Editorial

Jack D. Gaskill, Editor

"Has Martha's Code Been Broken? What Code?"

One of the primary duties Martha Stockton has as Associate Editor of *Optical Engineering* is to correspond with individuals I have identified as prospective referees for manuscripts we have received. She initially inquires about their availability and willingness to serve as referees and then, depending on their response, follows up in some fashion. In some cases this follow-up simply consists of a thank-you letter for a speedy and thorough review; more often, however, the follow-up activity takes the form of a reminder letter or call and, in extreme cases, it even turns into what can best be described as a search-and-rescue mission.

She recently sent me a letter she had just received from a delinquent prospect who claims that he has broken her code for search-and-rescue letters; by applying various code-breaking schemes to certain portions of Martha's letter, he purports, he has discovered their true meaning. Rather than allow myself to become the subject of some sort of editorial ethics investigation or, worse, be accused of an attempted cover-up, I have decided to come clean and leak some of the contents of the alleged code-breaker's letter. I have used my prerogative as Editor to alter the writer's text just a bit to protect his identity, but I assure you that my edited version conveys his thoughts unambiguously.

In the table below, Martha's original wording is found in the column on the left and the purported decoding key is on the right.

Martha's original words (paraphrased)

A very long time ago, I wrote to you concerning your availability to serve as a referee. I am embarrassed that I didn't inquire earlier as to whether you ever received it.

Since we have not heard from you, we have assumed that you did not have time to do the review. Because we feel it is unfair to the authors to delay this paper any longer, we have decided to accept it with only one review.

You may discard the copy of the paper that you have.

Purported decoding key (paraphrased)

What in heaven's name is wrong with you? Why haven't you responded? Could the pony have died on the journey between St. Joe and Sacramento? Could acid rain have destroyed the parchment?

We're not going to wait any longer, you clown! Because of your procrastination, we had to make an exception to our two-referee rule. Thanks for nothing! May you spend eternity reading Gaskill's editorials.

Take the paper and place it in a location where the solar irradiance is zero.

When I asked Martha to comment on the accuracy of the above decoding key, she denied even its existence—let alone its accuracy. Then she mumbled some psychological gobble-de-gook about guilty consciences, defense mechanisms, wearing the shoe that fits, etc. Because she seemed a bit touchy, and because I didn't understand what she was driving at, I decided to let the whole matter drop.

Future Special Issue

Call for Papers

July 1990

Electro-Optical Displays

Guest Editor

Dr. Mohammad A. Karim
University of Dayton
Department of Electrical Engineering
Center for Electro-Optics
300 College Park
Dayton, OH 45469-0001
513/229-3611

The July 1990 special issue of *Optical Engineering* will be devoted to the subject of electro-optical displays, both systems and processing. Topics to be covered include

helmet-mounted displays, night vision, liquid-crystal displays, intensified tubes, holographic displays, head-up displays, CRT displays, CCD displays, image degradation in displays, image restoration in displays, human factors in vision perception, and related topics. Within this range of topics, the intent is to provide a broad overview of the current state of the art and the trends for future technology development. Application areas include research, defense, and industry. Authors are encouraged to submit manuscripts for consideration on any of the above or related topics to the Guest Editor by November 15, 1989.

Complete editorial schedule
on p. 780

Call for Papers for November 1990
Special Issue on p. 725