

# Byline



Bi-Monthly Newsletter for STC Chicago Members

## President's Message

### Does This Weather Make You Tired?

*By Cheri Noble*

I don't have to tell you (living in the Chicago-land area) that this winter has been long with too much snow and just too cold...can you say Polar Vortex? As soon as it starts to get cold, I want to hibernate. I also noticed this year that I was starting to get more and more tired as the weather became colder and colder. I just wanted to sleep. Sometimes I have to find things that motivate me to get me out of the "tired mode" and into a more energetic mode. In the cold weather, I know I can't go home and just sit down; I have to keep moving. I can't tell you how many times I thought, "Just a few minutes of closing my eyes and I'll be fine." But I'm sure you know how that ends. I also have to look ahead to the thought of spring.

I have sometimes started on new writing projects that made me feel the same way — tired! Usually because I knew it too well and some of the tasks were not the tasks I'd like to work on. As I do when the weather gets cold, I realize I have to keep moving. I try to start with the tasks I like the least to get them

out of the way. That allows me to be able to look ahead at doing some of the tasks I do enjoy. Even then I can get tired, so I do work on the parts

I enjoy to get and keep me motivated.

Sometimes learning new things is what gets me motivated. I know we can't all change a lot of things about our jobs, but try to find even the smallest things to change to make it better. We can't do anything about the weather, but we can do things different to help keep our jobs from making us tired.

As technical communicators, we have a lot to look forward to this year. We have our annual Recognition and Awards Banquet on March 20, and watch our website for our special April program announcement. Our Program Manager, Elizabeth Burke, has been working hard to continue to bring relevant topics to our members.

Thank goodness that spring is just around the corner! Ω

### Renew Now!

Our events feature reduced pricing for STC Chicago members, so don't forget to renew! Read about the many benefits of membership and join or renew online [here](#). Ω

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## Let's Celebrate, STC Chicago!

*By MaryKay Grueneberg*

**Save the Date: Thursday, March 20**

### **Annual Chapter Recognition and Awards Banquet**

It's hard to believe, but it's that time of year again. It is time for us to honor our hard-working volunteers, celebrate our Chapter and all it has to offer, and acknowledge all of the winners of this year's annual International Summit Awards technical communication competition.

We had a good turnout of competition entries this year, and we are pleased to be able to present 26 awards at the banquet this year. In addition to the ISA competition award winners, we will also acknowledge the competition judges who gave their time and expertise to judge the entries and offer written evaluations and comments for the entrants.

We also will be honoring several other hard-working volunteers who have played key roles in making our Chapter vibrant and active. Our Chapter relies on the dedication and hard work of our volunteers and this is our chance to say "Thank You." In addition, we will honor this year's scholarship winners. It's going to be a fun-filled evening with new friends and old — so come on out and join us!

The banquet will take place on Thursday, March 20, at the Black Steer Charhouse in Elk Grove Village (just off I-290). The cost will be \$35 for members, \$40 for non-members, and \$30 for students and competition judges. Attendees will have a choice of three delicious entrees: charbroiled chicken breast, pork chops, or fettuccine Alfredo (with or without chicken). All meals will include soup, salad, potato or rice, vegetables, and dessert.

Please plan to join us as we celebrate STC Chicago! Registration and information is posted on the Chapter website: [www.stc-chicago.com](http://www.stc-chicago.com). Ω

**Psst...**

**Be the tenth person to email [byline@stc-chicago.com](mailto:byline@stc-chicago.com) with the subject "I read Byline" and win a \$10 Starbucks eGift card. Ω**

## "Get Real": A Professional Interview Program

*By Josée Martens*

We're excited to announce a new service at STC Chicago!

In the next few months, we'll be launching an informational interview service for students and recent graduates new to or considering the field of technical communication. Students can request an interview and we'll match them up with a senior technical communicator in our chapter for a 30- to 60-minute in-person or phone interview.

Would you like to be interviewed? Can you answer questions about what this work is like, what skills are needed, and more? We are looking to add some more interviewees to our roster of volunteers. Volunteer today! Send an email to [interview@stc-chicago.com](mailto:interview@stc-chicago.com). Ω

## Seeking Future Meeting Locations

*By Cheri Noble*

Is your employer in a convenient location for many of the STC Chicago members? Does your employer have conference or training room space that STC Chicago could use for an evening or Saturday morning chapter event? Could we order and have food delivered to your location for our meeting? We are always looking for "free" locations to host our program meetings. Some advantages for your company:

- We will promote your company name and location on our website.
- Attendees will see the support your organization provides for STC.
- Possibly many more of the associates at your company will attend the program.

Please contact [program@stc-chicago.com](mailto:program@stc-chicago.com) if your employer can help.

## February Meeting Snags a Crowd

*By Linda Buchalo*

The February STC meeting drew a full house for a demonstration of TechSmith Snagit 11. TechSmith experts Erika Smith, Cait Ryan, and Heath Smythe demonstrated new and existing features and provided tips in a presentation that appealed to both novice and seasoned Snagit users. Smith also demonstrated TechSmith Fuse, a free application that enables the easy transfer of images and files from a mobile device into the Snagit application.

New Snagit features include a single-click interface, always at the ready, at the edge of your screen. Videos captures are possible in MP4 format, and you can also record the system audio, such as mouse-clicks.

The Tools tab offers a variety of tools to edit Snagit captures, including the ability to blur sensitive information at varying levels. Changes to the callout feature brought cheers from the audience.

On the Image tab, you can use the Cut Out tool to remove unwanted portions of a capture and piece together the remaining portions. The Quick Styles feature saves frequently-used styles for future use.

From the Share tab, users can import captures into various outputs; several new outputs are available. Screencast.com



*Members learn about Snagit at the February meeting*

is a content-hosting service that provides easy sharing of captures.

The Library tab lists a history of your captures so you can easily access or reuse existing files. The batch convert features enables changes to multiple images at one time, for example, converting a folder of JPEG files to PNG files in a single click.

The demonstration included a scrolling capture. Although currently a problem in Google Chrome, listeners were promised that the problem is currently under investigation. And at the end of the presentation, members of the audience were encouraged to send any requests to the TechSmith team for consideration in future releases.

The meeting ended with a drawing, and two lucky winners walked away with the newest version of TechSmith Snagit. Ω

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## Upcoming Eastern Iowa Workshop

Join the Eastern Iowa Chapter of STC for a half-day writing workshop with Laura Behrens, owner and principal of Red Pen Communications, an editorial and consulting practice that focuses on excellent writing.

This learn-by-doing workshop is for professional writers, as well as those who reluctantly find themselves assigned to write. It will look into why writing clearly is so important, how technology is changing what and how we write, and why style is not frivolous but is instead vital to your effectiveness.

### **When**

Tuesday, March 11, 2014, 1:00-5:00 PM

### **Where**

Longbranch Hotel and Convention Center, 90 Twixt Town Road NE, Cedar Rapids, IA

### **Cost**

STC members - \$50

Students - \$30.00

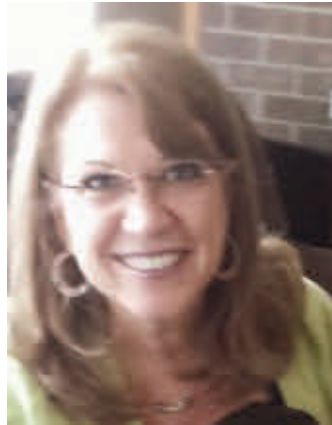
Non-members - \$60.00

### **For more information and registration**

<http://stc-easterniowa.org/events/its-not-about-your-clothes-why-style-is-important-to-your-writing/> Ω

## Member Spotlight: Cheri Noble

*Cheri Noble is President of STC Chicago.*



### **What are you working on now?**

I started a new job at Catamaran in December so I'm still learning. My team documents several applications for Pharmacy Benefit Management (PGM) tools. All of our documentation is online help.

### **How long have you lived in Chicago?**

I moved to the Chicagoland area from Michigan just over seven years ago. I lived in Michigan all of my life, and my family and best friends are still there. I go back to visit but have no desire to move back; I love it here!

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

I first joined STC when I was in Michigan and had an opportunity to join STC and attend the STC Summit that year. Back then, my employer used to pay for my membership. Shortly after I moved to Chicago, I knew I had to get involved with STC Chicago so I could continue to learn from my peers. I transferred my membership to STC Chicago and haven't looked back. Our chapter has phenomenal dedication!

### **What is your most common role as a technical communicator? Do you play any additional roles?**

In my new job, I'll be documenting more of the system documentation for several applications that is deployed as online documentation only. At another company, I worked with IT on developing the screen design, wrote the system error messages, created the step-by-step instructions for the online help, wrote field and screen level help, created paper training manuals and job aides, developed several eLearning courses, performed stand up training for internal associates and external clients and developed online surveys to obtain end user feedback to improve my materials.

### **What's your favorite place to visit?**

Boy this is a tough one! So far it's a toss-up between Estes Park, Colorado, and the Grand Tetons National Park, Wyo-

ming. (I have a picture of the Snake River on my desk.) I love mountains!

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

In a word, volunteer! STC has so much to offer and the Chicago chapter has some of the finest people I've ever met. Our members are supportive, always willing to step up and help. When you volunteer for STC Chicago, even if it's for just one event, you'll enjoy getting to know other people that do what you do. I've learned so much about the different companies in the Chicagoland area and what kind of technical writers they need. It's all about networking and learning from your peers.

### **What advice would you give other people who are thinking about joining STC?**

Are you looking for a job? I highly recommend to join STC and participate in our monthly programs. I directly attribute obtaining my new job from what I learned through our chapter last year. The career development series was timely and relevant to technical writers. I worked for the same company since 1972, so I didn't have a lot of chance to interview. I learned new skills for interviewing, how to present myself, and what should be in my portfolio. The feedback from other members made all the difference. I learn something new at every program meeting.

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

God-willing I'm in good health, I'd like to be able to retire from full-time work. I would like to foster rescue dogs, travel during the spring, summer, and fall, and then do contract technical writing when the weather starts to get colder. Working more on my time schedule would be great.

## Science Fair Judges Needed

STC Chicago is looking for judges to represent the Chapter at the Chicago Non-Public Schools Science Exposition at the Museum of Science and Industry on March 8 or 9. (You only have to attend one day.) Please contact [president@stc-chicago.com](mailto:president@stc-chicago.com) if you're interested. Ω

## STC Chicago Membership at a Glance

**Total Affiliated Members: 111**

Senior Members: 75

Members: 27

New TC Professionals: 4

Student Members: 5

## STC Chicago Chapter Leaders | 2013-2014

### President

Cheri Noble

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Bill Leavitt

### Internship Committee

Elizabeth Burke

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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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**Subscriptions:** The current issue of Byline and all archived editions are available on the [STC Chicago website](#).

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