



Inside This Issue:

Thoughts from Eleanor.....2
 January Networking Dinner.....2
 SAZ Program Schedule3
 SAZ Planning Schedule3
 News About Members3
 Acting Your Way to
 Professional Stardom.....4
 IABC Competition.....6
 Region 5 PAO Competition.....6
 STC Phoenix Chapter News....7
 Business Outreach Ideas7
 New STC Forum8
 STC 53rd Annual Conference .8
 Jobs in 2006.....8
 STC Remote Seminars9
 Chapter Contacts10

STC Mission Statement:

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

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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

The Top 10 Mistakes Writers Make When Looking for Work

With Jack Molisani

In this session, professional recruiter Jack Molisani will present the top 10 mistakes writers make when looking for work (contract, permanent, or outsource), with proactive tips on how to avoid pitfalls and increase your chances of landing that next job or contract.

About the Speaker

Jack Molisani has been a project officer in the Space Division of the United States Air Force, the documentation manager in a multimillion-dollar software company, and currently is the founder and president of ProSpring Inc., a technical communication staffing firm: www.prospring.net

Jack is also producing LavaCon: The Fourth Annual Conference on Technical Communication Management to be held Oct. 1-4, 2006, in Hawaii: www.lavacon.org. Jack will be raffling off a free entrance to LavaCon at the meeting, so be sure to bring your business card for the drawing! Jack talks about creating portfolios at the [Phoenix meeting](#) Wednesday, Feb. 15.

Save the Date: Thursday, Feb. 16

Place: Smuggler’s Inn 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: Choice of either Herb Crusted Chicken Breast in Lemon Cream Sauce or Vegetarian Pasta Primavera.

Dinner includes tossed salad, garlic mashed potatoes, green beans amandine, rolls and butter, coffee, iced tea, and dessert.

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

RSVP: To reserve your spot and specify a meal choice, send an e-mail message to Sue Norris (sue.norris@comcast.net) **by Monday, Feb. 13**. If you plan to join us for dinner, specify your meal choice when you RSVP.

Bring: Business cards and a current copy of your résumé.

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





Message from Our President

Thoughts from Eleanor

By Kitty Aughey, Associate Fellow

With the holidays behind us, we suddenly get organization-nuts! I have been filing, refiling, tossing, and every now and again reflecting. I came across some of my all-time favorite quotes from Eleanor Roosevelt. I hope they will brighten your day and your tomorrows.

Quotes from Eleanor Roosevelt

"Many people will walk in and out of your life,
But only true friends will leave footprints in your heart.
To handle yourself, use your head;
To handle others, use your heart."

"Anger is only one letter short of danger.
If someone betrays you once, it is his fault;
If he betrays you twice, it is your fault."

"Great minds discuss ideas;
Average minds discuss events;
Small minds discuss people."

"He who loses money, loses much;
He who loses a friend, loses much more;
He who loses faith, loses all."

"Beautiful young people are accidents of nature,
But beautiful old people are works of art."

"Learn from the mistakes of others.
You can't live long enough to make them all yourself."

"Yesterday is history.
Tomorrow is a mystery.
Today is a gift. (That is why it is called 'the present.')



Program Review

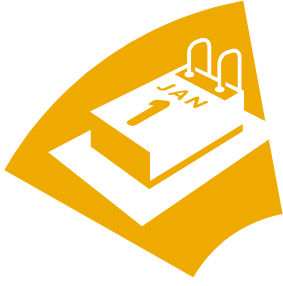
January Networking Dinner

By Brenda Huettner, Fellow

The dinner was great! There were 9 or 10 of us there, including **Gena Cairns**. Gena is the account manager at the Tucson office of the Tek Systems placement firm.

Once again, both **Bill Rost** and **Richard House** attended, which is nice to see! As Richard points out (often!) the sudden layoff from Misys really emphasized the importance of networking all the time — not just when you're looking for work.

Sue Norris came with her husband. **DeAnn Drottz** and **Richard Cook** also attended. Former member **Dirk Arnold** was there, too. He is now focusing exclusively on his "Endangered Architecture" business. Don't worry if you missed this one; there will be more networking dinners during our summer break. 🍷



Chapter Activity

SAZ Program Schedule

Programs are held on the **second Thursday** of each month, except February and 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.
- **October 13, 2005:** Bob Lane, “Visual Interactivity through Relational Presentation.”
- **November 10, 2005:** Iris Yoffa discusses 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), at El Charro (NE corner of Oracle and Orange Grove).
- **February 16, 2006:** Jack Molisani, “The Top 10 Mistakes Writers Make When Looking for Work.”
- **March 9, 2006:** Independent contracting.
- **April 13, 2006:** Brenda Huettner discusses 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 29, 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.



Chapter Membership News

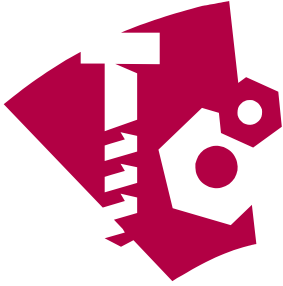
News About Members

By Helen Marty, Membership Committee

Welcome to **Soame Dustin** recently transferred to the Southern Arizona chapter from Washington.

Congratulations to **Sally Adams** and **Lorna Peck** who both have been members of STC for five years and thus have attained the level of senior member.





Feature Article

Acting Your Way to Professional Stardom

By Kathy Graden, Senior Member

To be a star technical communicator, deliver good performance — and be a great performer.

That's not as redundant as it sounds. Outstanding on-the-job performance — delivering results that surpass your manager's or customer's expectations, on time and at or under budget — gains others' respect and appreciation. But it's not just what you do, it's how you do it.

Confidence comes naturally to some people. If you aren't among them, don't worry; you can borrow and practice acting techniques to create a stronger presence for yourself at work.

Audience Expectations

An actor goes on stage knowing what the audience wants and expects. Consider the people you interact with at work as your audience. Your impact on them increases when you do the following:

- Tell or give them something they didn't know or have before.
- Act like yourself. Be genuine, but clean up your language if it tends to be rough in private settings.
- Be truthful and forthright. Lies and "weasel words" will come back to bite you later.
- Use a vocabulary that's suitable to you. If you're well-educated and your normal conversation includes big or difficult words, go ahead and use them. But people will know if you're faking or putting on airs.
- Speak directly and respectfully to others.
- Make people feel comfortable; they'll relax and that will make you more comfortable too.
- Speak clearly and at a pace that helps people absorb your words.
- Remember that others have a right to hear you and you have a right to be heard. It's OK to ask others if they can hear or understand you.
- Inform, entertain, or persuade. Audiences expect any of these, so it's important to deliver.

Becoming the Audience

When you get ready to walk into a meeting, conference, or interview, especially one where you will deliver a presentation or be a key participant, put yourself and any nervousness or anxieties aside. Visualize yourself as part of the audience ready to enjoy your performance. This both calms you and helps you connect better with your audience.

Carrying Yourself with Presence

An actress with good "stage presence" carries herself confidently when performing. Your posture at work can exude confidence if you do the following:

- When standing, distribute your weight evenly on the balls of both feet. Carry your rib cage high and contract your stomach muscles.
- When sitting, keep your rib cage high and lean very slightly forward. If you're at a table or desk, rest your forearms on the table midway between your wrist and elbow with your hands clasped.
- Don't fidget.

Breathing and Speaking with Control

Controlled breathing helps you project your voice (important if you're a quiet type) and increases your stamina. Always breathe from your diaphragm. You want to control the intake and outflow of air; uneven breathing puts you off balance.

Practice breathing in. Put your fist at the top of your rib cage and inhale slowly, picturing yourself breathing "into" your fist. When you've taken in as much air as you think you can, hold for three seconds and exhale.

To practice exhaling, shape your mouth as if you were saying, "Shh." Slowly push the air out through your mouth; the object is to keep the flow of air perfectly even.

If you practice regularly, you'll be able to project your voice easily in a large space, and you'll have command over your voice.

When speaking, speak in as low a tone as feels natural to you. End your sentences on a lower pitch, never with an upward pitch? That makes you sound as if you're not sure of yourself? Know what I mean? When answering the phone, say "Hello?" in a low tone so that the person on the other end will feel as if they're in good hands.

Using Eye Contact

If your eyes aren't up when you speak, you won't command attention.

If you're talking with a single person, look directly at one of the person's eyes, then the other, then back again, and so on. Doing this makes your eyes sparkle, and also touches the listener and makes you appear more sincere.

If you're speaking to a group, it's natural to want to scan the audience. Don't; you'll look shifty-eyed. Instead, lock eyes with different individuals at various points around the room, moving your gaze to a new person as you finish each thought.

Trusting the Worth of Your Words

Trust your knowledge of the topic you're speaking about, and your audience will trust you. Ask yourself what makes you uncomfortable when you watch and listen to other speakers, or what signs lead you to think that a speaker is faking it. If you come across as unsure of yourself, needy, subservient, or too anxious to make a good impression, you'll make others uncomfortable; they may even recoil. Believe that you and what you have to say are worthy.

Showing Enthusiasm

Enter the room radiating purpose and energy. As Nobel Prize-winning writer David Mamet once said, "You should go on stage as if to a hot date, not as if to give blood." Let your voice show enthusiasm, too; this communicates your interest and excitement for your topic and helps get others interested, too.

Managing Mistakes

Fear of "foot in mouth disease" — saying or doing something wrong and looking foolish — is a common reason why people hesitate to speak up in meetings or give presentations. But no one is perfect; even experienced performers slip up now and then. And really great performers turn errors to their advantage.

At a Paul McCartney concert I attended a couple of years ago, the former Beatle inexplicably forgot the words to one of his biggest hits, a song he's been performing for years: "I Saw Her Standing There." But Sir Paul has learned a few things about showmanship over the years; cannily, he began waving his arms in the manner of an orchestra conductor, turning the gaffe into an audience sing-along. At the end of the number, McCartney applauded the audience, complimented us on our singing, then made the self-deprecating joke that "You guys know these songs better than I do." The audience roared. He had effortlessly turned a potentially embarrassing moment into

one of the high points of the show.

If you do make a mistake, accept it, acknowledge it and quietly correct it, then move on. You can use gentle humor, but never call yourself "stupid" or anything that undermines your self-respect.

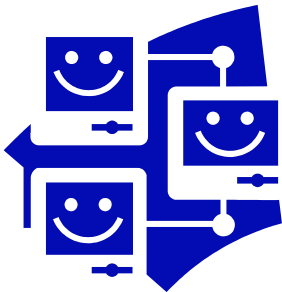
Staying on Your Toes

Some additional tips for conducting yourself with "presence" include:

- If you don't know the answer to a question, don't try to bluff; admit you don't know and offer to find out the answer and follow up.
- If someone challenges your knowledge (as in "You're completely wrong ..."), tell the person you appreciate her or his input and will definitely do more research.
- If the conversation dies, restart it by saying something like "Does anyone else have a comment or question about this idea?"

Exiting Gracefully

Finally, follow the advice of Jerry Seinfeld in one of the Seinfeld show episodes: "Always leave on a high note." If you want to be remembered and brought back for another "curtain call" or "return engagement," always say or do something that leaves 'em wanting more.



Networking

IABC Competition

Here is a chance to shine. The Tucson chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) has announced its 2005 Cactus Quill Call-for-Entries.

The Cactus Quill competition is open to communications professionals working in Arizona and to Arizona students. Entries must be original communication programs and projects that fit one of the categories listed in IABC's Cactus Quill brochure.

Entry Deadline: March 31, 2006

Early Bird: March 24, 2006

Awards Luncheon: June 1, 2006

For entry forms and more information, visit [Cactus Quill 2006 Brochure and Entry](#)



Chapter Events

Region 5 PAO Competition

All certificates are out and all winners of distinction awards have been forwarded to the Society for best-of-show judging. Our chapter has \$360 in judge appreciation funds, plus the profit from the entire competition. This income comes to us only when we host the PAO competitions, about every third year. The funds received make the chapter "go," thanks to **Brenda Huettner** and all those who judged!





Networking

STC Phoenix Chapter News

Join Phoenix chapter members Wednesday, Feb. 15, for their February meeting: "How to Use a Portfolio to Ace a Job Interview" with Jack Molisani. To avoid late fees, register by Feb. 9.

Jack Molisani will lead an entertaining and informative session on how a portfolio is not just a collection of work samples – it is an interviewing tool you can use to achieve the four critical steps needed to receive a job offer.

The presentation will include what to put in a portfolio, how to get things to put in your portfolio, and, most important, how to use your portfolio to ace a job interview.

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



Editor's Notes

Business Outreach Ideas

By Pat Markey, Editor

I just read an interesting synopsis of something the Hoosier chapter does. It gives Insight awards to local companies who employ technical communicators in innovative ways. I think this is also of interest to those of us who are working on the business outreach project. All companies have to produce information about their products or services. Those involved may wear many different hats. As we contact various businesses, we can ask what kind of product information it produces and how it does this. Then we can create both a list of businesses that use the skills of technical communicators and a list of skills that companies need. In the process, we may even find businesses that would be candidates for our own version of the Insight award. The following paragraphs from the STC Web site www.stc.org/insightAward.asp explain the award:

Each year, the Hoosier chapter of STC gives Insight awards to companies that employ technical communicators in extraordinary and effective ways. For the benefit of any STC members who might wish to begin such a program in their chapter, the Hoosier chapter has supplied the STC Web site with information about its program.

The criterion for receiving the Insight award is innovation in the technical communication position, job, or role. That is, the award is designated for an organization that uses a technical communicator (or a group of technical communicators) in a manner that is innovative relative to the usual ways in which the organization, geographical area, and/or industry uses technical writers. The more innovative the position, the greater the organization's "insight" into the broad applicability of technical communicators' skills.

The organization with the most innovative position wins the first-place Insight award. Runner-up awards also go to as many nominated companies as the judges think are deserving.

For more information on the award, contact Amy Perry at amyperryindy@yahoo.com or William D. Leavitt at skibill@aol.com.





Society President's News

New STC Forum

By Suzanna Laurent, STC President

I'm pleased to announce the launch of the STC Forum at forum.stcforum.org! You've been asking for a place where you can discuss issues of STC governance and broader issues of technical communication; you've now got such a place on STC's own Web site. Make your voice heard!

Please note: To avoid a mad rush of people wishing to check out the new forum (and the server gridlock this would cause), we're going to make a staggered announcement to the STC membership. A chunk of the membership will get the first announcement; we'll then let the site traffic die down a bit before sending the announcement to the next chunk (and so on).

I hope you'll take advantage of this new forum by registering, posting comments, and reading those of others. Communication is what makes STC a community, and community is what makes STC valuable.

[**Editor's Note:** As Suzanna said, this is a staged process, so you should wait until you receive your notification before you join the forum to post comments. If you have strong feelings about something, I would recommend that you register anyway and let your voice be heard, whether you have received the official announcement or not. Helpful, urgent comments and great ideas should not have to wait for an invitation.]



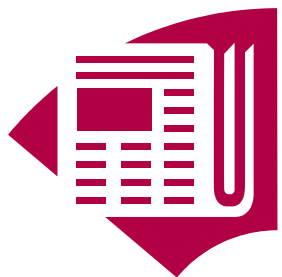
Society News

STC 53rd Annual Conference

The conference will be held at Bally's Las Vegas Hotel and Paris Las Vegas Hotel in Las Vegas, Nev., May 7-10, 2006. For more information, please visit www.stc.org/53rdConf/.

Complimentary Membership for Nonmember Conference Attendees

Nonmembers who register at the full conference rate for STC's 53rd Annual Conference will be invited to join STC — free — for the remainder of 2006. The STC office will include an application for a complimentary membership with the conference registration confirmation receipt letter.



Employment News

Jobs in 2006

By Pat Markey, Senior Member

In a recent article in *ComputerWorld* magazine, Katherine Spencer Lee of Robert Half Technology says that IT jobs will be in demand in 2006. Included in the list of top ten are technical writer and data analyst/report writer. The online article will be available for a limited time at the following address:

www.computerworld.com/careertopics/careers/story/0,10801,108048,00.html.





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.

Documenting APIs: Step Up to the Plate

Software applications are becoming more and more complex, incorporating more functionality in every version. Increasingly, engineering departments faced with a “make or buy” decision are choosing “buy,” and because object-oriented code is modular and portable, there are more and more packaged applications to choose from. The technology market is booming; more companies are packing up their code and sending it on the road. Suddenly, you're faced with providing programmer docs and you don't speak a word of C++, Java, or C#. This session presents an overview of API (Application Program Interface) documentation. It will discuss the target audience; call out and describe each of the possible deliverables; and look at the kind of information you need to provide, where to find the information you need, and how to understand it after you find it. Finally, it discusses the tools that are available for generating reference material automatically and offers a list of both hard-copy and online reference materials.

Susan W. Gallagher began working in the software industry in 1983. She has been leading teams that document object-oriented programming tools since 1992; she has been presenting workshops and conference sessions on object-oriented technology and API writing since 1997. Susan is based in San Diego, Calif., and can be reached at susanwg@cox.net. For more information about Susan, visit her Web site at www.members.cox.net/susanwg.

Please note that registration closes 24 hours before the seminar.

- **Presenter:** Susan W. Gallagher
- **Date:** Wednesday, Feb. 8 | 11 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Mountain Standard Time
- **Seminar Level:** All Levels

Improve Your Technical Communication Skills Through Creative Writing Techniques

Technical communication requires creativity. How often have you tried to pry knowledge gems out of busy subject matter experts? How many times have you faced a blank page with a few notes, no access to the software, and a looming deadline? And if you do have tons of information at your disposal, how do you present it in a way that will not intimidate the users, but will actually make them want to read the manual?

Presenters will use examples from fiction to demonstrate these techniques, and then show you how to adapt the techniques to your technical writing.

Marella, Amy, and Susan co-presented this workshop at STC's 52nd Annual Conference.

Please note that registration closes 24 hours before the seminar.

- **Presenters:** Susan Haire, Amy Himes, Marella Colyvas
- **Date:** Wednesday, Feb. 22 | 11 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Mountain Standard Time
- **Seminar Level:** All Levels



About the Newsletter

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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 issue is the 2nd Tuesday of the month: Feb. 14.** Your text may be edited to conform to style guidelines and space restrictions of the newsletter.

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1998-1999 – Dirk Arnold

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