

# Byword

## Is there a value to your work?

With increasing budget cuts and economic pressures, more and more communication professionals are being pressured to prove their value. Some have even attempted to count everything from column inches to direct response calls to prove their worth. So how do we measure the seemingly immeasurable?

Come to the Thursday, Oct. 7 IABC-Tucson meeting and you will get the answer.

The value of communications can be measured, says Lorenzo Sierra, ABC, a communications consultant for AON, a Fortune 500 human resources consulting firm. Sierra will share an emerging definition of communication value, one that emphasizes organizational outcomes over counting crazes and spectacular media. Instead, he focuses on working in collaboration with the rest of the organization to define the qualitative, quantitative, and fiscal value of communication.

Guests at the luncheon

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## Technology drives changes in how we communicate, says KOLD TV news director

When KOLD 13 News Director Michelle Germano, IABC-Tucson's guest speaker at the Sept. 2 luncheon, receives an increase in her budget, she'll spend it on new technology for her newsroom rather than hiring a new staff member.

"Technology determines what are viewers want to see," Germano explains.

Germano's target viewers, 18-54, are more likely to have technology ranging from blackberries to high-speed Internet connections. This age group has developed a disdain for a linear construction of a news story as a result.

Reporters are now forced to write in a non-linear mode to accommodate for this technology. A story written by a reporter is likely to be seen on the web and an email news alert in addition to a television segment.

"I often tell reporters to keep in mind that they're writing for multiple distribution outlets," said Germano.

Non-linear construction of a news story has also forced reporters to learn more multimedia technology.

"We're soon going to see the



**Michelle Germano**

emergence of repographers – reporters who can both write and shoot a story," said Germano. "Learning editorial and video integration systems will also be important."

As journalism becomes more dependent on technology, Germano expects the following trends to develop: improving news capability of digital mobile devices, hyper-localism or substations of a local affiliate, an end to linear news stories, and more news on demand.

# Communications at home and at work

**By Kathy Hippensteel**

I've always wondered why — having worked in the communications field for several years — that there are times when it seems impossible to perform a simple task like communicating with my husband. After being together for more than 30 years, one would think that we could just look at each other and know what the other is thinking. Well we've tried that and trust me it usually always messes things up. Of course we laugh about our communication bloopers (most of the time), but it reminds me just how difficult it is to effectively communicate — at work, at home, in front of a group, through the

media — the list goes on. Then there's IABC (International Association of Business Communicators), and if we bring it closer to home, there's the IABC-Tucson Chapter.

Most of us join IABC for professional reasons, including networking, professional development seminars, monthly luncheons, awards programs, chapter newsletter and resources from international. If it can help you communicate better with your spouse, then more power to you. The important point is that IABC provides you some benefit.

As we transition into a new year with a new board of directors, the consensus is to provide

great professional development workshops, great topics and speakers for our monthly luncheons and increase our membership. John Brown, President Elect and Professional Development Chair, has lined up Lorenzo Sierra, ABC and communications consultant for AON, who will provide valuable information on *What it's Worth: Measuring the Value of Communication*.

Finally, thank you to everyone who has volunteered to serve on the board and in committees. We have great things planned for the benefit of our members this year and it couldn't be done without everyone's help. Here's to another great year!

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### Byword

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# China trip is a memorable learning and teaching experience for Krista Neis

**By Krista Neis**

In July I spent three weeks teaching ESL at Huazhong University of Science and Technology, a school of more than 50,000, located in central China.

The students, most 19 or 20 years old, had studied English for eight years, but never with a native speaker. To graduate they had to pass a language proficiency test. The school regularly offers a conversational English intensive course; a Tucson foundation, Teach for Friendship, is one of several organizations from English-speaking countries that provide course instructors for this top-10 university.

We 25 Tucsonans lived in

Wuhan, a city of seven million, lying in reclaimed marshland at the confluence of the Han and the Yangtze rivers. (It was not a dry heat!) Wuhan's web site describes the city as "Where the first shot of the Revolution of 1911 overthrew the rule of 2,000 years of feudalism in China" and "used to be the political, military and cultural center of the whole country."

The students are proud of their Chinese heritage and enthusiastic about their developing country. They want to know what's going on in America. We talked about families, slang, politics, food, campus life, values, education, religion; we also sang and partied together. As only children these kids grow up with

no opposite sex sibling to relate to – food for thought.

With filtered news they'd never heard of the Tiananmen Square protest or its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary. My request to school officials to tour a local TV station and newspaper was met with silence.

In three weeks the students and I went from understanding 50-60 percent of what we said to one another to 85 -95 percent, according to my unscientific and unproven poll. The cultural learning curve was steep - Who is this crazy grandma?

Their laughter, stories, notes, mementos, emails, photos, and our adventures together –linguistic, imaginary and real – have a place in my heart forever.

## Lorenzo Sierra is October speaker

Continued from page 1

are also invited to share their horror and success stories with Sierra, a leading communicator who has helped major companies strategically align human resources and communications objectives with organizational goals.

The meeting will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. at McMahon's Steakhouse, on the southwest corner of Ft. Lowell and Swan. Cost is \$18 for members, \$25 for guests and members without reservations and \$14 for students. You can reserve your place by emailing Mimi Gibson at [mimiv@trico.coop](mailto:mimiv@trico.coop), or calling her at 744-2944, Ext. 1363. You can also pay online by going to [www.iabctucson.com](http://www.iabctucson.com). Reservation deadline is Monday, Oct. 4.

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# Bring in a member, rake in some cash

**By Elena Acoba  
Membership Chair**

Save yourself some money. Help colleagues strengthen their professional lives. Enliven our chapter activities.

This win-win-win situation comes from our membership referral program, which continues this year with a new feature.

Here's how it works: You refer someone to join the chapter. That person joins. You get a \$25 rebate the next time you renew your membership.

And now you can qualify for as many rebates as you can. So if

10 of your referrals join within a year, you can get a rebate of \$250.

This summer members Steve Reidy and Marci TeBockhorst became the first to receive rebates in the year-old program when Michelle Rau and John Patterson joined.

Awaiting rebates when they renew their memberships are Elena Acoba, **Susan Guerrero, Pat Toth** and former member **Sally Valenzuela** for bringing into the fold, respectively, **Doug Jenness, Pat Toth, Kitty Aughey and Marsha Baker.**

Marsha has offered to help create a new special interest group for creative writing.

New perspectives and energy keep our chapter growing and thriving, which means better programs and benefits for everyone.

To refer a prospective member, have that person contact Membership Chair Elena Acoba, 742-1979 or [acoba@dakotacom.net](mailto:acoba@dakotacom.net) (have the person put "IABC" in the subject line), or give Elena the name and contact information of the prospective member and she'll do the rest.

## Workshop to teach "do-it-yourself" video techniques

An October workshop led by Family Legacy Video president (and IABC-Tucson immediate past president) Steve Pender will teach amateur family video enthusiasts professional tips and techniques for making exciting and memorable home videos.

"Lights, camera, action: How to produce your own family videos" will take attendees through every step of the video creation process, from initial planning, to taping family interviews, events, photos and memorabilia and planning for the final

edit. Lighting, interview and editing techniques will be demonstrated.

The workshop is set for Saturday, Oct. 14, from 9 a.m. to noon at the office of the Arizona Small Business Administration, 4811 E. Grant Road, Suite #261. The office is at Crossroads Festival, at the northeast corner of Grant and Swan. Enter the double doors just east of T-Mobile, under the "OFFICES" sign.

Family Legacy Video's mission is to provide products and services that help families capture

their precious family stories, histories and memories on video. Pender, a veteran video writer, editor, director and producer, is the author of the *Family Legacy Video™ Producer's Guide*, a CD-ROM-based guide that steps users through the video production process, and a condensed version of the CD-ROM entitled the *Family Legacy Video™ Producer's e-Guide*. Pender's company has also just released a collection of royalty-free music, entitled *Family Legacy Video™ Producer's Music, Vol. 1: Generations*, that was created specifically for amateur home video productions.

Admission to the workshop costs \$10. However, attendees who purchase the CD-ROM guide receive free admission to the workshop. Workshop admissions and CD-ROM guides can be purchased at the Family Legacy Video Web site: [www.familylegacyvideo.com](http://www.familylegacyvideo.com). Complete workshop details are available at the site.

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# Big C a big hit despite the heat

**By Pat Toth**

More was going on at the Big C Mixer, held at Sakura West the evening of July 20, than met the eye. Behind the scenes representatives of five professional communications organizations spent more than four months making the fourth annual Big C this summer's hottest networking event.

The result? In the mid-summer heat of July the Big C attracted an amazing 175 attendees from throughout the greater Tucson area.

Attendees enjoyed a venue that was too hot, too loud and too crowded. In short they had a great time. Why? Because of everything that went right. The appetizers were delicious; the door prizes were fabulous; pre-event online registration worked beautifully; on-site registration went smoothly; and best of all people did a lot of really great networking.

The members of this year's planning committee were **Alaina Levine**, Public Relations Society of America; **Brenda Huettner**, Society for Technical Communication; **Pearl Ford-Fyffe**, Tucson

Advertising Federation; **Cynthia Klein**, Tucson American Marketing Association; and **Pat Toth**, IABC.

The Planning Committee met for the first time in early April, which didn't leave a lot of time to plan a summer Big C event. By the end of the meeting each member left with a "to do" list. Of greatest importance, we needed to find a venue that could hold the Big C's ever-growing number of attendees, and for a reasonable cost. Once we found the location, all other decisions — such as

setting a date and the cost, were discussed through email or, occasionally, by phone.

A week before the event, the planning committee met at Sakura West to discuss last-minute details. They met again a week after the Big C to review what could have been done better. By then the planning committee had meshed into an effective team. The professionalism and teamwork were exceptional, and volunteering to help with the Big C was a very rewarding experience.



## Michelle Rau found her calling at an early age

Michelle Rau has been drawing, writing and self-publishing since she was a child. She took lots of writing and art courses in school; she even worked for the school paper. At the University of Oregon she discovered “zines,” independent, self-published magazines, and made them the subject of her graduate work in journalism. Her interest eventu-

ally led her to publish her own zine. Michelle worked for several independent magazines in San Francisco before moving to Tucson. Since her arrival in Tucson, she has worked at Intuit, providing technical and administrative support for many different departments before taking her current position as a Communications Specialist. She’s happy to be

back to writing and publishing again.

### **What is your communications philosophy?**

Communication is like oxygen – it’s everywhere. You can’t control it; you can only try to manage or influence it. We have to balance very subjective and personal preferences with business objectives and technical realities. This can be difficult, but incredibly rewarding when we succeed (or even get close to succeeding). Communication is a very personal thing – so we’re not going to please all of the people all of the time.

### **What is your current position?**

I’m a communication specialist at Intuit, Inc. I’m a communications channel between various functional groups such as Operations and the sales agents who are on the phone.

### **Did you always want to do this? How did you get into it?**

I always thought that I would get into independent publishing or have a career in the creative arts. I knew that this position entailed writing, publishing for a business unit and some creative work. So when it became available in my department, I applied immediately. I’ve been doing this for three and a half years.

### **What are your greatest personal and professional achievements?**

At a former university job, I once took a small series of publications that were out of print and turned them into a profit-making venture. One personal achieve-

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# Member profile

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ment I take pride in is that I've learned how to do most of the maintenance work on my cars.

## How do you spend your free time outside of work? What are your non-writing interests?

Being a gear head, I spend a lot of time driving and making upgrades to my three 4x4s. When I'm not on four wheels I'm generally bicycling on two wheels or hiking. I love to travel, read and watch movies. My creative pursuits include photography, self-publishing, writing, collages, cartoons, mixed media and jewelry-making. I also enjoy working on my house.

## Where do you see yourself ten years from now?

I'll probably be living in Nevada or the Pacific Northwest and working as a writer and/or consultant in some capacity. I'll be traveling a lot more, getting better at photography, spending more time with animals, and doing more creative work.

## Where have you traveled/lived outside of Tucson? Any place you would recommend to your fellow IABC/Tucson members?

I've traveled all over the West Coast and the Southwest; I've lived in the Pacific Northwest and Colorado. I've also lived in France for 9 months on an exchange program. Generally, I like the more relaxed atmosphere and wide-open landscapes of the "left coast."

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*You don't get harmony when everybody sings the same note.*

—Doug Floyd

## How do you keep up with professional trends and development?

Fortunately, everyone at Intuit has goals, objectives and a development plan for each fiscal year, so professional development is part of my job. Intuit offers employees professional development courses to build various skills such as decision making and leading change. I'm a voracious (and omnivorous) reader with very eclectic tastes. I subscribe to a variety of magazines, surf the Internet a lot and subscribe to several e-mail lists. I wish I had more time to keep up on professional and industry trends though. That's one of my goals for this coming fiscal year.

## What have you gained from being a member in IABC?

What an amazing diversity and wealth of knowledge we as a chapter have! There's a great deal more to the field of communication than I thought there was. Using the tools and resources on the IABC website, especially around building communication plans, has helped me plan for rollouts, launches and programs.

## Any secrets you want to share?

Use categories and rules to manage your MS Outlook Inbox – I couldn't work if I didn't do this. Also, my favorite ways to find a fresh idea are looking through catalogs, doing image searches on Google, and window-shopping.

## Mark Your Calendar:

### Wednesday October 20

IABC Tucson will host an evening networking session at Tucson Botanical Gardens. Join your fellow chapter members for an evening of food, drinks and music.

*Watch your email and [www.iabctucson.com](http://www.iabctucson.com) for more information*



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