

# Setting the Pace, Leading the Pack

by Doug Ryan, manager of the Education and Training Committee and Michelle Corbin Nichols.  
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At the Annual International STC Conference, the winners of the International Technical Publications competitions are recognized, Associate Fellows and Fellows are honored, and the efforts of the chapters across the nation are honored. We hope to recognize those Carolina Chapter members who were recognized this year in this article. However, if we failed to mention your award, please let us know so that we can mention it in next month's *Carolina Communiqué*.

This year in Toronto, the Carolina Chapter received a Pacesetter Award, an honor presented to only one chapter per region. At the awards banquet, Bill Albing, Michelle Corbin Nichols, Lottie Applewhite, and Candace Soderston stood to accept the award (many other Carolina Chapter members were in Toronto, but did not attend the awards banquet that evening). The award cited the innovative work of the Education and Training Committee. Many thanks go to the members of the Education and Training Committee (see the EduSpeak article on page 5).

Also during the awards banquet, one of our own Carolina Chapter members was named as a Fellow this year: Candace Soderston. She was named Fellow for "inculcating human factors into the technical communication of a major producer of technical documentation and for significant contributions to the Society." Candace joins Lottie Applewhite, Austin Ferrell, Philip Rubens, and Richard Russell in representing the Carolina Chapter as STC Fellows. The Carolina Chapter also has several Associate Fellows in our midst, including Morris Dean, Larry Kunz, and Frank Zeigler.

The Frank R. Smith Outstanding Journal Article Award is given every year during the Opening Session. While no one from the Carolina Chapter won the Outstanding Article of 1996, three Carolina Chapter members received "Distinguished Communication" awards in the competition. Candace Soderston (along with Thomas

Crandell and Naomi Kleid) won the award for "Empirical Evaluation of Concept Mapping: A Job Performance Aid for Writers," which was published in second quarter 1996. Robert R. Berry and Michelle Corbin Nichols won for their third quarter 1996 article, "Design Principles for Multi-Window Online Information Systems: Conclusions from Research, Applications and Experience."

In the International Technical Publications Competition, in the Software Combination User and Reference Guides category, Ann-Marie Grissino (along with Kathy Tardif and Sue Lanzillo) won an Excellence Award. In the International Online Communication Competition, the Documentation Team for the SAS Solutions@Work Preview Edition won an Achievement Award. Finally, in the STC Newsletter Competition, in the category of Chapters with more than 300 members, the *Carolina Communiqué*, with Michelle Corbin Nichols, John R. Stuart, and Kim Spangler being recognized, won an Achievement Award.

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## carolina communiqué

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The Carolina Chapter publishes the *Carolina Communiqué* monthly to provide reliable and timely information to chapter and society members.

We encourage other STC chapters to reprint the material in this publication as long as they credit us and send us a copy of the reprint.

We also invite our readers to submit material for consideration in the *Carolina Communiqué*. E-mail articles and letters to the editor to tigger@vnet.net or send snailmail to:

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### Submission Deadlines

Articles are due on the first day of every month. We are currently planning the following issues:

- August
- September

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## Let's Have Some Fun!

by Michael Uhl, President. You can reach Mike at [mikeuhl@mindspring.com](mailto:mikeuhl@mindspring.com).

The ballots are in and it's official...you're stuck with me as President for at least a year. Fortunately, there are plenty of others who've been elected and have volunteered to make up for me. ;-)

The chapter has never been better prepared to succeed: We have continuity in leadership; we have experienced people in key positions and in supporting roles; and we have new people in suitable leadership positions. We have a strategic plan that's now broken in, and Bill Albing, our immediate Past President, is committed to updating the chapter's bylaws during the 1997-1998 year. Contact information for the new leaders is available on the Web at:

<http://stc.org/region2/ncc/www/leadership.html>

The Carolina Chapter won a Pacesetter Award in 1996-1997 for the work done by the Education and Training committee. The newsletter received an Achievement Award. The people most responsible for these awards are back again this year in the same roles and committed to doing even better in 1997-1998. Our Job Bank team is as awesome as ever.

Because the people who make these parts of our chapter work so well are staying on for at least another year, we can work to strengthen other areas of the chapter. As President, I am leading an effort to improve the following aspects of the chapter's activities. I, and other chapter leaders, want to improve:

1. Our relationship with academia
2. The quality of our programs
3. The way we recognize the achievements of members and corporate sponsors
4. Our chapter's image and visibility

Throughout the year I will call upon various chapter members to contribute to this effort, but will not ask anyone to do more than is good for them or us. The right chemistry for success is falling into place: we have the right people in the right jobs, performing at the optimum level of intensity. We're having fun; and above all, my goal is to keep it that way.

### Her Nichols Worth: We Need YOU!

To produce a top-quality newsletter every month, the Carolina Chapter needs YOU to volunteer-- only about 1 hour every week-- to help produce the newsletter. We need people who are interested in writing articles, working with advertisements submitted to make sure the graphics print with quality, and people with bright ideas on how to continue to improve the newsletter. Surely, that is YOU! Call me at night at 919-481-2287 if you are interested.

# HTML Help: Make It So



by Ann-Marie Grissino, Principal of Keypoint Consultants, a documentation and media design firm. Ann-Marie can be reached at [keypoint@mindspring.com](mailto:keypoint@mindspring.com).



An online help revolution is moving through our ranks at warp speeds. What's the revolution all about and where is it heading? This spring Help University brought experts to Chapel Hill from around the world to answer these questions, bringing the revolution right here to our backyards.

## Top-notch Speakers

Conference speakers came from companies such as Netscape, Microsoft, WexTech (the company that produces Doc-to-Help), ForeFront, Novell, and Blue Sky (the company that produces RoboHelp) and from other locations throughout the U.S. and abroad. According to John Garison, Help University's Director of Corporate Communication, attendance was fantastic, the audience was tremendously enthusiastic, and speakers had a great time.

The conference opened with a head-spinning presentation given by Ralph Walden, known as the WinHelp Wizard from Microsoft (he created HTML Help). With unquestioned authority, he charged through HTML-based help concepts. Next, attendees dove into "Understanding ActiveX Controls" with Steve Wexler from WexTech. Then, presentations such as "Context-Sensitive Help for the Mere Mortal," "CGI Scripts in HTML-based Help," and "Keyword Indexing" brought us to a much-needed lunch break.

## HTML-based Help Systems

The conference speakers proclaimed that online help in RTF form will go away and that the revolution will march towards HTML-based help. About 24 out of the 31 presentations included HTML topics. The HTML buzz was everywhere: vendor showcases, lunch, and dinners out in Chapel Hill.

For example, HTML-based help employs secondary, embedded, tri-pane, and popup windows. (Thank goodness! Until recently, there was no easy way to use our wonderful WinHelp popup windows in HTML.) Secondary windows can be docked, embedded, or customized. Navigation controls include a table of contents (often seen as a sidebar on the left), an index, full-text search (when using ActiveX and compiled HTML functionality), and related topics (as both author-time and run-time jumps). You can show your table of contents as an expandable tree and easily indicate that a topic is new.

HTML-based help lets you customize information types. You can specify that your help shows different

We want to keep high quality, professional conferences coming to the Triangle. Take a minute and send a quick email to [info@helpuniversity.com](mailto:info@helpuniversity.com). Or, contact them via their Web site ([www.helpuniversity.com](http://www.helpuniversity.com)). Tell them we want Help University to come back to the Triangle.

information to different audiences or displays only specific product components based on purchases. Microsoft's Walden emphasized that information typing as a tool has not yet been fully explored and will continue to evolve.

Much discussion revolved around compressed and compiled HTML. You can compile your HTML-based help with or without compression and can compile portions of your help (incremental compilation). Although Steve Wexler advised attendees to "learn some HTML now," he predicted that HTML tools will be more WSIWYG within the year. He also stated that Winhelp developers "are extremely well-positioned" to go into HTML development (Yes, we're ready!).

Francine Hyman of Communitec cautioned us that HTML-based help is not yet ready for prime time and that browser conflicts are far from resolved. She told us that "RTF is not a dirty word" and reminded us that we still need to get our work done using RTF-based tools.

HTML-based help brings new concepts, jargon, and technologies. Help University claimed that the "online communication industry has continued its lightning-speed evolution." The conference merely opened the door. Stay tuned.

## Experts Give Product Updates

Microsoft touts its HTML Help Workshop as the tool for authoring, indexing, and compiling help systems. However, according to one expert, its initial release (expected in early summer) is akin to a "glorified Notepad." Walden noted that we should "expect tool vendors to provide additional HTML authoring capabilities." Here are some other product tidbits: an Adobe spokesperson claimed that Adobe's HotTaMaLe, the new plug-in for FrameMaker, is better than WebWorks Lite Filter (HotTaMaLe converts Frame files into HTML) and discussion also focused on Java versus ActiveX controls and Netscape versus Internet Explorer and which will win the HTML-based help battle. The jury wavers on these issues.

As knowledge transfer experts, we're charged with keeping up with technological advances and guiding our companies in a direction that will take them across rocky transitions during the next few years with as much ease as possible. As John Garison put it, we're sensing "the puff before the train." Conferences such as the one sponsored by Help University benefit us greatly. Keep 'em coming.



# EduSpeak: Great First Year, Looking to Expand This Year

by Doug Ryan, Chair of the Education and Training Committee. You can reach Doug at [dsryan@mindspring.com](mailto:dsryan@mindspring.com)

In the end, the chapter's newly-revived Education and Training Committee had a phenomenally successful 1996-1997. I thank the following chapter members who hung in there with me and did a *lot* to make this success happen: **Hilary Harris, Diane Feldman, Candee Hellberg, Leatta Welch, Mike Uhl, Kay Ethier, Ivan Manestar, and Sarah O'Keefe**, and everyone else who came to committee meetings, made suggestions, helped, and more.

## We Set the Pace

All our hard work paid off. Somewhere, someone's paying attention. Because of the dedicated and excellent work of the Education and Training Committee, the Carolina Chapter was honored with a Pace setter Award at this year's annual conference (see the feature article on page 1).

## Training Workshops Given

After trial, error, and hard work, we met our 1996-1997 goal of starting a series of affordable, peer-taught workshops for chapter members with a highly successful, two-afternoon course in basic FrameMaker on May 8th and 13th. Chapter member Sarah O'Keefe of Scriptorium Publishing Services, Inc. led the class, while Lucent Technologies's ASCC loaned us its workstations, network, and classroom for hands-on training.

## Media Presence Established

Along with this column and periodic e-mail messages via the chapter's membership list, the Education and Training Committee has its workshops and meetings on the chapter Web site's Events page (<http://stc.org/region2/ncc>) and voice mail (406-6600).

Let me take this opportunity to thank our chapter's newsletter editor nonpareil, **Michelle Corbin Nichols**; our previous Madonna of membership management, **Kathy McKenzie**; and especially our Web site goddess, **Kim Spangler**, for their consistent (and patient!) work with our committee members during this part year.

## Partnerships Set Up with Corporate Sponsors

Along with the chapter as a whole, the Education and Training committee has established partnerships with the following companies, whom we take this space to thank again: **Mallet Technologies** (contact Kay Ethier, 406-1500 x22), an Adobe authorized trainer and value-added retailer (VAR), for providing many courses at a discount to chapter members; **Sarah O'Keefe**, head of Scriptorium Publishing Services, Inc., (775-7147), for teaching our basic

FrameMaker training; **Lucent Technologies' Advanced Software Construction Center (ASCC)**, (380-4520), for its computer classroom for our basic FrameMaker training; and **Advanced Concepts, Inc.**, a technology consulting firm, (910-563-2579), for subsidizing some workshop costs.

## Plans for This Year (1997 to 1998)

The Education and Training Committee will lead a lunchtime discussion on education and training opportunities in the Triangle and in the chapter at the Carolina Chapter's annual summer conference in RTP. Please, join us!

We plan to expand the "education" side of things to examine what constitutes the education of a technical communicator. We'll work with the NCSU student chapter to learn about the theories being taught in the Masters degree curriculum and offer speakers about what is going on "out here" in the profession.

Peer workshops we hope to have available in August through October include:

- Indexing
- HTML
- Online help
- The seven habits of highly effective people (based on the book by Stephen Covey)
- A repeat of the basic FrameMaker training.

## Job Bank Information

The number of jobs available for weekly posting on the telephone messaging service (a.k.a., the Job Bank phone line) has exceeded the recording capacity, forcing us to rely on our Web pages. The Web has no such limits and will serve our members better—offering more jobs, timely updates, and greater detail about each job listing.

You can reach the Web page at:

<http://stc.org/region2/ncc/www/weeklyjobs.html>.

If you do not have Web access, you can request to have a hard copy sent to you by U.S. mail. We on the Job Bank hope you find this new arrangement satisfactory and invite your comments or suggestions. Send requests or comments to [NCSTCJobs@aol.com](mailto:NCSTCJobs@aol.com), or call (919) 406-6600.

For comments about the Job Bank Web pages:

- Gina Caldanaro, Chair ([ginacal@vnet.ibm.com](mailto:ginacal@vnet.ibm.com))
- Dick Evans, Co-chair ([revans4@aol.com](mailto:revans4@aol.com))
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# May Meeting Summary: Interleaf Demonstration

.....  
by Charles Good. You can contact Charles at  
goodcr@aur.alcatel.com  
.....

The Carolina Chapter's May meeting was held at Dreyfus Auditorium in RTP. The topic was Interleaf 6 and the presenters included:

- Erin Worstrom, an Interleaf consultant (from Philadelphia)
- Lori Winfree, our area's account executive (from Atlanta).

The Interleaf product was first introduced 15 years ago. Since then, many of the original features, look, feel, and behavior have been carried forward. However, Interleaf 6 changes all that. By adopting the Motif user-interface approach, Interleaf 6 takes on more of a Windows 95 appearance and it incorporates a lot of nuances that made Macintosh computers so easy to use.

Interleaf 6 takes the work group (networked) publishing concept to a new level by incorporating filter and intelligent property characteristics not available in Interleaf 5. In addition, catalogs can become more than just writer component property templates. Catalogs in Interleaf 6 can be designed as print engine specifications for different types of output (for example, paper, CD-ROM, HTML, etc.).

We viewed various demonstrations of how auto referencing of page numbers, section numbers, paragraph numbers, figure numbers, and table numbers could be instantly changed by repositioning the documents within a book or modifying the catalog for a book. Copying documents into documents is much easier, and the conversion of Microsoft Word documents into Interleaf now supports tables and graphics.

**Note:** The demonstrations were done on a Dell Pentium, 122-MHz, PC laptop running Windows 95. The response was amazing (compared to their original PC version).

Also during the presentation, Worstrom and Winfree talked about other Interleaf products:

- DB-Link is a product for taking large databases and preparing the database information for publishing.
- Worldview and Worldview Press have been enhanced so they can support more than CD-ROM applications. However, it is still the product for situations where the online document must be page-for-page identical to printed information.
- Worldview Java is a new product for Internet users. It allows Worldview users to instantly have the latest version of the Worldview browser tool (automatically downloaded to the user's platform whenever Interleaf makes an upgrade).

see "Interleaf" on page 7

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**We are proud sponsors of the Carolina Chapter Education Committee!**  
**Upcoming Courses:**  
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**Congratulations on winning the Region 2 Pace Setter Award in Toronto!**

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# Learning How to Read an Interviewer's Mind

.....  
by Julie Davis, a member of the Job Bank. You can contact Julie at Julie\_Davis@vnet.ibm.com

.....  
Have you ever wondered what was going on in the mind of someone interviewing you for a job? Did you wish you could have had a “cheat sheet” to prepare for the kinds of questions she might ask?

Thanks to Lori Lathrop, a freelance indexer of technical manuals, we have a “Cliffs’ Notes” for job interviews. Lori Lathrop is the principal of Lathrop Media Services. Her experience includes more than sixteen years as a technical writer, editor, and professional indexer. (Lori’s book, *An Indexer’s Guide to the Internet*, is available from the American Society of Indexers, P.O. Box 48267, Seattle, WA 98148. Contact Lori at P.O. Box 3065, Idaho Springs, CO 80452; e-mail: 76620-456@compuserve.com)

Lori has generously shared a set of questions, based on her experiences interviewing interns who come to work with her at Lathrop Media; she also drew on her own previous experiences as an interviewee. While most of us aren’t looking for internship positions, we can still gain some insight from considering these questions.

If you've got a job interview coming up, sit down and role play with a friend who'll take the role of Interviewer and throw some of these questions at you. Think that sounds silly? It's surprising how nervous you can get in the real situation, so take every opportunity to practice (My husband, who used to hire for a small consulting firm, swears by this technique!).

Here is the list of interview questions:

1. How would you describe yourself?
2. What are your own special abilities?
3. What kind of work interests you most?
4. How would you describe your ideal work environment?
5. Are you a team player, or do you prefer to work alone?

Why?

6. Do you have plans for continued study or an advanced degree?
7. What do you know about this company?
8. Why are you interested in this company?

**Note:** I've been asked this one a lot. Most of you have probably heard this before, but it bears repeating— do your homework on the company before you go on an interview!

9. What have you done that shows initiative and willingness to work hard?
10. What do you feel are your greatest strengths?
11. What do you feel are your greatest weaknesses?
12. How do you react to working under pressure?
13. What kinds of things frustrate you most?
14. What types of people rub you the wrong way?
15. What qualities do you value most in people?
16. Are you analytical? (Give an example.)
17. Are you creative? (Give an example.)
18. What qualifications do you have that have made you think you would be successful in business?
19. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
20. If I were to call your past employer or one of your professors, what would they say about you?
21. What important lessons have you learned from jobs you have held?
22. What goals do you have for yourself three to five years from now?
23. What are your criteria for success?
24. Do you have any questions?

**Note:** Make sure you ask something about the company (business plans, vision, etc.) Do not ask about benefits, vacation time, or any topic that makes you sound like you're only interested in what the company can give you.

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## Membership News

**Total STC membership:** 17,997

**Current chapter membership:** 324

**New members:** Velda A. Bartek, Lisa M. Carter, Charles R. Good, Otis J. Johnston, Katherine M. Moran, Deborah G. Nacca, Timothy G. Owens, Anne L. Shamp, and Sheilah B. Zimpel.

**Transfers in:** John D. Huntley and Lisa Ratchford.

**Transfers out:** None.

**Members reinstated:** Lydia K. Wong

**Members with undeliverable addresses:** Jilanne Hoffman and Michael Walden.



"Interleaf" from page 5

- Business Web is a new product/strategy that will allow users to search information repositories (Interleaf based, as well as others). It is designed to use Worldview Java.
- Cyberleaf is Interleaf's HTML and GIF converted that will produce full composite document Web sites (not just Web pages or a softbook). The latest version is more programmable which provides the publisher more flexibility. Cyberleaf also provides PDF file output for users who need to provide information in this form for downloading. Cyberleaf also is one of the best products on the market for automatically providing a *text-only* version to assist users that have old browsers or slow network connections.

Although we did not talk too much about Interleaf buying Avalanche and acquiring the Fast Tag SGML conversion product, we did discuss SGML standards. It is interesting that the FOSI proposal for producing print formatted output from SGML is receiving little industry support because it is not realistic. However, the DSSSL standard which allows LISP programming enhancements appears to be worthwhile. SGML still seems to be little more than a neutral form of text-intensive content exchange between people with dissimilar tools, networks, etc.

This led to the final topic which was the realization that documentation is suffering from multiple personality disorder (MPD). Interleaf feels that some of the MPDs are caused by customers wanting so many different forms of output (for example, paper, CD-ROM, Web HTML/GIF, Windows Help, etc.). The other causes of MPD include things like having to use various source material formats, having to work in environments with different operating systems and platform types, etc.

Interleaf supports the concept whereby authors can write and develop on any platform, document assembly can be done on a common tool (Interleaf 6), review and document management can be done with Interleaf's Relational Document Management (RDM) product, and distribution/output can be handled by either Worldview, Cyberleaf, or Interleaf 6.



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Mallett Technology offers software, hardware (UNIX and PC), training, support, and project consulting for Adobe products.

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# Corporate Sponsors

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The Carolina Chapter thanks these corporate sponsors for their continued support of various STC activities throughout the year. Please ask any chapter leader how you can help support the Carolina Chapter of STC.  
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**SAS Institute**, for printing the membership directory and hosting the annual awards banquet.

**Mallet Technology, Advanced Concepts, Sarah O'Keefe of Scriptorium Publishing Services, and Lucent Technologies, Advanced Software Construction Center (ASCC)** for their continued support and involvement in the Education and Training Committee activities

## Monthly Meeting Notice

**What:** "Results and Roses: The 1997 STC Carolina Chapter Summer Conference." This year conference will emphasize practical skills that you'll be able to use as soon as you return to your job on Monday Morning.

**Who:** Carolina Chapter members, Educators, and others.

**When:** Saturday, July 19, 1997;  
7:45am Registration; 8:30am to 4:00pm Conference Sessions; 4:00pm Reception.

**Where:** Marriott in RTP. Directions: From eastbound or westbound I-40, take exit 281 and turn right on Miami Blvd. Almost immediately turn right onto Guardian Drive and into the RTP Marriott grounds.

**Contact:** Conference Manager, Patricia Tierney, (919) 954-9248.

 **society for technical communication**  
Carolina Chapter - Central North Carolina

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