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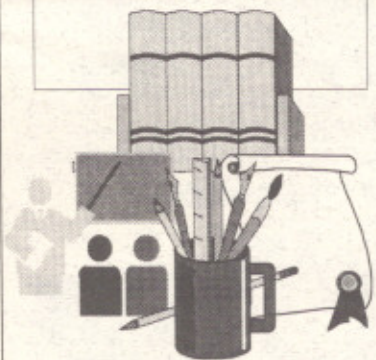
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**ISSUE NO. 7
SUMMER - 1995**



BELS Annual Meeting

On behalf of all who attended, I offer belated but heartfelt thanks to Diagnostek, Inc., and especially to David P. Jones and Julliana Newman, ELS, for hosting the 4th Annual Meeting of BELS in Kansas City. The appetizers were scrumptious, the drinks generous, and the dinner excellent—Thank you!

For those of you who missed it, I will briefly recount the evening's program. The meal was followed by a few short committee reports (interim figures provided by the Budget and Finance Committee are appended) and prepared remarks by our guest speaker, Maeve O'Connor, ELS(H). Ms. O'Connor is the author of "Editing Scientific Books and Journals" and "How to Copyedit Scientific Books and Journals," editorial coordinator of "European Science Editing" (the journal of the European Association of Science Editors [EASE]), and the first BELS Honored Editor. Her enlightening and humorous comments on the importance of author's editors were very well received by the audience.

Assorted notes:

- Between May 1994 and May 1995, BELS ranks grew by 37 members.
- Six certification examinations are scheduled for 1996, in California, Texas, Oregon, New York, Illinois, and Ontario.
- The first diplomate examination is to be administered this fall in Baltimore, right after the AMWA meeting.
- The BELS 5th Annual Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, May 4, 1996, in Portland, Oregon.

Grace Darling, ELS

The late nuclear physicist Leo Szilard was visiting a laboratory at the University of Indiana. "Doctor Szilard," said one of the researchers, embarrassed by the presence of the great man, "I don't know how much to explain. . . . I don't know what to assume. . . ." Szilard promptly responded, "You may assume infinite ignorance and unlimited intelligence."

**Board of Editors in the Life Sciences
Analysis of Account as of May 1995**

Income	
Bank balance	\$ 6385.82
Dues collected for 1995	2475.00
Fees collected for 1995	<u>1175.00</u>
	10,035.82
Expenses	
Postage	509.66
Phone and fax	207.46
Printing	293.24
Meeting and test rooms	512.99
Supplies	128.24
Clerical	2761.44
Bank charges	<u>28.00</u>
	4,441.03
BALANCE	<u><u>\$5,594.79</u></u>

I am often struck, more often in America than anywhere else, with the contrast between the vivid and honest accuracy of the vernacular we all use and the often elephantine jargon of the specialist.

Jargon, too, is often a cagey, noncommittal attempt to walk all around the object. I mean this with all respect to anyone sweating to work his way through to fundamentals. When you really are unsure about a function or a process, you tend to get lost in a maze of protective adjectives and in many abstractions, which are the linguistic elements of cloudiness and fog. Soon the jargon, if repeated often enough, is doing the thinking for you.

Of course, the impulse toward jargon is very much a matter of character; and it's likely that you can no more cure a naturally pompous person than you can reflower a virgin.

Alistair Cooke, *The Patient Has the Floor*

Academe in Translation*

"It has long been known . . .":

I didn't look up the original reference.

"Three of the samples were chosen for detailed study.":

The results of the others didn't make any sense.

"A careful analysis of the obtainable data . . .":

Three pages of notes were obliterated when I spilled the beer.

"Correct within an order of magnitude.":

Wrong.

"A definite trend is evident.":

These data are practically meaningless.

"Thanks are due to Joe Blotz for assistance with the experiment and to George Frink for valuable discussions.":

Blotz did the work and Frink explained to me what it meant.

"A statistically oriented projection of the significance of these findings . . .":

A wild guess.

"It is clear that much additional work will be required before a complete understanding of the phenomenon occurs.":

I don't understand it.

*From *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 1979

Too often we enjoy the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought.

John F. Kennedy

Lessons from Kansas City

titivate *v.* to make smart; spruce up.
Not to be confused with

titillate *v.t.* to excite agreeably.
(Although one might lead to the other.)

proactive *adj.* serving to prepare for, intervene in, or control an expected occurrence or situation. (Work it into your writing as often as you can—it's in fashion.)

bed key *n.* a crank-like appliance used in the nineteenth century to tighten the ropes on which straw mattresses were suspended.



Odds and Ends

The Public Health Service (PHS), parent agency of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), has issued final rules regarding conflict of interest for biomedical researchers. The rules go into effect on 1 October, and will affect the design, conduct, or reporting of PHS-funded research as well as research sponsored by the National Science Foundation (NSF), which has adopted them.

The PHS rules are intended to make sure that researchers' financial interests don't influence their research. A conflict of interest is defined as "anything of monetary value, including but not limited to salary or other payments for services (e.g., consulting fees or honoraria); equity interests; and intellectual property rights (e.g., patents, copyrights, and royalties from such rights)" exceeding \$10,000 or 5% ownership in companies that might be affected by the research.

Under the new rules, researchers can decide for themselves whether any potential conflict exists, and universities are required to review conflict of interest materials only if the agencies decide to fund a proposal. Despite these seemingly lax criteria, NSF and NIH officials suggest a broad interpretation of what constitutes conflict and will expect institutions to take their responsibility seriously—or have the government step in, which nobody wants.



The "dog days" of summer are named after Sirius, the Dog Star in the constellation Canis Major and by far the brightest star in all the heavens. Sirius is visible in the night sky in winter, but also accompanies the

sun across the daytime sky in summer.

Ancient skywatchers believed that Sirius combined its heat with that of the sun at this time of year, which typically extends from July 2 to August 15.

Scientists at Los Alamos National Laboratory have developed an information-storage method they call "high-density read-only memory," or HD-ROM. An ion-beam etches tiny patterns onto the surface of a stainless steel pin 25 mm long by 2 mm wide, which holds up to 2 gigabytes of data or almost 23 times as much as a computer hard drive. The inscribed features can be binary data or three-dimensional pictures, and can range in size from 1/10 of a microfilm image to 150 billionths of a meter. The developers of this technology have applied for a patent and are hoping to market their product to libraries as the ultimate archival system.



You may wish to place your order now for a 1996 calendar titled "Studmuffins of Science" and featuring a bevy of winsome male Ph.D.s. Each selection will be accompanied by a Dewar's-style profile, including "favorite DNA purification techniques" for a biologist, for instance, or "favorite geothermal upwelling" for an oceanographer. How does the professional community feel about this project? One of the entries, a handsome Cornell University physicist, expresses the majority view when he says, "Getting my degree was challenging and fulfilling and all, but this is a real honor." Copies of the calendar can be obtained from Karen Hopkins, c/o National Public Radio in New York.

Welcome!

Congratulations and welcome to our new members:



Lisa Catanese
Sally Ann Edwards
Ellen K. Endriss
Mary W. Eubanks
Victoria R. Gibson
Sheryl Hinkkanen
Carolyn E. Hunt

Tim Merrick
Joann Nash
Gerald T. Pollard
Renee J. Robillard
John Ruhkila
Molly Reusser
Waynette D. Sharp

Michael S. Worley

Calendar of Events

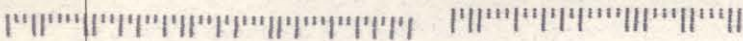
- Sept 25-27 - Third European Serials Conference, Valencia, Spain.
- Sept 26-30 - International Professional Communication Conference, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Savannah, GA.
- Oct 13-15 - CBE Retreat for Journal Editors, Airlie Center, Airlie, VA.
- Oct 22-23 - Third Annual Conference of the Committee on Women in Science and Engineering of the National Academy of Science. Washington, DC.
- Oct 25-28 - AMWA Annual Conference, Stouffer Harbor Place, Baltimore, MD.
- Oct 28 - BELS Certification Examination, Ramada Inn on Howard, Baltimore, MD.
- Nov 8-12 - Annual Conference of the American Translators Association, Stouffer Hotel, Nashville, TN.

All big things have little names, such as life and death, peace and war. Learn to use little words in a big way—it is hard to do. But they say what you mean. When you don't know what you mean, use big words: they often fool little people.

Booknews, July 1981

Sentences are either impossibly short or impossibly long. Commas, colons, parentheses and dashes crawl all over the page like flesh-eating microbes.

Jeff Giles reviewing Martin Amis's *The Information* (*Newsweek*, 8 May 1995)



Selected Readings in Plastic Surgery
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