



Editorial

Jack D. Gaskill, Editor

Editorial No. 62 (Postdeadline)

Here it is, you lucky people—my final editorial. Lest this statement be misinterpreted, I mean only to indicate that it is my **final** editorial, which I presume will be considered a welcome relief by most long-suffering readers of this column (as many of you already know, Brian Thompson officially becomes Editor of *Optical Engineering* on 1 January 1991). I had been attempting to compose this editorial for a long time, but I just couldn't come up with anything. Then, at the recent OPTCON '90 meeting in Boston, I happened to be chatting with my long-time friend B. J. Chang, whose complimentary words encouraged me to include some comments that I had nearly decided to omit. As a result, the editorial is in three parts.

Part I: Some old subjects revisited

During the past five and one-half years, my editorial subjects have ranged from a relatively mundane topic having to do with poorly prepared illustrations in manuscripts submitted to the Journal, all the way to the heated controversy regarding red squirrels and the construction of an astrophysical observatory on Mt. Graham. In each case I attempted to indicate my own views (thoughtful and correct as they are), but I also tried to present the opposing views (muddled and incorrect though they might have been) whenever I received letters expressing such views. Some of these subjects had little or nothing to do with optics, as was pointed out to me on a number of occasions, but my attitude from the beginning of my editorship has been that the Editor can write about anything he or she chooses to write about (almost). Besides, the remainder of each issue has almost always been entirely about optics or optics-related topics, and several of my colleagues have told me that they probably would have skipped my editorials had I written only about optics.

Regarding the revisiting of old subjects, I

- (a) *Am still in favor of:* manuscripts that have well-prepared illustrations; preserving the red squirrels **and** constructing the telescopes on Mt. Graham; changing "optics" to "photonics" as the name of the field; improving the quality of the Journal; reducing the time it takes for a manuscript to be refereed and published; etc.
- (b) *Am still opposed to:* trucks crashing into unsuspecting cyclists; conclusion jumping; Congressional investigations into "fraud in science"; Congressional conclusion jumping; Congress; etc.
- (c) *Am still unhappy about:* the length of time it takes for a manuscript to be published; referees who don't respond promptly to review requests; Editors who don't respond promptly to queries by authors; Congress; etc.
- (d) *Still can't figure out:* how to speed up responses from delinquent referees; how to speed up the handling of manuscripts by delinquent Editors; what can be done about Congress; etc.

- (e) *Am now undecided about:* the validity of the apparent correlation between plunges of the Dow Jones industrial average and the dates of the annual meetings of the Optical Society of America; name changes for societies; etc.

Part II: The defeat of apple pie

This subject is not really new—it is just about a new version of conclusion jumping. I am still opposed to conclusion jumping, whatever its form, so I will once again climb onto my soap box. The unfortunate interpretation of the results of a recent election in one of the United States provides the fodder for this discussion; however, I will change the scenario to avoid the appearance of a political diatribe.

The voters of that state were recently faced with a decision regarding the designation of an official state pie. Two separate groups were in favor of naming apple pie as the official pie, and each group succeeded in having a proposition placed on the election ballot: one proposed that apple pie with cheese be adopted as the official pie, whereas the other proposed that apple pie without cheese be adopted. Because these were separate propositions, a "yes" or "no" vote was permitted on each as prescribed by the election laws of the state. If one or both of them were to receive more "yes" votes than "no" votes, apple pie would become the official state pie—with or without cheese, as the numbers might dictate. If, on the other hand, both propositions were to receive more "no" votes than "yes" votes, apple pie would be defeated. Clearly, voters who favored apple pie with cheese would vote "yes" on the first proposition and "no" on the second, those who preferred apple pie without cheese would vote "no" on the first and "yes" on the second, and those who, for any reason, did not favor apple pie could and would vote "no" on both propositions.

In this slightly altered version of a true story, the pre-election polls indicated that well over half the citizens of this state favored designating apple pie as the official pie. This was not surprising because, after all, apple pie is right up there with motherhood and the flag. To compound matters, however, just two days before the election, the commissioner of the NFL (Numbskulls for Loquacity), an organization headquartered far away, threatened to move some of its future activities to other states if apple pie were not adopted as the official pie. Whether or not that threat caused any votes to be changed is uncertain, but it is known that 40% of those who actually cast ballots voted for apple pie with cheese, 19% voted for apple pie without cheese and only 41% voted against apple pie—with or without cheese. Included in the 41% group were those who disliked apples, those who disliked pie, those who disliked apple pie, those who thought pie was too expensive, those who were concerned about pesticide residue on apples, and those who simply didn't think that there should be any official state pie (plus the usual one-issue voters, racists, and bigots found in every electorate).

As you have probably guessed, both propositions were defeated—the first by a vote of 51% to 49% and the second by a vote of 75% to 25%. Consequently, even though 59% of those who cast ballots voted for apple pie, apple pie was defeated and the citizens of that state were branded "racists and bigots" by the conclusion-jumping loquacious numbskulls and other nonthinkers. Whew! Perhaps one day soon apple pie will become the official pie of that state; in the

meantime, however, maybe laws will be passed prohibiting all groups of numbskulls from reaping any financial rewards in the state until they reverse their silly, self-righteous stand. Which reminds me—if at some time in the future I ever have an opportunity to watch the "news" coverage of an event such as this on a particular television network (to be left unnamed), I think I'd Rather not. End of discussion on conclusion jumping.

Part III: My years as Editor

As I look back on these past five and one-half years, I have very positive feelings. To begin with, I feel extremely fortunate that the opportunity to be the Editor of *Optical Engineering* was offered to me, and I am glad that I took advantage of that opportunity. In the SPIE publications staff, I have had the privilege of working with as fine a group of individuals as can possibly be imagined, and I would like to acknowledge a few of them by name: Eric Pepper and Dixie Cheek, managing editors; Regina Wender, editorial staff; and, Marybeth Manning, director of publications. Their assistance, suggestions, and patience have been both invaluable and gratifying, and I want them to know how much I appreciate their efforts. In addition, my interactions with many others of the SPIE staff during my editorship have been most rewarding; at the risk of leaving someone out, I would like to let Elsie Heinrick, Jan Huston, Agnete Yaver, Terry Montonye, Cheri Jerome, Janice Gaines, Kathleen Robinson, Rich Donnelly, Sue Davis, Corbin Ball, Scott Walker, Sharon Kirkpatrick, and, of course, Joe Yaver know how much their encouragement and friendship have meant to me.

I also wish to acknowledge the contributions of those who chaired the Publications Committee from time to time during my tenure: Bill Rhodes, George Reynolds (deceased), Hank Carter, and Ted Saito. In addition, the unsung and often unnoticed efforts of the three Book Review Editors—Joe Horner, Paul Yoder, and Steve Gustafson—must be recognized. To the authors, without whom there would be

no Journal, as well as the referees who review the manuscripts, must of course go the lion's share of the thanks; their professionalism, interest in the field, and dedication to excellence provide the ingredients necessary to make the Journal successful. And we must not overlook the enthusiasm and dedication of all the Guest Editors of the special issues, which collectively have been the backbone of the Journal. There have been too many Guest Editors to list here, but I want them to know how important their contributions have been.

I would also like to thank Bob Shannon, Brenda Perry, Pat Gransie, and Didi Lawson of the Optical Sciences Center for their support during my years as Editor. Finally, I want to acknowledge the efforts of Irv Spiro, assistant editor, who has identified many potential papers over the past several years, as well as the efforts of my current associate editor, Bonnie Bittner. Bonnie has performed admirably, under very difficult circumstances, since replacing Martha Stockton during the summer of 1989. As many of you will remember, Martha died of cancer on 16 November 1989 after serving as associate editor for over four years. As I have written before, Martha was responsible for many improvements of the journal during her tenure.

As the duties of the Editor were passed from John DeVelis to John Caulfield and then on to me, I now pass them on to Brian Thompson. We can all rest assured that the Journal is in good hands. Brian, I wish you success!

Notice to Contributors

Beginning Jan. 1, 1991, contributed manuscripts should be sent to the new editor, Dr. Brian J. Thompson, *Optical Engineering*, 692 Mount Hope Ave., Rochester, NY 14620. Manuscripts invited for Special Issue sections of the journal should continue to be sent to the appropriate Guest Editor.

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January 1991

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June 1991

Optical Fiber Reliability

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August 1991

X-Ray/EUV Optics

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March 1992

Optics in Poland

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