

Byline



Quarterly Newsletter for STC Chicago Members

President's Message - Celebrating Commitment

By MaryKay Grueneberg

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Awards. Presentations. Celebration.

In three words, that's how I would sum up this year's annual banquet. We've written a brief "recap" of the banquet, since it was our March program.

VP Elizabeth Burke has given you a summary of the Competition Awards. What I'd like to do is give those of you who could not attend the banquet some information about a few special people that we honored during the evening.

It takes a lot of people to run a successful STC Chapter. We have a large Administrative Council, which consists of many highly dedicated professionals who share their time and talents regularly and consistently throughout the program year. These include our elected officers (President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Immediate Past President) and a host of dedicated Committee Managers (Advertising, Alliance, Bylaws, Byline, Competition, eLearning Showcase, Historian, Membership, Nominating, NIU IPD, Programs, Publicity/Marketing, Scholarship, Science Fair, Web/Online, and Workshops). We appreciate the dedication of all these Chapter leaders and representatives.

Each year, we honor a handful of people that either are not part of the leadership team or that may be part of that team but who have gone above and beyond what their volunteer role called for. Let me introduce to you the Chapter Award winners for the 2010-11 program year.

Distinguished Chapter Service Award – STC Chicago

The Society initiated the DCSA program in 1988 for the purpose of acknowledging the work of those chapter members who repeatedly and consistently provide exemplary service to the Society through Chapter activities. We present this award through our Chapter, but all nominations must be submitted and approved at the Society level. This year, we were thrilled to be able to give three DCSA awards to the following deserving people:

DCSA - Beth Najberg

Beth is an Associate Fellow of STC. She has volunteered and performed consistently for the STC Chicago Chapter throughout her career, in a wide variety of ways, taking on as much or more after her designation as Associate Fellow than before. She has presented in a variety of venues. Beth is in her fourth year as Alliance Liaison for STC Chicago. In that role, Beth has spent many dedicated hours working on the eLearning Showcases and the relationships we developed from those events. She has been a competition judge and works with students when she can. She is a great supporter of STC Chicago and of the technical communication profession. Her citation reads: "For continued commitment to STC Chicago and your years of leadership and evangelism as Alliance Liaison."

DCSA - W. Kelly Oja

Kelly has been the Chapter's Membership Manager for five years. Although he has the full support of the Administrative Council, he has been a committee of one all these years. He was also elected to the Nominating Committee for two years. He has done a fantastic job in



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spreading the word about STC Chicago, keeping in touch with current and past members. His citation reads: "In recognition of your exemplary efforts to attract and sustain membership in STC Chicago."

DCSA - Francis Bao

Francis has been an asset to the Chicago Chapter for many years. He has had one or more leadership roles every year for the past eight years. He spent three years as the Chapter Treasurer, has been VP, President, and Immediate Past President, is currently the Advertising Committee Manager, and has worked diligently on all three eLearning Showcases. He is a great evangelist of STC Chicago and is always willing to help out where he can. His citation reads: "For your dedication to STC Chicago and your work with the Chicago eLearning & Technology Showcase."

President's Award – Linda Kelley

The STC Chicago President's Award was established in 1993 to recognize significant volunteer contributions of chapter members usually not recognized at the Society level.

Linda first served STC Chicago as Program Committee Manager in 1998 and continued for three years. She stayed in the background for a few years after that until we put the call out for volunteers to run for elected office in 2008. She stepped up and has served as Chapter Treasurer for the past three years. In that role, Linda went 'above and beyond' while dealing with the 2009 financial issues at the Society level that caused a lot of change and paperwork at the Chapter level. Linda's award citation reads: "For your long-term dedication to STC Chicago, especially these past three years as Treasurer."

Robert G. Frank Award – Chris Hester and Daniel J. Dornbrook

A Robert G. Frank Award recipient is usually a member of STC Chicago for ten years or more and has played an active role for all or most of those years. Robert Frank was a dedicated leader of the chapter who worked beyond reasonable expectations to make it successful. Much of his professional life was spent in support of the long-term success of STC Chicago. The Robert G. Frank Award is intended to honor Robert Frank by recognizing STC members who characterize the dedication he displayed. This award is conferred by special committee and was awarded to two very special Chapter members.

Their award citations read: "For dedicated service to the Chicago chapter and distinguished leadership in STC."

STC Chicago Volunteer of the Year – Anna Miller

Initiated in 2010, the Volunteer of the Year Award was established to acknowledge dedication to the chapter through volunteer efforts and ongoing commitment to the technical communication profession. This award is intended to recognize a volunteer that either 'steps up in a pinch' or goes above and beyond what they originally volunteered for.

Anna has a long history of being active in the Chicago Chapter. She served as Education Manager for two years, worked on the STC Institute, and was elected to the Nominating Committee twice. She received the DCSA in 1998 and the Robert G. Frank Award in 2008. Last fall, when we put out a call for help with the Programs Committee, Anna told us she would be glad to "help out with sign-in and clean-up" at the monthly events. She ended up helping to plan and organize more than one event, including reaching out to potential speakers. Anna's award citation reads: "For your support of the STC Chicago membership through your help and efforts with the 2010-2011 programs."

STC Chicago Chapter Star – Apryl Cox Jackson

The Chapter Star Award was established in 2011 to acknowledge a Chapter member for outstanding service and volunteer efforts for a single major event.

Apryl is a senior member of STC and a member of STC Chicago since 2007. This award is an acknowledgement of her extensive and ongoing contributions to making the Chicago eLearning & Technology Showcase a success. Apryl first came on board the Showcase team in 2008, when she served as technology point person at the very busy event. In 2009, she designed the official program guide for the event. In 2010, she designed the program, and worked on speaker selection, website coordination, and committee management. She is a well-deserving recipient of this award. Apryl's award citation reads: "For your dedication to the Chicago eLearning & Technology Showcase, your support of the collaborative spirit of this project, your positive attitude, and willingness to share your time and talent with the great eLearning community in Chicago."

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Certificate of Awesomeness – William D. Leavitt

In addition to our annual Chapter Awards, this year we also recognized one of our long-time members as he celebrated his 50th year in the field of technical communication. This gentleman has been a practitioner and professional for fifty years, influencing others with generosity, wisdom, and humor. We were proud to recognize him as a member of our community

and thank him for his enthusiastic participation and countless contributions.

Bill’s special certificate reads: “This certifies that William D. Leavitt is a genuine friend, teacher, and leader in the field of technical communication.” Ω

STC Chicago 2010-2011 Technical Communication Competition Wrap-up

By Kim Sikora and Elizabeth Burke

Once again, our Technical Communication Competition was a huge success. The STC Chicago competition is an annual event that allows those in the Technical Communication field to submit work for review and evaluation by peers. *For the lone writer or contract consultant*, it provides the opportunity to receive feedback that may be unavailable in a work environment. *For those on a team*, maybe with many writers, it provides a different point of view. *For our judges*, it provides the opportunity to see how others present content, and apply different design approaches or different styles. For all involved...a win - win!

This year our judges took on an additional challenge, the entire format of the competition changed with new categories and new judging forms. We are very thankful for those that volunteered as judges. Without our judges, we could not possibly hold the competition.

- Molley Barrett
- Elizabeth L. Burke
- Camille Costa
- Margaret Dawn
- Mary De Jong
- MaryKay Grueneberg
- Carolyne Hurlbut
- Cynthia Laughlin
- Gwynne Monahan
- Cheri Noble
- Thomas Reed

The competition committee received a total of 27 entries, from 8 companies this year.

- Argonne National Laboratory
- Blue Coat Systems
- Corel Corporation
- Copresco
- Firm58
- Motorola
- S&S Cycle
- Sandia National Laboratories

While it is always possible for an entry to receive no award, we are happy to share that all entries received an award this year. There were 8 Distinguished, 14 Excellence, and 5 Merit awards presented.

This year we also presented two Best of Show awards, an outstanding achievement for the winners.

The Craft of Scientific Communication

Joseph Harmon

Alan Gross

Christie Henry

2009 Argonne Leadership Computing Facility (ALCF)

Science Brochure

Michele M. Nelson

Cheryl G. Drugan

Chel Heinzl

Once again, thank you to everyone who participated in this year's competition and CONGRATULATIONS to all! Ω

“Technical Communication in a Digital Age” Course to be Offered this Summer

By *Jessica Reyman*

The NIU-STC Institute for Professional Development will offer “Technical Communication in a Digital Age” this summer. The course is designed for people with little or no experience in the field, though it often enrolls a wide range of participants, including workplace professionals. The course consists of seven Saturday workshops (9:00 am - 4:00 pm), each led by an expert in the workshop topic. Participants also work on hands-on projects related to writing for online media. Participants earn three hours of undergraduate or graduate credit through Northern Illinois University. The course professor will be Dr. Jessica Reyman, assistant professor of Rhetoric and Professional Writing at NIU.

Registration is now open. For registration information, visit <http://www.reg.niu.edu/regrec/registration/reginfo.shtml>, or contact the NIU Office of Registration and Records at (815) 753-0681 or by email at regrec@niu.edu. Participants should register for ENGL 424 (undergraduate) or ENGL 624 (graduate). Tuition information can be found at <http://www.niu.edu/bursar/tuition/tuition.shtml>.

Other questions? Please contact Jessica Reyman at 815-753-6644 or by email at jreyman@niu.edu.

Schedule for Technical Communication in a Digital Age, Summer 2011

June 18 Introduction to the Course
Jessica Reyman, NIU

June 25 Getting Technical about Editing Websites
Jesse Racine, Xeno Media

July 9 Socializing Your Content: Using Wikis for Content Management
Chris Hester, Infogix

July 16 Web Accessibility and Universal Design
Karl Stolley, Illinois Institute of Technology

July 23 A Usable Workflow: DIY Website User Testing
Kristi Leach, Independent Contractor

July 30 Writing in Multimedia
Cheryl Ball, Illinois State University

August 6 Participant Presentations
Ω

Recap: Story Night with STC Chicago

By *MaryKay Grueneberg*

Our February networking meeting was great fun. In our first-ever “Story Night with STC Chicago,” 22 Chapter members came out to Ballydoyle Irish Pub and Restaurant in Downers Grove to share stories from the technical communication world. This fun evening was offered free to our members as our annual member appreciation event. Attendees were treated to delicious hors d’oeuvres that included BBQ boneless chicken wings, mini meatballs in marinara sauce, spinach and artichoke dip, and a veggie platter. We all had some good laughs and more than a few groans at some of the crazy, zany, and just plain whacky stories from the field. Everyone in attendance received a special “trophy” and a grab-bag prize for their story-telling efforts! Ω



April Meeting – Grassroots Documentation Testing

Do you ever feel limited in your knowledge of the usability needs of your audience?

If you don't have first hand exposure to your customer base, how can you ensure the usability of your documentation?

After reading *Rocket Surgery Made Easy* by Steve Krug, Kristi Leach and her tech comm department decided to adapt Krug's do-it-yourself website testing method to test documentation, with an important variable: they tested on co-workers. The resulting benefits were not the ones she expected, nor were the challenges quite the same as the ones covered in Krug's book.

Join us Thursday, April 28th to learn from Kristi about grassroots documentation testing in your workplace. She'll address topics such as using available resources, testing your content, using collaboration as a problem-solving tool, and producing solutions can use in your documentation efforts.

Where:

The CARA Group
Drake Oak Brook Plaza
2215 York Road
Oak Brook, IL 60523

When:

Thursday April 28, 2011 from 6:30 PM to 9:00 PM CDT

To Register:

Go to www.stc-chicago.org, click on Meetings, and click Register.

Contact:

Andi Dunn
STC Chicago
program10@stc-chicago.org Ω

Upcoming Conferences

May 15 – 18, 2011

STC 2011 Technical Communication Summit

Sacramento, CA

www.stc.org

May 9 – 11, 2011

Confab: The Content Strategy Conference

Minneapolis, MN

<http://confab2011.com>

<http://twitter.com/confab2011>

June 6 – 7, 2011

Web Content Conference

Chicago, IL

<http://www.webcontent2011.com> Ω

STC Membership at a Glance

Total members: 13,263

Members residing in the U.S.: 11,236

Members residing in Canada: 1,206

Members residing elsewhere: 821

Total communities*: 155

*Includes 104 professional chapters, 30 student chapters, and 21 SIGs. Ω

STC Chicago Membership at a Glance

Total Affiliated Members: 201

Associate Fellows: 5

Fellows: 5

Members: 54

Senior Members: 119

Student Members: 18 Ω

STC Chicago Member Spotlight—Chris Hester



Member Since: 1987

Job Title: Content Specialist

STC Affiliation: Associate Fellow

Years of Experience: 20 or more

Tech Comm Philosophy: “Get Excited and Make Things.”
And yes, I strategically reuse that from a t-shirt (which I have).

Favorite STC Moment: When I submit my committee reports to the AC on time.

Favorite Work Moment: When they let me use the whiteboard. I love the whiteboard.

Working on Now: A couple of content strategy projects, materials for the Institute class I’m teaching in July, a couple of presentations, and the BigDesign conference.

Favorite Movie: Netflix

Favorite Music: It’s all good. I like to create playlists for projects and presentations, sometimes for fun, sometimes as a coping mechanism.

Favorite Book: My cookbooks.

Favorite Technical Communication Guru(s): unsuck-it.com

Where’d I like to be 10 years from now: On a regular sleep schedule. Ω

Recap: STC Chicago Recognition Banquet

In past years, the annual STC Chicago banquet had become known as “the competition awards banquet,” with most of the focus going to the winners of the annual competition. While we definitely wanted to acknowledge all of the winners of the annual Technical Communications Competition, we also wanted to bring the focus back to members of our Chapter. This year, we did just that.

52 people, both STC Chicago members and non-members alike, joined us on March 10 at Charlie’s Charhouse in Elk Grove Village for our annual banquet. This year’s banquet was truly a recognition banquet of grand proportions. The banquet had three distinct purposes: Chapter recognition, Competition Awards, and STC Summit – Destination 2012. As you read in the President’s Message, we celebrated quite a number of Chapter members for their service to our Chapter and their dedication to the technical communication field. In addition,

we celebrated Chris Hester’s conferment as an STC Associate Fellow and we celebrated Bill Leavitt’s milestone of 50 years in the technical communications field. Then, we acknowledged the winners of our annual Technical Communications Competition. Many of the judges and almost all of the award winners were on hand to help celebrate the accomplishments of this year’s competition entrants. Finally, Bill Leavitt, our Chapter Historian, gave us a great review of the history of the STC Summits. He concluded his presentation by reminding everyone that the 2012 STC Summit will take place in our own backyard, at the Hyatt Regency in Rosemont. STC Chicago will be the Chapter host and we plan to help make it great! Ω

Byline

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