

Byline

Quarterly Newsletter for STC Chicago Members

Find Something New, Try Something Old

By MaryKay Grueneberg, STC Chicago Chapter president, 2010-11 term

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As I was trying to come up with a theme for my first President's Message, I looked through the first messages of some of the presidents before me. That was a mistake, because I knew then that I was in trouble! STC Chicago has a long line of incredibly intelligent and wonderfully creative leaders. I do not feel incredibly intelligent and I certainly am not creative.

I thought about telling you about the advantages of membership in STC. I thought about highlighting things like the networking opportunities with other professionals in the technical communications field, the monthly meetings that offer speakers and panels on current and trend-setting topics, the technical workshops that offer training in topics relevant to your profession, and the many job leads sent your way by fellow members and recruiters. However, you already know all that.

I wanted to tell you about the numerous and varied opportunities to become more involved and the benefits of being an active Chapter volunteer. However, our new vice president, Elizabeth Burke, beat me to the punch in her article "STC Chicago – It's all about YOU!" in this issue of *Byline*.

I wanted to tell you about the wonderful programs we have in store for you for the 2010-11 program year, but that is already covered in the article "STC Chicago Presents..." also in this issue of *Byline*.

I was at a loss as to what to say that you have not been told already. Then, as I sat at the First Thursdays lunch in Downtown Chicago with several new members, introducing myself as the new Chapter president, it came to me: *tell them what it is that the new leadership team is doing for them that is truly new*. It was an "Aha!" moment (or perhaps a "Duh!" moment, but that is a debate for another time!).

The STC Chicago Chapter elections were held last April, but the gavel was not officially handed over until the annual business meeting on June 15. In the seven weeks since that business meeting, the entire leadership team has been very busy and working very hard to ensure that all of you, the members of STC Chicago, will get the most out of your STC membership during the 2010-11 program year. Here are some of the ways we are going to make that happen:

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- **A new strategic plan** -- a Strategic Planning Committee was formed and met in June and July to discuss the needs of the Chapter and to come up with a two-year strategic plan to continue to grow and strengthen the Chapter.
- **A new competition format** -- the new Competition co-Managers have met several times to ensure a smooth rollout of the new competition. Based on the new competition format at the STC International level, “STC International Summit Awards,” STC Chicago has redesigned our local competition. The “STC Chicago Technical Communications Competition (2010-11)” will be announced in the near future and will be discussed at the September Chapter meeting in detail.
- **A strong, new program lineup** -- the Programs Committee has been working hard to provide a program lineup that will not only offer new and timely topics, but also new locations and varied meeting styles. In an effort to be as cost-efficient as possible and to reach out to the largest number of members, we will be offering panel discussions, individual speakers, networking events, and webinars.
- **A new STC Chicago Officer and Committee Manager Handbook** – the leadership team has been putting together a handbook for all Chapter officers and committee managers. The handbook clearly defines each role, its responsibilities, and timelines for all deliverables. The handbook will be available on the Chapter website so that all members can look at the roles that are available to them.
- **A new sponsorship plan** – we are looking at expanding our current sponsorship plan to include an additional tier in order to attract more sponsors for our meetings and events in an effort to make them as cost-effective as possible for the membership.

- **A new look for *Byline*** – as you can see with this online issue of the newsletter, we have gone green. This not only is an effort to be responsible to our planet, it is a great cost saving to the Chapter.
- **A Destination 2012 Committee** – a committee is being formed to start the planning for the 2012 Society Summit, which will be hosted right here in Chicago May 20-23, 2012.

As STC Chicago president, I sincerely hope that each and every one of you finds something new or rediscovers something old that interests you and entices you to become more involved with the STC Chapter. We promise you will not be sorry. If you ever have a question, a suggestion, or even a complaint, please do not hesitate to contact me at president@stc-chicago.org. My virtual door is always open! Ω

STC Chicago Membership at a Glance

Total Affiliated Members: 165
Associate Fellows: 5
Fellows: 3
Members: 92
Senior Members: 107
Student Members: 10 Ω

STC Membership at a Glance

Total members: 13,263
Members residing in the U.S.: 11,236
Members residing in Canada: 1,206
Members residing elsewhere: 821
Total communities*: 155
*Includes 104 professional chapters, 30 student chapters, and 21 SIGs. Ω

STC Chicago – It's All About YOU!

By Elizabeth Burke, STC Chicago Vice President

As I thought about writing my first article for *Byline*...I wanted to be creative, inspiring, even captivating. Nothing was coming to me.

It's not writer's block. You see, I want to encourage you to become involved in STC Chicago. I'm very excited and passionate about this opportunity. In addition, I want to say all the right things to encourage and inspire you.

At this point, many of you may be thinking, "Do you understand how much is on my plate?" I do! I understand the demands on your time...work, school, family, obligations to children, promises to friends. I know there's more. I appreciate your reaction. I experience the same.

So how can I ask you to become involved? I ask you to become involved because there is a great benefit to you and STC Chicago will work to find an activity that offers you something that interests you for the time that you can share.

What's the benefit? I can't answer that question directly but I can share with you the benefits I've experienced and continue to experience. These are experienced by others as well.

Becoming more active in STC, I made contacts that led to jobs. I gained knowledge that improved my viability in the job market. I had a good time serving as a committee manager. I found encouragement in talking to others who had similar experiences and could help me avoid problems. I had access to information that was not available within my company. I talked with other members who could empathize with my current project, work situation, accomplishments. I received validation in my efforts. And, I laughed and cheered with

my committee team members as we worked through difficulties and ended on a successful note.

There are many more benefits than can be shared in this article.

What am I asking of you? Take a look at the following activities. See if there is something that interests you. The list is not all encompassing. Feel free to suggest something. Then, contact STC or contact me directly. Tell us what you're interested in or what you would like to suggest. Let us know how much time you can contribute. Together we will find something.

A sampling of the opportunities available through STC Chicago.

- Attend a program meeting
- Volunteer to be a judge in the STC Chicago Chapter competition
- Mentor a student
- Ask your company to provide space for our competition orientation/consensus judging activities
- Contribute to our Web site redesign
- Contact us if your company is in need of a Technical Communicator
- Attend one of the STC Thursday Lunch meetings
- Ask your company to sponsor a meeting
- Offer to help with publicity or marketing
- Submit to the competition
- Attend a workshop
- Offer to help with advertising
- Suggest something new
- Become an STC and Chicago chapter member
- Volunteer to help on a committee
- Present at a Chapter meeting

To our current volunteers, we appreciate your time and effort. You continue to strengthen our chapter and bring value to everyone. Thank you. Ω

Byline Wins Fourth Consecutive APEX Award of Excellence



Byline and Editor Tom Lunde have won an Award of Excellence in the APEX Awards for the fourth year in a row.

The annual APEX awards are based on excellence in graphic design, editorial content, and the success of the entry—in the opinion of the judges—in achieving overall communications effectiveness and excellence. Grand Awards honor the outstanding works in each main category, while Awards of Excellence recognize exceptional entries in each of the sub-categories.

The competition is sponsored by Communication Concepts Inc., of Springfield, VA, which provides consult-

ing services to organizations in the communications field. The firm publishes www.writingthatworks.com, a web site for business writers and communicators, and *Writing That Works: The Business Communications Report*, a bimonthly newsletter covering business writing, editing and publishing for communicators in corporate, nonprofit, agency and independent settings.

Tom said of this year's award, "I am very pleased with the consistent quality we have been achieving with *Byline*. I get a lot of input and articles from our members, and many people in STC Chicago have stepped forward to author articles and provide member spotlights." Ω

STC Chicago – A Community of Excellence



Just in case you missed the announcement in the Summit review article in the last edition of the *Byline*, we want to let you know that STC Chicago has been awarded the 2010 Community of Excellence Award from the Society for Technical Communication. Dan Dornbrook, immediate past president of STC Chicago, commented on receiving the award, saying, "This award rightly be-

longs to the many members who have volunteered their time and skills to support our activities in the past year, as well as those who have supported us with their dues, and we thank you."

The annual Community Achievement Awards program run by the Society is meant to "recognize, in a visible and meaningful manner, communities that demonstrate outstanding, innovate, and sustained performance in advancing the goals of the Society."

The award was presented to Dan Dornbrook by STC vice president Hillary Hart on Leadership Day at the 2010 Summit in Dallas, Texas. The award certificate reads, "For guiding a successful e-learning and technology showcase, embracing social media to enhance communication among your members, and supporting technical communication students with scholarships." This is just one more reason that we are so grateful for our outstanding members and you should be proud to be a part of STC Chicago. Ω

STC Chicago Presents Preliminary Program Lineup for 2010-2011

You asked. We listened. This past Spring, STC Chicago conducted a member survey that asked what types of programs you wanted to attend and where you would like the programs to be held. Based on the feedback we received, we have put together a preliminary program lineup for the 2010-2011 program year.

We have some new topics, new locations, and we intend to offer at least two webinars for those who cannot attend traditional meetings. Not all of the meetings are completely in place yet, but we wanted to give you an idea of the exciting things we will have to offer during this program year.

| Month | Topic & Format | Location |
|------------------------|--|---|
| Thursday, August 26 | Job Searching Tips for Technical communicators --Expert panel discussion w/Q&A | Charlie's Charhouse 1180 W Devon Ave. / Elk Grove --Heavy appetizers, cash bar |
| Week of Sept. 15 | Meet the New STC Competition: Everything all new and experienced entrants and judges need to know --Presentation and roundtable discussions | Downers Grove Park District Lincoln Center 935 Maple Ave. / Downers Grove --Beverages and desserts |
| October | Truth or Dare: Social Media --Panel presentations and mini demos of how social media is used in business | Chicago Loop |
| November | SharePoint in the Technical Communication Field --Speaker | Northern suburbs |
| December | User Interface Design --Webinar | n/a |
| Tuesday, January 18 | Development Techniques for User Interface Text and Web-based Content in SmartPhone Applications --Speaker: Joe Welinske | Oak Park |
| February | Member Appreciation Night | To be determined |
| March | Destination 2012: STC Chicago Chapter Recognition Banquet | Northwestern suburbs |
| Week of April 11 | Moving into Instructional Design --Expert panel discussion | To be determined |
| May | Topic to be determined --Webinar | n/a |
| June | Annual Business Meeting and Networking --Networking and entertainment | To be determined |

Keep an eye on the STC Chicago website (www.stc-chicago.org) and your email for full program details and registration information as each event gets closer.

If you have not attended programs in the past, consider joining us this year. All programs are open to non-members, so invite a friend or two as well. Ω

August Meeting - Job Searching Tips for Technical Communicators

Searching for a new full-time position or that perfect new contract job? Do you think you already know how to put a good resume together or nail that interview?

Join STC Chicago on Thursday, August 26 to hear what the experts have to offer for “Job Searching Tips for Technical Communicators.”

Our panel discussion and Q&A with experts will help you sift through the myths and facts of the various aspects of searching for a job. Discuss with them the current job market trends and outlook, the skills that companies are expecting in candidates, and what employees and candidates should do to stay current in the technical communication field.

About the Meeting

Our panel members will feature a recruiter, an HR professional, a hiring manager, and a portfolio/resume

writer. Come out and join us!

Advanced registration is \$20 for members, \$40 for non-members, and \$15 for students. The walk-in fee is \$30 for members, \$50 for non-members, and \$15 for students.

Heavy appetizers will be provided and a cash bar will be available.

Charlie's Charhouse is located at [1180 West Devon Avenue](#) (just off 290), Elk Grove Village, IL 60007-3214

Registration and networking will begin at 6 p.m. The panel discussion will begin at 7 p.m.

Register at www.stc-chicago.org (click on “Meetings” then “Meeting Registration”). Ω

Get Ready For This Year's STC Chicago Chapter Annual Technical Publications, Art, and Online Communication Competition!



The STC Chicago Competition Committee is gearing up for a very exciting competition this year, and big news is right around the corner!



This is an excellent year to participate, as the 2010 competition includes new categories and a brand new vision from STC International. We had great success with last year's competition, and we are enthusiastic about the opportunities accompanying this year's changes!

We are looking for entries and judges for this exciting annual event. Be sure to watch your Inbox and the STC Chicago web site in the coming weeks for more information!

Have questions? Attend our September program, *Meet the New STC Competition*, for an opportunity to talk to experienced judges, to discover the components of a winning entry, and to learn more about the changes affecting this year's competition! Ω

Drawing Winners

The following people were selected by the Chapter's Administrative Council from those who completed the recent 2010 STC Chicago Program Survey to receive Amazon gift certificates.

We had more than 60 responses and received information that will be a huge help in planning next year's programs. For those of you who participated in the survey, I hope that you will come out for some more of the programs!

- Brande Martin
- Scot T. O'Hara
- Bob Lanham

Ω

Byline

Editor:

Tom Lunde, byline@stc-chicago.org

Advertising Manager:

Francis Bao, advertising@stc-chicago.org

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News guidelines: Send articles to *Byline* at byline@stc-chicago.org. Preferred format is a Word for Windows document file via e-mail. 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 printings. For details, go to our web site and click on *Byline* Advertising.

The advertisement and payment must be received by the 20th of the month before the next published issue of the newsletter (e.g., submit ad and payment by November 20th for the December issue). 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.org.

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Subscriptions: STC Chicago membership includes a subscription to *Byline*. Contact STC at:

Society for Technical Communication
Phone: 703-522-4114
Fax: 703-522-2075
www.stc.org

STC Chicago Chapter Leaders 2010-2011

President

MaryKay Grueneberg
president@stc-chicago.org

Treasurer

Linda Kelley
treasurer@stc-chicago.org

Immediate Past President

Dan Dornbrook
ipp@stc-chicago.org

Newsletter Committee

Tom Lunde
byline@stc-chicago.org

Vice President

Elizabeth Burke
vicepresident@stc-chicago.org

Competition Committee

Elizabeth Burke
competition10@stc-chicago.org

Secretary

Cheri Noble
secretary@stc-chicago.org

Scholarship Committee

Russ Friend
scholarship@stc-chicago.org