



**Newsletter October 2014**

**Issue 2**

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## From the Editor

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Welcome to the second issue of the ABC newsletter!

The highlight of this issue is the ABC annual conference, which is just around the corner, on October 22-26, in Philadelphia. This promises to be an exciting and productive event with many interesting presentations, roundtables and discussions. Opportunities also abound to get to know the host city better, whether you are going for the first time, or you are regular visitors. Watch out also for the chance to win a new watch!

This issue also contains some information on the Mighty Writers initiative - a non-profit that helps Philadelphia youth - member news and announcements of new books published by ABC members.

In addition to news published here, please remember to also regularly check the ABC web site for announcements and up-to-date information on various issues relevant to business communicators. As you know, the website includes details on on-going research grants, such as the C. R. Anderson Research Grants and the Center for Intercultural Dialogue Micro-Grants, notification of upcoming conferences, and advertised positions ([ABC website](#) )

As usual, I welcome any contributions you may have for future issues as well as your suggestions for making the newsletter an outstanding forum for ABC information. Don't hesitate to drop me a line at [news-editor@businesscommunication.org](mailto:news-editor@businesscommunication.org)

I look forward to seeing you in person in Philadelphia.



Sky Marsen  
News Editor of ABC

## From the President

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### There's Nothing Like Being There

#### Kathy Rentz, ABC President

If you're an ABC member, you know that our organization offers many benefits besides its conferences: two stimulating journals, research grants, instructional materials, numerous awards, a student writing contest, access to a wide network of bcomm professionals, interesting SIGs, leadership opportunities, etc., etc. These non-conference benefits are easily worth the price of a membership.

But for me, the biggest benefit of all is the opportunity to attend meetings of professionals who speak my language, care about what I care about, and inspire me to do my best work.

ABC conferences are truly wonderful events. The annual meeting offers a giant array of opportunities to share one's expertise, learn from others, and simply relax, eat (very well!), and socialize with colleagues from around the world. The regional meetings provide similar benefits, as well as opportunities to make connections with those nearby.

But ABC conferences have another benefit: They're like homecomings for our discipline. Within my department (English) and even within my program within that department (professional writing), I tend to be a loner by virtue of my focus on business communication. And I know that for many of you, a feeling of isolation is caused by our field's being considered a "fringe" area in your department or college or even by the fact that you're the only bcomm teacher on staff. At an ABC meeting, you are among your people! It's an environment where the challenge and importance of effective bcomm teaching, research, and consulting are already respected. Here, you don't have to justify what you do; you can simply learn how to do it better, help others do the same, and build a network that will keep supporting you when the conference ends.



Professor Kathryn Rentz is the President of ABC. She is a Professor in the Department of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Cincinnati.

Our [Philly meeting](#) is coming up, and the scheduled activities look fantastic. If at all possible, attend. And if you've either (a) reserved a room but would be willing to share it—and the cost—with another attendee or (b) haven't reserved a room but would like to share one with someone, please let our fabulous office manager, Marilyn Buerkens ([abcoffice@businesscommunication.org](mailto:abcoffice@businesscommunication.org)) know. She might be able to put you in touch with a potential roommate. Travel money is tight, but the rooms at the Hyatt are large! Let's enable as many people as possible to experience this year's annual meeting. If you're a bcommer, you've really gotta be there.

## ABC News

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### Annual Conference, October 22-26

Our annual conference is quickly approaching! Wednesday offers two pre-conference workshops plus two post-conference workshops. Our new format includes research roundtables, networking roundtables, lightning round discussions, and panels. Individual 15-minute papers were organized into groups of 3 for 50-minute sessions. Overall, the conference offers a dynamic selection of topics.

How important is time? Our clients and students expect punctuality from consultants and instructors. Time is also an important factor to ensure a well-organized conference. Presenters need to begin their sessions on time and ensure they end the session on time. The next presenter in that room appreciates being allowed to begin the next presentation on time. To reinforce the element of time and to add a bit of spice to the schedule, two Lucien Piccard watches (one for a woman and one for a man) will be given as door prizes at the end of the conference — around noon on Saturday. Winners must be present.

As you welcome new ABC members and renew your friendships with colleagues, remember that ABC is dedicated to teaching, research, and service. Consider how you can become involved and enrich your membership.

We look forward to greeting you in Philadelphia!  
Maryann & Andy Wysor  
ABC Conference Co-Chairs



## Support the Next Generation of “Mighty Writers”: Donate to the Silent Auction

In the midst of preparing for presentations and booking hotels at Penn’s Landing for the [79th Annual Association for Business Communication Conference](#), it’s important to also pause and reflect on the host city to which we will soon flock. Not only does Philadelphia boast such historical jewels as The Liberty Bell and culinary feasts like the gooey Philly cheesesteak, it is also a place of rich stories and texts—a place where some of our nation’s most significant documents were born. In fact, some of the first great American communicators signed the Declaration of Independence at the city’s Independence Hall. Given this lineage, we are thrilled to be headed to Philadelphia to further our mission of “advancing business communication research, education, and practice.”

As part of this mission, we must also look beyond the walls of our conference and recognize that literacy and the ability to communicate effectively are not inherent gifts for many of Philadelphia’s citizens. Approximately 40 percent of our host city’s students drop out of high school and about half of all working-age adults are functionally illiterate. In light of this literacy gap, we have a timely opportunity to support communication competency by partnering with a [local nonprofit](#).

During the October 22-26 event, ABC and C.R. Anderson Research Fund are honored to support **Mighty Writers**, an organization that helps Philadelphia youth (age 7 to 17) “think and write with clarity so they can achieve success at school, at work and in life.” This 501(c)(3) organization’s 300 volunteers (writers, teachers, journalists) mentor and teach 2,000 kids annually. Mighty Writers offers a daily afterschool academy, weekend and nighttime writing classes, SAT prep courses, and mentorships to give these students a leg up as communicators. Best of all, all these services are free to youth!

### How is ABC Getting Involved?

To support the mission of Mighty Writers, we are giving back to our host city by hosting a Silent Auction at our annual conference. During the conference, bidding will begin Thursday, October 23 at 10:00 am and will end Friday, October 24 at 11:10 am. All of the proceeds will go directly to Mighty Writers. You can



Britt Hoskins is a Master's of English student at Virginia Tech with a focus in technical writing and rhetoric. She also teaches freshman composition and contracts as a communications professional in the technology sector. This year Britt is partnering with Becky Morrison and Susan Schanne to coordinate the ABC silent auction.



support this organization by bidding at the conference as well as donating items for the auction.

### **There is Still Time to Donate!**

Donations can include anything from gift certificates, to wine and food baskets, to getaways, to electronics, to swag from your organization or university. If you are interested in supporting this essential organization, please contact Becky Morrison ([beckymor@vt.edu](mailto:beckymor@vt.edu)) to confirm your donation pledge, its value, description, your contact information, organizational affiliation, pick-up/drop-off details, etc. Donations are tax-deductible and a great way to increase the visibility of your business or institution among conference attendees.



We look forward to seeing you in Philly!

## **Business Practices Theme Section for *Business and Professional Communication* Quarterly- Call for Papers**

### **The Role of Public Speaking in Workplace Communication**

Our workplaces are saturated with verbal discourse. Business communication textbooks generally offer advice concerning the more structured of these discourses, especially formal presentations and meetings. However, there are other informal instances where the human voice is an important communication tool: Cubicle-to-cubicle gabble, informal discussions between supervisors and the supervised, ad hoc conversations in hallways (and, of course, elevators), telephone calls, teleconferences, and meetings with customers, students, or clients.

Business practitioners value speech as a critical communication channel. Membership in Toastmasters International continues to climb, as do the number of enrollees in Dale Carnegie Effective Communication courses. Many corporations offer in-house training for employees seeking to improve their speaking skills. As educators in the field of business communication, we also offer valuable speech instruction.

Papers for this theme section of *BPCQ* will deal with the many ways by which speech influences workplace environments—and also how those environments influence speech. Case studies, historical

analyses, ethnographic treatments, rhetorical analyses, quantitative studies, or other appropriate research methodologies are acceptable. Please use APA (Sixth Edition) guidelines for citation and reference methodology.

**Length:** Approximately 15 – 25 pages (double spaced)

**Deadline for manuscript submission:** April 1, 2015

To submit your manuscript for Focus on Business Practices:

1. Go to <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/bcq> If you do not already have an account, you will need to create one (see the link on webpage).
2. Then go to the Author Center to begin the submission process. You will be asked for "manuscript type," and select Focus On column from the dropdown menu. There are a number of other steps to follow to complete the submission process, including the uploading of your file.
3. You will receive a confirmation email once you have successfully submitted the manuscript.

If you have questions please contact the Business Practices Section Editor, Sam DeKay, at [shdekay@earthlink.net](mailto:shdekay@earthlink.net)

## Member News

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### On the Occasion of the Retirement of Dr. Debbie DuFrene

*Remarks presented at her retirement celebration by Tim Clipson*

A bitter sweet event took place on the campus of Stephen F. Austin State University this summer in Nacogdoches, Texas. Dr. Debbie DuFrene officially retired, this was certainly bitter (as she will be dearly missed) for SFASU and the many colleagues who have worked with Debbie since she arrived in 1988 and certainly sweet for Debbie as she makes this significant transition in her life.

Grocho Marks said: "The one thing I always wanted to do before I quit was to retire" Debbie certainly never quit at anything and will continue to serve as an example of what a persistent hard worker looks like. The mascot of SFASU is the Lumberjack and it has been said: "Lumberjacks never retire, they just pine away." It has also been said: "Academians never retire they just lose their faculties."

Debbie has had a distinguished career as an educator and author. With 7 years at Nicholls State, 1 year at University of New Orleans, 2 years at McNeese State and 26 years at Stephen F. Austin State University. A total of 36 years where within her 18 years as Professor of Business Communication at SFASU she also served 3 years as Chair of the General Business Department and 5 years as the Associate Dean in the College of Business.

Debbie also served on the ABC Board of Directors and Vice President for Southwest ABC. She authored or co-authored 90 academic articles and multiple editions of 3 books and received numerous research awards.



Debbie DuFrene

Here are a few more thoughts as they relate to Debbie's lifelong service to education:

Debbie survived, even outlived several Deans. She has been a great example and role model to new and old professors. She is highly respected, not just at SFASU, but internationally, not just as an educator, but for she is.

I have great memories of working on several research projects with her; greater memories of enjoying times and dinners at meetings in Montreal, Houston, Chicago, Dallas, Albuquerque, New Orleans, and Hawaii. As busy as she was, she always had time to listen without making one feel as they were in her way. Debbie made a positive difference and when you walked away from her you always felt good. Her determination and talent served as a catalyst for the College of Business at SFASU in its maintenance and renewal of AACSB accreditation.

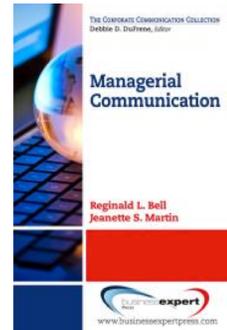
The following words describe Debbie: Faith, Family, Friends, Fun, Fearless, Resolute, Resilient, Responsible, Respected, Integrity, Patient, Fortitude, Dedicated, Intelligent, Consistent, and Positive. Debbie has been an encouraging and supportive colleague and faithful and trusted friend. We trust that Debbie will let her mind and soul find peace in her retirement as we wish for her relaxed and happy days. As Dr. Seuss would say: "Today is your day, your mountain is waiting, so get on your way." Debbie's footprints are here to stay.

For Debbie, there are now no reasons for clocks, reports or meetings. We know that Debbie is retiring from work, not life. Billy Graham said: God has a plan for your retirement." Even during retirement, we won't be surprised to hear about the positive difference Debbie will continue to make.

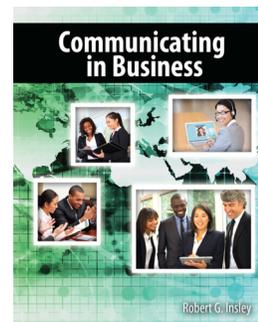
Postscript: Debbie will continue to live in Nacogdoches, Texas, where she will continue to enjoy her family and friends. She has been named Professor Emeritus at SFASU, so her faculty and friends will continue to have opportunity to visit with her. Additionally, we trust that Debbie will continue her long service and membership to ABC.

## Members' Books

**Managerial Communication (Business Expert Press, 2014) by Reginald L. Bell and Jeanette S. Martin.** The book is especially useful for the mid-career working adults enrolled in MBA programs or managers who want to study on their own, since they will find many of the examples in the book relatable to their experiences. The materials will also serve as guideposts for professors doing research and teaching in the area. The communication situations covered are from many different business functional areas. [Book website](#)



**Communicating in Business (Kendall Hunt, 2014) by Robert G. Insley.** Seamlessly fusing a book with accompanying website resources, this is a comprehensive, introductory business communication textbook that serves university, junior college, and community college students from a variety of disciplines. While written for business students and corporate/government personnel, the book is a practical, easy-to-read and comprehend, valuable resource to non-business majors who sense a need for some business training. [Book website](#)



**Business Communication: In Person, In Print, Online (9<sup>th</sup> edition, Cengage, 2014) by Amy Newman.** The book offers a realistic approach to communication in today's organizations. It covers the most important business communication concepts in detail and thoroughly integrates social media and other communication technologies. The author's accompanying [blog](#) provides timely and relevant posts that correlate to each chapter of the text. [Book website](#)



**Corporate Argumentation in Takeover Bids (John Benjamns, 2014) by Rudi Palmieri.** This volume systematically investigates the role of argumentation in takeover bids. The announcement of these financial proposals triggers an argumentative situation, in which both the economic desirability and the social acceptability of the deal become argumentative issues for different classes of stakeholders (shareholders, employees, customers, etc.). The study focuses on the strategic maneuvers that corporate directors deploy in order to persuade their audiences while complying with precise regulatory requirements, designed to allow shareholders to make reasonable decisions. [Book website](#)