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STC Mission Statement:
Creating and supporting a forum
for communities of practice in
the profession of technical
communication.

Contact the STC at
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Arlington, VA 22203-1822
Phone: (703) 522-4114
Web site: www.stc.org

**Southern Arizona
Chapter Mission
Statement:**

To increase public awareness
of the technical
communication profession
and to serve as a resource to
STC-SAZ members.

Meeting Notice

Network and Nibble 2005

Networking isn't scary, and it's not just for job hunters! Meet, greet, and eat with your fellow technical communicators at the September program meeting of the Southern Arizona Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication (STC-SAZ).

There will be an "elevator speech" contest with a gift card for the winner. Prepare a brief pitch ranging from 30 seconds to 3 minutes. Bring your best self forward and include concrete examples of your strengths. Present yourself as the interesting and charming person you really are!

Share your résumé with peer reviewers, 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. Technical recruiters and job placement firms have also been invited to help those seeking work.

This is one of our most popular types of meetings, so come early and be ready to mingle. You'll have a chance to practice networking in a fun, friendly environment. Meet and converse with new people and old friends. And you could win a prize for playing Networking Bingo!

**Save the Date: Thursday, Sept. 8
(New Location)**

Place: Smuggler's Inn (**NEW VENUE**) located at 6350 E. Speedway (SE corner of Speedway and Wilmot, in the Buccaneer room).

Time: Registration from 5:30 to 6 p.m. Dinner from 6 to 7 p.m. Program from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Menu: Please choose between the meat or meatless entrée when you make your reservation:

- Pasta Primavera with Chicken Strips - penne pasta with chicken in a marinara sauce with vegetables
- Garden Delight Salad - fresh greens with tomatoes, cucumbers, olives, onions, peppers and mushrooms

Dinners are served with role and butter, chef's choice dessert, iced tea and coffee.

Cost: Dinner and meeting: \$20 STC members; \$25 nonmembers
Meeting only (no dinner): \$5 STC members and students; \$10 nonmembers

RSVP: To reserve your spot, send an e-mail message to Sue Norris (sue.norris@comcast.net) **by noon Friday, Sept. 2.**

No-shows will be billed. Walk-ins are welcome but we cannot guarantee a meal. 🍴

NOTE: You must be a [member of the Southern Arizona Chapter](#) to qualify as a member for the purpose of meeting costs. 🍴



Meet Our President

Kitty Aughey Retires to Run Own Business

Kitty Aughey began her life in Michigan and has lived in several East Coast states. Eventually she moved to Tucson where she began her small consulting group – KBAssociates. In addition to her involvement in IABC, she is beginning her second term as president of the Society for Technical Communication – Southern Arizona Chapter.

This article was reprinted from *Byword*, June/July 2005. *Byword* is the newsletter of the Tucson Chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC).

What is your current profession?

I retired from Eastman Kodak Company in Rochester, NY after 16 years. I was manager of Digital Publication and Printing Services. I moved “home” to Tucson where I started a small consulting group - KBAssociates. We focus on publication process and change management.

Did you always want to do this?

I always wanted to run my own business. Retirement from my primary job allows me the time to enjoy running a business.

How did you get started?

Before I left Rochester people asked how to contact me. When I was settled, I made phone calls to NY corporate friends and gradually the phone began to ring. I utilize my corporate skills for small businesses. The transition was almost seamless.

What is your communication philosophy?

Know your intended audience!

What are your hobbies outside of work?

I have become a “tourist.” I am traveling all over Arizona as if I had never been here before. It is spectacular! I read books of all kinds and I read aloud to a group at an assistant living home. I enjoy gardening (still learning to avoid cactus stickers), home decorating and cooking.

Where have you lived/visited besides Tucson?

I began life in Michigan, moved to Arizona, moved back to University of Michigan, married and lived in New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania and then moved back to New York. I am now “at home” in Arizona.

What talent would you most like to have?

I would love to play an instrument well (piano, violin, or guitar).

What types of other jobs did you have?

I was in banking (from teller to loan officer) for six years. My favorite job was raising four sons. I also worked as a guidance counselor at the junior high level, hospital volunteer and as a professional party planner.

How did you find out about IABC and why did you join?

A fellow STC member, Pat Toth, also belongs to IABC. She invited me to a luncheon with the Independents Group. I was hooked on the great folks and the information about Tucson. The information flow from headquarters and the local chapter is wonderful! I look forward to establishing joint meetings with STC and IABC.

Do you have any secrets you want to share with your fellow IABC members?

I recently shook up my life. I bought a franchise, *The Blitz*, a workout center for men. This is an entirely new challenge and it sure is different from technical communication!



Message to Members

Chapter Financial Summary

By Richard Cook, Treasurer

We have reported our financials for last year ending June 30 to STC. Here is a summary:

Income:	\$4,034
Expenses:	\$5,421
Net:	=(\$1,387)

This includes a one-time \$1,400 expenditure for a digital projector, without which we would have had a break-even year.

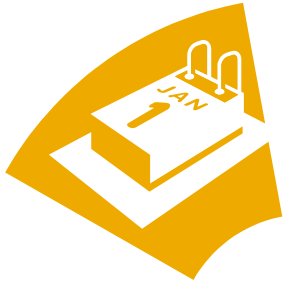
Readers of this newsletter may be aware that our primary source of income as a local community of STC, the Southern Arizona chapter, is the dues rebate we receive from the Society. Historically, this amount has been calculated based on chapter membership. The rate per member has gone down for each of the last several years, resulting in less and less income from this source. Things are changing due to the Society's restructuring, and this year we are assured to receive \$684, half of last year's amount. We may get more later after Society-level financing decisions are made, but it's likely that our income will continue to be proportional to the number of STC members who have chosen to affiliate with our chapter. It is important that you consider this as you make your membership choices each year. For more information about memberships, visit the [STC Web site](#).

As in prior years, the main use of this income is to subsidize monthly meetings, since the fee paid by attendees typically does not cover the meeting room and speaker costs. We also have several other types of fixed costs, such as Web hosting for <http://www.stc-saz.org/>, our PO box, and incidental postage and copying expenses.

To respond to the possibility that our funding from the Society will continue to decline, we're raising the meeting cost slightly to \$20 for members of our chapter. With this change and some cost reductions, we have a balanced budget for the coming fiscal year.

Anyone who wants to be more informed on the chapter financial decisions can attend our planning meetings, at 6 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of each month at Barnes and Noble on East Broadway.





Chapter Activity

SAZ Program Schedule

Programs are held on the **second Thursday** of each month, except May, in Tucson, Ariz.

New meeting location effective September 2005: Smuggler's Inn, 6350 E. Speedway Blvd. (southeast corner of Speedway and Wilmot)

- **September 8, 2005:** Network and Nibble. See meeting announcement on page 1.
- **October 13, 2005:** Bob Lane, "Visual Interactivity" (to be followed later in October by a half-day workshop on the same topic).
- **November 10, 2005:** HTML and Web design.
- **December 8, 2005:** Alaina Levine, Self-promotion, plus annual holiday party and silent auction.
- **January 12, 2006:** Casual networking dinner (no program). Location TBD.
- **February 9, 2006:** TBD (speaker and location).
- **March 9, 2006:** Independent contracting.
- **April 13, 2006:** Brenda Huettner, discusses new book on accessibility
- **May 18, 2005:** Annual Meeting: Awards and Recognitions.

The program schedule is subject to change without notice; for up-to-date meeting information, visit www.stc-saz.org.

SAZ Planning Schedule

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

September 27, 2005	January 24, 2006	May 23, 2006
October 25, 2005	February 28, 2006	
November 22, 2005	March 28, 2006	
December, 2005 (e-mail)	April 25, 2006	

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

Committee Openings

Webmaster

This is a fun, very visible job that is critical for the communication efforts of our chapter. Our webmaster must be familiar with HTML, be able to work with templates, forms, and CSS, and have HTML editing and FTP capability. Currently, the site is maintained in Dreamweaver.

Web committee members

Ideally, we would like to find several people to take on responsibility for the various areas of the site (such as the calendar or job area, or posting supporting material from programs). Each person must be able to update and post information with short turnaround times, but will work with the webmaster for more complicated pages (such as surveys, forms, or other data-gathering efforts we may want to implement). A great opportunity if you want to learn HTML!





Chapter Membership News

Cactus Quill Award Winner

Congratulations to the STC **Southern Arizona Web Team** that won an award of Merit for its STC Southern Arizona Web site in the 2005 competition, announced June 3. Every year the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC), Tucson Chapter, conducts a competition called the Cactus Quill Awards, honoring the best work submitted by communicators from around Arizona.

Senior Member Status

Congratulations to new Senior Member **Rebecca Carr**.

Article Reprinted

Fred Sapio's article in the [May 2005](#) issue of *The Borderline*, has been posted on the Education and Research Special Interest Group site as "[Email lessons: quick, flexible training.](#)" Thanks for sharing your insights, Fred. 🍀



Feature Article

Southwest Regional PAO Competitions Call for Entries

By Brenda Huettner, Fellow

Have you or your company produced technical communication products that you think are worthy of awards? This call for entries is your invitation to participate in the following Society for Technical Communication (STC) competitions:

- Online Communication Competition
- Technical Art Competition
- Technical Publications Competition

Who is eligible?

Anyone is eligible to submit entries, you do not have to be a member of STC. You may enter work as an individual or on behalf of a colleague or subordinate.

What can be entered?

Entries in all categories must contain sufficient technical, scientific, medical, or similar content to qualify as technical communication. Entries must have been produced or substantially revised within 24 months preceding Sept. 1, 2005.

Entries must have been originally prepared for and accepted for publication by a client, employer, or publisher. Entries are subject to all restrictions listed in the official Entry Rules, which will be posted soon!

What awards are given?

The Southwest Regional competitions will award the following levels of recognition:

- Merit
- Excellence
- Distinguished Technical Communication (DTC)
- Best of Show

For Merit, Excellence, and DTC awards, the entries are judged against a standard of excellence, not against each other. Thus, there can be multiple winners of each award within each category. The winners of the DTC are then judged against each other to

determine a single Best of Show award for the regional competition. All DTC award-winning entries, including the Best of Show, are automatically submitted to STC's international competitions.

How are the competitions structured?

STC's competitions recognize and encourage excellence in online communication, technical art, and technical publications. Local and regional competitions are the first level of the competition, held by a single chapter or region. Winners of the DTC award in each category of each local and regional competition are automatically submitted to the appropriate international competition. After you enter the regional competition, no further action is necessary.

Deadlines, fees, and where to submit

All entries for the Southwest Regional competitions must be received by **Sept. 30, 2005**.

Fees for each entry are:

- Students: \$45
- STC members: \$65
- nonmembers: \$80

To submit an entry into more than one competition, you must submit a separate entry fee for each competition.

Entries must include three copies of the submitted material, four copies of the entry form, and the appropriate fee. You can download the entry forms from the official STC competition site or from the Southwest Regional PAO site at <http://www.stc-saz.org/competitions/index.html>.

Entries should be sent to:

Brenda Huettner, Competition Manager
c/o Southern Arizona Chapter STC
8987 E. Tanque Verde #309-155
Tucson, AZ 85749

List of Categories

The following lists include the category number and names. For more detail on what each category covers, see this year's Southwest Regional PAO site at <http://www.stc-saz.org/competitions/index.html>.

Online Communication Competition Categories

1. Help
2. Demonstrations
3. Technical Marketing
4. Tutorials/Training
5. Reference Material
6. User Support Tools

Technical Art Competition Categories

(An entry in any category can be physical media or online.)

1. Mechanical Illustration, Line
2. Mechanical Illustration, Tone
3. Interpretative Illustration, Line
4. Interpretative Illustration, Tone
5. Photograph
6. Manual/Book Design
7. Annual Report Design
8. Catalog Design

9. Magazine Design
10. Cover Design
11. Promotional Poster Design
12. Informational Poster Design
13. Packaging Design
14. Promotional Materials Design
15. Informational Materials Design
16. Quick Reference Design
17. Display

Note for physical media entries: Entries in categories 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 11 and 12 must be mounted.

Notes for all entries: For categories 1, 2, 3, and 4, each copy of the entry must be accompanied by a sample of the illustration's publication or an example of its use. For category 9, submit three consecutive issues.

Technical Art Competition Categories

1. Promotional Materials
2. Informational Materials
3. Quick Reference Guides
4. Software Guides
5. Hardware/Software Combination Guides
6. Computer Hardware Guides
7. Noncomputer Equipment Guides
8. Organizational Manuals
9. Training Materials
10. Annual Reports
11. Magazines
12. Newsletters
13. Technical Reports
14. Trade/News Articles
15. Scholarly/Professional Articles
16. Scholarly/Professional Journals
17. Books
18. Documentation Sets

For categories 11, 12, and 16, submit three consecutive issues. For categories 14 and 15, submit only tear sheets or reprints, not photocopies.



Employment News

Technical Communication Career Center

STC's Technical Communication Career Center (TC3) is the place for technical communicators and their potential employers to find each other. STC members have free access to the job center.

For a limited time, non-STC members may also use the site for free. Joining STC allows you to use the site year-round, as well as providing many other benefits. Get the most for your money by [joining STC today!](#)

Job seekers can post an anonymous résumé, view jobs, receive a personal job alert, and create and access their career account.

Employers or recruiters can view résumés, post jobs, and create and access their employer account. ✚



Region 5 Activity

Call for Judges

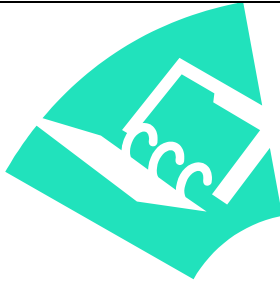
By Brenda Huettner, Fellow

If you're a seasoned technical communications professional, consider helping us out as a judge in the Southwest Regional PAO competitions. The benefits to judging are many: the opportunity to see up close some of the best technical communication products our field can produce, the chance to work closely with other judges and the competition committee (thus showing off your own skills!) and the gratitude and glory that come with being a judge (you get your name on the Web site **and** in our newsletters).

You can participate as a judge even if you're entering the competitions—we'll make sure that you don't judge your own entries and we'll avoid any other conflicts of interest. The more qualified judges we get, the fewer entries each judge must evaluate.

For more information on becoming a judge, contact the PAO competition liaison for your local area. This year, the liaisons are:

Tucson	Brenda Huettner	mailto:bphuettner@aol.com
Phoenix	Tom Barnett	mailto:tpbarnet@srpnet.com
Kachina	Judy Prono	mailto:jprono@lanl.gov
Oklahoma	Barbara Harrison	mailto:bh2228@sbcglobal.net



Editor's Notes

New Season

By Pat Markey, Editor

We are beginning a new season for our Tucson chapter. I must admit that it is nice to have the summer off. However, we did find time to enjoy each other's company at our three casual summer networking dinners.

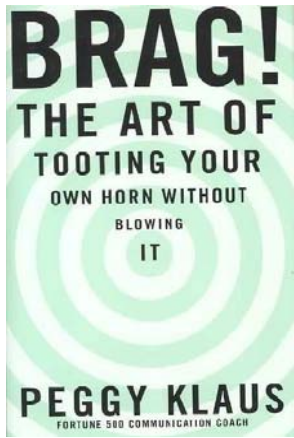
Preparing this issue of *The Borderline*, I realized that a lot had happened since the last issue in May.

The Society is changing. You will notice much more information and features available on the Web site. They are now offering training sessions and have implemented a Web-based career center. The Special Interest Groups are more active.

Our chapter is doing more with less. Even as the Society cuts our rebate, we accomplish a lot. We are hosting the Southwestern Regional Publications, Art and Online Competition, and, based on what you told us in the interest survey we conducted in April, we have a great series of programs this season. Oh, and in our spare time, we are helping Phoenix with its Region 5 Conference scheduled in November.

I am not sure why we are able to do so much, but I think it has to do with group dynamics, organizational skills and momentum. Some of us are exceptionally well-organized. Some of us are dynamos. Working together improves everyone's skills and we have a lot of fun in the process. Come and hear what we have been doing and help us plan our future. Check it out by attending our first program meeting, Network and Nibble 2005.





Book Review

Brag Without Blowing It

By Carrie Cooper, STC-SAZ Vice President

What's so good about you? Communication coach **Peggy Klaus** loves to help people communicate their successes without being opportunistic or egotistical. In her delightful book, *Brag!*, Klaus offers many hints about how to answer this question.

Klaus says the "bragalogue" (a short, enthusiastic, continually updated pitch story showcasing strengths and accomplishments) that you can deliver comfortably and sincerely is key to "planting seeds for the future" or standing out in interviews, performance reviews, or networking situations. That doesn't mean, however, that you brag all the time or that you do it at inappropriate times or places. Timing and delivery are everything in getting your message across. Klaus strongly advises that you brag about the right stuff in the right way to the right audience.

Think of the "bragalogue" as another name for "elevator speech." Another communications coach, Dale Kurow, advises that you recall that old radio station *WII-FM: What's In It For Me?* If you remember that people are always interested in how you can help them, you'll be on the right track when writing your "bragalogue."

On her Web site and in the book, Klaus offers the "BRAG! Take-12 Self-Evaluation Questionnaire" to help you get started writing your own bragalogue. For example, some of the questions are the following:

- What would you and others say are five of your personality pluses?
- What do you like/love about your current job/career?
- What new skills have you learned in the last year?

In this peppy book, Klaus also offered practical tips and real-life stories. For example, Klaus offers an exercise for job hunters: Pretend you were asked, "What would your current boss say about you?" Write the five things about you that make you the perfect candidate for each position you have applied for.

Klaus advises that for the rest of your career, when you are in a meeting, look around the room and, size permitting, "make it a point to personally introduce yourself to every single person in the room. When doing so, imagine you are introducing a very good friend and not yourself. It makes it much easier. Just do it. Say your name, mention what you do with a smile and upbeat energy, and then let the bragging begin."

Now that you've been introduced to the "bragalogue," write one.

At our Sept. 8 meeting, there will be an "elevator speech" contest with a gift card for the winner. Prepare a brief pitch ranging from 30 seconds to 3 minutes. Bring your best self forward and include concrete examples of your strengths. Present yourself as the interesting and charming person you really are! We'll vote on the most memorable "bragalogue" of the evening.

Note: This book is available from the Tucson Pima Public Library.

Additional resources:

<http://www.klausact.com/brag/questionnaire.htm>

<http://www.businessknowhow.com/money/elevator.htm>

<http://www.creativekeys.net/PowerfulPresentations/article1024.html>

<http://www.networkingforprofessionals.com/DK.php> 📌

Klaus, Peggy. *Brag! The art of tooting your own horn without blowing it.* New York: Warner Books, 2003.

"Bring your best self forward. People connect more positively to you when you summon the power of your unique personality. When you genuinely engage your best self, when you combine warmth with strength and marry style with substance, others instantly perceive you from a fresh perspective and actually look forward to hearing what you have to say next."



Networking

STC Phoenix Meeting

Seven Steps to Protect Your Business Against Hackers, Disasters, and Thieves

Join Phoenix chapter members Tuesday, Sept. 13, for their monthly program and networking opportunity.

Every organization large or small falls prey to business interruptions from hackers, disasters, thieves, and virus outbreaks. This program identifies core components required to secure and protect digital resources. Debbie Christofferson, CISSP, CISM, worked 20 years at Intel Corporation holding IT Security Manager roles across U.S., Europe, and Asia. Debbie will discuss what you really need to leverage your dollars and resources most effectively.

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



Educational Opportunities

STC Training

Imagine a two-day course covering the things you need to advance your career in technical communication--an in-depth, focused course taught by some of the most respected names in the field.

Now imagine that you have a choice of five such courses, each covering a different subject within technical communication. That's the STC Training Program--a new learning venue designed for today's professionals and scheduled for Oct. 20--21.

The five two-day courses, described in detail at www.stc.org/training, cover the following subjects:

- "The Architecture of Content." Instructor: Jonathan Price, STC Fellow
- "Creating and Using Personas to Improve Usability." Instructor: Whitney Quesenbery, STC Associate Fellow
- "Focusing on Content: Making Web Sites Work for Users." Instructors: Janice (Ginny) Redish, STC Fellow, and Caroline Jarrett
- "Leadership in Information Management: Developing the Business Framework and Implementation Road Map for Single Sourcing, Content Management, and Knowledge Management." Instructor: Benhong Rosaline (Roz) Tsai, STC Associate Fellow
- "XML: From Hand-Coding to WYSIWYG Authoring." Instructor: Neil Perlin, STC Associate Fellow

The STC Training Program will take place at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City, Crystal City, Va. (near Washington, D.C.). Register by Sept. 21, 2005, and the cost for STC members is \$1,095 (with hotel, \$1,295*) and \$1,255 for nonmembers (with hotel, \$1,455*). After Sept. 21, costs increase \$150.

Don't miss out on this unique opportunity. For information or to register, please visit <http://www.stc.org/training>.

*Hotel accommodations include up to three nights lodging in Crystal City, Va. Registration includes two breakfasts and two lunches. Discounts are available for multiple registrants from the same company.



More Educational Opportunities

STC Remote Seminars

With all seminars, the cost is per site, not per person. There are additional seminars scheduled for the summer. For more information, visit the STC Web site, www.stc.org/seminars.asp.

Developing Visual Fluency

Words are great, but you also need clear, simple, expressive graphics to communicate to today's overloaded, global audiences. Sophisticated graphics programs and vast libraries of reusable artwork mean that any technical communicator can create graphics—provided that he or she is visually fluent. This seminar will boost your visual creativity so you can imagine the right picture to communicate your message. It will also hone your critical skills so you can make your first attempts truly professional. You'll learn answers to the following questions:

- Where do I need graphics?
 - What kinds of graphics do I need for each type of message?
 - How do I avoid the most common graphical blunders?
-
- **Presenter:** William Horton
 - **Date:** Wednesday, Aug. 10 | 10–11:30 a.m. Pacific Daylight Time
 - **Seminar Level:** All

Know Your Audience Like Never Before Through User Profiles and Personas

It's practically the guiding mantra of technical communication: "Know your audience!" Although it's easy to agree with this statement, it can be surprisingly difficult to carry out the directive. Exactly what do we need to know? Where do we get the information? How do we capture and share what we've learned? And most important, what can we do with this knowledge?

For inspiration, this seminar looks to the persona, a type of fictional user profile that has emerged as a best practice in Web and software design. The persona isn't just for interface designers, though: It's an equally powerful tool for technical communicators as you plan, design, write, and deploy documentation and help systems. In this seminar, you'll learn how personas can help technical communicators to "know your audience" like never before. We'll discuss contextual research methods, a framework for analyzing data, tips for writing engaging personas, and ideas for putting them to use in your own projects. Along the way, we'll share examples from Quarry's work with various clients.

- **Presenter:** Robert Barlow-Busch
- **Date:** Wednesday, Aug. 25 | 10–11:30 a.m. Pacific Daylight Time
- **Seminar Type:** Web-Telephone
- **Seminar Level:** All





Sherry Michaels

Director's News

Community Paragraphs

By Sherry Michaels, Director Region 5

Have you seen the 1984 movie *Romancing the Stone*? There's a line in it that I frequently think of these days. Michael Douglas delivers it after he and Kathleen Turner slide down a muddy slope to escape assassination: "Hooo-Ha! What a day!"

STC is in the midst of a time that can only be described as "Hooo-Ha! What a day!"

Since induction at the annual business meeting in Seattle, the newly elected Board of Directors (BoD) has dealt with a number of significant issues, especially the resignations of Executive Director Peter Herbst and First Vice President Mike Bates. We are also continuing the work initiated by previous boards of moving STC into becoming a more responsive and open association for its members. In addition to that work and those events, we continue to develop better ways of communicating STC events and progress and accountability to our members.

Our most important task, that of *visibly* making our actions accountable to the members, and communicating them is taking time to develop. The STC BoD does not act in a vacuum. Every decision must be deployed and enacted using one of three resources:

1. A competent, highly leveraged office staff
2. Committees, made up of members like you together with various BoD members (recruited and elected from members like you)
3. Outside consultants, which we obtain for below market price, to whom we refer for expertise outside that of the BoD

Such deployment demands creativity, reasoned approaches, and the responsible use of our finite resources to meet the member needs. Our priorities are as follows:

First, Suzanna Laurent, our president, developed steps of a process and appointed a committee to begin selection of a new executive director. Suzanna then sent out a message to community leaders (via the president's listserv) that we had change underway in this position, and the steps she took to manage the situation. When the committee finds worthy candidates, they will present the candidates to the board to decide. If we need an interim executive director, the committee has sorted through the resources and has plans in place to manage this potential issue.

Next, Mike Bates had responsibilities as committee member for Governance, Finance and Education Support. These are all vital committees charged with improving STC into the future. Mike's resignation also left a decision vacuum that we had to fill immediately. According to the current bylaws, Suzanna appointed Second Vice President Paula Berger to step into Mike's first vice president position. Then Suzanna filled the second vice president position through appointment of Linda Oestreich (who had been a candidate for second vice president in the last election, and had won the second highest number of votes). Linda has served on the board and has been actively dedicated to STC for more than 20 years. I believe that with so many of us new to STC governance, it's a very good thing to have legacy knowledge that Linda can provide. A balance of progressive, new, reform-oriented board members and learned, knowledgeable board members can only be good for the membership of STC. Linda will serve as second vice president through the May 2006 annual board business meeting.

An essential piece of providing support and mentoring of community leadership is the Leadership Community Resource (LCR). The 2004-2005 board heard you when you said you needed the support of the “sponsor” side of director-sponsors. In response to your voices, the board asked Judy Glick-Smith to put together a resource pool that acts as a “triage” resource to any community that wants it. Judy and her team are developing a database that contains volunteer mentor names that LCR committee members can assign whenever a community wants advice on anything, such as leadership roles, volunteer recruitment, member recruitment, financial management and so forth. In the meantime, while Judy and her committee members are developing the structure and putting it together, directors still will perform the director-sponsor role.

Finally, in September, we will approve our 2005-2006 budget. The approval process generates a great deal of examination, questions and recommendations by the board members. Our newly elected treasurer, W.C. Wiese, asked for and received a number of questions from each of us. The responses to those inquiries and the inspection and discussion of them will lead the board members to an informed and balanced budget approval.

In addition to my role as the director of Region 5, which means I am responsive to members and I vote responsibly for those members, my “other job” is to complete the rechartering process for our communities. In that effort, I report to committee manager Victoria Koster-Lenhardt, director of Region 2. Rechartering is part of the Community Affairs committee, and I serve on that committee with Bob Dianetti, director of Region 4, and Vici. For the sake of managing STC committees well, STC presidents pair each new director with a second-year and third-year director. Bob is in his second year as a director and Vici is in her third. This process protects STC (the members) by assuring the passing on of legacy information. For the sake of managing the STC board well, the STC BoD has a reporting structure. I report to the second vice president, who was Paula Berger, but with the new changes in effect as of August 12, my STC “boss” will be Second Vice President Linda Oestreich.

As for communications, Suzanna appointed STC Fellow Lory Hawkes, as Communications Committee manager. Paula Berger, Cindy Currie (director for Region 1), and I serve on this committee. We are working on several initiatives to get you more information and get it to you faster. We’ve gotten many good ideas from every source, and we will be implementing them as soon as we can. Our objective is to get information out to you, and to funnel information from you quickly, proactively, responsibly and fully.

STC is a mature, big association. It is the biggest association of its kind in the world. It takes the combined skills of volunteers (reform oriented and legacy), a very loyal and hardworking staff, and skillful management to ensure that your trust as a member is well-placed.

STC is in the process of transitioning into a more dynamic, responsive organization that serves members more fully. In accomplishing this, we will no doubt encounter roadblocks and events that at times seem overwhelming and seem to be larger than our combined leadership experience, as diverse as it is. In these times, we ask your indulgence as we work steadily, competently, and as quickly as we can in our volunteer capacities to move STC into a better place.

To sum up activity in STC at the board level over the last three months, I simply have to borrow from the script of *Romancing the Stone*: Hooo-Ha! What a day! What a great new day for STC! 🍀



Mary Ellen Vazzana is a technical writer at AutoDesk, Inc. Mary Oliver Flebotte is the NNE chapter vice president and a software technical writer at BAE SYSTEMS.

STC Competition

Peer Review Process Builds Confidence

By Mary Ellen Vazzana

Associate Editor: Mary Oliver Flebotte

If anyone asked me to state the most confusing and frustrating part of being a technical writer, then I would say that it is the subjective nature of presenting technical information. Structure of material, writing style, even font selection – what is right and what is wrong? If you're like me, you probably find yourself digging through style guides and information that was written in the past and praying that what you've selected makes both your editor and the software development team happy.

I have read several books on technical writing, most of which taught me how to be a more efficient writer. However, because our reading audiences are so diverse, accommodating their needs constantly challenges me to find new and inventive ways to present information. Therein lies the subjectivity. And this is what initially attracted me to the STC Competition.

The judges in the STC Competition are our industry peers, many of whom have numerous years of experience in technical communication. When we enter work in the competition, the judges are actually acting as peer reviewers of our efforts. It's a great way to get positive reinforcement, constructive criticism, and even new ideas.

Material entered in the competition is judged on its own merit, against a set of well-honed evaluation criteria. The STC judges are all trained in advance of the competition to be sure they thoroughly understand the judging process, how to use the criteria and forms, and how to provide comments that are most useful to the entrant. In the publication's competition, the judges first evaluate their sets of entries independently and later meet with fellow judges to come to a consensus on the entries. This process adds the extra benefit of providing entrants with several points of view. Not only do they receive individual comments, but the entrants also receive the collective thoughts of the consensus team.

Whether or not a particular piece officially *wins* an award, every competition entrant still comes out a winner. I found the local and international STC judges' feedback to be extremely valuable. I make it a point to evaluate their feedback closely and share the information with my co-workers. The feedback enables me to improve my work, grow as a technical writer, and best of all, provide better technical documentation to my readers.

In the end, everybody wins.



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1999-2000 – Debra Parker (Crawford)

2000-2001 – Barbara Fraps

2001-2002 – Brenda Huettner

2002-2003 – Helen Marty

2003-2004 – Patricia Markey

2004-2005 – Kitty Aughey