

# The Independent Perspective

Newsletter of the Consulting and Independent Contracting Professional Interest Committee



## CIC PIC Membership Hits 500

CIC PIC recently welcomed its 500th member, Betty J. Champagne of Gaithersberg, Maryland.

According to CIC PIC Manager Christopher Juillet, the committee has experienced steady growth during its first 18 months in operation.

"When we formed the PIC in January of 1989, we had about 130 members, pretty good to start out with, but nowhere near what we have now," Juillet said. "At last year's ITCC in Chicago, I reported a membership tally of 168 committee members. By the end of this year's conference, we had more than 480, nearly three times the count just one year ago."

Asked when he expects PIC membership to level off, Juillet was cautiously optimistic. "I'd like to think that we could attract as many as 2000 members, a more realistic number is probably between 1200 and 1500. It's hard to say. STC headquarters recently reported that 16 percent of new members identify themselves as contractors or consultants, and there must be at least that many more STC members who are interested in independent consulting as a career option."

Concluding his comments, Juillet said "Of course, in the final analysis, the numbers are not the most important aspect of this effort. Sure, it's great to have a big group, but you can still do big things with a small, dedicated group. As long as CIC PIC keeps on doing good work and having fun, we'll enjoy continued success." ♦

## PIC Party Big Success

Another 1990 ITCC first was the first CIC PIC Wine and Cheese Reception. Coordinated by PIC member Cynthia Kolnick, the party provided a social hour for over 100 PIC members and friends to gather, meet, swap cards and generally have a great time.

Thanks, Cindy, for the great job you did pulling this together. Thanks also to the San Francisco Chapter for letting us use their Hospitality Suite for the CIC PIC party. ♦

## PIC Planning Meeting Draws 65

The second annual CIC PIC Planning Session, held this year at the 1990 ITCC in Santa Clara, was a huge success. More than 65 PIC members and friends attended to help chart the committee's course for the next two years.

Committee manager Christopher Juillet led the discussion group, reporting on the status of current PIC projects. The group also reviewed the PIC's goals and made plans for the coming year. Among the committee's new projects are these:

- Networking Directory, a resource list - Centa Uhalde (coordinator), Leigh Hlavaty and Yashoda Singh.
- U.S. Assignment Opportunities, a clearinghouse - Kevin Wilson (coordinator) and Marek Buchiewicz.
- Electronic Communication, a computerized bulletin board - Jack Godwin (coordinator), Susan Bagby, Cezar Ornatowski and Rob Reynolds.
- Getting Started Kit - Lisa Wendt (coordinator), Judy Francis, Susan Bagby, Cezar Ornatowski, David Gardner and Gail Mellor.
- Conference, a consulting progression at the 1991 ITCC - Tallin Ensley (coordinator) and Joyce Woods.
- Contracts Kit - Cynthia Kolnick (coordinator) and Louis Costanzo.

Ongoing PIC projects coordinators are:

- Marek Buchiewicz - International Assignment Opportunities

*see Planning Meeting, page 3*

*in this issue:*

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Getting It Write               | 2 |
| Project Coordinators           | 2 |
| Perspectives                   | 3 |
| From the Editor                | 3 |
| Fall CIC PIC Conference        |   |
| Call for Presenters            | 4 |
| CCF Presents First Consultants |   |
| Progression                    | 4 |
| ITCC Presents Wide             |   |
| Variety of Topics              | 4 |

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Fall CIC PIC Conference        |   |
| Call for Presenters            | 4 |
| CCF Presents First Consultants |   |
| Progression                    | 4 |
| ITCC Presents Wide             |   |
| Variety of Topics              | 4 |

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*see Planning Meeting, page 3*

- Conference, a consulting progression

## Getting It Write

by Joan Regan

If you want to make your business correspondence less arduous and more relaxed, learn and practice these "writer's commandments." Your approach to writing will change from exasperation to confidence.

**Know Your Audience --** Always consider your readers. Think of them as you write. This is similar to what actors do on stage: they talk to the audience, not at them.

Make certain that you understand the material you have in front of you before you put pen to paper (or hands to keyboard). Review your notes and be sure they make sense.

While it is not always possible to know exactly what your reader expects to see in a report or memo, take a few moments to ask some project-related questions. Make a few notes about your reader's "need to know" with the other content-related information you record. The time you spend on this will save you more time later when you are on deadline.

**Outline, Outline, Outline --** What good is a cake mix and all the utensils when you do not know how to "put it all together?" Outlining is just like cooking; blend all the ingredients together.

Imagine trying to install electrical wiring for a new building with the wrong set of drawings (or with no plan at all). You would likely short-circuit the entire structure, or worse, some of the occupants.

After you have visited the project site, jot your notes on small index cards, one point to a card. Note only pertinent facts, such as the project name, project contact name and telephone, and your observations. Index cards are good because you can carry them in a pocket; they force you to be concise. You can reorganize them easily, easing your outlining task.

**Be Precise and Brief --** Get to the point in as few words as possible.

**Do Not be a Technical Showoff --** Simplify your writing. Do not clutter your copy with lots of technical terms. Use industry-related phrases (that is, "jargon") only when absolutely necessary, then be sure to explain such terms.

*see Getting It Write, page 3*

## C&IC PIC Project Coordinators

### Anthology

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### Assignment Opportunities (U.S.)

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208-336-1674 (b)

### Getting Started Kit

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## Perspectives

by Christopher Juillet, CIC PIC  
Manager

There's truth to the old saw "no good deed goes unpunished."

Just when I was certain that I had handed this newsletter off completely to Charley McWha, she said "Of course, you'll have a column for me each issue, right?"

Well, maybe not every single issue, Charley. I mean, I'm not sure how much I have to say about whatever I'd say it about. I can say this, though, right now. I couldn't be more pleased with or proud of the response from STC members, and STC leaders, in support of the Consulting and Independent Contracting Professional Interest Committee.

Three years ago, the idea of such a PIC within STC was just that: an idea. Two years ago, a group met at the 1988 ITCC in Philadelphia to discuss the potential of forming such a PIC. Last year at this time, we had been chartered for about six months and already had around 200 members. Now, we have over 500 members, 32 area coordinators, 13 project coordinators, a budget, and most importantly, a future within our Society.

In our world, success comes easily to a precious (though not necessarily lucky) few. For most of us, though, success comes as the result of wild dreams and our ability to craft our own future from the resources at hand. It is a trail blazed with passion, hard work, and excellence.

The success of CIC PIC is your success. It is your passion that drives the need and desire for such an organization; your hard work that gives our dreams and ideas form and substance; your excellence that makes the effort we all give worth the giving.

Mostly, though, it is your belief that this CIC PIC can make a difference, within STC, within our profession, within our lives, and, perhaps even, within ourselves, that will offer each of us the most important benefit we can hope to attain: knowing that each of us is doing what is right and best and just for ourselves. ♦

Do you have a new address or telephone number? Let us know by sending it to:

C&IC PIC  
Post Box 1725  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

*from Getting It Write, page 2*

**Do Not Leave Unanswered Questions --** After you have composed your report or memo, read through it, paragraph by paragraph. Be certain that each makes sense, that each addresses a specific topic, and that each leads logically to the next. Mostly, be sure that, taken together, they address your readers' needs and answer their questions. Refer to your index card notes -- they will help keep you and your writing in focus.

**Edit, Edit, Edit -- Show no mercy!** After you have reviewed your text to ensure you have included all of the "facts," become a "word surgeon." Let your pen be the scalpel that cuts away all the dead wood.

Learn these well; practice them every day in every writing task. They will help you become a better, more organized and clearer writer.

Joan Regan is an STC member and recent new member to C&IC PIC. She holds an M.S. degree in Financial, Technical and Medical Journalism and has written for the engineering, computer, technical, medical, management and architectural industries.

## From the Editor

As editor I thought I'd have to write a lengthy column. I wrestled with what to say; I worried about how to start and how to end--all for naught. The news took all my space! So, happy reading and please let me hear from you. My address is listed on page 2.

Charley McWha  
Editor

*from Planning Meeting, page 1*

- Anita Leininger - Consulting Anthology
- Mary Chris McManus - Publicity
- Charley McWha - Newsletter
- Rob Reynolds - Membership

Each of the project coordinators will need help from all of us to make their efforts a success. Don't be the last to call and offer your assistance. (See box on page 2 for project coordinators' addresses.) ♦

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Editor - Charley McWha  
Consulting Editor -  
Christopher Juillet

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October issue--September 1

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## Fall CIC PIC Conference Call for Presenters

by Tallin Ensley, Conference  
Coordinator

Planning continues for this fall's  
Consulting and Independent  
Contracting Conference (CICC)  
(renamed from the earlier *Conference of  
Independence*).

The date is set: Saturday, October 6th,  
1990. The location is set: Oak Ridge,  
Tennessee, in conjunction with the East  
Tennessee chapter's Practical  
Conference on Communication  
(PCOC). The general topic is set: issues  
of import to consultants and  
independent contractors.

All that remains is to determine specific  
presentations that the conference will  
offer, and that's where you come in. If  
you have a topic you would like to  
present, take a minute to complete the  
Call for Presenters that accompanies  
this issue of *The Independent Perspective*.  
To make this conference really work,  
we'll need some first rate topics and  
presenters. We're looking forward to

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## CCF Presents First Consultants Progression

This year's ITCC included the first ever  
Consultants Progression.

Managed by PIC member Tallin Ensley,  
the one-hour progression featured  
discussions on a variety of consulting-  
related topics, each led by an expert in  
the field. The list of discussion leaders  
included such familiar names as Brian  
McCaleb, Tom Underwood, Louis  
Costanzo, Richard Weiss, Tallin Ensley,  
Joyce Sharer, Joyce Woods, Renee  
Larson and Marj Borchard.

This year's Consultants Progression was  
presented by the Communication  
Consultants Forum (CCF) a special  
interest group of the Twin Cities  
Chapter of STC.

Because of the outstanding success of  
the Twin Cities CCF group's  
progression, a similar progression is  
planned for next year's ITCC in New  
York City. ◆

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## ITCC Provided a Wide Variety of Topics

This year's International Technical  
Communication Conference (ITCC)  
held in Santa Clara, California, was like  
a candy store for technical  
communicators from all walks of the  
profession, direct employees and  
independent consultants, alike.

With an advance registration of nearly  
2700, the conference offered attendees  
four days of non-stop technical sessions,  
tours and social events. The only trouble  
this reporter witnessed was watching the  
attendees trying to decide which of the  
16 to 18 presentations to attend during  
any one time slot.

For independent consultants, the  
offerings were the best yet seen at an  
ITCC. As many as 25 presenters spoke  
at over 10 presentations. Most IC  
presentations were standing room only.

Hats off to Davlyn Jones, Conference  
Planning Manager, Peggy Cathcart,  
Conference Program Manager, and the  
many dedicated STC members on their  
respective teams. Well done! ◆

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*The Independent Perspective*

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