

Byline



Bi-Monthly Newsletter for STC Chicago Members

President's Thoughts

By Elizabeth L. Burke



It seems crazy to be releasing a "Winter Edition" of our newsletter when it is 70 degrees in February! But, I'm not complaining!

We have had a very busy past few months and we have a lot to share. As always, our volunteers have been working hard to bring you quality education sessions, networking opportunities, and our annual technical communications competition. But we have more in store. Read on to hear about our Feb. chapter meeting, CPTC classes, our annual Chapter Volunteer Recognition and Awards Banquet, and more! Ω

Candidates Sought for 2017-18 Chapter Offices

Are you ready for an exciting leadership opportunity? More and more employers want candidates with solid leadership skills, and leading the STC Chicago Chapter offers an excellent opportunity to gain and hone those skills.

The Nominating Committee is now accepting nominations for the offices of Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and for two members of the Nominating Committee. All candidates for chapter offices must be chapter members before the start of the Spring chapter elections (~April 1).

The Vice President will serve for one year, becoming President in 2018 and Immediate Past President the following year. All other officers will

serve one-year terms, but may serve more than one term if re-elected by chapter members. The Nominating Committee terms are two years.

All terms begin July 1, 2017. If you or someone you know is interested in one of these positions, please contact the committee at nominating@stc-chicago.org. Ω



Ideas, please...

Do you have a good idea for a workshop or a monthly meeting topic? Have you recently heard a speaker that you would like to see invited to an STC Chicago event? If so, we'd love to hear from you. We always try to offer our members a variety of relevant topics and a mix of locations, but we can always use more ideas!

Just send your thoughts and suggestions to us at program@stc-chicago.com. Ω



For membership information, contact STC at Society for Technical Communication 9401 Lee Highway | Suite 300 | Fairfax, Virginia 22031 Phone: +1 (703) 522-4114 | Fax: +1 (703) 522-2075 Email: stc@stc.com

2016 STC Chicago Technical Communication Competition is Wrapped!

The judging for the 2016 STC Chicago Technical Communication Competition has been completed and submitters have been notified of the results. As the competition details are getting wrapped up, we would like to send a special shout out to our amazing judges. Our team of judges came together as strangers, but in just one short month, they became a very reliable and cohesive team. In that time, they were able to complete their assigned evaluations, making notes and assessments, and lent their years of experience in the field to offer constructive advice and recommendations to the competition entrants.

THANK YOU to the following people for sharing their time and expertise to the competition:

- Elizabeth Burke
- Bernadette Cash (Judging Manager)
- Margaret Dawn (Team Lead)
- Adam Evans (Team Lead)
- MaryKay Grueneberg (Team Lead)
- Heidi Hanson
- John Hartigan
- Chris Kasic
- Linda Kelley
- Farhad Patel
- Tom Reed (Team Lead)
- Mitch Romanowski
- Liz Stefanski
- Deb Weuthrick
- Don Weuthrick
- Linda Ziemann

Ω



Pete Wagner, STC Chicago Treasurer

Meet the Officers

Now that Pete Wagner has been Treasurer for over half of the program year, we asked him to tell us a little about himself and the position of **STC Chicago Treasurer**. Here is what he had to say:

Dammit John, I'm a tech writer, not a CPA!

That was my initial reaction when asked to take over the Treasurer position. My name is Pete Wagner, and I've been involved on and off in chapter activities for many years, most notably teaching RoboHelp seminars. This year is the first time that I have taken the plunge and run for an elected position on the Administrative Council (AC).

What does the Treasurer do? Well, thanks to the well-oiled machine left behind by my predecessors, the time-hit is quite minimal. The Treasurer keeps track of a bank account and a PayPal account, and pays for chapter expenditures (monthly meeting venues, competition costs, banquet expenses, etc.). A Google spreadsheet helps keep track of these activities and is used to help prepare the twice-a-year financials. These activities probably take up an hour or two each month.

Twice a year the Treasurer must prepare financial documents for international STC (ISTC), which takes about a day each. The first, which I have just had the joy of completing (LOL) is preparing the proposed budget, which ISTC reviews and uses to provide appropriate funding for our chapter activities. The second leg of this tour is the financial report due in May each year, where we document what the actual expenditures were, versus what we asked for in the fall. Thanks for our not-for-profit status, the tax report to Uncle Sam is filling out a simple form online – or so I have been told. I'll get back to you on that one next year. ;)

The one thing I want to emphasize in closing is that volunteering doesn't mean taking on an official AC or committee position. As MaryKay pointed out in the last issue, there are a lot of small tasks that need to be done each month – you don't have to take the plunge, as I did, with a "big" position (although we certainly won't stop you if you want to!). Every little bit of help is greatly appreciated by the AC/committee regulars! Getting involved in

chapter activities is a great way to network within your profession, and honestly, just to hang out with some really nice people!

If you have any questions about the Treasurer position, or the state of our finances, please ask me at a chapter event or give me a holler at treasurer@stc-chicago.com. Ω



CPTC™ Classes Coming Soon!

Thinking about your goals for 2017? Why not become a Certified Professional Technical Communicator, and start the new year with new credentials?

The first CPTC Foundation Exam Prep Class in the Chicago area has been scheduled for March 2017. In this two-day class, you will become familiar with the nine core skill areas of technical communication, as well as topics included in the certification exam, certification exam format, and sample questions. You may take the exam at the conclusion of the class or online at a later date.

An APMG-accredited CPTC trainer, Chris Hester will be leading the class. Chris is a communications professional who has delivered successful content strategy, training, and knowledge management projects to clients in the advertising, entertainment, financial, pharmaceutical, and technological industries.

For more information about the class or certification, visit <https://www.reddeskstudio.com/certification/> or contact Chris at cptc@reddeskstudio.com. Ω

Renew Your STC Membership Today and Be Entered to Win



Did you forget something? Your benefits have expired, but there's still time to and bring your account into good standing! Renew today and continue to access the valuable [benefits and discounts](#) that come with being a member of the STC community.

Plus, if you [renew](#) your membership by **Friday, 24 February 2017**, you will be automatically entered to win a **\$50 Amazon gift card**. Ω

Technical Communication Summit '17 is coming!

Registration for STC's 64th annual conference is now open. This year's Summit will take place May 7 through 10, 2017 at the Gaylord National Resort, just outside of Washington, DC. Discounted advanced rates end on Feb 31, so hurry is you want to save \$300!

Full Summit registration includes access to all education sessions; the Opening and Closing Keynotes; Welcome Reception; Honors Reception; continental breakfast Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday mornings; as well as morning and afternoon refreshment breaks. Attendance at the 2017 Summit provides 8 CEUs toward CPTC currency. CEUs apply only to those who are certified and cannot be counted retroactively.

[Register for the Summit Now!](#) Ω

February Meeting: STC Certification: Is CPTC Right for You?

STC introduced the Certified Professional Technical Communicator (CPTC) program in 2016, and you may be wondering *What's the fuss? Should I or shouldn't I? Does certification even matter?*

Join us on Thursday, February 23, and get answers from members who have experienced the certification process. MaryKay Grueneberg has earned CPTC – Foundation designation, and Chris Hester is an accredited CPTC – Foundation trainer. They'll take your questions and discuss topics like:

- How certification is structured
- How the certification process works
- What to expect if you go through the program
- Is certification a fit for experienced technical communicators?
- What can CPTC do for you and your career?

This is an interactive discussion, so bring your questions! Full details and registration link are posted on the STC Chicago Website.

About the Speakers

Chris Hester – Chris is a content strategist, information architect, and technical writer. She is the owner of Red Desk Studio, Inc., a consulting firm for content strategy, knowledge management, and training solutions. She is a Fellow in the Society for Technical Communication, a Certified Professional Technical Communicator – Foundation level, and an APMG-accredited CPTC-Foundation trainer.

MaryKay Grueneberg - MaryKay has been a professional technical communicator for over 30 years. She is a writer and editor and has worked in the software industry for most of her career. She is an Associate Fellow in the Society for Technical Communication and a Certified Professional Technical Communicator – Foundation level. She currently is a Sr. User Assistance Developer at SAP. Ω

Volunteer Recognition and Competition Awards Banquet

On Thursday, March 16, 2017, STC Chicago will recognize the volunteers who shared their talents and time with our chapter membership and we will also present awards to those honored for their entries in the 2016 STC Chicago Technical Communication Competition.

Please join us for an evening of celebration as we honor those who support our Chapter through their devoted volunteer time. You will also have a chance to take a look at the winning competition entries. STC Chicago's competition entrants produce some of the best technical documentation, training, promotional material, and informational communication, and you won't want to miss this opportunity to see what's trending in technical communication.

We hope to see you there! We will have the event once again at Texas de Brazil in Schaumburg. We have two full rooms this year, but seating is still limited, so be sure to register early.

Banquet menu:

- 50-item salad area featuring various selections of crisp greens, fresh vegetables, imported artisan cheeses, charcuterie, and hot side dishes
- Garlic mashed potatoes, sweet fried bananas and Pão de Queijo (Brazilian cheese bread)
- Various cuts of expertly seasoned and grilled selections of beef, lamb, pork, chicken, and Brazilian sausage carved table side
- Non-alcoholic beverages: fountain soda, regular coffee and regular iced tea with complimentary refills
- Dessert: Bananas Foster Pie or Key Lime Pie

[Banquet Information and Registration](#)



November Meeting Recap: Writing with Localization in Mind: Some Tips and Tricks

On November 17, twenty of us gathered at the Carleton in Oak Park for the November Chapter meeting. Each of us that attended this great meeting came away with some great insight about writing clean – even those of us who don't currently work with translation.

Our speakers, Erica Goldberg and Adriana Romano, both project managers at Interpro Translation Solutions, taught us that writing simple and clean is not only a best practice for good technical documentation, but it makes the translation process smoother in many ways. They also showed us that even when you don't translate your documents, you have to consider a growing number of end users who are not native English speakers. Clean writing is good writing! We all enjoyed their crazy examples of translations gone terribly wrong!

In addition to some fun networking, the attendees had fun with our specially-designed STC Chicago Tech Comm crossword puzzle. Congratulations to the winner of the crossword contest: Linda Jansak. Linda won a Starbucks gift card for her great crossword skills.

A shout out to *Interpro Translation Solutions*, our venue sponsor for the November meeting. Check them out at: <http://www.interproinc.com> And another shout out to *Stilo*, for providing us with colored pencils for our Tech Comm Crosswords. Check them out at: <http://www.stilo.com> Ω



November speakers and sponsors from Interpro Translation Solutions



Learning how to write clean and clear (Nov.)



Paul Lockwood – Lightning Talks (Dec.)



October Meeting Recap: How to Position UA within UX

Twenty-three STC members and non-members joined us at the Ram Restaurant & Brewery in Schaumburg on October 20th for the STC monthly meeting. Due to an unexpected illness, our scheduled speaker, Joe Welinske, was unable to make the flight to Chicago that day. However, Darin Walsh, a publications manager at Shure in Niles, did a great job filling in for Joe. Darin used his years of experience in technical communication and publications management to share with us his insights and his take on Joe's original topic of how to position User Assistance within User Experience. In addition to a great topic, attendees enjoyed fantastic food and had a great time networking with other professionals.

A shout out to *Dakota Systems*, our venue sponsor for the October meeting. Check them out at: <http://www.daksys.com> Ω



Darin Walsh giving tips on positioning UA within UX

December Meeting...What a blast! Holiday Party and Networking was a Hit

On Tuesday, December 13, 25 colleagues and friends (new and old) joined us at our annual STC Chicago Holiday Party at TGI Friday's in Schaumburg.

We had six brave volunteers who presented Lightning Talks. Lightning talks are mini-presentations of 20 slides in 5 minutes on either serious or light topics. The tricky part is that the slides advance automatically, whether the speaker is ready or not! Lightning talks are an exercise in speaker brevity, concentration, and inevitably, a lot of laughter ensues!

A very special thank you to our speakers on providing some fun presentations:

Paul Ebreo – “An Intro to Programming in 5 Minutes”

Nick Strozza – “Adventures in Translation”
MK Grueneberg – “Reindeer Pause: 8 Tiny Lessons in Technical Communication”

Chris Hester – “The Agony & the Egnog: An introvert's guide to surviving the social season”

Linda Kelley – “Cheap Thrills”

Paul Lockwood – “A Study of...”

Paul Lockwood earned extra points as his was a Ninja Talk, meaning he did not see his slide deck or even know the title until he started to speak! For those who are curious, the full title of the presentation, which he did not know until the final slide, was “A Study of Contrast”.

Despite some issues with the heat/AC at the restaurant, we all had a lot fun connecting with old friends and making new friends before the craziness of the holiday season begins. Ω

Dakota

Save the Date!



Chicago eLearning & Technology Showcase

Celebrate Chicago as a world-class center for elearning. Join hosts [ATDChi](#), [Chicago ISPI](#), and [STC Chicago](#) at the 10th annual Chicago eLearning & Technology Showcase on August 15, 2017, for a cutting-edge exploration of new media and interactive elearning tools.

For full conference information, see <http://chicagoelearningshowcase.com/> Ω

STC Chicago 2016-17 Officers

President

Elizabeth L. Burke, president@stc-chicago.com

Vice President

Elizabeth Gecas, vp@stc-chicago.com

Secretary

Cheri Gerlach, secretary@stc-chicago.com

Treasurer

Pete Wagner, treasurer@stc-chicago.com

Immediate Past President

Betsy Maaks, ipp@stc-chicago.com

Byline

Byline is a bi-monthly publication of the STC Chicago chapter of the Society for Technical Communication (STC), a non-profit membership organization serving the needs of technical communication professionals.

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

Copyright statement: Byline invites submissions for consideration for publication. By submitting an article, you implicitly grant a license to Byline to run the article and for other STC publications to reprint it without permission. The writer holds copyright. In your cover letter, please let the editor know if this article has run elsewhere and if it has been submitted for consideration to other publications.

Subscriptions: The current issue of Byline and all archived editions are available on the [STC Chicago Website](#).

2016-17 Committee Managers

Alliance - Linda Jansak

Bylaws - Dan Dornbrook

Competition - MaryKay Grueneberg,
competition@stc-chicago.com

eLearning & Technology Showcase - Linda Jansak

Historian - Bill Leavitt

Internships - Elizabeth Gecas

Membership - Dan Dornbrook,
membership@stc-chicago.com

Newsletter - Michael Burke,
byline@stc-chicago.com

Nominating - Dan Dornbrook, Linda Jansak,
Donna Wampach, Cheri Gerlach,
nominating@stc-chicago.com

Get Real! Professional Interview Program -
Josée Martens, interview@stc-chicago.com

Programs - MaryKay Grueneberg,
program@stc-chicago.com

Social Media - Elizabeth Gecas, pr@stc-chicago.com

Scholarships - Russ Friend,
scholarships@stc-chicago.com

Sponsorship - Francis Bao,
sponsorship@stc-chicago.com

Web/Online - Mandy Morgan, web@stc-chicago.com