

Byline



Bi-Monthly Newsletter for STC Chicago Members and Supporters

President's Message

By Rita Hovorka

As schools reopen, it seems appropriate that this issue of the Byline covers two student activities. This also nicely coincides with the Chicago chapter's objective to increase connections with up-and-coming technical writers at the high school and college levels.

- MK Grueneberg has been our champion at York High School, which includes technical writing in its English curriculum. Read the winning article from their annual student writing contest.
- Pete Wagner led a team of judges for the Chicago Non-Public Schools Science Exposition. Read about his experience on selecting the best posters that demonstrated excellence in technical communication.

If you are interested in helping us connect with a local high school or community college, please get in touch with any member of the Administrative Council.

This issue outlines information on the Administrative Council candidates for the 2021-22 program year. Please vote! Also consider where you can help out with the chapter:

- Committee leaders are needed for the coming program year. Some committees require minimal time throughout the year.
- The STC Summit is virtual from June 5-9 this year, but the 2022 Summit will be in person and *in Chicago!* Volunteers are needed to manage the local requirements.

Our first chapter member exclusive drawing was held in March. Read about the drawing and watch for future events that are exclusively for Chicago chapter members.

Be sure to register for the April webinar, which will show you how the Walt Disney World Imagineering practices can be applied to technical communication. As

always, STC Chicago chapter members and students are free.

Are you tired of eating lunch alone every day? Take a real lunch break on April 8 (and the second Thursday of every month) to join our **Thursday Meetups**—a casual get-together for networking and socialization. We look forward to catching up with you! Ω

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Virtual Chapter Meeting

April: Chapter Members-Only Event

Attention STC Chicago Chapter members: Watch your inbox for an invitation to a special event that we've scheduled just for you in April! This event is part of our continuing effort to reward our members for their continuing support for our chapter. You won't want to miss it!

May: User Experience Writing and the UX Writer Discipline

Our virtual chapter meeting in May will feature one of our members' longtime favorite speakers, **Joe Welinske**, talking about User Experience (UX) writing and the skills associated with the UX Writer discipline. Watch our website and social media for details. Ω

Thursdays Meetups

We've had to postpone our normal First Thursdays lunch gatherings around the Chicago area for almost a full year now and we miss getting together with everyone. So, we have changed our name and we have changed our ways!

"Thursdays @ STC Chicago" has been renamed to "Thursday Meetups" and we are hosting virtual noon-hour meetups on the second Thursday of each month. Just as when we met in person, there will be no fees, no agendas, and no presentations... just a group of technical communicators getting together to network and socialize. Our in-person meetups are not gone for good, we are just adding a new networking option for you.

Check out our *Thursday Meetups* page for the registration link (it's free, of course, but you need to register to receive the GoTo Meeting link for the current month).

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Wednesday Webinar Series

"Tell Your Story the Walt Disney World Way: Adding Disney Imagineering to Your Technical Communication Toolbox"

Since the opening of Disneyland in 1955, Disney's Imagineers have been entertaining audiences of all ages at Disney parks around the world by bringing stories to life through immersive and engaging experiences. From 1955 through today, storytelling has been at the heart of everything the Imagineers do, and the key to the Imagineers' storytelling is effective communication. What does that have to do with technical communication? More than you might think! Join is on **April 7** for this presentation that explores a number of Imagineering Storytelling tools – practices and principles used by Walt Disney Imagineering in the design and construction of Disney parks and attractions – and how those same tools can be applied to technical communication and information development to help us effectively communicate with our audiences.

Presenter **Lou Prosperi** is a Senior Documentation and Curriculum Manager for Oracle's Utility Global Business Unit. Following a career in game design, Lou went to work as a technical writer and instructional designer and has been in that role for the last 20 years, providing user and technical documentation and training materials for enterprise applications used in the utilities industry. A self-proclaimed "Imagineering Evangelist," Lou's current area of interest is how to apply the principles and practices employed by Walt Disney Imagineering to other fields, including instructional design.

For registration details, see: <https://www.stc-chicago.com/apr-webinar-series-tell-your-story-the-walt-disney-world-way-adding-disney-imagineering-to-your-technical-communication-toolbox/> Ω

MSI Science Fair 2021

By Pete Wagner, STC Chicago vice president

STC Chicago has been involved with the Chicago Non-Public Schools' Science Exposition, sponsored by the Illinois Junior Academy of Science (IJAS), for two decades running. The standard judging at this regional science fair evaluates more than 400 students in grades 7 through 12. There are three components to the student's presentations: the written paper, a video presentation, and a poster summarizing the entry. All students are recognized with a Gold, Silver, or Bronze level certificate, with the award winners advancing 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. That's where STC Chicago comes in, providing two special cash awards of \$150 and \$75 for first and second place. Our judging focuses on the students' display posters (not the project's subject matter or how well it was executed) and how well they reflect excellence in technical communication. The project display posters are a unique opportunity for students to learn about the importance of technical communication.

Normally held in March at the Museum of Science and Industry (MSI), the pandemic last year made this a virtual event. This year saw a hybrid event where projects were once again on display Saturday, March 13, 2021. STC Chicago participated again this year, albeit via virtual judging.

Although these students are young, they are held to high standards. Judging criteria include:

- *Project title* – did it clearly reflect what the project was about?
- *Poster design* – was the layout clean? Was it appealing to the reader? Was the typeface inviting or the handwriting neat and legible?
- *Graphics* – did the graphics and photos add value?
- *Writing* – was the tone of the written pieces appropriate? Was the writing free from grammar and spelling errors? Were lists, tables, and graphs presented in a clear manner?

- *Overall perception* – did the poster display clearly convey the purpose and results of the project?

A big thank you to STC Chicago member **Nancy Shanahan**, who helped with the virtual judging along with chapter president **Rita Hovorka** and myself. My wife and I had the honor of being special judges onsite at the 2018 competition. The energy and creativity of the students and these projects was amazing, and I am really looking forward to (and hoping to) judge onsite again in 2022.

Through this special judging, students learn that the technical science is not the only factor, but that communication of that technical content is equally important. Chicago STC hopes to impart the importance of technical communication in all aspects of their academic lives, and that they will take these lessons with them into their future careers. I think it was mission accomplished based on this email I just received from one of the winners:

"I would like to thank you and the Society for Technical Communication for honoring me with the special Administrative Council Award. I am deeply honored to hold this title and thank you so much for recognizing my efforts. I am really looking forward to spending my \$75 prize, truthfully, I will probably save most of it, but it is fun to pretend for a bit."

Hey, all work and no play doesn't make for a great technical communicator! Congrats and enjoy your award! Ω



1st place poster – 2021
(student names withheld for privacy)

Celebrating Our Volunteers

Although we did not have a chance to have an award banquet this year, we were able to celebrate our chapter volunteers in a special way. Each winner received a personalized video announcement of their award, in advance of their etched acrylic award.

President's Award

The STC Chicago President's Award was established in 1993 to recognize significant volunteer contributions of chapter members.

2021 Recipient: MaryKay Grueneberg

Citation: *In recognition of your dedication to ensuring the Chicago chapter runs smoothly and for the special attention given to completing and submitting award applications.*

Volunteer of the Year Award

Established in 2010, the Volunteer of the Year Award was created to acknowledge ongoing dedication to the chapter through volunteer efforts and commitment to the technical communication profession.

2021 Recipient: Adam Evans

Citation: *For your work on the AAG and your willingness to step up for the chapter whenever needed.*

Above and Beyond Award

STC Chicago established the Above and Beyond Award in 2012 to recognize an individual that accepts the responsibilities for a unique and challenging chapter event or experience. In the role, the individual contributes an extraordinary effort and substantial personal time to ensure the successful completion of the experience.

2021 Recipient: Linda Kelley

Citation: *For your ongoing work as chapter webmaster, as well as your thoughtful revamp of our website pages.*

Chapter Star Award

Established in 2011, the STC Chicago Chapter Star Award was created to acknowledge a chapter member for outstanding service and volunteer efforts for a single major event.

2021 Recipient: Rebecca C. Hall

Citation: *For exceptionally managing the process to update the chapter bylaws, and with special appreciation for a creating a simple review process.*

Golden Support Award

Established in 2016, the Golden Support Award was created to acknowledge a business or group that has shown continued exceptional long-term professional support of the STC Chicago chapter.

2021 Recipient: LavaCon, Jack Molisani

Citation: *With special thanks for your continued support of STC Chicago programs.*

For a full listing of all past recipients of STC Chicago chapter awards, see: www.stc-chicago.com/people Ω

Celebrating Our Chapter

STC Chicago takes great pride in our long history of achievements at the Society level, and this year is no exception. We are extremely excited to share the news of the following two newest awards that the chapter will be receiving at the 2021 STC Summit.

Platinum Community Award

The STC Community Achievement Award (CAA) recognizes a SIG, professional, or student chapter's outstanding accomplishments in achieving the Society's goals through a wide range of programs and activities. The award to be presented at the STC Summit in June will reflect the work completed in the calendar year 2020. Our citation will read:

“For your exceptional programs and volunteer recognition, impressive outreach to students, and productive alliances with Chicago businesses and professional organizations.”

Pacesetter Award

The STC Community Pacesetter Award recognizes innovative and successful community initiatives. Unlike the CAA award, which recognizes the communities for consistent strength in many varied activities, the Pacesetter Award recognizes the successful implementation of a single beneficial innovation that may be implemented by other STC communities. Our citation will read:

“For your thoughtful way of honoring your volunteers by producing personal presentation videos for each honoree, thus creating special memory keepsakes of their achievements.”

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Chapter Election – Meet the Candidates

The election for the 2021-22 program year officers will be held from April 5-23, 2021. A link to the ballot will be sent via email to all STC Chicago Chapter members on April 5. If you are an STC Chicago chapter and do not receive a ballot, please contact secretary@stc-chicago.com to receive a ballot.

The STC Chicago program year runs from July 1 through June 30 each year. On July 1, 2021, **Rita Hovorka**, our current chapter president, will automatically move to the status of immediate past president. Our current vice president, **Pete Wagner**, will move to the position of president, with the validation of membership vote.



The full ballot for the 2021-22 program year:

Pete Wagner for President

Pete is a Senior Technical Writer at Litera, a Chicago-based software company that provides a complete document life cycle solution, first draft to final delivery, for end users in legal, life science and corporate. Pete spent most of his technical communications career at Siemens Building Technologies Division in Buffalo Grove. He's also worked as a solutions consultant at Dakota Systems in Chicago, done freelance writing and started his writing life as a magazine editor and writer for a small technical trade publication.

Pete's been a member of STC since 1994. Before joining the AC in 2016 Pete judged in the annual Technical Communication Competition and taught the chapter's RoboHelp seminars from 2004 to 2007. A stint as chapter treasurer led to Vice President, and Pete is now looking forward to serving as President.

Ben Durham for Vice President

Ben is a former educator who switched careers to become a technical writer when he and his wife found out they were soon-to-be parents. During this time, Ben freelanced and worked on his CPTC certification, which allowed him to spend more time at home with his wife

and newborn. He is currently the senior technical writer for HP Tuners, an automotive software company based in Buffalo Grove.

After joining STC, Ben eagerly sought involvement with the program's numerous SIGs. He is currently the Treasurer for the Policies and Procedures SIG, and he is the newsletter writer for the Academic SIG. Ben now has his sights set on STC's Chicago Chapter, where he hopes to serve as the new Vice President.

Administrative roles are familiar to Ben. In the past, he has served as a board member for the Independent Writers of Chicago, and he has several years of experience in leadership positions for various professional organizations.

Dan Dornbrook for Secretary

Dan has been a technical writer in the Chicago area since 1994 and an STC member since 1993, when he was studying technical communication at Milwaukee School of Engineering. He currently writes software documentation for the Midwest office of JMA Wireless, a telecommunications company based in upstate New York.

Dan has served as chapter secretary since 2017 and has managed the chapter's Social Media Committee since 2018. He served as chapter president in 2009-2010, vice president in 2008-2009, treasurer in 2006-2008, Program Committee manager in 2004-2006, and Byline editor in 2001-2002 and 1995-96.

Dan received a Robert G. Frank Award from the chapter in 2011, a Distinguished Chapter Service Award from STC in 2005, and a President's Award from the chapter in 2005. When asked why he would like to continue serving as secretary, Dan said, "As a technical writer, I have learned the importance of record-keeping to any organization, and I am glad I can apply that set of skills in service to our profession."

Francis Bao for Treasurer

Francis is a long-term member of STC Chicago with a long history of volunteering. He served as Chapter treasurer for three years, from 2003-2006. He served as VP/president/IPP from 2007-2010. Francis has also served as Education/Workshop Committee manager for two years and Nominating Committee for two years. In addition, Francis has been the Advertising/Sponsorship Committee manager since 2010. He has received the President's award, Distinguished Chapter Service award,

Meet the Candidates, cont'd

Volunteer of the Year award, and the Robert G. Frank award throughout the years. He is also an Associate Fellow of STC.

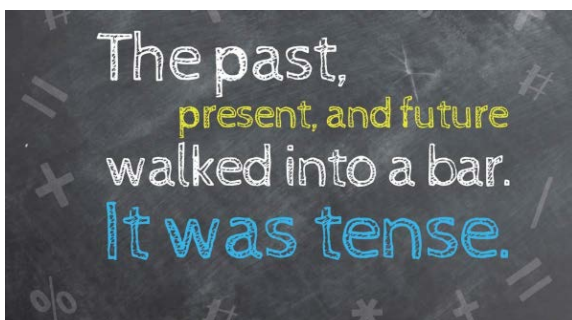
While he has been a part of the Administrative Council in one way or another for the past 17 years, Francis is anxious to once again be running for an officer position and is looking forward to serving the Chapter in the capacity of treasurer. Francis said, "I am very proud to be the part of leadership team again to keep the Chicago Chapter moving forward." Ω

Chapter Membership has its Perks!

Last month, the STC Rochester Chapter generously donated a free registration to their annual conference, Spectrum 2021, to each STC chapter! STC Chicago took the opportunity to offer that free registration as our first Chapter Members-Only Perk of 2021. We sent a notification to all registered chapter members and anyone who was interested in the virtual conference and available to attend was offered a chance to enter a drawing for the free ticket. The winner of the free registration to Spectrum 2021 was **Linda Kelley!**

If you are an STC Chicago Chapter member, watch your inbox for an invitation to a members-only event later this month – it is our way of saying "thank you" for your loyalty to our chapter.

If you are not yet a chapter member, you can change that at any time by adjusting your STC membership status at <https://www.stc.org/membership/> Ω



Spectrum 2021 – Check it out!



Spectrum
STC ROCHESTER CONFERENCE

Spectrum 2021, the annual conference of the Rochester STC Chapter, takes place online Saturday, April 17 to Monday, April 19. This year's theme is *Flexibility, Creativity, Sustainability*.

How do we sustain the practice of technical communication in this challenging time? How do we stay flexible? How do we nurture our creativity and apply it to our work?

Keynote speaker [Alisa Bonsignore](#) will set the stage for participants to learn and talk about sustainability and our careers, and presenters will share their ideas and methods they are applying to their work.

Register on [Eventbrite](#). You will find all the conference details on the [Spectrum pages](#) of the chapter website.

- Review the [Schedule](#) to see everything on the program.
- See more about what is offered on April 19, the main conference day, on the [Keynote](#) and [Session Descriptions](#) pages.
- Be sure to review the Sunday Leadership Day information on the [Schedule](#).
- Take a look at the [Workshop Descriptions](#) too.
- Learn about the speakers from their [bios](#).
- See the [logistics](#) of the conference.

Then make your selections and [register](#) for the events you want to attend.

Don't miss Spectrum 2021! Network with colleagues, build skills, and learn about the latest trends and opportunities in technical communication. The Rochester STC Chapter hopes you will register for all three days and welcomes you to attend any events you can. If you have any questions, please send a message to spectrum@stc-rochester.org.

And...keep in mind that two of our own STC Chicago chapter members will be speaking at the conference! Ω

STC Panel Visits York High School

By Ben Boxall, York HS student

The Society for Technical Communication (STC) recently held a Zoom question and answer session with York High School's technical writing students. These seniors have been studying the process of technical writing and communication throughout the school year.



Technical writing involves drafting and creating varying means of writing, such as

instructional materials, guides, reports, and many other information-based pieces. This style of writing is extremely popular among STEM, technical, and occupational fields. The simplification of information is important to provide understanding between the many professions within companies.

After having studied this process for a few months, students were given the opportunity to speak to those who practice technical writing in their actual career to obtain a greater understanding of its importance.

The first technical communicator introduced was **Adam Evans**, a senior technical documentation manager at Strata Decision Technology. The company creates software for the medical industry, where Evans creates the documentation for the software. Evans has a degree in technical writing and explains his passion for his field, given the opportunity to work with a variety of different people.

Next was **MaryKay Grueneberg**, a senior user assistance developer who works for SAP, a global corporation which works in a variety of industries. At SAP, Grueneberg does technical writing for many different products, having a company working with diversified industries. Grueneberg also told the class how she enjoys working with many international teams, despite having to deal with different time zones.

Third was **Linda Kelley**, who happened to be a graduate of York High School. Kelley is a senior information developer at Synergy Next, a company which sells a programming language. Kelley explains how she works within the marketing and development departments, often using her technical writing skills to aid in problem solving and to simplify information to make the product easier for clients to use.

Last to be introduced was **Lynne Williamson**, who also worked at a subsidiary of SAP, SAP Fieldglass as a technical writing manager. This company works on a software product to help external workforces and temporary workers, where Williamson writes about the software product used. She also talked about her previous experience working with other companies as a technical writer.

These four technical writers gave the students a great insight into the importance of technical writing in the real world, speaking on the ups and downs of the jobs, the variety of companies they have worked for, and the day to day life on the job. Students were given the chance to speak to each writer in breakout rooms to get more personalized Q&A.

The Society for Technical Communication can be found at www.stc.org where more information is provided on the field of study, along with courses, certifications, and much more. Ω

Student Writing Contest Winner

Some of our STC Chicago members recently paid a visit to York High School students via Zoom for our fourth annual Tech Comm Panel. We thought you'd like to hear about it from the students, so we held a contest for the best summary article. The article on this page, by student **Ben Boxall**, is the winning article. He is a High School Senior, taking an honors class in technical writing, with dual credit at College of DuPage. In addition to his article being published here in *Byline*, he will also receive a Certificate of Achievement from the chapter. Congratulations, Ben! Ω

Society News



2021 Summit – June 5-9

Registration is now open for the Virtual 2021 Summit!
The Summit will take place **5-9 June 2021**.



What's included with registration?

- All keynote and general sessions
- Education sessions in the following areas: Content Design and Delivery; Tools and Technologies; Management, Leadership, and Career Development. The program will include presentations, tutorials, and workshops at several experience levels.
- The Expo Hall, where numerous vendors demonstrate products, services, tools, and technology in the world of technical communication.
- The Honors Event, where the best and brightest in the industry are honored by the Society.
- Additional social networking and entertainment events
- Access to all recorded sessions until 31 August 2021 Ω

STC Society Election Results

STC, the Nominating Committee, and the Board of Directors are pleased to announce the results of the 2021 STC election. Congratulations to those elected, and thank you to all the candidates for your dedication to STC and willingness to devote your time and energy to improving our Society by running for office.!

President – Kirsty Taylor, automatically succeeds from VP

Vice President – Aiessa Moyna

Treasurer – Bobbi Werner

Director – Sree Pattabiraman

Director – Laura Palmer

Nominating Committee – Jack Molisani

Nominating Committee - David Caruso

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Visit www.stc.org/education to view the full list of upcoming educational opportunities with STC.



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

2020-21 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

Sponsorship – MK Grueneberg, sponsorship@stc-chicago.com

Webinar Series – MK Grueneberg, webinars@stc-chicago.com

Web/Online – Linda Kelley, web@stc-chicago.com

Byline

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Subscriptions: The current issue of Byline and all archived editions are available on the STC Chicago website at: <http://www.stc-chicago.com>



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