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Contributors  
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Barbara Schwedel, MS, ELS  
Kendall Sterling, ELS

Issue No. 30  
Spring 2003



## Congratulations

P Lynne Stockton,  
VMD, MS, ELS(D),  
and  
Debra G Shera, ELS(D),  
our two new Diplomate  
members.

Register  
to be a BELS Diplomate.  
Write to  
Diplomate  
Registrar,  
[redit@earthlink.net](mailto:redit@earthlink.net).

## Capsules

On January 1, 2003, **Karen Potvin Klein** became a Research Associate and Assistant Director of the Research Support Core in the Women's Health Center of Excellence at Wake Forest University Health Sciences. The Core assists faculty who submit grant applications on women's health topics, including gender differences in diseases or in understudied populations. So far, the service most in demand is editing (no surprise). Karen has also begun a series of University-wide Research Workshops on grants and manuscripts. In her spare time she is writing grant proposals, manuscripts, and miscellaneous documents for the Women's Health Center. Her email address is still [kklein@wfubmc.edu](mailto:kklein@wfubmc.edu), but her other contact information has changed to: Women's Health Center of Excellence, Wake Forest University Health Sciences, 2000 West First Street, Suite 101, Winston-Salem, NC 27104. Phone 336-713-4704, Fax 336-713-4228.

**Donna Tilton** has agreed to become the editor of *BELS Letter*. Her tenure will begin with the summer issue. The pro tem editor is giddy with relief. Thank you, Donna! *BELS Letter* is a newsletter, not a journal. If you have news, questions, comments, suggestions, or a short piece you think the membership might enjoy reading or would benefit from, please get in touch with Donna, using the prefix BELS in the subject line of your e-mail. Her e-mail address is [dtilton@mindspring.com](mailto:dtilton@mindspring.com).

Handing off: BELS will miss **Bobbie Reitt's** steadying hand as she and husband Pete take a few months to move from the mountains of western North Carolina to western Massachusetts. Bobbie has resigned from her position as BELS Registrar for Diplomate Examinations. **Kim Berman**, formerly Councilor for Member Relations and before that Head Proctor, will be the new diplomate registrar. Kim will send out a notice when she has received the registrar's files and is set up to take your calls, e-mails, and mail.

The **EASE Eighth General Assembly and Conference** will be held in the Guildhall in Bath, UK, from 8–11 June. Title of conference is "Editing and scientific 'truth.'" The BELS exam will be administered 2–5 pm on Sunday, 8 June.

**Barbara Burlingame**, who works for the FAO in Rome, will be moderating an EASE session, "Standards in scientific data, nomenclature and terminology: for whom?" She would like to hear from "any BELS members who are interested in participating or know of editors with special insights or experience in developing or implementing standards in science (beyond the normal implementation we all do when we adhere to standards)."

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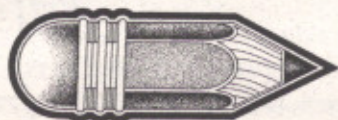
Capsules continued from page 1

**"So You're Going to Take the BELS Exam"**. That topic will be addressed at one of the Friday breakfast roundtables at the Miami AMWA conference on September 19. The exam will be administered on Wednesday, September 17, 10 AM-1 pm.

Please remember to use the **BELS ListServ** to discuss topics germane to BELS interests. Our listserve is still plagued by a species of Klez virus. We're upgrading service and that should solve the problem.

Computer-ept volunteer needed. **Susan Eastwood** provided a list of Bay Area biotech companies and their addresses so that BELS could send PR pamphlets ahead of the March exam in San Francisco. The ploy worked: this year we have 10 registrants. We need volunteers who can tickle computers until they spill similar regional lists about 6 months before an exam in a particular city. The AMWA exam in Miami is about 6 months away now. Any offers?

In **2004 exams** are planned for Princeton, Chicago, Vancouver, and St Louis, with possibles in Boston and Baltimore. We'd like to send BELS information to biotech and biomed companies and appropriate research institutes and departments in those cities, too. If you can do a one-time piece of volunteering, here's an opportunity. We can find someone to turn the list into labels.



## BELS Schedule in Pittsburgh, May 3-6, 2003

The 46th CSE Annual Meeting is in Pittsburgh, May 2-6, at the Hilton Hotel and Towers. The conference theme is "Interacting with the Digital Environment: Modern Scientific Publishing". Many BELS members are participating in panel discussions during the concurrent sessions.

Saturday, May 3, Certification Exam, 1-4 pm.

Sunday, May 4, BELS member meeting and dinner, 7-9:30 pm, likely at the Hilton Hotel and Towers. (Please check the Web site for this information, too.) Walter Pagel will be installed as BELS President. See page 8 for dinner reservation form.

Tuesday, May 6. Please note the afternoon CSE tour of the Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation.

Tuesday, May 6, EC business meeting, 4:30-6:30 pm. Venue TBA by e-mail. Dinner will be afterward and elsewhere for those who enjoy more togetherness.

**Elaine Firestone** volunteered to take some spiffy new BELS pamphlets and a bunch of the neon green BELS pencils to the STC meeting. She will also mention future BELS exams during the panel she's leading. Thank you, Elaine!

Thanks to **Nancy Wachter** for sending out the Proctor Box before each examination. The Proctor Box contains everything the proctor team needs to administer an exam and send results to the appropriate people.

**ELS or EIS?** It was brought to our attention that outgoing e-mail from people employed by Elsevier Science arrive with ELS after the employee's name. Turns out the tag is attached automatically by the Elsevier Science e-mail system. BELS President **Shirley Peterson** has written a letter to Crispin Davis, CEO of Reed Elsevier, pointing out the problem raised by the use of unearned ELS after employee names. Shirley suggested that since the Elsevier Science ELS is intended to identify the company affiliation, lower-casing the middle letter would solve the confusing use of ELS by non-BELS people and EIS would more accurately reflect the spelling of the company name. When there is a reply, BELS members will hear about it.

**The Editorial Eye** gave BELS several compliments in the August 2002 issue. The gist of the compliments is that the exam is onerous and worthy of respect by potential employers. Just what we like to hear. Unfortunately, the exam was identified as being administered by CSE. The Editor of *Editorial Eye* has been thanked for her kind thoughts and the good publicity, but advised that BELS is the certifying organization, and passing the exam permits use of ELS after one's name.



## Repetitive Stress Injuries in Computer Users: Prevention (I)

Kendall Wills Sterling, ELS

What was to have been the final installment of Kendall Sterling's series on repetitive stress injuries will appear in two issues of BELS Letter instead of one. In this issue Kendall offers information about the work area, correct posture, and exercise. The summer issue will contain her review of alternative keyboards and mouse variants. The list of retailers is on the BELS Web site and will be printed in the summer issue of BELS Letter.

Repetitive stress injuries (RSIs) are the most common work-related injury, accounting for more than 50% of all occupational illness. Treatment costs are high, totaling as much as an estimated \$20 billion per year in the United States alone. Even more costly to the individuals involved are the considerable pain and impairment that result from an RSI. For these reasons, and because postinjury treatment is often ineffective, prevention is seen as the best approach to RSIs in the workplace.

### Prevention of Musculoskeletal RSIs

Overuse is the most avoidable cause of RSIs. Computer users should take frequent rest breaks—several minutes per hour—or alternate computer use with other tasks that require movements different from those used to type or to operate the mouse.<sup>1</sup> Change position, stretch, or walk around during the day if you begin to feel tired. This will help reduce muscle strain and lower wear and tear on the lumbar disks and spine.

Prevention of RSIs requires identification of sites and tasks that place employees at risk and efforts aimed at decreasing those risks in the work environment.<sup>2</sup> It is essential to examine the entire work environment; changing just one element is not likely to eliminate all discomfort or all potential causes of RSI. Intervention may take any of three forms: ergonomic alterations in the work environment, alterations in equipment, and exercise and stretches designed to relieve the stress imposed on certain muscle groups during the work day.

### Ergonomic Alterations in the Work Environment Proper Arrangement of the Work Area

The work surface should be arranged such that items used constantly (67% to 100% of the time—eg, keyboard, mouse) are within the *primary* work area, 15 to 23 inches from the user's body. Items used frequently (34% to 66%—eg, telephone, pens) should be arranged in the *extended* work area, defined as within arm's length (20 to 28 inches). Items that are rarely or never used (0% to 33% of the time—eg, stapler, ruler, computer speakers) should be in the *tertiary* work area, which is beyond arm's length, or more than 28 inches from the user.<sup>3</sup>

### Proper Seating and Desk Height

The chair is the key component in the ergonomics of any workstation. It should be made of permeable material; have a five-spoked, star-shaped base for support; and have a backrest with an adjustable support to fit the lumbar area of the back. The front edge of the chair should have a "waterfall" contour, falling away from the back of the chair and toward the floor, to decrease pressure on the legs, as pressure can reduce whole-body circulation. Any tension in the legs, back, or shoulders is a sign that the chair is poorly adjusted and not providing adequate support. If the chair itself is not adjustable, a wide range of lumbar supports and cushions, both fixed and adjustable, are available. Arm rests should have a 2-inch minimum width, be adjustable, allow the arms to be supported but relaxed, and fit under the desk.

Seat height should be adjusted so the thighs are nearly horizontal and the feet are resting flat on the floor (typically 18 to 22 inches); use a footrest if you cannot rest your feet comfortably on the floor. The resulting angle between the upper and lower legs should be 60 to 100 degrees.

The ideal desk height is 26 inches from the floor, not the 30 inches more typical of mass-manufactured desks. Like the chair, the desk should have a waterfall edge to avoid producing pressure points on the wrists and forearms.

Ergo Health is a single-user CD-ROM that provides a multimedia 40- to 50-minute training program instructing office workers in the correct adjustment of the chair, keyboard, monitor, and accessories. It is available for \$35 from Ali-Med (see list of retailers on the BELS Web site).

### Proper Posture

Keep your elbows close to your sides to reduce upper back and shoulder strain. Try to maintain a 90-degree angle (the "neutral" position) between the upper and lower arm, though any position between 70 and 135 degrees is acceptable. The wrist and forearm should be held in a straight line, parallel to the floor. Adjust the keyboard to a slope of 0 to 25 degrees, and use a foam or gel-filled wrist support to help maintain a neutral arm/wrist position. Do not use the wrist rests while typing; instead, the rests should be used *between* bursts of keystrokes.

When using the keyboard, avoid bending the wrist in an ulnar ("pinkie finger") direction. Use a light touch on the keyboard to reduce hand stress. For the adventurous keyboard user, foot controls are available to perform frequent keyboard functions (eg, "shift" or "keypad on"). In most cases these controls are compatible with any keyboard and can be programmed to perform key functions or macros.

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## Repetitive Stress Injuries continued from page 3

To avoid shoulder strain, mouse users should have no more than 30 degrees of shoulder abduction, and the mouse pad should be placed at the edge of the desk to avoid pressure areas. Use the entire arm to move the mouse. Workers who frequently use the numeric keypad may find it helpful to place the mouse on the left side of the desk, as this provides a stretch and change of position for the overused right hand/wrist.<sup>3</sup>

The American Optometric Association recommends a monitor distance of 20 to 28 inches from the eyes, and the eyes should be in a downward gaze of about 15 degrees when viewing the screen.<sup>4</sup> The top of the screen should be below the horizontal eye level of the operator and tilted back slightly;<sup>4</sup> users who wear bifocals should lower the monitor by 6 inches.<sup>3</sup> Reading material should be positioned at a 20-degree incline, 20 inches away from the eyes (the "20/20 rule").

## Exercises to Relieve Muscle Stress

Exercises build strength and increase mobility and range of motion. Proper form and moderation are important to avoid exacerbating problems. Exercises that flex and extend the wrist and the fingers of the hand are particularly important for those who use a keyboard often. Hand exercisers and squeeze balls designed to improve grip strength are widely available. In addition, the following exercises should be done several times a day. Unless noted otherwise, work up to 10 repetitions at a time.

- Hold the hand and forearm straight. Bend wrist downward, holding for a few seconds. Return to neutral position.
- Lay hand on a flat surface. Extend hand upward, holding for a few seconds. Return.
- Extend fingers to fully open, and then to fully closed.
- With arms at your sides, rotate or roll your shoulders, starting with a forward motion, for four revolutions. Then do four revolutions starting with a backward motion first.
- Drop the head to the right, trying to touch the top of the shoulder. Keep torso straight and shoulders relaxed. Bring head to center and then drop to the left.
- Drop the head to one side and roll *slowly* in a circle, extending as close as you can to the upper torso. Perform four revolutions. Then perform four revolutions in the opposite direction.

## Should We Bulk Up?

According to the Bulk Mail Supervisor at the Southeastern Pennsylvania USPS office, a non-profit organization can be licensed to use bulk mail for \$150 per year. (BELS is, tax-wise, a Business League 501(c)(6) so a non-profit but not a charitable non-profit.) For-profit organizations and some other categories have to pay a total of \$300 per year. A decentralized organization such as ours needs to send mail from several locations. Licenses would have to be purchased from each post office used. Then there's the matter of buying and applying the precanceled stamps or renting a meter or buying envelopes with the metered mail mark in the stamp space or printing the envelopes individually.

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For those who don't stretch frequently, Jazzercise, Inc. has developed CyberStretch, a software program that offers stretch breaks in an easy-to-use screensaver format. Twenty-six body part-specific stretches are demonstrated, and users simply mirror the motions of the stretch illustrated on the computer screen. Although many of the stretches can be performed standing, all have been designed to be performed while sitting down. Both PC and Macintosh operating systems are supported, and cost is minimal: Current Jazzercise students and teachers can download the program at no cost; others can download the program for \$5 or obtain a CD-ROM for \$10. Those who are uncertain whether to purchase the software can download a free 7-day trial. Additional information can be obtained at [cyberstretch.com](http://cyberstretch.com).

Stretch Break Pro is another software program that, once installed on a user's hard drive, provides reminders to stretch and take breaks. Users are invited to follow several low-impact stretches demonstrated on the screen. When finished, Stretch Break returns the user to the previous Windows application. Stretch Break is available for \$44.95 from [safecomputing.com/exercise.html](http://safecomputing.com/exercise.html).

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## National Organization for Competency Assurance (NOCA) Peggy Chen, ELS

*Note: Organizations, not individuals, are members of NOCA whose accreditation body is The National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA). Organizations may be accredited by NCCA if they demonstrate compliance with each accreditation standard of NCCA. At some point soon BELS may need to ally itself with other certification boards by joining an agency such as NOCA ([www.noca.org/ncca.htm](http://www.noca.org/ncca.htm)), The Chauncey Group International (a subsidiary of Educational Testing Service®) ([www.chauncey.com](http://www.chauncey.com)), or Applied Measurement Professionals, Inc. ([www.goAMP.com](http://www.goAMP.com)) in order to stay current on various aspects of testing for certification. Online examinations spring to mind. **Peggy Chen**, a BELS member whose background includes a stint with ETS, attended selected sessions of the Tucson NOCA meeting on behalf of BELS in November 2002. Her report of what she learned there follows.*

NCCA accreditation may be something that BELS wishes to consider. The opportunity is open only to NOCA members, and it isn't cheap: \$3000 per year for each program. Our 2 programs, certification and diplomate, would mean \$6000 per year in dues, with renewal of NCCA accreditation by application and review every 5 years. However, the application process itself should be an enlightening self-audit. I'm still not clear on how legitimizing NCCA accreditation would be for BELS, but I think that the opportunity to discuss administrative and planning issues with NCCA commissioners as part of the process and then anytime as an accredited member would be valuable.

Networking opportunities with other member organizations would be valuable, too, although the bulk of these would be at

the 3 NOCA meetings per year (at about \$500 each). It is not necessary to be accredited by NCCA to attend NOCA meetings.

The workshops and roundtables offered at NOCA meetings provide a valuable opportunity to get feedback from experts and peers on such varied issues as legal accountability, computer-based testing, score reporting, question-writing, and scoring methods and options. The majority of NOCA member organizations seem to be health care oriented; however, as an NCCA commissioner told me, they encourage competency assurance organizations in other fields to join. Although I noticed that some sessions at the November meeting would not be of interest to us, because BELS does not certify people in health care processes, a number of topics were of more general interest from which BELS could benefit.

NOCA has an active political presence. The group lobbies and testifies on Capitol Hill and will even facilitate such activities for NOCA members.

To sum up, I think becoming a NOCA member would give BELS a fine opportunity to join a network of certifying organizations and encounter fresh ideas about how we manage our certification process. Allying ourselves with others in certification would provide support in any approach we decided to make to legislative bodies. I'd also like to add that the networking opportunities are likely to include what amounts to free consultations with experts in writing multiple-choice questions and in legal and administrative issues. Such experts are approachable during and after the conferences, having been presenters or moderators for conference workshops and shown an interest in assisting colleagues.

### Bulk? *from page 4*

**Bobbie Reitt** has had many years' experience with bulk mailing regulations, and at least two long talks about the service with her local postmaster. Labor-intensive sorting must be done exactly right. Bulk mailings always are handled last, small ones after large ones, and the delay may be as long as 3 weeks. There are no returns so no way to tell which addresses are valid. The postmaster said that organizations with fewer than 1000 members are usually unhappy with bulk mail.

**Mary Ann Schmidt** has prepared bulk mailings of 800 to 900 booklets. She says, "It's not impossible once you get the hang of it." She points out that USPS holds classes on bulk mail preparation, and provides the wide rubber bands and sorting trays. Mary Ann also does non-bulk mailing for an organization of 300 people that isn't big enough to make bulk mailing worthwhile.

Print shops of the AlphaGraphics® or Kinko's® sort have machines that print the document, fold it, and apply clear-circle stickers, labels, and stamps. The shop may then use its own bulk mail permit to send the items off. An organization can tap into this labor-saving system at almost any point. **Grace Darling** favors mailing houses and offers the numbers. The savings in postage from bulk mailing (from 37¢ down to 22¢ = 15¢ x 341 BELS Letter = \$51.15) would be offset by the extra handling and other USPS charges at a minimum of \$55 per hour. She was told by the USPS person that BELS should reconsider bulk mail if we ever have a mailing of 10,000 or more pieces.

Although BELS has more than 400 members, and all of them are sent dues notices, only 341 are active members who receive the BELS Letter. The cost of using a mailing house to fold and seal, apply labels and stamps was \$75 for the recent BELS Letter. Regular first-class postage was \$126.17. Hereafter those in charge of large BELS mailings will be encouraged to use a mailing service so that no one needs to spend evenings around the kitchen table licking and sticking.



## BELS Serves Summarized Q&A From the BELS Mailing List Server

Barbara Schwedel, ELS

BELS members continue to avail themselves of the mailing list, and this column summarizes several of the ensuing Q&A discussions—many thanks to all who participated! Here are the summaries:

### Statistics Books for Editors

**Matthew Stevens** asked readers of two mailing lists, BELS and Copyediting-L (*ce-l.technology-corner.com/celfaq/*), for recommendations of books explaining statistics from the editor's perspective. He elaborated, "Although I studied biometry for three years, I might as well have slept through the lectures for all that I remember."

Matthew heard from members of both groups, with over half mentioning *How to Report Statistics in Medicine—Annotated Guidelines for Authors, Editors, and Reviewers* (Lang TA, Secic M. Philadelphia: American College of Physicians, 1997).

**Jan Tremaine** described this book as "...very simply written with many 'examples'—you will find it very helpful." **Kendall Wills Sterling** observed, "...The 'Guide to Statistical Terms and Tests' in the back is especially helpful, as it gives a nutshell definition of each term along with what should be reported when that term is used. The simplicity and ease of use of this guide are worth the price of the book, in my opinion." (For a list of other resources recommended to Matthew, please contact me at [BSchwedel@aol.com](mailto:BSchwedel@aol.com).)

On the advice received, Matthew "threw caution to the wind and ordered 'Lang and Secic.' It took six weeks to arrive in Australia from the UK, and it cost A\$106." [When I checked on February 15, 2003, this was ~U.S.\$63.] Matthew added, "but I am pleased that I bought it."

### Double-Blind Peer Review?

**Elaine Firestone** wrote, "I had been asked to become the Document Manager for a special edition of a peer-reviewed journal in my field....Because of some events I knew of involving lack of confidentiality and negative author bias in the peer-review process, I wanted to find out what BELS members had experienced with single-blind versus double-blind peer review... Especially because it is a small scientific community, is it appropriate to have a 'double-blind' peer-review process so that neither the author nor reviewer knows the names of the other parties involved?"

**Barbara Simmons** responded that her journals were all double blind, but added, "when we send manuscripts to reviewers, we ask them to decline the review if they know the author or the facility. It's not so much a case of the authors' having hard feelings toward reviewers as it is a case of conflict of interest on the part of the reviewers." **Peggy Robinson** wrote, "Another way to try to avoid bias is to ask the authors to suggest names of people who might be suitable reviewers and

also the names of any people who should not be asked to review the article. Thus, an author can let you know if he or she is aware of someone who is likely to provide an unfavourable review for reasons other than those directly related to the manuscript." **Kendall Wills Sterling** mentioned a different approach, the open system: "Many...advocate a totally open system in which there is no blinding; reviewers and authors are all known to one another...[in their opinion] such a system improves reviewer accountability."

A while back, **Jill Shuman** went through the process Elaine was facing. Jill wrote a proposal to adopt double-blind peer-review, which was passed virtually without discussion. She wrote, "I think there was some relief that they didn't have to deal with the process [single-blind] and its inherent flaws anymore. Worked like a charm from there on." However, **Mark Goodwin** advised, "One thing for you to consider...is the tremendous amount of extra work in maintaining a double-blind vs. a single-blind system...for double-blind, you will need to remove...all affiliation and correspondence addresses, as well as alter any text references such as 'in previous studies, we (Smith et al, 1999) have found that' so that the reviewers will not associate the past publication authors with the current material. This latter task alone will require you to skim EVERY page of every submission...yikes."

Elaine concluded that Mark's response, "opened my eyes to the volume of work a double-blind peer review would involve...I suggested to the editors that they request the authors supply names of qualified reviewers, as well as names of those people the authors would rather not review their manuscripts. They said...they thought it was a good idea and they would consider it. Since then, I lost my part-time help...so I'm doing it all now; hence, when the prime guest editor sent out the letter telling authors how to submit their manuscripts, I didn't say anything when none of the suggestions I originally made were implemented." Elaine continued, "A cop out? Maybe. Self-preservation? Definitely!"

### Cautionary Phrase in Medical Device Labeling

**Esko Meriluoto**, who is based in Finland, was asked to translate the following statement into Finnish: "Caution: Federal law restricts this device to sale by or on the order of a \_\_\_\_\_." This statement is required in prescription medical

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device labeling by the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations (21 CFR 801.109(b)(1)). The blank is to be completed with the word *physician*, *dentist*, or *veterinarian*, or the descriptive designation of another state-licensed practitioner. Esko asked readers to explain the logic behind the statement because he would have expected it to define those allowed to buy or use medical devices but not those allowed to sell them.

**Mark Goodwin** responded (based on general knowledge rather than training), "The idea, I think, is that the regulation will best protect the public if it is directed at restricting the source of the item, rather than attempting to police a horde of potential end-users.... Also, this perspective helps to ensure that the folks (the doctors) best able to determine who should use the device will be the ones responsible for signing off on the distribution." Another respondent emphasized the similarity between this medical device regulation and regulations concerning prescription drugs. **Sheryl Hinkkanen** rephrased the statement slightly, to clarify its meaning, to "Federal law limits...this device to *being sold by*, or on the order of, a \_\_\_\_\_" [ellipsis and italics mine].

Esko commented that the advice provided, especially the comparison to prescription drugs and Sheryl's rephrasing of the caution statement, helped him "see the light through the convoluted language of the regulatory statement." He observed that although the CFR does not directly restrict who can buy a device, it does this indirectly by requiring licensed practitioners to regulate purchase.

**Clarification**

**Claudette Upton** provided the following clarification regarding her comments in the **Parentheses Around a Scientific Name: Italicized or Not?** discussion, which appeared in *BELS Serves*... in the Spring 2002 *BELS Letter* (Issue 28): "Somewhere in the transition from e-mail to typeset text, my italics were lost, and the impression given is that the Society of Caribbean Ornithology has dropped both the parentheses and the italics for scientific names. In fact, the scientific name [*Dendrocygna arborea*] should have been set in italics..." Claudette added, "Just wanted to set the record straight." Thank you, Claudette, and sorry for any misunderstandings that may have resulted from the omission.

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**Reservation for the BELS Members Meeting and Dinner  
Hilton Hotel and Towers, Pittsburgh, PA  
May 4, 2003, 7-9:30 pm**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Number attending \_\_\_\_\_  
Special diet requirements \_\_\_\_\_

**Enclose a check for \$25 per meal.**

Send to:  
Donna Curtis, PhD, ELS  
BELS Treasurer  
PO Box 173  
Chadds Ford, PA 19317

**Deadline for reservations is April 20.**



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Last Licks

Sorting through back issues of Science, Bobbie Reitt read that a Times Roman-based font is being created that will contain all the symbols, Greek letters, mathematical signs, and other characters that "give us so much trouble in science publishing these days, as conversions from (say) a Word format to XML format turn good science into gibberish." Better yet, access to this font apparently will be free of charge! For further details, check out stixfonts.org. Bobbie concluded that, by some time this year, "Maybe, just maybe...we won't have to struggle with arcane methods for searching files for symbols and operational signs to check them for accuracy!"

More than a year ago, Susan Eastwood asked, "Are there any standards of ethics in book publishing that you know of...in particular regarding conflict of interest?" Several respondents offered opinions or recounted personal experiences with books or other non-journal publications they'd worked on, but nobody cited standards—even incipient ones—that pertain to books. Months later, Susan answered her own question via her excellent summary of the proceedings of AMWA's March 2002 Asilomar

Conference, which included the plenary session Good Publication Practice: Guidelines for Pharmaceutical Companies. (Susan was Conference Director). These ethical guidelines were developed by several people involved with publications on pharmaceutical industry-funded clinical trials, with the objective of submission to, and eventual publication in, a peer-reviewed journal. Although the apparent focus is biomedical journals, the guidelines, at least a draft I saw several months ago, cover many types of scientific communications, including—eureka—book chapters. For additional information, please contact me for a copy of Susan's summary.

Fine Print

(1) The opinions in this column belong to the people cited and not necessarily to BELS or any employer. (2) To be added to the mailing list, please provide your name and e-mail address to the BELS Webmaster (Webmaster@bels.org); you must be an active member and you can always have your address removed if you later decide not to participate. (3) Comments or questions? Please contact me at BSchwedel@aol.com.

BELS Letter

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