

Byline



Bi-Monthly Newsletter for STC Chicago Members

President's Message Opportunities Await You

By *Betsy Maaks*



Some things come full circle: your kids learn to repay your kindnesses by treating you to ice cream; that chocolate you love to eat

shows up in pimples on your nose. You get the idea.

But seriously, it's good to be back with Chicago STC to help usher in another year of exciting programs and opportunities for development in the Chicago area. I'm proud to be surrounded by experienced and hard-working fellow officers and committee leaders who are planning another stellar year.

We're adding new webinars while maintaining our monthly programs, which, you'll be glad to note, will be distributed around Chicago and the suburbs, for your added convenience. I can relate to driving through traffic to a meeting, with a 43-mile commute by tollway. No fun, and who wants that?

We're planning a bookend celebration to the chapter's 60th year with notable guests as well as top-notch presenters throughout the year on a variety of topics to help you with your job, to develop your resume, and to pique your interest as a professional growth opportunity.

Networking and connecting with peers is also on the monthly agenda with the meetings and ongoing lunches on the first Thursday of each month.

I hope you'll stop lurking around the edges and come join us for some fun and enlightenment. I can't promise the Dalai Lama on our list of speakers, but we certainly have enlightening meetings and opportunities to connect. We're waiting to meet you—just show up. Ω

Don't miss Jack Molisani
in September!

Thurs, Sept 17 6:00 - 8:30 PM

Threats and Opportunities: Advancing Your Tech Comm Career

Sat, Sept 19 8:00 AM - 12:30 PM

Be the Captain of Your Career

Get more info...

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Find us online!



August Program

Tech Comm Contractor Panel

Tales of consulting, owning your own business, and being your own boss

Have you ever wanted to strike out on your own? Be your own boss? Ever wondered what goes into a contract negotiation or determining your rate? Do you have to be incorporated, have an LLC, something else?

Join us Thursday, August 27 in Oak Park to hear from three contractors who've done it all. They'll share their experiences—good and bad—from the contracting world. From starting out, to securing clients, to managing the business side of things, to determining your rate, our panelists will share their strategies and warn against common pitfalls they've encountered in their years of experience.

Whether you're new to the contracting world or you've been a contractor your whole professional life, there's something new to learn.

Thursday, August 27

6:00 PM Registration and networking

6:30 PM Dinner

7:30 PM Presentation

The Carleton Hotel (Foxboro Room)

1110 Pleasant St, Oak Park, IL 60302

\$10 Members | \$20 Non-members | \$5 Students

The Carleton Hotel has a free parking lot. If traveling via el, the Carleton is two blocks from the Harlem Green Line stop.

Register now!

The Panelists:



Rebecca C. Hall is the owner of [Rebecca C. Hall Consulting](#) and has been an independent consultant since 1995. A Fellow of the Society for Technical Communication, she has presented at STC chapters and conferences. In the Chicago Chapter, Becky served on the Administrative Council as Secretary, Vice President, President, and Past President, was the Co-Manager of the Independent Consulting SIG, and has served on the

Bylaws committee and as a competition judge. Becky has over 25 years of technical communication experience.



Andi Dunn, owner of [Technical Communications Consulting, Inc.](#), has been an independent technical writer since 2001. She has developed user guides, work process documentation, online help systems, and training courses for clients in many industries including telecommunications, medical devices, real estate, finance, and health care. Andi has been an active member of Chicago STC since the early '90s, having served as editor of *Byline*, co-chair of the Contracting and Independent Consultants Special Interest Group, Program Committee Chair, Nominating Committee member, and competition judge. Andi is passionate about the role that technical communications plays in helping people and organizations achieve their goals.



Chris Hester is an independent consultant specializing in information design, knowledge management, and business process improvement. She was the conference chair for the 2014 and 2015 STC Summit, provided speaker coaching for the 2015 STC Summit, and has presented at events such as the Summit, LavaCon, and BigDesign.

The Moderator:



Linda Jansak is an emerging technologies consultant with roots in journalism and communications. She has helped small, medium, and multi-national companies improve their marketing strategies and bring focus to their brand stories. Linda also teaches technical communication in the Department of Computer and Electrical Engineering at Purdue University Calumet. She is one of the founding members of the Chicago eLearning & Technology Showcase, where she is on the Advisory Board and acts as host representative for STC Chicago. She has served as President of the Chicago chapter and has held a variety of roles on the Administrative Council, including Marketing/PR manager, competition judge, and member of the Bylaws and Nominating Committees. Ω

September Program

Threats and Opportunities: Advancing Your Tech Comm Career

Are you following a carefully mapped career trajectory, or do you normally just wait for the next opportunity to present itself?

First, watch Andrea Ames' keynote session from LavaCon 2014, "Forget 'Predict' the Future—*Create* the Future!":

<http://lavacon.org/2014/program/>.

Then come to our September 17 meeting, in which returning speaker **Jack Molisani** will lead an interactive session to help identify (and act on) your career strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT).

Read to take your career to the next level? Don't miss this meeting!

Thursday, September 17

6:00 PM Registration and networking

6:30 PM Dinner

7:15 PM Presentation

RAM Restaurant & Brewery

1901 McConnor Parkway, Schaumburg, IL 60173

\$20 Members | \$25 Non-members | \$15 Students

This meeting also includes a full dinner, with the following entrée options, which you will choose when you register:

- ◆ Caesar Salad (with or without chicken) and warm breadstick
- ◆ Seared Sirloin Steak Sandwich with fries
- ◆ Roasted Mediterranean Chicken with mixed vegetables
- ◆ Bacon Cheddar Burger with fries

Register now! Ω

September Workshop

Be the Captain of Your Career

Join STC Chicago and STC Wisconsin for a Saturday morning workshop with Jack Molisani! Participants from both chapters will be present, so not only is this an excellent opportunity to learn tips and tricks for navigating your career, but it's also a nice chance to network with a neighboring chapter.

In this three-part career workshop, professional recruiter and STC Fellow Jack Molisani will cover the following areas:

Part I: Land That Job!

Have you ever applied for a job you really wanted, but didn't get? Chances are you made one (or several) common mistakes that can scuttle your chance of landing a job. In this section you will learn

- ◆ Dirty little resume secrets that can kill your chances of getting an interview
- ◆ The top 10 mistakes professionals make when looking for work—and how to avoid them
- ◆ Using a portfolio to ace an interview

Part II: Taking Your Career to the Next Level

Are you in a dead-end job, or perhaps you've hit a compensation glass ceiling? In this second part of the workshop, you will learn

- ◆ How to expand your sphere of influence—and your salary
- ◆ How to use personal branding to take your career to the next level

Part III: Honing Your Workplace Negotiation Skills

In the final part of the workshop you will practice how to get what you identified in parts I and II. Remember: You don't get what you deserve, you get what you negotiate!

The Speaker:



Jack Molisani is the president of [ProSpring Technical Staffing](#), an employment agency specializing in technical writers and other content professionals.

He's the author of *Be The Captain of Your Career: A New Approach to Career Planning and Advancement*, which hit #5 on Amazon's Career and Resumé Best Seller list.

Jack also produces the [LavaCon Conference on Content Strategy and Tech Comm Management](#), which is in New Orleans this October.

Notes:

- ♦ Jack highly recommends that you watch Andrea Ames' LavaCon keynote session, "Forget 'Predict' the Future—*Create the Future!*," before attending the workshop.
- ♦ Workshop attendees will receive a PDF copy of his book, *Be The Captain of Your Career*.
- ♦ Jack will also raffle a free entrance to LavaCon at the end of the workshop, so register today!

Saturday, September 19

8:00 AM — 12:30 PM

Comfort Suites Grayslake (Club Room)

1775 E. Belvidere Rd, Grayslake, IL 60030

\$25 Members | \$50 Non-members | \$15 Students

This workshop includes a hot buffet breakfast.

Register now! [Ω](#)

Share Your Knowledge: The Professional Interview Program

By Josée Martens

In 2014 we launched the PIP informational interview service for those considering a change in career, students, and recent graduates interested in the field of technical communication. Once they request an interview, we match them with a senior technical communicator in our Chicago chapter for a 30- to 60-minute in-person or phone interview. Learn more about the program [here](#).

Would you like to be interviewed? Could you answer questions about what this work is like, what skills are needed, and more? We're looking to add some more interviewees to our roster of volunteers. Volunteer today! Send an email to interview@stc-chicago.com. [Ω](#)

Chicago eLearning & Technology Showcase Highlights



Cynthia Laughlin displays STC Chicago's prize giveaways, a Kindle and a copy of Snagit, at the Chicago eLearning & Technology Showcase on August 18.

Member Spotlight

Trina Grieshaber

Trina Grieshaber is an independent technical writing consultant. She served as President of STC Wisconsin in 2009-10 before moving to the Chicago area.



How long have you been working in tech comm?

Since the spring of 2000. A former employer asked me to assist with a contract writing reports for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and I discovered that I really enjoyed the work.

When and how did you first get involved with STC?

I first attended an STC meeting I believe sometime that year in Milwaukee. It was about six years later that I started taking leadership positions for the Wisconsin chapter.

What is your most common role as a technical communicator? Do you play any additional roles?

In the organizations I've worked for, most commonly my role as a technical communicator focused on writing and editing policies and procedures. Other related roles included managing those documentation projects, leading discussions, and presenting to in-house audiences.

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

You'll get the most out of your membership by volunteering, even in a small way like writing one article a year or assisting at an event. If you ever have the chance to attend or, even better, present at an STC Summit, take the opportunity. You'll be glad you went. The best part of STC is the people.

What's your tech comm philosophy?

Pay close attention to discover the needs of all relevant audiences and to find a way to balance meeting those needs.

What's your favorite STC moment?

Two favorite moments:

1. In 2004 I attended my first STC Summit as a student member and had the pleasure to see my advisor, Prof. Gerald Alred, receive the Jay R. Gould award.

2. Because the Wisconsin chapter had coordinated with the Chicago chapter on a few events during my time, I already knew some of the Chicago chapter members when I moved here five years ago. Friendly faces welcomed me into the familiar culture of STC, which helped me greatly in transitioning to life here.

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

There are so many different options for keeping yourself busy through entertainment and learning new skills. As long as you have leisure time, there aren't many excuses for being bored here. The flip side of so many options is that sometimes it's overwhelming to choose among them.

What's your favorite place to visit?

Lake Michigan. I love sailing on the lake, swimming in it, and just walking on the shore listening to waves. Ω

Let's Hack Happiness: The Future of Collaboration, Design, and the Web

This year's theme for WebVisions is "Hacking Happiness," and they're super excited to share their lineup of speakers for WebVisions Chicago, which takes place Sept. 23-25 at the Siskel Film Center.

Acclaimed content strategist Jonathan Colman (Facebook) will talk about "Wicked Ambiguity and the User Experience." Pamela Pavliscak (Change Sciences) will share "The Science of Happy Design." Andy Davidhazy will discuss "Authenticity, Technology and the Future of Storytelling," and Dan Klyn and Andrew Hinton (The Understanding Group) will dig into IA in their workshop on "Information Architecture Essentials." Not to mention a lineup of experts that include Susan Mercer (Mad*Pow), Carolyn Chandler and Anna van Slee, Joe Stewart (Work & Co.) and more.

A Two-Day Pass is \$375 (\$275 for educators and students) and a Three-Day Pass is \$500 (educator and student passes are sold out), but STC Chicago members get a 20% discount by entering the promo code STCCHI at registration.

Register today at <http://wvchi15.eventbrite.com>. Ω

2015 is STC Chicago's 60th year as a chapter of the Society for Technical Communication. Thank you to our generous sponsors!



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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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