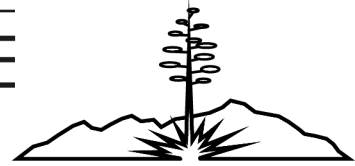




THE BORDER LINE

News from the SOUTHERN ARIZONA CHAPTER

SOCIETY FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION



December 2001, Volume 6, Number 4

Welcome new member

Welcome **Tiffany L. Winman** who recently transferred to the Southern Arizona chapter from the Mohawk chapter (Troy, NY).

Put on your thinking caps

By Helen Marty, chapter vice president

The newly formed Recognition Committee seeks to formally acknowledge members for their contributions to the Southern Arizona chapter.

Because ours is a fairly new chapter, we'd like to track the volunteerism of our members beginning with the inception of the chapter in 1998. This will help us to determine qualified candidates for STC's Associate Fellow or Distinguish Chapter Service Award.

We need your help. If you have worked on a committee, presented at a chapter meeting, participated in a panel or progression, written an article for an STC publication, won an STC award, or participated at the region or society level, contact us with your volunteer information. If you participated in the chapter leadership before 1998, we would like to know that, too.

Following are examples of the categories we are tracking:

Chapter council offices

- President, vice president
- Secretary
- Treasurer

Chapter committees

- Bylaws
- Education
- Employment
- Program planning, facilities, hospitality
- Membership, member database
- Publicity, Web site, newsletter
- Nominations, elections

Other contributions

- Founding member
- Speaker on a panel, presentation, or progression

Coming in December Holiday party featuring publications competition winners

The Southern Arizona chapter of STC invites you to its annual holiday party and a display of award-winning publications from the 2001 STC international publications competition.

The award-winning entries from the following categories will be on display:

- Technical publications
- Art
- Chapter newsletter
- Chapter public relations campaigns

Hors d'oeuvres will be served.

Meeting details

When	Thursday, December 20
Where	Viscount Suite Hotel 4855 East Broadway
Time	5:30 - 8 p.m.
Cost	\$10

To RSVP or to get more information, contact Pat Markey at pat.markey@prodigy.net.

Reserve by 4 p.m. Monday, December 17.

No-shows will be billed, and walk-ins are welcome!

-
- Region, society, or other chapter office
 - Competition judge, SIG volunteer, conference volunteer, special committee volunteer

We'd also like to know of contributions to the society or to a local chapter by members who have transferred to the Southern Arizona chapter.

If you have any suggestions for the Recognition Committee, please contact Pat Markey (pat.markey@prodigy.net) or Helen Marty (helen.marty@sunquest.com).

The mission of the Southern Arizona chapter of the Society for Technical Communication is to elevate the technical communication professions, increase public awareness of these professions, and serve as a resource to members.



About the newsletter

The Border Line is the official publication of the Southern Arizona chapter of the Society for Technical Communication.

Contributions

Contributions are welcome. Send mail to sarahbonati@captaris.com, or phone 320-7029. Include your name and telephone number with your submission.

For the publication of your first article, you'll be attending the Southern Arizona STC program of your choice as a guest of the chapter (workshops excluded).

Your submission should be factual, original, not previously published, and relevant to the field of technical communication; for example, describing tools, techniques, or tips for communicators.

By submitting an article, you implicitly grant a license to this newsletter to run the article and for other STC publications to reprint it without permission. Copyright is held by the writer. With your submission, please notify the editor if the article has run elsewhere and if it has been submitted for consideration to other publications.

The newsletter editor determines the submissions that are appropriate for publication. We reserve the right to edit your text to conform to the style guidelines and space restrictions of the newsletter.

The deadline for time-sensitive submissions is the first day of each month.

Reprints

Reprints of *The Border Line* are not available, but back issues can be viewed at the chapter Web site.



Chapter limits newsletter mailing

The Border Line is mailed to nonmembers as a courtesy of the chapter. To keep mailing and printing costs down, the chapter will mail newsletters to nonmembers for three months only.

If you are not a member and you want to continue receiving news of the Southern Arizona chapter, contact membership manager Judy McCabe at 806-3276 (work) or 546-9004 (home), or mccabe@mmsi.com. Or, join online at the STC Web site: <http://www.stc-va.org>.

Receive *The Border Line* via e-mail

To save paper, printing, and postage costs, *The Border Line* is available via e-mail in PDF format.

To sign up for this service, send a message to Sarah Bonati at sarahbonati@captaris.com.

Chapter contacts

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Administrative and program planning meetings for the chapter occur the first Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. at Barnes & Noble Café at Broadway and Rosemont. Members are welcome to participate.

Society contacts

Society for Technical Communication

Designing the future of technical communication

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Education outreach update

The Education Outreach committee explores outreach opportunities that create connections between the Southern Arizona chapter and the academic and business communities.

The next committee meeting is Tuesday, December 11, at 6:30 p.m., at Barnes & Noble Café at Broadway and Rosemont. Future meetings are tentatively planned for the second Tuesday of each month, 6:30 p.m., at the same location. To participate, attend a meeting of the committee or contact Leslie Dupont (ldupont@dakotacom.net).

Manage outside your project box

"Become a strategist for change" when managing technical communication projects was advice provided to attendees at the November program meeting. Lance Gelein offered this advice about project management for technical communicators.

Even though we have our communication projects to manage, Lance advised that technical communicators offer unique skills for organizing and changing the often chaotic product development life cycle.

Lance is a technical communicator with over 20 years' experience. He traveled to Tucson from Sacramento, where he owns a consulting business.

Some comments gathered after the meeting:

- Excellent subject matter, presentation, and handouts. Exercise was very good.
- Some good high-level info.
- Lance was terrific! Useful info.
- Very helpful!!! Especially liked comment/observation that communicators are natural project managers.
- Lance is great — all his background adds value to his talk. Thanks for bringing him to Tucson from California.
- Can we get him back for a full workshop?
- Very creative.

The meeting drew 18 people.

STC 2001-2002 schedule

Events are in Tucson unless noted

December 10	Phoenix chapter Rev Up Your Attitude! with workplace humorist Steve Saffron
December 20	Holiday party Featuring a display of the international STC publications competition award winners
January 17	Portfolio Tips and Feedback, a panel discussion
January 8	Phoenix chapter Pre-emptive Project Planning with John Hedtke
February 12	How to Deal with Recruiters and Negotiate Compensation with Andrew Davis
February 14	Topic TBD with technical communication recruiter and career consultant Andrew Davis of Synergistec Communications
March 21	Whine and Cheese
April 9	Phoenix chapter Topic TBD with Bonni Graham
April 18	The Changing Role of the Technical Communicator with Andrea Ames, past president of the Silicon Valley chapter <i>rescheduled from January</i>
April 20	Prepare for the Future: Professional Development, Skills, Tools, and Industry Predictions for Technical Communicators, a half-day workshop with Andrea Ames <i>rescheduled from January</i>
May 5-8	STC international conference in Nashville
May 16	Program TBD
June 20	End of year celebration

**For meeting details, go to
<http://www.stc-saz.org>**

**For Phoenix meetings, go to
<http://www.stc-phoenix.com>**





Leaders light the way

By J. Suzanna Laurent, region 5 director-sponsor
suzanna.laurent@mciworld.com

We're all in this together!

Since September 30, I've traveled to STC conferences in regions 1, 4, 5, 6, and 7. I live in Oklahoma, and all of these conferences were located in states on the north, south, east, and west borders of the United States.

One reason I attend so many conferences is to listen to what our members have to say and learn more about the issues facing technical communicators across the country. I learned that the issues are pretty much the same everywhere.

Most chapter leaders today are concerned with meeting the needs of their members better and trying to find ways to help them confront the downsizing and layoffs caused by the downturn in our economy.

This major concern is affecting chapters and their members nationwide. I think a great way to meet this challenge is to face it together, and that's exactly what STC members are doing!

Nationally, many chapter leaders are meeting this challenge by providing new opportunities for their members to network, peer review each other's resumes, and even practice interviewing techniques. Their Web sites are expanding to include better information for members seeking employment.

They know that networking is one of the best ways we can help one another. Some members who seldom get involved in chapter activities are now attending meetings, because they are seeking employment and know that they can learn and network at the same time.

Entrepreneurs attend because they know their next contract might come from an STC member who needs extra help at the office.

I spoke with one member who had been laid off. He told me he didn't think he would renew his STC dues because he wanted to reduce expenses.

I asked him, "At a time like this, why would you want to drop a terrific support group and network of friends who could provide you with the leads to find a new job?"

As I reflect on how I can help members work through these challenges, I realize the best advice I can give you is to continue supporting one another through STC and learn how to show the value you provide as a technical communicator. If you are not sure how to do that, review some of our award-winning STC publications, because they address this topic frequently.

An important article on providing value was published in *Technical Communication*, by Janice "Ginny" Redish, in February 1995. I'm sure you remember Ginny Reddish; she was the keynote speaker at the 2000 region 5 conference in Albuquerque.

Ginny has done some outstanding work on this topic, so go to the society Web site www.stc.org and search Technical Communication Online for articles from Ginny and others about the value you provide, how to measure that value, and how to add even more value. There are many good articles in *Intercom* as well regarding this same subject.

I hope you will use all of the resources I've talked about in this article to help yourself and others. Always remember, when a collection of minds, hearts, and talents work together, great things can happen!



Creating an idea culture

By Jennifer Square

How does your chapter get together to share new ideas? Does your chapter have an online book discussion? Does your chapter meet to discuss new ideas and books? Does your local STC chapter need to create an Idea Culture?

You may need a dose of Idea Watch to help you answer these questions! Idea Watch is a local level special interest group (SIG) currently being piloted in region 4, region 5, and region 7. You can check out the action at www.ideawatch.org, the Web site of the Central Ohio SIG.

Consider what Rosabeth Moss Kanter, author of *Evolve: Succeeding in the Digital Culture of Tomorrow*, says in this book about the value of ideas. "Colorful walls and pets in the office do not by themselves induce people to challenge assumptions or seek new approaches. It's not the office layout that induces changemasters to step forward, it is the mental layout — whether the person's mind is engaged in a constant search for fresh ideas."

The Central Ohio Idea Watch SIG strives to:

- Circulate great ideas, primarily ideas that are applicable to business and/or the field of technical communication.
- Provide a hub for like-minded people to familiarize themselves with ideas so that we can all begin to intelligently discuss ideas inside and outside the field of technical communication. Ideally, this community will grow to thousands of people and, when we see each other face-to-face at conferences and other gatherings, we can draw from our common foundation of great ideas to have more substantive, interesting conversations with one another.

- Stimulate you to provide your users with an astonishingly superior experience.

In the Central Ohio chapter, Idea Watch will achieve those goals by:

- Organizing book discussions one evening per month.
- Posting one idea of the month on the Web site. The idea of the month is either an original idea of one of our members or is an idea from a business guru — or a combination of both. Hopefully, the idea of the month will serve as a mere catalyst for action.
- Providing a "Guru Watch." The guru watch allows you to follow great minds and keep track of the work they are doing in their field.
- Publishing white papers that will serve as food for thought on various topics. The white papers are meant to stimulate your thinking.

Don't be left out of investigating, generating, and sharing your own ideas; these ideas could place you and your company years ahead of the competition.

Robert Reich in his new book, *The Future of Success*, suggests that companies will hire more "creative workers." Because software is taking on the job of applying an idea in production, there will always be a need for a human to have a great idea that the software can implement. The focus of work and the competitive edge will not be on the tool we use to implement, but rather on the human brains and ideas powering it.

For more information, check out the Central Ohio Idea Watch Web site or contact Jennifer Square, co-founder of Idea Watch, at squarej@ohiohills.com.

Jennifer Square is co-founder of the Central Ohio Idea Watch SIG. This article also appears in the December issue of the Rough Draft, the newsletter of the Phoenix chapter.

Need a creative recharge?

If you would like to participate in Idea Watch in the Southern Arizona chapter, contact Sarah Bonati (320-7029 or SarahBonati@captaris.com) to express your interest.



Are you playing too small a game?

by Christopher M. Avery, Ph.D.

People often exclude most of the world from their lives. This becomes evident to me when I see individuals struggle mightily against supposed friends, spouses, managers and co-workers. Such people have defined their life game as winning or losing against this one antagonist.

When I have an opportunity to coach such people, I sometimes ask them, "What's the chance that you've been defining too small of an arena within which to conduct your life? What would it look like for you to define a larger game?"

Having to answer these questions often helps folks see where and how they've been maintaining boundaries that keep their worlds small. Then, it's only a small step from that awareness to seeing how one can play at any level s/he chooses. And that is very freeing.

Here's the secret: The larger the game I define, the more opportunities there are for me, and the more potential teammates show up to help me. And the same goes for you.

Here's an example: When a team lead switches from struggling just for her team's success to playing for the entire company's success, other teams (against whom she's been competing for resources) become potential partners instead of roadblocks. Of course, a leader can always restrict

her "response-ability" just to her team. But, if she chooses to be "response-able" to all company teams, her success can extend over a much wider field.

Are you willing to be completely response-able:

- For yourself?
- For a family?
- For a process, team or department?
- For the entire company?
- For a church or community effort or project?
- For a neighborhood or city?
- For a state?
- For a nation?
- For the world?

Collaborators are inclusive players. They see themselves as responsible to and for themselves and also to the people and places they work with.

To become more inclusive players requires us to expand our circles of reference, our playing fields, or what we might call our life "games."

So, think about it: How large a "game" can you define? Are you ready for a larger life "game"?

How would you need to shift your boundaries to afford yourself and your teams even greater opportunities for success?

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