

Byline



Bi-Monthly Newsletter for STC Chicago Members

President's Message – Thank You!

By Elizabeth Burke, President

My last article as President for STC Chicago...

Thank you for allowing me to serve as President for our Chapter. It has been an honor to serve and I hope that even if only in a small way, I helped.

We had an incredible 2011-2012 year. As a Chapter, we accomplished many great things. We held monthly programs covering relevant topics with fantastic speakers, held our annual Technical Communications competition, engaged with upcoming professionals through Student Chapters and brought on an Intern, we once again presented a Scholarship award, held a Spring Workshop, published our always well-received bi-monthly newsletter - *Byline*, and let's not forget – supported the Society level Summit held here in fair Chicagoland! And, there are many more things we accomplished.

The way we accomplish all that we do is through the generous donation of time and effort by you, our dedicated volunteers. If I tried to list all the contributors against the endless list of activities, tasks, and accomplishments...I would fail.

There are those who contribute and it is clear of the time and effort they share. But, there are many, many, many others who pitch in quietly in a pinch or

for a simple, yet critical, item that may only be seen by one or two individuals. There are so many who contribute in so many ways.

Please know that our Chapter is successful only because it comprises the greatest volunteers! And, the most important thing I want to say in my last article is THANK YOU to all those who contributed this year to making our Chapter successful. We are successful only because of YOU!

I will be passing the leadership of our Chapter into the most capable hands of a new Administrative Council (AC) led by Linda Kelley. Linda brings excellent skills and valuable insight to this role and our Chapter is fortunate to have Linda serve as President. I trust that you will support Linda, the new AC, and our Chapter with equal commitment and dedication and that our Chapter will continue to excel.

Once again thank you! Ω

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Have You Renewed?

All our events feature reduced pricing for STC Chicago members. So if you haven't renewed your STC membership, now is the time to do so!

Read about the many **benefits of membership** and join or renew online **here**. Ω

Survey: Programs, Speakers, and Workshops: We want to hear from YOU!

By MaryKay Grueneberg

Within the next couple of days, you will be receiving a link to the STC Chicago Programs Survey via email. It only takes a few minutes to complete the survey and we would really like to hear from you about venues, speakers, program topics, and workshop topics. Our goal is to provide a good variety of speakers, topics, and locations while keeping the programs self-funding. The 2011-12 program year was quite successful. We were able to offer a variety of venues at either low cost or no cost to the Chapter. Venues locations included Buffalo Grove, Chicago, Downers Grove, Elk Grove Village, Oakbrook, Rosemont, Schaumburg, and Wheeling.

The speakers were knowledgeable and energetic. The attendees had plenty of networking opportunities and gave great feedback about the monthly programs and the April Workshop. We offered a variety of program types: two webinars, six standard speaker presentations, two networking opportunities (including the upcoming June event), one full banquet with a keynote speaker, one eLearning Showcase (in conjunction with CCASTD and CISPI), and one half-day workshop.

We spent a good deal of time networking with sponsors and speakers at the 2012 Summit and have lined up some great people to start the program year off right. With input from you, we hope to fill out the schedule with well-rounded offerings that will appeal to as many members as possible.

We look forward to hearing from you! Ω

Election Results

By Dan Dornbrook

The election is now closed and the votes have been verified and tallied by the Tellers Committee. The STC Chicago 2012-2013 chapter officers are:

President – **Linda Kelley**

Vice President – **Cheri Noble**

Secretary – **Donna Cleary**

Treasurer – **Chris Hester**

Immediate Past President – **Elizabeth Burke**

Nominating Committee – **Francis Bao and Beth Lisberg Najberg**

Congratulations to the officers and Nominating Committee members for the 2012-2013 program year! STC Chicago is looking forward to yet another fantastic year with great leadership, exciting and diverse programs, and a wonderful membership! Ω

April Meeting Recap

By *MaryKay Grueneberg*

On Thursday, April 19, STC Chicago member Adam Evans and Ryan Williams from Exact Target gave STC Chicago members an early look at their STC Summit 2012 presentation, "Our Users [sort of] Help Write Our Documentation."

Twenty-six people joined us at the RAM Restaurant & Brewery in Wheeling for an evening of networking and learning as Adam and Ryan showed us how to change the workflow by implementing a documentation Wiki. They showed us how to engage the users and use their feedback to create better docs.

Special thanks go out to the RAM and to LavaCon for being our very generous sponsors for the evening. Ω



End-of-Year Business and Networking Meeting

By *Elizabeth Burke*

Join us on Wednesday, June 20 at Outback in Schaumburg to pass the leadership baton to our new Administrative Council AND spend the evening networking with your STC Chicago friends.

Being the lively group that we are, it is sure to be an animated and spirited evening of great conversation.

Location: Outback, 216 East Golf Road, Schaumburg

Time: 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Fee: \$5 per participant

Soft drinks and appetizers provided courtesy of STC Chicago. Ω

Readers Write In

By *Kim Sikora*

Submit a 2-3 sentence response to the following question and your name and response could be published in a future issue.

This issue's question: **If you could describe your role in technical communication in 5 words, what would they be?**

Submit responses to byline@stc-chicago.com to be featured in an upcoming issue! Ω

Our 2012–2013 Technical Writing Competition is Coming Soon!

By Cheri Noble

Have you or someone at your company produced any technical communication products that you think are worthy of an award? If so, consider entering one or more products in our 2012-2013 Technical Writing Competition. Entrants do not have to be members of STC or STC Chicago. You can enter work as an individual or on behalf of a colleague or subordinate.

The categories of material are:

- Information Materials
- Instructional Materials
- Promotional Materials
- User Support Materials

The purpose of this event is to recognize and provide feedback to individual technical communication professionals for excellence in documentation. The competition helps to:

- Establish professional standards for our work
- Provide visibility to our profession
- Recognize outstanding efforts of technical communication professionals

Some of you may not be competitive but don't let the term "competition" scare you off. Your work is not compared to anyone else's to see whose document is the best. Rather, your work is evaluated by several of your peers using a structured evaluation form. Once the judges complete the judging form, they work together to recommend the level of award the product should receive.

The three levels of recognition are awarded in each competition category. These awards are:

- Distinguished
- Excellence
- Merit

Once judging is completed, the entrants are notified whether or not they won an award. At the Chapter Recognition and Awards Banquet, the product and the evaluation forms are returned to the submitter. The evaluation forms contain comments and possibly suggestions for improvements. The judges work very hard to provide honest and objective feedback on the structured evaluation forms.

Within each competition category, Best of Show candidates may be nominated by the judges from among those entries that receive Distinguished awards. The senior review panel then determines which, if any, nominee(s) will be elevated to the Best of Show. A Best of Show winner must represent the ideal in its category, and there can be only one winner in each of the four categories.

The Distinguished Award winners automatically qualify for submission to the STC Summit Awards Competition. Excellence Award winners have the option to submit their entries to the STC Awards Competition as well. As the completion approaches, we will also be looking for experienced technical communicators that would like to volunteer as judges for this year's competition. Our judges work in teams and are provided training and support all the way through the competition. The competition ends with a celebration at our annual Chapter Recognition and Awards Banquet in the spring.

Watch the next *Byline* and the STC Chicago Competition page for exact dates to begin submitting entries and to volunteer to be a judge. Now is the time to start looking around to see if you or a colleague has a product to enter and also start talking to your boss about supporting you in entering this year's competition. Enter as many products as you'd like! Ω

2012 STC Summit is History

By Linda Jansak and Bill Leavitt

After 14 months and thousands of hours of planning, budgeting, preparing reports, answering emails, making/taking phone calls, and conducting meetings, the 2012 STC Summit has come and gone.

In the months leading up to the Summit and between May 19 and 24 when the Summit was taking place at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare, at least 34 members of the Chicago Chapter "STC Chicago 2012 Summit Host Committee" contributed significant time and effort to its success.

The response from the attendees has been gratifying. Scores of STC attendees have approached us with their compliments about the enthusiasm, humor, energy and dedication displayed by our wonderful committee. The following list illustrates the main activities before and during the Summit that our committee accomplished:

STC Buddies

This committee contacted about 200 first-time Summit attendees, giving them advice about how to get the most from the Summit, what to go to, what to bring, etc. This was the first time this activity was done.

STC Blog

More than 11 Committee volunteers and others submitted 56 blog posts about various aspects of visiting Chicago and attending the Summit.

Social Media

The Summit was actively promoted at the Chicago Chapter Twitter site, Facebook page, and LinkedIn Group and blog. Members and others actively engaged in conversations online, sharing helpful information and supporting one another in the run up to the big event. During the event, Twitter became even more important, as members relied on this site for real-time updates and breaking news as the Summit unfolded. Conversations about the Summit continue at Twitter. To follow the discussion, go to <http://search.twitter.com> and perform a search for #stc12

Intercom

Nearly every month since last fall, Committee volunteers wrote and submitted articles about information attendees would need to visit Chicago and attend the Summit.

Hospitality Desk

The most visible STC Chicago responsibility at the Summit was the Hospitality Desk, which was located midway between the hotel lobby and STC Central. During the 32 hours that the Hospitality Desk was open, 29 different Committee volunteers worked the desk, with two to four people there at all times. The helpfulness, friendliness, enthusiasm and courteousness led some attendees to bring us gifts in appreciation of our efforts.

Communities Reception

This was an important networking event for which we created a "passport" game to get attendees to visit the special-interest group (SIG) tables. Nine members of our committee ran this successful activity, which supported the efforts of the Community Affairs Committee.

Fun Photography

During the Communities Reception and the Music Jam, the Committee set up a photography set, where members could get their pictures taken, often with Blues Brothers hats and sunglasses. This was a free activity and photos were posted at our chapter group page at Flickr.com.

Music Jam

For the first time in four years, the STC "Rough Drafts" band put on a show at the Summit, featuring many types of music and plenty of dancing. Not only was this event coordinated by the STC Chicago Summit Host Committee, but nine Blues Brothers and Sisters entertained guests with their dancing and antics to the music of "Sweet Home Chicago." Reports from attendees indicated that this mini-show was a big hit and lots of fun.

STC Chicago-Sponsored Tours

It has been many years since an STC Summit offered attendees tours of local attractions. Initial response was slow, so the Committee put in an extraordinary amount of time and effort into attracting interest. In the final evaluation, these tours were well attended and very successful with attendees. A trip to Second City with a choice of dining options was held on the night before the Summit started. Another tour, an architectural boat tour on the Chicago River took place just after the Summit ended.

Tweet-Up

The Committee also coordinated the annual STC Tweet-Up, which was held at the Ram Restaurant and Brewery in Rosemont.

STC Chicago Souvenirs

The Committee took advantage of the Summit to sell STC souvenirs to Summit attendees as a fund-raising activity. These included STC business card cases, STC coffee mugs, and a special "rough draft" coffee mug with production hash marks. The business card cases sold out, but there are a few of the coffee mugs available to Chicago Chapter members at future meetings.

Sponsorship

The 2012 Music Jam would not have been possible without the generous support and enthusiasm of Ann Grove of Logical Writing Solutions and Ken Cook of Ken Cook Co. As primary sponsor of the Music Jam, Logical Writing Solutions provided complimentary, custom-designed t-shirts that will serve as a memorable keepsake of the 2012 STC Summit. In support of our efforts at the Communities Reception, Ken Cook generously provided all printed materials used in our networking activity. We appreciate the steadfast support of these longtime STC members.

Finally, special thanks are due to photographer Bryan Kelley for donating his time talent to capture novelty photos at the Communities Reception.

Much credit is due the members of the 2012 Summit Host Committee for their efforts and dedication to STC Chicago and the Summit. Most other chapters have been able to assemble around ten people to work and the Summit, but Chicago had 34. Everything was well done, problem-free, successful and valuable to the STC members who attended the Summit. Linda Jansak and Bill Leavitt were the co-managers of the Host Committee. Managers of the activities described above are as follows: Linda Jansak (tours and sponsorship), Bill Leavitt (Communities Reception and Blues Brothers), Betsy Maaks (Music Jam), Adam Evans (blog), Francis Bao (hospitality desk and STC buddies), Linda Kelly (STC fun photography), Elizabeth Burke (Tweet-Up), and MaryKay Grueneberg (STC Chicago Souvenirs). Host Chapter Tour Guides are as follows: Linda Kelley, Paula Ludmann and Linda Jansak (Second City); Chris Juillet and Nancy Hoffman (River View Architectural Tour).

The following STC Chicago members served on the Host Committee: Francis Bao, Dan Brantley, Elizabeth Burke, Carla A. Christensen, Andi Dunn, Mary De Jong, Dan Dornbrook, Adam Evans, Russ Friend, Trina Grieshaber, MaryKay Grueneberg, Becky Hall, Chris Hester, Nancy Hoffman, Apryl Cox Jackson, Linda Jansak, Chris Juillet, Linda Kelley, Kristi Leach, Bill Leavitt, Leigh Lillis, James Lockard, Paula Ludmann, Betsy Maaks, Anna Miller, Beth Najberg, Steve Napora, Cheri Noble, Tom Reed, Donald Richie, Mary Whalen (Sojoodi), Donna Templeton, Michael Tillmans, Pete Wagner. Ω

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STC mission statement: Creating and supporting a forum for communities of practice in the profession of technical communication.

News guidelines: Send articles to Byline at byline@stc-chicago.com. Preferred format is a MS Word® document file via e-mail. We reserve the right to edit for style and space.

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.

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.com.

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Subscriptions: The current issue of Byline and all archived editions are available on the STC Chicago website at www.stc-chicago.com.

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STC Chicago Membership at a Glance

Total Affiliated Members: 138

Members: 35

Senior Members: 76

Student Members: 16 Ω

STC Chicago Chapter Leaders 2011–2012

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