

# Byline



Bi-Monthly Newsletter for STC Chicago Members

## President's Message The Year in Review

By Cheri Noble

A year has come and gone already and what a year it has been.

Our Thursdays @ STC Chicago program has been doing very well and I'd like to thank our volunteers that host these events; we couldn't do it without you. All of our committee managers worked very diligently this year to improve their groups or tasks. It seems like we are always improving and that is great to see and I appreciate all they have done.

Our chapter started a new program this year under the leadership of Josée Martens. Besides running our successful scholarship program this year, she started an interviewing program for students, giving them an opportunity to interview a technical writer in preparation for their future careers.

Our year always starts with the Chicago eLearning & Technology Showcase. The sold-out event last year was at the Northwestern School of Law along Lakeshore Drive. A special thank you to Linda Jansak, Apryl Jackson, and all the other volunteers that supported this effort. It's a great one-day event with tons of

great sessions, and this year's event is right around the corner.

Our programs started with a webinar with Joe Welinski, a networking meeting, and our October program "Academic Trends and Career Tracks for Tech Comm Pros," then on to "Social Media and the Technical Communicator," ending 2013 with Lightning Talks (everyone was so funny) combined with our annual holiday party.

We started 2014 with a webinar on "Social Collaboration: How User Added Content Enhances Your Documentation," and then there was cold and snow, and so much of it! February brought us a Snagit demo by TechSmith. This session was packed full of tons of tips and tricks for using Snagit, and our instructors were fantastic. As the weather slowly started to warm up, we hosted "User Experience – Staying Relevant in a User-Centric World" in Greektown. I can't tell you how many times I've attended one

*Continued, page 5*

**Don't miss this year's  
eLearning & Technology  
Showcase:**

Tuesday, August 5  
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM  
Northern Illinois University,  
Naperville Campus

[Learn more...](#)

### [inside this issue](#)

July Program	2
IWOC Rate Survey	2
A Trivial Pursuit	3
Competition Help Wanted	3
eLearning Showcase	3
Member Spotlight	4
2014-15 Chapter Officers	5

Find us online!



## July Program: Building a Business Case for Content Strategy Initiatives

We're teaming up with the Chicago Content Strategists to co-host a presentation by **Jack Molisani**, President of ProSpring Technical Staffing and Executive Director of the LavaCon Conference on Content Strategy and User Experience.

Don't miss this opportunity to hear Jack share case studies, metrics, and hard-won lessons learned about how to build a business case to fund content initiatives.

Learn more about the event and [register here](#).

Seating is limited, so sign up soon!

**When:**

Wednesday, July 16  
5:30 PM

**Where:**

Razorfish  
222 Merchandise Mart Plaza #1200, Chicago Ω

---

## Independent Writers Rate Survey Requests Your Participation

Since the mid-1980s the Independent Writers of Chicago has conducted a survey every few years of rates charged by its members. The survey's goal was to provide each IWOC member with knowledge about where he or she stood in relation to colleagues when billing for the many types of writing and editing assignments that members undertake.

This year IWOC has opened the survey to several different writers organizations throughout the Chicagoland area, including STC Chicago. By participating in the survey, STC members will receive a breakdown of writing and editing rates charged by our peers for a variety of assignments from video script writing to newsletters, from Web content to speech writing. The survey covers article writing (journals, periodicals); social media (blogs, Twitter feeds); public relations and advertising (collaterals, annual reports, white papers); and more. The survey doesn't include fiction, poetry,

or any writing for which the writer receives non-currency or salaried payment. All monies received must be for writing created beyond employee constraints and responsibilities.

The survey is completely anonymous. IWOC does not want to know who anyone's clients are. If there are questions you cannot or prefer not to answer, you can feel free to skip over them.

One of the most frequently mentioned issues for freelance writers is how much to charge: you don't want to walk away from a client interview leaving a substantial amount of money on the table, and you don't want to price yourself out of the market. The IWOC rate survey is just another tool for you as you build your professional writing career.

The survey itself was developed and is owned by the Independent Writers of Chicago. Some of its questions may not apply to some writers. In those instances respondents can simply not answer; not every question requires an answer. IWOC has attempted to cover a wide spectrum of freelance writing assignments, but it's inevitable that some areas may be missed. In order for the survey to have its greatest impact, usefulness, and credibility, it must have the broadest possible participation.

Here's how it works:

1. Access the survey by clicking [here](#):
2. You have until July 15 to complete the survey, which can be done in ten minutes.
3. All submissions will be tallied, probably within six weeks, and the results will be distributed to the leaders of all participating writers organizations with the request that they be forwarded immediately to all members of the organization.
4. It's FREE. No personal information will be collected. Every organization that takes part will receive a copy of the report for distribution to its membership.

When the results are in, IWOC will issue a press release to the media, (1) to raise the profile of freelance writers and their value to the communications industry and (2) to reassure employers that the rate survey is only informational and is in no way an attempt to set fees.

Please join in this important effort. It truly is a win-win opportunity for everyone. Ω

## A Trivial Pursuit

*By Linda Kelley*

Which fast food restaurant was the first to sell one billion burgers? Are the holes in Swiss cheese called eyes, spheres, globes, or pores? Paul Reiser and Greg Evigan played the title characters in what late '80s sitcom? If you attended our June 19 trivia meeting, you now know the answers to these and other burning questions. (The answers are White Castle, eyes, and My Two Dads, in case you couldn't make it!)

Over pizza and salad, 6 teams competed for big prizes. It was close, but we ended up congratulating Elizabeth Burke, Cynthia Laughlin, Josée Martens, and Cheri Noble for their victorious first-place finish. The team of Ben Bauer, Rosario Carrillo, John Hartigan, and James Walsh came in second. Both teams received Starbucks gift cards.

After a brief business meeting, the gavel was passed to our new chapter president and incoming officers. Thanks again to all of our volunteers and everyone who attended. Ω



*Members enjoy a game of trivia at our June meeting.*

## Wanted: Technical Communicators to Help with the 43rd Annual Chapter Competition

*By Cynthia Laughlin*

Have you been looking for a way to become more involved with the chapter? Have you wished you could see material from other industries? Have you wanted to meet other writers, designers, and content specialists? If so, the annual Chapter Competition needs you.

Needed: Volunteers who can

- Help publicize the competition
- Answer entrant's questions
- Train judges
- Coordinate entries and responses
- Organize and run a review team
- Follow up with entrants and judges
- Order awards
- Plan the annual banquet

This year, we are planning to start our competition in mid-September to get a jump on the holidays. The Call for Entries will go out mid-August, and publicity and planning begins in the next weeks. Coordination of judges and entries will begin in September and continue until the competition ends the first week of December. The award and banquet planning will begin in February 2015. So no matter what your schedule or skill set, there are many ways you can help.

Members and non-members are welcome. Email [competition@stc-chicago.com](mailto:competition@stc-chicago.com) to sign-up or for more information. Ω

---

## Register Now for the eLearning & Technology Showcase

The Chicago eLearning & Technology Showcase is a full-day conference with an emphasis on the role of new media and interactive methods in organizational training. Speakers explore all aspects of eLearning, such as instructional design, development tools, media resources, virtual classrooms, social and interactive applications, mobile learning, rapid eLearning, and more.

This can't-miss event takes place Tuesday, August 5 from 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM at Northern Illinois University, Naperville Campus. Click [here](#) to register. Ω

## Member Spotlight: Adam Evans

Adam Evans is President of STC Chicago for the 2014-2015 program year. He is currently a Documentation Manager at kCura.



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

I first got involved with STC as a member of the student chapter at Cedarville University. I served as Vice President and President of that chapter. After I graduated college, I was a member of STC Indiana. Then three years later, I moved to Chicago and have been with STC Chicago ever since.

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

About a year ago, I moved into the role of Documentation Manager. I currently manage a team of nine writers, and growing. My day-to-day usually consists of planning documentation initiatives, reviewing content, and making sure our content strategy aligns with that of the company.

### Is there anything you wish you had known about STC when you first joined the organization?

I wish I would've known just how valuable having connections in the industry is. At first, I didn't make it a priority to attend meetings and get to know other technical communicators. Ever since I've been a regular attendee, I've made great connections in the Chicago area, and I lean on them all the time.

### What's the strangest job you've had?

I grew up in Pennsylvania farm country, so I'll spare you.

### What advice would you give someone who is thinking about joining STC?

Use your talents to get involved and contribute to the society. Not only do you help give back to the organization, but you also reap personal benefits that won't become apparent until much further down the road.

### What's your tech comm philosophy?

Buck the trend. Just because it's always been done one way, doesn't mean it's the only way. In my short career, I've seen so

many trends come and go. It's clear to me that those who experiment become the trend setters.

### What's your favorite STC moment?

The 2014 Summit in Phoenix was pretty great this year, but my favorite memory is the Resume Review event STC Chicago held last year. It was one of the most practical meetings we've ever had, and it received rave reviews.

### What's your favorite work moment?

For the sake of those involved, I've promised to never share my favorite work moment with anyone.

### How long have you lived in Chicago?

Three years! I've enjoyed the downtown life since we've moved here, but my wife and I are moving to Oak Park in June.

### What do you like most (and least!) about the city?

I mostly love the excellent food scene we have in Chicago. After three years, I haven't even come close to exhausting the restaurant options in this foodie city. And after visiting other U.S. cities (I'm looking at you, Phoenix), I realized just how great our restaurant selection really is.

My least favorite thing is when it rains and the sidewalks turn into rushing rivers of garbage. I really do hate it.

### What are you currently reading?

My doc team has a monthly book club, and we're currently reading *Unbroken* by Laura Hillenbrand. My favorite book this year so far is *The People Who Eat Darkness* by Richard Lloyd Parry.

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

Nashville. I want to go back again and again.

### What would be your ideal vacation?

Something that combines adventure and relaxation. I can usually lay on the beach for about a day, and then I'm ready to go see something. Also, somewhere I've never been before. That's key.

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

The west coast, working on something innovative, with my cat. Ω

# Your 2014-2015 Chapter Officers

The newly installed chapter officers for the 2014-2015 program year are as follows:

**President:** Adam Evans

**Vice President:** Betsy Maaks

**Secretary:** Cynthia Laughlin

**Treasurer:** John Hartigan

**Immediate Past President:** Cheri Noble

**Nominating Committee:** Steve Napora (2013-2015), MaryKay Grueneberg (2014-2016), Carla Martinek (2014-2016), Donna Wampach (2014-2016)

Congratulations to all! Ω

---

## President's message

*Continued from page 1*

of our program meetings and come away with "I used to know that, now I remember!"

We had another good year with our competition. Cynthia Laughlin and Adam Evans worked to coordinate all of the activities and volunteers, culminating at our annual competition awards and celebration banquet in March.

Our nominating committee, led by Paula Ludmann, pulled together excellent candidates to run for office for the upcoming year. A special thank you goes to Francis Bao who stepped in at the last minute to complete the final recommendations for us this year. The entire committee pulled together to help, and I appreciate all they did.

In May, our annual Summit was held in Phoenix. Our members that attended were able to go on stage and accept our Community of Distinction award for all of us. I am very happy for our chapter to have worked so hard to obtain the level of excellence.

Did you know that the Chicago chapters of ATD (Association for Talent Development, formerly ASTD) and ISPI (International Society for Performance Improvement) post their events and opportunities on our Events Calendar? If your career is more than technical writing, you might be

interested in an event these chapters host as well. Click the calendar icon on the STC Chicago home page.

Looking ahead to 2015, we are going to celebrate STC Chicago's 60<sup>th</sup> year! Our historian, Bill Leavitt, knows more than anyone how STC Chicago has grown and changed over the last 60 years. Be sure to watch future editions of *Byline*, At-a-Glance, our website, and your email for future activities. He even has a blog on STC.org, so watch for his articles!

We have so many unsung heroes in our chapter. You know what it's like at work when some things are working just fine; those people can go unnoticed. We have three such people in our chapter. Our webmaster/publicity person, Adam Evans, maintained our website, emails, events, and so much more. Linda Kelley actively seeks out writers for *Byline*, publishes it every other month, and offers her guidance and assistance whenever asked. John Hartigan is our treasurer and had jumped in with both feet to learn and maintain our financial records. He is always prepared for our administrative council meetings and keeps excellent record of our expenses. I would like to say a special thank you to them.

I am very proud of our chapter and all we have accomplished in the past year. Did you contribute to our chapter last year? Did you attend a program meeting or volunteer for any activity? If you did, thank you. If you didn't, you're missing out on so many opportunities to get to know more of our members and share your knowledge with us. Our chapter needs you to remain strong!

### Are You Published?

As a writer, sometimes the last thing I want to do during my time off is to write. Any time you would like to share your experience or ideas with other STC members, contact the editor of *Byline*, Linda Kelley. We would like to see more members share their experiences with our members. The articles don't have to be long; just let us know what's on your mind. Maybe it's something that will stimulate conversation or reflect another point of view. Ω

.....  
: Congratulations to Paul Lockwood, winner of  
: the trivia contest in the last issue of *Byline*.  
: Paul received a \$10 Starbucks gift card.  
: .....

## STC Chicago Chapter Leaders | 2014-2015

### President

Adam Evans, [president@stc-chicago.com](mailto:president@stc-chicago.com)

### Immediate Past President

Cheri Noble, [ipp@stc-chicago.com](mailto:ipp@stc-chicago.com)

### Vice President

Betsy Maaks, [vp@stc-chicago.com](mailto:vp@stc-chicago.com)

### Secretary

Cynthia Laughlin, [secretary@stc-chicago.com](mailto:secretary@stc-chicago.com)

### Treasurer

John Hartigan, [treasurer@stc-chicago.com](mailto:treasurer@stc-chicago.com)

### Nominating

Francis Bao, MaryKay Grueneberg, Carla Martinek, Steve Napora, Donna Wampach, [nominating@stc-chicago.com](mailto:nominating@stc-chicago.com)

### Alliance

Beth Najberg

### Bylaws

Dan Dornbrook

### Competition

Cynthia Laughlin, [competition@stc-chicago.com](mailto:competition@stc-chicago.com)

### eLearning & Technology Showcase

Linda Jansak

### Historian

Bill Leavitt

### Internships

Elizabeth Burke

### Membership

Dan Dornbrook, [membership@stc-chicago.com](mailto:membership@stc-chicago.com)

### Newsletter

Linda Kelley, [byline@stc-chicago.com](mailto:byline@stc-chicago.com)

### Programs

Elizabeth Burke, [program@stc-chicago.com](mailto:program@stc-chicago.com)

### Publicity/Marketing

Jessica Daugherty, [pr@stc-chicago.com](mailto:pr@stc-chicago.com)

### Scholarships

Josée Martens, [scholarship@stc-chicago.com](mailto:scholarship@stc-chicago.com)

### Science Fair

Cheri Noble

### Sponsorship

Francis Bao, [sponsorship@stc-chicago.com](mailto:sponsorship@stc-chicago.com)

### Web/Online

Jessica Behles, [web@stc-chicago.com](mailto:web@stc-chicago.com)

## Byline

### Editor

Linda Kelley, [byline@stc-chicago.com](mailto:byline@stc-chicago.com)

### Advertising Manager

Francis Bao, [advertising@stc-chicago.com](mailto:advertising@stc-chicago.com)

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).

**Publication and reprints:** Entire contents Copyright © 2013 STC Chicago. Permission to reproduce any part of this publication is granted if printed credit is given to Byline, the author (if known), and STC Chicago, and if a printed copy is sent to the editor.

**Copyright statement:** Byline invites submissions for consideration for publication. By submitting an article, you implicitly grant a license to Byline to run the article and for other STC publications to reprint it without permission. The writer holds copyright. In your cover letter, please let the editor know if this article has run elsewhere and if it has been submitted for consideration to other publications.

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

For membership information, contact STC at  
Society for Technical Communication  
9401 Lee Highway | Suite 300 | Fairfax, Virginia 22031  
Phone: +1 (703) 522-4114 | Fax: +1 (703) 522-2075  
Email: [stc@stc.com](mailto:stc@stc.com)