Newsletter

IEEE Professional Communication Society

First Call for PCC85

Historic Williamsburg, Virginia, is the site of the 1985 PCS conference. The meeting will be at the Williamsburg Hilton Hotel and National Conference Center, October 16-18, 1985.

The conference theme is **Bridging the Present and the Future**. Main topics for contributed papers are

* Communicating on-line
* International aspects of technical communication
* Industry-University collaboration
* Technological advances
* Transition from the office of today to the office of the future
* Use of metaphors in technical communication
* Testing information and documentation
* Group dynamics and organizational communication
* Effective oral presentations
* Computer graphics
* Integration of text and graphics
* Technical communication as a profession

The deadline for abstracts of proposed papers is February 28, 1985. The full text of accepted papers will be due July 1.

General conference chairman is Jim Hill, with Roger Grice as technical program chairman, Steve Linehan as publications chairman, and William Kehoe as exhibits chairman.

Inside

Candidates for PCS AdCom

At the June 8 meeting, the nominations committee submitted the following candidates for the IEEE PCS Administrative Committee for the term January 1985 through December 1987: V. Arms, R. Grice, C. Harkins, R. Joenk, W. Kehoe, and L. Martin. The AdCom unanimously approved these candidates.

Valarie Arms heads technical writing teaching at Drexel University in Philadelphia, PA. She has been an active contributor in the field and has published several articles on the teaching of technical writing. Valarie holds a Ph.D. from Temple University. She has been a speaker at our conferences and is editing the PCC84 *Conference Record.* She will assume the editorship of our *Transactions* in 1985.

Roger Grice is an advisory information developer in Customer and Service Information Development for the IBM Corporation in Kingston, NY. Roger has presented papers at several of our conferences and has published in our *Transactions.* He is currently researching the differences between industrial practices and academic research on computer systems documentation and information.

Craig Harkins is a past officer of PCS and a member of the AdCom. Craig holds a Ph.D. from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. After many years with the IBM Corporation, he established his own consulting firm in San Jose, CA. Craig was the keynote speaker at our 1983 conference.

Rudy Joenk is currently involved in engineering vitality issues at the IBM Corporation in Boulder, CO. Rudy has a 20-year history of professional communication activities—editor of our *Transactions* and *Newsletter* and former editor of the *IBM Journal of Research and Development.* He has a Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh. He served on the IEEE Publications Board from 1978 through 1980. Rudy was the 1980 PCS Goldsmith Award recipient and the recipient of an

From the editor . . .

Associate editor Dave Milley and I are passing the editorship of the *Newsletter* to Deborah Flaherty, beginning with the January 1985 issue. Deborah works for AT&T Technologies in New York City where she is an editor for *The Engineer*, AT&T's high-technology publication. I'm sure she will welcome articles, reviews, and comments for the new-year issue: AT&T Technologies, 222 Broadway, Room 1443B, New York, NY 10038; (212) 669-2623.

Putting the *Newsletter* together is a contrast like day and night with editing the *Transactions*. *Newsletter* activity is relatively low key for two months out of three whereas the *Transactions* approaches being a continual activity. But the best characteristic of the *Newsletter* is its informality. Many of the items I enjoy in print are not formal or archival enough for the *Transactions* but are ideal for the *Newsletter*. And in eight issues of the *Newsletter* there have been more—not many but more—contributions from PC-ers than in 32 issues of the *Transactions*. What the *Newsletter* still needs, however, is some *regular* contributors—some columnists to provide periodic reports, analyses, and updates on areas of PCS interest.

I have thoroughly enjoyed developing the *Newsletter* and hope to be a regular contributor next year. Special thanks are due Emily Schlesinger, our only regular contributor, who has faithfully accumulated and organized the new-member names ever since she was *Newsletter* editor herself.

I also thank Dr. James H. Boren, originator of *mumblepeg* (The Voice of the Bureaucrat) and president of the International Association of Professional Bureaucrats, for creating a Boren Bird (page 20) especially for this issue of the *Newsletter*. Several other Boren Birds have been reprinted in previous issues.

Here are three more communication hot lines:

—(212) REWRITE, *Grammar Hotline* at York College, Jamaica, New York
—(614) 369-4431 x301, *Writing Resource Center* at Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, Ohio
—(803) 777-7020, *Writer's Hotline* at the University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina

If you know of other such professional communication links, please send me the information.

☐

Shakespeare, after hearing a few speakers at the International Conference of Communicators:

". . . speaks an infinite deal of nothing.
. . . His reasons are as two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff; you shall seek all day ere you find them, and when you have them, they are not worth the search."

—The Merchant of Venice, *Act I, Scene i*
  S. Pasupathy
  IEEE Communications Magazine, *August 1984*

IEEE Professional Communication Society

Officers

Dan Rosich, **President**
Lois Moore, **Vice-president**
Leon Pickus, **Treasurer**
Deborah Flaherty, **Secretary**

Staff

Rudy Joenk, **Editor**
Dave Milley, **Associate Editor**

PCS Education: What Next?

The education committee of the Professional Communication Society has reached a "moment of hesitation." Having developed several successful courses over the past ten years (to fulfill part of the society's mandate to help IEEE engineers and scientists communicate more effectively with management, clients, their peers, and the public), the committee now is trying to define where it should next direct its rather limited human and financial resources.

For example, should the committee place most emphasis on

1. Promoting its current courses?
2. Developing courses on new topics?
3. Converting its current courses (and possibly developing new courses) for delivery using new technology?

The implications of concentrating on each aspect are discussed briefly.

Promoting Current Courses

The response by IEEE societies and the general membership to PCS's offerings has been, frankly, disappointing. Notwithstanding the advertising in *IEEE Spectrum*, promotion at conferences, articles in this *Newsletter*, and personal contacts with members of other IEEE societies, the result has been little more than a desultory display of interest. Even a mailing piece marketed professionally by the Educational Activities Board produced insufficient response to justify the Board's investment.

This lack of interest has been particularly disheartening for the programs' designers and instructors, for they know that IEEE members who have enrolled in their courses have been consistently complimentary and enthusiastic. Now the education committee feels it has reached an impasse: The courses do what they were intended to do—and do it well—but marketing them is time consuming, expensive, and seemingly unproductive.

Developing Courses on New Topics

The Professional Communication Society has sufficient expertise among its members to design courses on almost any communication topic. But two questions

need to be answered before any steps are taken toward new program development:

1. What topics are most needed or wanted by IEEE members?
2. What guarantee is there that other IEEE members will enroll in a course once it has been developed?

The evidence to date, based on members' response to existing courses, shows that no new course should be produced unless there is a *proven* demand for it.

Converting Existing Courses for Electronic Delivery

Supposedly this is where the action is going to be in education. It would certainly be feasible to convert PCS's courses for delivery either by videocassettes or through computer programs.

Six years ago I explored with John Wilhelm, IEEE's Director of Education, the possibility of producing videocassettes containing the essentials of PCS's technical and business writing workshop. The plan was to make the videocassettes and an accompanying instructor's manual available to IEEE societies and sections, who would use them to help run technical writing courses coordinated by local instructors. The plan had to be shelved, partly because of the high cost, partly because of the extensive time it would take to write and produce the video segments, and partly because we were unsure how responsive the potential market would be.

Computer-aided instruction (CAI) seems to offer the most exciting possibilities because it is particularly suited to individualized, self-paced learning. The essential ingredients for a CAI program already exist in PCS's correspondence course *Technically-Write!*

A CAI writing course could be designed for either independent or interactive learning. In the independent mode the entire program would be stored on floppy disks. The learner would work through the teaching modules, typing responses as directed and being taken through subroutines whenever a response indicates that he or she needs further instruction on a particular skill.

In the interactive mode, the learner would interact directly with an instructor, much as our correspondence course participants now correspond with their instructors. But the interaction would be almost immediate rather than delayed a week or ten days. The

PCS Education: What Next?

only requirements would be that both the instructor and the student have video terminals and that their terminals be able to interface with each other.

A technical writing course presented in the independent learning mode would be much more time-consuming to design, and expensive to develop, than an interactive course. It would also be much more tedious for a learner to work through. The independent modules would have to be framed so that students could compare their typed responses against standard answers because the program would be unable to provide personal comments on the student's work.

An interactive computer-assisted technical writing course would have students type their answers at video terminals and, when ready to have their work evaluated, send a signal to their instructor. The instructor would then call up a student's assignment, assess it, and type comments and suggestions. (Ideally, the instructor would converse directly with the student, both typing at their terminals.) The program would be relatively simple to prepare because many of the modules could be adapted from the existing correspondence course.

Although the technology exists to teach the course by computer, some five years will probably elapse before enough engineers and course instructors have video terminals that can communicate directly with one another. An interim alternative might be to use electronic mail services such as those offered by CompuServe and The Source.™ Both are faster than regular mail but lack the immediacy of terminal-to-terminal computer communication. And, of course, the cost is higher than for regular mail.

The Next Step

Where, then, do we go from here? In October I will be asking delegates attending PCC84 in Atlantic City to address that question as part of the session "Teaching Engineers to Write Well." The four panel members will introduce alternative methods for delivering technical communication instruction to varying audiences, such as college undergraduates, in-house engineers, and IEEE members, and will invite intensive audience participation.

But we need more than that. We also need to know how PCS members across the country feel about the direction the education committee should be taking.

Where do *you* think we should focus our attention? And can you tell us how we can encourage IEEE members to take advantage of the programs and courses we have designed for them?

Please take just a few moments and drop me a line; a postcard will be fine. Send it to Ron Blicq, P.O. Box 181, Postal Station C, Winnipeg, MB, Canada R3M 3S7; (207) 452-6480.

Thanks!

—*Ronald S. Blicq*
  PCS Education Chairman

□

First Call for PCC85

Volunteers are needed for publicity chairman and local arrangements chairman (who should be a resident of the Williamsburg area). For more information contact Jim Hill, HRB-Singer, Inc., P.O. Box 60, State College, PA 16804, (814) 238-4311 x2316, or Roger Grice, IBM Corporation, P.O. Box 100, Kingston, NY 12401, (914) 383-3675.

—*Jim Hill*
  Conference Chairman

□

Business letters average 185 to 190 words, Dartnell Institute of Business Research in Chicago finds. It says the average cost for dictation and transcription is $8.10 if no dictating machine is used, $6.08 otherwise.

—The Wall Street Journal
  July 5, 1984

K.I.S.S.*

Put a Yalie who majored in English in charge of a government department, give him a computer, and what have you got? An official who puts a premium on concise English and an editing program that removes the "no-nos" from the word processor.

When Malcolm Baldrige first took over the U.S. Department of Commerce, he had trouble understanding the letters he was given to sign. They were full of multisyllabic phrases that protected the writers rather than concise statements which allowed the reader to comprehend quickly what was being said. According to the Secretary, clarity, not convolution, was to be the key to writing. When summer intern Alan Eisen (now with Wang Laboratories) saw the "Don't Use These Words" list, he offered to fix the computers so that it would be available to everyone. The resulting program writes "Don't use these words" at the top of the screen and flashes a highlight on the offending phrase whenever the user presses the glossary key. Here is Commerce Secretary Baldrige's "hit list" of bad English.

The List

- **Do not use nouns or adjectives as verbs:**
  to optimize
  to impact
  to interface
  to maximize
  to finalize
  to target
- **Use the precise word or phrase:**
  datum (singular); data (plural)
  criterion (singular); criteria (plural)
  subsequent means after, not before
  different from, not different than
  insure means to guarantee against financial loss; ensure means to make sure or certain
  effect as a noun means result, and as a verb, to bring about, to accomplish; affect means to influence, to act upon, to alter, to assume, to adopt

  think is mental; feel is physical or emotional (think thoughts; feel feelings)
- **Avoid redundancies:**
  serious crisis
  personally reviewed
  new initiatives
  enclosed herewith
  important essentials
  final outcome
  future plans
  end result
  great majority
  untimely death (Has there ever been a timely death?)
- **Do not use addressee's first name in the body of the letter.**
- **Do not refer to the date of the incoming letter.**
- **Stop apologizing:**
  "I regret the delay in responding to you."
- **Do not use a split infinitive (placing an adverb between "to" and the verb)**

- **Please stop using affected or imprecise words. Some examples:**
  viable
  input
  orient
  hopefully (use "I hope")
- **Please stop using the following phrases:**
  I regret I cannot be more responsive (or encouraging)
  I am deeply concerned
  Thank you for your letter expressing concern (use "Thank you for your letter concerning")

  prior to (use "before")
  subject matter
  very much
  bottom line
  best wishes
  at the present time (use "at this time")
  as you know; as I am sure you know; as you are aware
  more importantly (use "more important")
  needless to say
  it is my intention
  mutually beneficial
  contingent upon
  management regime

—Reprinted with permission from CHEMTECH
January 1984
©1984 by Malcolm Baldrige

☐

Newsletter Deadline

Articles, news, and comments for publication must reach the editor on or before the first day of the month preceding the month of issue, that is,

Issue	Deadline
January	December 1
April	March 1
July	June 1
October	September 1

Send double-spaced typed contributions to Deborah Flaherty, AT&T Technologies, 222 Broadway, Rm 1443B, New York, NY 10038.

☐

*Keep It Simple, Stupid.

Last Call for PCC84

As you already know (we hope), the 1984 PCS conference will be held in Atlantic City, New Jersey from October 10 through 12. Atlantic City is one of the most visitor-oriented cities in the country with some of the finest facilities for conferences and conventions of all sizes and kinds. And we have the facilities of the newest hotel to be built in Atlantic City, right on the famous boardwalk, thanks to local arrangements chairman Leon Pickus.

This year's theme is "The Practical Aspects of Engineering Communications." Jack Friedman has put together a program of papers and workshops that stresses communicating electrical engineering knowledge by techniques that are both innovative and practical with today's publishing technology.

Following registration, the conference gets underway at 9:00 a.m. on October 10 with a plenary session and a workshop on word processing. Later there are parallel sessions on improving presentations and applying persuasion theory. On October 11 and 12 there will be papers on communicating with peers, new publishing techniques, teaching engineers to improve their writing, sales writing, listening skills, author-editor relationships, informing and motivating fellow workers, and using a computer in the interactive mode.

On Thursday we will have an awards luncheon with keynote speaker John D. Ryder, a past president of IRE, chairman of the IEEE centennial task force, and coauthor of *Engineers and Electrons*. Dr. Ryder's address is titled "Science Must be First." He will speak of the need of engineers to communicate and will cite examples from the history of electrical science of those who communicated well and those who did not.

The program is full but there will be time for other activities. Because of the ocean, Atlantic City's temperature is moderate throughout the year. It won't be warm enough for ocean swimming—just use the hotel's large pool—but conditions promise to be ideal for walks along the ocean front. Atlantic City has long been a tourist city and has a multitude of entertainment opportunities and gift shops.

You should have already received your registration information in the mail. For further information contact Leon Pickus, RCA Missile and Surface Radar, MS 127-326, Moorestown, NJ 08057; (609) 778-3660.

Plan now to meet your fellow engineering communicators on October 10 at Harrah's Trump Plaza in Atlantic City.

—*Andrew Malcolm*
 Conference Chairman

☐

The Paper Plague

There are 21 trillion pages of paper stored in American offices these days, with an additional 911 million pages being added each day, according to a report from Infosystems.

Business representatives estimate that documents on file, most of which will never be looked at again, cost 25 cents apiece each year to store. It is an interesting statistic considering that at that rate the total annual cost of paper files would be $5.25 trillion, well above the gross national product of about $3.5 trillion.

One option is switching from paper to microfilm for storage. Another common-sense option is to teach computers such paper-saving tricks as filling one page before starting another.

☐

Review of Shakespeare's paper submitted to the *Transactions of Communicators:*

"He draweth the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument."

—Love's Labor's Lost, *Act V, Scene i*
 S. Pasupathy
 IEEE Communications Magazine, *August 1984*

PCS Information Hot Line

To encourage member participation, particularly international members, the Administrative Committee has appointed Lois Moore, PCS vice-president, as "international hot line representative." Members—and non-members—are invited to write, phone, or cable her for information about PCS activities:

Lois K. Moore
The Johns Hopkins University
Applied Physics Laboratory
Laurel, Maryland 20707 USA
(301) 953-5000 x8313
APLJHU

☐

West Coast Member Seeks Regional Activity

Administrative Committee member Lacy R. Martin, publications manager at Amdahl Communication Systems, Los Angeles, is seeking the names and addresses of local PCS members who would like to help initiate some regional and local activities—meetings, seminars, newsletter, etc.

West coast PC-ers interested in participating in such projects or others like them are urged to communicate with Lacy at Amdahl Communication Systems, 2500 Walnut Ave., Marina del Rey, Ca 90291; (213) 822-3202 (W), (213) 215-3844 (H).

☐

CIRCULATION
IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication

_____ Member   _ _ _ _ Non-Member _____ Total
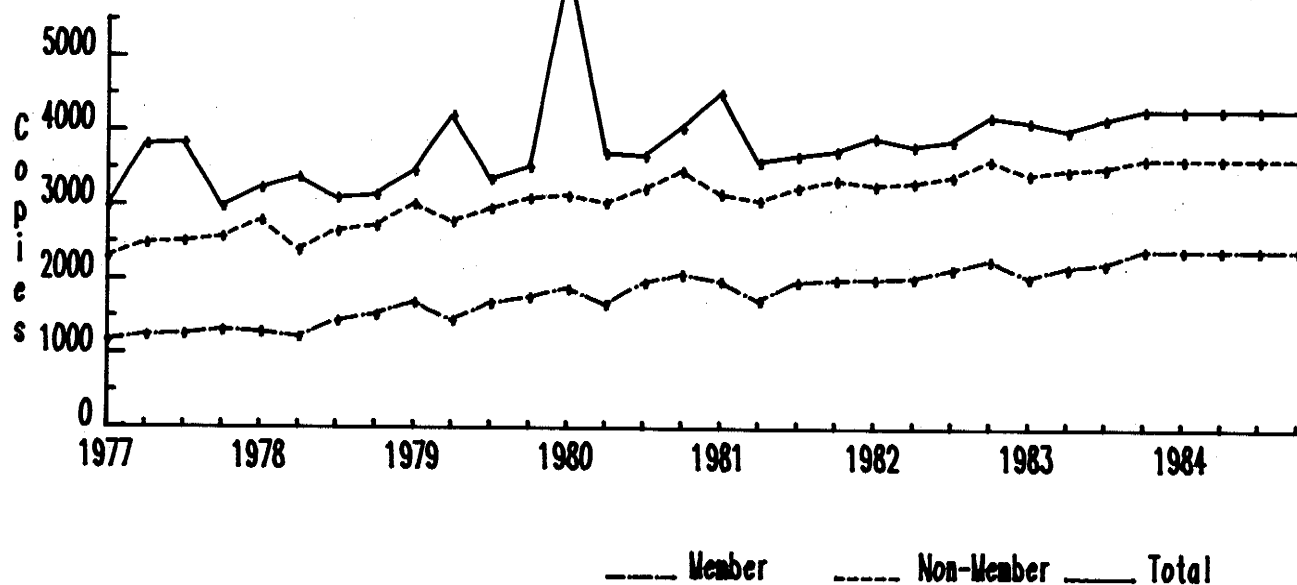
Circulation   From 1977 through 1983 PCS membership had an average annual compound growth rate of ten percent, from 1243 to 2216. In contrast, non-member subscribers (e.g., libraries) remained nearly constant at an average 1285. Although these provided 50 percent of the paid circulation in 1977, they now represent only 37 percent. The mild annual sawtooth variation of the membership curve—usually lowest in the second quarter and highest in the fourth—is traceable to the mechanism of dues payment and renewal. Spikes in the total-distribution curve identify topical issues, which were printed in large quantities to accommodate special distributions. The March 1980 issue was on Public Speaking for Engineers and Scientists. Data for 1984 are estimates.   —*Editor*

Agin 'Em

Whenever we interview a job candidate here at *Writer's Digest,* we ask, "How fast can you run the em dash?"

If the candidate answers something like "9.6 seconds," we move on to the next applicant, not because the candidate doesn't know what an em dash is, but because that person can run it faster than most of us can.

Far from being an Olympic event, the em dash is a dash that is one "em" (a unit of length approximately the width of a typeset letter *m*) long. It's often used to separate parenthetical thoughts, dependent clauses, and editors about to disagree with fisticuffs.

The use of the em dash is widespread, and few people can quarrel with the amiable em. Some editorial sorts, however, don't like the use of the dash, and are anti-em. For the most part, the anti-ems maintain a low profile (despite Dorothy's guardian in *The Wizard of Oz*). Most editors who use their heads, however, appreciate the em dash. More than one editor has said, "I think, therefore I em," and we're glad that none of those editors works here.

The em dash is only one of a family of illustrious dashes. The em is closely related to the *en dash* and the *O dash*. The O dash was once used often in editorial offices, shouted in moments of pique and frustration, but has been more recently replaced by more up-to-date shouting.

The en dash, on the other hand, is still in vogue. Its most common use is as a hyphen. It has other common uses, though none is as recognizable as its duty as a hyphen. This dash, for instance, is frequently tagged to the end of a movie to indicate that it is over, thusly:

The En

—Writer's Digest © *1984*
  September 1984

☐

Conference: Writing for the Computer Industry

The second conference on "Writing for the Computer Industry" at Plymouth State College of the University System of New Hampshire is scheduled for June 15, 1985.

Writers, designers, editors, and managers of writing in the computer industry, and teachers of technical writing are asked to submit proposals for presentations on both innovative and traditional approaches to writing for the computer industry. Preference will be given to proposals by experienced lecturers who present new material.

The 1985 conference will emphasize documentation in electronic form (interactive and on-line user aids) and on the visual design of computer screens. Topics will also include writing software manuals, writing promotional documentation, writing for international audiences, training writers, linguistic style, and other aspects of technical writing about computers.

The main speaker at the conference will be Dr. Patricia Wright of the Applied Psychology Unit of the Medical Research Council, Cambridge, England. A leading applied psychologist in the United Kingdom and a specialist in document design, Dr. Wright is one of the few researchers studying layout and language style appropriate to computer documentation.

Proposals for presentations at the conference should be addressed to Dr. Richard Chisholm, 1 Reed House, Plymouth State College, Plymouth NH 03264; (603) 536-1550 x301 or (603) 786-9759 (evenings). The deadline for submission is January 3, 1985.

☐

A complete new version of the comprehensive *Oxford English Dictionary* will be developed for publication on-line in 1988 with the assistance of IBM United Kingdom data processing specialists and equipment. The dictionary staff will edit some half million words and two million illustrative quotations. The O.E.D. has been published in its entirety only once—in 1928.

New PC-ers June–August 1984

ASIA

Korea
Hwang, I.H.

Singapore
Ang, K.H.

AUSTRALIA

New South Wales
Defina, D.V.

**CENTRAL AND
SOUTH AMERICA**

Chile
Gomez, A.B.

Mexico
Guzman, H.R.

EUROPE

Italy
Bava, E.

MIDDLE EAST

Israel
Avrahami, Z.
Kopman, S.

Turkey
Kal, O.

NORTH AMERICA

Canada
Ontario
Ritchi, W.A.

Quebec
Dejneka, T.T.
Gross, H.

United States
California
Guthrie, B.L.
Jackson, R.A.
Lee, W.
Ngo, M.P.

Colorado
Elser, A.G.
Phair, D.E.

Georgia
Tullis, B.

Illinois
Pakin, S.

Massachusetts
McMullen, J.J.

New Jersey
Dukes, E.
Parikh, K.C.

New York
Carmichael, K.E., Jr.
Creech, W.M.
Daversa, A.R.
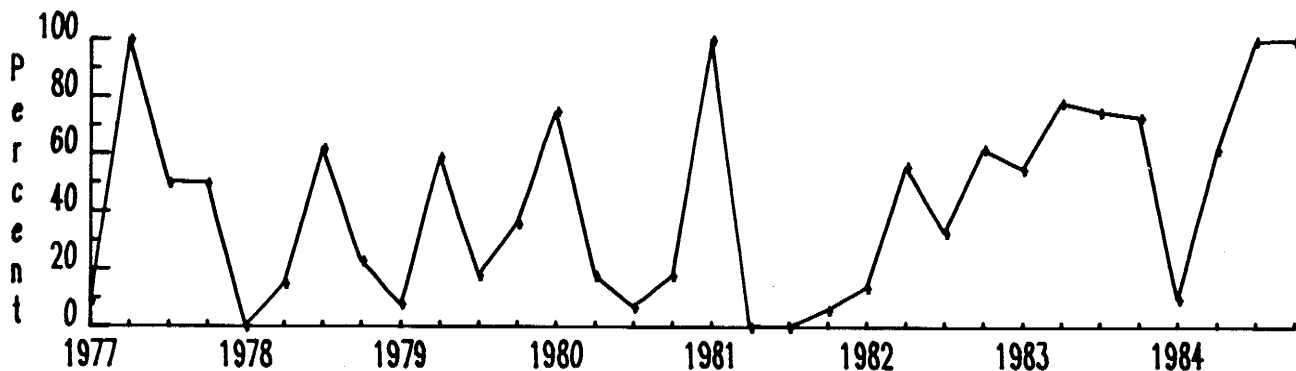Zuppardo, J.P.

Ohio
Force, D.A.

Texas
Chen, C.-F.
Stephens, D.E.

Virginia
Kardulias, G.D.

—Emily Schlesinger

CONTENT: ORIGINAL PAPERS
### IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication

Original Papers The goal of the late '70s—to build up the number of original papers by having at least one topical issue per year—is evident here. More recently, although slow in developing, unsolicited contributions are supplementing the special calls for papers in filling the *Transactions*. During these eight years the average content was 44 percent original, but in 1983 and 1984 it was 69 percent.   *—Editor*

New Transactions Editor

Valarie M. Arms, Associate Professor of Humanities and Communications at Drexel University in Philadelphia, will become editor of the *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication* beginning with the March 1985 issue. Prof. Arms has headed the staff of technical writing teachers at Drexel since 1981, and she is editor of our PCC84 proceedings.

Prof. Arms has a B.S. in mathematics from Allegheny College and an M.A. and a Ph.D. in English literature from Temple University. Since completing her Ph.D. she has published 15 papers in professional journals and has made numerous oral presentations.
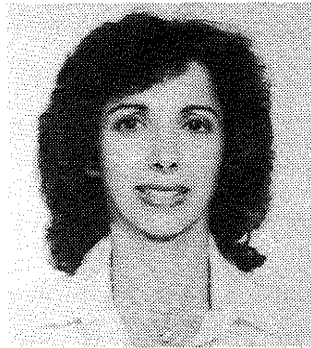
Her work as technical editor for several engineers led her to teach undergraduates to write using computers, a project that was supported by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education and described in the *Transactions* and other publications. She prepared manuals for the Drexel University word-processing laboratory and designed WP software packages, along with conducting workshops on composing with computers and designing software.

Dr. Arms is a member of the American Association of University Professors, the Association for Computing in the Humanities, the Delaware Valley Writing Council, the International Word Processing Association, the Modern Language Association, the National Council of Teachers of English, and the Society for Technical Communication.

Papers for the *Transactions* should be sent to Dr. Arms at the Department of Humanities and Communications, Drexel University, Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2444.

□

New Newsletter Editor

Deborah L. Flaherty, secretary of the PCS Administrative Committee, will take on the editorship of this *Newsletter* beginning with the January 1985 issue.

Ms. Flaherty is a Senior Public Relations Specialist for AT&T Technologies in New York City. In that position she edits materials for *The Engineer,* AT&T's high-technology publication.

She received a Bachelor of Arts degree *cum laude* in French and chemistry from Regis College and a Master of Science degree in technical writing from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and is now working toward a Master of Business Administration degree at New York University.

Ms. Flaherty is a member of Alpha Lambda Delta and Delta Epsilon Sigma and is a charter member of Sigma Tau Chi honor society for technical communicators. She is also a member of the Society for Technical Communication and is vice-president of the South Bergen (New Jersey) Business and Professional Women's Club. In 1982 she was selected one of 16 outstanding young career women in New Jersey by the NJ Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs.

Material for the next *Newsletter* should be sent to Ms. Flaherty at AT&T Technologies, 222 Broadway, Room 1443B, New York, NY 10038; (212) 669-2623.

□

Shakespeare, expressing his frustration upon rejection by the *Transactions of Communicators:*

"O judgement! thou are fled to brutish beasts,
And men have lost their reason."

—Julius Caesar, *Act III, Scene ii*
  S. Pasupathy
  IEEE Communications Magazine, *August 1984*

For civilized discussion and debate—which is what we try to achieve when we write and read essays—there should be time for deliberation, for rethinking those insights that at first seem so compelling and later appear so flawed.

—*Samuel C. Florman*
  Technology Review
  August/September 1984

Test Yourself on Printing Lingo

The following terms are common shop talk at your local printer's place. How many do you know? Answers are on p. 15.

1. Recto pages
2. Ascender
3. Colophon
4. Emage
5. Gutter
6. Pied type
7. Verso pages
8. Sinkage
9. Point
10. Flyleaf
11. Majuscule
12. Comb binding, GBC
13. Descender
14. Double, doublet, doubleton, dupe
15. Folio
16. Blues
17. Peculiars, sorts, pi characters
18. Minuscule
19. Offprint
20. Thirty, 30

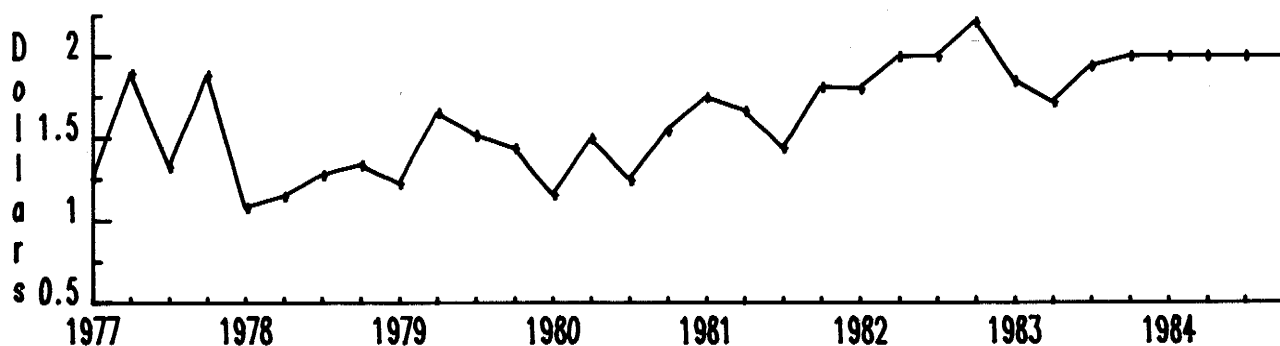—The Editorial Eye, *January 1982*
  5905 Pratt Street
  Alexandria, VA 22310

PRODUCTION COST PER COPY
IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication

Production Cost   Factors in the production cost are (1) fixed costs such as typesetting that do not depend on the number of copies; (2) variable costs such as paper, printing, and postage, which are proportional to the number of copies; and (3) other costs such as microfiche and IEEE editorial services. Though not fitting a curve very well, these costs from 1978 through 1984 rose at a compound rate of about nine percent. The 1977 expenses were unusual in part because of the Third IEEE Conference on Scientific Journals. The higher fixed costs for a topical issue (more original papers, more typesetting) are partially masked in this graph by the lower printing cost per copy when more copies are produced for special distributions. Data for 1984 are estimates.   —*Editor*

Technology Transfer— Opportunity for Technical Writers

Right now the land of opportunity for the technical writing profession is computers. Books, magazines, and every other form of print medium are bursting with the start-up of new publication projects. But this will not last forever. Meanwhile, off in the wings, a new area of opportunity for the producers of the written word is dawning, but few are aware of it or recognize it. It is the area of technology transfer.

The phrase "technology transfer" stands for many kinds of activity for making the technology produced in one R&D activity, in one country, useful in another area or location or in a different industrial pursuit.

The kind of technology transfer that has the greatest possibility for this country as a whole, and for the technical writing profession in particular, is that which converts the technological advances created in Government R&D agencies into commercial products for industry.

We are now at the stage where there are oceans of new technological advances being created in our Government's National Laboratories, and we have oceans of entrepreneurs itching to exploit those advances by converting them into profitable commercial products. However, this conversion cannot take place unless the advances to be exploited are fully documented. That is, one has to have a full spectrum of documentation on each of them. This spectrum consists of detailed engineering reports, specifications, full sets of drawings, and manuals—all of which are needed to enable the engineers in private industry to convert the new technological advances into commercial products— quickly, easily, and at low cost.

Such documentation is done nowadays in the National Laboratories where the new technology is produced, but the amount done is only a fraction of the amount required. Fully 80 percent of the new technology created in our National Laboratories is not documented enough for engineers in private industry to convert it into commercial products and do so quickly, easily, and at low cost. This documentation shortfall results mainly from the fact that it takes one professional writer-day per page to produce material adequate for publication. Engineers do not want to spend months or even weeks to write up the technology developments they created, after months of work developing them.

The demand for new technology, however, to keep U.S. industry competitive against other countries with high-technology industry, is so intense that there will be an enormous demand from private industry for new technology from the Government's National Laboratories. In turn, this will cause a surge of employment of technical writers to fully document the advances produced in our National Laboratories—placing the technical writer in a key role in the technology transfer process.

The opportunity is now wide open for those technical writers who want to make technology transfer their "land of opportunity." Two good stepping stones for entering it are a survey of what is needed [1] and a self-teaching manual on how this type of writing is done [2].

1. Doctors, Samuel I. *The Role of Federal Agencies in Technology Transfer.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press; 1969.
2. Olken, Hyman. *The Technical Communicator's Handbook of Technology Transfer.* Livermore, CA: Olken Publications; 1980.

—*Hyman Olken*
2830 Kennedy Street
Livermore, CA 94550

□

If, as I believe, the quality of our thought is related to both leisurely contemplation and the measured function of our hand, then ever-increasing speed may have an adverse effect on what we write. I suggest that our desire to communicate quickly must be tempered by our need to converse meaningfully.

—*Samuel C. Florman*
Technology Review
August/September 1984

How to Make Your Manual Look Amateurish

If you believe a professional looking manual is more readable and easier to use than a poorly designed one, you may want to avoid these pitfalls of manual design and layout. But if you want your publication to look amateurish, just do any of the following:

1. Use as many different typefaces in your cover, title page, headings, and text as you have available. The old rule about a maximum of two different typefaces per publication is only for those who like unity and continuity. (Note that bold, medium, and italic of the same typeface are considered one typeface.)

2. If your headings are typed in all caps on a typewriter, space two or three times between each letter. This will magically make each letter look larger. So what if they look like they are floating in a bowl of alphabet soup?

3. When designing the spine for a binder, arrange the letters vertically, one on top of another. After all, the Chinese have written this way for centuries.

4. Print the title of your manual from the bottom of the spine toward the top. No major publisher prints spines this way, but just think of the novelty when you lay the manual flat on the desk and the title on the spine is now upside down!

5. Fill your page as far to the left and as far to the right as your typewriter or word processor permits. Margins are useful in securities and commodities transactions but aren't really needed on pages.

—Ann Fikes
STC dateline houston
November 1983

□

Rockcopy and Squishcopy

As purveyors of the language, claiming to be communication experts, we need to heal ourselves of a growing disease. This disease, becoming prevalent with the spread of computer technology, is the dreaded "use of jargon." Fellow communicators, many of us are using the terms "hardcopy" and "softcopy" when we speak of computer documentation.

(A refresher for those of you who have not been exposed: "Hardcopy" is the vogue term for printed documentation, and "Softcopy" is the vogue term for documentation displayed on a video display unit.)

Pause to think about the real meaning of these terms. (After all, words are symbols of ideas and objects . . . right?) How can documentation printed on paper be considered hard? When I touch paper, my fingers tell me "soft." Perhaps the originator of the term was thinking of the binder the paper is stored in. Now take the other term, "softcopy." Tell me—just how soft are those displayed characters and figures? For that matter, when was the last time you grabbed hold of some light to see how soft it is?

If you plan to use the terms "hardcopy" and "softcopy" you should at least reverse their meanings. Paper is soft, and the video display screen (the tangible part of displayed characters) is hard.

I propose a simple solution to this earth-shaking problem of terminology: To appear as the computer expert in your group (showing yourself as a computer tyro to real computer experts), continue to use "hardcopy" and "softcopy" in their usual sense. To appear as a real communicator (which is easier on our listeners and readers), use "printed documentation" and "displayed documentation."

—D. M. Willoughby
ACM SIGDOC Asterisk
April 1984

□

Carts and Horses

Almost every textbook and course of instruction on writing proposals contain the injunction "Be sure the proposal is responsive to the Request for Proposal." These texts and courses then carry on in great detail on how to accomplish this step and the other steps of a good proposal.

The only problem is the hidden assumptions that the writer of the Request for Proposal (RFP) knew both what he really wanted and how to explain it properly in the RFP. In my experience those assumptions are often not valid.

I have a position with a state agency that frequently hires outside consultants. I have had to prepare the RFPs to hire those consultants. I soon found that I was working in the dark. There are literally dozens of texts and courses that tell me how to write "winning" proposals, but I have been unable to find a single source of information on how to write RFPs.

I know what the essential parts of a proposal are; I can even see sample boilerplate. But what are the essential parts of an RFP? What good does it do to teach people to write clear and concise proposals when the RFP is vague and difficult to understand?

Under these circumstances I am forced to rely on what someone else did last time—but what if that person was as ignorant as I? Oh sure, I use my technical writing training to improve the old one somewhat (I think), but how many problems am I perpetuating that I am unaware of?

Maybe a similar problem exists with Invitations to Bid. Not having worked with them for many years, I'm not sure. But I suspect that any time I want to hire a service instead of buying a product I will run headlong into the same problem. I also suspect that there are many RFP writers who aren't aware of any lack of training, who are being soundly cursed by proposers each time they get an RFP.

Who should teach such courses or write such articles? Those who often submit proposals could probably give some guidance on the good and bad points of the RFPs they respond to. Other writers who give advice on proposals could give some thought to the other side of the coin. Almost any contribution would be a beacon in the current fog.

Poorly thought out and poorly written RFPs may be contributing to a great waste of resources. I am reminded of the story of a little boy who asked, "Mom, where did I come from?" The mother braced herself and gave carefully prepared and presented instruction on sex and childbirth. Her son looked puzzled for a minute, then repeated the question, "But Mom, where did I come from?" Her next explanation was even more involved. Exasperated, the boy tried again: "Mom, did I come here from Utah or Colorado?"

The most carefully worked up proposal is useless if it addresses the wrong question. But nobody is teaching the questioners what questions to ask and how to ask so the questions can be understood. In other words, *HELP!*

—*Kenneth B. Powell*
 Utah Dept. of Business Regulation
 Salt Lake City, UT

□

Author! Author!

Do you know people itching to put pen to paper? Or fingers to the keyboards of their PCs? Suggest they consider *Potentials* as an outlet for their inspirations, particularly if their ideas are of a technical, personal, or professional nature *useful to someone starting out.*

Submitting an outline first is recommended. However, all manuscripts received will be considered. Send ideas or manuscripts to *IEEE Potentials,* 445 Hoes Lane, Piscataway, NJ 08854.

□

1884 1984
A CENTURY OF ELECTRICAL PROGRESS
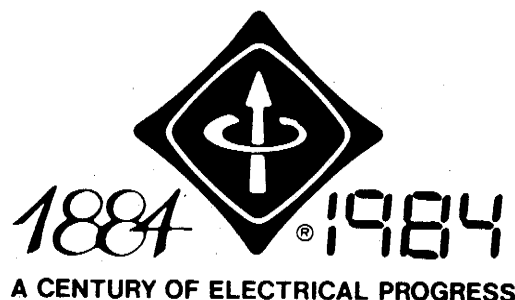
CCS Seminar for Communication Officers

The Council of Communication Societies (CCS), of which PCS is a member, has scheduled its annual seminar for December 6-7, 1984, at the National 4H Center in Washington, DC.

Designed for officers and executives of societies in the communication field, this seminar is intended to foster interchange of ideas and solutions to society problems such as membership and publications.

The registration fee is $75, including two lunches, and the 4H Center has reserved a block of rooms for $53 single, $86 double, which also includes some meals. For more details contact CCS at P.O. Box 1074, Silver Spring, MD 20910; (301) 953-7100 x2111.

CCS has also just published its *Directory of Communication Societies,* available from the same address; $6 prepaid.

—*David B. Dobson, PCS representative to CCS and CCS Executive Committee*

Answers to "Test Yourself on Printing Lingo"

1. Right-hand, or odd-numbered, pages.
2. The part of a lowercase letter than extends above the body of the letter (as in the letter *b*).
3. (a) A publisher's trade emblem. (b) A statement at the end of a book describing the book's production.
4. Text area measured in ems.
5. The margin nearest the binding.
6. Pied type is mixed up or disarranged.
7. Left-hand, or even-numbered, pages.
8. Extra white space at the top of a page.
9. Unit of typographical measure equal to 1/72 inch.
10. A blank page at the front or back of a book.
11. A capital letter.
12. A plastic binding that is solid on one side and has teeth that form rings that bind the pages.
13. The part of a lowercase letter that extends below the body of the letter (as in *p*).
14. Incorrect repetition of letters, words, or lines.
15. Page number.
16. Blue-ink photographs of pages ready for offset reproduction.
17. Seldom used type characters.
18. A lowercase letter.
19. Reprint of one article or book section.
20. The end (used in newspaper offices).

Hägar
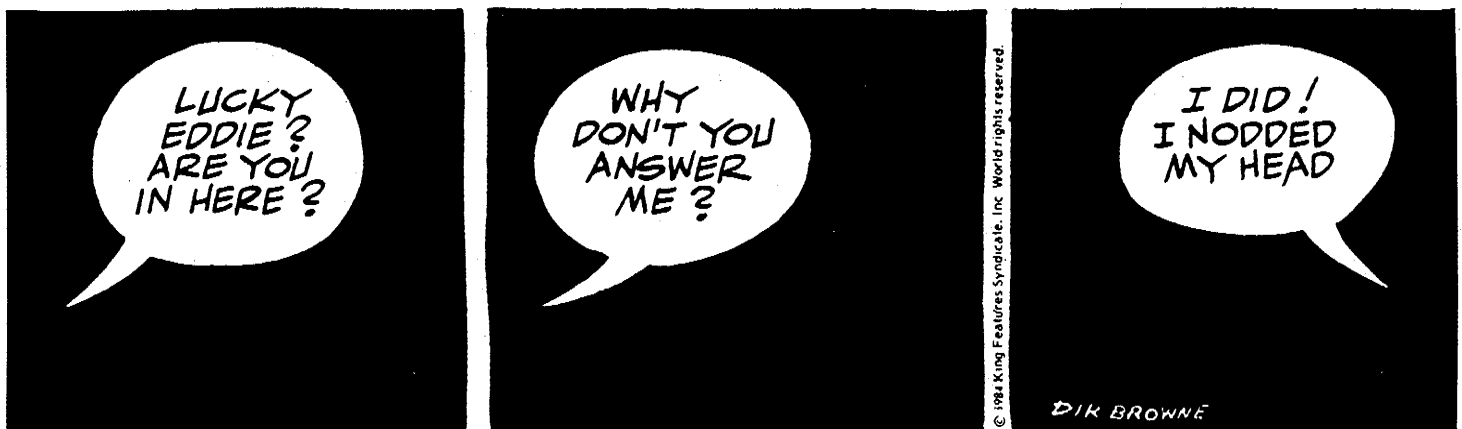
Research and Professional Communication

Professional communication efforts are most effective when they are guided by research. We are confident that most people would agree with this statement. On the other hand, we would bet that a remarkably small percentage of any given communicator's work has any conscious relationship to formal research.

The operative words here are "conscious" and "formal." Delete these terms and we will lose our bet because—often without realizing it—communicators make their best decisions on the basis of informal research, called *experience*. Choices that worked in the past are likely to be made again in the future; bad decision are not likely to be repeated.

The lowest level of formal research involves capitalizing on this phenomenon through structure and experimentation. Although the approach can be implemented by an individual, it works best in a group situation. Essentially, it involves the same five basic steps of higher research: (1) data collection, (2) theory, (3) measurement, (4) analysis, and (5) adjustment.

For example, let's look at a recent experience we had with a press kit sent out by our firm, Hamlin Harkins, Ltd. One member of the firm suggested that our news release would get more attention if we stamped each of the folders with a big red "Priority!" marking. Staff opinion varied sharply—and almost evenly—as to the value of this procedure; we couldn't establish a conclusive direction during the data collection stage.

So, we structured a small experiment. The mailing list was divided, randomly, and releases were distributed to half with the red stamp mark and half without it. Measurement would be based on whether the release was printed.

In this case, analysis was easy. Not a single publication that received the stamped version of the release used it; most of the others did. Clearly, our blatant display of self-importance turned editors off. Adjustment involved throwing the damn stamp out. We now know that we're not going to use it again.

This is the lowest level of formal research, but it can be a useful way to shorten experience curves. Variations of it can be used in virtually every communication situation. There almost never is a time when one cannot formally experiment with an approach for the first time and devise a way of measuring the effects over time. That's research.

On major campaigns, of course, it is vastly better to use attitude surveys and similar studies which enable more precise measurement of a communication program's effectiveness in developing optimal message strategies.

At whatever level the research is conducted, however, we firmly believe that communication professionals should have this habit deeply ingrained in their work habits: Look before you leap . . . leap . . . look again . . . then, accordingly, leap again. Keep doing it. And make both the "looks" and the "leaps" *formal* ones. This is research, the short route to more effective communication.

—*Donna M. Hamlin and Craig Harkins*
  Hamlin Harkins, Ltd.
  San Jose, CA

□

Math-Typing Guide

Where can good instructions for *typing* (not typesetting) mathematics be found? If you can recommend some instructional material, please write to Martin H. Ackroyd, Dept. of Electrical Engineering Science, Univ. of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester CO4 3SQ, Essex, England.

□

Shakespeare's thought after reading an instruction manual:

". . . that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
To plague th' inventor."

—Macbeth, *Act I, Scene vii*
  S. Pasupathy
  IEEE Communications Magazine, *August 1984*

Flaherty to Receive "Key"

An IEEE Centennial "Key to the Future" will be presented to Deborah Flaherty on November 30. The occasion is the final centennial-year event, a ceremonial dinner in San Jose, California.

Thirty-three Keys are being presented to young engineers chosen by their IEEE societies. The Keys are symbolic of the key to the future of the IEEE.

Deborah was chosen to represent PCS because of her service as secretary to the Administrative Committee, her technical communication work for AT&T Technologies, and her business-professional activities in her home community. She will become editor of the PCS *Newsletter* in January.
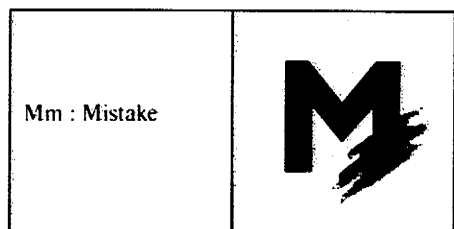
—Jim Hill
Awards Committee Chairman

☐

The Action Alphabet
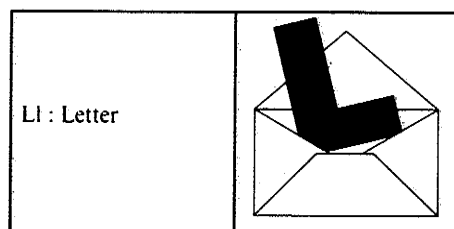
Ll : Letter

Mm : Mistake

ᴄ᷾ 1984 by Neumeier Design Team

The *Action Alphabet* is a giant step beyond the usual A-is-for-apple ABCs. The design team had in mind an alphabet in which the letterforms themselves—not extraneous objects—were the illustrations. The alphabet was created by Byron Glazer and Marty Neumeier of The Neumeier Design Team, Santa Barbara and Palo Alto, CA.

—Marion Muller
U&lc., August 1984

☐

Candidates for PCS AdCom

IBM award in 1979 for the *Transactions* issue on "Patents and Patenting for Engineers and Scientists."

William Kehoe is an administrator at the Applied Physics Laboratory of The Johns Hopkins University. Bill holds a master's degree from George Washington University. He has been active in PCS activities—chairing sessions at each of our annual conferences, researching the site for our 1985 conference, and arranging to have our "Communication and Report Writing Workshop" presented at APL. Bill is currently involved in the use of personal computers in communication processes.

Lacy Martin is a California-based communication consultant with more than 20 years of industrial experience from a variety of communication perspectives—proposals, systems documentation, and instruction manuals. Currently he is publications manager for Amdahl Communication Systems. Lacy is a member of the AdCom and is the PCS representative to the *Proceedings of the IEEE*. He is particularly interested in starting some regional PCS activities on the west coast.

Additional candidates may be nominated by petition with the names of 25 society members, excluding student members. Candidates must be either affiliate members of PCS or members of IEEE *and* PCS. Petitions must be received by November 7 by David B. Dobson, nominations committee chairman, McGregor & Werner, Inc., 6411 Chillum Place, Washington, DC 20012.

AdCom membership involves participation in four meetings a year and some committee assignments. The new members will be elected by the current AdCom at its annual meeting at IEEE headquarters in New York City on December 7.

—Dan Rosich
PCS President

☐

Future PCC Sites

1985 – Williamsburg, Virginia
1986 – Charlotte, North Carolina
1987 – Winnipeg, Canada
1988 – Seattle, Washington
1989 – New York City
1990 – London, England

PCS 25 Years Ago

The Institute of Radio Engineers Professional Group on Engineering Writing and Speech (IRE-PGEWS) began its third year of existence in 1959 under the leadership of Joe Chapline, Chairman; Tom Patterson, Vice-Chairman; Eleanor McElwee, Secretary; and Herb Michaelson, Treasurer. Membership had grown to 1300, and three issues of the *Transactions* (volume EWS-2) were published.

The problems faced by the early leaders of our society were evidently very similar to those faced today. The first two 1959 *Transacations* issues consisted largely of papers presented at the Second National Symposium of IRE-PGEWS. The third issue did contain some original papers but also featured a number of reprints (including one based on an address by Sir Lawrence Bragg) as well as pictorial coverage of the 1959 Dual National Sumposia (Los Angeles and Boston sessions).

Elections held in 1959 led to the elevation of Tom Patterson to Chairman and John Kinn to Vice-Chairman; Eleanor McElwee and Herb Michaelson continued as Secretary and Treasurer.

"A Review of The IRE-PGEWS" was presented by Tom Patterson at the Los Angeles session of the 1959 Dual National Symposia and was included in the December issue of the *Transations*. (It is reprinted below.) This review of the purpose and aims of the society in 1959 is interesting in both its similarities to and its differences from the purposes and aims we espouse today. Even more interesting is the fact that defining our charter has continued to be one of our more difficult tasks. This task would be considerably easier if PCS members would communicate their interests and desires to the Administrative Committee. If a sufficient number of our members would respond, the AdCom could more easily tailor a program to answer their needs.

—Richard M. Robinson
* PCS Membership Chairman*

A Review of the IRE-PGEWS

I have been asked many times, "What is PGEWS?" Now that we are well into our third year, it is time to review our original charter and our aims. Our membership has grown to over 1300. This figure is not startling, but it does indicate that there is considerable interest in writing and speaking. We have held four symposia, with widely varying comments.

The purpose of PGEWS is clear: To increase the effectiveness of technical writing and speaking by engineers in the electronics industry. No one disputes this, but some disagree with our methods of implementation. I feel there are two ways in which we can help the electronics engineer. First, we can help the engineering writers who in turn work with the design engineers; second, we can help the design engineers directly.

More than half the members of PGEWS are engineers, yet less than half of those attending our symposia are engineers. Therefore, I submit that the way to reach the design engineers directly is through these *Transactions*. On the other hand, through our symposia we can reach the publications engineers who in turn can help the engineers at the local level.

I have received several suggestions that PGEWS should feature the theory of communication. This, of course, is a noble ideal and perhaps should be investigated. The theory of communication is under intensive study by members of other professional groups of the IRE and involves kinds of language and media of transmission. The transplanting of ideas from one mind to another is under investigation in the field of psychology. PGEWS is primarily concerned with communicating technical information in the English language for decision-making. We have found that the English language is poorly taught and poorly used. We are trying to correct this in an interim manner by placing before our membership examples of good and bad writing and by pointing out self-taught rules for recognizing the difference. Ultimately, this should be a function of the Professional Group on Education. It amazes me that business and engineering are carried on as successfully as they are, based on written and oral English-language presentations that are full of ambiguities and misleading statements.

For our purposes in PGEWS, let us assume that those who are writing have a working knowledge of the English language. Then we can help the author in setting his ideas down on paper in a logical manner to achieve his intended purpose. His purpose may be for recognition in the field, for additional funds to carry on the work, or for the production department to make his plan into hardware. Whatever the author's purpose, his meaning should be clear.

For verbal presentations, again let us assume that the person has sufficient knowledge of spoken English. He may then be helped in the use of visual aids and in platform techniques so that his presentation will achieve its intended purpose effectively.

In conclusion, I suggest that this *Transactions* become the primary medium for helping our engineering members directly in improving the accurate transmission of their ideas. The symposia, on the other hand, should be aimed at exchanging ideas with others in the engineering publications field. We should encourage local meetings at the section level. We should further establish liaison with the Professional Group on Education and with the Professioal Group on Engineering Management to study our common problems.

—T. T. Patterson
* IRE Trans. Engineering Writing and Speech*
* Vol. EWS-2, December 1959*

□

Answers, Please

Engineers should "volunteer to give a simple, jargon-free talk on what they do and why they believe it is important to our nation . . . to civic or service organizations." This idea is seconded by IEEE president R. J. Gowen in *The Institute* for September. "Help local schools and teachers learn more about the principles of engineering" was recommended by IEEE *Impact* in May as a partial solution to the crisis in secondary math-science education. The growing role of technology in current events and in the marketplace makes it more critical than ever before for engineers to be able to communicate with those within and outside of their profession.

Laudable as it is, where is this engineering presence going to come from? Rather, how can PCS help make it happen?

Outside of academia, engineers as a group are notoriously reticent about making conference presentations and speaking in public. Seventy percent of them believe they are undertrained in communication skills (IEEE *Spectrum*, June). Yet few have made use of PCS's offerings (this *Newsletter*, page 3).

Do you have some ideas?

Are we doing the right things? Are we doing things right? Ron Blicq, for example, asks these questions about PCS education courses and how they're delivered. We don't know the answers but we're aggressively looking for them:

- Our fourth conference takes place this month.
- A PCS-information hot line is now available.
- Lois Moore and Dan Plung are publishing an IEEE Press book on marketing ideas.
- A tutorial package on delivering conference presentations and another communication-related book are being developed.
- New editors will bring new ideas to both the *Transactions* and this *Newsletter.*
- The IEEE's Technical Information Profile is being tapped to find our audience—and help them find us.

Whether you use the PCS hot line (page 7) or the U.S. Postal Service, we're waiting to hear from you. We all have a stake in PCS's future.

—*Rudy Joenk*
  Boulder, Colorado

Engineeringspeak vs Englishspeak

Extracted and condensed from Quarterly Review of Doublespeak, *July 1984, X(4):6-8; copyright 1984 by the National Council of Teachers of English, Urbana, Illinois.*

Recently I saw in print for the first time "engineeringspeak." The news editorial in which it was enshrined takes my fellow engineers to task, again, for language improprieties.

It is true that some of us engineers don't talk and write real good, but we manage to survive and even flourish in spite of it. Our confraternity can't speak and write as well as most English teachers perhaps because we were not trained to be English teachers.

For a change, let's talk about the personal English of English professionals who teach engineers. Let's talk about scholarly language mutilation in the guise of language innovation—of teachers who preach the gospel of good English but practice "Englishspeak."

Englishspeak is the science of avoiding explanations of things English in intelligible English. As with engineeringspeak, it is language by mutual consent instead of language by rule. It provides the cabalism that assures exclusivity, thus preventing intrusion by the unordained. Unlike engineeringspeak, it is premeditated.

If all of us would look to our own language first, perhaps we could be more forgiving. Language teachers especially could help more by attacking before, rather than railing after, a disease to which they also are victim and carrier. Unless and until they and schools recognize the urgencies of educated and educating communications in all disciplines, I fear that we engineers are just gonna keep right on doin' the best we can with what we was given and the good ole stylistic and structured multivariate standards them English teachers keep settin' us, personologically.

—*Martin A. Zeidner*

Knitpicking Vultures*

Behavior Pattern

Communicative scavengers that feed on the work of more productive birds, the Knitpicking Vultures pick over proposals, reports, policy statements, and other wordalities for the purpose of preserving the status quo. They rarely flutter and tend to roost with glowering joy as they take a bare bones approach to retrogressive communication. Knitpicking Vultures replace clarity with their own flotational bloatum.

Habitat

Government agencies, corporate headquarters, banks, universities, and research centers. Aging members of the species still use the blue pencil, but up-to-date and swinging members of the species use word processors and computerized absquatualities. Habitat includes cluttered desk areas and computer centers.

Profile and Plummage

Haunchy stance for searching, hovering, and roosting over paper; plummage, pinfeathers.

Song

Boren Dirge of Creativity: You won't get lost if you stay in a rut (usually warbled with a gruntistic uuuulp and ohmmmmm).

*Not to be confused with *nitpickers* that deal primarily with the eggs of lice. *Knitpicking* involves a more stylized and professional type of bone picking.

—*Jim Boren*
  August 1984

☐

Newsletter

IEEE Professional Communication Society