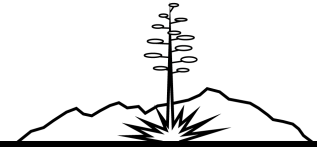


THE BORDER LINE



News from the Society for Technical Communication, Southern Arizona Chapter
March 2001, Volume 5, Number 7

Watch for your member survey

Can the chapter quench your thirst for knowledge or drown your burning issues with solutions?

Your issues are STC issues, and the chapter leadership requests that you share them in an upcoming survey.

This survey of members will be instrumental in planning programs for 2001-2002 and beyond.

Your feedback assures that the council plans programs that meet your needs. Watch your mailbox in April!

Join us March 29 to network and nibble

Come network with fellow technical communicators and those who hire technical communicators at the upcoming March meeting.

Talk with other technical communicators, share your resume, learn about local companies that hire technical communicators, and learn more about STC and how it can help you. Meet representatives of several temporary and employment agencies and managers of technical publication departments. Look over publications from STC and similar professional societies. Find out about useful web pages that are dedicated to technical communication.

If you're new to Tucson or technical communication, someone who knows it all or wondering what it's all about; come network and nibble.

If your startup dot com just ended up dot dead, come network and nibble.

If you're trying to decide whether you or a corporation should pay your Social Security, come network and nibble.

If you need to hire or want to be hired, come network and nibble.

Nibbles include Swedish meatballs, salami coronets, veggies with dip, chicken drumettes, breaded zucchini, and deviled eggs.

Meeting details

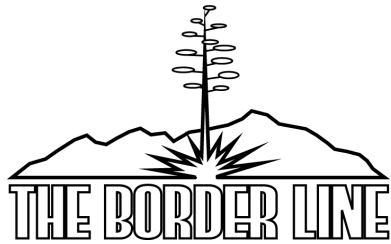
When	Thursday, March 29
Where	Viscount Suite Hotel, 4855 East Broadway
Registration	5:30 - 6 p.m.
Nibbles and networking	6 - 8 p.m.
Cost	\$10 members, \$15 nonmembers

To RSVP or to get more information, contact Anna Mary Mackey at ammackey@leshercomm.com.

Reserve by 4 p.m. Monday, March 26.

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

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



About the newsletter

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

Contributions are welcome. Send mail to stb@rightfax.com, or phone 320-7029. Include your name and telephone number.

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

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

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

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

Electronic version via e-mail

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

To sign up for this service, send a message to stb@rightfax.com.

Clip 'N Save

Southern Arizona STC Tentative 2000-2001 Events

March 29	Network and Nibble
April	Chapter election and member survey
April 24	Using an Intranet Site to Manage a Development Project
May 17	What Employers Look For, and How to Present Your Skills and Experience

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

Phoenix STC Upcoming Events

April 10	Contract vs. Captive: Which is Better for You? with Brenda Huettner
April 21	Writing for Computer-Based and Multimedia Training, a seminar with Jane Smith
May 8	Dine and Whine, with three topics and facilitators
June 12	Chapter awards and honors dinner with Jim Morgan presenting When Pride Is Good

**For up-to-date meeting information, go to
<http://www.stc-phoenix.com/>**



Chapter slates candidates for 2001-2002 leadership

By Sarah Bonati, nominating committee chair

Candidates to lead the Southern Arizona chapter in the coming year have generously accepted nominations by the chapter nominating committee.

This year, the committee set a goal to nominate two candidates for each office in order to give the membership a more democratic election and a choice among several qualified candidates. It is gratifying to find volunteers who are ready to offer their time to support the chapter and keep it healthy in the coming year.

The election will be held later this month.

Following is a list of the chapter offices and nominees.

President

The president leads the chapter in all activities for the year.

Brenda Huettner has been a technical writer and a member of STC for 16 years. She currently serves as chapter vice president and has served on the publicity, survey, and planning committees. Since its inception, Brenda has also 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 to the STC annual conference since 1995. Currently, she is a contract employee.

"My goal for the upcoming year is to get more member participation by increasing our services such as additional workshops, Web-based or e-mail offerings, and local special interest groups. It will be important for us to build on the many things we've accomplished this year, like the success of our monthly programs and the liaison we're forming with the University of Arizona. I also hope to start other types of outreach programs, such as a speaker's bureau, joint events with the Phoenix chapter, or possibly a new satellite chapter."

Vice president

The vice president substitutes for the president and is automatically nominated for president next year.

Richard Cook is director of technical communications for Omnivelop, LLC, a software development services company based in Tucson.

He has an undergraduate engineering degree and a masters in econometrics. His experience includes hardware design documents, software manuals, and online Help systems for Windows and Web applications, freelance technical writing as an independent contractor, and project management. Richard has been a member of STC since 1997, and was secretary of the Southern Arizona chapter in 1998-1999.

"I think most technical communicators today are challenged by the rapid changes we're seeing in media and methods of communication. STC can be a valuable resource to members by providing information about new technologies, communication techniques, research findings, and tools. I feel one of the most important things a local chapter can do is to promote the education and training of members so that they maintain and improve their two most critical skills: basic technical communication expertise and proficiency using the most effective media and tools for the job at hand."

Helen Marty works as a technical writer for Sunquest Information Systems, Inc. She is responsible for documenting software applications, creating both hard copy and online information products. Before Sunquest, Helen worked at IBM Corporation where she was a technical editor/writer. Helen is graduate of the University of Arizona with a B.A. in English. Helen has been a member of the STC since 1992. She is in her second year as copyeditor for *The Border Line* and her third year as chapter treasurer. Helen served as the facilities coordinator for two years and was a member of the program planning committee for one year. She has also served as a volunteer for the Phoenix chapter publications competition.

"As vice president, I want to establish a formal recognition program for the Southern Arizona chapter. Last year, I was instrumental in recognizing contributing members with something other than a certificate. I would like society recognition for our eligible members, our chapter, and our newsletter. I also want to continue the momentum our chapter has established for getting excellent speakers and informative workshops."

See *Leadership*, page 5 ...





Leaders light the way

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

Leaving your comfort zone

Quite often I hear people make the comment "I just can't get up in front of a group to speak; it bothers me too much!" Of course, the problem is more intense for some than for others, but remember that our attitudes, mannerisms, body language, and the voice that we use in private all go with us into public settings. Unless we speak up, persuade and convince, unless we have the power of speech, and unless we have a say in what goes on, we are not in control of our lives. That's an awesome thought, isn't it? Yet, the fear of public speaking is still the number one phobia in America today!

I'd like to tell you about my friend Mary B. She joined another organization to which I belong, and she quickly accepted a committee management position. She took on one of the hardest committees, but that didn't bother her at all — it was the fear of giving a report at our meeting that almost made her quit! It took a lot of courage, but Mary worked hard and was determined to succeed.

Since then she has led the chapter as president, served as president of a related city-wide organization, and the other night she even performed as "Dolly Parton" in front of a large group of businesswomen! Because of her willingness to leave her comfort zone, she achieved more than she ever thought possible.

Actually, except for when you mutter to yourself, all speaking is public speaking. When you think of it in that context, we are all public speakers — it's just that some of us have learned how to speak more effectively than others. Because this is such a widespread problem, I'd like to share some tips about how to reduce anxiety when faced with this task that "gives you butterflies."

Be prepared. I've found that the lack of preparation is a major cause of anxiety. Knowing exactly what you are going to say and how to say it will give you more confidence, which allows you to

focus on your presentation. Don't be afraid to use your notes; I do it all the time!

Picture success. Imagine walking into a room, being introduced, delivering your presentation with enthusiasm, fielding questions with confidence, and leaving the room knowing you did a great job. Visualization is very powerful, and it will help you focus on what you need to do to be successful.

Rehearse. Practice standing up, with an audience if possible, using any props needed, and wearing the clothes you will wear when you speak. If possible, have someone videotape your presentation to play later. Watch the tape and incorporate any changes you think necessary before your final practice session. This is the best possible preparation!

Relax. Focus on relaxing instead of thinking about how much you dread speaking. This part is easy once you learn the technique of how to breathe correctly. When your muscles tighten and you feel nervous, you may not breathe deeply enough. So sit up straight — erect but relaxed — and inhale deeply at least three times. As you breathe, tell yourself when you inhale, "I am" and on the exhale, "relaxed." Don't think of anything else except "I am relaxed," and repeat this exercise several times.

Make eye contact. Eye contact helps you to connect with your audience. Don't focus on just one person though, move your eyes slowly around the room. You can relate better to your audience as individuals if you look into their eyes as you speak. This also helps you react to their interest in you.

Let me encourage you to take advantage of STC to help you improve your speaking skills. Use our chapter meetings and conferences to give reports, presentations, and to practice, practice, practice. Remember, too, that Aristotle once said, "We are what we repeatedly do, excellence then is not an act, but a habit."



Leadership, continued ...

Secretary

The secretary keeps minutes of all council meetings and maintains the historical records for the chapter.

Pat Markey has been a technical writer and trainer for over 10 years for a software development company and a member of STC since 1996. She is also the company's representative to the ANSI standards committee X12. Other business experience includes technical support for a major value-added network and for mainframe computers for a computer manufacturer. She was also an active partner in a publishing company. Pat has a Ph.D. in romance linguistics from the University of Michigan where she taught French as a graduate teaching assistant.

Larry Jorgensen has been a member of STC and IEEE's communications group off and on since 1975. He wrote electronic maintenance and operations manuals, "chasing ones and zeros around the flip flops," for many years. He was introduced to software while writing Minute Man Guidance System manuals at Rockwell International. He has been writing user guides ever since, presently for Sunquest Information Systems, Inc.

Treasurer

The treasurer collects and reports on the chapter funds.

Carrie Cooper has over seven years' experience in technical communication. She holds a bachelor of arts, Summa Cum Laude, in English and technical writing from the University of Arizona. A member of STC since 2000, she recently received an award of merit for her style guide in the Phoenix chapter's technical publications competition. She is most pleased when sentences sound right, information is clear, and numbers are accurate. Carrie uses an Excel spreadsheet to balance her checkbook to the penny and has been known to bring pie charts to financial planners.

Pamela Lloyd is the sole full-time technical communicator with HealthTrio. She is responsible for all phases of the documentation production cycle, including the development of training guides and online help for both client-server and Web-based software applications. Her duties include maintenance of an intranet dedicated to standards and procedures used by the development teams at HealthTrio. She maintains a database of volunteers for Kino Learning Center, produces a newsletter for the Cactus Cowboy Corral rope-spinning club, and is in the process of developing *Speak Up! Speak Out!*, an Internet newsletter aimed at teens. Pamela recently rejoined the STC and is currently a member of the committee for education and outreach.

"Beyond the Bleeding Edge" Wants You!

Waves of new technologies are sweeping over us, and many writers can barely keep up with the daily grind, let alone find time to research the next wave.

It's time to start thinking about "Beyond the Bleeding Edge" topics for STC's 48th Annual conference in Chicago in May. These sessions are designed to offer quick looks at technologies too new to present in traditional formats.

If you've used a technology that you'd like to discuss (or hear someone else discuss), let us know.

In 1999, we covered XSL, JavaHelp, and WebTV. In 2000, it was XHTML and database-driven publishing systems. This year we might cover smart cards, mCommerce, and the issue of writing quality in the online age and the tools that support it. Other possible topics include existing

technologies that may be new to technical communicators, such as active server pages.

To be considered for a "Beyond the Bleeding Edge" session, a topic must be novel in early 2001. This means the technology should be emerging now or should exist now and be applicable to technical communicators but little known.

If you enjoy investigating new technologies and like to talk about them, we want to hear from you. A formal proposal is not required; simply send a brief description of your presentation to Neil Perlin, Hyper/Word Services, nperlin@concentric.net or (978) 657-5464.

As long as there are open slots, we can accept proposals up to the last minute before the conference. However, to appear in the program, you must submit a proposal by March 20. Those submitting proposals after March 20 will appear in a supplement (handout) to the program.

Managing documentation with humor and grace: a telephone seminar

Managing the people and projects associated with technical documentation gets more difficult every day. Coping with changes in technology, blending teams after mergers and acquisitions, facing layoffs, finding qualified candidates, meeting ever-changing deadlines and requirements-these are just some of the challenges technical communication managers and team leaders face.

This telephone seminar will give you practical tips and techniques that you can use to help keep your sanity while those around you seem to be losing theirs, as well as a greater appreciation for all the good things about technical documentation that led you to the field in the first place.

You will also take away two complete Powerpoint presentations supporting the objectives of this seminar that you can tailor and offer to your colleagues at the office.

When

Wednesday, April 18, 1-2:30 P.M. eastern time

Cost

\$125 per site (not per person). Add \$8 for registrations received less than five days before the seminar.

Registration

For a registration form, go to www.stc-va.org.

About the speaker

Doreen A. Mannion, a senior member of STC, has been a professional communicator for over fifteen years. She is also an award-winning author, and a frequent speaker at STC's annual conferences.

Doreen has worked as a stand-up comedienne, advertising salesperson, trade show coordinator, technical editor, technical writer, indexer, insurance agent, sports talk show host, and football official.

She is currently a project manager at McDonald Bradley, Inc., in McLean, VA. McDonald Bradley consultants provide complete life cycle information technology to federal government and commercial clients.

What is a telephone seminar?

A telephone seminar is much like a large conference call but in a more controlled, radio-like environment. You dial the 800 number from your phone, enter your personal identification number, and you're connected!

You then sit back and listen to the presentations and join in the lively Q and A sessions.

This is one in a series sponsored by STC.