



Bi-Monthly Newsletter for STC Chicago Members

President's Message

By Elizabeth Gecas

We have come upon the Dog Days of summer. In these super-heated days, I find myself out running. You may say, "That's crazy!" I see it as a challenge worth taking on. My running schedule may look daunting to some, (4 miles on M/W/F, 6 miles on T/Th) but I have a goal to cross that finish line and complete my second half-marathon. Running a race that long may seem impossible, but it can be done. Preparing for a race involves many different parts to make it happen. It needs a location to host the course, vendors to provide restrooms, food, supplies, first aid, runners, and most importantly; it needs volunteers. These pieces are necessary to assist each runner in crossing the finish line.

Just as a race needs multiple people involved to make it happen, so does STC. Our chapter would not be as successful as it is without the support of the committees that volunteer their spare time to keep us running towards that finish line. With that said, STC is in need of volunteers to support our committees. You can make a difference and gain experience for your resume and portfolio. Check out our list of committees on the last page of this newsletter to see what might interest you. Maybe this is your first race. Maybe you are like me and you are looking to challenge yourself again. It is never too late to start. If you, or someone you know, is interested in getting involved in a committee, we would appreciate you reaching out and let us know.

I would also like to invite you to check our list of upcoming programs scheduled for the remaining months of 2017 inside this newsletter. Ω

The VIP Program...begins NOW

Last August, we launched our new Volunteer Incentive Program (VIP). During the entire program year (August 2016 through June 2017), all members who volunteered in big or small ways were entered into a drawing for a gift card for dinner for two. Members received one ticket for each time they volunteered. At our end-of-year celebration in June, we awarded the winner with a \$100 gift certificate to Texas de Brazil (that is dinner for two)! Our lucky winner was **Linda Kelley**.

Since everyone loved being a VIP so much, we have decided to relaunch the program for the 2017-18 program year. The winner will be selected next June at our end-of-year celebration.

Remember...volunteer in big ways or small ways...it all counts! Here are just some of the ways you can be entered into this year's raffle:

- ✚ write an article for Byline on a tech comm topic
- ✚ be a competition judge
- ✚ work check-in at a program meeting
- ✚ print name tags for a monthly meeting
- ✚ write a meeting recap for Byline
- ✚ make centerpieces for our annual banquet
- ✚ help contact schools regarding our scholarship program
- ✚ secure a sponsor for a meeting

...and so much more!

Let's see what ways you can come up with to volunteer! Ω

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Join us for the 10th Anniversary of the eLearning Showcase

By: Apryl Cox

Online, advance registration closes soon for the 2017 Chicago eLearning & Technology Showcase. Don't miss your chance to attend this year's event! Sunday, August 13 is the deadline for advance, online registration.

The full-day conference begins with a keynote session by Connie Malamed, the eLearning Coach. Then, you can choose from 22 breakout sessions presented by 38 speakers in 4 time slots. You'll return to work with inspiration and new skills to make your eLearning projects more effective.

You are also invited to a special after-party to help celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Showcase. After the conference, stay to network with other industry professionals, enjoy interactive entertainment with our hosts from ComedySportz, and enter a special prize drawing. Appetizers are included, and a cash bar is available.

Reserve your seat today for the conference, the after-party, or both. Register now!

We can't wait to see you on August 15 at the NIU Naperville Conference Center. Ω

Congratulations!

Please join us in congratulating our fellow technical communicators.

Francis Bao – Francis received an **APEX 2017** Award of Excellence in Print Media – Membership & Customer Materials for *i-H2O Intelligently Designed Water*.

Lynn Buck – Celebrating 20 Years of Service with Copresco, a Chicago area digital printing firm. “Lynn’s background was in conventional offset printing and bindery, but she soon warmed up to our digital production processes and fast Copies Overnight turnaround times,” says Copresco President Steve Johnson. Buck was promoted to production manager in 2006 and is now responsible for Copresco’s shop floor and the production of millions of pages of publications, books, and manuals. Her duties include all facets of the book manufacturing process, including prepress, digital printing, binding, shipping, warehousing, and fulfillment operations.



Is there something you or a fellow colleague is celebrating in a technical communication career? Share the news with us and we will include it in a future issue of Byline. Ω

Did you know?

...STC Member Perks Program

Did you know that STC membership came with an STC Member Perks program?

STC members can take advantage of a variety of services and products offered at special discount rates for members only. Use of these discounted services and products can result in achieving a true return on your investment in membership.

The newest partner is Deluxe, who is offering 50% off your first order of checks, business forms, or any of a number of business items, with a 15% discount on subsequent orders.

Check out the companies currently offering special STC member discounts:



Check <https://www.stc.org/members/perks/> for full details on the STC Member Perks program. Ω

STC Chicago 2017 Tech Comm Competition – Opens September 1

STC Chicago has hosted a technical publications competition for the past 46 years. Our Chapter has one of the longest running annual competitions in STC. This year is no different. Registration for our 47th competition will open on September 1, 2017.

The competition is an invaluable opportunity for technical communicators and their teams to...

- ✚ • receive detailed feedback from multiple peer reviewers

- ✚ • receive recognition for outstanding work effort
- ✚ • provide employers with validation of tech comm efforts

Everyone is eligible to submit entries to our competition; you do not need to be a member of STC. You can enter work you completed or you can submit an entry on behalf of a colleague or subordinate. The entry must have been produced or substantially revised within the 24 months prior to September 1, 2017 and cannot have been submitted previously to any STC competition.

Submission deadline is October 28, 2016.

For full competition and submission details, see our competition page at <http://www.stc-chicago.com/competition/>.

Submission and payment links will be posted online by September 1.

If you have any questions, please contact our Competition Committee via email at competition@stc-chicago.com.

An important note about this year's competition: In past years, Distinguished winners from our local competition have automatically moved on to the international Summit Awards competition, and Excellence winners had the option to move on as well. However, there will not be a 2018 International Summit Awards competition. STC is taking the year off to review, evaluate, and refine the competition. STC is planning to bring the international competition back in 2019. Ω



Call for 2017 Competition Judges

We are recruiting judges for the annual STC Chicago Technical Writing Competition. Judges have a unique opportunity to review entries from different categories and industries. Entries can be websites, manuals, help documentation, posters, newsletters, etc. Past entries have come from industries as diverse as aerospace, manufacturing, agricultural, software, and medical associations. Reviewing such different work can be educational as well as inspiring. You also get to interact with other judges and benefit from their experience.

How does judging work?

Judges are placed in 3-member teams with a designated team lead. The team members receive 3-5 entries that must be reviewed over an 8-week period. Judging this year will run from November 4 through December 30. Each judge reviews the entries using a 4-page form that highlights different elements of technical communication. Responses are shared within the team and modified if necessary as the team comes to consensus on award status of the entry.

Where do I sign up?

A link to judge applications will be posted on our website by September 1. If you have any questions, please contact our Competition Committee via email at competition@stc-chicago.com. Ω



June & July STC Chicago Program Recaps

Celebration, Business Meeting, and Trivia!

Our June meeting was all business, except for the fun parts! We introduced and welcomed our new officers and ended the program year with questions, questions, and more trivia questions. This annual tradition was just as much fun as the previous years and if you missed it, be sure to mark your calendars for June 2018 to celebrate another year of STC fun.

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People First Content Strategy: What I Learned from Facebook for Business

Speaker: Jack Molisani

Recap by: *Pete Wagner*

The well-attended July chapter meeting at the Olive Garden in Downers Grove featured STC favorite Jack Molisani, president of ProSpring Technical Staffing and the author of *Be the Captain of Your Career: A New Approach to Career Planning and Advancement*. Jack is also the Executive Director of the LavaCon Conference on Content Strategy and TechComm Management.

The presentation, People-First Content Strategy (and You), described how Facebook for Business inspired Jack to change his approach to content strategy and his ability to enable customer success. He talked about how the audience can use these concepts to enhance their careers.

Facebook has 1.7 billion customers, with 60 million pages dedicated to businesses. The goal of Facebook for Business is to solve a business problem. However, businesses are made up of people, so the ultimate goal is to solve people's problems. This was illustrated with the small business success story of Camy Newman's Pop Up Plus, an online shop catering to curvy trendsetters' sizes 14+. What was the goal of the Facebook for Business content strategy team? There were multiple business-related goals (see figure 1), but

the ultimate goal was to make Camy’s customers feel sexy!

Facebook Case Study



Figure 1: FBB Business Goals and Ultimate Goal

This was Jack’s “Ah Ha!” moment, which changed how he approached his job. As LavaCon director, he had always touted conference features: content strategy, content engineering, and tech comm management. This led him to the realization that “OMG, I’ve been selling ads, or at best, I’ve been selling dresses.” In turn, he refocused LavaCon’s goals on the attendees: “enhance your skills, find your tribe, and make a difference.” The updated mission statement became:

- ✦ To help companies solve content-related business problems
- ✦ To give attendees skills that will advance their career
- ✦ To provide a place where content professionals can advance the field

How does this translate into your career “ah ha” moment? Start by figuring out where you can solve problems, at your job, in business cases, during job interviews, responding to market changes. If you ask STC fellow Andrea Ames, what she does for a living, she won’t say “I’m a content strategist” or “I’m an information architect” (although she certainly does both of those things). Rather, she communicates what she does (and her organizational value) to executives by saying “I solve business problems.” What a great personal brand! It instantly communicates what she does and why she is valuable!

Whose problem can you solve today? Ω

STC Chicago Upcoming Programs

Watch www.stc-chicago.com for full details and registration links

August 24

Summit Remix: What you missed and why you should attend professional conferences

Speakers: MK Grueneberg, Chris Hester, Linda Jansak, and Linda Kelley

For those who could not attend the annual STC Summit, this meeting will have four members each give a 15-minute presentation on their best takeaways from the Summit. They will share their thoughts on specific sessions, the Summit as a whole, and on the advantages of professional conferences in general.

- ✦ **Linda Jansak** will talk about the non-educational sessions and events, including networking sessions, the vendor expo, special group lunches, keynote speakers, the annual board meeting, and the honors reception.
- ✦ **MK Grueneberg** will talk about the value of continuing education at any level of your career. No matter where you are on your career path, there is always something to be learned – especially in an ever-changing field like Tech Comm.
- ✦ **Linda Kelley** will share key take-aways and tips from the educational sessions she attended.
- ✦ **Chris Hester** will wrap up with a discussion of the “value vs cost” of a conference and how to assess/justify attending (i.e., how to build a case for going).

Location for this meeting: Ram Restaurant in Schaumburg

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September 21

Why Content Strategy is more important than ever during this Digital Transformation Era

Speaker: Ruben Martinez, Quark Enterprise Solutions

Time for a new Content Strategy – It's not surprising to learn that most global businesses have transitioned away from print-centric communications strategies to accommodate demands for digital and mobile content. What IS surprising? Most businesses continue to rely on outdated methods of creating, managing, and distributing content, regardless of the intended output.

These methods, which range from managing review processes with email and PDF's to storing content in insufficient content management systems, are loaded with manual processes that make them increasingly inflexible, time-consuming, and expensive, not to mention require constant rework.

Meanwhile, consumer demand for the right content at the right time and on the right device and in an enriched self-service experience is growing exponentially. Without a new content strategy, most teams will remain overwhelmed - which leads to drops in productivity, missed opportunities, and lost revenue.

How can we educate and align content strategy goals with upper management and help our organizations stay competitive? Ruben Martinez, of Quark Enterprise Solutions, will tell us!

Location for this meeting: CARA offices, Oakbrook

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October 26

Hello World! RIP Traditional Content Strategies and Methodologies

Speaker: Pam Noreault

To adapt to changes in content consumption and learning preferences, documentation teams are employing alternative content strategies, which employ aspects of crowdsourcing, social media, gamification, and YouTube. In this interactive session, you will gain insight, ideas, and knowledge about how to shift away from traditional content delivery mechanisms.

About the Speaker

Pam Noreault has over 20 years of experience in technical communications, education, and management. She specializes in content strategy, customer engagement, content conversions, and social networking strategies. She has an undergraduate degree in education from The Ohio State University and a master's degree in English and Professional Writing from Wright State University. When not trying out new gadgets or trying to innovate in the business world, she is hiking with her two dogs.

Location for this meeting: Olive Garden, Downers Grove. Ω

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Byline

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