

Optical Engineering

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A Picture (and Biography) is Worth 1000 Words

Ronald G. Driggers





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According to Wikipedia (so it must be true), the phrase “A picture is worth a thousand words” is attributed to an article by Fred R. Barnard in the trade journal *Printers’ Ink* in 1921. He went on to say later that he attributed it to a Chinese proverb so people would take it seriously.

I’ve always liked the pictures and biographies of authors in *Optical Engineering* because it lets me get to know the more personal side of my colleagues, see what they look like, and review their background and major accomplishments. We’ve even had authors send in pictures of themselves in the infrared so that you could see their bright faces in heat rather than in reflectivity. We’ve had authors send in pictures of themselves on motorcycles, in airplanes, in front of sports cars, and as author groups.

Some of the biographies are pretty funny and interesting too. I remember one (and I can’t find it) that went something like:

“John Doe has just completed his doctoral degree at the University of Somewhereville and is so burnt out that he has no further research interests. He plans to spend the rest of his life riding and working on his motorcycle.”

A close friend of mine wrote one for an *Optical Engineering* paper in 1991:

“Jeffrey S. Sanders received his BSEE in 1987 from Memphis State University. During 1987 and 1988 he worked as an electro-optics engineer for Martin Marietta Electronic Systems Division on the LANTIRN program. In 1988 he returned to Memphis State to pursue a PhD in engineering. In between donning armor and hitting his friends with sticks

(Society for Creative Anachronism), and a few cases of tequila, he somehow managed to complete an MS in 1990. His current research interests include visual perception of infrared imagery and multispectral imaging with frequency modulated reticles.”

Most of the pictures and biographies are more conservative, but they are still interesting to read and help us know our colleagues better. The pictures and biographies have been a nice personal touch to the journal, but beginning in 2014, SPIE will be standardizing all of the journals to be more uniform. The increasing preference for digital formats, reduction in print quantities (and increase in costs), increased number of papers published per issue, and lengthy article page counts are all influencing factors in the decision to discontinue inclusion of author photographs in SPIE journals. Going forward, biographies will be limited to 75 words, so you will have to do like Thomas Jefferson and spend the time to make your 75 words count. This will all lead to an increased efficiency and a shorter publication turnaround time.

So, why am I writing about this in an editorial? First, I wanted to inform you of the change. But, more importantly, I would like all of you to spend a little time with your online SPIE profile. Do you know that you likely already have one? SPIE profiles rank high in search engine results, often above Facebook and LinkedIn. Profiles automatically link to SPIE conference participation and publications, and you can add a biography statement, upload a photograph, and list any other publications and professional interests. All papers published on the SPIE Digital Library include links on the authors’ names that take you to their online profiles. Please spend some time creating or improving your SPIE profile footprint by going to <http://spie.org/app/profiles/default.aspx>. You can use your profile to tell others more about you. I am still interested in learning about all of you, and I think most people are curious about others working in their field.

Like most print and computer technology progress, we are moving more to digital media, and photos/biographies are no exception. So, how about a new comparison? An interesting SPIE profile is worth a handshake!

Ronald G. Driggers
Editor