Byline

President's Message
STC Chicago and My Career

By Cheri Noble

As most of you know, I started a new job this past December. It wasn't an easy decision after being with my former employer for 41 years. I was talking to my manager and a team member over the past week to find out what it was that made them choose me. "Experience" was the common answer. We can have all the experience and more, but if we can't communicate that succinctly and accurately, it may not help us. I know that what I learned at our program meetings last year is what got me the job. Our Speed Resume program gave me a whole new perspective on what should be on my resume. Thanks to the attendees who provided feedback on my resume, I was able to create a more accurate and concise account of my skill set and career history. The Portfolio Review program really opened my eyes. I used to have a 3" binder with 10 tabs to show work I had created in the past. Thanks to Chris Hester, who came in with three pieces of paper, I now have very small folder with just a few choice samples of my work. The funny thing was, at my job interview, the manager didn't even want to see my portfolio. One thing many people forget is that it's the people you meet and the discussions that occur at our program meetings that make a difference. With updating my resume and portfolio also came much more confidence in my abilities and what I would have to offer to an employer. It wasn't on the agenda, but it's part of the experience of attending program meetings.

The job market and how to get a job change so quickly. The way one looked for a job 20 years ago doesn't work anymore. What I thought was an excellent resume and portfolio was very "old school." Without STC and STC Chicago, I know I would not have been able to apply for and get a new job.

I'm still learning my new job, but I'm starting to retain more of the information. I didn't just change jobs, I changed industries; I went from the retail industry to pharmacy benefits management. I wanted a challenge, and that's just what I got—and I couldn't be

Find us online!

inside this issue

STC CHICAGO

June Meeting: Member Appreciation, Networking, and Fun!

Our June meeting is traditionally our chapter business meeting, where we introduce the new officers for the next program year, but it is also a time to relax, socialize, and have some fun. Best of all, it only costs $5! We'll celebrate the past year, thank our volunteers, and look ahead to the year to come.

Did you attend last year's June meeting? We played a trivia game that was such a hit that it's back again this year. Start picking your team members now and get ready for the competition! Register **here**.

When: Thursday, June 19, 2014

Where: Dominick's Pizza and Pasta
139 W. St. Charles Rd., Villa Park

Time: 6:00pm – 8:30pm Ω

Spring Is a Time for Change and New Beginnings

By Cheri Noble

As our gardens and yards begin to come alive, our STC Chicago programs are coming to a break for the summer. But that doesn't mean your Program Manager and Administrative Council are taking a break. We are looking for ideas and suggestions for the 2014-2015 year. We need to know what you, our members, would like to learn. Would you like to learn more about how to use certain software like RoboHelp, Word, SharePoint, FrameMaker, etc.? If so, we could plan a workshop on a Saturday. Or is it "best practices" and processes you'd like to know more about? Some suggestions or topics I heard mentioned at the April program meeting were

- Working with styles (Word, FrameMaker, RoboHelp, etc.)
- How to proofread with accuracy
- Working effectively with remote team members

Do you know someone who would make a great presenter? Let us know. We can do some of the leg work to see if we can get them on our schedule. Send your ideas or suggestions to programs@stc-chicago.com. **Think big!** Ω

Judge for a Day

By Pamela Nelson

On March 9, I had the privilege of representing the Chicago chapter of STC to judge the Chicago Non-Public Schools Science Exposition, which was held at the Museum of Science and Industry. I spent several hours evaluating projects displayed by dozens of students.

The criteria used is available in the STC March At-a-Glance e-newsletter, covering communication topics such as layout, graphics, terminology, style, and tone. There was a wide range of entries, on topics such as what is the best nail polish for the price, how to prevent soil erosion, what are favorite foods of peers, at what age do students have the best memory, and so many others. It was a pleasure to see the hard work and creativity of these young people.

The two projects that I felt stood out from the rest in terms of meeting the STC criteria received monetary awards from the Chicago chapter. The top prize was given to the 8th-grade student whose project "Coca Cola vs. Coca Cola" tested the student's peers on their ability to tell whether two cups of soda were the same brand. According to the results, most of the peers did not realize the soda was the same. The overall presentation and report for this project was really excellent, and comparable to displays I've seen in corporate communication projects.

The other project, "Tell Tail Wag - Brain Lateralization in Dogs," was also by an 8th-grade student and tested whether a dog's tail wagging would change direction based on various stimuli, such as its owner, a squeak toy, and a cat placed in front of the dog's crate. According to the results, the stimuli did change the tail's direction. This project used a variety of graphics and had a well-written report that made it easy to visualize how the testing was performed and videotaped.

Overall, volunteering for this event was an enjoyable experience that I would recommend to anyone. You receive free admission to the museum for the entire day. Ω

Congratulations to Donna Jones, winner of last issue's "I read Byline" contest. Donna received a $10 Starbucks gift card.

User Experience and Flaming Cheese: A Recap of the April Meeting

By Linda Kelley

STC Chicago members and guests gathered at The Parthenon Restaurant in Greektown on April 17 to learn how to stay relevant in a user-centric world. Stuart Bender, applications engineer, artist, and educator, shared his insights on usability testing, user experience, and user-centered design to help us not only meet the user's expectations but exceed them. In this overview version of Stuart's upcoming Summit workshop, we learned about personas, the roles and skill sets that are important in a comprehensive user experience team, and how to get measurable, helpful information during usability testing.

Stuart's own team in the Communications Services department at CCC Information Services Inc. is a model of working together to come up with creative solutions. They demonstrate daily how a team's "creative synergy" and specialized knowledge can lead to problem solving, consistency, innovation, team cohesion, trust, and fun to produce relevant, top-quality communication products.

As if all of this useful information weren't enough, we also enjoyed a bountiful buffet of traditional Greek favorites at the restaurant that invented flaming saganaki. Opaa! Ω

Stuart Bender discusses user experience and usability testing

Eastern Iowa Workshop Recap

By Francis Bao

On March 11, the Eastern Iowa Chapter organized a writing workshop. The content of the workshop was about why style is import to technical writers. It was presented by Laura Behrens, owner and principal of Red Pen Communication, an editorial and consulting practice that focuses on excellent writing.

During the workshop, Laura used her expertise to show the audience why style is a vital element of writing. Style includes audience, formality, and context. She also introduced some arbiters that are commonly utilized by writers, such as Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS), Modern Language Associations (MLA), American Psychological Association (APA), Corporate, and Associated Press.

In technical writing, writers should use short and straightforward sentences with proper punctuation, such as commas, quotation marks, and periods. Long sentences, such as compound and complex sentences, in technical writing will confuse readers, and the clarity of the writing will be affected. In addition, Laura provided knowledge on proper use of prepositions. Using the wrong prepositions and phrases will change the meaning of technical content and will cause negative impact for marketing new technologies. Technical writers also need to avoid clichés and jargon in their writing and use formal terms in the content. Tech-related errors usually have to be fixed by writers themselves, since spell check will not always correct such errors.

Proofreading of technical writing work is very significant to technical writers since their work will reflect their skills as well as professional image. Laura provided several guidelines for proofreading technical content. They include putting away writing for a day; reading it out loud; using a text-to-speak program; building a checklist of writers' most common mistakes; customizing spell check; using different formats, such as hardcopy, e-reader, web, and smartphone; and reading back to front, bottom to top, and right to left. She also asked the audience to practice sample writing by using information she presented during the workshop. The workshop received very good feedback from all attendees.

2014 Robert G. Frank Award Goes to Beth Najberg

By Francis Bao

The Robert G. Frank Award is to honor Robert Frank, a dedicated leader of the Chicago Chapter who worked beyond reasonable expectation to make it successful. Robert G. Frank Award recipients are usually members of STC Chicago for 10 years or more and have played an active role for all or most of those years. The award recipients are determined by the Frank Award Committee.

Beth Lisberg Najberg is the 2014 recipient of the Robert G. Frank Award. She has been an STC member for over 20 years, working for the chapter in various capacities, including judging in chapter-level competitions, serving on the nominating committee for two terms, teaching document design at the Institute of Professional Development, and presenting at STC international conferences. She and Mike Albers compiled a bibliography for information design that has been used by STC since 2000. She is a book reviewer for STC's academic journal, *Technical Communication*. At the local level, she has been actively involved in the Chicago Alliance for many years. She was instrumental in the creation and maintenance of a WordPress site dedicated to promoting Alliance events. She became an STC Associate Fellow in 2006.

Beth has more than 25 years' experience as an information and instructional design consultant, documenting systems, developing custom training solutions, and creating technical presentations for large corporations and public entities. She has presented at numerous STC conferences about visual communication and information design. She is the principal of Beginnings, an independent consulting firm specializing in technical communication since 1991.

Congratulations to Beth Lisberg Najberg! Ω

Accra is the largest and the capital city of what African country? An electroencephalograph measures the activity of what body part?

Trivia is back… Join us June 19! Ω

Chapter Award Recipients

By Cheri Noble

Distinguished Chapter Service Awards
Donna Wampach

Donna Wampach has served the STC Chicago chapter in the capacity of Secretary for the last two years. As Secretary, Donna improved many Administrative Council processes by moving all meeting agendas and notes to a digital format, which enhances collaboration and time spent on projects. She attends all meetings with a positive attitude, updates minutes very quickly, and always provides valid, prompt input for chapter discussions. Most recently, Donna collaborated and completed an application for a Pacesetter award for our chapter.

Cynthia Laughlin

Cynthia Laughlin has served the STC Chicago chapter as our Competition Manager this year and was the Judging Manager last year. With Cynthia's leadership and dedication, she has moved all tracking of entries to online, improved the organization of materials, tried new ways to orient judges, and helps judges to participate wherever they are located.

Last year we had 51 entries, and this year we had 32 entries. That is a lot of coordination, time, and effort to remain organized and complete everything on time. I had the pleasure of working with Cynthia last year as the Competition Manager, and I can tell you her dedication and leadership to our chapter is exemplary.

Volunteer of the Year Award
Linda Jansak

Linda Jansak has served the STC Chicago chapter (for 7 years now) as our main contact for the Chicago eLearning and Technology Showcase, which, by the way, sells out every year. This annual event is a collaborative effort between STC Chicago, CCASTD, and CISPI. This large one-day conference focuses on new media and interactive methods for training. There are so many sessions that it's usually hard to pick which ones to attend. Linda recruits for volunteers to help with planning as well as hosting on the day of the event, helps determine the best and most cost-effective location,

and reports to the STC Chicago AC on the progress. STC Chicago's profit from last year's event is going to help us keep the cost low for our chapter programs and may allow us to obtain some well-known speakers in the future. All Linda has done allows us to do more for our members.

As of August, we didn't have a Program Manager, and Linda stepped in to organize October's meeting on Academic Trends and Career Tracks for Technical Communication Professionals. We had a great turnout, and the panel of speakers was great. Congratulations to Linda on another year of great volunteer work!

President's Award

Paula Ludmann

I am happy to present Paula with this year's President's Award. She became the Nominating Committee Manager in 2012. Paula takes her job very seriously and is very responsible for her duty as the manager. She held face-to-face meetings as well as conference calls with committee members to discuss every detail and came up with good ideas for encouraging potential candidates to run for office. Last year, we had three candidates for the VP position. She recommended distributing flyers at chapter meetings and competition judging orientation to advertise our chapter election. Paula is a very dedicated leader in our chapter, and she has done an excellent job. She is creative and enthusiastic and has led this committee with her leadership and hardworking spirit. She is truly an excellent example of leadership in the Chicago Chapter.

Chapter Star Award

Elizabeth Burke

When I started as president, the Program Manager position was vacant. This was not the way I wanted to start my year! Needless to say, I was concerned because this is one of the core roles of our chapter. I am forever grateful that Elizabeth saw the need and asked if she could help! Oh my goodness, anyone who runs a non-profit organization knows that it's great when someone asks to help! Since Elizabeth took over, we've had excellent topics and attendance at all the meetings, and I look forward to more in the future.

Elizabeth has found meeting locations that are close to train stations, have good food, and are FREE! Did you know that

we don't pay for any meeting location? She networks with area restaurants to find the best value and works with other STC members to come up with topics and speakers that provide benefit to our members. Was anyone at the meeting in February when TechSmith was here to train us on Snagit? It was a fantastic meeting, location, and food! She works with our webmaster to create registration and update the activities calendar. She attends the monthly AC meetings and provides updates to our agenda so the AC knows what's going on. Ω

"Get Real": A Professional Interview Program

By Josée Martens

Earlier this month, STC Chicago launched the "Get Real" informational interview service for students and recent graduates in our field. It is our hope that in offering this service to students, we will also get an opportunity to educate students about STC. To learn more about the service, please visit our chapter website today.

We are so pleased that a set of seasoned professionals from our chapter have already volunteered to be interviewed. If you'd like to join our roster of volunteers, please email interview@stc-chicago.com. Ω

President's message
Continued from page 1

happier. When you're the "new guy," you spend most of your time being trained and absorbing data like a sponge. I've been very lucky because everything I have asked for (software, information, etc.) I was able to get. I was given time to learn an upgraded version of RoboHelp to totally change our online help "skin" to include our corporate colors and logo and to create a custom style set. I presented the updated version of online help, and once the team approved of the changes, I was able to teach them how to do the updates. It feels great to be able to contribute! Ω

Meet Our Newest Fellows: Becky Hall and Chris Hester

STC Chicago congratulates Rebecca (Becky) Hall and Chris Hester, who have attained the rank of STC Fellow. According to the STC website, "The rank of Fellow is the highest honor an STC member can receive…. STC Fellows contribute to the profession and the Society at the highest level, as indicated by their publications, presentations, awards mentoring, leadership, and community service." We are proud to count both Becky and Chris among our members!

Becky Hall

What advice would you give someone who is thinking about joining STC?

Do it! Plan to attend at least three meetings or events a year. You'll meet people and build relationships, in addition to learning from the events. If you can volunteer, do so. You'll meet more people, make more relationships, grow more in the giving of your time than you imagined, and get back more than you give.

What's your tech comm philosophy?

I want to be that quiet little voice at your shoulder as you're struggling with your work, the voice that gives you just enough information for success, but willing to provide more information if you want it. And I believe that we create a contract with our readers/users to provide information they can trust. If we aren't right in one place, why should they trust any other part of the documentation?

How long have you lived in Chicago?

I moved to the Chicago area in 1988 from the Boston suburbs.

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

Since I live in West Chicago, not Chicago proper, I really don't go to the city much, though I enjoy it when I do. But what I love about living in West Chicago includes the people and the level of community involvement many residents have. We have all sorts of community events, from festivals to pancake breakfasts to chili fests. Hmm, most of them involve food!

Name your three favorite books

Tough question, and the answer changes at different times. Today I'll group three in one for *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien, and add anything by Jane Austen plus *The Non-Designer's Design Book* by Robin Williams for a bit of tech comm flare.

What's your favorite place to visit?

The ocean — pretty much any ocean. But not to lay on the beach — to walk, smell the salt air, watch the birds, collect shells and rocks…

What's your favorite movie?

The Princess Bride!

What hobbies do you take part in regularly?

I am a second degree black belt in kyuki-do (a martial art), and I am a quilter, making both art and traditional quilts.

Chris Hester

When and how did you first get involved with STC?

I joined STC when I was an undergraduate student at Illinois State. During my junior year, just before my internship at Argonne National Laboratory, my advisor recommended that I join STC, attend meetings, and start meeting people in the Chicago area. Since I planned to move here after graduation, I took his advice. As it turned out, I ended up going to grad school instead. I got involved with the student chapter, and the year I was president, the chapter organized a regional STC conference.

What are you working on now?

The 2014 Summit! Are you going? You should totally go!

What's the strangest job you've had?

Detasseling corn.

How long have you lived in Chicago?

I moved here in May 1991 from Cincinnati.

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

I like that I can drive an hour east and be in the city, or an hour west and be completely out of reach. I also really enjoy the forest preserve systems and bike trails throughout Dupage County, Lake County, and the area. We started exploring the bike trails last summer, and they're fantastic.

What are you currently reading?

I recently finished reading *Be the Captain of Your Career*, by Jack Molisani, and *Speaker Camp*, by Russ Unger and Samantha Starmer. I've been fortunate to attend Jack's presentations on job hunting, and reading the book is like chatting with Jack — he revs you up and makes you rethink your career activities and personal goals, even if you're feeling comfortable with how things are. It's an engaging read, and it will be an excellent resource to have around.

When it comes to presenting, the thing I struggle with most is putting together the presentation — refining the idea, outlining it, creating slides, staying focused, and so forth. *Speaker Camp* was loaded with useful information for preparing and presenting material, and while it's geared towards preparing oneself for the conference circuit, I've found myself able to apply its concepts to other types of presentations.

What kind of music do you listen to?

Lately, I've been listening to music on Daytrotter, which is the site for Horseshack (a recording studio in Rock Island). They host recording sessions for a fantastic variety of artists and then make those sessions available as playlists, downloads, and whatnot. I've found some great new bands, plus new music from favorite bands.

What's your tech comm philosophy?

A few years ago, a friend said, "If you can't draw it, you can't do it." I think that's become my attitude to projects in general — if I get stuck or feel overwhelmed, I assume a reader will feel that way. Sketching on paper or a whiteboard helps me work through an idea or process. Ω

The Summit: Investing in Myself

By Cheri Noble

I learned many years ago that my career is just that, MINE! In the '90s, my company paid for one membership and one conference a year for everyone in my department. Of course, I chose to belong to STC and attend the Summit. I would come back from the Summit pumped up with ideas and all of the things I had learned and couldn't wait to share them with my team. Then a downturn in the company happened and they couldn't pay for any of those things anymore. I had to make a choice: do I fund my own career development or blame it on my company that I didn't join or attend any STC events? That's when it hit me that it's MY CAREER. I could take what I learned anywhere I went, and I could do my job better with the information I learned. I started to pay my own membership dues and conference costs. I used my vacation time to attend the Summit every May. I decided that this was an investment I would make in myself, and I couldn't be happier.

Our annual Summit is approaching, and I hope you're able to attend. It begins (with pre-conferences) on Saturday, May 17 and ends Wednesday, May 23. Regretfully, I can't attend this year (buying a house and getting married is busy enough), but I will miss this learning opportunity. If you've never been, try your best to go this year. STC always has the best speakers and topics; the learning opportunities are fantastic. The networking opportunities are immense, and I advise you to take advantage if you can. (Just a side note: If you are attending, be sure to buy a ticket for the Awards Banquet and be ready to go on stage to help accept the Chicago Chapter's Community of Distinction Award!) Ω

Eastern Iowa Workshop
Continued from page 3

Not only do technical writing workshops present the newest technologies to communication professionals, but they also will be able to fit their individual needs and upgrade their professional skills. Technical writers will have opportunities to learn knowledge, practice in their workplaces, and expand their vision. These technologies effectively enhance the knowledge base of technical communicators and help them become experts in the field. Ω

STC Chicago Awards Two Scholarships

By Josée Martens

The Scholarship Committee is pleased to announce that STC Chicago has awarded two scholarships. Tracy Castro received our top scholarship of $1000 and an STC student membership. Kerri Kowalewski-Halawa received our second scholarship of $500 and an STC student membership.

Tracy is focusing on technical communications as a part of the A.A. transfer program at the College of Lake County. In the Spring of 2015, she will transfer to Southern Illinois University to complete her bachelor's degree in Workplace Education and Development. Tracy's application grabbed the judges' attention with her high-quality writing samples. Each sample demonstrated a solid

Tracy Castro

understanding of the principals of technical communication. Tracy recently joined Aon, where she hopes to explore new roles using the technical communication skills she has acquired throughout her studies. You may recognize Tracy. She was also awarded the 2013 STC Chicago Scholarship last year.

Kerri is pursuing her masters in Writing, Rhetoric, and Discourse at DePaul University. She plans to use the skills she develops to make the world a better place and hopes to land a position with a nonprofit. The judges were particularly impressed with Kerri's collaborative report on improving the usability of the Center for Better Healthcare website.

Please join us in congratulating both Tracy and Kerri. Ω

More trivia practice for June 19:

Snert is the name of the dog in what comic strip?

The Palo Verde is the official tree of which state?

What character in "The Addams Family" slept on a bed of nails? Ω

Competition Award Winners

Distinguished

TransForum
Argonne National Laboratory
Cindi Anderson
Renée M. Nault
Suzanne Williams

2012 ALCF Annual Report
Argonne National Laboratory
Renee H. Carlson
James Collins
ALCF Communications Team

Informal Learning Basics
Université Concordia
Saul Carliner
Stephanie Castellano
Mark Morrow
Justin Brusion
Juana Llorens

STOP Idling. START $aving.
Argonne National Laboratory
Sana Sandler
Linda Stephens
Patricia Weikersheimer

Advanced Networking Initiatives at Indiana University
Indiana University
Janae Cummings
Maria Morris

Big Red II: Embracing the Spirit of Indiana University
Indiana University
Janae Cummings
Keith Danielson
Daphne Siefert-Herron
Brian Hawkins

RevoDeployR Deployment Planning Guide
Revolution Analytics
Josée Martens
David Russell

HP Insight Remote Support Help
Hewlett Packard
Wayne Craun
Lynda O'Leary
Aidan O'Driscoll
Kristine White

Excellence

Argonne Site Sustainability Plan
Argonne National Laboratory
Diana D. Anderson
Nancy L. Erdmann
Vicki L. Skonicki

Argonne Now
Argonne National Laboratory
Louise Lerner
Sana Sandler

Indiana University IT News Website
Indiana University
Ceci Jones Schrock
Sarah Engel
Austin Lord
Brian Hawkins
Daphne Siefert-Herron
Greg Moore

SLS1024-Manage your Sales Opportunities with Insite 2.0 and SalesForce.com
Motorola
Paul Chironna, Project Manager
Piotr Pesko and Karol Cholewa, Graphics
Mimi Jones and Vicki Kunkel, Instructional Design
Mateusz Barszcz and Ewa Mwaura, Developers

Control Pad Configuration Software Manual
Federal Signal
Camille Costa

Joint Center for Energy Storage Research (JCESR) Kickoff Meeting Participant Handout
Argonne National Laboratory
Madonna Pence
Kerri Schroeder
Betty Waterman

Argonne Sustainable Employee Commuting Resources Guide
Argonne National Laboratory
Diana D. Anderson
Larisa Blyudaya

IT@IU Faculty Packets
Indiana University
Janae Cummings
Maria Morris
Jonathan Walker
Alan Milner

ALYX Cart Operator's Manual and ALYX Cart Service Manual
Fenwal, a Frensenius Kabi Company
Pamela Nelson

Merit

From Quanta to the Continuum: Opportunities for Mesoscale Science
Argonne National Laboratory
Renée M. Nault
Joseph E. Harmon
Cindi Andersen

Tutorial Videos: Actions on your Argonne Retirement Plans
Argonne National Laboratory
Katherine Obmascik
James Corsolini

ESE0300 – Sales Way "Lite" – Module One: Overview
Motorola
Joanne Riog, Project Manager
TyngJun Sim, Developer

The Advanced Protein Crystallization Facility at Argonne National Laboratory
Argonne National Laboratory
Michele M. Nelson
Brooke D. Brandon

HP Insight Online Reporting Guide
Hewlett Packard
Lynda O'Leary
Wayne Craun
Kristine White

Geolynx Mobile User Guide
Geocomm
Jill Mergen
Evelyne Anker

RevoDeployR Management Console's User's Guide
Revolution Analytics
Josée Martens

RevoScaleR Teradata Data Source Getting Started Guide
Revolution Analytics
Susan I. Ranney
Richard Calaway

Profile Manager Help System
Zebra Technologies, Inc.
Beth Harker
Jason Ω

STC Chicago Membership at a Glance

Total Affiliated Members: 118

Senior Members: 79

Members: 29

New TC Professionals: 4

Student Members: 6

STC Chicago Chapter Leaders | 2013-2014

Byline