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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.

Web site: www.stc-saz.org

Meeting Notice

Holiday Party and Silent Auction

Join us for a great party, a presentation on how to relax in the office, and participate in our silent auction (see page 2).

Office Relaxation

With Lex Moeller

It's holiday time, and stress is on the rise. What better place to practice relaxation exercises to combat stress than in your office? After all, many technical writers sit and stare at a computer screen 8 hours a day. You can learn some simple relaxation exercises, stretches, and techniques to fight fatigue, improve your mood, and become more productive on the job. Maybe you'll even get motivated to add office relaxation to your list of New Year's resolutions.

About Our Speaker

Lex Moeller has been a technical writer since 1989 and a member of STC since 1994. She became a certified group fitness instructor in 1995 and taught aerobics, yoga, toning, and Pilates classes for the city of Tucson for 11 years, so she knows a little something about exercise, technical writing, and stress.

Save the Date: Thursday, Dec. 14

Place: El Parador located at 2744 East Broadway (south side, between Country Club and Tucson Blvd). Parking at adjacent businesses is OK after 5:30.

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: Order on site from a select menu. Dinners are served with soft drinks, 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 Pat Markey (pat.markey@comcast.net) by **Monday, Dec. 11**.

Walk-ins are welcome.

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





Think about donating...

Barbecue items (apron, BBQ tongs, etc.)
Candles
Candy dish
Car cleaning set with wax, cloths, etc.
CD-R discs with cases
Chess or checker set
Coffee mug filled with coffee beans and a biscotti
Dishtowel set
Gift certificates from local restaurants
Photo album
Picture frame
Popcorn and movie bowl (snacks and DVD movie in a large popcorn bowl)
Potted plants, roses in a vase, or a hanging basket
Set of soaps, lotion, and washcloth
Stationery set with nice writing pen
Teacup and saucer with specialty tea
Tickets to a minor or major league sports game

Chapter Fund-raiser to Benefit the STC-SAZ Scholarship Fund

Silent Auction Dec. 14

By Carrie Cooper, STC-SAZ President

A special part of our chapter meeting Thursday, Dec. 14, will be a casual silent auction. All proceeds from the auction fund our annual STC-SAZ Scholarship for full-time graduate and undergraduate students. These scholarships encourage studies and promote growth in the technical communication profession.

This is your chance to do a little holiday shopping and support your profession, both at the same time. Our goals are to raise \$200 and to help a worthy student advance in our field. There is no extra charge to attend the auction; it's part of our regular monthly meeting.

Mark your calendar now and plan to attend in December. **Lex Moeller** will lead us in stress-reduction desk exercises. We encourage you to bring a friend or colleague – and your checkbook – to this fun meeting. With a variety of auction items to choose from, you're sure to find something special.

Donating: Bring items that night

We are looking for new or gently used items in good condition to auction at this worthwhile event. You, your employer, or both can donate the item. (Sorry, your item donations are not tax-deductible.) Popular items include gift baskets, wine, holiday décor items, any food items, and books. See the sidebar for more ideas.

To donate an item, simply bring it to the meeting. You set the opening (minimum) bid for each item you are donating. The SAZ admin council reserves the right to change opening bids or refuse inappropriate items.

Bidding: Write your initials on the bid card

No special registration is required. Auction items will be on display in our meeting room. Each item will have a bid card that states the minimum bid price (\$1). Most starting bid prices range from \$5 to \$10.

Bidding begins at the minimum price and may be increased by full dollar amounts only. There is no penny or cent bid-raising. For example, if an item has a \$5 bid, the next bid must be at least \$6. It's easy to bid on items you're interested in—just write your bid price and initials on the bid card.

Winning: Take your treasures home!

When the auction closes, we will pull the bid cards. The last entry and highest bidder of each item will be declared the winner.

Donors must take home any nonbid items that night.

Pay cash or check for any items you win before you leave the party.

Questions on the auction?

E-mail me at carrie.cooper@acs-inc.com for more information.





Can you donate a door prize for our meetings?

Letter from the President

Knock, Knock. You Win!

By Carrie Cooper, STC-SAZ President

The STC-SAZ administrative council strives to keep meeting costs at a minimum. Each month, we offer you value by ensuring the meeting has four elements: a talented speaker with a relevant topic at a central venue with a good meal. That's the "meat" of the monthly program meeting. Each meeting is organized by a different volunteer, who works with the speaker and our facilities chair to set up the meeting.

Generally, our speakers "sing for their supper": We provide dinner in exchange for their talk. Sometimes, if a speaker is from out of town or nationally known, we also buy them a small gift or pay their airfare. We have been fortunate to have a string of great speakers who are willing to share their knowledge without receiving a stipend.

The "gravy" of the monthly program meeting is the door prize for attendees. Anyone attending the meeting, whether dinner or program only, gets a ticket for the door prize drawing. We draw the winner's name after the speaker is finished. It's a small way to show our appreciation to the people who come to the meetings.

The meeting organizer is responsible for collecting donated door prizes. Sometimes this means the organizer donates an item or pays out-of-pocket for the door prize. For example, the door prize at the December meeting will be a poinsettia plant (thank you, **Kitty**). As STC-SAZ vice president for two years, I organized a lot of meetings. Here are some things I've done in the past to provide door prizes:

- Went to Barnes & Noble and bought editing and writing books on the sale table. Used my credit at Bookman's, a used bookstore, to buy books for door prizes. Raided my bookcase for new (never read) books.
- Spent \$10 on a Barnes & Noble gift card. (When the chapter supplied door prizes, this was our default gift.) Regifted a gift card I won at work.
- Bought a bottle of wine on sale at the grocery store.
- For a meeting near the holidays, I donated a batch of spiced pecans for the door prize and a basket of handcrafted soap items for the speaker.
- Bought a business card holder on sale at Office Max to go with a book on networking. Office supply stores sometimes have \$10 flash USB drives.
- Given away STC merchandise from conferences: leather pad holder with pen, tote bags, briefcase, umbrellas, etc.

Here are some additional ideas:

- A Mac User Group suggests giving away an hour of expertise. Winners receive training, support, or troubleshooting from another member.
- Ask businesses you work with or patronize regularly to donate items as door prizes, such as demo CDs, mouse pads, key chains, ball caps, or T-shirts. We would be happy to recognize companies who donate items to our meetings.

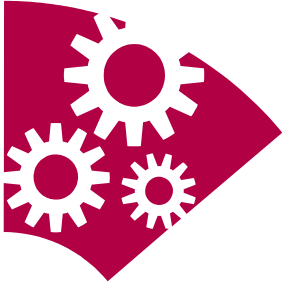
If you have a suitable door prize, please let our VP, **DeAnn Drottz**, know.

Web Site of the Month:

I recommend <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:Randompage>. As you might expect, every time you open the link, a different random page from Wikipedia opens. You could learn something really cool. Here are some recent examples:

- The Japanese word *irezumi* means tattooing.
- The province of Quezon is in the Philippines.
- National Heart Research Fund is a British medical research charity.





This article originally appeared in the STC Northeast Ohio chapter newsletter *Lines and Letters*, Volume 23, Issue 3, November 2006.

Feature Article/Book Review

If Harry Potter Ran General Electric: Leadership Wisdom From the World of the Wizards

by Tom Morris

(Currency/Doubleday, New York 2006, 272pp, ISBN 0385517548. \$24.95 USD)

Reviewed by Kim Lindsey (klindsey@parker.com), STC Northeast Ohio chapter

Wouldn't it be more than a little strange if the best-selling children's books in modern times contained some of the deepest wisdom that contemporary businesspeople need for successful careers, great relationships, and flourishing lives? (xiii)

So begins this worthwhile amalgam of Greek philosophy, leadership principles, and fantasy literature.

Tom Morris, former professor of philosophy at Notre Dame and now corporate philosopher, describes how he spontaneously drew illustrations on wisdom from JK Rowling's novels during a presentation. But the connection is obvious: In its UK printing, the first novel was titled *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, and General Electric runs an R&D facility called the "House of Magic."

While the book could be used to introduce both Greek philosophy and business concepts to a younger audience, it also imbues serious subjects like wisdom and virtue with an aura of fun, making them more approachable and perhaps more memorable for everyone.

Numerous quotes and examples from all six Potter novels help Morris develop a theme that runs through many of his writings: Sustainable excellence, coupled with fulfillment in our work.

The book draws liberally from many sources, from ancient to modern, in business and philosophy, as well as the Potter novels themselves. There are quotes from Jack Welch (former chairman of GE) and Socrates, Mark Twain and Moses. To underline the breadth of Dumbledore's insight that "It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities," the author gives two parallel quotes: one from the stoic Heraclitus, the other from the film *Batman Begins*. True wisdom is timeless and cross-cultural.

He also describes many similarities between Aristotle, his own ideal man, and headmaster Dumbledore, an idealized fictional character. Indeed, Aristotle's prize pupil was another boy wonder: Alexander the Great. The varied sentence structure and expansive vocabulary make this well-edited book a pleasing read. Summaries that appear in every section restate the topic at hand, sometimes with a slight twist. For example, the chapter on Ethics has a section titled, "Ethical and Unethical People." The summary:

It's ironic that the alternative to an ethical life is the unbridled pursuit of power – since the deepest source of genuine power is living the ethical life. (79)

A word of caution: Since it draws on all six Harry Potter volumes, the book contains spoilers galore. If you have not read all six books, or if your only involvement is the films, the book won't mean as much to you. I will conclude with a final quote from Morris, who encourages,

Wisdom about life can be distilled from the process of living by anyone who pays enough attention. (190)





Society News

STC Annual Conference

The 2007 event in Minneapolis May 12-16 will be the largest international gathering of technical communicators and THE primary source of your professional development.

It is a **MUST-ATTEND EVENT!**

Highlights of the Summit:

- **NEW!** Intensive two-day preconference workshops, combined with a selection of conference sessions, earn you a Certificate of Attendance. Workshop registration includes full-conference for a single low price.
- **NEW!** Specialized tracks within the conference, designed by leading authorities that will give you in-depth knowledge on the topics and issues that affect your everyday work.
- 110 technical sessions on six topics:
 - Designing and Assessing User Experiences
 - Developing and Delivering Content
 - Producing and Publishing Information
 - Management
 - Developing Your Skills and Promoting Your Profession
 - Applying Research and Theory to Practice
- Evaluation workshops with experienced professionals to evaluate your manuals, online help, tutorials, and indexes.
- Keynote presentations by high-tech humorist Ze Frank and internationally renowned science communicator – and 2007 STC Honorary Fellow – Simon Singh.
- The profession's largest exposition of technical communication products and services.

Advance rates have just been announced: \$795 for members (full conference advanced rate) and \$1,020 for nonmembers.

Watch for the opening of online registration AND the early-bird special rate of \$645 (sign up by Feb. 28, 2007).

For the latest conference news, visit the STC Web site at www.stc.org/54thConf/index.asp.



Skills Development

Writer's UA Survey 2006

The Skills and Technologies Survey was published in September/October 2006 for a five-week period. Close to 500 people responded to our call for participation. The analysis appears in four different sections: Skills, Technologies, Platforms, and Tools. To review the results of the survey, visit www.writersua.com/surveys/skillstech06/.





Chapter Activity

SAZ Program Schedule

Programs are held on the **second Thursday** of each month, except January, in Tucson and February in Chandler.

New meeting location effective September 2006: El Parador, 2744 East Broadway (south side between Country Club and Tucson Blvd.), www.elparadortucson.com

- **September 14, 2006:** Network and Nibble.
- **October 12, 2006:** Avon Murphy
- **November 9, 2006:** DITA with Tom Escobedo, IBM..
- **December 14, 2006:** Holiday party See meeting announcement, Page 1
- **January 11, 2007:** Casual networking dinner (no program). Location TBD.
- **February 15, 2007:** Susan Burton, STC's Executive Director (U. of Phoenix, Chandler, AZ)
- **March 8, 2007:** Knowledge Management at Intuit and chocolate raffle fundraiser for scholarship
- **April 12, 2007:** Brad Keller will be present to discuss past, present, and future of Help authoring and news about Robohelp, Doc-To-Help, and Microsoft.
- **May 10, 2007:** 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.

August 22, 2006	December 2006 (e-mail)	April 24, 2007
September 26, 2006	January 23, 2007	
October 24, 2006	February 27, 2007	
November 28, (e-mail)	March 27, 2007	

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

Publicity and Public Relations

This is a fun, very visible job that is critical for the communication efforts of our chapter. Two to four people would make an ideal team. For more information, contact Brenda Huettner at bphuettner@aol.com.

Education Outreach

This group would be our liaison with the Tucson academic communities, both for higher education and secondary schools.

Scholarship Committee

This person solicits and processes applications for our annual scholarship award from the college communities in Tucson.





Networking

STC Phoenix Meeting

Using Your Technical Communication Skills for Other Areas (Culinary Writing)

With Jim Morgan

Jim Morgan is past president of the STC Phoenix chapter, having first joined in 1973. Morgan calls himself a Renaissance soul because of the wide array of interests he has pursued: technical writing, photography, videography, ultralight flying, sailing, and scuba diving.

Recently, Morgan pursued his culinary interests and graduated with honors and a degree in Le Cordon Bleu Culinary Arts from Scottsdale Culinary Institute. Since graduating, he has authored the textbook *Culinary Creation* and has appeared on the reality TV series "Masterchef USA," "Bobby Flay's FoodNation," and Cajun Chef John Folse's PBS series "Taste of Louisiana."

Morgan has addressed STC audiences on several occasions. This time, he will speak about the relationship of culinary books to technical writing and discuss how his tech writing experience allowed him to slip easily into the task of authoring a cooking-related text.

Please remember to bring your résumé, and be certain to introduce yourself if you are looking for a job.

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



Educational Opportunities

DITA: Getting Started Workshop

Led by Jen Linton

DITA (Darwin Information Typing Architecture) provides you with an open-source OASIS standard to support topic-based authoring of well-structured content. Out of the box, DITA encompasses three primary information types (concept, task, and reference) that provide a structure amenable to most technical information, as well as a mechanism for extending the structure to specialize your industry's needs.

Who Should Attend?

This workshop is designed as an introduction to DITA. It is meant for those who need to implement structured documentation, including writers, editors, information architects, and their managers.

What You'll Learn to Do

- Build a business case for moving to the Darwin Information Typing Architecture
- Apply DITA concepts and methodology
- Design and create information using a topic/task-based structured writing approach
- Use XML markup with DITA elements and understand the importance of the DITA elements to information development

- Understand the purpose of DITA maps and how to create them
- Create relationship tables
- Recognize the need for specialization in DITA
- Evaluate XML editing tools and use the DITA Open Toolkit

Details

When: January 10–11, 2007, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Where: Phoenix, Ariz.

Host: Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona

Fee: \$925.00

Fee Discount: “2 for 1” discount for CIDM members! For details, visit

<http://www.comtech-serv.com/workshops/register.shtml>.

Instructor: Jen Linton (see her bio at

<http://www.comtech-serv.com/workshops/instructors.shtml#jen>)

Book: This workshop now includes a complimentary copy of Jen Linton and Kyrene Bruski's new book *Introduction to DITA: A Basic User Guide to the Darwin Information Typing Architecture*.

Register: Online at <http://www.comtech-serv.com/workshops/register.shtml>

or by phone at 303-232-7586.

Refunds/Cancellations: See our policy at

<http://www.comtech-serv.com/workshops/register.shtml#policy>.

There are only 25 seats available to ensure you receive individual attention. For more information, visit <http://www.comtech-serv.com/workshops/dita.shtml>.



Editor's Notes

Looking Ahead

By Pat Markey, Editor

Perhaps you heard that STC has added a new position to the Board of Directors, Director of Education. STC Executive Director Susan Burton says, “This role will help position STC as a leader in providing the most advanced, dynamic, and future-oriented training and education in the field of technical communication.”

The restructuring in STC is providing tangible benefits. When you renew your membership, don't forget to choose to be a member of the Southern Arizona Chapter. If you are not a member, please become one.



Members on the Move

On the Move

Brenda Huettner, SAZ Chapter member, will replace Sherry Michaels as Region 5 director until May 2007. Sherry recently resigned the position. STC President Paula Berger says, “Brenda Huettner has been unanimously approved by the Board of Directors to fill Sherry's seat as STC Director, and she will be taking over the sponsorship duties for Region 5. Brenda is a longtime STC member and an STC Fellow. She is a past president of Region 5's Southern Arizona chapter and also a longtime leader in the Management SIG. You can reach Brenda at dir5@stc.org.”



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, 2006.

Publication Policies

We welcome contributions, book and product reviews, letters, and articles that are relevant to the field of technical communication. **Content is due the fourth Tuesday of every month.** Your text may be edited to conform to style guidelines and space restrictions of the newsletter.

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Past Presidents of the Southern Arizona Chapter

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

2004-2006 – Kitty Aughey