

# Byline



Bi-Monthly Newsletter for STC Chicago Members

## President's message

By Linda Kelley, President

Wow, I can't believe it's the end of the STC year already. As I get ready to pass the gavel into Cheri Noble's infinitely capable hands, I've been taking a look back at the past year, and I'm so proud of all the chapter has accomplished. This year we offered seven program meetings, two peer-review meetings, a recognition and awards dinner, a webinar, a half-day workshop, monthly networking lunches, an election, a competition, and the eLearning and Technology Showcase. We also awarded two college scholarships, posted dozens of job or consulting opportunities, published six issues of Byline, produced 18 blog posts, and shared countless Facebook posts, Tweets, RSS updates, and LinkedIn discussions — all of which led us to be recognized with two STC awards, Community of Excellence and Community Pacesetter.

I've had the opportunity this year to chat with officers of other organizations, presidents of other STC chapters, and our Community Affairs Committee (CAC) representative, and people always want to know what makes our chapter so successful. As one of the larger STC chapters, located in a vibrant metropolitan area, we're fortunate to have the resources (or access to the resources) to carry out our visions. But it really boils down to the volunteers. What a wonderful bunch of creative minds we

have in this chapter, combined with a great deal of energy and enthusiasm. The brainstorming that often occurs at our monthly Administrative Council and planning meetings is exciting and fruitful.

Of course you don't have to be an AC member to share an idea. A member recently commented on how nice it was to be able to suggest a program that would be of value to her and then have it actually occur. We're more than happy to hear your ideas! If you're interested in something, chances are good that other people are interested as well. Please let us know! Our contact information is always posted on the People page of the STC Chicago website.

In closing, I'd like to thank this year's officers, Cheri Noble, Elizabeth Burke, Chris Hester, and Donna Wampach, along with all of our committee managers and nominating committee members, Francis Bao, Dan Dornbrook, Adam Evans, MaryKay Gruenberg, Linda Jansak, Cynthia Laughlin, Bill Leavitt, Paula Ludmann, Josée Martens, Beth Najberg, and Kim Sikora, for all of their hard work. It's been an honor to work with them and to represent all of you. Have a great summer, and don't forget to register for our **June Trivia Night!** Ω

## 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](http://www.stc-chicago.blogspot.com)

## inside this issue

President's message	1
Upcoming events	2
Election results	2
Career workshop recap	3
Peer review series	4

Find us online!



## Join Us for Trivia Night

By Linda Kelley, President

We've got the questions; you've got the answers! Do you know the main industry of the Bahamas, how many dimples are on a golf ball, or what notorious serial killer of the 1970s the book *The Stranger Beside Me* was about? Perhaps you know which letter appears on the most Scrabble tiles or what beverage has the slogan "Great Taste, Less Filling." Either way, you won't want to miss our final meeting of the program year, Trivia Night with STC Chicago, on Tuesday, June 25 at Elmhurst Public House in Elmhurst.

We'll be passing the gavel to the newly elected Administrative Council members, celebrating the end of the program year, and of course competing (in teams of 3 or 4) at trivia. There will be food, drink, networking, merriment, and prizes. For \$5, what more could you ask for?

### When?

Tuesday, June 25

Time: 6:30 to 9:00 pm

### Where?

Elmhurst Public House  
683 W. St. Charles Rd., Elmhurst

### How much?

\$5 - Includes a selection of sandwiches, salads, and soft drinks. (Alcoholic beverages are available for purchase.)

**Register** today! 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

## 2013-14 Election Results

By Paula Ludmann, Nominating Committee

Thanks to everyone who ran in the 2013 STC Chicago election. Having a three-way race for Vice President made this an exciting election.

The STC Chicago 2013-2014 chapter officers are:

President – *Cheri Noble*

Vice President – *Adam Evans*

Secretary – *Donna Cleary*

Treasurer – *John Hartigan*

Immediate Past President – *Linda Kelley*

Nominating Committee – *Steve Napora* (2-year term) and *Christen Meyer* (1-year term)

I also want to thank the members of the Nominating Committee. Francis Bao, Linda Jansak, and Beth Lisberg Najberg volunteered countless hours to make this year's election a success. Ω



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## Jump-start Your Career Workshop

*By Elizabeth L. Burke, Immediate Past President*

It was a crisp spring morning on Saturday, April 20th in Grayslake as we filled the meeting room for our workshop, Jump-start Your Career. This workshop was a jointly sponsored event by the STC Chicago and STC Wisconsin chapters and consisted of the panel topics, What do Technical Publication Managers Look for in a Candidate and Working with a Recruiter with several experienced presenters for the panel discussions. Our guest speaker Jack Molisani, presented two topics, Career Advancement through Personal Branding and Honing Your Workplace Negotiation Skills.

Our panelists for, What do Technical Publication Managers Look for in a Candidate, included Linda Verway, a manager for the Information Design and Development team at the FIS Milwaukee Brown Deer campus; Olivia Jordan, the Senior Manager of Client Education for Enghouse Interactive; MaryKay Grueneberg, a Technical Writer at SAP; and Elizabeth Burke, a consultant in technical writing and instructional design. All of our panelists brought several years of experience as hiring managers in a variety of industries. There was a broad spectrum of questions for our panelists as those who attended were in different stages of their technical communication careers. Attendees included those just entering the workforce from college, those who brought years of experience in business but were embarking on a new career in technical communications, and there were also those with many years in the technical communication field wanting to explore new content areas and new companies. The attendees were filled with questions.

- How do I provide samples when I signed a non-disclosure agreement?
- How long of a resume should I submit?
- How many different resumes should I maintain?
- What types of questions should I expect to answer during the interview?
- How do I get from a phone interview to an in-person interview?

Our second panel discussion, Working with a Recruiter, included Gina Arinyanontakoon, a Recruiting Manager with the CARA Group, Inc.; and Kristi Aldag, currently an Independent Recruiting Consultant working at Career Education Corporation. Both of our panelists possess significant experience in successfully recruiting and placing candidates with clients. Whether our attendees were interested in consulting or a permanent position with a company, the information and techniques that Gina and Kristi shared help to strengthen our attendees interviewing and presentation skills during the search and interviewing process. Gina and Kristi stressed that a professional and persistent approach will help candidates be successful in their job hunting process.

Our guest speaker, Jack Molisani, is President of ProSpring Technical Staffing providing candidates for technology and manufacturing companies. Jack presented two topics as part of our workshop – Career Advancement through Personal Branding and Honing Your Workplace Negotiation Skills. Both topics complimented our panel discussions and shared additional insights and techniques in acquiring the next job. For those looking for a technical communication job for the first time helped attendees identify the attributes to highlight and promote to get that first interview. For those in the workforce for some time, Jack reminded attendees what skills to stress during the interview to help them stand apart from the rest. And the important part of every interview process, negotiating your salary, was very informative with tips to discover the salary range for position.

The workshop was full of information, full of questions, and a full complement of presenters and attendees. With the variety of backgrounds and questions, everyone took away new information and new techniques in the search for a new or different technical communication position. Ω

# Peer Review Series: Portfolios

By Cheri Noble, Vice President

In the latest installment of our "Peer Review" STC Chicago program series, we discussed and reviewed examples of professional portfolios. This article provides some of the ideas and suggestions that were discussed at the May 25th program meeting.

In the past, many of us may not have been thinking of creating a portfolio of our work samples. With an ever changing economy, we should all have some samples of the work we have created to introduce ourselves to potential new employers.

You don't have to keep everything you've ever done in your portfolio. If you are talking to a prospective employer, find out what their needs are and take those items with you. You want your portfolio to tell your story; who are you and what can you do for this potential employer.

Some types of items that might be in your portfolio could be:

- Project plan
- Process documentation
- Writing sample (to reflect writing style)
- Before and after instructional manual or document
- Images, graphics, drawings
- Online Help files (use screen shots)
- PDFs
- Wikis/Portals
- Websites (use screen shots)
- Table of Contents
- Documentation Checklist
- Business Sign Off form
- Style Guide
- Template(s) (samples)
- Job aid(s)
- Checklist(s)
- Skills inventory
- Awards you've received

Once you've determined what should be in your portfolio, decide how to organize it. If the contents are paper, have a professional binder with tabs for each type of item. Don't forget to include additional business cards.

Include a table of contents at the beginning of your binder. Alternatively, you can bring your documents to an interview digitally on an iPad, tablet, laptop or USB drive.

Here are some other ideas that were presented and discussed:

- Use Dropbox (or any online/cloud storage) to maintain samples/documentation
- Only print/bring samples according to the job requirements
- Make your portfolio part of your story
- Maintain writing samples
- Demonstrate documentation process knowledge
- Create a PowerPoint that tells the history of what you did on a project (from beginning to end)
- Have writing samples available if the interviewer asks for them
- Relate items in your portfolio to entries on your resume

This is not an exhaustive list, but you can see that we had plenty to talk about and share. In the fall, we hope to have another "Peer Review" topic. Watch the Byline and the [STC Chicago website](#) for details. Ω

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## Readers write in

By Kim Sikora, Newsletter Committee

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: **Beach volleyball, sandcastle building contests, swimming... What's your favorite beach activity?**

Submit responses to [byline@stc-chicago.com](mailto:byline@stc-chicago.com) to be featured in an upcoming issue! Ω

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## 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

### President

Linda Kelley  
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### Immediate Past President

Elizabeth Burke  
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### Vice President

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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.

**News guidelines:** Send articles to [byline@stc-chicago.com](mailto: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](mailto:byline@stc-chicago.com).

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