

Rewarding Printed Excellence

by Helen Weeks, manager of Technical Publications Competition

What do an article entitled "Reference made easy" and a book about long distance service have in common? Both won Distinguished Technical Communication (DTC) awards in the Carolina Chapter's Technical Publications Competition, and are now eligible for the International Technical Publications Competition.

These annual Competitions identify, recognize, and encourage excellence in printed technical communication. Entries are rated on four factors: writing, graphics, copyediting, and overall integration, all judged in the context of a document's purpose, content, and organization.

This year's chapter competition included entries in such categories as brochures, training materials, hardware and software user guides, newsletters, books, and scholarly articles.

Four levels of recognition, in descending order, were awarded:

- Distinguished Technical Communication
- Excellence
- Merit
- Achievement

Chapter members gathered at our February meeting (despite the icy weather) to celebrate and recognize the winners of both the online communication and technical publications competitions.

And the winners are.....

Distinguished Technical Communication

- Sylvana Smith, *Long Distance 101*
- Michael Harvey and Betty Prioux, "Reference made easy"

Award of Excellence

- Kathy McKenzie, Christopher Benz, and Gregory Rakauskas, *HealthPoint ACS(TM) User Manual*
- Julia Schelly, Anne Ruybal, and Lydia Wong, *Spread DLL Reference Guide* and *Spread OCX/VBX Reference Guide*
- Julia Schelly, Lydia Wong, and Vicky Earp, *ButtonMaker User's Guide*
- Sylvana Smith, *Remote Access Application and Planning Guide* and *the AccessNode Sales Flyers*

- Sylvana Smith and Jo Phillips, *Recognizing the Value of the Operator Work Force*

Award of Merit

- Victoria Hertz and Nancy A. Pipes, *TapDance for Windows User's Manual*
- Nancy L. Wagner, *CTR Corp. Direct Mail Brochure — Virtual Reality*
- Carla Honour, *Dancik-On-Disk Marketing Packet*

see "Printed" on page 3

Online Excellence

by Diane Feldman, co-manager of Online Communications Competition

Marty Tomasi and his team at SAS Institute won Best of Show honors in the Carolina Chapter's Second Annual Online Communication Competition. Their winning entry is a Web version of *Solutions@Work*, a reference guide for data forms, data tables, and EIS customization. In conferring an Award of Excellence, the judges recognized quality of communication, ease of navigation, well-organized content, and effective use of its medium.

Marty and his team are congratulated doubly for their Award of Excellence for the Help Version of *Solutions@Work*. Marty's entries are joined by the *HealthPoint ACS Online Help*, by Greg Rakauskas, Kathy McKenzie, and Chris Benz. All entries that received Awards of Excellence have been entered in the International Online Communication Competition.

Response to the competition was terrific, with entrants from a wide variety of industries. Although the competition

recognizes four categories of online communication, this year's entries were in two categories: Online Reference and Online Help. (Tutorial/Training, and Demonstration/Presentation are the other two.) Our judges used the guidelines the STC International Online Communication Competition Committee developed to evaluate submissions.

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carolina communiqué

A publication of the Society for Technical Communication (STC), Carolina Chapter

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The Carolina Chapter publishes the *Carolina Communiqué* bimonthly to provide reliable and timely information to Chapter and Society members.

We encourage other STC chapters to reprint the material in this publication (with the exception of the cartoon) as long as they credit us and send 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 the 1st of every month.

Her Nichols Worth

This issue was a challenge. For the first time in my 7 months as newsletter editor, I actually had to hold articles for the next issue. The "Help on Help" column and the "Quibble Me This" column will return next issue for sure. Meanwhile, I hope you enjoy Cheri Taylor's article on the newly formed Information Design SIG and Hilary Harris' article on respect.

Which brings me to the announcement of the winners of the raffle for conference

Vision Day is Coming to Town

by Larry Kunz, Carolina Chapter Strategic Planning Manager

It's now a Carolina Chapter tradition: Vision Day! A stimulating and fun afternoon in which we chart Carolina Chapter's future course. This year we meet on Saturday, May 31 at the home of Chris Benz, our highly visionary Public Relations manager.

Do you have ideas for raising the visibility and enhancing the prestige for yourself and your fellow technical communicators around the Triangle? Do you want the inspiration and satisfaction that come from working with colleagues on something both exciting and meaningful? Then you won't want to miss Vision Day. All Chapter members are welcome — you do *not* have to be an officer, have served on a committee, or even attended a meeting.

As on our 1995 and 1996 Vision Days, we'll be in a relaxed setting where we can

registrations to Help University's HTML and WinHelp Conference: Hilary Harris and Ann-Marie Grissino. As a consolation prize, Ventana Communications Group donated two books, "Looking Good in Print" and "Looking Good Online" which were awarded to Cheri Taylor.

Writing newsletter articles is easy, fun, and rewarding. Please take an hour to write an article for us. Yes, an hour is all it'll take! Really! Or, if you'd like to volunteer to edit articles, I'm in need of copy-editors, too.

brainstorm and be creative. For last year's Vision Day we made giant strides toward completing the Carolina chapter's Strategic Plan. Approved by the Chapter administrative council in October, the Strategic Plan is a "road map" for the next five years, setting forth the specific tactics that the Carolina Chapter will use to attain a leadership position in both our profession and community.

This year on Vision Day we'll work together to find concrete ways to carry out those tactics and meet our goals. This is *not* about identifying and divvying work items for people. It's about discovering creative, visionary ways to fulfill our dreams and realize our Chapter's tremendous potential.

For now, block out May 31 (12:00 noon to 4:00pm) on your calendar and plan to join us for an exciting, rewarding afternoon. Look for details and directions in an upcoming *Communiqué*.

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 committee hope you find this new arrangement satisfactory and invite your comments or suggestions. Send requests or comments to NCSTCJobs@aol.com or call (919) 406-6600.

For comments about specific parts of the Carolina Chapter Job Bank Web pages:

- Lee Bungarner, Committee Chair and Resume Page Contact (jlbumgar@aol.com)
- Dick Evans, Co-chair and Weekly Jobs Page Contact (revans4@aol.com)
- Gina Caldanaro, Company Employment Page Contact (ginacal@vnet.ibm.com)
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Gaining Respect: Enlighten Them About Your Abilities

by Hilary Harris

As technical communicators, we often gripe about respect—in peer discussions, TECHWR-L threads, STC newsletter and journal articles, and STC meeting topics. We discuss and write the problem, but *why* don't we just get it?

A possible reason is that we don't work on it enough. When projects are going well, respect probably doesn't come to mind. Indeed, when the project is on schedule and budget, when the subject matter experts are cooperative, and when the boss is happy, we're happy too. But suddenly—BAM!—we are cutting corners mid-project, justifying our expense, or, worse yet, compromising our professionalism. We acquiesce to ill-informed others—who “know how it should be done.” We then muse on how and why this happened.

While we cannot completely rid ourselves of such nightmarish scenarios, there is enough

evidence to suggest that we experience less than acceptable levels of respect in the workplace. So what can we do? In the previous issue of *Communiqué* (January/February 1997), Mary Wise gave excellent pointers. But, alas! It may be another ogre that looms over us tightly gripping the respect rope.

In reading real-life scenarios from the TECHWR-L list on the issue of respect, many complaints seem to share a common denominator: a misconception or misunderstanding of our profession. Perhaps our lack of respect stems from a lack of understanding.

As a 'sole' technical writer most of the time, I field my fair share of misconceptions. Perhaps we presume when we think everyone knows and understands what we do, especially if they asked for our services! For example, on one assignment, it became clear that my client was hungry for

information on my services. I wondered if his co-workers lacked this understanding too. I momentarily visualized wearing on the job a sandwich board with instructions on how to use and benefit from my services!

Prior to our discussion, my client viewed and labeled a technical writer as anyone capable of composing a master's thesis on a word processor. Educating my client was a communications challenge because of the delicacy of the working relationship.

But after many interactions, my working relationships improved not only with my client but with his co-workers as well. Gradually, tactfully, I wove into the conversation concepts and phrases like subject matter experts, substantive edit, content edit, user needs, user studies, and user testing. For me, this proactive approach is now a given in a new workplace.

see “Respect” on page 5

“Online” from page 1

Look over the list of competition winners, judges, and managers. When you see these colleagues, acknowledge their achievement, for they represent the best our profession has to offer in a still-emerging form of technical communication. Without them, there's no competition. We are also especially grateful to Cisco Systems for their facilities for our judging event.

And the winners are.....

Best of Show/Award of Excellence

- Marty Tomasi and team, SAS Institute, *Solutions@Work (Web Version)*

Award of Excellence

- Greg Rakauskas, Kathy McKenzie, and Chris Benz, HealthPoint, *HealthPoint ACS Online Help*
- Marty Tomasi and team, SAS Institute, *Solutions@Work (Help Version)*

Award of Merit

- Ceil Shuman, Unifi, Inc., *Help Services Escalation Procedures*
- Philip Shelton, SAS Institute, *SAS Desktop Online Help*
- Lisa Pappas, Mobius Group, *Mobius MPRES Help System*

- Dana Gillihan, Paul Leone, and Dr. Thyra Rauch, IBM, *Integrated Help and Online User's Guide*

Award of Achievement

- Diane Feldman, Wandel & Goltermann, Inc., *Domino/Wizard Reference System*
- Rick Sapir, Gilbarco, Inc., *Gilbarco Online Index*

Judges for the online communication competition were: Michael Carver, Linda Enders, Susan Holahan, Greg Knoll, Tom Lyndes, Pat Moell, Mark Nathans, Michelle Corbin Nichols, Michael Uhl, Morris Vaughan, and Liz Wing.

The competition managers were: Lisa Pappas, Diane Feldman, Ann-Marie Grissino, Deana Betterton.

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- F. Alan Coleman and Rodney A. Throckmorton, *Siecor FuseLite Termination System Instruction Manual*

Award of Achievement

- Gary Etzel, *G-SITE(TM) System Printer Quick Reference Card*
- Pam Thorner and Rick Sapir, *MDE-2530-82 Master/Satellite/Combo Installation Manual*

- Samantha G. Stichter, *Bowman Inventory Management System (IMS) User Guide, Version 2.3*

- Nancy A. Pipes and Elma K. Longley, *A Planner for Windows, Work Force/Job Group Analyst for Windows, and Adverse Impact Monitor for Windows User's Manuals*

- Helen Weeks and team, *Getting Started with SAS/EIS(r) Software, Version 6, Second Edition*

With Special Thanks to.....

A team from another STC chapter judged this year's entries. In turn, Carolina provided judges for their entries. Local team members were Len Olszewski, Mark Phalert, Lisa Wiles, Sandie Hudson, Elizabeth Brownrigg, John D'Amelio, Lauren Bednarczyk, Nancy Mitchell, Alexia Prendergast, Susan Simone, Lee Bumgarner, Sarah O'Keefe, Larry Kunz, Michael Carver, Ted Buckner, Kathy Bumpass, Carol Linden, Cate Parrish, Susan Willard, Chris Hemedinger, Lee Peterson, and Meredith Blackwelder.

The competition committee included Helen Weeks (competition manager), Hanna Schoenrock (judging manager), Patsy Poole (awards manager), Susan Willard (entry manager), and John West (publicity).

Join a New STC SIG: Information Design

by Cheri Taylor, *Manager Information Design Special Interest Group*

Information Design: the science of the organization of information. If you've been in technical communication for some time, you realize there is more to technical writing than just writing. Technical communicators with an interest in information design now have a their own group. The newly formed Information Design special interest group is at your service!

What do information designers do? Write, of course, and more. They transform complex, unorganized, or unstructured data into useful, usable information. Using skills in writing and editing, instructional design, usability, and graphic design, an information designer discovers and articulates the meaning in data, and then creates the map that allows others to use the information easily. Information design extends beyond the traditional boundaries of technical communication (reference manuals and online help systems), but to broader communication (public signage, forms and applications, and computer user interfaces).

The Information Design SIG's mission is two-fold: (1) to meet the professional development needs of STC members in the

1997 Membership Directory

by Kathy McKenzie, *STC Carolina Chapter Membership Manager*

The 1997 Membership Directory is coming soon, courtesy of the Membership Committee! This year's directory listing adds each member's major job function (Writer/Editor, Contractor, Manager, Educator, Graphics). For networking, we've also included listings of each member by membership grade for associate fellows, senior members, fellows, and student members (there are too many regular members to include, but they are easy enough to find in the listing). We also listed many opportunities for participation at both Chapter and Society level, and included info about how to join STC.

We hope you find the directory helpful. Happy networking!

Note: Due to a printing error, the directory was printed single-sided, causing some formatting problems. We apologize for the inconvenience. ,

area of information design, and (2) to act as a conduit between STC and the larger information design community.

We have a Web site up and running, where you can learn more about the SIG and information design in general. Currently, the site contains the approved proposal for the SIG, as well as an information design bibliography. We have identified a Web site chair who will be adding material to the site in the near future. Please visit us at <http://stc.org/pics/idsig/> or send e-mail to idsigwww@stc.org for information.

You can also join our listserv, where we discuss information design topics and related STC activities. To subscribe, e-mail majordomo@stc.org and put in the body of the message SUBSCRIBE STCIDSIG-L youraddress

Two other lists serve the information design community. The moderated list is InfoDesign, and a more informal, unmoderated list is InfoDesign-Cafe. Visit our Web site for more information about these lists and the information design community.

We plan to publish our first newsletter prior to the annual conference in May. If you want to join our mailing list, do so at our

Web site. (If you have no Internet access, call at 859-1467.)

Look for us in Intercom's next issue, where an article will introduce the Information Design SIG and the new Lone Writers SIG.

I must give 100% credit for this SIG to Beth Mazur, of the Pittsburgh chapter. She has done a wonderful job of getting the SIG organized, proposed, and approved. The only glitch was toward the end of the approval process, when she discovered the requirement that a SIG manager must be a senior STC member. This is where I come in. I will act as manager, and Beth as assistant manager, until she is eligible to lead the effort herself. My congratulations to her on a job well done, and I am proud to be helping her!

A note about these special interest groups: In the past we've called them PICs (Professional Interest Committees). Because the term Special Interest Group (SIG) is more broadly understood in the greater business and professional community, STC is changing the name of our PICs to SIGs. The official kickoff of this change is the Toronto conference in May. During 1997, you may see the groups referred to either way. But we'll all eventually be SIGs! ,

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EduSpeak: Look What's Next!

by Doug Ryan, Chair Education Committee

The Chapter's Education/Training Committee is a) up and running; b) in full swing; c) totally hot (in a professional way), d) all of the above. Headlines from the Committee's last meeting follow.

Advanced FrameMaker courses offered by Mallett Technology

We were joined by Kay Ethier of Mallett Technology, a provider of Adobe FrameMaker products and training. To start the Committee's offerings, Mallett has scheduled full, hands-on Adobe FrameMaker 5 Advanced Training—two days, \$600 per student course offered to STC members at half price if we can register at least 6 students 10 days in advance.

Basic FrameMaker training available as well

Meanwhile, Committee members are working to arrange a series of peer-taught workshops in FrameMaker, at lower cost, beginning in May:

- A basic, half-day Frame workshop, probably on weekends. This course will provide lecture-demo along with, hopefully, some hands-on work at individual machines. We are talking with several Chapter members who are potential workshop leaders, and envision 10-15 participants per workshop.
- Sessions on selected, intermediate/advanced Frame topics. Chapter members Candee Hellberg and Sarah O'Keefe have agreed to train smaller groups of members. Both Candy and Sarah want the topics to depend on what's asked for or what emerges from the basic workshops as needs. Candee has indicated weeknights are best for her sessions.

The Committee's Resource-Finding Group hard at work

Hilary Harris has bravely agreed to lead the Education/Training Committee's Resource-Finding Group, which looks for possible training sites and for software to acquire for Chapter training purposes. Hilary is currently talking with Durham and Wake Techs as well as with NCSU's Extension Service about possible training sites.

Please *do* contact Hilary with tips, leads, and offers of help in this endeavor, especially if you work at one of the large Triangle companies. See if they will offer the Chapter use of their lab/classroom in the evenings or on weekends. Contact: Hilary Harris at 846-3742 or hilaryh@ix.netcom.com

Miscellaneous Happenings

The Committee is also contacting Chapter members about giving workshops in creating online help, working with graphics between applications, and indexing, along with a professional skills session on how to be proactive in extending a contract.

Education/Training Committee meetings, by the way, are the Tuesday evening following the regular Chapter Meeting. (Since meetings are the second Thursday of the month, this usually means on third Tuesday evenings.) As always, check the Chapter's Upcoming Events Web page. To get involved with the Committee, or to explore hosting a workshop yourself (or as part of a group), contact Doug Ryan at 490-6927 (H), 380-4552 (W), or dsryan@mindspring.com. ,

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So, technical communicators, maybe we should consider an all-out campaign to educate the public and to minimize misconceptions. Start in the workplace by first understanding how others perceive our area of expertise. Where there is confusion, *eliminate* it. Show how you can help convey their ideas effectively. A word of caution: don't assume *anything*.

Within STC, we could call on local companies to educate management on what technical communicators do and the value-added component they deliver. We could publish brochures on the specifics of what we do on the STC Web pages. These brochures could be available to each chapter and disseminated at meetings. I bet many local contract employment shops would just *love* such a piece—it'd help their clients identify their need for technical communicators.

The respect issue is not a quick and easy fix. But by educating companies about our abilities, we'll be adding more credence to our roles as technical communicators. As I was reminded at the Seattle conference last May, it is our job as technical communicators to understand and demonstrate the use of these new technology for the new mass audiences. It may be frustrating and time consuming, but we could start by going back to the basics. ,

Director's Chair

by Mary Wise

This month, I want the members in Region 2 to meet their candidates! Two outstanding STC senior members have been nominated: Tony Caruso from the Metro Baltimore chapter, and Tracey Chiricosta from the Washington, D.C. chapter. I asked Tony and Tracey to answer a basic question for me.

Tony, what future challenges do you see for our members?

At the turn of this century, the American work force toiled long, hard hours in jobs that took increasingly heavy physical tolls. As we head into the next century, a better educated work force is still toiling long, hard hours in jobs that are taking increasingly more stressful tolls. Regardless of how we feel were being pulled in every which way, learning a little more today than we knew yesterday, and maintaining a well-balanced life style are two of the greatest challenges we'll continue to face in the future.

With the mission of the STC ... "to improve the quality and effectiveness of technical communication for audiences worldwide," the everyday challenges we face in upholding this mission are as
see "Director" on page 6

Ask Dr. Couth

Dear Dr. C.: Help! I'm working with Ms. Ego, an incorrigible technical writer who, incredibly, refuses to incorporate the majority of my brilliant, logical, constructive edits. I'm in shock. What must I do?

Dear Brilliant, Logical, Constructive⁽¹⁾

Editor: As a member of that exalted covey of gods and goddesses known as editors, you express proper shock and, I presume, indignation over this intolerable, egregious situation! The magnanimity of the insult is almost incomprehensible.

First and foremost, you must—I repeat, must—put aside all other work until this

issue is satisfactorily resolved. I must add for the sake of any other Ms. or Mr. Egos in my reading audience, only one satisfactory resolution exists: the writer must immediately admit the error of her ways and incorporate *all* of your edits, henceforth, *without question*.

You can resolve this specific situation by following any combination of these recommendations, although completing number 1 should be sufficient:

1. Immediately apprise the President or CEO⁽²⁾ of your company of this horrific situation. Because your senior executive

already reveres⁽³⁾ editors, he or she will, of course, insist on firing the technical writer within the next five minutes. Intervene at this point. Because you are an editor—meaning that you are compassionate, sensitive to the inherent deficiencies in lesser mortals, and wise, you must now counsel your executive to give the misguided writer a second chance.⁽⁴⁾

2. Require that Ms. Ego take a leave of absence so that she may return to a college or university that teaches the proper relationship between writer (supplicant) and editor (supreme voice of reason).

I recommend:

- "Paying Homage to Your Editor" (UNC)
- "Learning Everything You Ever Need to Know about Anything and Everything at the Master Editor's Knees"⁽⁵⁾ (Duke)
- "Transforming Yourself from an Insignificant Writer to an Omnipotent Editor"⁽⁶⁾ (NC State).

3. Delete from the universe all documentation Ms. Ego is currently writing or has written (All programmers can arrange this within 5 nanoseconds and will be delighted⁽⁷⁾ to take down such a writer who is so disrespectful to you, their beloved editor.)

Footnotes for Dr. Couth:

⁽¹⁾ I include these redundant adjectives only to remind my faithful readers that editors are, by definition, brilliant, logical, and constructive. It seems to be a flagrant failure of our world's schools that young technical writers are entering the workforce without that basic understanding. I intend to say much more on this topic to the leaders of the world the next time I meet with them!

⁽²⁾ Notice that I did not suggest apprising Ms. Ego's manager. This is the nincompoop who hired the aggrandizing writer! Should your executive decide to fire the manager, strongly consider supporting this action. Or, at the least, suggest another job for this incompetent.

⁽³⁾ This reverence, a given, exists because Presidents and CEOs understand they would never have risen to the top without an august editor to guide their every spoken and written word.

"Director" from page 4

diverse as our growing membership. As we invest our time, energy, and for many of us our own money, to stay current and slightly ahead of new technology, we can't help but feel that: "Okay,-but-what-else-do-I-really-need-to-learn-about-this-fill-in-the-blank - thing?" The answers are changing to the questions that haven't been asked yet.

Added to these internal challenges are the demanding external workplace challenges we face everyday when we work with different teams under constantly changing conditions and unrealistic deadlines. Stress? You measure it against the time of day the last FedEx truck arrives for a pickup.

Staying slightly ahead in the fragile balance with work and family demands as we head into a new century is one of the greatest challenges we face in the field of technical communication.

So Tracey, what future challenges do you see for our members?

STC members, and technical communicators in general, face a number of challenges in the future, but the most wide-reaching challenges will be those posed by changing technology and our evolving roles within our organizations. The Internet and other technological advancements have become an integral part of the workplace and are therefore an integral part of the skills and concepts that we must understand, write about, and use to perform our jobs. At the same time, private companies and government organizations alike are redefining themselves. As technical communicators, we must continually evaluate our roles within the organization as they grow and change so that we remain an essential part of the product or team. With these challenges, however, come exciting opportunities to educate ourselves and improve the quality and depth of our work. As long as we continue to look ahead and anticipate these changes, we can take advantage of the opportunities offered and grow as individuals and as a profession. ,

Educational Opportunities Abound!

Look at what Doug Ryan and the Education Committee members are bringing your way!

- Basic FrameMaker training, taught by members of our own chapter, will be available in May. To reserve a space, contact Doug Ryan (490-6927, dsryan@mindspring.com or Hilary Harris (846-3742, hilaryh@ix.netcom.com).
- Advanced FrameMaker training, offered by Mallett Technology, will be coming soon. Watch the Carolina Chapter Web site for details.
- Watch for a survey from the committee, so that you can have input into the topics and types of training that you'd like offered.

See "Dr." on page 9

Vote for 2nd Vice Present, Affect the Future of STC

by Elizabeth Babcock, Manager STC
Nominating Committee

When you get your ballot for STC's Spring 1997 election, I hope you'll agree with me that the high caliber of candidates makes a choice difficult.

Of all the choices, perhaps the most significant is for second vice president, since whoever you elect will be managing Chapter Affairs (the director-sponsors) this year and the administrative committees of the Society next year. The following year, 1999-2000, that person will usher in the new century as the president of STC. Finally, he or she will serve the first entirely 21st-century STC board as the Society's immediate past president. All that will depend on this year's vote, since STC has an automatic succession through the presidential "chairs."

The STC Nominating Committee talked with both candidates: Mary Wise and Mark Hanigan. The full text of the talk is located on the national STC Web site at: <http://www.stc-va.org/2ndvp.html>. Please check it

out. (If you do not have access to the Web but would like a copy of the complete text of the interview, please call Michelle Corbin Nichols at 919-481-2287 and leave your name and address with whoever or whatever answers the phone.) Some excerpts follow.

What do you hope to accomplish for the Society during your four years in the presidential chain of offices?

Mark: "I have at least two goals in mind:

- I would like to strengthen the Society's presence in the academic community and in the business community.....
- I believe that the Society board of directors and Office have done a good job in both anticipating and responding to the membership needs and directives..... In this area I would "stay the course," trying to remain responsive to the ever-changing requirements of our chapters, our individual members, and our professional environment."

Mary: "I hope to accomplish three major goals:

- To help define and begin to implement a realistic vision for becoming a truly international society.
- To define specific roles within the Society for our student membership.
- To continue to improve on delivery of services to members

In addition to these goals, I hope to meet with and talk to a lot of members, at regional conferences, chapter seminars and workshops, and the Annual Conference. I want to listen to members' concerns and get their ideas for how to make the Society work for them."

What challenges do you see ahead for our members?

Mark: "I believe the biggest single challenge for us as technical communicators is to remain "on top of our profession" in terms of tools, techniques, and trends..... Much of the large corporate infrastructure including

see "Vote" on page 10

HELP UNIVERSITY'S HTML & WinHelp Developers Conference



Coming April 10-12, 1997 to Chapel Hill, North Carolina!

If you are a WinHelp or HTML developer, then the **HTML and WinHelp Developers Conference** is the perfect opportunity for you to learn, share information, and stay up-to-date with the trends and rapid changes facing our Industry.

Your \$450.00 registration fee (\$499.00 after February 1, 1997) includes:

- ✓ More Than 20 General Conference Sessions and Roundtable Meetings
- ✓ Vendor Exhibits and Product Showcase Presentations
- ✓ One ½-day Seminar of Your Choice on Saturday
- ✓ Two Corporate-Sponsored Networking Lunches and Vendors Reception

Conference sessions on Thursday and Friday will cover a wide range of topics presented in three tracks: Basic WinHelp and HTML Development, Design and Management, and Case Studies and Advanced Issues. The ½ day seminars on Saturday will provide a more in-depth view of emerging online technologies.

To register call 1-800-801-HELP or check the Help University web site for up-to-date information and registration forms at www.helpuniversity.com.

E-mail Distributions

by Kathy McKenzie, *STC Carolina Chapter Membership Manager*, and Chris Benz, *Public Relations Manager*

Since December, the Carolina Chapter has e-mailed Chapter announcements. If you'd like to receive them, the Society office must have your current e-mail address. To remedy this problem at the click of a button, use the online form at the Society's Web site at <http://www.stc-va.org> or e-mail the old and new information to: Membership@stc-va.org

At the December board meeting, STC Secretary Pat Moell suggested that we e-mail meeting reminders to our membership, in the hope that they can more easily invite co-workers and friends to STC events. This, of course, would supplement our usual routes: newsletter, InfoLine (919.406.6600), and our Web pages (<http://stc.org/region2/ncc>). As membership manager, I investigated and found it feasible.

I requested and received from the Society office the distribution list. I received e-mail addresses for about 200 of our 370 total membership. On the first attempts at e-mailing to the distribution list, about 10% bounced back as undeliverable (see the list at the end of this article).

The next day, I sent another note to the same list of e-mail addresses, this time requesting feedback on whether they liked the idea and asking specific questions on how to use the list.

The response was overwhelmingly favorable! As an example, Travis Russell

enthusiastically comments "I would like all notices via e-mail. Some of us with busy schedules do not have time to browse Web pages, and find instant e-mail handy reminders that we can print and post on calendars. Otherwise, I might never get any STC information. Keep the e-mail flowing!"

Nacia Avera agrees. "Yes, I definitely like receiving notification of STC meetings via e-mail. I think it's a great idea. I don't get a chance to visit the Web site every day, although I do use it frequently. Given the newsletter's spotty distribution history, I'd say that e-mail is the best way to let people know when meetings are coming up. One week's notice would be optimal for me." (Sorry, Michelle)

[Editor's Note: That's quite all right! All feedback is encouraged and welcome!]

Although the comments ranged from 3-4 days to 2 weeks to "as much notice as possible," the consensus was to try to send out meeting notices with about a week's notice—"enough time to plan but not enough to forget," according to Mike Collins, in a typical response. Lottie Applewhite says, "I think the Friday preceding the meeting is a good reminder time for planning the next week's schedule."

As for the issue of who should have access to the list, several members agreed with Karen Spalink: "guarding the addresses from advertisers and the like." Cheri Taylor writes "I'd like to be on the list but, like you said, would not want the list distributed or sold for other reasons."

In my feedback request, I also asked for more suggestions on list use. As a general rule, Alexia Prendergast says "any STC-specific news or events would be appropriate." Stephanie Conrad suggests using it for special events information and election ballots.

Larry Kunz offers additional uses, such as to "send reminders for special events like the Summer Conference and Vision Day." He further suggests including in each reminder at the bottom, the paragraph about contacting the STC office for address changes. Another great idea!

To make this effort successful, all you need to do is to keep your membership data current. For our part, we will request an updated e-mail list monthly. We are as concerned as you that the list be kept private and that notices to members be timely and unobtrusive.

Here are the invalid addresses. If you recognize any of these addresses, suggest to that person that they update their information with the Society office.

bettertd@wg.com
sasjcc@unix.sas.com
lac@fns.com
jdavis1@unity.ncsu.edu
ewensj@imonics.com
john.gilson@bvc.frco.com
mark8521@ecu.campus.mci.net
ebhughel@unity.edu
sbl@fns.com
leary@dg-rtp.dg.com
kellie_mcmanus@us.wfl.com
crm@unity.edu
rick@ralum13
phn@rti.com
okeefe@imonics.com
ldp@rti.org
robert_perry@radian.com
sasppb@shelly.unx.sas.com
rubenp@rpi.edu
Ryaner@wq.com
sasdos@unx.jsheilds@ral.mindspring.com
jhs@fns.com
tierney.patricia@epamail.epa.gov
woodruff@hrfocus.att.com

P.S. Need a free or very low cost e-mail account? Contact newsletter editor Michelle Corbin Nichols. ,

Membership News

Total STC membership: 20,704

Current chapter membership: 373

New members:

Ann B. Ayers
Ed Crockett
Kay L. Ethier
Gene E. French
Geoffrey D. Heath
Linda B. Lunney

Transfers in:

Cindy Haga
David P. Kaylor

Transfers out:

Suzanne I. Barber
Mary B. Whitesides

Members reinstated:

None.

Members with undeliverable addresses:

Tony E. Morrison
Dana Gillihan

The Prez Says: Nightwriter's Lament

Even though my visit to Dallas in December was short, I took in the local STC meeting. I was there for two days on business and had contacted the Lone Star Chapter president about possibly meeting with her. If you have ever traveled on business, there is nothing like joining with others with similar interests for an evening of fun, and it was fun to join in another chapter's activities, if only for a day.

After work that Thursday, I drove from the factory in Richardson to the centrally located Harvey Hotel in Addison to attend the meeting. As technical communicators, we have a lot in common with each other and I felt right at home. A group of 60 or so people filled a dining room. About twice as large as the Carolina Chapter, the Lone Star Chapter has members from as many different companies with as many different types of work.

The silliness of the gift exchange after supper was contrasted by the intense, yet warm, presentation by Judy Glick-Smith, a past chapter president and region director-sponsor. She spoke about balancing our physical, mental (emotional), and spiritual sides. She spoke about herself and about all of us and I enjoyed how she shared on a very personal level. Too often the workplace is depersonalizing, either because we use machines or because there is a push to get the work done at the cost of keeping a human orientation.

"Dr." from page 6

⁽⁴⁾ Forgive me, again, for interrupting my instructions to explain something to the rest of the readers, something that you already understand: Editors do not give third chances, an untenable idea that misguides others as to the gravity of even stepping into a situation that requires a second chance.

⁽⁵⁾ Dr. Couth, herself, developed and teaches this course. It does take most students 8-12 years to complete the *curriculum vitae*, but the results ensure that no Ms. or Mr. Egos ever again enter the workforce with their misguided, glop-for-brains views.

⁽⁶⁾ Although the ratio of editors to writers would ideally be 1:1 (or 1:2 in certain rare occasions when both writers actually could

This was a refreshing and uplifting program. Judy wore her cowgirl outfit -- hat, bandana, chaps, and all. It put us all at ease. She finished by singing cowgirl songs while playing guitar. I can picture us buckaroos driving our ``doc''-ies down from the mountains to the valley of volumes for that last great roundup before the grill of a deadline. Yee-Ha!

Her suggestions were definitely practical, and her music was touching. I still find myself humming the song she sang so beautifully, Nightriders Lament. (doo doo doodle odle-dee...) Get along, little ``doc''-ies. We can be more effective technical communicators when we stay healthy and give our minds a creative rest. And Judy is a shining example because she has her own documentation company, does workshops on motivational speaking, teaches at the local community college, and still finds time to be director-sponsor and do some very real horse herding. Judy, you inspire us all.

If you ever travel on business, be sure to check out the local STC chapter, because STC is active all over the country and in other countries as well. Thanks, Judy, for the wonderful program. Thanks, Ann (president) and Kelly (newsletter editor), for welcoming me and allowing me to enjoy the program. Our time afterwards comparing notes about our respective chapters showed me that we have similar challenges and opportunities. My only lament was that I had to leave Dallas so soon. ,

write their collective way out of a paper bag), unfortunately, few individuals in the world have the required talent, initiative, intelligence, and patience. (Coincidentally, Dr. Couth developed and teaches this course, also.)

⁽⁷⁾ Competent programmers (and engineers) understand better than almost any other professionals that editors should control all written communication. They understand this because they know that they cannot write or speak effectively (if at all), having been grievously shortchanged when the language skills were passed out at conception. It's a genuinely sad state for them, but we editors continue to love them even though they do not possess an iota of these basic skills. Ah, the inequities of life. ,

chapter leadership

President

Bill Albing
kgbill@aol.com
(919) 365-2448

Vice President

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(919) 541-4283

Treasurer

Jeanne Ferneyhough
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(919) 677-8000 x. 6480

Secretary

Pat Moell
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Director-Sponsor

Mary Wise
Mary_Wise@manu.com
(301) 984-5436

Membership

Kathy McKenzie
khmck@aol.com
(919) 572-1137

Programs Manager

Open (Mike Uhl is acting chair.)

Job Bank Manager

Lee Bumgarner
lee.bumgarner@virtus.com
(919) 467-9975, x3046

Hospitality Manager

Gary Spizzen
spizzen@imonics.com
(919) 544-5000

Public Relations

Christopher Benz
cjbenz@unforgettable.com
(919) 572-1104

Nominating

Open

Education Committee Chair

Doug Ryan
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(919) 490-6927

Strategic Planning

Larry Kunz
ldkunz@vnet.ibm.com
(919) 254-6395

"Vote" from page 7

technical communication departments has been significantly reduced or dismantled completely...."

"I believe the body of knowledge about our profession is too expansive for any one person to handle. STC provides us an excellent mechanism of "educational networking." I believe that anyone who wishes to be successful in our profession needs to embrace the fact that "you will be in school for your entire career."

Mary: "I see three main challenges for our members:

- The challenge of expanding our expertise into new areas: learning how business works, learning how to apply strategic planning techniques to our careers and our lives, and learning to adopt a global focus as our world shrinks.....
- The ongoing challenge of adapting to new technologies to address the changing audience for our products.....
- The challenge of balancing our lives. This one is as old as work itself, but it will continue to challenge us." ,

STC society for technical communication
Carolina Chapter - Central North Carolina

c/o Michelle Corbin Nichols
100 Romaine Court
Cary, NC 27513

Coming Attractions

March 6, 1997

Manager's PIC (SIG) meeting. Topic: "Headcount-based Department" at Nortel's main plant. (Check the Web site for more details.)

March 22, 1997

Cary Festival of Books, Cary Community Center. Carolina Chapter will host a booth.

April 3, 1997

Manager's PIC (SIG) meeting. Topic: "Project Management: Tools and Processes" at NetEdge Systems.

April 10, 1997

Our next monthly meeting entitled "Creating paper and online documents with Adobe products."

Monthly Meeting Notice

- What:** Scanning the Web with CD-ROM Tools
- Who:** Dykki Settle, Ventana Communications Group
- When:** Thursday, March 13, 1997; 6:00pm
- Where:** Glaxo-Wellcome; Bide Auditorium in the Bide Building; 5 Moore Drive, off Alexander Drive, near the Durham Freeway; Research Triangle Park.
- Contact:** Michael Uhl (919-541-4283). Special thanks to John Stuart of Glaxo-Wellcome for arranging the meeting facilities and Michelle Nichols of Ventana Communications Group for arranging the speaker.

FIRST CLASS MAIL