

Byline



Bi-Monthly Newsletter for STC Chicago Members

President's message

By Linda Kelley, President

It's my great pleasure to announce that the Chicago chapter has earned a Community of Excellence Award from STC for 2012. Our citation will read

For expanding your social media offerings, for successfully hosting the STC Summit and Music Jam, and for expanding the eLearning and Technology Showcase.

The Community Achievement Award Evaluation Committee referred to us as "one of the most consistent and active communities in the CAA process." They also said, "Your Community shows solid energy and enthusiasm, and your programs and activities show how innovative a community can be. You do a great job of embracing new technologies and offering solid value. Your ability to reach out to other organizations is also noteworthy. It's great to see so much positive energy ON TOP of hosting the Summit."

All of these wonderful things don't just happen accidentally. We have a great group of volunteers working collectively to bring us a lot of bang for our buck. Here are a few of the things we highlighted in our application:

- At the Summit, we successfully executed tours to local hot spots, a live music event, the inaugural "STC Buddies" program, a networking activity, and a Chicago-themed photography shoot. Chapter volunteers submitted 56 blog posts about various aspects of visiting Chicago and attending the Summit.
- We implemented a free online financial system to make the treasurer's job easier, and we streamlined Administrative Council operations using Google Drive.
- We completely redesigned the chapter website, and our blog, Facebook account, and Twitter presence have become much more active. Some of our Facebook posts have reached as many as 2,500 people!
- Along with our co-hosting organizations, we secured a new venue and expanded the 5th annual Chicago eLearning & Technology Showcase. We also introduced branded videos to help spotlight the host organizations and the event itself.

Check out the blog!

Did you know STC Chicago has a blog? Check it out for event recaps, new software and apps for our industry, and Tech Comm Friday - a weekly roundup of all things technical communication.

www.stc-chicago.blogspot.com

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Find us online!



President's message, continued

- We shared 79 job openings with our members through Yahoo discussion lists, Facebook, and the STC Chicago LinkedIn Group page.
- We hosted a successful Technical Communications Competition that had 51 entries this year, which was a significant increase from the past few years.
- We offered a workshop, a banquet, two networking/ member-appreciation meetings, and six speaker presentations, in addition to informal monthly lunch gatherings.

I feel very fortunate to belong to such a vibrant community! Ω

Reserve Your Spot at the Banquet Now!

By Cheri Noble

This year's Technical Communication Competition and Member Recognition Awards Dinner should be very exciting. We had a great group of entries in the competition this year and are pleased to present 44 awards at the banquet. All award-winning entries will be on display so you can see what other members of STC are doing. We will also be presenting our Best of Show award-winning entries.

The judges that worked on evaluating the entries are also acknowledged for their hard work and dedication to our competition. It was good to see the excellent comments they provided on the entries they judged. All entries are returned to the submitters, along with the evaluation forms completed by the judges.

This is also a time to celebrate our members and their achievements over the past year. I am impressed with the number of STC Chicago chapter members who spend countless hours volunteering their time and talents to our chapter. It's this dedication that makes our chapter strong.

In addition, we'll be honoring this year's STC Chicago scholarship winners, Jamil Wilkins and Tracy Castro. We hope you plan on attending; you won't be disappointed!

This year's banquet is on Thursday, March 21st, from 6 pm to 9 pm at the Black Steer Charhouse, 1180 West Devon Avenue, Elk Grove Village.

You'll have a choice of four delicious entrees:

- Top Sirloin Steak
- Pork Chops
- Chicken Breast
- Fettucine Alfredo (vegetarian or with chicken)

All meals include soup, salad, entree (with rice or potatoes and vegetable), soft drinks, and dessert. Dinner is at 6 pm, and the awards presentations begin at 7 pm.

Register here for this event!

We'd like to give a special thank you to the Ken Cook Co. and to Interpro Translation Services for sponsoring our banquet this year.

For those of you that may not know, the Ken Cook Co. provides services such as Technical Writing, Technical Editing, Instructional Design, Content and Database Management and so much more. Interpro provides translation and localization of data and websites as well as project management, voiceover recording and many other services.

It is because of their continued support of STC Chicago that we are able to continue to schedule events at minimal cost to our members. Ω

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

STC Chicago Awards Two \$250 Scholarships

By Josée Martens

The Scholarship Committee is pleased to announce that STC Chicago has awarded a \$250 scholarship to both:

- **Jamil Wilkins**, a graduate student at New Jersey Institute of Technology
- **Tracy Castro**, a student enrolled at the College of Lake County in Illinois

Jamil Wilkins is pursuing a Master of Science in Professional and Technical Communication from the New Jersey Institute of Technology. He received his undergraduate degree also from NJIT and is currently employed as an e-learning support specialist at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of NJ while completing his coursework. He has upcoming plans to publish his first science fiction novel, the first draft of which is expected later this year.

What attracted the judges to Jamil's application was his attractive and robust virtual portfolio showcasing his competencies.



The writing was clear and concise, and the content was well-adapted to his audience. Jamil is a natural at both technical communication and marketing himself.



Tracy Castro is pursuing a Professional Technical Communications Certificate from the College of Lake County. In addition to her coursework, she provides document layout and graphic design freelance services. She is also a certified MS Office instructor. Tracy has been interested and/or involved in communication for much of her adult life. After completing the program, she plans on a new career as a full-time instructional designer.

Tracy's application grabbed the judges' attention with her various writing samples. In particular, Tracy's chicken pox brochure did a wonderful job of communicating the pertinent medical information to both younger and more mature audiences.

Congratulations to Jamil and Tracy. Winners will be honored at the upcoming awards banquet on March 21st. Ω



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Speed Resume-ting Event Recap

By Mary Whalen

At February's resume review event, a group of us STC-ers gathered to share ideas, ask questions, and get advice on how to best present oneself on a resume. It was a wonderful gathering of peers, who ranged in experience from fresh-out-of-college to retired.

The session started with a "speed round," where each person had two minutes with each resume. The quick review time forced us to focus on first impressions that a hiring manager might have (rather than the details that we notice when wearing our technical writing hats).

After the speed round, we had an open discussion about what we saw in our reviews. We discussed everything from which typefaces are ideal to how job titles or functions are phrased. We gave suggestions on how a beginning writer can gain authority and how a more senior writer can streamline his or her experience. We also weighed in on whether the length of your resume matters, talked about the issues that come with a person reviewing a resume versus it being searched in a database, and compared the strategies a contract technical writer might use to the strategies someone looking for permanent employment might use.

At the end of the morning, we had a few minutes to get input from Lisa Vitale of Cara. Lisa gave us a recruiter's perspective on how to craft a resume and talked about her biggest resume turn ons and turn offs.

For me, the session was very helpful. For example, I have been advised many times over the years to make my resume shorter, but I have wanted to list all skills and experiences to give employers a full picture of my abilities. Input from others, however, helped me formulate a comfortable strategy for which information to cut and how to reorganize. In general, it was nice to have the time set aside to reflect on my current career goals and plan how my resume could help me meet these goals.

Thanks to Linda Kelley and Josée Martens for coordinating the session, and thanks to Lisa Vitale for her participation and for getting Cara to donate the meeting space. Look for a similar portfolio review event sometime in 2013. Ω



From left: Cheri Noble, Josée Martens, Linda Kelley, and Chris Hester at the Speed Resume-ting event

Content is King...We Design, Develop, and Deliver Valuable Content

By Paul Mueller

The 2012 Summit in Chicago was a huge success and showcased the vibrant STC Chicago chapter. Additional STC Chicago meetings and events continue to provide the exciting exchange of ideas and in-person networking that enrich our professional careers. I am consistently impressed by these lively discussions as we share our ideas and approaches to delivering the information our audiences need. Through these discussions, we are able to learn from each other and explore new methods to deliver valuable content.

Events that facilitate the exchange of ideas are a vital part of STC. As colleagues, we challenge each other to find better ways to solve problems, and then to share those ideas and solutions. I am impressed and inspired by how our community members share their ideas, debate various approaches, and help each other find new solutions. These communities, combined with the many educational offerings organized by STC, bring a vast amount of knowledge to the technical communication industry.

I would like to serve the Society as the Vice President and I am asking for your vote. I am grateful for all that STC has provided to help me throughout my career.

I would like to lend my leadership and business experience to help STC continue to serve our industry and shape future leaders. Content is king and STC should be recognized as the organization that helps you design, develop, and deliver valuable content.

STC elections are often very close and your vote is important in selecting the leaders who will help shape the future direction of our professional organization. Voting in the 2013 Society for Technical Communication (STC) election begins March 11 and ends March 22 at 5 pm ET (10.00 GMT).

I have enjoyed serving STC in many local and international roles. I have served as a Director on the STC Board, as the Chair of several Task Forces, and in many Summit leadership positions including the Summit Conference Chair for 2012 and 2013. If you would like more information about me and what I can contribute to the leadership of STC, please visit my election website at www.stc-paulmueller.com and [my section of the STC election website](#). Thank you for being an important part of our professional community and I look forward to seeing many of you in Atlanta at the 2013 Summit. Ω

Does Your Career Need a Recharge?

By Linda Kelley

On April 20, STC Chicago and STC Wisconsin are joining forces to present the Jump-Start Your Career Workshop, featuring the incomparable Jack Molisani. In addition to two presentations by Jack, the workshop also includes panel discussions with recruiters and hiring managers. If your career needs a little boost, this is a terrific opportunity.

Here's what you'll learn:

Career Advancement Through Personal Branding

Personal branding is the way we market ourselves to others, whether they be employers, recruiters, clients, co-workers, or anyone else. Jack will help you position yourself to stimulate your career.

Honing Your Workplace Negotiation Skills

In this hands-on negotiation workshop, you'll learn how to prepare for a pending negotiation, set the stage for success, and get what you really want.

What Do Technical Publication Managers Look for in a Candidate?

A panel of tech pub and training managers will answer your questions and discuss the essential qualities they look for when hiring.

Working with a Recruiter

Learn from this panel of experts how to form a productive and mutually beneficial relationship with a recruiter.

Date: Saturday, April 20

Time: 8:00AM-12:30PM

Location:

Comfort Suites Grayslake
1775 E. Belvidere Road
Grayslake, IL 60030

Cost:

\$25 members
\$50 non-members
\$15 students

Register for this event [here](#). Ω



Jack Molisani is the president of ProSpring Technical Staffing, an employment agency that specializes in engineers, project managers, and technical communicators. Jack also produces The LavaCon Conference on Digital Media and Content Strategy, which takes place in Portland this year, from October 21–23, 2013 (www.lavacon.org).

Member spotlight: Josée Martens

By Kim Sikora

How long have you lived in Chicago?

I attended elementary, middle, and high school in the western suburbs of Chicago. After 4 years at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, I lived downtown Chicago. I then worked in Paris, France for 5 years. After Paris, I moved back to Illinois, where I've been living ever since. All in all, I've spent 27 out of the last 40 years in Illinois but only 4 within the city limits of Chicago.

What do you like most (and least!) about the city?

There is so much to love about Chicago! What I love best about the city is the amazing array of restaurants.

When and how did you first get involved with STC?

I first became involved with the STC in 1999 while living in Paris. I learned of the organization during my year-long technical writing program at the University of Paris. I was a member for several years until I moved back to the United States. I rejoined in early 2012.

Top three favorite books?

Well, I had twins boys in 2011 so my favorite books these days are:

- Goodnight Moon
- The Pout-Pout Fish
- Go Dog Go

Favorite place to visit?

My favorite place to visit is my grandmother's house in the beautiful French countryside in the summertime.

Strangest job you've had?

I was hired as a copier saleswoman right out of college. My sales territory was limited to churches and schools. I sold a fax machine to my old high school and copier to my dad's company. I didn't exactly make my quota but I was given a free bible at practically every church I cold-called.

Most significant thing you have learned from being involved with STC?

Networking is priceless!

What advice would you give other people who are thinking about joining STC?

Just do it! When I lost my job in Jan 2012, I was suddenly thrust back out on the job market. Everyone tells you to reach out to your peers. I realized I had not invested in myself at all over the last decade and had no other technical communicators in my network. Within two months of rejoining the STC, I was at the Summit and meeting hundreds of other technical communicators. I attended seminars on how to get a job, learned about several new technological advancements, and made new friends. I love all the benefits of being an STC member. I will never stray again! Ω



STC Chicago Membership at a Glance

Total Affiliated Members: 112

Members: 36

Senior Members: 67

Student Members: 3 Ω

STC Chicago Chapter Leaders 2012-2013

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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@stc-chicago.com. Preferred format is a MS Word® document file via email. 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](http://stc-chicago.com).

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