

THE BORDER LINE



News from the Society for Technical Communication, Southern Arizona Chapter
August 2000, Volume 5, Number 1

New mailing list supports XML pubs

Michael Smith, list moderator

XML-DOC is a new online mailing list for documentation professionals and anyone else interested in discussing the application of XML tools and techniques to the creation of documentation.

Topics that are highly encouraged on the list:

- XML-based content/document management systems
- Single-sourcing with XML
- DocBook, the SGML/XML DTD for documentation
- Transitioning to XML authoring from a FrameMaker environment
- Converting legacy documents to XML
- Publishing (transforming and delivering XML content)
- XML training and certification
- Document analysis and data modeling
- Profiling and customizing for multiple audiences and delivery formats.

To subscribe to the list, send a blank e-mail message to: xml-doc-subscribe@egroups.com. Or subscribe at the XML-DOC Web site: <http://www.egroups.com/subscribe/xml-doc/>.

My hope for XML-DOC is that it will help to raise the level of awareness about XML in the documentation community and give us a clear point of contact with the XML developers and product vendors who are creating and refining the authoring tools, content management software, and publishing solutions that many of us will eventually use.

STC president kicks off first year of term

Mark Hanigan, STC president

Hello, and happy STC new year! We are just coming off of another very successful annual conference, this 47th edition having taken place in Orlando! If you were there, you would have to agree that it was the best yet in terms of the number and variety of sessions. Also, from my vantage, it appeared that everyone enjoyed all the conference activities—from the opening keynote Thomas Koulopoulos through our side-splitting closing speaker Bill Herz!

If you were not at this year's 47th annual conference, it is not too soon to start planning to attend next year's edition, which will be in Chicago on May 13-16, 2001. Like nothing else, the STC annual conference provides us with the setting to celebrate our profession, renew and make new professional acquaintances, and expand our technical and professional knowledge.

For me, STC's 47th annual conference was most special in that I begin my one-year term at the "STC helm," a privilege for which I am most appreciative. And now that the conference is over, I look forward to getting to work on this year's agenda.

All of us on the STC board of directors are going to be very busy over the summer, helping to advance this year's objectives, and, of course, preparing for the fall 2000 meeting of the STC board. This year, the fall board meeting is to be held September 14-17 in Winnipeg, MB, hosted by the Manitoba chapter. With the exception of an executive session, all STC board of director meetings are open to all members. So, if you are in the area, please stop by. (Location details will be forthcoming.)

The theme of the 2000-2001 STC year is "Providing Value." Needless to say, all of the efforts to make our organization successful takes the efforts of literally hundreds of individuals—individuals just like you! If there is an area of STC at the Society level that is of interest to you, let me or another member of the board know. Or, if you just want to drop me a line, my e-mail address is onwritetrk@aol.com.

My personal philosophy is to "take what you do seriously, but don't take yourself too seriously." Couple this with my belief about STC: Collectively we have all of the knowledge, but individually, none of us do. This means you are the keeper of a piece of this collective knowledge. Let's share the wealth!

Yours in friendship and service,

Mark Hanigan

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.

Members achieve senior status

Congratulations to **Richard House, Cheryl Kidder, and Pat Madea** on achieving senior member status in STC.

The grade of senior member is conferred on those who have been members for five years.



About the newsletter

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

Contributions are welcome. Send mail to stb@rightfax.com, or phone 320-7029. Include your name and telephone number. The deadline for time-sensitive submissions is the first Friday of each month.

We reserve the right to edit your text to conform to the style guidelines and space restrictions of the newsletter.

Electronic version via email

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 stb@rightfax.com.

Chapter Administrative Council

President	Barbara Fraps
Vice President	Brenda Huettner
Secretary	Beth Kane
Treasurer	Helen Marty
Database	Larry Hammer
Facilities	Helen Marty
Hospitality	Lucy Vitale
Job Bank	Bill Rost
Membership	Judy McCabe
Newsletter	Sarah Bonati
Copyeditor	Helen Marty
Publicity	Brenda Huettner
Web Site	Dirk J. Arnold

Express yourself! Dinner's on us

Visualize your name here

Is the success story of your STC award of merit still awaiting publication?

Are you anxious to tell the tale of your telecommuting experience?

Have you been inspired at a "whine and cheese" meeting to write an essay on your tech writing grievance?

To encourage you to put pen to paper, the chapter administrative council is offering an incentive.

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

Your submission should be:

- Factual.
- Original, and not previously published.
- Relevant to the field of technical communication, for example describing tools, techniques, or tips for communicators.

The newsletter editor determines the submissions that are appropriate for publication. The deadline for time-sensitive submissions is the first Friday of each month.

Clip 'N Save

Southern Arizona STC Tentative 2000-2001 Events

September 26	Whine and Cheese IV, Part I
October 26	Improving Your Web Site with Free Resources
November	Developing Training Materials
December 19	Holiday Party and Pubs Competition Winners
January 25	Whine and Cheese IV, Part II
February 17	Workshop: Getting the Most from Adobe Acrobat Files
February 27	Organizing and Managing a Writing Project
March	Effective Visual Communication
April	Using an Intranet Site to Manage a Development Project
May	What Employers Look For, and How to Present Your Skills and Experience

For up-to-date meeting info, go to
<http://www.stc.org/region5/saz/default.htm>

President's corner

Barbara Fraps, chapter president

We're beginning a new year of chapter meetings and support for the technical communicators of southern Arizona.

Before looking at where we're going, let's see where we've been. Last year the chapter membership grew by over 10 percent (the goal of last year's council!); we adopted our own chapter bylaws; we held a salary survey of the membership; we presented two workshops, a display of the technical publications competition winners, and five evening programs; and we hosted two social events.

The thanks for all that go to the members of last year's administrative council: **Debbie Crawford, Helen Marty, Beth Kane, and Dirk Arnold**, and the many people who attended planning meetings and volunteered to manage a committee or program.

This year's administrative council and planning team have big shoes to fill. Besides myself as your new president, the council consists of:

- **Brenda Huettner**, vice president
- **Helen Marty**, treasurer
- **Ed Hoornaert**, secretary
- **Debbie Crawford**, immediate past president

The program planning team is the administrative council as well as **Leslie Dupont, Chet Hedden, Pat Markey, Bryan Croddy, Beth Kane, Lucy Vitale, Anna Mary Mackey, Sarah Bonati, Dirk Arnold, Judy McCabe**, and anyone else interested in attending. The team met in June and selected topics for eight presentations, one workshop, and one social event for the coming year.

The council's goal for this year is to improve the profitability of the program meetings in order to keep the chapter fiscally secure. To accomplish the goal without increasing costs, we want to involve more members in chapter activities and enlist members as presenters when possible. Our membership has a wide range of skills and areas of expertise that we want to tap for the improvement and benefit of all.

Do you have a special skill? Please start thinking about getting involved in your chapter, no matter how much or how little time you can spare.

Join us in September for *Whine and Cheese IV, Part 1**

The annual Whine and Cheese meeting offers you the opportunity to listen to and share your technical communication successes and frustrations. This year the chapter is hosting not one but *two* of these popular meetings.

The evening is carved into two 30-minute sessions that are guided by facilitators at four tables. Sit in on two sessions, spend the entire evening at one session, or table-hop to join all four discussions—the decision is yours. Topics and facilitators for the meeting are:

- Writing for Translation, with translator **Friederike Almstedt**
- Working with Translation Vendors, facilitator to be announced
- What Makes a Winning Publication, with tech pubs manager and editor **Karen Thure**
- Avoiding Legal Issues in Documentation, facilitator to be announced

In the Whine and Cheese tradition, door prizes will be given away. The evening includes light refreshments, and no advance reservations are necessary.

Enjoy this chance to whine and celebrate with the rest of us!

When

Tuesday	September 26
5:30 p.m.	Registration, networking, and refreshments
6:30 p.m.	Program

Fee

\$7 for members and nonmembers.
No pre-registration necessary.

Location

Sunquest Information Systems
4801 E. Broadway Boulevard

For more information, e-mail Leslie Dupont at Ldupont@dakotacom.net or check <http://www.stc.org/region5/saz/default.htm>.

****Don't miss Part 2, coming in January!!***

Phoenix chapter seeks entrants, volunteers for Publications, Art, and Online Competitions

By Aiessa Moyna, Phoenix chapter
Competition publicity co-manager

The traditional summer break is winding down, and Arizona's STC program year is about to start. What better way to kick it off than by getting involved in one of the biggest events in the state?

The event is the Publications, Art, and Online Competitions sponsored by the Phoenix chapter, and you can get involved in a number of ways.

Enter your best work in one or more of the competitions

By now, you may have received the call for competition entries, and you should be thinking about which projects you'll submit for judging.

Not only will you have a chance to show your colleagues what you can do, you'll also have a chance to receive valuable professional feedback that you can apply to make future projects even better.

For just \$45 per entry, you'll receive an objective assessment of your work from some of the most seasoned and knowledgeable professionals in our field. (What would you pay for a consultant to do the same thing—thousands of dollars, right?)

Plus, any work recognized with a distinguished technical communication award in our local competitions automatically will be entered in the STC international competitions early in 2001.

Serve on the competition planning committee

A handful of volunteers began planning the competitions two months ago, but many more will be needed between now and the competition awards banquet in February.

Volunteering is a great way to exercise your professional skills in new ways or enhance your

résumé with experience that you won't get on a typical project at work.

Volunteer positions range from manager of one of the individual competitions to envelope-stuffer to catering director.

Serve as a competition judge

One of the most critical volunteer roles in this year's competition is judge. If you have experience evaluating printed publications, technical art and illustrations, or online documentation, then this is the job for you!

Judges of past competitions have enjoyed the opportunity to work with a number of experts who possess a range of skills and backgrounds, and they have reported feeling personally and professionally re-energized by the experience.

Judges will spend a few hours reviewing competition entries in private, then spend most of a Saturday meeting with the other judges in their area of expertise.

Applications for judges are available now. To get your application or to find out more, contact manager of judging Bobbie McDermott (mcdermob@agcs.com or 623-581-4745).

Want to know more about this year's competitions and how you can get involved?

Contact either of the competition co-managers, Maura Betler (Maura_Betler@g1.com or 480-948-3544) or Carl Gotlieb (gotliebc@agcs.com or 602-789-9248).

Or check the STC Phoenix Web site at www.stc-phoenix.com.

See related story on page 7.



Membership news

Welcome! The Southern Arizona chapter welcomes the following new members:

- **Julie Badger**
- **Carrie Cooper**
- **Annette Dreher**
- **June Scroggin**
- **Bob Epstein**
- **Lisa Hacker**
- **Marilyn Pincus**

And transferees:

- **Paul Bundy** (Des Moines)
- **Larry Jorgensen** (Puget Sound)
- **Hugh McLean** (Singapore)

These members have joined since March. The chapter currently has 63 members.

Interested in joining the Southern Arizona chapter? Contact Judy McCabe at 806-3276 (days), 546-9004 (evenings), or mccabe@mmsi.com.

Chapter officers take their places

The Southern Arizona chapter held elections for chapter officers in the spring. The election included a vote to adopt a set of bylaws for the chapter. (Since the chapter was founded two years ago, this was the first opportunity to establish bylaws.)

Of 64 members, 15 ballots were returned (a 23 percent return rate). The response was 15 yes votes for each officer, 14 yes votes for the bylaws, and 1 abstention for the bylaws.

Congratulations to these new officers

President **Barbara Fraps** has been a member of STC for four years. Last year she served as vice president of the chapter and was an active member of the program planning committee for several years. Barbara has eleven years' experience editing and formatting user manuals written by engineers and technical writers and four years' experience in her current position as documentation manager for Global Atmospherics, Inc. As president, Barbara's goals are to continue chapter growth and to promote the full employment and education of its members.

Vice President **Brenda Huettner** has been a technical writer and a member of STC for sixteen years. Last year, she served on the chapter's

Indexers plan to meet in Tucson

The American Society of Indexers Arizona chapter plans to meet in Tucson in September.

Two speakers are tentatively scheduled.

When	Saturday, September 23 1 - 3 p.m.
Fee	Free! No pre-registration necessary.
Location	Nanini Library 7300 N. Shannon Road

For up-to-date information on the meeting topic and speakers, go to <http://aztec.asu.edu/azasi/> or call Nan Badgett, 825-2892.

publicity, survey, and planning committees. Since its inception, Brenda has been active in the STC management special interest group and is currently its newsletter editor. Brenda has been a speaker at many regional conferences and has given presentations at the STC annual conference since 1995. Currently, she is a contract employee.

Treasurer **Helen Marty** is a technical writer at Sunquest Information Systems, Inc. Helen has been a member of STC since 1992 and an active volunteer in the Southern Arizona chapter since 1997. She has served as treasurer, facilities coordinator, and newsletter copyeditor, and she helped to plan programs. She is responsible for producing both printed and online documentation for software applications at Sunquest.

Secretary **Edward Hoornaert** is a technical writer at Sunquest. Before the chapter was established, Ed served as the first Tucson liaison to the Phoenix chapter and as such worked with a committee to organize programs to serve southern Arizona. The first few meetings drew fewer than ten participants but steadily expanded to form the kernel of the present Southern Arizona chapter.

To view the bylaws, go to <http://www.stc.org/region5/saz/default.htm>.



Annual conference rewards attendees, chapters

J. Suzanna Laurent, region 5 director-sponsor
slaurent@dcaweb.net

The 2,400 members who attended the STC annual conference in May in Orlando discovered that there is more than one "magic kingdom." Of course the best known is Walt Disney's, but the Florida chapter members who hosted the conference created a second magic kingdom called "Renaissance Communicators: A Vision of Our Future."

STC's is the largest conference in the world that focuses on the arts and sciences of technical communication. The conference included over 250 educational presentations in the areas of education and training, information design, management and professional development, theory and research, tools and technology, and writing and editing. Without a doubt, it had something for each and every one of our diverse members who wanted to learn more about technical communication.

The honors banquet was a time of "magic" for two Region 5 chapters who received the Chapter Achievement Awards in their size categories. Congratulations to both the Phoenix chapter and Oklahoma chapter who won this prestigious award. Congratulations also to Houston chapter members who received a Pacesetter award for their outstanding efforts in furthering the technical communication profession in Texas and Louisiana. In addition, Region 5 had two students from the Texas Tech University at Lubbock each awarded a \$2,500 STC scholarship.

A conference involves so much more than just learning new and interesting things, it's making friends and having fun as well! When the conference closed and members started travelling home to places around the world, I thought of all the new friends and acquaintances I gained through this "magical" experience. I hope you had a safe trip home and that you can share your experiences with those who were unable to take advantage of our annual conference which is one of STC's most beneficial opportunities.

Society news

Serving on the STC international board of directors has been a rewarding experience for me this past year, and I am looking forward to the next

two years as well. At the spring board meeting held just before the conference, the board approved the following items of business (all amounts stated are in U. S. dollars).

Merit grants

- Michigan Tech University student chapter for \$3,000 scholarship fund for seed money to cover expenses for selected students to attend STC annual and regional conferences.
- Northeast Ohio chapter for \$500 to support and expand its mentoring program.
- Northeast Ohio chapter for \$1,000 to enhance its publicity program.
- Central Ohio chapter for \$1,500 to offer a Region 4 leadership training workshop and conference for leaders of both student and professional chapters.
- Shipping expenses not to exceed \$1,000 to send the ITPC winning entries to the Singapore chapter.

Loans

- Multi-chapter loan of \$2,500 for the Region 6 conference.

Research grants

- Saul Carliner for \$9,960 on "What Do We Manage? A Survey of the Management Portfolios of Large Technical Communications Departments."
- Michael Albers and Loel Kim for \$10,000 on "User Web Browsing Characteristics using Palm Handheld for Information Retrieval."

Brand tools

- Brand tools created by STC brand development team.

Chapter formation

- Dissolution of the Illinois State University student chapter.
- Formation of the Montana chapter with a \$200 start-up grant and the dissolution of the Montana student chapter.
- Formation of the Long Island chapter with a \$350 start-up grant.

Industry fellowship for faculty

- An Industry Fellowship for Faculty of \$2,000 to Dwedor Morais Ford contingent on her obtaining an industry internship position.



Can you make the cut?

Aiessa Moyna, Phoenix chapter
Competition publicity co-manager

This month, STC Phoenix issues the call for entries for the 2000 Technical Publications, Art, and Online Competitions. This means that it's time to look over the work you produced within the last year or so and start separating the "prime" and "choice" examples from those that are merely "standard." And you'll want to hurry—entries in the competitions must be postmarked by September 23!

Why should you enter your work in one or more of the competitions this year? Perhaps the best reason is that you'll receive valuable professional feedback from experts in the field of technical communication at a bargain price of just \$45 per entry.

You'll also have a chance to show off your finest work to colleagues who'll appreciate your creativity, talent, and expertise in a way that many of your co-workers or clients simply cannot.

Finally, you'll be eligible to enter your work in STC's international competitions early in 2001, provided that your entry receives a Distinguished Technical Communication Award locally.

When you enter, the competition planning committee will submit your work to a panel of esteemed judges, who will spend most of next month reviewing and evaluating your work against the criteria established by the international Society. (For details, see the "Competitions" page on the STC Web site at www.stc-va.org.)

Final judging will take place in early November, and you'll learn the results before the end of the year. Then on February 13, 2001, the STC Phoenix chapter will gather to celebrate the winners, announce the Best of Show Award, and identify the entries that will go on to the STC International competitions.

If you haven't yet received the call for entries, or if you just need an extra copy, check out the competition Web site at www.stc-phoenix.com/PAO-2000.htm.

For more information, contact one of our competition co-managers, Maura Betler (Maura_Betler@g1.com or 480-948-3544) or Carl Gotlieb (gotliebc@agcs.com or 602-789-9248).

Calendar Phoenix Chapter, Year 2000 Publications, Art, and Online Competitions

Call for entries mailed	August
Entries postmarked	September 23
Judges trained	October 7
Judging concludes	November 4
Entrants notified of results	November/December
Awards presented	February 13, 2001

Hats off to our corporate sponsors

The Southern Arizona chapter extends thanks to its Tucson corporate sponsors for their generous donations in 1999-2000.

- **AlphaGraphics** donated the printing of the newsletter.
- **Line by Line** donated a free gift for our holiday party.
- **Global Atmosphericics** donated free gifts for Whine and Cheese III.
- **Modular Mining Systems** donated free gifts for Whine and Cheese III.
- **RightFAX** donated the use of audiovisual equipment and door prizes for Whine and Cheese III.
- **Sunquest Information Systems, Inc.** donated meeting space, speaker gifts, giveaways, and copying services.
- **TCI Solutions, Inc.** donated giveaways for Whine and Cheese III.

Jobs are plentiful in local job bank

Looking for a new gig? About seven jobs for technical writers are available in the Southern Arizona Job Bank.

Look for the list on the chapter Web site: <http://www.stc.org/region5/saz/jobbank.htm>.

To receive e-mail notifications of new job postings or to post a new job listing, contact **Bill Rost**, Job Bank Coordinator, at 733-6434 or wcr@sunquest.com.

Salary survey profiles members

Brenda Huettner

I'd like to thank those of you who took the time to complete our recent salary survey. We received a total of 22 responses, which is almost a 50 percent return rate! I'd also like to thank **Shan Finney** and **Barbara Fraps**, who helped create, manage, and compile the results.

A typical member

Based on our survey results, the typical member of the Southern Arizona chapter is an intermediate-level writer with a college degree and about eight years of experience.

Almost all of the reported salaries (76 percent) fell in the \$35,000-\$44,999 range.

Typical benefits included medical, life, dental, and disability insurance, with 100 percent of the employee respondents having access to a 401K plan.

The most frequently reported type of documentation was end-user, with installation, reference, procedures, and software development documents in a four-way tie for second place.

Although it is difficult to draw correlations from such small overall numbers, we did notice that all of the respondents in the higher salary ranges (\$45,000-\$54,999 and \$55,000-\$64,999) listed themselves as "senior level," generally with some type of management responsibilities.

Education levels (we have several members with masters degrees or more), however, did not seem to have any effect on compensation or job level.

Contractors

Five of our respondents (about 22 percent) answered the "contractors" side of the questionnaire.

We specifically asked them to report on income and work they performed in the year 1999. There was a wide range of rates (from \$12 to \$50 per hour), and an even wider range of hours worked (from 5 to 40 per week). Some worked all year; others only reported 18 or 20 weeks of work.

Like the employees, the contractor's primary duty is writing, with some editing and training as well. The most common types of documentation were end-user and reference documents, followed by software development documents and then help systems.

**Detailed data from the salary survey will soon be posted to
<http://www.stc.org/region5/saz/default.htm>. Watch for it!**

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