

Byline



Bi-Monthly Newsletter for STC Chicago Members and Supporters

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President's Message

by MaryKay Grueneberg

I am always amazed at how many talented technical communicators we have in Chicago. Just take a look at our Website and see the list of all the winners of the 2018 STC Chicago Technical Communications Competition. We saw some really good entries that ranged from marketing brochures to Help systems to training videos. We also have talented members and non-members alike that volunteer their time to help STC Chicago run and serve our membership. Take a look at the *47th Annual Chapter Recognition Awards* article in this issue to see some of our recent award winners. And the talent is getting younger and younger! Check out the two winning articles from some of our local High School students who wrote about the Tech Comm Panel held at their school a few weeks ago. Finally, take a look at the article about our very own Ken Cook and his nomination as a Tech Comm Icon! –Our issue is large this month, but we have so much to share! We hope you take a few minutes and read through this month's issue. Enjoy!

47th Annual Chapter Recognition Awards

For the past 47 years, STC Chicago has held a banquet to honor our exceptional volunteers as well as the winners of the STC Chicago Technical Communication Competition – that's longer than many of the STC Communities have been in existence! On March 21, we were very excited and proud to honor some very special people. We are very proud to announce the winners of the chapter awards:

President's Award: The STC Chicago President's Award was established in 1993 to recognize significant volunteer contributions of chapter members. This year is an exception. By unanimous vote of the AC, we decided to honor someone outside of the chapter.

Tim Esposito spent so much of his personal time to help us get our website up and running properly again after the migration last year that we felt he deserved some special recognition.

Timothy Esposito

"In appreciation of your exceptional effort and many hours of work helping fix our Website post-migration issues. We now consider you an honorary member of STC Chicago."

Volunteer of the Year Award: Initiated in 2010, this award was established to acknowledge ongoing dedication to the chapter through volunteer efforts and commitment to the technical communication profession.

Linda Kelley stepped up this year by taking on the role of Webmaster. Our Website is the "face" of our Chapter and she has done a great job of keeping it up-to-date, clean, and relevant. She also has been the host of our well-loved Trivia Night.

Linda Kelley

"For your sustained contributions to the Chicago chapter, your efforts as Webmaster, and for being an awesome host for our annual Trivia Night."

Chapter Recognition Awards continued on page 2

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.

Stacey Lohman and Heidi Hanson were asked to set up our annual membership drive. They went above and beyond and created an amazing 4-month marketing campaign. It was creative, thoughtful, and effective.

Stacey Lohman

Heidi Hanson

“For your service to the chapter by designing and executing an extremely creative marketing plan for the 2019 Membership Drive.”

Distinguished Chapter Service Award (DCSA): The Society initiated the Distinguished Chapter Service Award (DCSA) program in 1988 to acknowledge the work of those chapter members who repeatedly and consistently provide exemplary service to the Society through chapter activities. This is a society level award given at the chapter level. It is not awarded every year.

Pete Wagner has been our chapter treasurer for the past three years and has done an exemplary job. He was co-host of one of the Thursdays@Chicago networking lunches for many years. He steps up where and when needed without question. He is a true and solid supporter of our chapter.

Pete Wagner

“For your dedication to STC Chicago and your exemplary efforts as Treasurer for the past three years.”

Robert G. Frank Award: A recipient is usually a member of STC Chicago for ten years or more and served in an active role for all or most of these years. Robert Frank was a dedicated leader of the chapter who worked beyond reasonable expectations to make it successful. Much of his professional life was spent in support of the longterm success of STC Chicago. The Robert G. Frank Award is intended to honor Robert Frank by recognizing STC members who characterize the dedication he displayed.

Elizabeth Burke has been an active member of the chapter since she joined in 2006. She has served in a number of leadership roles including two terms as president, secretary, program manager, internship committee manager, multiple terms as competition committee manager, and scholarship manager. She was responsible for bringing CARA into STC Chicago not only as a member but as a strong supporter and regular sponsor. She developed and implemented our high school level scholarship program.

Elizabeth L. Burke

“For dedicated service to the Chicago chapter and distinguished leadership in STC.”

Please visit our website, www.stc-chicago.com, to see the full historical list for each of the chapter awards as well as the full list of the competition winners.

New City Location for Thursdays@STC Chicago

Did you know that on the on the first Thursday of each month, STC Chicago members and non-members get together for lunch in three different locations? We gather for informal discussions and networking.

Open to all, the *Thursdays@STC Chicago* events are free - attendees pay for their own food and drinks, but the networking opportunity is priceless.

The **NEW city location** is at Silk Road (19 S LaSalle St, #106 - W Arcade Place) in Chicago.

The Thursdays@STC Chicago lunches are informal and reservations are not required to attend. However, we do have a “Save me a seat” link for each of the locations. This lets the host know how many to plan for and who to contact in the event of a last-minute cancellation. Check our [Thursdays@Chicago page](http://www.stc-chicago.com/activities/thursdays-stc-chicago/) (<http://www.stc-chicago.com/activities/thursdays-stc-chicago/>) for details and all locations.

Article Contest Winners!

Some of our STC Chicago members recently paid a visit to York High School in Elmhurst to sit on a Tech Comm Panel. We thought you'd like to hear about it from the students, so we had a contest for the best summary article. We are including the two best student articles in this *Byline* issue. Congratulations to the student authors. They are Seniors who are taking an honors calls in technical communication.

Technical Communicators Meet the Dukes!

By: Shalan John and Camille Gilbert

The Chicago chapter of the Society for Technical Communication (STC) visited York Community High School on February 26, 2019 to share insights with students from the intriguing world of technical writing.

York's Technical Writing Honors class, taught by Mr. Andrew Bendelow, had the unique opportunity to hear from four real-life technical communicators who work for various organizations.

The STC panel consisted of: Adam Evans, Sr. Technical Documentation Manager at Strata Decision Technology, MaryKay Grueneberg, Sr. User Assistance Developer at SAP, Linda Kelley, Sr. Information Developer at Synergex, and Lynne Williamson, Technical Writing Manager at SAP Fieldglass.



During the opening remarks of the STC panel, Mr. Bendelow asked each technical communicator what the best and the most challenging aspects of their occupations were. The four technical communicators agreed that the best parts of their jobs are exposure to numerous industries, being able to think and act creatively in their profession, and being able to take complex information and bring it down to user-level information. All four panelists emphasized that the feeling of knowing their work is helping many people makes everything they do worth the time and effort. As for challenges, the four professionals had different opinions.

Evans explained that his biggest challenge is prioritizing tasks and reporting to stakeholders. "Just making sure everyone is pleased and hitting the deadlines they were given," said Evans. As for Grueneberg, coordinating time zones for meetings that occur internationally is her biggest challenge. Kelley shared that the hardest part to her was working remotely due to their intangible product, which makes it more difficult to reach out to people. However, Kelley also shared that with experience, she's figured out ways to make it work. Lastly, Williamson described her biggest challenge as just keeping up with advanced technologies and tools.

As the opening remarks concluded, the students in Technical Writing Honors had the opportunity to ask questions to each technical communicator. Senior Gillian O'Hara left the event very pleased. "It was truly an eye-opening experience," she said. Senior Nicole Bednarik commented, "I'm thinking about studying technical writing in college to earn more opportunities in my future profession. I didn't realize how crucial technical writing was to our society until the STC professionals explained the various roles they play in making life easier for everybody."

All in all, the Chicago chapter of the Society for Technical Communicators left Technical Writing Honors students with a lot of newly profound knowledge about such a distinctive career field. Students were beyond pleased to be a part of such a rare occasion!

Contest Winners continued on page 4

Technical Writers Encourage the Professionals of the Future

By Manu Mehta

A council of specialists from the Society for Technical Communication (STC) visited students of Andrew Bendelow's *Technical Writing-H* course in York Community High School on the 26th of February 2019 to explain the duties that come with working as a technical writer.

Each student was given a chance to question three of the four technical writers, who moved in rotation among the students: Adam Evans (Senior Technical Documentation Manager at Strata Decision Technology), MaryKay Grueneberg (Senior User Assistance Developer at SAP), Linda Kelley (Senior Information Developer at Synergex), and Lynne Williamson (Technical Writing Manager at SAP Fieldglass).

Many of the questions that were asked pertained to the difficulties of working as a technical writer. Kelley answered, asserting that "It is a **must** for technical writers to be able to accept change and learn new things, which generally occurs on one's own time." Two rotations later, Evans supplemented Kelley's answer by emphasizing that "For me, staying in one professional field of technical writing becomes a bore, which is why I've switched from being a technical writer in law to a technical writer in healthcare. If this is the same attitude you face as a technical writer, then it should be understood that a steep learning curve is required when switching professional fields."

Matt Anikiej, a senior enrolled in *Technical Writing-H*, generated a simple and unique question that came with a lengthy response from each of the technical writers: "How has the field of technical writing evolved?" Grueneberg began by discussing that the technical writing field before the advent of the Inter-



From left to right: Lynne Williamson, Adam Evans, Linda Kelley, and MaryKay Grueneberg .

net generally only consisted of writing user guides and had few other tasks. Grueneberg later discussed that once the internet was introduced, the technical writing field expanded to involve many more duties — such as making videos and producing chatbots.

Students interested in joining the technical writing field inquired about the credentials required to join this profession. All of the technical writers stated that it would be helpful to major in English. Evans even suggested that one should minor in a different field "because it would aid in understanding different fields that technical writers would have to communicate with."

Some students lingered after class to discuss more about the technical writing field, but all students left with an understanding of what this new and prospering field is all about.

Chapter Officer Elections Opens April 8

Our annual election of officers will open April 8 and run through April 26. All registered chapter members will receive an election email on or before April 8. If you are a registered member and do not receive the election email, please reach out to secretary@stc-chicago.com

Congratulations, Ken Cook!

In a recent article, the Association of Equipment Manufacturers (AEM) has declared STC Chicago member Ken Cook a “Technical Communication Icon”. They chronicled his 50+ year career in Tech Comm and most importantly, they talk about the role Ken and his company have played in making the equipment manufacturing industry safe through the training and manuals they have created. We are so very proud of Ken. For the full article for AEM, see <https://www.aem.org/news/meet-ken-cook-technical-communication-icon/>

Chicago eLearning & Technology Showcase

Mark Your Calendar & Join Us

This year's Chicago eLearning & Technology Showcase will be Tuesday, August 13 at Northern Illinois University (NIU), in Naperville, Illinois. The west suburban conference center is easily accessible just off Interstate 88. Registration opens in May.



Volunteers Needed!

Did you know that the Showcase is attended by 325+ people each year – and is run entirely by volunteers? We are beginning to plan this year's event and need additional help.

Review the wide range of volunteer opportunities and then complete the volunteer interest form. In thanks for your contribution, you will be invited to attend the Showcase at a reduced rate.

Upcoming Program Meetings

April 11	“Writing with Translation in Mind: Some Tips and Tricks”	Emily Labeledz and Leticia Barroso, InterPro	Olive Garden, Downers Grove
April 17	“Intelligent Content – What is it? Why is it important?”	Alan Horvath	Downtown location, tbd
May 16	“Using Design Thinking to Create Better eLearning Experiences”	James Goldsmith and Daniel Coco	Bar Louie, Schaumburg
June 20	Annual Business Meeting and Trivia Night	n/a	Elmhurst, tdb

STC Chicago 2018-19 Officers

President – MaryKay Grueneberg, president@stc-chicago.com

Vice President – Michael Burke, vp@stc-chicago.com

Secretary – Dan Dornbrook, secretary@stc-chicago.com

Treasurer – Pete Wagner, treasurer@stc-chicago.com

Immediate Past President – Elizabeth Gecas, ipp@stc-chicago.com

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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.

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

2018-19 Committee Managers

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Bylaws – Becky Hall

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

eLearning & Technology Showcase – Linda Jansak

Historian – Bill Leavitt

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Nominating – Pete Wagner, nominating@stc-chicago.com

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Programs – MaryKay Grueneberg, program@stc-chicago.com

Social Media – Dan Dornbrook

Scholarships – Elizabeth L. Burke, scholarships@stc-chicago.com

Sponsorship – Francis Bao, sponsorship@stc-chicago.com

Webinar Series – Adam Evans

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



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