." We believe you, Jim. Of course, we realize that, as the author, your credibility is suspect. Our unbiased sources, however, report the play *was* well received.

"NIH" lays bare the paranoid attitude of the engineer who rejects all work except his own. The three characters in the play were portrayed by Jim Glennon, an industrial psychologist for Standard Oil of Indiana, Nancy Mansfield, an industrial psychologist with Vernon Psychological Lab, and Tom Nunan, PR account man for Burson-Marsteller. Session chairman and panel discussion moderator was Hal Renne of Encyclopedia Britannica.

The significant difference between this play and its three predecessors authored by Jim Lufkin is that the play demonstrated rather than a communications a *management* problem, and confined itself to revealing the problem. The hour-long panel discussion dealt with possible solutions.

Next presentation: IEEE International Convention in March.



### SPOTLIGHT ON THE VEEP

Every year we select six people to serve on our AdCom for three years. Often times without knowing too much about the candidates. So in one of our upcoming issues we will preview the candidates to give you an advance look before the ballot arrives. But once we elect the new members, they tend to disappear on us. Not because they are inactive but rather because we don't talk about people too often in the Newsletter or Transactions. Well, we hope to correct that situation with "Operation Exposure." Periodically, we'll ramble a bit about some of our AdCom members, and perhaps just a G-EWS member. Like Bob McGahey, our current vice chairman.

Bob is manager of Westinghouse Electric's Technical Publicity Department, where he has been employed since 1949. He directs W's relations with editors in the business and technical press, and plans and places

editorial material in these media. He holds a BSEE and an MSEE from Purdue and an MBA from Pitt. He is a charter member and former vice chairman of the Pittsburgh chapter of the Society of Technical Writers and Publishers. Since joining our AdCom, Bob has served as organizer for our session at the 1970 International Convention. He did pretty well in that job. So we handed him the same assignment for '71. And he's so enthusiastic about it that he will be both session organizer and chairman.

Bob keeps his hand in many activities. For example, he has been president of his local PTA, codeveloper and president of a community swim club, president of a Toastmasters' International chapter, an ardent political worker for local candidates and issues, and an active layman in church programs.

That's our Bob.

## EDITORIAL; ONE VOTE FOR "I"

We (meaning you and me) are continually confronted with the editorial "we." I, for one, don't like it. Because it's phony. What can be more absurd than a newspaper columnist talking about "our hat blowing off on a windy day." Collective ownership of felt hats nowadays is rare. It was the columnist's hat and he should say so. But, instead, he gets hung up on archaic traditions, irrefutable rules and the cowardice of a writer who hides his views under a vague plural.

Well, I say, let's (you and me again) scrap a few of those rules, starting with the editorial "we." Anytime you find a "we" in our (yours and mine) Newsletter, you'll know the reference is either to the several of us who are publishing the Newsletter or to the members of AdCom. That means most of the Newsletter copy will use "we." If the copy, however, contains my viewpoint or editorial comment, it will be first person, singular.

Walt Dennen

P.S. If you have a pet peeve, I'll be happy to include it in a forthcoming issue.

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## AN UNEXPECTED - BUT WELCOME - ANSWER

Our Newsletter carried an editorial a couple of issues ago on "Where Do We Go From Here?". One suggested answer came from John F. Kray, IBM, and editor of the IEEE's publication for the Binghamton Section. He suggested G-EWS prepare a series of slide-cassette tape lectures on oral and written communications, as part of IEEE's continuing education service. Our AdCom heartily agreed. John Kray is now chairman of our committee to develop the series. His committee is already functioning, but if you wish to join in, contact John at IBM, Endicott, New York 13760, tel; (607) 252-4671.

## AUTHORS ARISE

We normally don't carry employment opportunities in our Newsletter, but here's one that we can't pass by. The International Correspondence Schools is looking for a qualified engineer or writer to prepare instruction material on a contract basis on the subject of computer and digital principles and devices, as well as on installation, servicing and troubleshooting. Material will be used in individual and group training programs directed toward those who are working in industrial maintenance of electronic and electrical equipment. Text is envisioned to run 250-300 pages, plus illustrations.

Are you interested? Contact Joseph A. Risse, director of electronics, Department of Curriculum Development, ICS Division of Intext, Scranton, Pa. 18515.

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## GOODBYE, PALMER

Some of us don't quite go back to handwritten texts, or even handset type, but our printing methods have been - for the most part - rather static. That's all changing now. G-EWS Transactions has been selected to participate in an IEEE pilot project on computer-assisted composition. Under current plans, the three issues in 1971 will be video-composed. To this date some Transaction abstracts have been video-composed, but no Transactions themselves.

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## WHAT'S OUR FUTURE

IEE has established an ad hoc committee to "delineate the problems and recommend solutions affecting the professional and economic well-being of the electrical engineer." The committee has identified five major problems and five potential solutions. We've been asked to poll our members on how they rank the problems/solutions.

## WHAT THEY ARE: WHAT THEY ARE NOT

Trade journals, we mean. Our session at the 1971 International Convention will be on "Trade Journals - What They Are; What They Are Not." Time: Wednesday morning, March 24. Papers will consider what an editor expects from an author and, conversely what an author should expect from an editor. To be followed by a panel discussion with audience participation.

As mentioned elsewhere, "Not Invented Here" will also be presented. On Monday (March 22) and Tuesday (March 23) afternoons.

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## THE TIMES THEY ARE ACHANGING

And so are our constitution and by-laws. Bob McGahey and Bob Woelfle have been revising the G-EWS documents in light of our evolution since our founding in 1956. Copies of the drafts have been sent to AdCom members for review. The drafts will be a major topic for discussion at the November 16 AdCom meeting. The proposed constitution and by-laws will be reviewed and approved by IEEE headquarters and then sent to all G-EWS members for ratification.

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## AND CHANGING SOME MORE

Bob Woelfle has also revised our membership brochure. The new booklet, complete with cartoon illustrations, will be available shortly as an aid to our group recruiting efforts. The lighter treatment still presents all pertinent information on the why's and wherefore's of G-EWS membership.

## PROBLEMS

1. Need for guidance from a national organization with respect to training and utilizing engineers to avoid the problems of large-scale lay-offs and disappointing job markets that discourage bright students from entering the profession.

2. Lack of a proper vehicle or official voice to express collective views for engineers.

3. Lack of an organization that works toward enhancement of the engineer's professional image and toward better communication with society.

4. Lack of portable economic benefits, particularly pensions.

5. Need for providing employment advisory service and company profiles

and for working toward a contractual arrangement for employment of engineers.

## SOLUTIONS

1. Do nothing. Let the law of supply and demand, plus individual initiative, solve any problem.

2. Increase IEEE's scope to serve economic as well as technical interests. This solution implies that IEEE would become a lobbying organization and therefore lose its tax-free status. Benefits, of course, would be long-range.

3. Join the National Society of Professional Engineers as an associate member (fee: about \$40).

4. Create a sister organization to IEEE to handle the problems. This solution also has some tax-status disadvantages but might prove feasible.

5. Join a labor organization such as the AFL-CIO.

This ad hoc committee has requested that we rank the problems and solutions in order of importance. A postal card or hand-written note will do. Send your rankings, with any additional problems, suggested solutions, or comments to:

Professor Raj Mittra  
Department of Electrical Engineering  
University of Illinois  
Urbana, Ill. 61801

And tell him G-EWS sent you.

## ANOTHER VOICE – ANOTHER VIEW

Winston N. Coburn has some good thoughts on EWS aims and purposes; following are some edited extracts from his letter (edited, I assure you, for length, not content:

Editor, EWS Newsletter:

– The comments of Olsen, Woelfle, Michaelson and Seideman, (August 1970 Newsletter) raise issues that need to be faced now. Carl Olsen has a good point: EWS tries to serve the entire IEEE membership with a limited-distribution *Transactions* that mainly communicates between people who are already professional communicators. He suggests we use *Spectrum* for tutorial papers. Saying it differently, *Spectrum* should be interested in any paper that appeals to enough members of IEEE: this could certainly include papers on preparing technical correspondence, proposals, etc.

Carl Olsen wants to discontinue the *Transactions*, Irv Seideman wants to continue them. The EWS *Transactions* afford the only outlet for scholarly papers, since STWP *Technical Communications* leans more toward brief, popular articles. Possibly we could use the *Transactions* just for those papers that deal with the interests of professional communicators, then prepare another way of dealing with the other technical people who want to learn to communicate as a secondary interest.

(Following are a number of suggestions on means of getting tutorial papers and other materials to members via archival storage and dissemination. Announcement of such papers could be made through listings distributed with *Spectrum* and *Proceedings*.)

Winston N. Coburn,  
38 Kalina Drive  
Rhinebeck, New York 12572

## HERB, WE'VE KNOWN IT ALL ALONG

Herb Michaelson, who has been active in G-EWS since its founding in the 1950's and is a member of AdCom, has been elected to the board of directors of the Society of Technical Writers and Publishers. It just proves we don't have a corner on the prime talent.

## THANK YOU, FRANK HAYLOCK

Our last issue ended with a comment that we hoped you would enjoy our less formal tone. We said we didn't expect to be inundated with either cheers or catcalls. And we weren't. But eight G-EWS members did take the time to send informal notes saying they like the different tone. So to Frank Haylock in Burlingame, California, Emily Schlesinger in Baltimore, and the six in between, thank you.



# NEWSLETTER

THE INSTITUTE OF ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONICS ENGINEERS

**Group on**

## **Engineering Writing and Speech**

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