



A Message from the President

What a Difference a Year Makes

As you read this article, STC Chicago is preparing to end the 2019-2020 Administrative Council term and begin the 2020-2021 term. Who could imagine a year ago that we would be living through a pandemic and that our lives would be affected so greatly. Many of us are experiencing rough times, maybe the greatest struggle of our lives to date, but we will persevere and, I believe, emerge stronger. One of our greatest assets as technical communicators, is to develop multiple backup plans. I urge you to use that talent as we face the challenges brought about with our current situation.

Although we had to postpone our in-person meetings and activities for the last few months, we will resume normal activities as soon as allowed. I'm sure at this point of the shelter in place order, we are all looking forward to that day. I know that I appreciated the insights or maybe a new technique for my career at our meetings and other chapter activities. Until the day that we can resume our meetings, I encourage you to use this time to add a new skill or research some Tech Comm method that you normally do not have the time to pursue. That may be as simple as attending one of our Chapter webinars or a session

offered by another organization or group offering similar sessions. Maybe consider this a pandemic challenge to emerge with one or two new skills or talents when we return to normal activities.

As we end our current term, I would like to thank all of the volunteers who supported our Chapter, membership, and activities throughout the past year. Even though our activities were preempted, there are still activities and tasks that carried on throughout the year. As well, we continue to plan and prepare for future meetings and activities. Whether you were able to contribute many hours or just a few, the benefit to our Chapter is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Finally, we will have many memories of this time, some difficult and painful, but I ask that everyone take a minute to create a good memory. Maybe it is a simple call to a good friend that you lost contact with over the years. Maybe it is sending a card to a relative just to let them know you are thinking and caring about them even more during this difficult time. Join the many that are eating meals together by way of Zoom or FaceTime. It's not the same, but give someone a virtual hug, it's good for both of you.

Wishing you well. Stay safe and stay healthy!

Best Regards,
Michael

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Welcome to Our 2019-20 Officers

Thank you to all the members who voted in the recent election. As a result of the election, STC Chicago welcomes the following officers for the 2020-2021 program year:

- President – Rita Hovorka
- Vice President – Pete Wagner
- Secretary – Dan Dornbrook
- Treasurer – Francis Bao
- Immediate Past President – Michael Burke

Job Search During COVID-19

STC Rochester had a recent Webinar with speaker Hannah Morgan, the Career Sherpa, and have shared the link to the recording. If you have been displaced due to the current pandemic, take a look at this video. We hope you find some helpful tips.

Job Search During COVID-19

For details on the speaker, check out her Web page at <https://careersherpa.net/>

June Webinar Series - Advancing Your Technical Communication Career

Do you love technical communication but feel somewhat stuck? Join us to hear about some easy ways to rethink your technical communication career and add some excitement to your 2020 opportunities.

REGISTRATION

LINK: <http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=erucd7bab&oeidk=a07eh2l6s9ue2b17478>

Wednesday, June 3
12:00 - 1:00 pm CST

STC Chapter Members - FREE
STC Members - \$5.00
Non-members - \$10.00

Speaker - Liz Herman, PhD, PMP, CPTC



As a long-time technical communicator and an Expert-Level Certified Professional Technical Communicator, Liz is currently building a knowledge management practice at Senture, LLC and is concluding a knowledge management project with the United States Department of Agriculture. As a senior member of STC, Liz has served on its Board of Directors, chaired the Community Affairs Committee, the Technical Communication Book of Knowledge Committee, and the Intercom Editorial Advisory Board. She has also served in various leadership roles in the Eastern Iowa and Washington DC Baltimore chapters.

2020 Annual STC Business Meeting

STC's Annual Business Meeting will take place virtually on **Wednesday, 3 June 2020 from 5:00-6:30 PM EDT** via Zoom. During the meeting, the 2020-2021 Board of Directors will be installed, we'll look back over the past year, we'll discuss initiatives planned for the coming year, and we'll discuss old and new business. To attend this event, you must be a current STC member in good standing. If you are interested in submitting a motion or registering for the event, please visit the [STC website](#) **Registration will close at 5:00 PM EDT on Tuesday, 2 June**. We hope to see you there!

Message from the Incoming President

There's no certainty about how to plan for the 2020-2021 program year—celebrations are postponed, Thursday lunches are cancelled, and we're missing opportunities to visit with our STC friends. As time passes while you're working from home, here are some ways to stay in touch with us:

- Join our LinkedIn group to expand your professional network and follow us through our Facebook page.
- Add the upcoming webinars to your calendar to enrich your day and learn something new. The June Webinar, *Advancing Your Technical Communication Career*, contains good information for everyone.
- Take an STC online course and expand your skill set! If you were able to attend the virtual Technical Communication Summit and Expo, expand on a session that piqued your interest.

Other links in this issue outline the tentative dates we've planned to meet again in person. We hope you will join us later this summer to celebrate our community's success and honor our volunteers and winners of the annual competition.

If the slower pace of life has you looking for new activities, check out the volunteer opportunities outlined on our website. There are lots of options! Stay engaged with your fellow members as the Webmaster for the chapter's website, show off your project management skills as part of the competition committee, or expand your network while you work on the Membership Drive committee.

Most importantly, if you have found yourself without work during this uncertain time, stay connected to our LinkedIn group for notices on new job openings.

We hope you are safe and well. Continue to enjoy virtual visits with your friends and family until we can meet again in person.

~~Rita Hovorka

Tentative Dates for Meetings

As you know, due to the Pandemic, we've had to postpone the annual Awards Banquet and cancel our recent in-person meetings. As the world begins to reopen, we are making tentative plans for beginning meetings once again, starting in August. We will always consider the safety of our members first and the Administrative Council will watch the situation and make a definitive determination as the times draw closer. In the meantime, please mark your calendars for these events.

August 20 (tentative) – Celebration, Business Meeting, and Trivia!

Our August meeting is all about introducing our 2020-2021 chapter officers, celebrating our community's success, fun, and trivia! You can socialize, relax, and best of all, it's *free* to STC Chicago members. We hope you plan to come meet the officers and introduce yourself to a member you've never met.

September 17 (tentative) – Annual Banquet

Our September meeting will be our re-scheduled annual Awards Banquet where we will honor all of the Chapter's volunteers and we will celebrate the Competition winners.

STC Chicago sponsors special awards for IJAS Region 2 Science Exposition

Before *social distancing* became part of our everyday conversation, two members of the STC Chicago Administrative Council volunteered to be special judges for the Chicago Non-Public Schools' Science Exposition, sponsored by the Illinois Junior Academy of Science (IJAS). The event was scheduled for March 14 at the Museum of Science and Industry, and more than 400 students, in grades 5 through 12, representing 47 non-public schools in IJAS Region 2, were expected to attend.

Each student or pair of students created a science project in one of 19 scientific categories, wrote a project paper following strict IJAS guidelines, created a project display, and prepared a live presentation for the day of the event. During the exposition, a group of three judges would evaluate each project's subject matter and how well it was executed. Award winners would then advance to the state exposition.

In addition to the standard judging, a number of professional organizations provide special judging based on criteria reflecting the organization's specific field. Judging for the STC Chicago awards focuses only on how well the students' display posters reflect excellence in technical communication, including basic principles of good writing and effective design and layout.

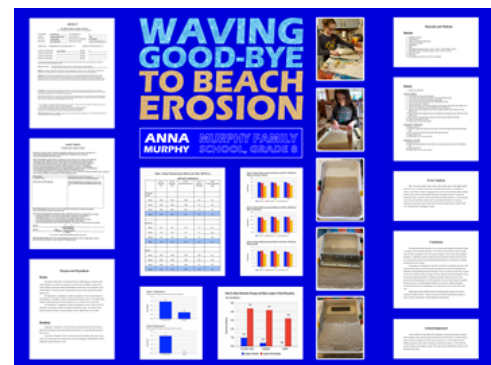
When our world changed in early March, the event was quickly reorganized as an online competition that was held at the end of March. Unfortunately, the new timeframe conflicted with my judging partner's schedule. Fortunately, several of my colleagues were missing their daily socializing in the office, and I was able to recruit a special judging team to represent the STC Chicago Chapter! I provided access to photos of the display posters and the project abstracts and the following guidelines for judging:

- Project title – Does it clearly reflect what the project was about?
- Poster design – Is the layout clean and appealing to the reader? Is the typeface inviting or the handwriting neat and legible?

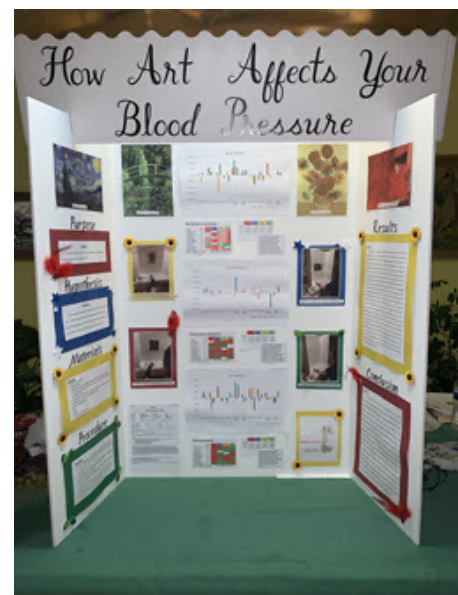
- Graphics – Do the graphics and photos add value?
- Writing – Is the tone of the written pieces appropriate? Is the writing free from grammar and spelling errors? Are lists, tables, and graphs presented in a clear manner?
- Overall perception – Does the poster display clearly convey the purpose and results of the project?

We met online a few days later to discuss the entries and select two awards for demonstrating excellence in technical communication: \$150 for first prize and \$75 for second prize. Here are our selections:

- **First prize:** Anna Murphy, a homeschooled student, for *Waving Goodbye to Beach Erosion: A Study of Erosion Control Methods*



- **Second prize:** Charlotte Stec, a student at St. Daniel the Prophet, for *How art affects your blood pressure*



STC Chicago 2019-20 Officers

President

Michael Burke, president@stc-chicago.com

Vice President

Rita Hovorka, vp@stc-chicago.com

Secretary

Dan Dornbrook, secretary@stc-chicago.com

Treasurer

Pete Wagner, treasurer@stc-chicago.com

Immediate Past President

MaryKay Grueneberg, ipp@stc-chicago.com

2019-20 Committee Managers

Alliance – Linda Jansak

Bylaws – Becky Hall

Competition – Elizabeth Burke and Cheri Gerlach,
competition@stc-chicago.com

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Historian – Bill Leavitt

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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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