

Grace Darling, MS, ELS  
Editor

Susan E. Aiello, DVM, ELS  
Design and Page Layout

Karen L. Klein, ELS  
Proofreader

Shirley Peterson, MS, ELS  
Newsletter Staff Contributor

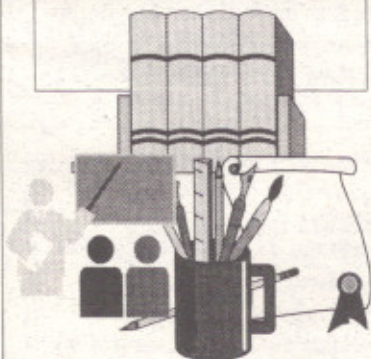
Kendall W. Sterling, ELS  
News Reporter

**DIRECT ALL  
NEWSLETTER  
CORRESPONDENCE TO:**

GRACE DARLING  
411 NORTH WASHINGTON,  
SUITE 6900, LB15  
DALLAS, TEXAS 75246

214-824-0154  
214-824-0463, FAX

ISSUE NO. 3 SUMMER 1994



## News From the Professional Front

Several BELS members attended the Fifth General Assembly of the European Association of Science Editors (EASE) held in Budapest, Hungary, this past April. By all accounts, the conference was very successful and the venue most enjoyable. Of particular interest to BELSites were the following items:

Pebr Enckell, editor of the *Science Editors' Handbook*, reported that the first three chapters of the *Handbook* had been issued to members and previewed forthcoming distributions. Completed or in the works are chapters on symbols for physical quantities, zoological nomenclature, numerals in science, chemistry, nomenclature, and writing abstracts. Enckell solicited suggestions for further chapters and offers to write them. The main difference between the *Handbook* and the *CBE Style Manual* is supposed to be that the *Handbook* chapters are written in direct response to suggestions from editors, but another important distinction is that the *Handbook* is being distributed in installments of one or two chapters at a time and at no charge to EASE members. Presumably when all chapters are in they will be collated and offered for sale as a book.

Maeve O'Connor, Secretary-Treasurer of EASE and Honored Editor in the Life Sciences, presented a proposal on bibliographic references that aims at greater consistency of information across the various styles of reference citation. A vote was held and all five points of the proposal passed. It reads as follows: (1) that the name-year (Harvard) and numbering (citation-order [*Ed. Note*: also known as the Vancouver] and alphabetic-numeric) styles for bibliographic references in scientific publications should include the same information elements, set out as far as possible in the same order, in each type of reference (to journal articles, book chapters, books, etc.); (2) that punctuation in lists of bibliographic references should be kept to the minimum needed to conform to the relevant international or national standards; (3) that authors should not be required to underline, embolden, or italicize the elements constituting a reference; (4) that in each reference list all serial titles should be either abbreviated in accordance with the internationally recognized *List of Serial Title Word Abbreviations* or, if a publication's house style so requires, written in full; (5) that if a cited document has more than four authors, the names of the first three should be included in the reference, followed by "et al." or by "and *n* others," except when a publication's house style requires a different number to be named.

Ed Huth, freshly reinstated editor of the *Annals of Internal Medicine* and a familiar face to many in BELS, traced the development of the Vancouver style of bibliographic citation. His account here is reprinted from the July 1994 issue of the *Bulletin of the European Association of Science Editors*, supplemented with a few chronological notes from the preface to *Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals*.

Continued on page 4

**BOARD OF EDITORS OF THE LIFE SCIENCES**  
**Financial Statement**  
**January 1, 1993 to May 12, 1994**

	1993	1994
<b>INCOME</b>	\$6,300.00	\$5,961.00
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Postage	1,217.77	424.76
Telephone/fax	251.46	135.38
Exam & meeting room rent	1,399.07	196.75
Printing	123.83	423.86
Copying		48.81
Supplies	260.06	78.23
Computer software	496.80	
Advertising	150.00	
Bank charges	21.95	4.75
Miscellaneous		
pins	631.00	
banquet	513.40	
proctor travel	227.77	
refund	100.00	
mailing labels		100.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	5,393.11	1,412.54
<b>NET INCOME</b>	906.89	4,548.46

BELS derives its income primarily from two sources, examination fees and member dues. The bulk of the expenses have to do with administering the certification exam: printing costs (brochures and forms), buying mailing lists, mailing notices to hundreds of people selected by geography and profession, handling inquiries and applications (postage, telephone), exam room rental, and proctor travel and accommodation. It costs BELS about \$500 to put on an examination, of which there will be at least 10 in 1994. Other BELS expenses are (usually) two meetings per year of the Executive Council—meeting room rental only; the councilors generally pay their own way.

.....

**Publication Numbers**

Earlier this year, the councils that allocate funding to British universities announced that they will no longer use total publication counts as a measure of the relative strengths of research departments. Instead, they will take into account only the four best papers individual researchers in each department have published in the previous 3 years. The decision to consider only a few top papers reflects a growing concern over some researchers' frantic efforts to accumulate publications by splitting results up into series of short papers and appending their names as coauthors on as many publications as possible. A few other research granting bodies and tenure committees in this and other countries are also trying to deemphasize publication volume as a measure of a researcher's productivity. NIH grant applicants, for instance, must now fit biographical and publication data on just two pages.

**Financial Conflicts of Interest**

The Public Health Service (which includes the National Institutes of Health among its many agencies) and the National Science Foundation have published rules to prevent financial conflicts of interest by federally funded scientists. The proposed guidelines give institutions the primary responsibility for examining researchers' financial holdings and interpreting the regulations to avoid potential conflicts of interest with the funding agencies. Researchers must disclose to their institutions all "significant financial interests," defined as holdings worth more than \$5,000 or more than 5% ownership in a company, "that would reasonably appear to be directly and significantly affected by the research," such as salaries, consulting fees, stocks or stock options, honoraria, and intellectual property rights. Exempt from disclosure are researchers whose prospective income will derive from lectures, teaching, or other services performed for nonprofit entities; those who hold less than \$5,000 or 5% of a company; those who own companies applying for Small Business Innovative Research grants; and applicants for NSF grants who work at an institution employing 50 or fewer people. [Federal Register 1994 June 28; 59 (123):33308-12.]

*The average person can understand 35,000 words, but in our ordinary conversations we use only about 1,000 words. Those are the words I use [in my writing].*

Robert Fulghum

**About Our Members**

We welcome the following new members to the Board of Editors in the Life Sciences; well done, people!



Catherine Judge Allen  
 Sally F. Campbell  
 Connie Grogan  
 Carol A. Koetke  
 Diana Bosse Mathis  
 Barbara A. Regan  
 Robert W. (Bob) Wathen

Robert Bellandi  
 Stephen de Looze\*  
 Penny Hoeltzel  
 Kathleen F. Loudon  
 Brenda Allen Milot  
 Gail K. Schmitt  
 Elena Westbrook

Carol Cadmus  
 Ruth E. de Wijs-Christenson\*  
 Margaret Hoppenrath  
 Kathleen Lyle  
 Georgianna Oja  
 Barbara A. Simmons  
 Sherry Williams

\* Names that include prefixes made up of particles such as *d', de, den, der, des, du, van, von, ul,* or *y* can be a source of confusion during indexing or bibliographic citation. In English-speaking countries the particles are always considered to be part of the surname—e.g., Von Bulow, Claus—and are *usually* but not always capitalized when transposed—e.g., La Guardia, Fiorello; de Klerk, Frederik. Other countries use different methods—e.g., Gogh, Vincent van (in the Netherlands); Gaulle, Charles de (in France)—so that you should know the nationality of the person and the alphabetization conventions in that country before determining the correct form of entry. If the person is well known, you may find the answer in *Webster's New Biographical Dictionary*.

Congratulations to Chris Wogan, ELS, who is now also an MS by virtue of having completed the work for a Master of Science degree from the University of Houston this spring. Her field of study was biological sciences with a focus on human physiology, and Chris hopes to put to good use what she learned in class on her job in the aerospace medicine industry.

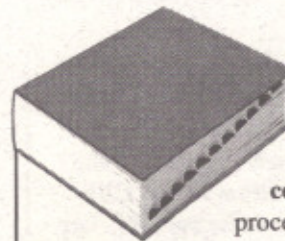
Our best wishes to Julliana Newman, ELS, who was recently appointed vice-president of marketing at Diagnostek, Inc., an Albuquerque, New Mexico, pharmacy-services management firm.

Claudette Reed Upton and her brothers have established a memorial fund in honor of their mother, the remarkable Helen Tarasov Reed. The family is trying to build an endowment that will be used to sponsor projects and promote causes that were dear to their late mother, such as environmental protection and equal access to education for all. If you would like more information about the Helen Tarasov Reed Memorial Fund, please contact Claudette at 206-945-3387.

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

October 7-10 CBE Retreat in Peer Review,  
 Airlie House, Warrenton, VA.

November 2-5 AMWA 54th Annual  
 Conference, The Pointe Hilton  
 at Squaw Peak, Phoenix, AZ.



**Reminders**

**continuous** = uninterrupted;  
 proceeding without cessation

**continual** = often repeated; intermittent;  
 recurring frequently

## NEWS FROM THE PROFESSIONAL FRONT, from Page 1

In 1978, a small group of editors of general medical journals met informally in Vancouver, British Columbia, to establish guidelines for the format of manuscripts submitted to their journals. The group, now expanded and known as the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, has met annually since then and has produced four editions of the *Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals*.\*

The editors who met in Vancouver in yet another attempt to standardize reference style were unable to agree, and an "external expert" was invited from the National Library of Medicine. Unbeknown to the editors, however, the NLM had already adopted the American national standard based on the Anglo-American cataloguing rules.

The citation-sequence system, now known as the Vancouver style, is currently used by about 500 biomedical journals. It calls for citing the typical journal article by **title** followed by the **year** of publication and a **semicolon**. The **volume** is next, separated by a **colon** from the inclusive **page numbers**, which are elided except for the teens—e.g.,

Spargo PM, Manners JM. DDAVP and open heart surgery. *Anaesthesia* 1989;44:363-4.  
Nehse G, Tunn S. Androgen and progesterone receptors in oral carcinoma. *J Craniomaxillofac Surg* 1994;22:114-19.

The first six authors should be listed, followed by "et al." if more. Other types of publications are addressed, as well as the many permutations possible within each kind. (The new edition of the *CBE Style Manual*, expected to be available later this year, recommends inclusion of the issue numbers of journals and use of abbreviations in square brackets to identify organizations as authors.)

In case you are not sufficiently confused yet, the Bulletin reports that "participants were *heartened* [emphasis added] to learn that the International

Federation of Library Associations is involved in its own attempt to achieve standardization in bibliographic citation for the purposes of cataloguing."

\* Single copies of this document are available free of charge from the Secretariat Office, American College of Physicians, Independence Mall West, Sixth Street at Race, Philadelphia, PA 19106-1572, or by calling Kathleen Case at 800-523-1546, ext. 2631.

---



---

*Read over your compositions, and when you meet a passage which you think is particularly fine, strike it out.*

Samuel Johnson

---



---

### Annals of Improbable Research

The former editor of the *Journal of Irreproducible Results (JIR)* has joined with the magazine's staff and a number of regular contributors, including some Nobel laureates, to form a new humor publication, the *Annals of Improbable Research (AIR)*, which will hit the stands this fall. *AIR* will assume sponsorship of the annual IgNobel awards honoring science of the most dubious sorts. The original founder of *JIR* will be chairman of the editorial board and claims everyone is excited about the prospect of being called *AIRheads*. A future article by chemist Dudley Herschbach of Harvard details his quantum interpretation of intelligence (the QI of IQ) that explains why smart people sometimes act dumb and how temperature fluctuations drive IQ up and down. When asked whether his theory meant global warming would make the world smarter, Herschbach said he would have to go do the calculations.

*Self-expression is for babies and seals, where it can be charming. A writer's business is to affect the reader.*

Vincent McHugh

**PROPOSAL TO IMPROVE REPORTING OF CLINICAL TRIALS IN THE BIOMEDICAL LITERATURE**

Last March, a group of medical editors, researchers, and biostatisticians, henceforth referred to as the working group, met in Asilomar, California, to consider how the reporting of clinical trials might be made more consistent and complete. At the end of their deliberations, the working group had drafted the following checklist:

**INTRODUCTION, include:**

- *a priori* hypothesis, specific protocol objectives

**METHODS, include:**

**Study as Designed,**

- planned study population, including controls
- inclusion and exclusion criteria
- planned subgroup analyses
- prognostic factors that may affect study results
- outcome measures and minimum difference(s) to be considered clinically important
- planned treatment interventions
- method of assignment of subjects to treatments (e.g., randomization method, blinding or masking procedure, matching criteria)
- planned sample size, power calculations
- rules for stopping the study
- methods of statistical analysis in sufficient detail to permit replication

**RESULTS, include:**

**Study as Conducted,**

- inclusive dates of accrual of study population
- sample size achieved
- how many subjects were excluded or withdrew, and the reasons
- demographics and clinical characteristics of the study population, including controls
- how the study as conducted deviated from the study as planned, and the reasons (e.g., compliance)

**Study Findings,**

- estimates of treatment effects, stated as comparisons among treatment groups (e.g., differences in risks, rates, or means of

outcome measures, as well as precise *P* values, not just  $P < 0.05$  or  $P > 0.05$ )

- measures of precision for outcome measures and for estimates of treatment effects (confidence intervals, standard errors)
- summary data and appropriate descriptive statistics
- complications of treatment
- repository where original data can be obtained (e.g., principal investigator)

**DISCUSSION, include:**

- interpretation of study findings
- results considered in the context of results in other trials reported in the literature

The methods section should detail the study design in terms of the final plan (e.g., the protocol submitted to an institutional review board), which should be in written form and agreed upon by investigators before the study begins. The results section should include details of how the study was actually conducted as well as the study findings.

The working group suggests that the checklist can (a) serve as a framework for authors submitting reports of clinical trials; (b) guide peer reviewers in their evaluation of manuscripts submitted for publication; and (c) be helpful to clinical investigators as a quick reference in planning and writing reports of their work and as a training tool for students. The checklist is being disseminated widely among biomedical researchers, writers, and editors in hopes of generating sufficient input from potential users so that it might be refined and published in final form in the near future. You are encouraged to send your comments by December 5, 1994, to Working Group, c/o Neurosurgery Editorial Office, 1360 Ninth Avenue, Suite 210, San Francisco, CA 94122.

---



---

*There's many a bestseller that could have been prevented by a good teacher.*

Flannery O'Connor

---



---

**BELS CERTIFICATION EXAMINATIONS 1994**

November 2	Wed.	9 am-12 pm	InnSuites Hotel Phoenix Squaw Peak Best Western 1615 E. Northern Ave Phoenix, AZ 85020	<u>Register by</u> October 19
November 2	Wed.	10 am-1 pm	Ciba Foundation 41 Portland Place London, England, WIN 4BN	October 19

Please note: We cannot register anyone for an examination later than 2 weeks before its scheduled date. Please allow at least 4 weeks for the application and registration process if you use the U.S. mails. International mails take longer than 4 weeks. Call (704)526-9138 for instructions if you plan to use UPS, Federal Express, or other services that do not deliver to the BELS post office.

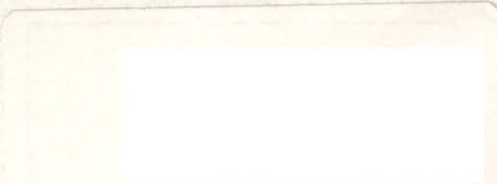
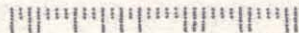
**BELS, P.O. Box 824, Highlands, NC 28741 USA**

**CALL FOR QUESTIONS**

Walter Pagel, ELS(D), Secretary of the Certification Examination Development Committee, invites every BELS member to submit potential question material to the committee as soon as possible. The test for BELS certification is continually revised to improve it and keep it fresh, and for this we rely on the membership at large.

Examples from your everyday work are suitable; nonmedical examples and passages in which more than one sentence is deficient are especially welcome. Please send both edited and unedited versions of the passage and include as much of the piece as is necessary to make the context clear. If you would like to try your hand at developing a complete question, you are encouraged to do so. There should be a stimulus (the passage), a question, and four options, only one of which is the correct answer. Experienced editors should be able to agree about which is the **best** option; they need not all agree it is the **only** option.

Please send your ideas to Walter Pagel, Scientific Publications Office, M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, 1515 Holcombe Blvd., Houston, TX 77030.



Selected Readings in Plastic Surgery  
411 North Washington, Ste. 6900, LB15  
Dallas, Texas 75246

**BELS LETTER**

US POSTAGE  
0.29  
METRO  
OCT 5 1994  
HIGHLANDS, NC