Byline

Bi-Monthly Newsletter for STC Chicago Members

STC Chicago Honored at 2011 TechComm Summit

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The STC Chicago Chapter received not one but two special awards at the Honors Banquet at this year's TechComm Summit in Sacramento on May 17, 2011.

The first award is a Community Achievement Award (CAA) of **Community of Distinction** for 2010. This is the highest level of CAA that is awarded by STC to Chapters or SIGs. This marks the fourth year we have received this award level; we earned Distinction in 2006, 2007, 2008 and we received a Community of Excellence in 2009. The annual Community Achievement Awards program run by the Society is meant to "recognize, in a visible and meaningful manner, communities that demonstrate outstanding, innovative, and sustained performance in advancing the goals of the Society."

Our notification email from the Society stated, "As one of the most consistent and active communities in the CAA process, your community had another year filled with many activities. The CAAEC hopes that your community will continue to aspire to a high level with a set of impressive initiatives and activities next year."

Our award citation read, "For continued excellence in member services, an outstanding e-Learning & Technology Showcase, and a camaraderie that is 'priceless'."

STC Chicago was also named as **Community of the Year**. This is a new Society level award. Each Chapter or SIG that earned the CAA level of Distinction was eligible for this award. STC Chicago was awarded the Community of the Year for having the highest number of application points among the CAA Distinction winners.

Congratulations to the 2010-11 Administrative Council, committee managers, volunteers, and the entire membership of STC Chicago! Ω

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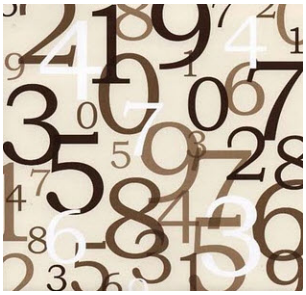
President's Message - STC Chicago by the Numbers

By MaryKay Grueneberg



As I tried to decide on a topic for my last President's Message, I realized that this presidential year just flew by. At first, I couldn't figure out where the time went. But then, I started to look at STC Chicago by the numbers and I quickly saw why time flew by. WE ARE A BUSY CHAPTER! Here's a list of some interesting numbers that help to describe our 2010-11 year:

1 newly installed Associate Fellow

2 STC Summit Awards

3 DCSA winners

4 Student awards, given at **2** science fairs

4 Special Chapter Recognition Awards given at the annual banquet

5 Administrative Council officers

5 Fellows in our Chapter

5 Associate Fellows in our Chapter

7 locations were used for our Chapter meetings (including Elk Grove Village, Downers Grove, West Loop, Buffalo Grove, Oak Park, Oakbrook, and Arlington Heights)

8 companies entered our local Tech Comm Competition

10 programs or meetings were offered in the past **12** months

11 judges participated in our local Tech Comm Competition

15 active committees help to run the Chapter

27 entries in our local Tech Comm Competition

73 Job postings by members for members through the Yahoo Groups list

135 Chapter members

2012 The year STC Chicago hosts the annual STC Summit!

The Society of Technical Communication has **104** professional Chapters, **30** student Chapters,
and **21** SIGS. That's a total of **155** distinct STC communities.
BUT…
there is **only 1** Community of the Year…STC Chicago!!

I am proud to be a member of a fantastic STC Chapter. I am honored to have served as your Chapter President for the past year. I look forward to an awesome 2011-12 program year! Ω

Thinking About the Past Year as Vice President and a Look Forward

By Elizabeth Burke

While our calendar year does not end for a little over six more months, my role as Vice President ends in a few short days. Wow, what a year! I could not imagine last July when I began this role what we would accomplish. Yes, we had a structure and a plan but it seemed unreal at the start. Knowing the team in place, I knew it was not impossible - just an incredible plan.

MaryKay shared many of the great things we, as a chapter, accomplished last year so I won't repeat the information but we did do great things. Go back and read it again, it is impressive. I *will repeat* that not only did we achieve *Community of Distinction* but we were also honored with the first *Community of the Year* award due to our efforts. Yay, STC Chicago!

As a participant of STC Chicago, you have a great resource at your disposal. STC Chicago supports your effort with information, activities, opportunities, and resources. Take advantage! Utilize your chapter benefits! And…yes, get involved. I encourage you to volunteer and get active, in little ways or big. You will appreciate the experience and the benefits.

Looking forward… as I finish my role as Vice President, I begin my role as President. In this role, I look forward to supporting our chapter and all of our member and non-member participants. Again, we have many goals to accomplish but I am determined to do all that I can to accomplish our goals and support our chapter. Additionally, the STC Summit will be held in Rosemont in 2012. This is an incredible event. I encourage you to start planning now to attend.

Finally, thanks to everyone involved in the chapter activities and events. I hope you enjoyed your experience as much as I did. I encourage you to continue your involvement. I know you will enjoy next year's activities as well.

Have a great and safe summer! Ω

Some Things Never Change

By Linda Kelley

In the last 21 years, I've been to STC conferences in Santa Clara, Seattle, Cincinnati, Chicago, Minneapolis, Philadelphia, Dallas, and, this year, Sacramento. Of course, during that time the buzzwords and acronyms have changed. The bleeding edge has gone far beyond COM, Java, SGML, HTML, and even (rumor has it) XML to wikis, DITA, EPUB, and AIR. Meet-ups have become tweet-ups, and this year we even had our own Summit Social Event Site.

What hasn't changed throughout all those years, however, is the feeling I get when I attend the Summit. The best way I can think to describe it is rejuvenated.

When I hear Neil Perlin expounding on mobile content, Jack Molisani explaining how to build a successful business case, and Scott Abel discussing the impact of social networking, I am re-energized. And when I get the opportunity to meet — in person — the development team responsible for the tools I use every day, I am revitalized. Then when I walk through the Expo Hall and see all of the cool new tools, I am recharged (and maybe a little bit consumed with desire).

But, by far the most invigorating thing is spending several days with people who do what I do. These are the people who understand the frustration of working with uncooperative SMEs and the joy of constructing a help system that looks exactly the way I want it to. No matter where they're from, they speak my language. At the Summit, we can exchange ideas, business cards, and the occasional horror story.

So, it doesn't matter if I was feeling a little burnt out at work before I left. It doesn't matter if I have 249 messages waiting for my attention when I get back. As always, I return home from the Summit excited, once again, about my profession. Ω

STC Chicago is Hosting the 2012 TechComm Summit

Next year's Summit takes place in Rosemont, Illinois just minutes from Chicago. The "City of Roses" will welcome technical communicators from near and far from 20-23 May 2012. All events will take place at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare.

Keep your eye on our website, www.stc-chicago.org and on the TechComm Summit site www.summit.stc.org for updates as planning progresses.

If you would like to help at the 2012 Summit or if you have any questions, please contact STC Chicago's Summit Host Committee at sct2012@stc-chicago.org. Ω

STC Chicago 2011-2012 Technical Communication Competition

A quick note to let everyone know that we are already making plans for our annual competition. We will announce details soon. Again, this year we will use the STC International forms and format that we used during the 2010-2011 competition. We received excellent feedback from our submitters and our judges about the revised forms.

Start gathering your entries now and watch for our announcement. Ω

Recap: April Meeting

22 STC members and non-members, including four members of the NIU STC Student Chapter, attended the April 28, 2011 meeting, "Grassroots Documentation Testing," presented by STC member Kristi Leach. This was a hands-on, collaborative session intended to provide general concepts surrounding the process of documentation testing. Although approximately half of the audience had some experience in usability testing, everyone was able to take away a few tips and tricks on how to set up and perform the testing.

The meeting was sponsored by CARA, who graciously donated the meeting space in their offices in Oakbrook, IL. CARA is a consulting firm specializing in custom learning and performance solutions for Fortune 1000 organizations. Ω

A View From the Summit

By Cheris Noble

In 2002, I was a member of the Southwestern Michigan Chapter of STC and had only attended one monthly meeting. Basically, I was not an active member at all. I attended my first STC Summit that year. The Summit was great. The topics of the sessions were so varied and the speakers were very knowledgeable. I learned a lot and was able to take some insights back to my workplace.

When I moved to the Chicagoland area in 2006, I changed my membership to the Chicago Chapter and decided that to learn more about the Chapter to help my career; I needed to be an active member. So, I started to attend meetings (and learned very quickly about what time to leave to get from one place to another after work!). The topics were just what I needed and the presenters were great. But, the most important thing I learned was that we have some of the best people in STC right here in our Chapter.

I decided to attend the STC Summit this year. My company does not sponsor this type of event, so I took a week of vacation and paid for the Summit on my own. Just like the last time I attended, the topics were relevant and the speakers were great. But, this time, I noticed that by being an active member of our Chapter, I was able to share information and learn from the members of our Chapter at the Summit. Then, I found myself meeting, learning, and sharing with other members of STC. My favorite way to learn is from each other. What a great and diverse group we belong to!

My big takeaway was that by participating in our monthly STC events and getting to know our members better made my overall experience at the Summit that much more powerful. Some members that I used to just talk with at our monthly meetings are now my friends!

My suggestion to you is that if you never attended one of the STC Chicago monthly meetings; make the time to attend at least one. I promise that you will be welcomed and you will walk away with more knowledge you can use and may even make a friend or two. Then, plan to attend the Summit next year right here in Chicago (Rosemont)!

I can't wait for next year's Summit in Chicago. Ω

Amendment for Student Voting Approved at Annual Business Meeting

By Kevin Cuddihy on 17 May 2011 (reprinted from STC's Notebook)

The member-proposed amendment to allow student voting was approved by an overwhelming majority at the STC Annual Business Meeting last night, 16 May, at the Summit in Sacramento, CA.

STC member Bill Swallow introduced the amendment through a petition earlier in the year, and after 20 minutes of debate, the matter was put to a vote. A two-thirds majority of the 100-plus voting members was necessary to amend the bylaws, but the vote was so one-sided that an exact count was unnecessary.

"I penned the amendment in response to last year's Board vote" on student voting, explained Swallow. "The membership reaction to that vote and the feedback I saw prompted me to move forward." He continued, "I'm very pleased that it passed with a near unanimous vote as well. More importantly, I'm pleased that the students now have an equal say in where STC is going."

The vote officially amends Article III, Section 3, Paragraph A of the Society for Technical Communication Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws to say:

Voting rights. Each and every member in good standing is entitled to one vote on each matter submitted to the membership for a vote. No class of membership will have any restrictions on its voting eligibility. The term "voting members" or "voting membership," when used in these Bylaws, shall refer to all membership classifications.

In new business, Bernard Aschwanden followed up on the momentum of the students by introducing a motion that the Board be requested to put an emphasis on growing student membership and increasing its offerings to student members. The pro and con comments were evenly split, with most of the "con" comments stating that the Board was already very active in working for student members. In the final vote, the motion passed by a slim 60-59 margin.

Aschwanden commented on both votes after the meeting. "This is a great day for membership as we now recognize student members fully," he enthused. "STC, hold your head high. The resounding vote supporting the motion sends a loud, clear, and positive message for the future of our community. The board has been given a mandate to see students as full members in STC, and will, I am sure, work hard to consider ways to increase our student membership and increase student member value. Students—welcome aboard!

In other news from the Annual Business Meeting, Hillary Hart was officially installed as the 2011-2012 President, with Alan Houser taking her side as Vice President. Aiessa Moyna was officially reinstalled as Treasurer, while Rich Maggiani and Tricia Spayer were reinstalled as Directors and Leah Guren and Jack Molisani were installed as members of the Nominating Committee. Ω

Get Your Science On

By Chris Hester

STC Chicago got involved with the science fairs in 1986. We work with two groups: the Chicago Public Schools Science Fair, Inc. (www. chicagostudentsciencefair.org) and the Chicago Non-public Science Exposition (www. qrc.depaul.edu/ijas2).

Background

For the science fair, students have the option of doing a project or a paper (or both) in the available categories. The students at both fairs are in grades 7 - 12. There are two types of judging - regular and special. Regular judges evaluate papers and projects according to state-set criteria, and award winners advance to the state science fair. Special judges may focus only on a specific category or cross-disciplinary set of projects, and they typically have their own criteria. It's possible that a student could receive several special awards and no regular awards.

What We Do

STC Chicago sees the science fair as an opportunity for students to communicate what they learned about their projects, and the project board (or poster) as the means to do that. Whereas most judges evaluate five or six projects and interview the students, we review **all** of the posters and give awards to those that demonstrate basic principles of good writing and design.

I have been judging science fair posters for the past ten years, and when I look at the posters, I ask myself questions like:

- Do I understand the writing? How are the style and tone?
- Is the layout clean and attractive? Do the graphics make sense?
- What about the basics, such as using numbered steps, punctuation, word choice?
- Are there signs of creative thinking? Critical thinking?
- How well does the poster convey the purpose of the project?

When I ask questions, how clearly and effectively does the student provide an answer?

For each fair, STC Chicago provides Distinguished and Excellence awards in the form of savings bonds.

This past February, I judged papers for the first time with the non-public schools group. My judging partner and I listened to students present their research projects, and then we had the opportunity to ask questions before completing our evaluation. It was a different experience than judging posters, and I really enjoyed learning how students approach and present their research in that format.

What We Plan to Do

On that same day as the papers judging, I taught a workshop on how to critique scientific papers and provide effective feedback. The purpose of the workshop was to help the teachers and sponsors responsible for coaching students who would be refining their papers for state. We plan to conduct more workshops this fall, including workshops such as "how to communicate scientific and technical information," which will help both students and teachers.

Working with the science fair teams has been very educational and rewarding. If you would like to participate on the Science Fair committee and help with the workshops or be a judge, please contact me at chrishester@comcast.net. Ω

STC Chicago's Annual Business Meeting and Networking Event: June 14

It's still not too late to register for this event. You're invited to join **STC Chicago** members on June 14 for our community's Annual Business Meeting and Networking Event.

We're gathering again this year for the official "passing of the gavel" from this year's president to the incoming president. Meet our Chapter's newly elected officers and committee members and hear about the recent TechComm Summit and get the scoop on some of the plans for the 2011-12 program year.

Don't miss this fun evening of networking and great food from California Pizza Kitchen. The event is free to all, but **please RSVP** so we know whether or not to expect you. See the Chapter website for details www.stc-chicago.org or go directly to the registration page at www.conta.cc/IFMZcj.

Where:

California Pizza Kitchen
Arlington Town Square
3 South Evergreen
Arlington Heights, IL 600005

When:

Tuesday June 14, 2011
6:00 PM to 8:30 PM CDT

Cost:

Free to all. Non-alcoholic beverages and appetizers are included. Dinner food is available for purchase.
Ω

Chicago eLearning & Technology Showcase: Call for Speakers

By Linda Jansak

Would you like to share your expertise on how technology can be used to create, enhance, or manage elearning? If so, consider submitting a presentation proposal for one of the 50-minute breakout sessions at the **2011 Chicago eLearning & Technology Showcase**. We also have opportunities for you to be a member of a panel or a progression in which you provide a 12-minute presentation of one of your elearning projects. Details and the official proposal form can be accessed at www.chicagoeleqrningshowcase.com.

This year's Showcase will take place on Tuesday, August 16, with more than 250 professionals in attendance. As a speaker, you will pay no costs or registration fees, and you can attend the keynote presentation, other breakout sessions, and networking events for free. (Only one free admission per session. Co-presenters will pay a discounted registration fee.) The application deadline is **Thursday, June 23**. If you have any questions, contact speakers@chicagoelearningshowcase.com.

About the Showcase

In 2008, 2009, and 2010, the Chicago eLearning & Technology Showcase earned the enthusiastic praise of attendees and presenters alike. We will gather again on August 16, 2011 to celebrate the evolution of adult learning and performance. Registration will open in mid-June.

The Showcase provides a full day of presentations with an emphasis on the role of new media and interactive methods in business and institutional training. Our speakers explore all aspects of elearning--instructional design, development tools, media resources, virtual classrooms, social and interactive applications, mobile learning, rapid elearning, and more.

Interested in sponsoring or being an exhibitor at the 2011 Showcase? Please contact us at sponsorship@chicagoelearningshowcase.com. for details. Ω

STC Chicago Membership at a Glance

Total Affiliated Members: 135

Associate Fellows: 4

Fellows: 5

Members: 31

Senior Members: 87

Student Members: 8 Ω

Byline

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Advertising: We encourage advertising that follows STC guidelines and promotes services to STC Chicago members.
Half page (7.5"x4.5"): $300 (1 issue)
Whole page (7.5"x9"): $500 (1 issue).
Discounts for multiple issues. For details, go to our web site at www.stc-chicago.org and click on Byline Advertising.

The advertisement and payment must be received by the 20th of the month before the next published issue of the newsletter (*Byline* is published in February, April, June, August, October, and December). We will not run your ad until payment is received. Submit ad files in electronic copy only in .tif, .gif, or .jpg format to byline@stc-chicago.org .

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