

TECH comments

The newsletter of the Southeastern Michigan chapter of the Society for Technical Communication

March 1997

Volume 26, Issue 10

President's Message:

The most often heard comment from my fellow STC members over the past two years as president goes something like "I've meant to do more with STC but my schedule won't allow it." While I don't control your schedule, I can't help thinking, "do you?"

We are surrounded by self-help programs, business planning seminars, electronic organizers, and project management software. Do they work? The answer is *it's up to you*. A central theme of all these organizational tips and tricks is to *prioritize*.

Can you anticipate where I'm coming from on this? If *you* control your schedule instead of letting it control you, a more productive, more efficient *you* is the result. We often refer jokingly about the ability to manage our clients or to manage our bosses. In reality, you do need to exert some control over these elements, rather than be pulled from one emergency to another. The net result is you end up with more of a most precious commodity, time.

Prioritize

by Jim Anastasiow, President STC/SM

Another precious commodity is money. Stop a minute and think if STC has ever impacted your income in some way; a job through our Employment Referral Service, networking at a monthly meeting resulting in work for hire, a regional or national conference providing important job leads, or an idea stemming from an article you read in one of our publications tying into an ongoing project? I hope the answer is yes.

Now, if STC helps you make money, shouldn't involvement in our organization be higher on your list of priorities?

Prioritize one night a month to network with other professionals. *Prioritize* a few hours each month to join one of our committees and possibly learn some new skills, pick up some job contacts, or just meet some new people.

Opportunity just keeps on knocking folks, with the international conference on our doorstep this year—what an opportunity! What other STC activities might you consider placing higher on your priorities list? The conference is a great experience if

you have never attended or have not attended recently. And what an alluring destination . . . Toronto, a truly international city with many exciting things to do, whatever your interests: the arts, theater, science, history, culture, or food (my favorite). Not to mention that the conference is a great way to keep up on current trends that affect our industry. Don't be a reactive follower, anticipate trends and be a leader in our field by staying current.

So, my somewhat scattered message to you this month is I'm not buying the excuse that you don't have time to involve yourself in the professional organization that helps you make money (and which helps you enjoy your free time). What's more, I think you need to consider more involvement, not less, including attending our international conference in Toronto. I hope to see you there. □

Web Opportunity

The STC Web Committee has an immediate opening for an experienced form programmer and a section editor for a new "About the STC" section.

The form programmer will create a registration form, a volunteer form, and other forms as determined necessary by the Web Committee.

The section editor will gather information on predetermined topics, and at minimum, provide text files with the compiled information to the Web Committee Chair. If desired, the section editor may create the HTML files and upload them to the STC server.

For information, contact Web Committee Chair, Catherine Juon at 313.944.0358 or dynamicdtp@pobox.com. □

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Welcome, New Members!

We welcome the following new members who have joined our chapter:

Beth Ambaruch

Kjirsten K. J. Blander

Kristen Lee Lorenz

We also welcome the following member who has transferred into our chapter:

Ann Marie LaBara

**STC/SM 1996-1997 Board of Directors
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

President

Jim Anastasiow
810.443.1540
m2morgan@mail.oeonline.com

Vice President

Martha Swidersky
313.995.7994
marthas@ncms.org

Treasurer

Karen Gilbert
313.995.6187
gilbert@ann-arbor.applicon.com

Secretary

Elizabeth Mack (Interim)
810.349.7854
lm@mack.agn.net

Past President

John Brus
810.986.0162
jbrus@cmsa.gmr.com

COMMITTEE MANAGERS

Directory

Jim Anastasiow (interim)
(see President above)

Employment Referral Service

Frances Mueller Roach
313.764.5211
fmroach@umich.edu

Membership

Eileen Wilkinson
313.663.9494
ewtw@aol.com

Newsletter

Jill Bornemeier
313.332.5571
jbornemeier@nei.com

Nominations

Ruth Blough
810.305.9362
73472.627@compuserve.com

Program Director

Martha Swidersky
(see Vice President above)

Publicity

Shirley Willard
810.737.7300 X-8039
shirley_willard@compuware.com

Professional Liaison

Ginny Collins
810.546.0754
ginny_collins@compuserve.com

Web Master

Catherine M. Juon
313.944.0358
cjuon@pobox.com

STC/SM Information/Web Page

313.332.9371
<http://stc.org/region4/smc>

Director-Sponsor Message:

Register Now for 44th Annual Conference

*by Nancy Hoffman, Region 4 Director-Sponsor
313.663.8118, 313.663.8778 (fax), creekscom@aol.com*

Registration materials are now in our hands. This year's conference promises to be even more rewarding than previous STC conferences. The preliminary program advertises some excellent technical programs, featured speakers, and post-conference seminars and workshops. There are also some very interesting special tours that both conference attendees and their guests can choose from.

Toronto: Next Door to Region 4

Yes, this is a first for STC. We're holding our first conference outside the United States. Our Canadian STC members are thrilled to welcome us to Toronto, Ontario.

And Toronto is right next door to those of us who are in Region 4! In fact, it's a relatively easy drive for many of us in the region, a simple flight or train ride for others.

Arrive a Little Early for STC Leadership Day

Leadership day is from 8:30 a.m. till 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, May 11. First, the STC Mall, including a continental breakfast and a series of displays about STC committee work, is very informative for current as well as up-and-coming STC leaders. The Chapter Leaders' Workshop and Society Leaders' Workshop that follow are extremely helpful for new as well as

existing chapter and society leaders. It's an excellent opportunity for you to meet with other members who are helping to lead our society and learn some important tips about how to do your STC job more efficiently and effectively. All past, present, and future leaders are welcome to attend.

Region 4 Reception

And, on Monday evening, May 12, you'll want to meet with other STC members from Region 4 at our regional reception. It will be held at the Sheraton Centre Hotel from 7:00 till 9:00 p.m. (The room name and exact location of our reception will be printed in the final program.) We'll have complimentary wine, soft drinks, and snacks. Please stop by to see us!

So, what are you waiting for? Send in your conference registration form today! □

Receive Chapter Notices via Email

We'd like to use email as an alternative method to announce upcoming program meetings, holiday gatherings, and other STC-related business. This will reduce our printing and mailing costs. If you'd like to receive chapter notices by email, please send your complete name and email address to fmroach@umich.edu.

ERS January Statistics

	1/97	1/96	
Contract	3	12	
Full-time	3	2	
Total	6	14	58% change

Employment Booth to Provide Information at Conference

by Roger E. Masse, Manager, STC Employment Information Committee

The STC will sponsor an Employment Information Booth at the 44th Annual Conference in Toronto. Books containing résumés from job seekers and job postings from employers will be available during the hours the exposition area is open. Whether you come to the conference or not, your résumé or job posting can be included in the Employment Information Booth.

Résumé Books

Résumés from job seekers will be organized into books for the following regions:

Region 1:

Connecticut, France, Maine, Massachusetts, New Brunswick, New Hampshire, New York, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Quebec, Rhode Island, Sweden, United Kingdom, Vermont

Region 2:

Delaware, Israel, Maryland, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Washington DC, West Virginia

Region 3:

Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Tennessee

Region 4:

Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio

Region 5:

Arizona, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas

Region 6:

Iowa, Kansas, Manitoba, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin

Region 7:

Alaska, Alberta, British Columbia, Colorado, Idaho, Japan, Montana, Oregon, Saskatchewan, Utah, Washington, Wyoming

Region 8:

California, Hawaii, Nevada, New Zealand, Republic of China, Singapore

To include your résumé in the books:

1. Print your résumé on *one* sheet of paper, double-sided if you need more than one page. If you send résumés printed on more than one sheet of paper, only the first page will be placed in the books.

2. On the top right-hand corner of the résumé, note regions where you would consider accepting employment. Use numbers from the above list of regions.
3. Make six copies of your résumé for each region. For example, if you would like your résumé included in two regions, make twelve copies, six for each region.
4. Place six copies in a plastic sheet protector that is punched for three-hole notebooks.
5. Mail the résumé packets to the address below *by April 18*. (Or, bring your packet to the Employment Information Booth at the conference.)

Job Postings

The Employment Information Booth offers employers an excellent opportunity to find qualified professionals for current or future job openings.

To have a job opening posted:

1. Print your job posting on *one* sheet of paper, preferably one side only. If a representative of your company will be at the conference to conduct interviews, state that information clearly on the job posting.
2. Make 100 copies of the opening for posting in the employment booth and for having copies available for job seekers.
3. Send copies to the address below *by April 18*. (Or bring copies to the Employment Information Booth when the exposition area first opens.)

Job seekers can obtain your job posting at the Employment Information Booth or have postings mailed to them after the conference.

Employment Information Booth Services

The Employment Information Booth will be self-service. The résumé books will be available for employers. Job openings will be posted, and copies will be available for job seekers. A message board will also be available for job seekers and employers to contact one another. Volunteers will monitor the booth to replenish popular job postings or résumés.

Job Postings After the Conference

If you want copies of job postings mailed to you after the conference, please send a stamped (\$3.00 in U.S. postage), self-addressed, 8½ x 11 envelope to the address below:

Roger E. Masse, Manager
STC Employment Information Committee
3750 Benton Street
Santa Clara, CA 95051

Elections are Coming!

Ballots for the STC-SM 1997/98 election will be mailed to members the last week in March and the election will be closed on April 26. Results will be announced in early May 1997.

If you are interested in running for office, please contact Ruth Blough, Nominations Committee Manager, immediately at 810.305.9362.

Current Job Postings

Permanent Positions:

1/31/97

Technical editor for new Web-based journal. Exciting opportunities for candidate versed in web technology and publication business practices. Must understand potential of information technology, be comfortable presenting ideas to corporate managers, and willing to work hard to help get project off to successful start. Involves cutting-edge Intranet applications and chance to influence design of information system for major international corporation.

Duties and responsibilities:

- > Act as liaison to editorial board and authors on issues involving production schedules and digital publication procedures for digital and paper versions of publication.
- > Provide technical oversight and troubleshooting for record conversion, metadata input, indexing, and system maintenance for digital publication.
- > Participate with RLIS and Ford systems groups in developing derivative products from journal content.
- > Promote technical journal.
- > Act as liaison between Ford and publisher of quarterly review journal.

Qualifications required:

- > Extensive experience with digital publication and Web; significant experience designing Web-based systems; strong knowledge of digital publication issues and technologies.
- > Significant experience or detailed knowledge of traditional serial publication business practices.
- > Masters in information science or equivalent academic or work experience. In-depth understanding of issues and approaches to information management, and human factors involved in designing interfaces for information retrieval.

- > Excellent written/verbal communication skills and commitment to teamwork.

Qualifications desired:

- > Education or experience in engineering.
- > Experience supervising staff.

Excellent benefits and competitive salary. Must be U.S. citizen or have visa status permitting full-time employment under U.S. immigration law.

Send résumé and salary requirements; reference position, *Ford Technical Journal*.

Robert Schwarzwaldner
Ford Motor Company, Research Library & Information Services
P.O. Box 1602 RM/MD 1153 SRL
Dearborn, MI 48121
Fax: 313.323.7936

2/5/97

Entry-level technical writer needed to research technical information, and to write/edit user documentation for FANUC Robotics products and systems. Writer will function as contributing member of one or more product/system development teams.

Responsibilities:

- > Review technical specifications and data.
- > Operate equipment (robots, system controls, etc.) to obtain information and to validate documentation.
- > Interview users, customers, and subject-matter experts.

Qualifications required:

- > PC literacy.
- > BS/BA in technical writing, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, related field, or equivalent experience.
- > Excellent communication skills.

Qualifications desired:

- > Knowledge of Interleaf software.
- > Experience writing online documentation (HTML, Web, Internet)
- > Illustration experience.

- > Experience developing software user manuals, electronic service manuals, or mechanical repair and assembly manuals.

FANUC Robotics, Inc.
2000 South Adams Rd.
Auburn Hills, MI 48326
Fax: 810.377.7363

2/10/97

Sales support writer/consultant with healthcare, software, or other related experience for The MEDSTAT Group's Managed Care & Insurance Division. MEDSTAT specializes in strategic application of health information and offers knowledge-based systems, consultation and research for improving quality and total value of healthcare.

Responsibilities:

- > Develop winning product and service proposals.
- > Manage proposal process, from solution development through final document production.
- > Create effective presentations and sales documents.
- > Write and edit marketing literature.

Requirements:

- > Minimum four-year degree.
- > Excellent writing skills.
- > Strong communication skills.
- > Ability to work effectively in fast-paced team environment.
- > Proficiency with word processing and presentation software.

Competitive salary and benefits as well as opportunities for career development. Forward résumé, writing sample, and cover letter addressing qualifications and salary requirements to:

The MEDSTAT Group
Dept. DN998
P.O. Box 973
Ann Arbor, MI 48106
Fax: 313.913.3680

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2/10/97

Technical writer in Novi/Northville area. Mid-level position responsible for development and maintenance of custom procedural manuals for business accounting software, development and maintenance of educational materials for same, management of reference manuals from third-party software company, and assistance with writing and editing company newsletter.

Requirements:

- > Three to five years experience writing software procedure manuals. Excellent written/verbal communication skills.
- > Organizational and planning skills.
- > Advanced MS Word for Windows skills.
- > Experience with business accounting software.

JoAnn Keosaian
 Computer Decisions International, Inc.
 22260 Haggerty Road, Ste. 300
 Northville, Michigan 48167-8969
 810.347.4600
 Fax: 810.347.1567
 Email: webmail@cdi-usa.com

2/11/97

Automotive tech writers and electrical systems tech writers needed.

EDS, a world leader in applying information technology, offers exposure to multiple customers, environments, and emerging technologies, has openings in Pontiac, Warren, Troy, Farmington Hills, and Flint.

Responsibilities include creating automotive service procedures, including system description, troubleshooting and remove-and-replace procedures; developing schematics, circuit operations, and module-based diagnostics for automotive systems; providing service-readiness engineering support for vehicle components.

Requirements:

- > BS/BA in automotive technology, engineering, technical communication, or equivalent experience.
- > Auto dealership experience and knowledge of automotive systems preferred.

Excellent salary and benefits as well as opportunity for advancement. Mail, fax, or email your resume to:

EDS Staffing
 Dept. 72-5847
 700 Tower Drive
 Troy, MI 48098
 Fax: 810.265.4501
 Email: staffing@eds.com
 Web site: <http://www.eds.com>

2/17/97

Tech writer - duties include formatting and editing text to create software reference and user manuals for simulation software running on UNIX workstations and PCs. Daily interaction with program developers, application engineers, and product managers. Must have excellent written, verbal, and comprehension skills. Desktop publishing, page layout, and graphics manipulation required. Documents are published in hard copy and online. Must be detail-oriented, able to apply existing format structure to new material, eager to investigate questionable information, and appropriately apply broad/general instructions to a myriad of situations.

Requirements:

- > Degree in journalism, computer science, English, or technical writing.
- > Working knowledge of Interleaf and Cyberleaf, Windows 95, NT, or UNIX.
- > Two years high-level word processing or desktop publishing.

Send résumé and salary requirements to:

Human Resources
 Deneb Robotics, Inc.
 P.O. Box 214687
 Auburn Hills, MI 48321-4687
 Email: hr@deneb.com
 Phone: 810.377.6900
 Fax: 810.377.8125

2/18/97

TPI Technologies is a technical documentation firm, specializing in technical publications and video presentations for the automotive industry. Our products include vehicle owners manuals, service manuals, competitive comparison and labor time studies, and technical training programs.

We are seeking automotive technical documentation developers and technicians with training or experience in one or more of the following areas:

- > Technical writing.
- > Editing and proofreading.
- > Automotive diagnosis and repair.
- > Service information and labor time study development.

BS/BA or equivalent experience. Send résumé and brief cover letter to:

TPI Technologies
 Technical Recruiting
 21866 Schmemman
 Warren, MI 48089-3288
 Fax: 810.772.7620
 No phone calls please.

2/21/97

Integral Solutions, Inc. (ISI) a—small software company providing Advanced Product Quality Planning software to manufacturing companies—seeks user support manager to be responsible for the following activities:

- > Instruction
- > Training development
- > Technical support
- > Software documentation
- > Internal training
- > Internal technical support

Salary range: \$30,000-40,000

Cindy Barrager
 Integral Solutions, Inc.
 520 E. 11 Mile Rd.
 Royal Oak, MI 48067-2741
 Phone: 810.543.6040 X-210
 Fax: 810.543.2882
 Email: isisales@rust.net
 Web site: <http://www.integsolutions.com/>

Contract Positions:

2/10/97

Gale Research seeks freelance writers for a variety of business projects. Please send résumé and writing sample to:

Linda Pugliese
 c/o Gale Research
 645 Griswold
 Suite 835
 Detroit, MI 48226
 Email: Linda_Pugliese@gale.com

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2/17/97

Freelance transcriptionist needed to transcribe taped interviews to word processing format. The work may vary from a few tapes over a few weeks to several tapes in one week and will be intermittent over four or five months.

Theresa Welsh
810.548.7643
Email tmwelsh@aol.com.

2/19/97

Environmental consulting firm needs freelance editor to edit proposals and environmental reports, varying in length from 10 to 120 pages. Previous experience with environmental documents a plus, but not required. May also need to conduct a brown-bag session for employees on writing and editing.

Send résumé and hourly rate to:

Mary Grappin
The Traverse Group
3772 Plaza Drive
Ann Arbor, MI 48108
Email: traverse@ix.netcom.com
Fax: 313-747-9229

Note: If you know of employers seeking technical writers or editors for contract, freelance, or permanent positions, please have them contact our ERS manager. This service is free to employers and benefits our fellow STC members who are seeking new job opportunities. □

Submitting Articles

Do you have valuable information to share with other technical communicators? Write it down in article format! The STC/SM *TECH comments* staff welcomes article submissions. Any topic relevant to our field would be appreciated.

Send your articles to:
Jill Bornemeier
Managing Editor
jbornemeier@nei.com.

Meet the Speaker

The featured speaker of our March Program Meeting, Angela Gibbons, will be presenting "Career Morphing II" (aka Career Transformation or Metamorphosis). Career morphing is necessary because globally, we are shifting to an entirely new economy. The industrial age is over. The age of the maternal corporation is over. We are in the information age and have been for some time, although business and industry have been clinging to the passing era.

To be competitive and effective in the new career paradigm, we will have to expend some transformational effort. This effort is going to have to be different from that which we have previously put forth. Therefore, we need to *morph*, or transform our careers.

Angela Gibbons is Manager of Human Resources Compensation and Benefits for OE Tool and Equipment Group of SPX Corporation, based in Warren, Michigan. Prior to joining OE Tool and Equipment Group in 1996, Angela spent three years with Philips Display Components as a human resources specialist. Before working in the components industry, Angela worked for six years in the Sales and Human Resources departments of Digital Equipment Corporation. □

March 12 Program Meeting Career Morphing II

Angela Gibbons

Holiday Inn North Campus
3600 Plymouth Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Cash Bar 6:30
Dinner 7:00
Presentation 8:00

Members: \$19.00
Nonmembers: \$21.00
Presentation Only: \$5.00

Entree choices:

Chicken with Mushrooms &
Artichokes with Wild Rice

Baked Orange Roughy with Rice
Pilaf

RSVP
Karen Gilbert
313.995.6187

Mentoring Program Focus

The Mentoring Program will have a new focus over the next few months. We will, as a group, consider the professional goals of the individual members and provide advice and suggestions for achieving those goals.

At the January meeting we discussed our professional goals for the year. For example, one of mine is to establish a Web site. At the next few monthly group meetings, we will report on the progress each member of the group has made toward their goals and make suggestions to further the progress. Perhaps having to report on the progress will provide a little extra incentive.

If the idea is successful in helping the members achieve their professional goals, this approach could become the primary focus of the Mentoring Program.

New members can join the group at any time. For information, contact Ginny Collins
(ginny_collins@compuserve.com or 810.546.0754). □

The 1996 Job Market: A Year in Review

by Frances Mueller Roach, ERS Manager

Over the past year, I've collected data on all job postings received through the ERS to determine what the job market is like in our area and what trends, if any, might exist. Whether you're thinking of testing the job market this year or not, the results should be of particular interest to you. They indicate what industries and locations are ideal for tech writers and what skills are in greatest demand. They also indicate when in 1996 most companies were looking to hire contract or permanent tech writers.

The ERS received a total of 106 job postings in 1996, of which 59 were contract postings and 47 were permanent full-time postings. Overall, the peak hiring times were in April and January, though this varied by full-time and contract positions. Chart 1 indicates the overall job posting trends month-by-month.

Contract writers were in greatest demand in January and April, while those seeking permanent full-time positions may have had better luck in April and November. Chart 2 compares the job posting trends between contract and full-time positions.

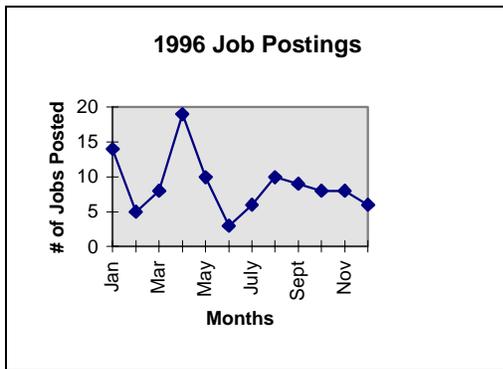


Chart 1. 1996 ERS Job Postings

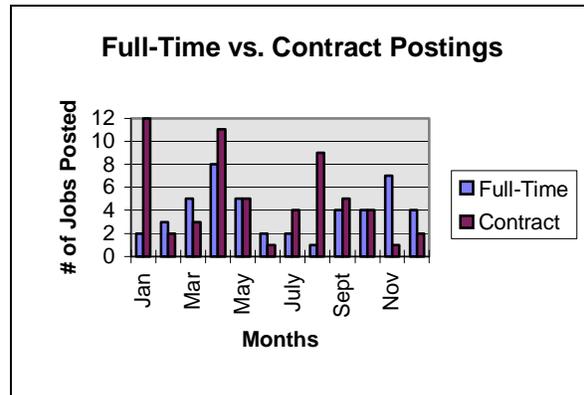


Chart 2. Job Postings for Full-Time and Contract Positions

Most jobs were located in Ann Arbor and were primarily for the computer software industry. Dearborn, Auburn Hills, and Warren were (not surprisingly!) tied to the auto industry. Chart 3 shows the top job locations for tech writers in 1996.

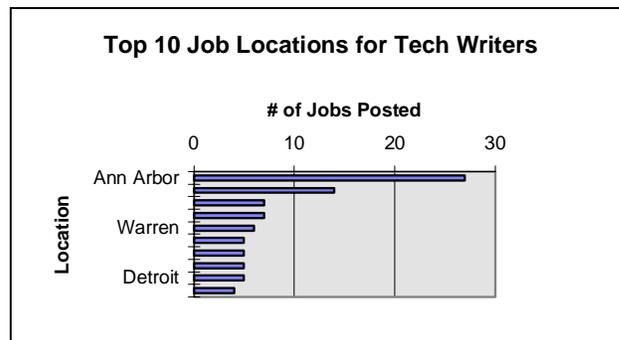


Chart 3. Top Job Locations

Top 5 Skills in Demand / Top 5 Local Industries Seeking Tech Writers

1. MS Word / 1. Computer software
2. Robohelp or Doc-to-Help / 2. Automotive
3. FrameMaker / 3. Manufacturing
4. WordPerfect / 4. Training
5. PageMaker / 5. Healthcare

Although it's impossible to predict what the 1997 job market holds for us, this 1996 data does provide a baseline from which we can compare data and analyze trends in the future. Look for job market comparisons and trending analyses in future issues of *TECH comments*. □

Learn About Your Candidates for Second Vice President

by Elizabeth Babcock, Manager, STC Nominating Committee

When you get your ballot this year for STC's Spring 1997 election, I hope you'll agree with me that the high caliber of the candidates makes the choice a difficult one. Of all the choices on the ballot, perhaps the most significant is that for second vice president, since whoever you elect will be managing Chapter Affairs (the director-sponsors) this year and the administrative committees of the Society next year. The following year, 1999-2000, that person will usher in the new century as the president of STC. Finally, he or she will serve the first entirely 21st-century STC board as the Society's immediate past president. All that will depend on this year's vote, since STC has an automatic succession through the presidential *chairs*.

To help you make an informed decision about candidates for second vice president, the STC Nominating Committee posed three questions to the two wonderful people, Mary Wise and Mark Hanigan, who are running for that office this year. Here are the questions and their answers.

Tell us what your job as director-sponsor has taught you that you can apply to the presidential chain of offices.

Mark Hanigan: The director-sponsor job carries with it the full complement of tasks associated with supporting the chapters and serving as a voting member of the STC Board. I think that this is very important because one has to understand the requirements and challenges of sustaining quality chapters. This understanding facilitates more comprehensive decisions at the Society level that are sensitive to serving the best interests of the chapters and membership as a whole. After all, this is why the Society board exists in the first place.

My experiences as a director-sponsor have provided me with exposure to the full complement of challenges and issues that chapters must meet and that individual members face. I have assisted in the formation of new chapters, helped struggling chapters get back on their feet, and supported more-established chapters in pursuit of their next-level goals. I think that this experience, combined with years of service at chapter administrative council positions, has given me a solid understanding of the types of support that chapters need at the board level.

At the same time, I have learned that one person certainly cannot do it all. The collective, cooperative efforts of all of us are needed to attain the loftier

goals. I am also sensitive to providing support for individual accomplishment. In other words, I believe in letting individuals take ownership of their respective tasks and challenges.

Mary Wise: During my term as director-sponsor, I've learned four main lessons:

1. There is no right answer to any problem. I've learned to listen attentively to all opinions. Good ideas are everywhere; by acknowledging the value in everyone's opinion, we can find solutions to the most challenging problems. I'll apply this knowledge by actively seeking out constructive criticism, concrete suggestions, and innovative solutions to the challenges we face.
2. People need both structure and freedom: structure, so that they know what to do and when to do it; and freedom, so that they can do it creatively. I'll apply this knowledge as I have in my career — by providing guidance rather than by micromanaging. The talented people who serve on the board are adult professionals. I will trust them to complete their jobs or to tell me if they cannot.
3. I've learned to ask for help and to accept help when it's offered. The success of the Society does not hang on one person, one group of people, or one segment of membership. The success of the Society depends on all of us working together toward

common goals. I'll apply this knowledge by asking our members to help us achieve these goals, by attending chapter meetings, by volunteering at the chapter and Society levels, and by telling us their opinions.

4. Finally, I've learned that a good sense of humor can carry you through tense times as well as smooth times. I think that we sometimes forget that the Society can be a lot of fun. There's no point in taking on these jobs if we don't receive pleasure from them. I'll apply this knowledge by continuing to look upon the Society as a joyful part of my life.

What do you hope to accomplish for the Society during your four years in the presidential chain of offices?

Mark: I have at least two goals in mind:

1. I would like to strengthen the Society's presence in the academic community and in the business community. I believe that STC is in a unique position to lead our profession into the next century and beyond. We can provide this leadership by fostering communication and support

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between the academic community and the business community.

Specific ways of implementing that goal might include proliferating regional student conferences, expanding scholarship programs at all levels and for all of the technical communications disciplines, encouraging direct support of academic programs by the business community through provision of both human and financial resources, and perhaps hosting an academic/industry symposium to discuss all of these issues and to map out a strategic plan.

2. I believe that the Society board of directors and Office have done a good job in both anticipating and responding to the membership needs and directives. This good work is borne out by our continued and steady growth, and by our high membership retention rate. In this area I would stay the course, trying to remain responsive to the ever-changing requirements of our chapters, our individual members, and our professional environment.

Mary: I hope to accomplish three major goals:

1. To help define and begin to implement a realistic vision for becoming a truly international society. This huge goal has many issues to resolve; among them are language issues in competitions, governance issues for chapter representation, and logistics issues in providing services. We have already begun this effort. By the time I leave office, I want to be able to show our members that we've made significant, concrete progress.
2. To define specific roles within the Society for our student membership. More and more, new technical communicators are coming into the workplace from academic programs. I will ask the board to examine how we can encourage and mentor students better. Some ways might

include revamping the definition and activities of student chapters, fostering and encouraging student conferences, and providing more help and recognition to students in the form of more scholarships, internships, and other honors.

3. To continue to improve on delivery of services to members. For example, we've just scratched the surface with regard to electronic delivery of services. In the future, I envision being able to renew our memberships, order publications, and participate in discussions online.

In addition to these goals, I hope to meet and talk to a lot of members, at regional conferences, chapter seminars and workshops, and the Annual Conference. I want to listen to members' concerns and get their ideas for how to make the Society work for them.

What challenges do you see ahead for our members?

Mark: I believe the biggest single challenge for us as technical communicators is to remain on top of our profession in terms of tools, techniques, and trends. The corporate structure has changed dramatically over the past decade. The fraternal support for lifetime employees that once covered everything from career development through retirement has given way as companies have scrambled to become and remain competitive in a global marketplace. Much of the large corporate infrastructure including technical communication departments has been significantly reduced or dismantled completely.

Yet, at the same time, requirements for technical communication deliverables have expanded. As a fallout of this increased demand, companies are relying more on us to tell them what they need in terms of these deliverables. We have to know how to respond.

I believe the body of knowledge about our profession is too expansive for any one person to handle. STC provides us an excellent mechanism of educational

networking. I believe that anyone who wishes to be successful in our profession needs to embrace the fact that *you will be in school for your entire career.*

Mary: I see three main challenges for our members:

1. The challenge of expanding our expertise into new areas: learning how business works, learning how to apply strategic planning techniques to our careers and our lives, and learning to adopt a global focus as our world shrinks. By learning how business works, we can more easily articulate how we contribute to the bottom line at our jobs. By applying strategic planning techniques to our careers and lives, we take control of them and can more readily adapt to the changes taking place at the workplace and in the world.
2. The ongoing challenge of adapting to new technologies to address the changing audience for our products. The world is changing faster than ever; therefore, we must learn how to use new technologies to create and deliver usable products to our clients. In fact, I believe that we must stop being *problem solvers* and become *opportunity anticipators*. I've told my company's clients to stop producing *deliverables* and to start producing *usables*. If we start looking ahead to how we can contribute new and better solutions to our clients, we'll earn the respect we want.
3. The challenge of balancing our lives. This one is as old as work itself, but it will continue to challenge us. We need to learn to be good to ourselves, to pay attention to the non-technical communicator parts of our lives, and to have a good laugh. I love technical communication and think the success of the Society is vital to the profession, but I also know that my family, my friends, and my health are even more important. □

Calendar of Events

**March 12 (Wednesday)
Program Meeting**

Speaker: Angela Gibbons
Topic: Career Morphing II
Holiday Inn North Campus
Ann Arbor
Cash bar begins at 6:30 p.m.
Contact Martha Swidersky
313.995.7994
Email: marthas@ncms.org

**March 12 (Wednesday)
Ann Arbor Networking Luncheon**

Gourmet Garden (Stadium near Liberty)
Begin between 11:30 and 12 noon.
Contact Kathy Carter
W: 313.668.4529
Email: carter.kathy@epamail.epa.gov

**April 7 (Monday)
STC/SM Board of Directors Meeting**

Kerby's Coney Island
Haggerty just north of Eight Mile Road
6:30 p.m.

**April 10 (Thursday)
Ann Arbor Networking Luncheon**

Cooker's (Plymouth Rd.)
Begin between 11:30 and 12 noon.

**April 16 (Wednesday)
Program Meeting**

Holiday Inn North Campus
Ann Arbor
Cash bar begins at 6:30 p.m.
Contact Martha Swidersky
313.995.7994
Email: marthas@ncms.org

THINK



SPRING!

Unclassifieds

**WANTED:
ERS Postings**

Is your company trying to fill a technical communication position? If so, why not post the position with our Employment Referral Service? The service is free of charge and benefits chapter members who are seeking employment. For information, contact our ERS manager, Frances Mueller Roach.

313.764.5211
fmroach@umich.edu.

**WANTED:
Tantalizing Topics**

Is there an area of technical communications that you'd like to learn more about? If so, contact Catherine Titta. She's gathering topic ideas for future Program Meetings and would appreciate your input.

313.996.9006

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TECH comments

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