

Byline



Bi-Monthly Newsletter for STC Chicago Members and Supporters

President's Message

By Rita Hovorka

As the year ends, our holiday season begins with a day of thanks. With the phrase, "unprecedented year" uttered at every turn, many are wondering what we can be thankful for in 2020. This pandemic would have been much different had it arrived five years ago when there were limited tools for virtual connections. With that in mind, I am thankful for the technology that has allowed many to continue working despite stay-at-home orders, and the opportunities we have had to virtually gather and see one another.

This year was much more enjoyable with the virtual STC Summit and online trivia nights and happy hours. We are virtually gathering again on Thursday, December 17 for our holiday party and traditional lightning talks. We hope you join us for this night of comradery and laughter.

This is also the time to renew your STC membership (if you have not already done so). Remember to add the Chicago Chapter to your membership so that you continue to receive information on our educational and networking events.

We are especially thankful for our Chicago Chapter members and sincerely hope that you and your loved ones are doing well. Please take care of yourself as life moves indoors for the winter and lend a hand to someone else if you are able to do so. Let's look forward to the possibility of being able to gather again in person when spring arrives.

On behalf of the STC Chicago Administrative Council, happy holidays to all and best wishes for a healthy New Year! Ω



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**From STC Chicago to you,
we wish you all
a safe a happy holiday season!**



Virtual Chapter Meeting

Virtual Holiday Party w/Lightning Talks

The 2019-20 program year was another big one for STC Chicago, amid the dramatic changes that beset us all. Once again, our chapter earned the 2020 Platinum Community Achievement Award from STC, and *Byline* won a 2020 Apex Award. For 2020-21, our 49th annual Technical Communications Competition is well under way, and our programming has gone virtual with a combination of interactive evening events and our ever-popular weekday webinars.

So please join us on **Thursday, December 17**, at our first STC Chicago Virtual Holiday Party, using the interactive video features of GoToMeeting as we have for our webinars and our online networking events. (We will trust you to mute yourselves—or not!—for barking dogs.) In response to member feedback, we are moving our meetings to 7 p.m. to suit the virtual format.

As tradition demands, we will once again have Lightning Talks, mini presentations of 20 slides in five 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 and concentration, and often a lot of laughter ensues. We will have several presenters, and one brave speaker will do a Ninja Lightning Talk, with a slide deck he will not see until he starts to speak!

Check our Website for details and a registration link. If you are interested in giving a Lightning Talk, please send your idea to program@stcchicago.org. We hope to see—and hear—you online as we send this tumultuous year packing! Ω



Wednesday Webinar Series

No December Webinar

Happy Holidays – See you in January! Ω

STC Chicago October Meeting Recap

By Dan Dornbrook

The Chicago Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication gathered online on Thursday, October 22, for the first of a series of virtual chapter meetings, expected to continue through the 2020-21 program year. The goal was to mutually encourage each other in a fun and uplifting way as we enjoyed the snacks or beverages of our choice from the comfort and safety of our homes.

The advertised theme of this fall kickoff, inspired by a similarly themed event organized by the STC Rochester chapter and gratefully reused with their kind permission, was “I Found a Better Way”. Members and guests were invited to share with the group how they had “found a better way” to do something in this challenging year, whether in their work lives or in their personal or family lives. Had they claimed a victory, planned or unforeseen, or achieved some success that they wished to share? What problem had they solved that deserved attention and applause? What personal or household-related discovery—in response to current events or not—could we all celebrate together?

In keeping with the guidance that “where we go with this is up to you”, as we made the rounds and participants introduced themselves, with conversation flowing freely, we realized that what we most wanted to do was catch up with each other and with the events of each other’s lives, professional and otherwise, after months of unexpectedly being unable to meet in person. We discovered that we were all finding our own ways to adapt to ever-changing circumstances, personal and professional, and that the best ways were the ways that worked best for each of us.

STC Chicago October Meeting Recap, cont'd

In an effort to identify how we as a chapter can serve our members better, participants were asked for ideas to improve future virtual meetings, many of which will feature speaker presentations on professional topics much like those at our weekday webinars. The main request was for a later start time because, when meeting online, we no longer need to start early enough to eat together before a presentation starts. Based on this request, future virtual meetings will start at 7 p.m. Chicago time.

We look forward to seeing and hearing each other—and staying in touch—at online events through the winter and spring of 2021. Ω

Become a Member, Renew Your Membership, Win Prizes!

Become an STC member or renew your STC membership *by December 31* and be sure to *designate the Chicago Chapter as your chapter*, and you may wind up with several fall membership drive stocking stuffers courtesy of the Chicago Chapter. The first 80 people applying by year's end will be sent (U.S. postal addresses only) a snazzy STC Notebook.



The Chapter is further sweetening the pot by entering *everyone* that's signed up by year's end into a raffle for two Amazon gift cards (\$25 and \$50). As an STC member, you have access to best-in-class technical communication education and training programs, career development, professional networking opportunities, and exclusive member benefits. Now by signing up before the end of the year, you can get some great stuff to boot!

Remember, when renewing your STC membership you must also sign up as a Chicago Chapter member to be eligible for the fall membership drive stocking stuffers. Ω

STC Chicago Chapter Expanding Its Educational Scholarship Program

As in years past, STC Chicago will continue to offer educational scholarships for college and high-school students pursuing technical communication careers. In addition, the Chapter is expanding its support of technical communication education by offering an Educational Grants program in 2021, open to all *STC Chicago* members.

College/High School Scholarships

STC Chicago will continue to offer **two \$1,000 college scholarships** and **two \$500 high school scholarships** for educational purposes. The scholarships are available for students currently pursuing or who will be pursuing technical communication-related degrees or certificates at accredited educational institutions in the United States. Each award also includes a **one-year paid STC Student Membership**, which includes **STC Chicago Chapter dues**.

Continuing Education Grants

Recognizing that education continues throughout an active career, STC Chicago is also developing an educational grant program for active STC Chicago members to help defray the costs of any conferences, webinars, etc., related to the field of technical communication. The specifics of this program are being finalized at the time of this writing.

The application deadline for the student scholarship program as well as the educational grant program is **March 31, 2021**. The latest details for all these programs will be posted to the [Student Scholarships page](#) before the end of December. You can also contact the Scholarship Manager at scholarship@stc-chicago.com at any time if you have questions. Ω

It Was a Hell of a Year!

By Bill Leavitt, STC Fellow

Yes, this has been a difficult year for many of us as a result of the Covid-19 virus and the problems it caused, but for me the toughest year in STC was 1989-90. That was the year I was STC International President. It was a parade of problems. Most STC presidents have had to face a major challenge or two during their administrations, but few can compare to mine. The job of being president is always a challenge, since he or she has to juggle a full-time job, a family and a 10-20-hour a week STC job.

Here's what happened to me:

Following the election in March-April 1989, I began putting together my administration. I had the STC Office to manage, seven other officers and directors to work with, and some 50 committees to organize and find managers for.

Right off the bat in April 1989, my treasurer had a debilitating stroke. I had to replace him with a capable treasurer fast. To further complicate matters, the treasurer's wife requested that it would help his recovery if he could continue as treasurer and attend board meetings.

My eventual solution was to find an experienced chapter treasurer and create the new post of "Assistant Treasurer." With the help of others, I found someone in the current treasurer's chapter who was able to help my treasurer, do most of the work and help him come to board meetings. It turned out to be a win-win situation.

Next, while on vacation camping in the Smokey Mountains, I got a call from the STC Office with a major legal problem I had to solve. After dealing with that, I was asked by the local East Tennessee Chapter to spend a day of my vacation going on a Smokey Mountain hike with the chapter members as an opportunity for them to meet the "STC President."

In September, we had our fall board meeting in Charleston, South Carolina, which included a really cool joint chapter-board dinner on the deck of the aircraft

carrier "Yorktown." However, the next day we found out that a major hurricane was headed for Charleston. Most board members made it out in time, but a few were stranded for the duration.

Three weeks following the board meeting an earthquake struck San Francisco, the city where the next (1990) STC conference was scheduled to be held. We had to scramble to find another location close enough that some of the San Francisco people could help out, but with enough local human resources to tackle this huge job in time. We chose the Silicon Valley Chapter, which did a superior job of running our conference at its new location in Santa Clara, California. It turned out to be the largest conference to date, with over 2,500 attendees.

Another challenge that I had to deal with was the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The Toronto Chapter called me one day to complain that NAFTA had created a policy regarding technical writers that effectively blocked them from doing free-lance work in the U.S. Since we had recently created the position of Assistant to the President (AP) for Academic Affairs, I took advantage of having this new AP to bring him along to Toronto to address the problem. As a result, we contacted the Canadian government and created academic programs in Canada that would fit the description in the NAFTA regulations and satisfy our Canadian members.

Numerous other problems and issues kept me busy, such as moving the Society office, creating a five-year plan and establishing an international membership policy, but there were high points of enjoyment too. Since I was installed as STC president May 1989 in Chicago (my home chapter city) the Chicago Chapter held a coronation the first night of the conference and crowned me king of STC. They also had a Chicago street temporarily named after me.

Our conference in Santa Clara in May 1990 featured the first time STC used video to project the keynote address of the conference for the huge audience onto big screens. They also re-played the video continuously throughout the conference. Another high point was getting to meet Alan Kaye, an Apple Computer Fellow and the creator of the term "personal computer." It was

It Was a Hell of a Year, cont'd

fun meeting and hosting him prior to the keynote address.

There were other successes during my administration too. For my year as president, we hit the highest number of members up until then (15,132), the highest net worth (\$1,485,703), the highest membership retention rate (75%) and the largest number of chapters (123). Of course, little of that success could be attributed to me. I have to give credit to the support from the seven STC Office staff members, the great efforts of the members of the board of directors, and the hard work from the six assistants to the president (for Conferences, Academic Affairs, Public Relations, Professional Development, Professional Competitions, and Professional Publications). Within that framework were some 50 committees with hundreds of STC members working for the greater good of the STC membership.

It was a hell of a year, but one I shall always cherish. Sometimes, making a dedicated effort is its own reward. Ω

Member News

Copresco Wins Four Major Awards in Graphic Arts Competition

Copresco has won four major Graphics Excellence Awards from the Great Lakes Graphics Association (GLGA).

"The awards program is the largest regional print competition in the United States," says GLGA Director Bill Gibson. "The winning entries acknowledge exceptional quality and craftsmanship in design, creation and full color printing."

Copresco was honored with Best of Division awards for a financial prospectus and a product brochure. Two Awards of Excellence were garnered for digital book printing. Certificates of Merit Awards were given for a client cookbook and the firm's Overnight Lite newsletter.

"These awards demonstrate the exceptional quality that Copresco brings to digital printing," says Copresco President Steve Johnson.

One of the firm's winning pieces was a full-color, full-bleed 7"x10" booklet for an international investment technology organization. "Just a few years ago, offset printing would have been the only choice for producing such a prestigious financial piece with a quantity of only 50. It was perfect for our short-run services," Johnson said.

"At 20 pages, plus cover, the booklet would typically be saddle stitched, but the client wanted the prominence of perfect binding, realizing that Copresco was one of the few printers that could accurately and economically bind such a small quantity and small page count," he concluded.

"Our Overnight Lite newsletter has won many awards for editorial excellence, but we're delighted that it has now also been recognized for its beautiful quality. You can read Lite's content online, but we insist that you subscribe to the printed newsletter to fully appreciate it," says Editor Lee Strouse.

Copresco produces millions of pages of short-run publications, books and manuals. Projects range from booklets, catalogs, handbooks, textbooks and technical materials to training aids, guidebooks, newsletters, calendars and cookbooks. Ω



Copresco President Steve Johnson (from left), Bill Gibson of Great Lakes Graphics Association and Copresco Production Manager Lynn Buck are shown with Graphics Excellence Awards

Editor's note: Are you an STC member with some news to share? Do you have an article idea? Please reach out to byline@stc-chicago.com

Society News



Society Webinar Registration Fees Discounted until End of Year

With many STC members and professionals in our wider community whose financial situation has changed due to COVID-19, we're offering the **student discount rate of \$29 for webinars and \$295 for online courses** to our members for our live programming through **31 December 2020**. We hope this provides a small bit of positivity in these troubling times. You should receive the discount automatically when you register. If you have questions, please contact us at education@stc.org. Ω

STC's 2021 Membership Open Now

All STC memberships are on a calendar-year basis (not anniversary) and will expire on **31 December**. For any new members joining, if you join any time before December 31, you get benefits from the time you join through December 31, 2021, so join now and take advantage of the extra time! Ω



Upcoming Courses

More info at: <https://www.stc.org/education/online-courses/>

Introverts and Leadership One, presented by Ben Woelk, starts on **13 January** and runs through **10 February 2021**. Live sessions will be held every Wednesday at 12 Noon EST.

Instructional Design for Technical Communicators, presented by Saul Carliner starts on **9 March** and runs through **30 March 2021**. Live sessions will be held every Tuesday at 1:30 PM EST.

Technical Communication Manager, presented by Saul Carliner starts on **9 March** and runs through **13 April 2021**. Live sessions will be held every Tuesday at 10:30 AM EST.

Upcoming Live Webinars

More info at: <https://www.stc.org/live-webinars/>
Introduction to Accessibility in Tech

Comm on **Tuesday, 8 December** at 12 Noon EST, presented by Char James-Tanny.

From Technical Writer to CEO: What is your Content Mindset? on **Tuesday, 8 December** at 1:00 PM EST, presented by Lisa Pietrangeli. **This webinar is sponsored by 36Software and is FREE.**

Five Strategies for Making Interdisciplinary Teams Work on **Tuesday, 5 January 2021** at 12 Noon EST, presented Jennifer Goode.

Rethinking Scientific Research Communication on **Monday, 1 February 2021** at 12 Noon EST, presented by Jennifer Goode.

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 MK Grueneberg, competition@stc-chicago.com

eLearning & Technology Showcase – Linda Jansak

Historian – Bill Leavitt

Byline Newsletter – MK Grueneberg, byline@stc-chicago.com

Nominating – Manager Pete Wagner, nominating@stc-chicago.com

Get Real! Professional Interview Program – [*manager wanted*](#), interview@stc-chicago.com

Membership Drive – [*manager wanted*](#), membership@stc-chicago.com

Programs – Dan Dornbrook, program@stc-chicago.com

Social Media – Dan Dornbrook

Scholarships – Pete Wagner, scholarships@stc-chicago.com

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Webinar Series – MK Grueneberg

Web/Online – Linda Kelley, web@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.

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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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