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STC Mission Statement

Creating and supporting a forum for communities of practice in the profession of technical communication.

The Society for Technical Communication (STC) is the world's largest professional association for anyone whose job involves communicating technical information. Contact the STC at 901 N. Stuart St., Suite 904, Arlington, VA 22203-1822. Phone: (703) 522-4114; Web site: www.stc.org.

Chapter Meeting Notice

Network and Nibble 2004

Save the Date: Thursday, September 9

Networking isn't scary, nor is it just for job hunters! Meet, greet, and eat with your fellow technical communicators at the September program meeting of the Southern Arizona Chapter (SAZ) of the Society for Technical Communication (STC). This meeting is especially designed to bring together a wide range of people to exchange information and ideas. And, if you are job hunting, technical recruiters and job placement firms will also be present.

Group activities and handouts will help you develop practical networking skills. Learn about negative networking, the elevator speech, and success stories. Trade strategies for coping with challenging work situations. Learn methods for nurturing your network, evaluating new groups, and useful techniques for building relationships...not just swapping business cards.

Share your résumé, discuss the local companies where your peers work, and learn more about STC and how it can help you. Look over publications from STC and similar professional societies. This is one of our most popular meetings, so come early and be ready to mingle. You'll have a chance to practice networking in a fun, friendly environment, and feast on hors d'oeuvres. Meet and converse with new people and old friends. And, you can win a prize for playing Networking Bingo!

Date: Thursday, September 9, 2004

Place: Courtyard by Marriott, 201 S. Williams Blvd, in the Williams Centre near Broadway and Craycroft in Tucson

Time: Registration from 5:30 to 6:00 p.m. Program from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m.

Menu: Assorted beverages (tea, coffee, or soft drinks) and hors d'oeuvres. Bring your business cards and a current copy of your résumé.

Cost: STC members \$15; Nonmembers \$20

(Never attended a Southern Arizona Chapter meeting? Use the \$5 Off Coupon found on page 6.)

RSVP: Send an e-mail message to Pat Markey (pat.markey@comcast.net) by 4:00 p.m. Tuesday, September 7. No-shows will be billed. Walk-ins are always welcome, but we cannot guarantee a meal. 🍴

About the Newsletter

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The Border Line is the official publication of the Southern Arizona Chapter (SAZ) of the Society for Technical Communication (STC). Issues are published monthly from September to May. The design and layout of this newsletter are copyright STC, 2004.

Publication Policies

We welcome contributions, book and product reviews, letters, and articles that are relevant to the field of technical communication. The submission deadline for the next (October) newsletter is **Friday, September 24**. Your text may be edited to conform to style guidelines and space restrictions of the newsletter.

Copyright Statement

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Reprint Policies

Reprints are permitted if you acknowledge the source and author. Send a copy of the publication containing the article you want to reprint to STC-SAZ, P.O. Box 14333, Tucson, AZ 85732.

Distribution

The Border Line is distributed via e-mail. To subscribe, join the ListServ from our Web site at www.stc-saz.org.

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Past Presidents

of the Southern Arizona Chapter

1998-1999—Dirk Arnold

1999-2000—Debra Crawford

2000-2001—Barbara Fraps

2001-2002—Brenda Huettner

2002-2003—Helen Marty

2003-2004—Patricia Markey ■



President's Message

Exploring Change

By Kitty Aughey

Welcome back to a new STC-SAZ year! It is a challenge and exciting privilege to be your president.

Our membership has fallen off slightly. This is true in most all STC chapters. The economic environment and employers no longer paying STC dues have been the primary reasons. We also have a smaller rebate from the Society office. This year we will explore changes in the way we do business in order to make membership more valuable to everyone.

We will begin changes in the following ways:

- **Member Recruitment**
Increase membership by 5%. Make retaining current members a priority.
- **STC Transformation**
Following STC guidelines, we will review our mission and vision statements and assess the value we give to members.
- **Informative and educational meetings**
Develop a variety of programs. Some meetings will be informational while others will be educational (teaching us new communication skills).
- **STC to Business**
Develop a program explaining our chapter and the values of membership. Take this presentation to local businesses. Ask businesses what their communication needs will be in the future and how can we help?
- **Expand on our Public Relations/Publicity Plan**
Increase the awareness of our chapter throughout Southern Arizona.

Please let me know what ideas for change you may have (kaughey@cox.net). Your ideas can help make chapter membership more valuable for everyone.

Cheers,
Kitty ✚



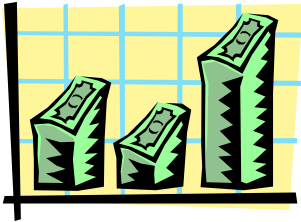
Want to be in the News?

by Helen Marty

As the new editor of *The Border Line*, I'd like to ask your help.

Take a few minutes to let me know what you've been doing. Have you recently received an award, published something, made a presentation to an organization or another STC chapter, been elected to an office of another society or university, or received a college degree?

Also, if you've recently read a good book relating to technical communication and would like to share it with others, write a short book review and send it to me at hmarty@cox.net. ✚



Chapter Financial Summary

By Richard Cook, Treasurer

Readers of this newsletter are familiar with our activities as a chapter of STC. This article provides some information on STC's funding.

Our primary source of income is the Dues Rebate we receive from the Society, which for next year will be \$24 per member. With this rebate we subsidize monthly meetings by paying for speakers and the meeting room (the fee paid by attendees covers their meal). We also contribute to the cost of our incoming vice president attending the STC Annual Conference, which benefits the chapter during the person's upcoming term as president. In addition, this income covers several types of fixed costs we have as a chapter, including Web hosting for www.stc-saz.org, our post office box, and incidental postage and copying expenses.

In recent years, the Dues Rebate income has not been adequate for these expenses. Last year, for example, we did not have enough attendance at the workshop to break even so there was an unbudgeted loss in November. We started last fiscal year (8/1/2003) with a bank balance of \$1657.17 so we don't have a lot of cushion for things like this.

Notably "off-budget" is the Region 5 Competitions event we held last year. Led by Brenda Huettner, a host of people from our chapter, and two other Region 5 people, 129 entries were received, sent out for judging, and evaluated. Of our 19 Distinguished entries, 15 won awards at the international Society level. In the end, we netted over \$4000 from the efforts of these volunteers.

The plan for this windfall is to set it aside, first as a safety net to protect us from unanticipated events in the future, and second to be used for needs that may be identified by future leaders of the chapter. We expect to have the opportunity to host the Competitions like this every third or fourth year, as it rotates among the chapters in the Region.

Getting our chapter budget together for the coming year was a significant challenge. The Dues Rebate is down about a third from last year, so we had to make some cuts. Also, we're raising the meeting cost slightly to \$18 for members, and both member and nonmember will pay \$5 for meeting-only, which will include dessert and beverage. We feel it is fair to reduce the amount that all members subsidize meetings that only some attend. With these changes, we have a balanced budget for the fiscal year.

If anyone wants to be more informed on the chapter financial decisions, attend one of our planning meetings (see the Planning Schedule on page 5). ■

Welcome, Newcomers

New members

Dawn Baron - July

Timothy Hadinger - May

Transfer members

Penny Hankins, senior member, formerly of the Illinois Heartland Chapter

Lauren Swerdlove, member, formerly of the San Diego Chapter ■





Meeting handouts are available at www.stc-saz.org/resources.html.

Clip and Save:

Program Schedule

Southern Arizona Chapter 2004-2005

September 9, 2004: Network and Nibble 2004

October 14, 2004: A Night at the Round Table (*formerly Whine and Cheese*): Career perspectives from new writer to seasoned vet

November 11, 2004: Lin Surasky, FrameMaker Tips and Tricks

December 9, 2004: Holiday Party and Silent Auction

January 13, 2005: Brenda Huettnner , Usability for Technical Writers

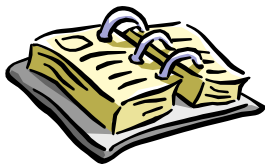
February 10, 2005: Avon Murphy

March 10, 2005: A Night at the Round Table: Graphics for technical writers

April 14, 2005: Content Management

May 19, 2005: Awards and Recognitions

Unless otherwise noted, programs are held on the **second Thursday** of each month at the Courtyard by Marriott, 201 S. Williams Blvd. (in the Williams Centre near Broadway and Craycroft, in Tucson, Arizona). The program schedule is subject to change without notice; for up-to-date meeting information, visit www.stc-saz.org. 🍀



Planning Schedule

Southern Arizona Chapter 2004-2005

All chapter members are invited to join us at the monthly planning meetings. Come participate in the way the chapter is run! You'll meet the executive council, the committee heads, and have an opportunity to express your opinion and learn about the inner workings of our chapter.

September 28, 2004

February 22, 2005

October 26, 2004

March 22, 2005

November 23, 2004

April 26, 2005

December 28, 2004

May 24, 2005

January 25, 2005

June 4, 2005 (for 2005-2006)

Planning meetings are held in the café at Barnes and Noble on Broadway (east of Swan) at 6:00 p.m. on the **fourth Tuesday** of the month. 🍀



Membership News

Awards

At the Chapter Annual Awards Banquet, **Pat Markey** awarded chapter officers and committee managers with certificates for their outstanding contribution to the chapter. **Helen Marty** received the President's award for her continuing contributions to the chapter. **Brenda Huettner** recapped the successful Southwestern Regional Publication, Art, and Online Competition and presented awards to the competition judges. For her outstanding management of the competition, Brenda received a cash award towards the STC's Annual Conference. Her article on the competition's database was printed in the July/August issue of *Tieline*. **Carrie Cooper** presented the chapter's first scholarship to **Kristin Welch**, a graduate student at the University of Arizona.

Jutta Holzhaus received an Excellence award for 2003-2004 newsletter, *The Border Line*, and **Jill Norton** received a Special Publication Merit award from the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Cactus Quill Awards competition.

Elections

Karen Kamp was elected Treasurer and **Helen Marty** was elected to another two-year term as Vice President-Committees of the University of Arizona's Tucson Alumni Club. Karen is also serving as the Immediate Past President.

Pat Toth was elected to the Board of the Tucson chapter of the IABC. She is chairing Awards and Judging.

Publications

Christine Abbott recently published:

Abbott, C. (2004). "Integrating theory and practice through innovative collaborations between academicians and workplace professionals." In T. Bridgeford, K. Kitalong, & D. Selfe, (Eds.) *Innovative approaches to teaching technical communication*. Logan, UT: Utah State Press.

Eubanks, P. & Abbott, C. (2004). Using focus groups to supplement the assessment of technical communication texts, pedagogy, and programs. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 12, 25-46. ■

Don't belong to the STC yet? Want to just check out our chapter? Clip this coupon to save \$5.

STC, Southern Arizona Chapter

Nonmember \$5 Off Coupon

Save \$5 at Your First Meeting

We encourage nonmembers to attend a chapter program to learn about the STC and the Southern Arizona Chapter. Bring this completed coupon to the first chapter program you attend, and you'll save \$5 off the cost of admission.

Name (please print): _____

E-mail address: _____

Date of program: _____





Technical Art, Online Communication, and Publications Competitions

Southwest Regional PAO Competitions

By Tom Barnett, Former PAO Competitions General Manager

In the fall of 2002, the first ever Southwest Regional PAO Competitions were held and included the Phoenix, Southern Arizona, and New Mexico Kachina Chapters. Last year we added the Oklahoma Chapter. Entries also come from other chapters.

We receive over a hundred entries in this multi-chapter competition! A number of award winners from this competition go on to compete in the international STC competitions and win awards there as well.

Following is key information regarding this year's competitions:

- The Southwest Regional PAO Competitions will follow the rules for the STC International Competitions, available at the STC [Competitions](#) page.
- The **deadline** for entries is **September 24, 2004**.
- General competition managers are **Karen Zorn** and **Dana Osborne** of the Phoenix Chapter. You can contact Karen at pao-2004@zorntech.com for more information or if you want to volunteer to help with the competitions.
- Those interested in being a judge for the competition can contact **Sherry Michaels** at sherry.michaels@docntrain.com.

Visit the Phoenix Web site, www.stc-phoenix.com/competitions.html, to download the Call for Entries and the Entry Form in Word or PDF format for the 2004-2005 competition.

New This Year

Adobe Acrobat Portable Document Format (PDF) files will be entered and judged in the Technical Publications Competition, instead of the Online Communication Competition. They should be printed and submitted to the Technical Publications competition in the appropriate category, based on their content.

The Society competitions have raised their fees 33% this year. The Southwest Regional Competitions have passed on only \$5 of that increase. Entry Fees for this year are:

- \$65 STC members
- \$85 Nonmembers
- \$45 STC student members
- \$100 International Competition - Distinguished only
(paid by the SWR PAO Competitions)

Make checks payable to STC Phoenix. Credit cards are accepted through PayPal only. For information about PayPal, see www.paypal.com. ■



Phoenix Chapter Meeting

Performance Technology: What's in It for You?

Tuesday, September 14, 2004

In this interactive presentation, **Jane Smith** will show participants how Performance Technology requires a broader view of requests for training and documentation. Through following a case study, participants will identify the stages of a performance analysis along with all the factors to consider when identifying solutions to performance issues – solutions that may or may not include documentation and training.

For more information, see the Phoenix Web site, www.stc-phoenix.com. 🗝

Region 5 Conference

The Intermountain Chapter will host the Region 5 conference on **October 21-23, 2004** in Salt Lake City, Utah. The conference theme is **Ascending the Summit: A Technical Communication Expedition**.

Each of you will have a chance to test your climbing skills; your teamwork skills; your technical savvy, as you participate in technical sessions, product demos, and sessions that will focus on refining the basics of our technical communication tool kits.

For more information, see the [Region 5 Conference flyer](#). 🗝



Transformation News

by Andrea Ames, STC President



You've said want more value in your STC membership, and we're listening! As you might know, the STC Board of Directors and a team of amazing additional volunteers is leading the Society through a transformation to provide increased and improved value to you. You probably have many questions about this effort and what it means to you, so the Communication Committee is providing several information resources for you to read and hear about the transformation and ask questions and provide feedback.

With this short note, I personally invite and encourage you to take advantage of these resources! Here's a list and brief description of what's available today. I hope you'll opt to receive updates, as we have several other interesting programs rolling out in the fall.

- www.stc.org/transformation/: On the Transformation Web site you'll find articles and presentations
- transform@lists.stc.org: Subscribe to this distribution list to receive Web site update information and other tidbits (go to the Web site and then click the "Transformation Discussion List" link at the top of the left column of the page).
- transform@stc.org: Send a note to the Communication Committee to ask questions or provide transformation feedback and suggestions. 🗝



Networking Information

Professional Publishing Course

Saturdays, September 11, 2004 and October 16, 2004

The Arizona Book Publishing Association (ABPA) sponsors this introduction to the business of publishing, with eight subjects taught by industry experts. Learn not just how to create a book, but how to create a successful book. For more information on professional publishing courses, contact Bill Fessler, 602-234-1574, bill@primerpublishers.com, or see the ABPA Web site, www.azbookpub.com.

Technical Presentation

Tuesday, September 14, 2004

Paperless Corrective/Preventative Actions

American Society for Quality (ASQ), Tucson Old Pueblo Section sponsors this technical presentation. Every company has some type of corrective, nonconformance, or preventative action procedures. Here we get the opportunity to listen to lessons learned, experiences, and benchmarks that can be taken to our own companies.

For more information about this presentation, contact Saile Monreal, Elias.Monreal@chamberlaingroup.com, or see the ASQ Web site, www.asq.org.

LavaCon, the International Conference on Technical Project Management

Sunday to Thursday, September 26-30, 2004

Juggling more deadlines than you have time or resources to meet? Attend LavaCon and learn best practices for estimating projects, meeting multiple deadlines with minimal resources, and more. See www.lavacon.org for details. 🍀



Educational Opportunities

Upcoming STC Seminars

Presenter: Char James-Tanny

Cascading Style Sheets: Learning the Basics (Part I)

Wednesday, September 15, 2004 | 1:00-2:30 p.m. ET (Eastern Time)

Cascading Style Sheets: Creating Layouts without Tables (Part II)

Wednesday, September 29, 2004 | 1:00-2:30 p.m. ET (Eastern Time)

Seminar Type: Web-Telephone

Seminar Costs: \$99 STC Members; \$149 Nonmembers

With all seminars, the cost is per site, not per person. For more information, see the STC's Web site, www.stc.org/seminars.asp. 🍀



Director's Report

Structural Change

by Visiting Author [Jonathan W. Baker](#), *STC Region 1 Director-Sponsor*

One of the things on my mind these days concerns the issue of whether we are seeing structural changes in the technical communication business or whether things really are OK and once the economy improves, we'll all be back at work. One of the reasons why I am inclined to lean toward the structural change point of view is that in the last several weeks, I've heard from different people who are concerned about technical communication jobs migrating to other countries. I have no facts to verify this, but I do have questions and would be interested in hearing from you about what changes you are seeing in the business.

One of the long-term concerns for STC, if structural change is taking place, would be that our U.S. membership might decline, while our international membership would continue to grow. This has a raft of implications for the Society. So again, let me know what you think about this possibility. Does it worry you? Do you want to see STC become a true international organization? Is this a win-win situation for the membership? How do we get there?

Even if things are not changing structurally, we are seeing changes. Should the economy kick into high gear tomorrow, for many of us things are already different. During the recession, many of you have chosen to retire, early or otherwise; changed careers; retooled your career for other aspects of technical communication; or simply held on. However, the long-term issues remain. Technical communicators are a graying group with dwindling numbers. New technical communicators are not pouring into the field. So again, I ask: what are your thoughts about this? Will all technical communicators be in the geriatric ward soon? Does STC need to think differently about what it offers, based upon the notion that we are an aging, diminishing group? Please let me know what is on your mind.

Another interesting aspect to change in our profession is that product documentation represents a tiny fraction of what is wrong or broken with a product. At a recent meeting of the Software Process Improvement Network in the Boston Chapter, **Capers Jones** (an expert in software process improvement) indicated that fewer than 5 percent of problems with software can be identified as belonging to documentation. Pretty astounding. We do our job so well that our clients may be thinking we aren't needed, or at the very least, that documentation is easy to prepare. Not!

Last issue, change. We are in a period of huge change and transition. How are you faring? Do you think you are weathering the storm? Will you have a successful outcome? Have you done the planning that you need to survive and thrive? Let me know how you are doing. This is a time when we should be banding together and helping each other work through these miseries. ♣

Letters to the Editor



It's important to get feedback from chapter members and nonmembers. If you have any suggestions or comments about this newsletter, or if you want to comment on any of our programs, feel free to contact Helen Marty at hmarty@cox.net. ♣