

# The **B E L S** Letter

Published by the Board of Editors in the Life Sciences

March 2014 • No. 42

## A European Perspective

### Scientific and Technical Journal Editors Meet in Belgium

*By Mirjam Curno, PhD, ELS*

Thanks to the BELS Executive Council, I was able to attend a joint meeting of the European Association of Science Editors (EASE) and the International Society for Managing and Technical Editors (ISMTE). The meeting was held from September 23 to 24 in Blankenberge, which is situated on the Belgian coast, an hour-and-a-half train ride from Brussels.

Being off-season and shrouded in mist on the morning I arrived from Geneva, Switzerland, the town felt sleepy. However, the meeting was anything but, with 80 engaged delegates crowded in the main seminar room at full capacity for the keynote address by Irene Hames. Irene, a fellow council member of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), spoke eloquently of the future of peer review. She laid out current practices and challenges, and went on to highlight new initiatives in this area. Despite the criticism of peer review, including its susceptibility to bias and lack of clear standards, it is seen as critical for the reputation of science. Irene highlighted several new and innovative approaches to peer review. The publisher Frontiers allows for direct dialogue between reviewers and authors, and the journal of the European Molecular Biology Organization (EMBO) gives reviewers the opportunity to comment on each other's reports. "Open" peer review has morphed into many different meanings beyond that the reviewer's identity is known to the authors.



Members of the European Association of Science Editors and the International Society of Managing and Technical Editors broke up into small groups to discuss current trends affecting our profession.

Photo courtesy Committee on Publication Ethics

*(continued next page)*

The keynote lecture was followed by the first plenary of the meeting, presented by Cameron Neylon from *PLOS One*. Ever innovative, *PLOS One* is renowned for providing alternative metrics to its authors and readers. Cameron had the audience spellbound with his wonderful graphs showing the impact of articles beyond the traditional academic citation counts. In particular, articles such as opinion pieces and position papers tend to reach other stakeholders including program implementers and policymakers. These articles can be teased out using alternative data sources, such as tweets.

### Dealing with Difficult Authors

The delegates then had the chance to listen to Steffen Pauly from Springer talk about leadership in the editorial office, including an overview of the qualities of good managers. The meeting then went into two breakout sessions, of which I attended “How to Deal with Difficult Editors and Authors.” This session focused on awkward or unpleasant situations that may arise during our work. Participants shared their experiences handling, for example, unresponsive editors-in-chief.

During the dinner on Monday night, David Smith from *The Scholarly Kitchen* gave a guest address offering delegates a unique insight into the workings of the blog and its chefs. It was noted how little concrete evidence there often is for the continuation of certain publishing practices.

The second day kicked off with a plenary talk by Anthony Watkinson, who spoke on trust and authority in scholarly communication in light of the digital transition. Anthony gave us a first glimpse at data from a study on how scientists assign authority and trustworthiness to information sources they use in their work, in particular scholarly literature. Interestingly, the study did not find significant differences in behavior between “young” and “old” scientists. It also found only marginal importance for social media channels.

Following the plenary, one of the parallel sessions covered the launch of the new EASE handbook

for science editors, which is a great resource covering all aspects of editing including style conventions, editorial workflow, and engaging the editorial board. The other parallel session was dedicated to discussions of gender-related issues in editorial offices and in reporting of research. The Gender Policy Committee of EASE presented the first available data from its comprehensive survey into current practices and willingness to adopt policies such as a gender-balanced editorial board and ensuring considerations of sex/gender in articles. The fourth plenary was presented by Rachael Lammey, who provided an update on the newest initiatives by Cross-Ref. *(continued)*

---

### ***Plagiarism, Fraud, and Subterfuge***

## **Trending Topics in Publication Ethics**

Founded in the UK in 1997, the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) serves as a forum for discussion of ethical issues encountered by its members, who are mostly journal editors and publishers. Over the years, COPE has built a large database of case studies. The database has recently undergone an upgrade, allowing for some interesting longitudinal analyses of “trending” topics in publication ethics. The data show that, for example, authorship disputes have been high on the agenda since 1997. In contrast, issues with peer review have seen a sharp increase between 2009 and 2012, with several cases of authors masking themselves as peer reviewers, who they themselves had suggested as recommended referees. The same period saw a decrease in cases concerned with redundant or duplicate publications. Plagiarism, on the other hand, has been a common feature in case discussions since 2000, which may be due to routine screening of manuscripts by editors using plagiarism detection software, uncovering this type of misconduct regularly. For interested readers, a presentation of this analysis from the Seventh International Congress on Peer Review and Biomedical Publication is available on the COPE website, [www.publicationethics.org](http://www.publicationethics.org).

- M.C.

I had the pleasure to co-facilitate one of the final parallel sessions of the day with my fellow COPE council members Irene Hames and André van Steirteghem. Irene started off the session with a presentation on the recently reclassified cases that COPE has advised over the last 16 years, showing trends of hot topics in publication ethics (see sidebar on page 2). We then split into smaller groups with our participants and discussed a trio of ethics cases. One dealt with an authorship dispute, one involved possible redundant publication, and the third was an instance of suspected reviewer misconduct. Lively discussions focused on, for example, the role of institutions in dealing with ethical cases as well as how to better educate authors and reviewers to prevent these situations from arising.

This concluded the meeting, which proved an excellent opportunity to learn about recent developments in scholarly publishing, meet fellow editors, and share experiences. Having grown up in Belgium, I also left Blankenberge with some renewed memories of childhood summers on this part of the coast.

---

*Mirjam Curno, PhD, ELS, is journal manager at Frontiers, an open access publisher based in Switzerland, and a council member of the Committee on Publication Ethics. She traveled to Belgium with the help of an award from the BELS Executive Council (see page 5).*

## CSE Style Manual Update

By Lindsey Buscher, ELS

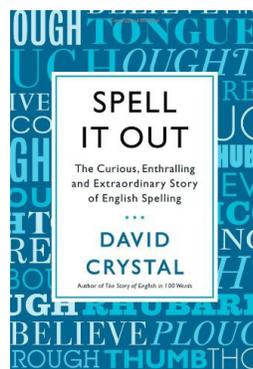
The eighth edition of the Council of Science Editors (CSE) style manual, *Scientific Style and Format*, is in its final stages of publishing and will be released at the CSE annual meeting in San Antonio, Texas, May 2–5. For the first time in CSE history, the new edition will also be available online by subscription. Stay tuned for updates on the CSE website or follow the council on LinkedIn, Facebook, or Twitter.

The following BELS members deserve a great deal of thanks for serving in official capacities on the subcommittee, as a peer reviewer, or as a proofreader: Louise R. Adam, Carolyn Brown, Jo Ann M. Eliason, Lynn Jaluvka, Devora Krischer, Kate Mason, Suzanne Meyers, David Nadziejka, R. Michelle Sauer, and Ann Tennier. Leslie Neistadt deserves special mention for additional assistance and moral support.

## BELS Members Recommend

Crystal D. *Spell It Out: The Curious, Enthralling, and Extraordinary Story of English Spelling*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press; 2012.

Reviewed by Alisa Mayor, PhD, ELS



For anyone who has struggled with superficial and ineffective English-language spelling rules, this book provides an alternate approach that focuses on history and context from the times of the Roman Empire to the present. Along the way, Crystal points out causes of the vagaries of spelling. For example, in adapting the Roman alphabet to the language of England, scribes misread the Old English letter for “th” as a “y,” which resulted in expressions such as “Ye Olde” instead of “The Olde.” William Caxton, the first major English printer, continued a custom of adding an extra “e” to words to avoid ending words with “v” or “z.” This custom resulted in words such as *have*, *give*, *groove*, and *come*. Another source of silent letters dates back to the 16th and 17th centuries. For example, the word *debt*, borrowed from the French word *dette*, supposedly came from the Latin word *debitum*. Some of the earliest printers’ assistants in England were Flemish, which resulted in words such as *ghost* from the Flemish spelling *gheest*. In reading Crystal’s book, editors can appreciate how complicated, fluid, and history-laden our language is, even if they have been working with words in English for their entire lives.

# BELS Welcomes Our Newest Members !

## **Exam #137**

**Glassboro, NJ**

**September 14, 2013**

Sarah Becker-Marrero, ELS  
Claymont, DE

Jennifer Cahill, ELS  
Turnersville, NJ

Carol Field, ELS  
Philadelphia, PA

Alanna Franchetti, ELS  
Levittown, PA

Parvathy Hariharan, MS, ELS  
Houston, TX

Julia Kessler, ELS  
Chicago, IL

Susan Kurowski, ELS  
New York, NY

Chris Lawrence, PhD, ELS  
Raleigh, NC

Patricia Malay, MSN, MA, ELS  
Philadelphia, PA

Raymond McGorry, MSBE, PT, ELS  
Charlton, MA

Christine Melton, ELS  
Kendall Park, NJ

Laura Miller, ELS  
Sparta, NJ

Ryan Moyer, ELS  
Spring City, PA

Allison Musante, ELS  
West Windsor, NJ

Kelly E. Viola, ELS  
Jacksonville, FL

Stephanie Wieland, ELS  
Thorofare, NJ

**Exam #138**  
**Seoul, South Korea**  
**October 19, 2013**

Yoon Joo Seo, ELS  
Seoul, Korea

Sun Och Yoon, PhD, ELS  
Seoul, Korea

**Exam #139**  
**Columbus, OH**  
**November 6, 2013**

Daniel Anley, MA, ELS  
Tokyo, Japan

Darlene J. Benson, RPh, ELS  
Rochester Hills, MI

Linda Blevins, RN, MS, MFA, ELS  
Springboro, OH

Amy Cook, PhD, ELS  
Portland, OR

RuthAnn Deveney, ELS  
Kennett Square, PA

Keri Jolly, MA, ELS  
Columbus, OH

Rebecca L. Julian, MS, ELS  
Baltimore, MD

Kirsten Ketner, ELS  
St Louis, MO

Sue Landry, ELS  
Milford, NJ

B. Jane Moore, MS, ELS  
Bellevue, IA

Sonia K. Morgan-Linnell, PhD, ELS  
Sugar Land, TX

Melissa Nelson, MS, ELS  
Pittsburgh, PA

Mary Nishikawa, MA, ELS  
Yokohama, Japan

Tatsuya Oyama, PhD, ELS  
Ashburn, VA

Susan Peirce, PhD, ELS  
Clemson, SC

Julie Quinn, MD, ELS  
Portland, OR

Kelly Schrank, ELS  
Canastota, NY

**Exam #140**  
**Mumbai, India**  
**December 1, 2013**

Habeeb Ibrahim Abdul Razack,  
MSc, ELS  
Bangalore, India

Jessica D'Lima, ELS  
Mumbai, India

**Welcome, cont'd.**

Mark D'souza, ELS  
Mumbai, India

Shobana Ganesan, MSc, ELS  
Mumbai, India

Sangeeta Gidwani, ELS  
Mumbai, India

Henna Jain, ELS  
Mumbai, India

Sandeep S. Kamat, MBBS, ELS  
Mumbai, India

Bandana Malhotra, MBBS, ELS  
New Delhi, India

Neha Ishwar Mirchandani, ELS  
Mumbai, India

Rincy P. Moncy, MSc, ELS  
Mumbai, India

Elenka Rodrigues, MSc, ELS  
Mumbai, India

Shivaneesh Shah, PhD, ELS  
Kochi, India

Archana Singh, MSc, ELS  
Mumbai, India

Aarthi Soundarajan, ELS  
Mumbai, India

Nishtha Srivastava, MA, ELS  
Mumbai, India

**BELS Annual Dinner Meeting**

Sunday, May 4

San Antonio, TX

in conjunction with CSE

Details will follow via email.

# Let BELS Help You

Twice each year, the Executive Council will reimburse one BELS member up to \$US 500 of the costs associated with attending, in person or online, a professional meeting, workshop, or other qualifying activity. A list of upcoming conferences is shown below. The event must be attended by July 31 of the year following receipt of the award. To be eligible, an award candidate must have an ELS or ELS(D) designation and be an active BELS member. The awardee must submit registration and other expense receipts for reimbursement within one month after the activity. Receipts received after the deadline are not eligible.

Candidates may complete and submit the interactive form on the BELS website, or download a PDF version of the form, print it out and mail it to the address given. Awardees are encouraged -- but not required -- to submit a report about the activity to *The BELS Letter*, similar to the report on the first page of this issue.

## UPCOMING CONFERENCES

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Dates (2014 unless noted)</b>	<b>Location</b>
American Medical Writers Assn.	October 8 – 11	Memphis, TN
American Society for Indexing	May 1 – 2	Charleston SC
Assn. of Earth Science Editors	October 7 – 10	Lexington, KY
Assn. of Health Care Journalists	March 27 – 30	Denver, CO
Board of Editors in Life Sciences	May 4	San Antonio, TX
Council of Science Editors	May 2 – 5	San Antonio, TX
Drug Information Association	June 15 – 19	San Diego, CA
European Assn. of Science Editors	June 13 – 15	Split, Croatia
European Medical Writers Assn.	May 13 – 17	Budapest, Hungary
Institute of Professional Editors	May 6 – 9, 2015	Canberra, Australia
Internt'l Publication Planning Assn.	July 21 – 22	Chicago, IL
Internt'l Soc Medical Publication Profs	April 7 – 9	Arlington, VA
Internat'l Soc Managing Technical Eds	October 13 – 14	London, UK
National Assn. of Science Writers	October 17 – 21	Columbus, OH
Nat'l Council Univ Research Admin	August 10 – 13	Washington, DC
Society for Technical Communication	May 18 – 21	Phoenix, AZ

# Nota Bene

Recent professional accomplishments by BELS members (listed alphabetically)

**Kim Berman, ELS**, of Sloansville, New York, is starting her third year as an adjunct assistant professor in the Department of Clinical Research and Leadership at George Washington University's School of Medicine and Health Sciences. She teaches a graduate-level course in medical writing for clinical research.

###

**Lyn Camire, MA, ELS**, of Baltimore, Maryland, served as part of this palliative team publication: Walker KA, Mayo RL, Camire LM, & Kearney CD. Effectiveness of integration of palliative medicine specialist services into the intensive care unit of a community teaching hospital. *J Palliat Med*. 2013;10:1237-1241.

###

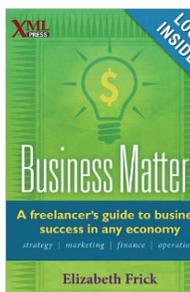
**Dave L. Chance, MA, ELS**, of Salt Lake City, Utah, served as lead editor on the following books published recently by Amirsys:

- *Diagnostic Pathology: Normal Histology* (Laura Lamps, MD, et al)
- *Diagnostic Pathology: Fetal Histology* (Jessica Comstock, MD, et al)
- *Diagnostic Pathology: Familial Cancer Syndromes* (Vania Nosé, MD, PhD, et al)
- *Diagnostic Ophthalmology* (Brian Stagg, MD, and Bala Ambati, MD, PhD, et al)
- *Diagnostic Pathology: Intraoperative Consultation* (Susan Lester, MD, PhD, et al)

**Sandra Ripley Distelhorst, ELS**, of Edmonds, Washington, edited 3 consensus statements on supportive care for breast cancer patients along with an article, "Breaking the Silence," a study of Somali women's beliefs and attitudes about breast cancer. Her AWMA national conference presentations included workshops on plagiarism and opportunities in medical writing, a roundtable on journal impact factors, and a poster comparing several editorial styles.

###

**Elizabeth (Bette) Frick, PhD, ELS**, of Boulder, Colorado, authored a book titled *Business Matters: A Freelancer's Guide to Business Success in Any Economy*, published by XMLPress in Laguna Hills, California. Her book is available on Amazon.com in ebook and paperback editions. Of 7 reviews published by February 2013, all gave the book 5 stars out of a possible 5.



###

**Sangeeta Gidwani, ELS**, of Mumbai, India, was the only junior editor nominated for best editor award at Crimson Interactive (2010-2013) and was a member of the team that won the best team award (2011-2012). During 2013, Gidwani completed a massive

open online course (MOOC) called "Writing in the Sciences," offered by Stanford University.

###

**Norman Grossblatt, ELS(D)**, of Chevy Chase, Maryland, was honored in January for 50 years of service to the National Academies in Washington, DC, where he holds the title of senior editor.

###

**Cindy Hamilton, PharmD, ELS**, of Virginia Beach, Virginia, received the Harold Swanberg Award for distinguished contributions to medical communication at the AMWA annual conference in November. Her acceptance speech, "Powerful Words," was published in the *AMWA Journal*.



###

**Donald Harting, MA, ELS**, of Downingtown, Pennsylvania, recently edited a 4-part, interactive update on acute myeloid leukemia for MCM Education in Newtown, Pennsylvania. He also successfully extended his registration as a certified continuing medical education professional (CCMEP) through 2015.

###

## **Nota Bene**, *cont'd.*

**Adelé H. Hensley, ELS**, of Greer, South Carolina, recently started a new position as a textbook author for BJU Press. She mostly writes books for the life sciences, but at the moment she is working on a new chemistry textbook.

###

**Anne (Wenzel) Hicks, ELS**, of Arlington, Virginia, has made the switch to full-time freelancing, leaving her job of the past 9 years to focus completely on her work as an author's editor and scientific and medical copy editor.

###

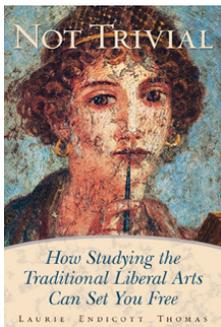
**Kathleen Loudon, ELS**, of Gurnee, Illinois, is celebrating 20 years this year as an independent medical editor-writer and as a member of BELS.

###

**Angela Roster, ELS**, of Elk Grove Village, Illinois, leads editorial services as associate director of medical writing for Pharma Start, an outsourcing firm focused on submissions, translational modeling, and clinical development for the pharmaceutical, biotechnology, and medical device industries.

###

**Laurie E. Thomas, MA, ELS**, authored a book titled *Not Trivial: How Studying the Traditional Liberal Arts Can Set You Free*, published by Freedom of Speech Publishing



in Leawood, Kansas. The 359-page book is available on Amazon.com in both paperback and Kindle editions.

As of February 2013, the book had received 8 reviews, of which 7 were for 5 stars out of 5.

###

**Mark Vrabel, AHIP, ELS**, of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, successfully renewed his Academy of Health Information Professionals credential at the distinguished level through 2018. He also received the Publication-Author Award from the Pittsburgh Chapter of the Special Libraries Association.

## **IN MEMORIAM**

BELS regrets to announce the passing of **Martha Brookes, MS, ELS(D)**, a founding member of our organization. She died February 20 in Corvallis, Oregon. Martha is remembered by friends and colleagues for her ability to combine a love of science with a love of language. Her long career included positions in the Department of Forestry at Oregon State University and with the US Forest Service. She applied her skills as a technical publications editor and shared them as a teacher of scientific writing. Martha's obituary can be read here: [www.gazettetimes.com/news/local/obituaries](http://www.gazettetimes.com/news/local/obituaries).

## **Awards from CSE**

During the 2013 Council of Science Editors (CSE) conference, distinguished service awards were presented to BELS members **Norman Grossblatt, Leslie Neistadt**, and **Caroline Simpson**. The awards were given in appreciation for their work on

*Science Editor*, CSE's membership journal.



(From left to right in photo: Leslie, Norman, and CSE award presenter, Christine Laine. Caroline was not present to receive her award.)

## **BELS VETERAN RETIRES**

**Amy Redmon-Norwood, MA, ELS**, has retired as editorial project manager for the *American Journal of Epidemiology*. Amy earned her BELS credentials in 1991, putting her among the earliest candidates to pass the exam. She was affiliated with the epidemiology journal, published by Oxford University Press on behalf of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore and sponsored by the Society for Epidemiologic Research, for 24 years and with Waverly Press/Williams & Wilkins for 11 years. Amy was a strong advocate of BELS certification. Her successor, **Rachel Box, MS, ELS**, became a member of BELS in 2011.

# Upcoming BELS Exams

<b>Date</b> (2014 unless noted)	<b>Location</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Register by</b>
April 27	Pacific Grove, California	AMWA Pacific Grove	March 30
May 3	San Antonio, Texas	CSE	April 12
June 13	Split, Croatia	EASE	May 23
September 27	Seoul, South Korea	none	September 6
October 8	Memphis, Tennessee	AMWA	September 17

## Thank You, Proctors

The following people deserve our gratitude for serving as volunteer exam proctors:

Charlotte Baptista, Greg Cuca, Janice Deal, Jane Krauhs, Anselmo Martyres, Leslie Neistadt, Janet Novak, Lori Potraffke, Barbara Schwedel, Rick Weisburd, Mary Ann Wojcik

New volunteer proctors are welcome and should contact Leslie Neistadt at [neistadt@slu.edu](mailto:neistadt@slu.edu).