

# Byline



Bi-Monthly Newsletter for STC Chicago Members

## President's Message Opportunities Galore

By *Betsy Maaks*



Can you believe it? The current year of STC Chicago's activities is half over. And wow, have we offered our members and community a boatload of opportunities.

Opportunities like local monthly meetings with informed speakers; the Wednesday Webinar Series at no cost for members and only \$5 for non-members; the mentoring program we offer as part of the Get Real! Interview program; and I must mention the annual STC Chicago Competition.

Regarding the Competition, I think the STC Chicago community should brag a bit. The Best of Show winner from the STC Chicago Competition went on to the International STC Competition to win its Best of Show in its category. Proof that the Chicago community is not only capable, but I believe well known for its high-quality publications, no matter the media. Our community is highly trained and well respected in the communication industry. Moreover, our

experts throughout the area are more than willing to share their knowledge and skills.

Chicago is a wonderful place to be, and the STC community is a major contributor to the ongoing promotion of our skills and expertise to our employers, our academia, and our new graduates. It's the purview of STC Chicago members to be ready and willing to reach out, into our cities and businesses, our institutes of education, and our industries to pass on our knowledge.

The February monthly meeting on Feb. 18 at the RAM Restaurant in Schaumburg features a plethora of talented speakers who each have a specified number of slides and SECONDS to speak to each one. It's an evening of whirlwind speeches where the point is to get to the point—quickly, succinctly, and with finesse. It's a fun and educational night, because the speakers can pick any topic that they believe is interesting to you, the audience. It's all about the audience.

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## Register now for STC's Technical Communication Summit '16

May 15–18 in Anaheim, CA

[Get more info...](#)

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Find us online!



## February Program Lightning Talks

Our February meeting is a data blitz, featuring five prepared lightning talks and one ninja talk. Back by popular demand, each lightning talk is a five-minute presentation in which the speaker does not control the slides, which progress automatically every 15 seconds. Even more challenging is the unrehearsed ninja talk, in which the speaker is seeing the slides for the very first time and must speak about them extemporaneously.

Join us for an evening of great networking, some nuggets of knowledge, and a lot of laughs.

**Thursday, February 18**

**6:00 - 7:00 PM Dinner**

**7:00 - 8:00 PM Presentation**

**RAM Restaurant**

**9520 W Higgins Rd.**

**Rosemont, IL 60018**

**\$25 Members | \$35 Non-members | \$10 Students**

A buffet dinner with the following selections is included with your registration:

- ◆ Chicken with porter mushrooms
- ◆ Vegetarian sun-dried tomato pasta
- ◆ Garlic mashed potatoes
- ◆ Seasonal vegetables

**Register now!**

### Speakers and Topics



**Linda Kelley** – 18 Tech Comm Lessons I Learned from Raising 3 Kids



**MaryKay Grueneberg** – Achieving Your Goals



**Elizabeth Burke** – Spring, 31 Days and Counting!



**Pete Wagner** – Tales from the TC Camp: the techcomm unconference



**Francis Bao** – Technical Translation, a Decisive Role for International Marketing Communication



**Paul Lockwood** – A surprise slideshow! Ω

## STC Chicago Needs You!

*by Elizabeth L. Burke, STC Chicago Vice President*

In a few short months, our 2015 Administrative Council will transition to the 2016 Officers and Committee Managers. A manager coordinates the activities for their committee and for the Chapter and ensures that tasks and activities are on schedule with the appropriate support.

Being part of a committee and serving as a manager offers you a variety of benefits. You gain insight into the operations and activities of our Chapter, and you have a significant role in the Chapter vision. Additionally, many companies encourage committee volunteer efforts in professional and community organizations.

At this time, we are looking for managers for two vital committees: Competition and Internship.

### Competition

The Competition committee conducts the annual Chapter-level Technical Communication Competition and works with the Program Manager to organize the awards portion of the annual Chapter Recognition and Awards Banquet. The

judging rules, categories, and prize levels are the same as those used for the Society's international competitions. Typically, this committee has co-managers: one to facilitate the entry submissions and one to support the judges during the evaluation portion of the competition.

#### *Responsibilities*

- ◆ Soliciting, training, and mentoring competition judges
- ◆ Conducting a training session for judges
- ◆ Assigning judging teams and working with the Entries and Awards Manager to assign entries to teams
- ◆ Conducting and overseeing Consensus Judging
- ◆ Helping to plan and organize the annual Chapter Recognition and Awards Banquet

### **Internship**

The Internship committee supports both the professional and academic communities in the effort to match students in tech comm studies with companies seeking qualified candidates for short-term roles in business and industry.

#### *Responsibilities*

- ◆ Maintaining a list of academic liaisons to communicate Internship openings to students in tech comm studies
- ◆ Serving as a contact point for businesses requesting student candidates from the Chapter

### **Committee Volunteers**

In addition to volunteering as Committee Managers, STC Chicago encourages you to volunteer for one of several Chapter committees. Each of our committees can use an extra pair of hands or more to support our programs and activities. Volunteering gives you the opportunity to shape and contribute to Chapter activities without requiring huge amounts of personal time. Not only does your effort help our Chapter offer many valuable services, but you will be amazed at the networking opportunities and overall enjoyment you receive from volunteering. Each committee has a variety of tasks, large and small, that allow you to contribute your skills. And, consider that volunteering for an organization supporting your profession is another bullet point on your resume.

If you are interested in finding out more about volunteer opportunities or just finding out about the different committees that STC Chicago offers our membership, check out the **Officer and Committee Manager Handbook** on our website for a full description of each committee. Ω

## Scholarship Deadline: March 15

*By Josée Martens*

Tech comm students: Don't miss this opportunity to help fund your education! STC Chicago is offering a scholarship worth \$1000 for the 2016-2017 school year. The scholarship also includes a one-year paid STC Student Membership, including Chicago chapter dues.

Eligible applicants must be a current undergraduate or graduate student pursuing a technical communication-related degree or certificate at an accredited educational U.S. educational institution.

See our website (<http://www.stc-chicago.com/resources/student-scholarships/>) for more information and to download an application form. Ω

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## Candidates Sought for 2016-17 Chapter Offices

Are you ready for an exciting leadership opportunity? More and more employers want candidates with solid leadership skills, and leading the STC Chicago Chapter offers an excellent opportunity to gain and hone those skills.

The Nominating committee is now accepting nominations for the offices of Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and at least two members of the Nominating committee. All candidates for chapter offices must be chapter members before the start of chapter elections.

The Vice President serves for one year, becoming President in 2016 and Immediate Past President the following year. All others serve one-year terms but may serve more than one term if re-elected by chapter members.

All terms begin in July 2016. If you or someone you know is interested in one of these positions, please contact the committee at [nominating@stc-chicago.org](mailto:nominating@stc-chicago.org). Ω

**It's not too late to renew your dues!**  
**[Get more info...](#)**

## March Program

### Recognition and Awards Banquet

On Thursday, March 10, STC Chicago will honor those who shared their talents and time with our chapter membership and also present awards for exemplary entries in the STC Chicago Technical Communication Competition.

Please join us on this evening to honor those who contribute and support our Chapter and to see the competition entries. STC Chicago produces some of the best technical documentation, training, promotional, and informational communication, and you won't want to miss this opportunity to see what's trending in technical communication.

**Thursday, March 10, 2016**

**6:00 - 8:00 PM**

**Texas de Brazil**

**5 Woodfield Mall**

**Schaumburg, IL 60173**

**\$30 Members | \$35 Non-members | \$25 Students**

#### Menu

- ◆ 50-item salad area featuring various selections of crisp greens, fresh vegetables, imported artisan cheeses, charcuterie, and hot side dishes
- ◆ Garlic mashed potatoes, sweet fried bananas, and Pão de Queijo (Brazilian cheese bread)
- ◆ Various cuts of expertly seasoned and grilled selections of beef, lamb, pork, chicken, and Brazilian sausage carved table side
- ◆ Non-alcoholic beverages: fountain soda, regular coffee, and regular iced tea with complimentary refills
- ◆ Dessert: Bananas Foster Pie or Key Lime Pie

We hope to see you in March for an evening of honors and dining!

**Register now!** Ω

**Remember to use your half price code to register if you renewed or joined STC by December 31, 2015, and selected STC Chicago as your community.**

## January Recap

### UX Tools and Methodologies

On January 21, Zikaya Vallier, UX Team Lead at kCura, shared her knowledge of the user experience process and the tools she uses to keep product design and customer service focused where it should be: on the end-user.

Creating personas, which are representations of the goals and behavior of a hypothesized group of users, can be a huge step toward understanding your users. Zikaya recommended defining between 2 and 8 personas with realistic names, actual photos, and information such as personality traits, needs or goals, motivations and frustrations, resources, and tasks or workflows.

Another helpful collaborative tool is an empathy map, which identifies your customers' feelings, thoughts, and attitudes. The map can be filled out as a group exercise, and at the end, after the user's pains and gains are determined, you can convert the map into a persona.

Because user feedback is also extremely important, you should find ways to get access to your users (e.g., a customer portal or other online community, customer support, a user conference, internal users, and possibly even friends and family). Zikaya shared several tips about usability testing, but if you don't have time to perform an official test in a controlled environment, you can still benefit by simply observing users using the content with little guidance.

Thanks, Zikaya, and thanks also to the CARA Group for generously providing meeting space. Ω



*Zikaya Vallier explains how to better understand your users at the January program meeting.*

## Member Spotlight

### Dan Dornbrook

*Dan Dornbrook is a Content Developer at Motorola Solutions. After serving STC Chicago in many capacities, Dan currently serves as Manager of the Nominating, Membership, and Bylaws committees.*



#### **How long have you worked in tech comm?**

More than 20 years—I started at Zenith (now part of LG Electronics) in 1994, writing TV manuals.

#### **When and how did you first get involved with STC?**

I joined the Wisconsin Chapter as a student in the tech comm program at Milwaukee School of Engineering (MSOE). When I graduated, many of my friends (on and off campus) were moving to the Chicago area, and I knew there were more opportunities here, even in the later stages of recession. I came to a networking happy hour at the Allerton Hotel and met lots of people, many of whom are still around. Having worked in daily newspapers for 13 years, I volunteered to help edit *Byline*, and the rest is history.

#### **Is there anything you wish you had known about STC when you first joined the organization?**

I wish I had known how quickly a member can stand out just by volunteering. Even in the 1990s, when the chapter (and the society) had several times as many members as we do now, one person could make a big impact just by offering to help, and that's even truer today. People remember your face and your name, and that opens more doors than people think.

#### **What's the most significant thing you've learned from being involved with STC?**

Connections matter, and I say that as a borderline loner by nature. I found several jobs earlier in my career by meeting somebody through STC who knew somebody who knew of an opening. More to the point, tech comm is a specialized enough field that many of us cross paths in all kinds of ways repeatedly. It's like "Seinfeld" without the punch lines! We all need to get out there and mingle and see where it leads.

#### **What's the strangest job you've had?**

As an undergrad in journalism school, I had a part-time job doing phone surveys for a professor's research. I called news-

paper managers around the country with questions about their workplaces. Most receptionists or secretaries (as they were called then) answered by saying the paper's name or their boss' name and asking, "May I help you?" In New York City the second part of the greeting was "Waddayawant!" I later figured out the meaning was the same, but it was a memorable moment for a kid from Milwaukee.

#### **What do you like most (and least!) about Chicago?**

What I like most is the variety of music and theater and art and other cultural opportunities—including restaurants, if you think about it. There's more to see and do than most grownups can keep up with.

What I like least is the traffic—not just congestion and distances, but the frustrated drivers who try to make up for lost time by tailgating and weaving all over the place, sometimes just for a block or two. Probably while having some phone conversation that neither party will remember when it's done. Some people seriously need to get over themselves.

#### **What do you like to do on weekends?**

I live (and work) in the suburbs but can walk to public transit from home, so I like to go into the city on weekends for various forms of entertainment, including several film festivals in the fall. Brunch is fun too if you can time it to avoid waiting for a table.

#### **Where would you like to be 10 years from now?**

Probably retired in or near some major college town with more cultural opportunities than people expect in communities that size. I'd also like to travel beyond where work and family typically take me. Especially if wine is involved. Ω

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## President's Message

*Continued from page 1*

Then in March, prepare for a great Awards Banquet. You'll see the Competition Best of Show, and many award-winning entries to look over first-hand and maybe pick up a few tips to improve your own work. We will recognize our volunteers as well as our Society-level honorees. And as always, great conversation over a wonderful meal. Come join us for an unforgettable evening. Save the date for the Recognition and Awards Banquet: Thursday, March 10, at 6:00 PM. See [March Program on page 4](#) for details. Ω

## STC Chicago Chapter Leaders | 2014-2015

### President

Betsy Maaks, [president@stc-chicago.com](mailto:president@stc-chicago.com)

### Immediate Past President

Adam Evans, [ipp@stc-chicago.com](mailto:ipp@stc-chicago.com)

### Vice President

Elizabeth Burke, [vp@stc-chicago.com](mailto:vp@stc-chicago.com)

### Secretary

Cynthia Laughlin, [secretary@stc-chicago.com](mailto:secretary@stc-chicago.com)

### Treasurer

John Hartigan, [treasurer@stc-chicago.com](mailto:treasurer@stc-chicago.com)

### Nominating

Dan Dornbrook, Linda Jansak, Carla Martinek, Donna Wampach, [nominating@stc-chicago.com](mailto:nominating@stc-chicago.com)

### Alliance

Linda Jansak

### Bylaws

Dan Dornbrook

### Competition

Cynthia Laughlin, [competition@stc-chicago.com](mailto:competition@stc-chicago.com)

### eLearning & Technology Showcase

Linda Jansak

### Historian

Bill Leavitt

### Internships

Elizabeth Burke

### Membership

Dan Dornbrook, [membership@stc-chicago.com](mailto:membership@stc-chicago.com)

### Newsletter

Linda Kelley, [byline@stc-chicago.com](mailto:byline@stc-chicago.com)

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### Sponsorship

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### Advertising Manager

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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 Microsoft® 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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