

The BELS Letter

Board of Editors in the Life Sciences

Maintaining and promoting editorial proficiency in the life sciences



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From the President

Whether it was at a workshop, an open session, or a networking event, it was wonderful to see so many BELS members earlier this month at the American Medical Writers Association's annual conference in Denver. About 18 of us were able to gather for lunch at the meeting (thank you, AMWA, for reserving tables for us!), and we enjoyed the camaraderie and the conversation, which ranged from updates on our work as editors to sharing pictures of our feline co-workers. It was great to see some familiar faces and some new ones, too!

I am looking forward to seeing even more

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The BELS Letter

Bryan Tutt, ELS(D)
Managing Editor

Alex Rudie
Publications Coordinator



From the President

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of you, albeit virtually, at our 2022 Annual Membership Meeting on Wednesday, December 14, from 2–3 p.m. Central time. More information is soon to come, but we will gather to review highlights from the past year and preview what's coming in 2023. BELS trivia will return for another round, and we'll have a prize drawing to cap off the session. Mark your calendars and plan to join us!

As a reminder, please make sure to check your email inbox for your BELS membership renewal notice for 2023 and respond promptly to lock in your continued member benefits, discounts, and networking opportunities.

As we head into the holiday season, I hope you find time to renew and recharge on both the personal and professional fronts. I am grateful for your continued involvement and wish you all the best as we draw closer to the end of another productive year.

*Melanie Fridl Ross, MSJ, ELS
BELS President*



BELS members at the AMWA conference

BELS Member Profile

Robert Foster, ELS
Executive Director
Discovery Expedition of St. Charles/Lewis
& Clark Boathouse and Museum



Why did you pursue BELS certification?

After some years editing an association news magazine for a health care association, my portfolio expanded to include a peer-reviewed journal. Studying for, and taking, the BELS exam was very helpful in understanding journal editing and establishing credibility with my peers and authors.

How has BELS certification or membership benefited you personally and/or professionally?

I've had a number of clients who were more inclined to hire me due to my credential. Before the pandemic, when I was planning to expatriate to Asia, I attained the TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) certification. Paired with BELS certification, I felt well-positioned to teach English overseas or edit long-distance.

What type of skills/experience helped you transition from editing and publishing to executive leadership?

The ability to communicate well and attend to details is important in every line of work—and so is the ability to give and take criticism. I parlayed volunteer leadership of a nonprofit (cycling and pedestrian advocacy) into a series of executive director posts, including my current full-time paid position as museum director.

What gives you job satisfaction?

I'm new to museum management and had no inkling how much I would love the field. Being able to tell stories, create exhibits, and share visitors' journeys is a wonderful line of work. My enthusiasm has carried me into grad school in the field of Museums, Heritage, and Public History.

What is your grammar pet peeve?

Just this evening, I read "an anecdote to overtourism." The anecdote/antidote swap grates my nerves!

BELS Membership Renewals Are Open!

It's time to renew your BELS membership for 2023! Stay connected with editing colleagues from around the world and enjoy benefits such as:

- [Free virtual events and webinars](#), and access to the library of recorded sessions
 - [Past topics](#) include: "Work-Life Balance," "Tips, Tricks & Tools for Working with International Clients," and "Cybersecurity"
- Access to the job board and members-only email discussion list
- 30% [discount](#) on PerfectIt license
- 20% [discount](#) on several resource materials from the University of Chicago Press

All this and more for your annual member dues of **ONLY \$45!**

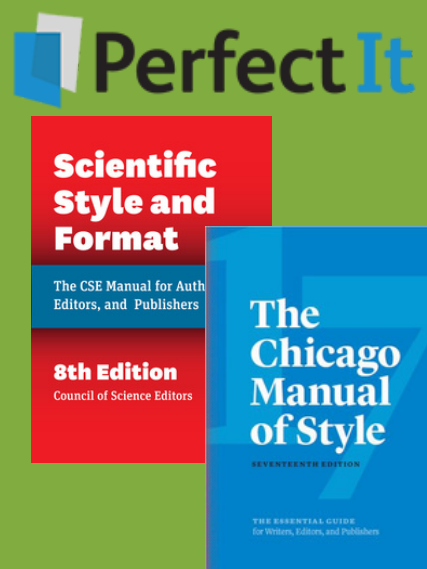
To renew: Log in to your BELS account and view the invoice located in your member profile (or check your email for the invoice).

The deadline for 2023 renewal is December 31, 2022, so don't wait!

BELS Member Discounts

BELS has partnered with resource providers to offer valuable members-only discounts on products and services that help make your job easier. These offers are exclusive to BELS members and should not be shared with any other non-member.

BELS member discounts include a 30% discount on a single license of PerfectIt software. PerfectIt improves consistency, ensures quality, and saves time. BELS members also receive a 20% discount on reference books such as *Scientific Style and Format: The CSE Manual for Authors, Editors, and Publishers* and *The Chicago Manual of Style*. The discount can be applied to both online and print versions of these books. Visit bels.org and click on Member Resources to claim your discounts today!

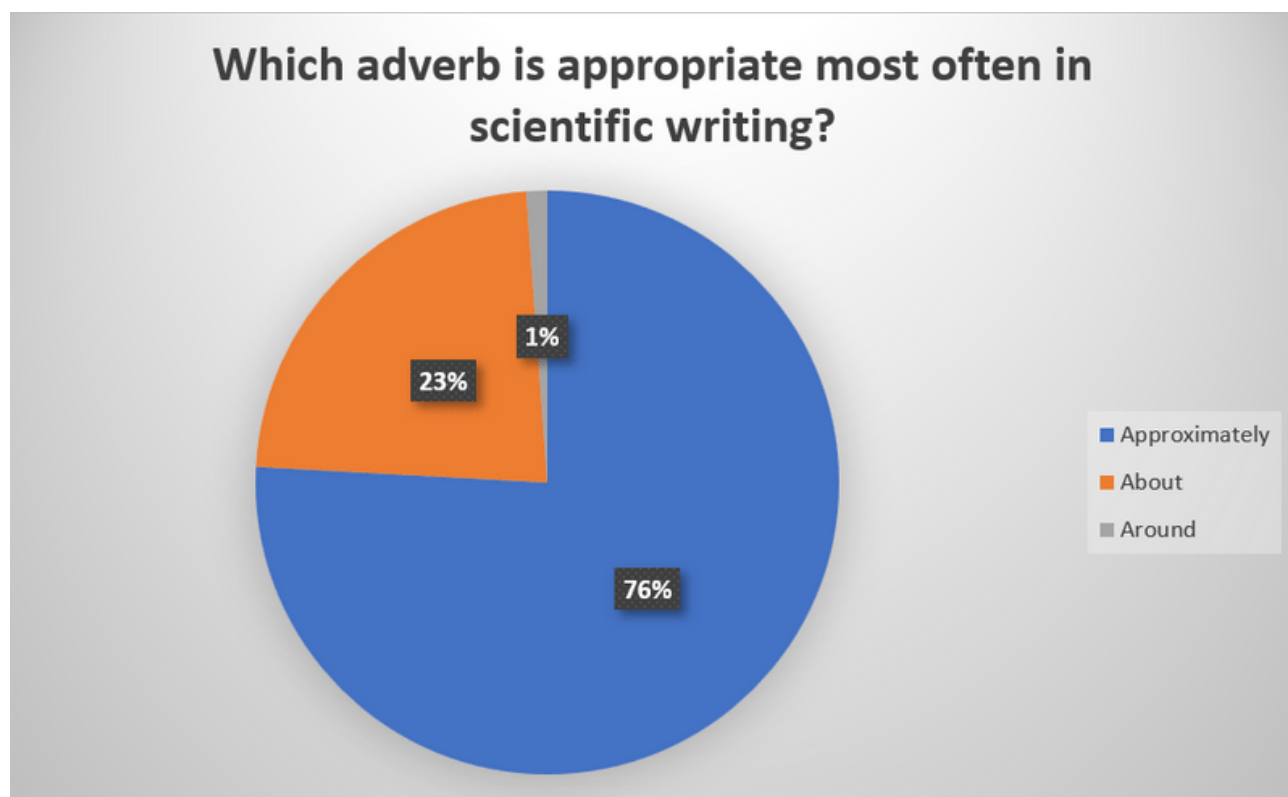


Monthly Poll Results

Last month's poll asked about adverbs. Most editors tend to follow the advice of Mark Twain and Stephen King on adverbs and adjectives, and we delete them with enthusiasm. But adverbs are useful in some situations, such as when you want to convey an inexact numeric value. We asked BELS members which adverb best conveys this idea: *approximately*, *about*, or *around*.

An overwhelming 76% chose *approximately* as the one most often appropriate in scientific writing. The *AMA Manual of Style* (11th ed.) supports this, stating in its "Correct and Preferred Usage" chapter that of the 3 adverbs, *approximately* is almost always the best choice in medical and scientific writing.

Please visit bels.org to participate in this month's poll.



New Certified Editors

Dhruv Arora, ELS
Sunjeetha Balu, ELS
Louise Burrows, ELS
Kathryn Dana, ELS
Cassandra D'souza, ELS
Jacqueline Farley, ELS
Kimberley Haulena, ELS
Jennifer Herrin, ELS
Angela Herron, ELS
Jim Hesson, ELS
David Jackson, MPH, ELS
Yejoon Koh, ELS

Mara Lambert, ELS
Anindita Mukhopadhyay, ELS
Alexis Nagel, ELS
Margaret Nelson, ELS
Sangeeta P.C., ELS
Eric Rathman, ELS
Nicole Rocco, ELS
Diana Steele Jones, ELS
Sarah Stinnissen, ELS
Michelle Trybulec, ELS
Fariba Zamani, ELS



Save the Date for the 2022 Annual Membership Meeting!

Wednesday, December 14, 2:00–3:00 p.m. CST
Virtual via Zoom
Registration will open soon.



Officers

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President

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Chair, Certification Examination Development

Thomas P. Gegeny, MS, ELS
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Chair, Membership & Marketing

Stephen Bublitz, ELS
Board Member at Large

John D. McDonald, MA, DTM, ELS
Board Member at Large

Non-voting Board Member
Sheryle Hazard, CAE
Executive Director

The Board of Editors in the Life Sciences (BELS) was founded in 1991 to evaluate the proficiency of manuscript editors in the life sciences and to award credentials similar to those obtainable in other professions.

Potential employers and clients of manuscript editors usually have no objective way to assess the proficiency of editors. For their part, editors are frustrated by the difficulty of demonstrating their ability. That is why both employers and editors so often resort to personal references or ad hoc tests, not always with satisfactory results. The need for an objective test of editorial skill has long been recognized.

To meet that need, BELS developed a process for testing and evaluating proficiency in editing in the life sciences. The Board administers two examinations—one for certification and one for diplomate status. The examinations, written by senior life-science editors assisted by testing experts, focus on the principles and practices of scientific editing in English.