

President's Message

by Elizabeth Gecas

I'd like to start this message off by saying I hope everyone is safe from the snow storms coming in. With the weather outside behaving as it is, I had a lot of time this weekend to de-clutter. As I was doing so, I came across an introductory technical communications textbook I used in undergrad. Curiously, I flipped it open to a random page where it gave instructions on how to organize your writing in the most logical sequence. I think it's amazing how the rules of grammar, style and writing continue to stand firm despite the very shorthand types of communication we come across on our social platforms (i.e., Twitter).

I also reflected that I wouldn't have the job I have now if I hadn't taken the multiple tech comm classes or internships that I did. Now, I use STC resources as a supplement to stay relevant in the Tech Comm field. Many of these resources are detailed in the articles below.

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Pardon Our Dust

Many of you have noticed some issues with our website. We recently migrated over to STC hosting and while that migration is now complete, we are experiencing intermittent issues related to content being posted accurately.

We are working closely with the STC IT Manager to get this solved as quickly as possible.

In the meantime, please rely on the links in this newsletter and your direct event invitations for registration links and information.

If you experience any issues while trying to register for an event, please contact us as program@stc-chicago.com

Thank you for your continued patience. Ω



Student Volunteers Needed for STC Summit

Applications for student volunteers are due by April 2, 2018. If you are an STC student member and a full-time student, you could get your Summit registration waived by volunteering. Check the [Call for 2018 Volunteers](#) for full details and application links. Ω

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Congratulations!

Please join us in congratulating our fellow technical communicators.

STC Chicago has a New Fellow

STC Chicago is proud to announce that one of our own members, MaryKay Grueneberg, will join the class of 2018 STC Fellows at the annual STC Summit in Orlando this May.

The rank of Fellow is STC's highest honor, recognizing career-long contributions. By definition, "Becoming an STC Fellow is a lifelong journey of achievement, an honor bestowed by the Society upon Associate Fellows who have continued to make exemplary contributions to the arts and science of technical communication, and for sustained and significant service to STC. These contributions involve significant achievements that advance the profession and its recognition."

MaryKay has been a member of STC Chicago for over 20 years and has had a number of leadership roles within our chapter. She currently serves as our vice president and Program Manager and was also the Competition Manager for our 2017 Technical Communications Competition. Ω

Copresco President Wins Fourth Award for Communications Excellence

Copresco Company President and STC Chicago member Steve Johnson has won a fourth APEX Award for Publication Excellence from Communications Concepts, Inc.

Johnson was recently honored for the "Johnson's World" column he wrote for Printing News magazine. The monthly feature provided firsthand observations and thoughtful commentary about the state of today's graphic communications industry. The column has since moved to Printing Impressions magazine.

Johnson garnered previous APEX Awards for two columns written for American Printer Magazine and a column he penned for Quick Printing Magazine.

He has won multiple awards for publications excellence, marketing communications, newsletter editing and technical writing. Johnson has been active as a consultant and speaker on a variety of business and technological topics for the graphic and technical communications industries.

Awards in the annual international APEX competition for communications professionals are based on excellence in editorial content and the success of the entry in achieving overall communications effectiveness.

Copresco has won dozens of awards for technical communications from the graphic arts industry and professional organizations. Ω



Is there something you or a fellow colleague is celebrating in a technical communication career? Share the news with us and we will include it in a future issue of Byline. Ω



Design Contest Winner Selected

This past fall, STC Chicago sent out a call to all designer, graphic artists, and all-round creative people looking for a great new design for the cover of the STC Chicago 46th Annual Recognition & Awards Banquet program. All art types were welcomed and we had just a few rules about content.

The winning entry was designed by Rachel Friend. Rachel will graduate this May from McHenry County College with two Associate of Arts and Sciences (AAS) degrees. One is in Graphic Design and the other is in Web Design & Development. She's been on the McHenry County College Dean's List once, on the McHenry County College President's Honor List twice, and received a Graphic Arts Merit Scholarship. Rachel is a new STC Student member.

Here is a sneak preview of the cover design:



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Membership Drive Winners Selected

Our fall membership drive concluded on December 31. All those who joined or renewed their STC membership and selected STC Chicago as their community by December 31, 2017, were automatically entered in a drawing to win a free Amazon Echo! Two winners were selected using an online random number generator. The two winners were: **Stacey Lohman** and **Huntley Eshenroder**.

Congratulations to both of our winners – we hope they enjoy their new Amazon Echos! Ω

STC Chicago Technical Communication Competition Award Winners

Our 2017 Technical Communications Competition has been wrapped. Thank you to all who submitted. Thank you, especially, to our judges:

- **Rebecca Altman**
- **Mollye Barrett**
- **Ben Bauer**
- **Elizabeth Gecas**
- **Heidi Hanson**
- **Donna Jones**
- **Linda Mankivsy Ziemann**
- **Sophia Moustakas Marx**
- **Tom Reed**
- **Bob Slocum**
- **Liz Stefanski**
- **Beth Wolfe**
- **Don Wuethrick**
- **Deborah Wuethrick**

The competition awards will be presented at our annual Chapter Recognition and Awards Banquet in March. We are still finalizing the list of contributor names. A full list of award winners will be included in our April issue of Byline. See the related article for registration information for the banquet. Ω

Now Accepting Candidates for Officer and Committee Manager Positions

The STC Chicago administrative council is looking for a few good people who would like to help manage the Chapter. Each April, STC Chicago holds elections for the following officer positions:

- + Vice president, *the current vice president automatically moves to president and the current president moves to Immediate Past President*
- + Secretary
- + Treasurer
- + Nominating committee

If interested in running on the 2018-19 ballot, please send an email to nominating@stc-chicago.com.

In addition, we are always looking for new help with our various committees, both committee managers and committee members. See the full list of the [STC Chicago committees](#) to explore where you would like to help! Ω

STC Summit 2018: Communicate the Future

STC's 2018 Summit takes place 20-23 May at the Hyatt Regency Orlando in Orlando, FL. The Summit kicks off Sunday evening with the Welcome Reception in the Expo Hall. The Summit is the premier conference for technical communication education and networking. It attracts over 600 attendees and 40 exhibitors during a 3-day period and brings together like-minded individuals to grow in their knowledge of the technical communication field.

For full details about the 2018 STC Summit, see the [Conference Overview](#) and other registration and schedule information on the stc.org website.

STC Society 2018 Election to Open Soon

STC's [2018 Election Slate](#) has been announced and elections will open soon.

President

Jane Wilson will automatically succeed from the office of Vice President

Vice President

- [Pam Brewer](#)
- [Ben Woelk](#)

Secretary

- [Kirsty Taylor](#)

Director (two positions to be elected)

- [Ramesh Aiyyangar](#)
- [Alisa Bonsignore](#)
- [Todd DeLuca](#)
- [Makarand Pandit](#)

Nominating Committee (two positions to be elected)

- [Jackie Damrau](#)
- [MaryKay Grueneberg](#)
- [Li-At Rathbun](#)

To ask the candidates questions, you can go to the [STC Election Forum](#).



STC Program Meeting Recaps



December: Annual Holiday Party and Lightning Talks

The 2016-17 program year was a huge year for STC Chicago. We earned the 2017 Platinum Community Achievement Award, 2017 Pacesetter Award, and we were named 2017 STC Community of the Year! To celebrate these fantastic accomplishments, we Gathered at Bar Louie on December 14, 2017, at our annual STC Chicago Holiday Party.

After enjoying a wonderful dinner buffet dinner, attendees sat back and enjoyed some great Lightning Talks. Lightning talks are mini-presentations of 20 slides in 5 minutes on either serious or light topics. The tricky part is that the slides advance automatically, whether the speaker is ready or not!

Many thanks to the following speakers who gave Lightning Talks:

- **Paul Ebreo:** “Bitcoin: Why it was invented & how it works”
- **Bruce Watson:** “HITRUST healthcare info security certification: A TW opportunity”
- **Chris Hester:** “From Paperweight to Conversation Piece”
- **Elizabeth Burke:** “Christmas Gifts – The Adult Version (\$\$Expensive)”
- **Linda Kelley:** “A Cheap Thrills Sequel”
- **MK Grueneberg:** “Santa’s Naughty and Nice List for Presenters”
- **Paul Lockwood:** (Ninja Talk) “Hooray for Hollywood”

January: We learned how to create micro-learning in micro-time!

By: Pete Wagner

The January STC Chicago chapter meeting featured an interesting discussion on microlearning presented by **Shannon Tipton**, Chief Learning Rebel at Learning Rebels LLC. Shannon described microlearning as short bursts of “right-sized content” to help a user achieve a specific outcome. It’s all about getting help to the user when they need it.

Shannon cited YouTube statistics showing that people typically lose interest in what they are reading or viewing after about three minutes. If it’s highly relevant and important, they may stick with it for up to seven minutes. These trends don’t bode well for classic learning courses, as evidenced by the fact that fewer than 15% of workers apply their formal training to their day-to-day jobs.

Shannon said that the answer for providing critical job-related performance support are micro-learning objects, which deliver the right amount of content (typically small) needed to accomplish a specific task. Keys to creating good microlearning objects include:

- Flexible modality: the content must work on various device platforms.
- Accessibility: users have to be able to find the content! For example, YouTube videos are properly tagged to facilitate online searches.
- Annotatable: It’s nice if the user can add their own notes to the content.

She said that the principles of microlearning have been around for years, but only recently has it been trending in the learning/instructions design industry. Hearing about these “right-sized” pieces of content, I couldn’t help but note the similarity to modular writing and single sourcing.

To start your own learning revolution, check out Shannon’s website at <https://learningrebels.com/> Ω

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Upcoming STC Programs



February: Making an Impact Using Animated Videos

The more educated the team, the healthier the bottom line. The challenge lies in keeping teams informed and wanting to learn more about their roles in the industry. With dry content centered on policies and procedures, how do you create eLearning that engages a learner? By using relatable and fun animated videos!

At our meeting on February 15, **Karen Kostrinsky** will show you how she turned a learning challenge into an eLearning design template for use internally and externally. You will learn how she worked with internal and external subject matter experts to create engaging storyboards and scripts that focus on critical factors affecting the mortgage industry.

At the end of this session, you will be able to

- Understand the importance of storytelling in developing eLearning
- Capture the importance of using good audio techniques
- Use GoAnimate to create fun and engaging eLearning videos, even with dry boring content

Karen Kostrinsky is a manager of eLearning development at Ellie Mae, an all-in-one fully integrated mortgage solution. Her team creates eLearning courses designed to make life easier for employees, clients, and partners. At Ellie Mae headquarters, Karen built a recording studio for podcasts, demo recordings, and voice-overs.

Previously, she taught college and worked as a learning consultant for 25 years.

The meeting will take place at Bar Louie in Schaumburg. You can [register here](#). Ω

March: STC Chicago Recognition and Awards Banquet

On Thursday, March 15, 2018, we will hold our 46th annual recognition and awards banquet. We will recognize the volunteers who have shared their talents and time with our chapter membership and we will present awards to those honored for their outstanding entries in the 2017 STC Chicago Technical Communications Competition.

The banquet will be held in the private back rooms of Texas de Brazil at Woodfield Mall in Schaumburg. [Register here](#) to join us for this great annual event.

Thanks to our wonderful Gold sponsors, [Dakota Systems, Inc.](#) and [Ken Cook Co.](#), we are able to once again offer extremely discounted pricing for the banquet. So join us for an evening of awards, recognition, networking, and great food! Ω

Banquet Gold Sponsors:

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Innovation in Technical Communication



Wednesday Webinar Series

STC Chicago provides live webinars *FREE* to its chapter members on the first or second Wednesday of every month. These online events exist as a supplement to our monthly in-person chapter meetings.

Not a member of STC Chicago? Our monthly webinar series is available to other STC members for just \$5 and non-members for just \$10.

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Feb Webinar Series: Gaining the Advantage: The Value of Tech Comm

Presented by Alyssa Fox, STC president

Wed, Feb 7 @ 12:00 – 1:00 pm CST

Technological change and innovation are happening faster than ever. These changes drive businesses to re-evaluate how their customers and prospects consume content, and therefore, how that content is created. Technical Communicators are at the forefront of this content sea change, so are we taking advantage of that to make our roles and our content more powerful?

Join Alyssa to discuss the value of technical communication in today's businesses, how you can make your position stronger in your organization, and how STC is helping equip you to do just that.

[Register now for the February webinar!](#) Ω

March Webinar Series: Cool Infographics: design Tips, Examples & Tools

Presented by Randy Krum

Wed, Mar 7 @ 12:00 – 1:00 pm CST

Infographics and data visualizations are powerful communication tools to make information easier to understand and more memorable to an audience. Designing to communicate with data can be applied to PowerPoint presentations, reports, blog posts and infographics.

Randy will share the science behind why infographics work, great examples of how companies are leveraging infographics to communicate information, and design secrets anyone can use to overcome the most common pitfalls and mistakes designers make. Top software and websites used by designers will also be shared, including many free tools that anyone can use. You will get many actionable tips and links you can use right away in your own communication.

[Register now for the March webinar](#) Ω



STC Chicago 2016-17 Officers

President

Elizabeth Gecas, president@stc-chicago.com

Vice President

MaryKay Grueneberg, vp@stc-chicago.com

Secretary

Dan Dornbrook, secretary@stc-chicago.com

Treasurer

Pete Wagner, treasurer@stc-chicago.com

Immediate Past President

Elizabeth L. Burke, ipp@stc-chicago.com

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Bylaws – Dan Dornbrook

Competition – MaryKay Grueneberg, competition@stc-chicago.com

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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.

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