

TECH comments

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

May 1997

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President's Message:

Help Wanted—Professional Program Committee

by Jim Anastasiow President, STC/SM

This month's message is a detailed appeal for help with our chapter's Professional Program Committee function. This activity provides our membership with the professional information needed to keep up-to-date with the tasks and tools associated with our profession. Participation in this committee is an excellent inroad to participation in STC/SM. I'd like to detail some of the committee functions with the hope that I might spark the interest of individuals in our chapter to participate in this function.

Considerable work has already gone into next year's schedule to secure meeting sites and dates and to prepare a list of possible presenters. We do, however, need volunteers to help with the following:

> **Speaker liaison** to contact monthly speakers. Call to invite the speaker and schedule a presentation, gather biographical information for our program flyer, newsletter, and associated publicity. Send speaker guidelines to the speaker to help in preparing the presentation with the appropriate audience focus and length. Communicate with Newsletter and Publicity committees. Time commitment is approximately two hours per month, much of it phone work, and attendance at Program Committee meetings.

> **Hotel liaison** to keep in contact with program-site contacts. Verify dates, establish menus for program night, arrange presentation media equipment, and set dinner prices. Time commitment is approximately two hours per month, mostly phone work with an occasional meeting with a hotel banquet person. Phone skills and project management skills are important.

> **Greeters** to welcome people, ensure speaker preparations are complete, sign in people, distribute name badges, and help newcomers feel welcome. Time requirement is approximately two hours per month, primarily on program night. Good interpersonal skills are helpful in greeting people as they arrive.

> **Flyer preparer** to prepare the program flyer and to arrange for printing and mailing to membership several weeks before the program. Consolidating speaker information and hotel information into one document that goes out on time each month can be a challenge. In addition, this information must be quickly forwarded to our Web and Publicity committees. Time commitment is approximately four hours per month. Desktop publishing and project management skills are essential.

> **Program facilitator/committee manager** to coordinate the efforts of committee members and to ensure monthly project milestones are met,

presenters are booked well ahead of program events, and each committee function is completed monthly. Time commitment is approximately four hours per month including holding committee meetings to keep things running smoothly. This person attends monthly board meetings and is a voting board member.

Currently, all these positions need to be filled. For the last three years, board members have pulled double-duty to keep our programs afloat. While our activities may appear seamless, it's been a real scramble to keep up with the ongoing program needs. It has also slowed chapter growth because all our resources were dedicated to putting on programs without a program committee. So, (I'm asking nicely!) *please consider helping out*. Contact me, Karen Gilbert, Ruth Blough, or Martha Swidersky to express any interest or ask questions.

Other Business

STC/SM is collecting used computer equipment to donate to local charities. As we upgrade tools, older equipment and software can still be used by churches and other social organizations to perform bookkeeping, to produce newsletters and flyers, etc. Please contact me directly if you have any items to donate.

Thanks for reading!



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Director-Sponsor Message

By Nancy Hoffman, Region 4 Director-Sponsor
phone: 313.663.8118, fax: 313.663.8778
email: creekscm@aol.com

Congratulations, Region 4!

It's time, once again, to congratulate individuals and chapters in our region who recently have been recognized by STC: new Associate Fellows, new members of Sigma Tau Chi, a recipient of the Jay Gould Award, winners in the Newsletter competition, winners of the International Technical Publications, International Technical Art, and International Online competitions.

New Associate Fellows

Congratulations to our region's new Associate Fellows: Renee C. Anderson and Barbara E. Mirel of the Chicago chapter and Lynnette R. Porter of the Bowling Green State University Student Chapter! This very special honor is in recognition of many years of involvement in both STC and in the technical communication profession.

New Members Inducted into Sigma Tau Chi

STC honors its outstanding students in the technical communication profession by conferring membership in its honorary fraternity, Sigma Tau Chi. This year's new members from Region 4 are: Jennifer Giordano and Mary Katharine Wiedemer of Bowling Green State University, and Philip Wittmer of Cedarville College. Congratulations to our new Sigma Tau Chi members!

Jay R. Gould Award Winner

This year, we're extremely proud to have a winner of the Jay R. Gould Award in our region! The Jay R. Gould Award recognizes excellence in teaching that becomes true academic mentorship: the personal and professional concern that an excellent teacher extends to a student beyond the demands of the classroom—even beyond graduation and into a professional career. Sandra Harner, professor in the English Department at Cedarville College in Cedarville, Ohio, and advisor of the Cedarville College STC student chapter, received the award this year. We're extremely lucky to have directly received the benefits of such an educator at one of the universities in our region—one that has had an outstanding

STC student chapter for a number of years. Congratulations, Sandi!

Newsletter Competition Winners

Two newsletters in our region received awards in the STC Newsletter Competition! The Chicago chapter received an Achievement award in the *Chapters with More Than 300 Members* category for its newsletter, *Byline*, Janet Kaczkowski, editor. And the West Michigan Shores chapter received a Merit award in the *Chapters with 75 or Fewer Members* category for its newsletter, *Shorelines*, Brion Eriksen, editor/designer, Mike Hood, copy editor, and Mimi Miles, proofreader.

International Technical Publications, International Technical Art, and International Online Competition Winners

Many members of our region received awards this year in STC's international competitions. Congratulations to each of you! And, congratulations to all of the members who participated in STC's competition this year. Whether on the local chapter level or international level, and whether or not you received an award, we're all winners when we participate in STC competitions and have our technical communication pieces judged by our peers in the profession. We learn valuable insights by communicating with others in our field and receiving praise and constructive criticism from others with different views of the process and results of technical communication.

Congratulations all!

Conference Update: *Toronto Star* Press Centre Tour Cancelled

The STC Annual Conference program tour of the *Toronto Star* Press Centre has been cancelled. The tour had been scheduled for Wednesday, May 14, 1-4 pm.

In addition, STC chapter leaders should be aware of the following amendments to the conference *Preliminary Program*:

- > The time for the Royal Ontario Museum Program Tour has been changed. The *Preliminary Program* lists this tour as taking place on the afternoon of Thursday, May 15. The tour has been rescheduled for the morning of that day. The exact time has yet to be announced.
- > The *Preliminary Program* listed two different fax numbers for the conference Housing Bureau. The correct fax number is the one that appears on the Housing Application Form: 416.203.6735.

Also note that the Society office has posted information about the technical sessions on its Web site at <http://www.stc-va.org> (select "Conference" from the menu, then select "1997 Annual Conference Information and Session Details").

For more information, please contact the Society office at 703.522.4114 or conference@stc-va.org. □

Public Speaking: The Five-Minute Speech Checklist

No matter how often you give speeches, every trip to the lectern brings new challenges—and new opportunities—to improve your presentation.

- > *Smile.* Happiness is contagious. Make the audience feel as if you are glad to be there, and glad they are there, too. They will remember your mood even if they forget your point. Warning: an insincere smile will ruin the speech.
 - > *Be energetic.* Show your passion and conviction through body language and an optimistic tone of voice.
 - > *Be still.* Don't fidget or rock back and forth. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, and your arms at your sides when not gesturing to emphasize a point.
 - > *Be heard.* Don't shout, but project your voice without sounding unnatural.
 - > *Hostile audience?* Keep calm; don't get defensive. Give them as many facts as you can. Remember, they can't make you look bad—only you can do that.
 - > *Remember your setting.* Tailor your presentation to each particular group and the environment where you speak. Decide how you can connect with the audience,
- how large it will be, how the room will be set up, and whether you'll need any audiovisuals.
- > *Tell it and hold on.* Cut to the chase: tell them why you're there, and stay with that message. Don't follow tangents.
 - > *Watch your time.* Practice the speech so you can develop a schedule for time management. This way you will know if you are speaking too quickly, or dragging on and on. Don't speak with single members of the audience as you pass out informational literature.
 - > *Be careful during Q&A.* A question-and-answer period is a surefire way to get sidetracked, waste time, and lose control of your message. Keep it short. Be honest with your answers. If you don't know an answer, say so, but tell the inquirer where to find the answer.
- Source:
The American School Board Journal □

Did You Know . . .

- > In every episode of *Seinfeld* there is a Superman somewhere.
- > Cats have over one hundred vocal sounds, while dogs only have about ten. 
- > The Boston University Bridge (on Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts) is the only place in the world where a boat can sail under a train driving under a car driving under an airplane.
- > Isaac Asimov is the only author who has a book in every Dewey-decimal category.
- > If you have three quarters, four dimes, and four pennies, you have \$1.19. You also have the largest amount of money in coins without being able to make change for a dollar.



Tell Us About

As a technical writer, you hear about the various STC-sponsored competitions, national and international. Included are competitions for technical art, publications, and online communication. These competitions provide you with the opportunity to have your work evaluated by your peers and to receive recognition for outstanding work.

We also feel that it is important that you hear how our chapter's members fare in these competitions. For those of you who have won awards, contact us, let us know. We'd love to hear details about the competition, and details about the award you won. We'll be including award information in a future issue of *TECH comments*.

Send award information to:

Jill Bornemeier
Managing Editor
jbormemeier@nei.com
or call 313.332.5571

Current Job Postings

Permanent Positions:

3/35/97

Growing plastic bottle manufacturer in Plymouth, Michigan seeks instructional designer/developer to create technical training programs (including analysis, design, and development) for production line personnel.

Requirements: Related degree and five or more years solid instructional design/technical writing experience. Must work well with all levels of plant personnel, particularly SMEs. Excellent writing skills. A passion for accuracy, completeness, and effective training.

Send qualifications and salary requirements to:

Technical Writer
P.O. Box 5545
Plymouth, MI 48170

4/14/97

Entry-level technical writer for small company that writes software for telecommunications industry. This is a two-part job.

Part 1:

Work with team of engineers to produce ISO 9000-compliant design documents. Develop documentation from many sources, including outside contractors. Edit, format, and improve readability. Stay in close communication with engineering team, contractors, and customer, who is both U.S.- and Japan-based. Learn about technical contents where possible. Use MS Word.

Part 2:

Work with team of technical writers to plan and implement strategies for documenting highly technical data communications software. Tasks include learning software hands-on, asking questions of engineers, writing new documentation, and updating and improving existing documentation. New ventures may include online documentation. Use FrameMaker and MS Word.

Must be flexible, detail-oriented, and learn quickly. Good writing skills required.

Contact: Mabel Lee
Open Networks Engineering, Inc. (ONE)
777 E. Eisenhower Pkwy.
Suite 650
Ann Arbor, MI 48108
Phone: 313.996.9900 Ext. 1231
Fax: 313.996.9908
Email: mll@one.com
URL: <http://www.one.com>

Contract Positions:

4/12/97

Short-term contract, 2-3 months. Large Troy-based company seeks an editor to edit existing computer software documentation.

Fax resume to:

Joan Dunae
Phone: 810.426.6212
Fax: 810.426.6216

4/12/97

Short-term contract, 3-6 months. Lear Corporation seeks a technical writer to write and maintain software user manuals for various AS/400 systems. Other responsibilities include taking minutes for semi-monthly project team meetings and preparing and maintaining other project documents. Must be experienced in software documentation and MS Word and able to work independently.

Send or fax resume to:

Paul Geesey
Lear Corporation ITC
24467 W. Ten Mile Rd.
Southfield, MI 48034
Phone: 810.368.8707
Fax: 810.368.8710

4/18/97

Short-term contract, 3-6 months. SAP technical writer (Southfield). Two positions available for experienced training and documentation specialists to develop SAP user materials. Work with configuration team and business content experts. Must be able to communicate effectively with diverse user population. Experience developing training materials and courseware as well as user documentation is required. Exposure to SAP or other client/server, integrated

systems a plus. Fast-paced, team-oriented atmosphere.

Requirements: Advanced knowledge of MS Word 7.0, Windows 95 or NT. Strong editing and proofreading skills. Excellent writing and developing skills. Imagination, creativity, and tenacity.

Mail or fax resume to:

Paige Thiele
Lear Corporation
24467 West Ten Mile Road
Southfield, MI 48034
Fax: 810.368.8720

4/27/97

Short-term contract (1-2 months). Experienced writer needed for Creative Solutions, a leading provider of tax, accounting, and office management software.

Requirements: Experience using MS Word 7.0 and RoboHelp. Experience working with local area networks. Experience using and writing software tutorials and online help. Ability to follow corporate style guidelines. Ability to learn a new product and get up to speed quickly. Experience with meeting tight deadlines.

Send resume and cover letter to:

Nancy Dow
Manager, Technical Communications
Creative Solutions, Inc.
7322 Newman Blvd.
Dexter, MI 48130
ndow@creativesol.com

No phone calls please.

Note: If you know of employers seeking technical writers or editors for contract, free-lance, 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.





Program Meeting

Entrepreneurial Nightmares and Miscellanea

Ray Poshadlo

Holiday Inn Livonia West
17123 N. Laurel Park Drive
Livonia, Michigan

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

Members: \$20.00
Nonmembers: \$25.00
Presentation Only: \$5.00

Entree choices:
Chicken Wisconsin
(w/ham, Swiss, & white wine sauce)
Pasta Primavera

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



Submitting Articles

Do you have information to share with other technical communicators? Put it in article format! *TECH comments* welcomes articles. Any topic relevant to our field is appreciated. Send your articles to:

Jill Bornemeier
Managing Editor
jbornemeier@nei.com.

Meet Your New Officers

Our new STC/SM officers will be installed at the June board meeting. They will officially step up as the leaders of our chapter July 1.

Plan on attending the June 11 program meeting to meet our new officers. For those unable to attend, here's a brief introduction to the people who have agreed to serve our chapter:

President: Karen Gilbert

Karen was treasurer in the 1996-1997 year. She has worked on the Web and Program committees, and has served terms as secretary and as Employment Referral Committee manager. Karen manages Technical Writing Services at Applicon, Inc. in Ann Arbor.

Vice President: Ginny Collins

Ginny, professional liaison for the past two terms, served a term as secretary, founded our Mentoring Program, and has helped on various chapter committees. Ginny is a self-employed technical communicator.

Secretary: Ann Kelly

Ann served the past two terms on our Nominations Committee, served two terms as membership manager, and was active on several other committees. Ann is a self-employed automotive writer.

Treasurer: Michelle Monroe

Michelle has been active in the Mentoring Program since its inception. She was also involved with the Michigan Tech STC Student Chapter. Michelle is a documentation specialist with McKesson Pharmacy Systems.

Nominations Committee

The Nominations Committee is composed of both elected and appointed members. Ruth Blough has agreed to continue serving as manager of this committee. The elected members of the Nominations Committee are:

Don Trejo
Elizabeth Mack
Susan Smith

Let's show our gratitude to our new officers for all the time, effort, and skills they are volunteering. Please give them the support they need for a successful year! □

Meet the Speaker

Dreams of starting your own business can turn to nightmares. Books and seminars often leave out details that can help you to avoid the nightmares. Our featured speaker, Ray Poshadlo, will share his six years of entrepreneurial ups and downs, and will:

- > Provide helpful/practical marketing, selling, developing and packaging tips.
- > Explore new opportunities like Web commerce, Webcasting versus Web surfing, and bundling.
- > Cover Web-oriented pitfalls like the limitation of HTML and HTTP.
- > Debunk the universality myth of the Web and Java.

Ray Poshadlo is president of Softwrights, Inc. in Dearborn, Michigan. He has over 25 years experience in software design, programming, and documentation. Ray has a master's degree in computer, information, and control engineering from the University of Michigan and a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from Wayne State University. His unusual background includes the publication of pioneering research in 3-D graphics and early work in interactive videodisc (multimedia) training. His company develops and publishes software for the commercial market—and also offers custom-made software, training manuals, technical manuals, and Web-site design/programming to corporate clients. □

STC/SM

Senior Member

To qualify as a Senior Member, you must be a member of STC for five years. Each of our Senior Members brings valuable experience to our chapter. We proudly present our newest Senior Member:

Vincent Militello

Calendar of Events

May 11-14 (Sunday through Wednesday)**44th Annual STC Conference**

Sheraton Centre Toronto
Toronto, Ontario
Contact: National STC Office
703.522.4114

May 13 (Tuesday)**Ann Arbor Networking Luncheon**

Red Lobster, Carpenter Rd.
Begins between 11:30 and 12 noon.

May 14 (Wednesday)**Program Meeting**

Speaker: Ray Poshadlo
Topic: Entrepreneurial Nightmares and
Miscellanea
Holiday Inn - Livonia West
I-275 and 6 Mile Road
Cash bar begins at 6:30 p.m.
Contact: Martha Swidersky
313.995.7994
marthas@ncms.org

June 2 (Monday)**STC/SM Board of Directors Meeting**

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

June 11 (Wednesday)**Ann Arbor Networking Luncheon**

Mediterrano, South State
Begins between 11:30 and 12 noon.

June 11 (Wednesday)**Program Meeting**

Speaker: Diane Keller
Topic: Capturing Online Information
Holiday Inn - Livonia West
I-275 and 6 Mile Road
Cash bar begins at 6:30 p.m.
Contact: Martha Swidersky
313.995.7994
marthas@ncms.org

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 and benefits chapter members who seek employment. For information, contact ERS manager, Frances Mueller Roach.

313.764.5211
fmroach@umich.edu.

WANTED: Tantalizing Topics

Is there an area of technical communications 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

WANTED: Volunteer Writers

We need volunteers to write short articles for *TECH comments*. Most source material would be provided by a board member, but would need to be written up as an article. If you are interested, contact Catherine Titta.

313.996.9006
arbortc@bizserve.com.

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TECH comments

STC/SM

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