

TECH

STC
society for technical communication
Orlando Chapter
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A Note from the President

1999 Is Here!

by Dick Hughes

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Happy New Year to all of you. I hope your holiday season was restful and rewarding. As we enter a new year, many of us take time to reflect on what we want to accomplish with this “clean slate” of time ahead of us, and I’d like to offer some STC-related items to put on your list. First, be sure to renew your membership before the end of February. If your job is anything like mine, the one thing you can count on is that it will probably change somewhat over the course of the new year. Our profession seems to be a most dynamic one. By maintaining your membership in STC, you’ll be able to keep up with the trends in our profession through the society’s publications, conferences, and seminars, as well as our local chapter meetings.

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Second, consider becoming more involved in the chapter. We have been fortunate to see an overall growth in our membership over the last few years – we had approximately 135 members at the end of 1998. Unfortunately, only about 15 to 20 percent of our members ever serve as an elected chapter officers, or on one of our chapter’s standing committees. I realize the perception is that these activities take a lot of time, but, in actuality, they don’t. Most elected office and committee activities only involve a few hours a month, and the more people get involved, the less time will be needed per person. With the new year, we also begin the process of preparing for the annual chapter elections in April, so there are many opportunities to help the chapter, and your own professional development. Please think about the role you would like to take and contact me if you have any questions about elected officer positions or committee opportunities.

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Finally, our upcoming February 24 chapter meeting is going to offer all members a rare opportunity. As most of you know, in May of 2000, the STC Annual Conference will be right here in Orlando at Walt Disney World. This is the first time in the history of STC that the annual conference will be in Florida, and even though all the chapters in Florida are hosting the event, our chapter has a unique opportunity to be at the forefront of the organizing efforts. In addition, this May, at the 1999 Annual Conference in Cincinnati, the Florida chapters will have a display booth in the exhibition hall to preview and promote the 2000 event. At our February 24 chapter meeting, Richard Wrye, Conference Support Committee Chair for the 2000 Annual Conference, will explain the opportunities we have as a chapter to help both this year in Cincinnati and next year at Disney World. Please make plans to attend this very important meeting. ☒



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Chapter Notes

by Laurie Benson

December Meeting: Understanding and Getting Ready for the Year 2000

Presented by John Matelski,
Technology Management, City of Orlando

How did we get into this Y2K mess anyway? In case you don't know, in the old days when disk space was expensive, code needed to be written to use as little space as possible. Therefore, two-digit years were used instead of four. Now, when the year rolls over to 2000, we could experience problems from dates that don't recalculate correctly in areas as diverse as fire alarms, traffic controls, bank vaults, elevators, copy machines, microwaves, telephones, pagers, and of course computer software applications.

Any business today should get ready for the Year 2000 as follows:

1. Take an inventory of where you could experience problems
2. Assess each problem and how long and how costly

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You may reprint original material appearing in Tech Trends if you acknowledge the author and source and send us a copy of the publication containing the print.



Bill Paskert and Barbara Odom with their door prizes from the December meeting.

- it would be to fix it
3. Decide whether to fix the problem, retire, or replace the asset
4. Test the solutions
5. Implement the solutions
6. Monitor as the year rolls over.

Many businesses have received requests for a Year 2000 Compliance Statement. Statements that have been issued are in various formats and can open up some liability to your company. Public Law No. 105-271, which was passed on 10/19/1998, attempts to define the liability inherent in these statements. Your company could be held liable if your statement claims that there will be no Y2K problem when in fact your company knows there is a problem and the statement was issued with an intent to deceive your customers. A company may be considered to incur greater liability when issuing their statements on the web rather than in answer to specific requests from customers.

There is a local group of businesspeople concerned about Y2K who meet on the second Wednesday of each month at the Orlando City Hall from 6 -- 8 p.m., usually on the 9th floor.

Some Internet sources of information on Y2K include:

www.marketpartners.com

www.year2000.com

www.y2kjournal.com

www.y2ktimebomb.com

www.ml.com/y2k/index.htm

www.microsoft.com/technet/topics/year2k/default.htm ☒



Call for Presenters for Currents '99 "Moving Forward - Looking Back"

by Gene Larson

Share your expertise with fellow technical communicators at STC Atlanta's 11th annual Currents conference on April 17, 1999. The Currents '99 planning committee is now accepting proposals for presentations.

These topic suggestions may give you some presentation ideas: Contracting - getting into contracting, managing finances/taxes/bookkeeping, marketing yourself Focusing on Users - user task analysis, usability testing, focus groups, Web-based surveys, contextual inquiries Education, Professional Development, Management Mentoring, internships, working with other disciplines Expanding Your Roles, becoming expert - Web design, GUI design, requirements gathering, project management, training Learning New Skills & Tools - HTML help, Web design, tool comparisons, database and information development, instructional design, JAVA scripting

Proposals and abstracts are due January 15. Selected presenters will be notified by January 29. Submit yours today!

Submit a 100- to 400-word proposal of your presentation with the complete title, purpose, author(s), company, full address, and contact numbers. Indicate whether your session will be a panel, workshop, or presentation. Specify what kind of audio/visual equipment you will

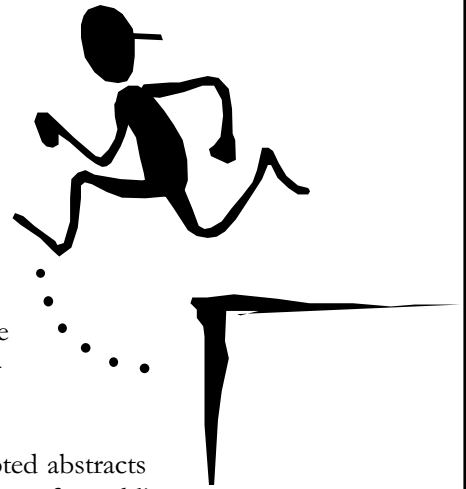
need. Include a one-page biographical sketch and a brief description of the business community you support.

Authors of accepted abstracts must submit a paper for publication in the Conference Proceedings. Papers are due February 15. Detailed instructions for preparation will be provided. Presenters attend the conference free of charge.

For more information, contact conference manager Stephanie Gibson at 770-650-8008, x174 or sgibson@quiz.com.

Submit your proposal by January 15, 1999:
· E-mail to currents99@mindspring.com
· US mail to Cheryl Bailey and Gena Belcher, 1579F Monroe Drive, Suite 406 Atlanta, GA 30324

For information about STC Atlanta and directions to our meetings, point your browser to www.pobox.com/~stc-atlanta, or call the chapter's telephone service, 404-652-1806. ☒



Admin Council

by Laurie Benson

The good news is that our membership count is up slightly to a total of 130 members for our local chapter. A higher membership count increases available funds and will help support our activities for the National Conference in the Year 2000.

After consideration of how technically advanced our members are as a group, the council members decided to discontinue the employment telephone hotline and place all our job postings on the web site instead. For your information, there are actually two locations on the STC web site, a nationwide job database located at <http://www.stc-va.org/employmentframe.html> and a locally maintained listing at <http://stc.org/region3/orl/www/employ/empopp.html>.

As you may be aware, we also make employment announcements at the monthly meetings and in the newsletter. If we receive any complaints about difficulty in accessing the job postings, we will reconsider the telephone hotline. ☒

Employment Opportunities

by Diane Heald

Here are the additions to our employment hotline. Remember to check the hotline (262-2064) or contact Diane Heald at 407/277-8458 or heald@iag.net for the latest employment information.



Position: Senior Editor
Location: Orlando
Contact: Felicia Slattery (fslattery@ciber.com)
Ciber, Inc. 1-800-800-0682, 407-682-1300
Description: We are looking for a Senior Editor to edit online projects for grammar, standard adherence, professional appearance and content of documentation publications. This position is with Ciber to work for a Fortune 500 company in the Orlando area. The individual must have at least 5 years of editing online projects. They will also have experience with documenting publications, MSOffice, MS projects, VISIO, PowerPoint, HTML, and FrontPage.

Position: Entry level Technical Writer
Location: Orlando
Contact: David Whitfield at 407-316-8848, Fax: 407-316-8848, dwhitfie@modisit.com,

Description: A leader in the IT industry is seeking an entry level Technical Writer for one of its clients. The right candidate will have a B.A. in English or Technical Writing and preferably 1 to 2 years experience writing and editing in a team, both hard copy and online. Knowledge of at least one of the following applications: RoboHELP, FrameMaker, Ventura or ForeHelp is required. Experience with Adobe Acrobat is a plus. This is a full-time, permanent position that pays around \$30,000, depending on knowledge and experience.

Position: Technical Writer/Database Technician
Location: Orlando
Contact: David Whitfield at modis, Tel: 407-316-8848, Fax: 407-316-8830, dwhitfie@modisit.com, www.modisit.com

Description: The right candidate will have a B. A. in English or Technical Writing and 4 or 5

years of experience in technical writing and database design and development. The position involves completing complex documentation projects and development of MS Access databases, including SQL queries, reports, forms and security. Knowledge of electronic publishing techniques, MS Access and MS BASIC would be advantageous. This is a full-time permanent position and will pay in the region of \$42,000, depending on knowledge and experience.

Position: Editor
Location: Orlando
Contact: David Whitfield at modis. Tel: 407-316-8848, Fax: 407-316-8830, dwhitfie@modisit.com, www.modisit.com

Description: Looking for an Editor for one our Fortune 50 clients. Successful candidates will have more than 3 years experience editing documents preferably with FrontPage. The main responsibility of this role is to edit and change both hard copy and online copy for a team of Tech Writers. The position is most likely to be a long term contract for the right candidate.

Position: Technical Writer
Location: Alachua, Florida
Contact: Ben Plumb, Manager, Medical Manager R&D, Inc. (904) 462-2148 x.203; Fax: (904) 462-1505, benp@mdmgr.com, www.medicalmanager.com

Description: Rresearching, writing and editing technical manuals; occasionally documenting new software systems. Must have a technical writing degree, or course work, or experience for a minimum of 2 years. Knowledge of Microsoft Word 97 or above, initiative, organizational ability, detail-mindedness. Please send resume, salary history and requirement. ☒


4th Annual Region 3 Student Conference Announcement and Call for Papers

by Julian Hacker

Wow! To celebrate the 4th annual Region 3 Student Conference, it has earned an official name - "Directions '99"! The conference, which typically alternates between Georgia and Florida, will be hosted by the Mercer STC Student Chapter on the Mercer University campus in Macon, Georgia. The campus is just 75 miles south of Atlanta, right off Interstate 75 - very easy access.

The conference will begin Friday evening, March 26, 1999 with a reception as you register and check into the hotel in Macon. The program is on Saturday, March 27. The theme will be "Pack Your Bags for the 21st Century" and will feature topics for anyone interested in our stimulating profession, including students, professors and practicing technical communicators. Sessions will include long-range strategies and short-term skills to prepare professionals for enterprising careers in the next century. Timely tips and practical advice are always welcome. That's why we call the conference "Directions '99"!

The timing is during Macon's much anticipated Cherry Blossom Festival. This is a wonderful time to experience Spring in historic Macon, the home of many neat places such as the Georgia Music Hall of Fame. If you are a student or would like to share practical

experience with students, please send an abstract or outline to the program manager at the following address. Proposals must be received by January 15, 1999. Send proposals to: Julian Hacker PMP, 3968 Menlo Drive, Atlanta, GA 30340, (770) 934-7616, jfhacker@mindspring.com.



Scholarship Applications Available

Each year, STC offers scholarships to full-time graduate and undergraduate students pursuing careers in technical communication.

Fourteen awards of \$2,500 each will be granted for academic year 1999-2000.

Application deadline is February 15, 1999.

Application forms and instructions are available from the STC office:

901 N. Stuart Street, Suite 904
Arlington, VA 22203-1854
(703) 522-4114

Xerographics Ad

STC News

Arriving Early at STC's 46th Annual Conference? There Are Plenty of Things to Do

by Thea Teich

If you are taking advantage of cheaper weekend airfares and arriving in Cincinnati for STC's 46th Annual Conference on Saturday, May 15, there are several fun things you may want to tackle on your own.

First, the Cincinnati Reds are playing the San Diego Padres at Cinergy Field on Saturday, May 15, at 7:05 p.m. and Sunday, May 16, at 1:15 p.m. Cinergy Field is about a five-block walk South of the conference hotels and the area is quite safe at night. You can find out more by visiting the Reds' web site at <http://www.cincinnatireds.com>. You can order tickets through the web site or buy them when you arrive in town, but your seat selection will probably be limited if you wait. Unfortunately, the Reds will be away during the rest of the conference.

Second, the touring company of *Les Miserables* is performing at the Aronoff Center for the Arts, about a five-block east of the conference hotels. If you're interested in tickets, check your local Ticketmaster outlets now. Tickets are already on sale.

Third, Cincinnati's Playhouse in the Park will be showing "Appalachian Strings," by Randal Myler and exuberant dancing to celebrate of the Appalachian people's history. This play is a regional premiere. This live performance is at 5 p.m. and 9 p.m. on Saturday, May 15, and 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Sunday, May 16.

Performances also are held on Tuesday, May 18, and Wednesday, May 19 at 8 p.m. To reserve tickets, contact the Playhouse at (513) 421-3888. Cincinnati's Playhouse in the Park is located in Eden Park, just a short cab ride away from the conference hotels. Before you stop at the Playhouse, you may want to ask your cab driver to take you up to the parkinglot of the Celestial Restaurant for a great view of downtown Cincinnati and the Ohio River.

Other attractions in Cincinnati will be highlighted in the *Preliminary Program*, the March 1999 issue of *Intercom*

magazine. There are also Hospitality Tours and Program Tours scheduled for the week of the conference. The three events described here all occur within a very short distance of the conference hotels. ☒



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De on Language

Some Resolutions You Can Live With

by Mary Kendig



Okay, it's a new year. And once again, you're telling yourself that you just can't go through with that resolution you've made for oh, say 11 years in a row now to lose 20 pounds or stop smoking. Well, perhaps you should start with something that might be a little easier to deal with. I've got just the thing! Here are some resolutions you and I should vow to keep, presented by William L. Rivers in a book called "Writing: Craft and Art." Although these were written almost 25 years ago, they remain words for all technical communicators to live by in 1999 and beyond.

- Make your writing as precise and specific as you can make it, for what you imply with a vague word is seldom what all of your readers infer.
- Remember that the greatest power in writing is in nouns and verbs, especially powerful, visual verbs. In most cases, the adjective is the enemy of the noun, and the adverb the enemy of the verb. Use adjectives and adverbs sparingly, and if you have to use one, search for the right one.
- Never assume that jargon is more defensible in writing than it is in speaking. If you are about to use a term primarily to demonstrate that you are a member of an "in" group, shun it.

- Have the courage to write simply. To communicate complex ideas and facts with a simplicity that any literate person can understand is to address the largest possible audience.
- Instead of memorizing six-syllable words, train yourself to think about the meanings of ordinary words. The true measure of your vocabulary is not the number of words you can use but the number you can use effectively.
- Learn to develop a keen sense of your audience. Know the audience you are writing for, learn what they know and don't know, and understand what tone and attitude will engage them.
- Observe the conventions of spelling, punctuation, grammar, usage, and sentence and paragraph structure, not merely because they exist as "rules" but because communication with readers usually breaks down when you ignore them.

Don't these sound just a bit easier to stick with than that new diet? How about giving them a try? And if you need support, well, I'm here for you. Just let me finish this last piece of holiday fruitcake first, would you?

Here's to a happy (and well-written) 1999! ☒

Effective Writing Workshop

by Gene Larson

The STC Atlanta Chapter and the Writing & Editing Special Interest Group will sponsor Jewel Kennington's Effective Writing Workshop on Saturday, February 20, at Scientific-Atlanta, Inc., 3845 Pleasantdale Rd., Norcross, GA.

Registration and continental breakfast begins at 8:30 a.m. The workshop presentation is from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Jewel Kennington presents an informative day of writing techniques. Her workshop applies the fundamental principles of rhetoric and composition to technical writing. Elements include effective sentence structure, paragraph structure, word usage, and cohesiveness. She

shows you how to avoid common technical writing errors and how to construct clear, effective documents.

The fee is \$115 per person for registrations received before February 5; \$125 after February 5 or paid at the door. You can download a registration form from our web site, www.pobox.com/~stc-atlanta. Register early! The workshop is limited to 30 attendees. Directions and a lunch menu will be included with your registration confirmation.

The fee includes the Effective Writing workbook, a copy of "Style: Toward Clarity and Grace" by Joseph M. Williams, and a certificate of completion. A continental breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack are included. ☒

Coming Up...

- Jan. 26** **Chapter Meeting. Presentation and Discussion:
On Your Own: The Pitfalls and the Payoffs,**
Presented by Barbara Odom, Independent Consultant
Members: \$5.00 / Nonmembers: \$7.00
6:30 p.m. – Time for networking
7:00 p.m. – Business meeting and presentation/discussion
R.S.V.P. to Lori Corbett at 407/903-2042 or
STCmember@aol.com
- Winter Park CivicCenter
1050 W. Morse Blvd.
Winter Park, Florida
- Feb.15** **Deadline for submission of papers for the 11th Annual Currents
Conference in Atlanta, GA.**
For more information, please see page 3 of this issue of Tech Trends,
or contact Stephanie Gibson at 770/650-8008 x. 174.
- Atlanta, GA
- Feb. 24** **Chapter Meeting. Getting Ready for STC's 46th and 47th Annual
Conferences,** presented by Richard Wrye, Conference Support
Committee Chairperson. Find out how you can reap the rewards and
benefits of hosting the STC Annual Conference in 2000.
- Winter Park CivicCenter
1050 W. Morse Blvd.
Winter Park, Florida
- March 3** **Submission Deadline for the March/April issue of Tech
Tech Trends.** Contact Nadejda Bojilova at 407/ 660-0343 x.321 or at
nbojilova@paysys.com for more details on how to submit articles for
the Orlando STC chapter newsletter.

TECH TRENDS

Orlando Chapter
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—PLEASE FORWARD—



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