



TECH comments

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

May 1998

Volume 27, Issue 9



President's Message:

Fostering a Sense of Community

It has been said that one of our most basic needs is affiliation. Perhaps this is one of the primary reasons most of us joined STC/SM. Our involvement with the chapter allows us to connect with other members who have similar interests and experiences. I would like to take this opportunity to commend all the volunteers whose efforts have gone a long way in creating a professional organization that people are excited to join!!

Our chapter hosts technical programs and social events to help foster a sense of community among members. This year, these events have been well received, as our attendance has increased dramatically for each meeting. Additionally, our chapter has other accomplishments to be proud of: *TECH comments*, our chapter newsletter received an Achievement Award from the Society newsletter competition; we are sponsoring a member to attend the Annual Conference; and we are having fun while working with our various committees!!

Recognition, Recognition, Recognition

As any personnel manager will tell you, one of the biggest challenges facing most companies today is motivating employees. This is also true with a volunteer staff. Recent studies by motivation experts conclude that recognition, recognition, and more recognition is one of the most powerful motivators.

Our chapter offers many forms of recognition. For example, each year STC/SM presents the Outstanding Chapter Member Award to recognize a member whose contributions to the chapter are truly noteworthy.

This year our chapter instituted three additional forms of recognition:

- > The President's Bravo acknowledges members who deserve a special thank you for a job well done, letting volunteers know their contributions are worthy of attention.
- > Sponsorship of the president-elect to attend the Annual STC Conference helps to prepare the newly elected officer for his or her leadership role.
- > Program Meetings include a raffle for certificates that allow recipients to attend the next dinner and presentation free.

Information, Information, Information

To keep all members informed about upcoming activities, our chapter publishes a monthly newsletter. To meet the professional growth needs of our members, our chapter holds monthly program meetings. We try to provide you with the most current information regarding advancements in our field.

All members are welcome to attend monthly Board Meetings (see page 8 for information regarding the next meeting). Anyone can discuss issues/concerns/initiatives during the new-business portion of the meetings. If you want to have a voice in chapter policies, please attend. I can't emphasize how valuable your opinions are to us. We try to create an environment where ideas can be shared. Always feel free to contact board members with ideas, questions, or concerns. Leave a message on the chapter hotline; post it to our list server (under development); or ask for it to be posted to our Web site or published in the newsletter. We are here to serve our membership. We like to receive regular feedback; it gives us an opportunity to measure how well we are serving you.

Hurrah, Hurrah, Hurrah

I'm pleased to announce that most of our committees, yes committees, are staffed and ready to kick into full gear for next

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*(Continued from page 1)***Presidents Message**

year! However, we always have room for more. We will be hosting competitions this year. If you would like to serve as a judge, or to co-chair the Competitions Committee, give us a call; all members are welcome to participate!!

We will also be hosting a Saturday seminar in October. If you would like to help coordinate the seminar, we'd love to hear from you. We can use additional help registering/greeting people, generating press materials (fliers), and coordinating the event. If you'd like to exercise your organizational skills, please contact us.

Renew, Renew, Renew

Activities are already being planned for next year. If you haven't renewed your membership, please do so no later than Tuesday, June 30, 1998. It's going to be another exciting year and you don't want to miss out on all the great benefits our chapter has to offer!! □

June Program Meeting

Please join us June 22 at the Ann Arbor North Campus Holiday Inn for our June Program Meeting. We'll be providing a complimentary buffet with a cash bar, planned activities (including a surprise or two), and the opportunity to socialize with fellow STC/SM members before our summer break.

As part of the evening's planned activities, we will be inducting the 1998-99 STC/SM Board of Directors. We will also be announcing this year's recipient of the Outstanding Chapter Member Award. And for the surprise—well, let's just say if you have volunteered your services this year, come.

Note that the June meeting is the last meeting of the year. There will be no May meeting due to possible conflicts with the 45th Annual STC Conference.

Festivities begin at 6:30 p.m., please come! □

Reacting to Difficult Types

When dealing with people, be ready to react to the actions of different personalities. Some examples:

- > Dealing with the aggressor, who is intimidating, hostile and loves to threaten.

Listen to everything the person has to say. Avoid arguments and be formal, calling the person by name. Be concise and clear with your reactions.

- > Dealing with the underminer, who takes pride in criticism and is sarcastic and devious.

Focus on the issues and don't acknowledge sarcasm. Don't overreact.

- > Dealing with the unresponsive person, who is difficult to talk to and never reveals his or her ideas.

Ask open-ended questions and learn to be silent—waiting for the person to say something. Be patient and friendly.

- > Dealing with the egotist, who knows it all and feels and acts superior.

Make sure you know the facts. Agree when possible and ask questions and listen. Disagree only when you know you're right.

Why Not Volunteer for Something?

by Jim Anastasiow, Past President STC/SM

It's been a year since I last wrote for our newsletter. It was one of the duties of the president, and it proved to be quite a challenge to come up with new angles on volunteerism and inspiring reasons for STC members to be concerned with chapter issues each month. I remember exploring many angles of volunteerism. I hope some of my points made an impression because I believed what I wrote and what I put down on paper was directly based on my own experiences. While researching for my articles, I came across a similar piece written by Max E. Rumbaugh, then executive vice president of the Society of Automotive Engineers, for SAE's professional journal. His stated rationale for automotive engineers becoming involved in SAE also applies to tech writers becoming involved in STC (if you substitute the word *communication* for *engineering*). I'll call his paraphrased list:

Reasons To Become Professionally Involved

- > It's happening.
- > A potpourri of continuous educational opportunities.
- > A cost-effective way to make contacts, locally, around the United States and globally.
- > Very effective networking events.
- > A chance to keep abreast of significant overall communication trends.
- > Hands-on opportunity to experience new products/styles/communication solutions.
- > Best membership value of any professional communications organization.
- > Timely updates of new technologies impacting communication.
- > Technical papers from around the globe (in monthly/quarterly journals and national conferences).
- > Great way to get up to speed rapidly on a new job or new assignment.
- > Current source of technology/process methodology and a great transfer opportunity.
- > Speakers/presenters get great experience which will help their career development (at local, regional and national meetings).

My point: professional involvement advances your career, regardless of your profession. You owe it to yourself and to your profession to get involved, volunteer, *do something!!!*

Lastly, let me share an accomplishment with you. You might remember my reference to being involved in helping an inner-city church with a computer project. This year we were able to open the computer learning lab. Several computers are now online with instruction that began this fall. It's a small program with a half dozen computers that I built and help maintain.

And, it's a small world—while at the computer lab one Saturday, I was recognized by another STC chapter member, who was there with other members of his Hartland church, helping out with a monthly food-distribution program at the same site.

So there we were, tech writers, helping teach literacy and feed the poor, right in our own *backyard*. Now, that's what I call volunteerism! Couch potatoes beware, the world is passing you by. Why don't you see what you can do to get involved. Check with our local STC chapter for more information.

See you in the field! □

Did You Know . . .

- > The toes of mummies were wrapped individually. 
- > There are four cars and eleven lightposts on the back of a ten-dollar bill.
- > Leonardo da Vinci could write with one hand and draw with the other at the same time.
- > Armadillos can be housebroken. 
- > The first CD pressed in the United States was Bruce Springsteen's "Born in the USA."

Quote of the Month

I did not wish to take a cabin passage, but rather to go before the mast and on the deck of the world, for there I could best see the moonlight amid the mountains.

—Henry David Thoreau

New Area Code?

If you have a new area code, please let STC/SM Webmaster Renka Gesing know so she can update your Web membership entry. You can contact Renka at:

519.254.5051

or

renka@windsor.igs.net.

STC Membership Renewal

Just a quick reminder, if you haven't already done so, make sure you renew your STC membership for next year!

Current Job Postings

Permanent Full-Time

3/20/98

Gateway 2000 seeks writing manager, information developers, and graphic designers for its Information Development Department. This group develops information that ships with computers, including high-quality publications, on-line documents, help systems, Web information, multimedia, and video.

For information, visit Gateway's Web site at <http://www.gateway.com>.

Gateway offers a fast-paced environment with a competitive compensation and benefits plan (including profit sharing and stock options), excellent career growth, and a comprehensive relocation program.

Please fax or email résumé to:

John Bass, Senior Manager
Information Development
Gateway 2000
North Sioux City, SD 57049
Phone: 605.232.1888
Fax: 605.232.2636
Email: bassjoh@gateway.com

3/26/98

DataNet Quality Systems, a leading developer of statistical-process-control software for automated manufacturers, offers a career opportunity for a technical writer. Responsibilities include technical document planning and writing, help screen production, and instructional layout and design. Requirements include experience producing software user documentation, facility with RoboHelp, PageMaker, and Windows 95. BA in technical communications or journalism.

Competitive salary and benefits. Please send résumé to:

DataNet Quality Systems
24567 Northwestern Highway
Fourth Floor
Southfield, MI 48075

03/27/98

Western Florida software company seeks three software technical writers to document user manuals, life cycle development, and online documentation. Experience required with FrameMaker or Interleaf; RoboHelp,

Doc-2 Help, or WinHelp; and Adobe Acrobat.

Open positions include:

- > Manager of software technical documentation (\$50,000 to \$60,000).
- > Mid-level software staff writer (\$45,000 to \$50,000).
- > Junior -level software staff writer (\$35,000 to \$45,000).

Company provides 100% of family relocation up to \$8,000. Florida has no state income tax.

Houston, Texas company seeks four technical writers to document user manuals, life cycle development and online documentation. FrameMaker with RoboHelp or Doc-2 Help experience required. Previous software documentation experience.

Tom Hicks
6500 Sands Point Drive, Suite 607
Houston, Texas 77074
Fax: 713.270.5577
Email: t-hicks@worldnet.att.net
Phone: 713.995.8410

Prefer email or U.S. mail résumés to fax.

3/27/98

Analogy, Inc., outside of Portland, Oregon, a world leader in analog and mixed-signal simulation software, seeks the following:

Technical Publications Manager to lead team of technical writers and contractors to provide online user documentation. Lead effort to design and develop next generation of Analogy's online documentation system. Minimum of 3-4 years managing a team-oriented technical publications group in a software development environment with at least 2 years experience managing online documentation projects. BA/BS or MA/MS in technical writing with emphasis in electrical engineering, computer science, or equivalent. Knowledge of current state of online documentation technology including authoring tools, online-help systems, and viewers available on both UNIX and PC platforms. Knowledge of usability testing procedures highly desirable. Experience in an engineering discipline highly desirable.

Senior Technical Writer to develop on-line user documentation, develop documentation

plans and schedules, design on-line presentation of documentation, and write documentation. Four years experience as a technical writer of user documentation. Must understand basic analog electrical engineering concepts. BA/BS in technical writing, journalism, or related field highly desired. BA/BS or AA/AS in electrical engineering or related work experience highly desired. Familiarity with FrameMaker a plus.

Tanya Webb
Analogy, Inc.
HR Specialist/Corporate Recruiter
Phone: 503.520.4354
Fax: 503. 643.3361
Email: twebb@analogy.com
Web: <http://www.analogy.com>

3/27/98

Managing editor needed for national newsletter publishing company. Excellent writing and editing, with a working knowledge of desktop publishing and design. Strong organizational skills, ability to track multiple tasks on tight deadlines, and excellent customer service skills. Should be familiar with PageMaker, PhotoShop, Illustrator and database programs. Must be able to function as part of a closely-knit team.

Fax résumés to 734.439.3611.

3/30/98

Steeplechase Software seeks entry-level technical writer to work in small-company atmosphere with one other technical writer. Initially edit existing material, develop original material after learning about product. Publications currently created in FrameMaker and RoboHelp. Work closely with marketing and engineering departments. Opportunity to work on wide variety of products.

The ideal candidate has:

- > Degree in technical communication or related field.
- > Experience writing technical documentation (internship or classroom).
- > Ability to work independently.
- > Experience with FrameMaker, Windows 95/NT, and graphics package.

> Sense of humor and flexibility.

Salary/hourly rate depends on experience.

Lisa Zuber, Human Resources
Steeplechase Software, Inc.
1330 Eisenhower Place
Ann Arbor, MI 48108
Phone: 734.975.8100
Fax: 734.975.8123
Web Site: <http://www.steeplechase.com>

Contract

3/16/98

Medical/technical writer needed to develop brochures, newsletters, and other printed materials for cardiovascular equipment.

Barbara Schmid
3M Healthcare
Email: hlwilkins@mmm.com
Phone: 313.741.6021
Fax: 313.663.3944

3/17/98

Technical writer needed to write online and print documentation to support client/server environment and marketing activities.

Requirements:

- > RoboHelp, MS Office.
- > 3-5 years experience.

Maureen Naumcheff
TAC Automotive
Phone: 800.359.2466
Fax: 313.271.3928
Email: mnaumche@1tac.com

3/23/98

Six-month contract, Wayne County. Writer needed to create service manuals and training material for supplier of automotive dealership training. Automotive writing experience and/or hands-on experience with cars (dealership, mechanic, home car repair) required. Associate's, ASE certification, or other education helpful. Nissan, Ford, or GM experience a bonus. Must have basic knowledge of Microsoft applications. Must pass automotive knowledge test and brief writing test. \$13-15/hr with benefits.

Twelve-month contract, Wayne County.

Entry level technical developer needed to create automotive circuit diagrams for supplier of automotive technical training. Experience drawing and reading wiring diagrams and circuits. General automotive knowledge helpful. Background in basic electronics/electrical systems preferred. Possible overtime. \$10-14.50/hr with benefits.

Temporary-to-permanent contract, Oakland County. Publishing specialist needed to work with well-organized and established publishing group creating material for Fortune 500 customers. Experience in Arbotext or Framemaker with SGML tagging and Macintosh or PC. Must be able to start contributing within 2-3 days of start, have good proofreading skills, be able to handle multiple projects, and enjoy being a software problem solver. Salary commensurate with experience. Benefits included.

Doreen Kephart
Professional Resource Associates, Inc.
201 Broadway
Marine City, MI 48039
Fax: 810.765.1182
Web Site: www.pra-usa.com
Email: prainfo@pra-usa.com

4/4/98

TPS, North Carolina Research Triangle Park's premier technical writing employer, has immediate need for the following 1+ years contracts:

- > Paper-based technical writer. Experience writing TELECOM customer documentation.
- > On-line technical writer. Experience with RoboHelp.
- > Multimedia technical writer. Experience with Director.

Full benefits and great salaries.

Emily Toone
TPS, Inc.
Phone: 888.867.3169
Fax: 919.460.7773
Email: etoone@t-p-s.com
Web: <http://www.t-p-s.com>

4/23/98

RoboHelp developer needed to develop online help for a parking meter software project. Assignment is 40 hours/week for

approximately 3-6 months. Will need to work on site at consultant's office in Ann Arbor. Rate is \$25-35, based on experience.

Jack DeLand
Adam Charles Consulting
218 N. 4th Ave., Suite 210
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
Fax: 734.665.0632

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. □

Congratulations

John Brus

by Ruth Blough
Senior Member, STC/SM

Congratulations to John Brus for receiving the Distinguished Chapter Service Award from the Society for Technical Communication!

The Distinguished Chapter Service Award is a Society-level recognition award that acknowledges the work of chapter members who demonstrate exemplary service to the Society.

The Southeastern Michigan Chapter recommended John for this award to recognize his dedication and notable service to the chapter, the Society, and the technical communication profession. His 20 years of contributions have been both numerous and outstanding. John assisted in the chapter's publication competition several years, served as vice president for two years, and held the office of president for one year. He has also managed or co-managed several committees and was instrumental in developing our chapter's Web site. At the national level, John has served as publicity manager for the 1986 ITCC and has been a speaker at two other ITCCs. In addition, John has won several chapter and national awards for his publications.

Thank you, John, for the many ways you have enriched our chapter and our profession.

 □

We're a Chapter of Winners!

by Catherine Juon and Catherine Titta, Members STC/SM

Members of our chapter entered at least two regional competitions—Western Michigan Shores and Middle Tennessee. Entrants from other chapters, including ours, dominated the Western Michigan Shores (WMS) Chapter Competition. (We even stole Best of Show!) Out of 30 entries in the WMS competition, only five were from their home chapter. Around 50 people attended the WMS banquet, including our Regional Director-Sponsor Nancy Hoffman. The banquet got off to a bit of a late start, as many the out-of-towners couldn't decipher cryptic directions, but it turned out to be an enjoyable evening with yummy food and a humorist writer from the Grand Rapids Press. When the awards were announced, these local members were all honored for their work:

Technical Publications

James M. Anastasiow

Wood Model Making Training Guide for Ford Apprentices

Merit Award

Suzanne Bork

Rockwell Axle Oil Seal Update

Excellence Award

Catherine M. Juon

Father Patrick Jackson House Newsletter

Achievement Award

Catherine Titta

Arbor Intelligent Systems State User's Guide

Achievement Award

Gwendolyn White

Operator Productivity Report

Achievement Award

Online Communications

Catherine M. Juon

Women Business Owners Web

Merit Award

Catherine Titta

Operating Objectives System (OOSYS Help)

Excellence and Best of Show Award

Catherine Titta

ADP Autosource Direct Help

Merit Award

Technical Art

Catherine M. Juon

Wellhead Protection Community Guide

Merit Award

Catherine M. Juon

Ann Arbor Ad Club Web

Excellence Award



Regional Director-Sponsor Nancy Hoffman (second from right) joins Catherine Titta, Catherine Juon, and Jim Anastasiow as the happy winners display their awards at the WMS banquet.

In another competition in Middle Tennessee, yet another member was recognized for her excellent work:

Frances Mueller Roach

Compuware UNIFACE Business Alliance Program Brochure
Award of Merit

We encourage other chapter members to enter competitions—it's a great way to earn professional recognition and to network with other STC members. As one of our winners, Suzanne Bork, noted, "Particularly helpful are the judges' Publications Evaluations, which I will certainly review again before we reprint... And most of all, I can't tell you what a thrill it was to receive my 'Congratulations!' letter from Mike Hood and Mimi Miles, competition co-chairs for the WMS chapter. I'm looking forward to this year's Competition!"

We couldn't have said it better! □

Planning the Mentoring Program

by Mike Dailey, STC/SM Professional Liaison

Over the past year, we have explored several different ways to build a mentoring program for our chapter. We would like to build on our efforts in the coming year and would appreciate suggestions from you, the chapter members, as to how we might improve the program.

We proposed a mentoring group early in the year. The general suggestion was that the group would meet on a monthly basis and provide a forum where both new and experienced members of the chapter could share thoughts, ideas, and seek advice from their colleagues. A number of our members have participated in the mentoring group and realized significant benefits. I am interested as to whether you, as members of the chapter, believe we should make an effort to revitalize this part of the program. If not, should we explore another option?

We also increased our involvement with the technical communication students of Eastern Michigan University (EMU). Several board members took time this year to answer questions for technical communication students at EMU. This proved enlightening for the students and board members alike. Later in the year, several of these students presented the results of the research they performed to meet the requirements of their master's theses. The presentations were very interesting and informative. As more students join our ranks, we have an opportunity to cultivate their interest in technical communication and in our own areas of specialty. I am interested in hearing recommendations from chapter members as to how we may best support these students as they seek opportunities in our profession.

The Mentoring Program has a goal of improving the quality of our work as technical communicators by cultivating communication between members of the chapter. We stand to gain significantly by sharing knowledge, experience, and wisdom with each other. The question is: How best to accomplish this goal? Would it be beneficial for us to compile notes on mentoring that chapter members can implement in the office? Are there members interested in participating in one-to-one mentoring relationships? Should we place more emphasis on working with newer or more experienced members? Your suggestions and ideas can help us further develop the Mentoring Program for our chapter. Please send your ideas to one of the following addresses:

Michael Dailey
C/O Sterling Commerce ISG
24 Frank Lloyd Wright Drive
P.O. Box 305
Lobby A
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-0305

or

Email: mdailey@tir.com

The Results Are In!

1998-99 STC/SM Officers Elected

by Susan R. Smith

STC/SM Nominations Committee Member

The ballots have been counted and the Nominations Committee is delighted to announce the new officers and elected Nominations Committee members for 1998/99.

President: Ginny Collins-Llope

After working her way through the ranks of STC/SM, first as Secretary, then as Professional Liaison, and finally as Vice President and Programs Manager, Ginny Collins-Llope has been elected president for the coming year. Ginny has been an active member of STC for the past 10 years. Her entrepreneurial spirit launched her into her own business, Collins Communications, over four years ago. Over the years our chapter has benefited from her ideas and enthusiasm—in 1995 she founded the Mentoring Program. We look forward to an exciting year under her guidance.

Vice President: Michael Dailey

Michael has been with STC for two years and involved in technical communication for 10. In his second year with STC/SM he served as professional liaison. He currently works for Sterling Commerce ISG as a senior technical writer.

Treasurer: Susan G. Musico

Our treasurer for the coming year is Susan Musico. Susan has been an STC member for three years and involved in technical communication for 10. She began her career as a systems analyst and progressed into project management where her communication skills were put to the test. As her career advanced, she went on to earn an MBA in finance and information systems. Currently, she is the owner and president of Clarity Consulting and Communication, Inc.

Secretary: Catherine Titta

We have elected Catherine Titta as secretary. Catherine is the owner and senior consultant of Arbor Technicomm, where she concentrates on the emerging documentation technologies. She has been an STC member for nine years.

Nominations Committee

Serving on the Nominations Committee for the coming year are Rosemary Hampton, Kathleen Kleckner, and Don Trejo.

- > Rosemary has been an STC member for six years. During this time she has participated in the STC/SM Mentoring Program.
- > Kathleen is a senior technical writer for Fiserv/GALAXY and a member of the Project Management Institute. While she is relatively new to STC/SM, she has been quite active in our chapter—attending most of our chapter meetings and acting as a greeter at several of those meetings.
- > Don has served on the STC/SM Nominations Committee and Membership Committee for several years. He is a self-employed automotive writer with a degree in scientific and technical communications from Michigan Technological University. □

Calendar of Events

May 12 (Thursday)

Ann Arbor Networking Luncheon

LaPinata Mexican Restaurant
(on Stadium Blvd.)

Begins between 11:30 and 12 noon

May 17-20

STC 45th Annual Conference

The Anaheim Convention Center
Anaheim, California

June 1 (Monday)

STC/SM Board of Directors Meeting

TBD

6:30 p.m.

Board meetings are open to all members.

For more information, contact Karen
Gilbert at 734.995.6187.

Welcome, New Members!

Jack Baum

William J. Holtzman, Jr.

Laura M. King-Moore

Leonard G. Korstjens

Kimberly L. Martin

Carrie E. Pajunen

Marina Subonj

Rhonda L. Ziethlow

We look forward to seeing you
at future STC/SM functions!

Publication and Reprint Policies

TECH comments is published monthly September through June for members and friends of the Southeast Michigan chapter of the Society for Technical Communication. We welcome feature articles; letters to the editor; and information about meetings, courses, and workshops. We accept manuscripts in both hardcopy and electronic format with MS Word or ASCII text. Submissions will be edited.

Reprints from *TECH Comments* are permitted if credit is given and a copy is sent to the managing editor.

Send submissions to:

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TECH comments

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