

Byline



Bi-Monthly Newsletter for STC Chicago Members

President's Message – Happy New Year!

By Elizabeth Burke

I realize at this point the New Year celebrations have come and gone, and we are already well past New Year's Day. However, this is our first issue of Byline in the new year and for those of you whom I have not seen yet this year, I did not want to miss the opportunity to wish you well. 2012 promises to be a very rich and busy year!

It is already February and we are busy with Chapter activities. We have already held our first program meeting of the year and have a full slate of upcoming activities. I encourage you to join us. Our program meetings are not just about the excellent content that our speakers bring to us; it is also the opportunity to gather with your fellow writers, instructional designers, web designers, and all technical communicators.

You might be surprised by the benefits a single meeting offers. At each meeting, we learn from excellent speakers about topics impacting the world of technical communication. Our attendees announce jobs that are open and companies seeking new talent. We provide a forum for you to reach out about a problem or a different idea in approaching your work.

We have completed the judging for our annual competition. The winners have been contacted with their honors and planning is underway for our Recognition and Awards Banquet.

As always, this year's banquet is shaping up to be spectacular. We will honor our members who volunteer their time and effort to make the Chicago chapter a value-added organization. We have a very dedicated volunteer group striving to serve our membership in the best possible way. It is only right to come together once a year to reflect and acknowledge that effort.

Additionally, as we recognize our competition winners, we honor those whose day-to-day work makes technical communications the profession of choice. Consider reserving a table for your co-workers to attend together. The evening is always fun and provides a chance to get together with some of the most talented people in the business!

I know you have read with each issue this year and through many of our social media communications about the Summit. We have been talking about and promoting the event for over a year now, but we are approaching the final stretch. Our Summit committee has done an excellent job working with STC International and local participants to support the Summit in a big way. The committee's effort has been phenomenal with so many of our members volunteering their time in preparation and committing their time during the conference. A huge round of applause is deserved for this dedicated group.
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The 2011-2012 chapter term seems like it just started, but we are down to the last few months of the term. We will soon be holding elections for Administrative Council board. I encourage you to consider running for an office or nominating someone you believe would not only serve the Chapter well but would enjoy the activities and responsibilities that go along with these positions. Admittedly, there is a great amount of work with these roles but it is shared across the board and supported by a fantastic group of committee volunteers.

Hard work is a key component in most of activities of value, but working with such a talented group of people with a common goal makes it all worth the effort. If you are interested in nominating someone, please contact Dan Dornbrook, the Nomination Committee Manager. Dan can provide details if you are interested or even just a little curious about what is involved.

So here's to a new and wonderful 2012! Slip on your running shoes because we have great things to accomplish! Ω

Member Appreciation Night: Let's Break the Ice!

By Elizabeth Burke

Wednesday, February 29 | 6:00–9:00 p.m.

In appreciation of our members, we'll gather in a private room at California Pizza Kitchen in Schaumburg (across from Woodfield Mall) on Wednesday, February 29, to really get to know one another. A true networking experience! Gather with your colleagues for an evening of networking and fun, and find out what makes your colleagues tick. We will have a container of "ice breaker" questions that participants will select from. What fun facts will you share with your friends? What bits of information will you find out about your STC Chicago officers. Come find out. Join us for some fun, laughs, prizes, and good conversation.

Let's mix it up too! Bring one or more of your co-workers. Show them what STC Chicago has to offer and maybe find out something new about them as well!

For just \$5 registration, you will be able to enjoy a variety of appetizers and soft beverages, compliments of STC Chicago. Full dinner will be available for purchase as well. Ω

Readers Write In

By Kim Sikora

Congratulations to Bill Leavitt, winner of last issue's *Readers Write In* submission contest! Bill's response to the question "What is one way you deal with the brutal Chicago winter?":

I love winter sports, such as ice skating, cross country skiing, and downhill skiing, but I especially love amateur downhill ski racing; I compete in local, state, Midwest, and national races. I am happy to see snow!

This issue's question: **What is one mobile app you couldn't live without?**

Submit a 2-3 sentence response and your name and response could be published in a future issue; STC Chicago members could also be featured in an upcoming Member Spotlight!

Submit responses to byline@stc-chicago.com. All readers are encouraged to respond. Ω

Interviewing Skills and Techniques Workshop

By Elizabeth Burke

Saturday, March 31 | 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

On Saturday, March 31, STC Chicago is offering a workshop to help you prepare and practice for your next job search. This workshop will help you improve your resume and portfolio whether you are looking for your first job or seeking a job change. It will also give you an opportunity to practice your interviewing skills.

During the Interviewing Skills and Techniques workshop, CARA recruiters will share current trends and expectations in resumes. You will be presented with key components of a portfolio and tips on how to improve and sell your work samples. To complete the package, the resume and portfolio portions will be combined with the interviewing portion. You will team up with workshop participants to practice your interviewing skills and get feedback on your presentation of your skills and experience.

Bring your resume and two or three work samples to evaluate how your resume and portfolio are received in today's market. You are also encouraged to bring your laptop to make immediate changes to your materials, to show your samples, and to take notes.

Presenters

Jeff Warner - As a Recruiting Manager, Jeff works closely with CARA's Account Executives to understand the needs of CARA's clients and identify the best candidates for their Learning projects. Jeff holds over twenty years experience recruiting in a variety of positions and industries.

Elizabeth Burke - As a consultant with The CARA Group, Elizabeth provides Technical Writing and Instructional Design services for CARA's clients. Additionally, Elizabeth participates in the CARA interviewing process as a peer interviewer for potential CARA candidates. Elizabeth's career spans over twenty years in technical writing and instructional design.

Lisa Vitale - Lisa is a Senior Recruiter of The CARA Group. In this capacity, Lisa helps to build CARA's base of customers and consultants and is responsible for helping CARA grow profitably by providing strong resources for client engagements. Lisa has more than 15 years of experience recruiting professionals with training and development and technical communications skills.

To register for this beneficial event, visit www.stc-chicago.com.

The CARA® Group specializes in custom learning, and performance and change management solutions for Fortune 1000 organizations. CARA designs, develops, and implements programs that directly contribute to an organization's productivity and growth. CARA services include instructional design, training, performance support, web-based training, eLearning, project management, technical writing, course design and development, needs analysis, performance consulting, and organizational design and development. Ω

STC Chicago ranks #51 of the 400 Most Influential in #Techcomm and #ContentStrategy. Several other STC Communities also made the list, but STC Chicago ranked highest on the list. Thanks to all who tweet on behalf of the Chapter!



Silver Sponsors - January Meeting

STC Chicago Started 2012 with a Bang!

By MaryKay Grueneberg

Twenty-six STC Chicago members and non-members gathered at the Olive Garden Restaurant in Downers Grove on January 26 to enjoy good food, important networking, and a great presentation. Larry Pilotto of Interpro Translation Solutions walked through the details of the translation effort for eLearning materials from a translation vendor's perspective. By letting us, as technical communicators, understand the pain points of the translation process, he was able to pass on some tips on how to lessen those pain points going forward while preparing materials for translation. As with all of our Chapter meetings, an important part of the evening was networking. It was an enjoyable evening as we met with new members, prospective members, and even some members we haven't seen in a while!



Interpro team enjoying dinner before the presentation

We had two wonderful sponsors for the January event. Interpro Translation Solutions provides world-class language translation, software localization, multilingual desktop publishing, and project management solutions which enable their clients to deliver multilingual products to their global audiences. BlueStreak Learning helps organizations start and grow technology-based training programs. They specialize in developing customer, member, and business partner education as well as employee training.



Jennifer De Vries, representative for Blue Streak Learning

To learn more about our sponsors, check out the Interpro Translation Solutions Website at www.interproinc.com and check out the BlueStreak Learning Website at www.bluestreaklearning.com. Ω

Free Money Still Available to Students

By Linda Kelley

There's still time to apply! STC Chicago is offering two \$250 scholarships for the 2012 – 2013 school year to undergraduate or graduate students enrolled in a certificate or degree program in or related to the field of technical communication. Application forms are available at <http://www.stc-chicago.com/2012/01/12/student-scholarships-available/>

Completed applications are due **February 15**, and winners will be notified the first week in March. If you have any questions, please contact scholarship@stc-chicago.com. Don't miss this opportunity to help fund your education! Ω

STC Member Spotlight: Donna Wampach-Cleary

By Kim Sikora

How long have you lived in Chicago? I was born in Chicago and grew up in the western suburbs of LaGrange Park and Naperville. After living in Aurora and Carol Stream, I'm back in Naperville.

Top Three Favorite Books? After keeping up with the latest on technical communication, I like to read mysteries and adventure stories. My top three books are:

1. Girl with the Dragon Tattoo – Stieg Larsson
2. The Time Traveler's Wife – Audrey Niffenegger
3. Broken – Karin Fossum

Favorite Place to Visit? I've been fortunate to travel extensively in the U.S. and Europe. My favorite place to visit in the U.S. is the Hawaiian island of Kauai, particularly the Hanalei Bay area, whose magnificent mountains and beaches are featured in the George Clooney film "The Descendants." In Europe, my favorite place is Oslo, Norway. It's an easy city to get around, and I enjoyed combining my interests in art and Viking history by visiting Oslo's Viking Ship Museum and Oslo's National Museum of Art (Nasjonalmuseet). In December 2010, some friends of mine and I saw the Norwegian music trio a-ha (famous for their 1985 single "Take on Me") perform their last two concerts in Oslo.

Most significant thing you have learned from being involved with STC? Thanks to STC, whenever I create technical information, I'm always mindful of the technical communicator's commandment – know your audience. I also subscribe to the usability principle that if the user can't find what he/she is looking for in a technical information source, then the technical information is more than likely to be considered useless.

When and how did you first get involved with STC? In 2001, my technical writing professor at DePaul University, Dr. Roger Graves, mentioned the benefits of joining STC. I signed up for STC that year and attended the STC annual conference in Chicago where I learned that there were technical communicators not only across the U.S. but across the world.

What is your most common role as a technical communicator? Do you play any additional roles? In addition to editing my company's policies and procedures, I am also the content manager for our department's intranet site. Lately, most of my time has been spent providing consensus building and creating content management system categories for my company's healthcare procedures.



Most rewarding part of being involved with STC? This winter I was a judge for the Chicago chapter's technical writing competition. I enjoyed learning what other information formats technical communicators use and providing feedback to peers who may not otherwise have an opportunity to receive feedback from other technical communicators.

Is there anything you wish you had known about STC when first joining the organization? I highly recommend being a judge for the chapter's annual technical writing competition. It's a great way to network with other technical communicators and learn what projects other technical communicators are working on. Ω

Save the Date – Thursday, March 29: Annual Chapter Recognition and Awards Banquet

By MaryKay Grueneberg

It's that time of year again. Time for us to honor our hard-working volunteers, celebrate our Chapter and all it has to offer, and acknowledge all of the winners of this year's Annual Summit Awards Technical Communication Competition.

This year, we've added a new twist. Jack Molisani will be on hand as our keynote speaker to offer his insights on the field of Technical Communication today and in the future. Jack is the president of ProSpring Technical Staffing, a technical staffing company specializing in engineers, technical project managers, and technical writers. He is also the founder and producer of the LavaCon Conference on Digital Media and Content Strategies. Jack is an STC Fellow and is a member of multiple STC Communities in California. If you have never heard Jack speak, believe us when we say you are in for a treat at this banquet!

The banquet will take place on Thursday, March 29, at the Black Steer Charhouse (formerly Charlie's Charhouse) in Elk Grove Village. In consideration of the tight economy, we have reduced the banquet registration fees from previous years. This year, the cost will be \$35 for members, \$40 for non-members, and \$30 for students and competition judges. Attendees will have a choice of three delicious entrees:

- Charbroiled chicken breast, marinated in olive oil and fine herbs
- Prime Top Sirloin Steak
- Chicken Breast Alfredo

All meals will include soup, salad, potato or rice, vegetables, and dessert. Please plan to come and help us celebrate STC Chicago! Registration and information will be posted on the Chapter website within the week. Ω

Chicago 2012 Summit Host Committee Members Hard at Work

By Linda Jansak and Bill Leavitt

All activities of the Chicago Summit Host Committee are proceeding on schedule. We continue to promote the event in print and online. The Official Summit Blog has generated a lot of interest on social media sites, including Twitter and LinkedIn. Thank you to all who tweet, re-tweet, and share links to our posts.

Recently, we confirmed that the Summit Jam Session will be held on the evening of Monday, May 21st, directly after the Communities Reception at the Hyatt. For those new to STC, the Jam Session is an evening of live music provided by the "Rough Drafts," a band comprised of STC members who just happen to be talented musicians in addition to being savvy technical communicators. The band will offer its brand of pop, classic rock, and – in tribute to Chicago – R&B. The Host Committee is currently seeking sponsorship for this and our other networking events. If you know of companies willing to lend their support, please let us know at stc2012@stc-chicago.com.

Summit Host Committee Meeting

We will be holding a networking event for the Host Committee at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare in April. We hope that all committee members will take time to attend. Those committee members who didn't get a chance to attend our get-together last November will have another opportunity to tour the venue and learn more about committee activities. The time and date for this meeting will be announced to the Host Committee within the next few weeks.

The 2012 Summit is a great opportunity to become involved in the community. If you would like to help with event planning and execution, please let us know. If you are already a member of the Chicago Host Committee, check your e-mail soon for status updates and other news. To become a member of the committee, contact stc2012@stc-chicago.com. 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

STC Chicago Chapter Leaders 2011–2012

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Summit 2012

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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).
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