President's Message

By Rita Hovorka

I step into the role as chapter president during uncertain times. Although there's not a clear picture on when we will be able to meet in person again, the chapter continues to move forward with activities we can engage participation in remotely. In this issue, we discuss the annual competition and the need for committee leaders.

A little bit about me: I became a technical writer during another time of uncertainty. Thirteen years after receiving a degree in home economics and five years after receiving an MBA, my career path had become overgrown and some introspection was in order.

Thinking about the feedback I received during a technical communication course in my first year of college, I realized that my writing skills were of value in the business world. So, I took almost a year off to pursue a certificate in Professional Technical Communication. The program included an internship and my advisor helped me find a place at Siemens Building Technologies in Buffalo Grove. There was not a permanent position with the company, but I was certain that the internship would quickly lead to something permanent. I started work on June 1, 2001.

I remember the commotion in the office on the morning of September 11, 2001. It was not until a few days later that I realized what this meant for my prospects of finding a permanent position. As luck would have it, two technical writers at Siemens had left the company since I arrived in June. I was fortunate to be hired as a temporary employee to fill one of the open positions, and I became a permanent employee in February 2002. I am still with Siemens today, but in Chicago, where our software development group moved at the end of 2017.

I've been peripherally involved with STC Chicago since I joined as a student member in 2000. I volunteered to help at the annual STC Summit in Chicago that year and was recognized in 2003 for helping with the Chicago chapter's annual competition. My friend and former colleague, Pete Wagner, asked me about getting more involved with the chapter again, and that's how I ran for and became vice president for the 2019-2020 program year. Now Pete is my vice president for this program year, and he and I look forward to making this uncertain year as productive as possible.

In this Issue

Trivia Night Coming Soon to a Computer Near You

Hopefully you've all been brushing up on your obscure facts and trivial information while you've been sheltering in place, because our popular **annual Trivia Night** is back!

Although we're unable to compete in person this year, we're taking our event online. We'll gather virtually over Zoom on Thursday, August 20 at 7:00pm for a fun, free evening of challenging questions, friendly competition, and prizes.

Save the date (where else are you going to go?) and watch your inbox for an email with more details and a link to register.

Bylaws Changes to be Voted on in September
By Becky Hall

The STC Chicago Administrative Council (AC) has approved some changes to the chapter bylaws. The changes originated from the scheduled review process (described in the bylaws). The AC and the membership were given the opportunity to suggest additional changes. The next step is to ask the membership for approval of the changes.

In addition to some small changes to clean up existing language, the proposed changes address some issues about meetings and elections which will allow us to move all formal business online, as needed, which is especially important in today's circumstances.

Current members of the STC Chicago chapter will be asked to vote electronically on the bylaws changes in September. Please look for an email with a link to the ballot in early September.

Committee Managers Needed

Are you looking for something else to do while you're cooped up at home? Volunteer as a committee manager! There are still several open positions for the 2020-21 program year:

Competition co-manager
- Need to be an STC Chicago member.
- Track entries and manage the judges for the annual Technical Communication Competition (September to November).
- Work with the Program Committee to organize the annual Chapter Recognition and Awards Banquet (February and March).

Get Real! Professional Interview Program
- Offer members and non-members a chance to interview someone in the Tech Comm field.
- Must be an STC member and an experienced technical communicator.
- When a request is received, match the requesters with the volunteers from our volunteer list to conduct the interviews.

Membership Drive
- Plan and conduct an annual Fall membership drive to gain new members, encourage member renewal, and improve the participation of inactive members.
- Multiple people can share this responsibility; one must be an STC member.

Scholarships
- Work with local educators to solicit entrants, review applications, select winners, and ensure the scholarship is properly delivered.
- An STC member is needed to act as the committee manager.
- A non-STC member has already volunteered for this committee.

STC Chicago Chapter Annual Technical Communications Competition

Call for Entries

STC Chicago's 49th annual Technical Communications Competition opens on September 1, 2020. The competition is an invaluable opportunity for technical communicators and their teams to receive recognition for outstanding work, receive detailed feedback from multiple peer reviewers, and to provide employers or potential employers with validation of technical communication expertise.

- You do not need to be a member of STC to enter – everyone is eligible to submit entries.
- You can enter work that you created, or you can submit an entry on behalf of a colleague or subordinate, with their permission.
- The entry must have been produced or substantially revised within the 24 months prior to September 1, 2020 and cannot have been submitted previously to any STC competition.

A link for entry applications and fees will be posted on our website by August 15. If you have any questions, please contact our Competition Committee by email at competition@stcchicago.com.

Dates

Aug. 16-Sept. 27: Call for Entries and Judges
Oct. 3: Judges' orientation via GoToMeeting
Oct. 4-Nov. 15: Judging takes place

Fees

STC Chicago member: $50
STC member (non-Chicago chapter): $75
Student: $25
Non-STC member: $100

Call for Judges

STC Chicago is recruiting judges for our annual STC Chicago Technical Communication Competition.

- As a judge, you have a unique opportunity to review entries from different companies across a variety of industries.
- The entries you review can be websites, manuals, online help, posters, newsletters, and more.
- Past entries included industries as diverse as aerospace, manufacturing, agricultural, software, and medical associations.
- Each judge reviews the entries using a four-page form that highlights different elements of technical communication. Responses are shared among team members and modified, as necessary, as the team reaches consensus on the award status of each entry.

Where do I sign up?
A link to judge applications will be posted on our website by August 15. If you have any questions, please contact our Competition Committee by email at competition@stcchicago.com.
How does judging work?

- Judging runs from October 4 through November 15.
- Judges work as a team of 2-3. Each team member receives 3-5 entries to review.
- Entries are judged using a four-page form that highlights different elements of technical communication.
- Responses are shared among team members and modified, as necessary, as the team reaches consensus on the award status of each entry.
-

Calling all Technical Communicators!

Entries *and* Judges Needed

STC Chicago Announces Volunteer Award Winners

Each year, at our annual Volunteer Recognition and Awards banquet, we spend time recognizing our chapter volunteers with special awards. This year's banquet had to be postponed due to the pandemic, but we'd still like to announce the winners of the awards to everyone.

President's Award – Apryl Cox-Jackson

The STC Chicago President's Award was established in 1993 to recognize significant volunteer contributions of chapter members not previously recognized at the Society level.

> *Apryl was recognized for her efforts working on the committee for the annual Chicago eLearning & Technology Showcase. She has worked on the showcase every year since its inception. The showcase is a one-day conference that we are very proud to co-sponsor. Unfortunately, this year's showcase had to be canceled, but plans are already in the works for 2021.*

Volunteer of the Year Award – Elizabeth L. Burke

Established in 2010, the Volunteer of the Year Award was created to acknowledge ongoing dedication to the chapter through volunteer efforts and commitment to the technical communication profession.

> *Elizabeth has been a part of the Administrative Council of STC Chicago in one way or another for many years, including two terms as president. In the 2019-2020 program year, she took the lead for our annual Technical Communications Competition. She was also our Scholarship Committee Manager. She has often stepped in to help out other committees where needed.*

Chapter Star Award – Rachel Friend

Established in 2011, the STC Chicago Chapter Star Award was created to acknowledge a chapter member for outstanding service and volunteer efforts for a single major event.

> *Rachel was the editor of the STC Chicago newsletter,* Byline, *for the 2019-2020 program year. With no previous experience, she jumped in to help out when asked. Clearly, she did a great job as we have just learned that our newsletter has once again earned an Apex Award!*

Robert G. Frank Award – Pete Wagner

Robert G. Frank Award recipients are usually members of STC Chicago for ten years or more and have played an active role for all or most of those years. Robert Frank was a dedicated leader of the chapter who worked beyond reasonable expectations to make it successful. Much of his professional life was spent in support of the long-term success of STC Chicago. The Robert G. Frank Award is intended to honor the memory of Robert Frank by recognizing STC members who characterize the dedication he displayed. This award is awarded by a special committee.

> *Pete has been a member of STC Chicago for over 30 years (he joined in 1989). During that time, he has volunteered in a number of ways:*
>
> - *Competition: Assisted in running the competition*
> - *First Thursday Lunch: Served as a point person and organizer for the Northern suburbs and downtown locations since 2008*
> - *Sponsors: Recruited business sponsors for monthly meetings*
> - *Programs: Secured monthly meeting locations for program meetings*
> - *Seminars: Developed and presented RoboHelp seminars, beginning and intermediate/advanced, for the chapter, 2004 - 2007*
> - *eLearning & Technology Showcase: Attended multiple conferences, always helping as needed with activities and Chapter promotions*
> - *Treasurer: Served as Treasurer, 2017 - 2020*
> - *2012 Summit Conference (Chicago): Supported the Chicago effort to organize and host the 2012 Summit held in Chicago*
>
> *Pete is also the 2020-21 vice president of STC Chicago.*

Congratulations to all our volunteer award winners!

STC Conferences in Chicago

By Bill Leavitt, STC Fellow, Past International President

Chicago Chapter has hosted many of STC's International Conferences (now called Summits) over the years since the first STW (Society of Technical Writers) in 1955 in Hartford, Connecticut. It is a complement to Chicago Chapter that it has so far hosted six conferences.

No other city has hosted so many conferences and Summits. New York City and Washington, D.C., have hosted five STC events each and Minneapolis and Dallas have hosted four. A total of 30 cities have hosted STC conferences or Summits, including such unusual places as Las Vegas and Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

The first STC conference held in Chicago was in 1960. It was the 7th conference held by our society. It was noteworthy because it also resulted in the merger of two predecessor organizations, STWE (Society of Technical Writers and Editors) and the West Coast TPS (Technical Publishing Society) to form the Society of Technical Writers & Publishers (STWP). Note that the predecessor organizations of STWE were the Society of Technical Writers (STW) and the Association of Technical Writers and Editors (TWE). Later, the Society of Technical Writers & Publishers (STWP) changed its name to Society for Technical Communication (STC) on July 1, 1971.

May 24-27, 1967, marked the dates of the 14th STC/STWP conference, held at the Edgewater Beach Hotel. This was a record-breaking conference for many reasons. It was the most well attended to date (612 attendees), it was the first conference where income exceeded expenses, and the hotel it was held in was demolished right after our conference. Its theme was Technical Communication: Man's Record of Reality. Two current members of the Chicago Chapter were involved in the planning of the 1967 conference, Barbara Simmons (registration) and me (finance).

The 24th annual conference was held at the newly renovated Pick-Congress Hotel from May 11-14, 1977. Its theme was Focus '77; attendance was 700. This was also the most well-attended conference to date. A unique aspect of this conference was that relatively few people attended the sessions, since the King Tut exhibit had just opened across the street from the hotel at the Chicago Art Institute. Barbara Simmons and I served in the same roles for this conference as for the 1967 event.

The 1989 (36th) conference, held May 14-17, 1989, at the Chicago Marriot Hotel, was the first conference that featured the installation of an international president in his home city (me). To commemorate the occasion, Chicago Chapter members conducted a coronation during the conference. The theme for this conference was "Communicate or Else!" which combined the importance of technical communication with Chicago's mobster history. It also had a record attendance of 2,000 people.

The 2001 (48th) conference, was held May 13-16, 2001, at the Hyatt Regency Chicago in downtown Chicago. Its theme was "2001: A Global Communication Odyssey."

The 2012 Summit (59th) was held May 20-23, 2012. This was the first Chicago international conference that was not held in Chicago. It was held at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare in Rosemont, Illinois. Its attendance was under 1,000, a reflection of the diminished size of STC. However, this summit featured many unique ideas, including STC Buddies (a committee that helped first-time attendees), use of four kinds of social media, and the inclusion of 34 chapter members in local planning and operation. One of the memorable features of this Summit was a novel dance party featuring the music of the "Rough Drafts" STC band with an appearance by the STC Blues Brothers and Sisters (from Chicago Chapter).

Chicago STC has averaged hosting an international conference/summit every ten year. It seems likely that we will be invited to host another Summit in the near future.

STC Chicago Wins Another Apex Award

STC Chicago has continued on our winning streak and has, once again, earned the 2020 Apex Award for Publication Excellence for our newsletter, *Byline*. Much credit and thanks go to our 2019-2020 *Byline* editor, Rachel Friend.

Society News

Last Chance to Access Summit OnDemand

Summit education sessions are available OnDemand until **31 August 2020**. **Register today** and gain access to 90+ recordings.

Sessions showcase the following areas: Content Design and Delivery; Tools and Technologies; Training Development and Delivery; and Project Management, Leadership, and Career Development.

If you attended the virtual event, use the same URL and credentials you used during the Summit to log on to the Summit OnDemand.

Student Discount Rate for Online Courses Ends Soon

Time is running out to receive the student discount rate of $295 for online courses. This rate will expire on **31 August 2020**, so there's no better time to register! See www.stc.org for additional details:

- **4 August:** Introduction to the Field of Tech Comm: What Every New Professional Should Know

- **13 August:** Integrating Social Media and Social Search into Technical Communication

- **18 August:** Using the Power of FrameMaker to Get Back to Writing

For all the latest Society news, be sure to check out www.stc.org or see our link to the STC Notebook on the bottom of our website at www.stc-chicago.com

STC Chicago 2020-21 Officers

President –Rita Hovorka, *president@stc-chicago.com*
Vice President – Pete Wagner, *vp@stc-chicago.com*
Secretary – Dan Dornbrook, *secretary@stc-chicago.com*
Treasurer – Francis Bao, *treasurer@stc-chicago.com*
Immediate Past President – Michael Burke, *ipp@stc-chicago.com*

2019-20 Committee Managers

Alliance – Linda Jansak
Bylaws – Becky Hall
Competition – Rita Hovorka and Tbd, *competition@stc-chicago.com*
eLearning & Technology Showcase – Linda Jansak
Historian – Bill Leavitt
Byline Newsletter – MK Grueneberg, *byline@stc-chicago.com*
Nominating – Manager Tbd, *nominating@stc-chicago.com*
Get Real! Professional Interview Program – Tbd, *interview@stc-chicago.com*
Membership Drive – Tbd, *membership@stc-chicago.com*
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Byline

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Subscriptions: The current issue of Byline and all archived editions are available on the ***STC Chicago Website***.

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