Nanook of the North Returns

By Gail Lippincott

A little over two years ago, I began an excellent adventure up nort' and have just returned for its next phase. As an Orlando chapter member since 1988, when I was an undergrad in the University of Central Florida (UCF) tech writing program, and because STC and the Orlando chapter have been such an important part of my career, I'd like to share my thoughts with you.

After graduation, I coordinated the UCF-STC Florida Technical Writing Conference for four years, working with some of the movers and shakers in our field. One particularly impressive keynote speaker from the '93 conference was Dr. Billie Wahlstrom, chair of the rhetoric department at the University of Minnesota (U of M).

When Professor Gloria Jaffee suggested I apply to the U of M's new PhD in Rhetoric and Scientific and Technical Communication, I was astonished, never having considered such a northern clime. But as a military brat and wife I've always enjoyed moving, and my husband Bob said that now it was my turn, he'd follow me. *Except,* it turns out, to Minnesota. With his complete support, though, I left the nest, leaving one child at home who was attending UCF.

"How bad are the winters in Minnesota" was the topic of every conversation I had with my Florida friends? "Not bad" — the standard answer in Minnesota for most any situation. When I heard the radio announcer give the weather forecast one morning as "14 below and sunny, not bad today," I gained a better understanding of relativity. When there's no wind, 14 below and sunny really is not bad, and I thoroughly enjoyed my two winters up there.

Lots of sunny days must contribute to the good-natured attitude of these warm-hearted Midwesterners. The golf courses and parks are in use year round; in fact, more people seem to sled and cross-country ski on the golf courses in winter than golf in the summer. My worst fear was unrealized, however, because I didn't have much trouble driving in the snow. My goodness, the snow plows

are out at 4 am, looking for something to shovel. And I drove slowly, aggravating those tough drivers, I'm sure, but when they got close enough to see my Florida tag, they quickly dropped back, surrounding me with white space. You betcha.

Graduate school in residence was a wonderful time to read deeply and reflect on the interdisciplinary underpinnings of our profession and how it functions in our society. My course work gave me a vocabulary and theoretical framework for some things I instinctively knew or had learned from experience. The two years of course work flew by.

Leaving my new friends was very hard, and you can bet I am happy to be back with my life partner. And the other constant in my life has been STC: from *Rough Draft* to *Tech Trends,* e-mail, snail mail, and phone calls, I've kept up with the Orlando chapter. What's more, the Society also supported my educational endeavor with the award of a Della A. Whitaker graduate scholarship. Other well-qualified colleagues applied but weren't selected, and I can't help but believe that my chapter participation was a deciding consideration.

For the Latest Employment and Meeting Information, Call the Orlando Chapter Hotline at 407-262-2064

Happy Valentines Day

A Note from the President…

By Dick Hughes

I'm writing this month's column the morning after attending our very successful January general meeting and program on "Tool Wars." Many thanks and congratulations to Vice President Charlotte Salveson and Program Coordinator Diane Heald for putting together a standing-room-only program. Even though I had to leave early, I could tell that the exchange of ideas and information was a benefit to all. It was wonderful to see many new faces and meet some members who are new to our area.

As I mentioned last month, the STC Region 3 Student Conference is coming up on April 12 at the Florida Institute of Technology (FIT) in Melbourne. Titled "Launching Your Career," this event will offer seminars and workshops for students (or anyone else) interested in technical communication-related careers and will feature an address by STC President Jody Heiken. I hope many of our regular Orlando Chapter members can attend and help guide a future generation of technical communicators. The deadline for registration is March 25 and the pre-registration charge for STC members is only $40.00, which includes a dessert reception and lunch. For more information about the conference, you can contact Marilyn Goravitch at FIT at (407) 768-8000 Ext. 8073, via e-mail at mgoravit@winnie.fit.edu, or visit the conference website at www.fit.edu/~kullberg.

Finally, I'd like to ask you all for a little help. As many of you know, the Orlando Chapter is moving our annual conference to October this year and extending it to a two-day event with presentations and seminars on the first day and a full-day workshop on the second. This year's conference, TRENDS '97, will focus on many of the technological issues facing technical communicators both in their jobs every day and in the future. Our keynote speaker and workshop leader, Dr. Jonathan Price, is a nationally known expert on designing online help systems. His attendance alone will almost guarantee a well attended and successful event.

What I need your help with is in assisting our conference committee (and its wonderful manager, Alice Sennott from Fiserv) coordinate various activities associated with the event. With more than 120 members in the Orlando Chapter, surely we can pull together 15-20 capable people to help Alice make our first truly regional conference a great event. In the weeks ahead, I'm going to be calling many of you to ask for your assistance. I realize we're all busy, but the more capable people we have to help, the less time it will take for any of us, and we'll have some fun too. Please consider becoming part of our conference committee. ⊠

Perspectives:
Newsletter & Membership

By Lori Corbett

As the Managing Editor of *Tech Trends* and the Membership committee chair, I thought I would combine my comments into one article this month.

About the Newsletter

Producing *Tech Trends* has become much easier as we settle into an established routine. However, it takes a lot of people to accomplish this feat. We have a new member of the newsletter staff, Betty Jasper, who has agreed to help wherever and whenever we need her. Betty graciously agreed to help compile the Job Opportunities section and filled in at the last minute to take care of the January Meeting notes.

In addition to our regular contributors, we can always use individual contributions. An excellent example is Gail Lippincott's article this month. Feel free to contact me about any ideas you may have; I am sure we will be able to use it!

We finally found a paper stock we like. I hope you like it too. Now you will recognize *Tech Trends* when you see it in your mailbox! And this is the first six-page issue. We want to include so much in the newsletter that we had to expand. To support this effort, the Administrative Council approved the idea of accepting advertising in *Tech Trends.* If you would like a rate card, please contact me and I will forward one to you.

About Membership

As evidenced by the great turnout at January's meeting, our membership is active and growing. This is really great! The potential for our profession is enormous, and membership in the Society is an important ingredient to our success. I just want to remind those folks who have not renewed or who might want to join STC as new members, you must complete the paperwork (pay) by the end of February to be eligible to vote in the this spring's Society election. ⊠

Candidate Views:
Perspectives from the Second Vice President Hopefuls

By Elizabeth Babcock
Manager, STC Nominating Committee

When you get your ballot for this year's STC Spring 1997 election, I hope you'll agree with me that the high caliber of the candidates makes the choices difficult. Of all the positions on the ballot, perhaps the most significant is the one for second vice president, because whoever you elect will be managing Chapter Affairs (your director-sponsor) 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 president of STC. Finally, he or she will serve on the first 21st-century board as the Society's immediate past president. All that will depend on your vote this year.

In an attempt to help you make an informed decision about the candidates for second vice president, the STC Nominating Committee posed three questions to Mary Wise and Mark Hanigan (this year's candidates). In the first of a two-part series, this month's article looks at their responses to the question: "What has your job as director-sponsor taught you that you can apply to the presidential chain of offices?"

Mark Hanigan:

The director-sponsor job carries with it the full complement of tasks associated with supporting the chapters and serving as a voting member of the STC Board. I think that this is very important because one has to understand the requirements and challenges of sustaining quality chapters. This understanding facilitates more comprehensive decisions at the Society level that are sensitive to serving the best interests of the chapters and membership as a whole. After all, this is why the Society board exists in the first place.

My experiences as a director-sponsor have provided me with exposure to the full complement of challenges and issues that chapters must meet and that individual members face. I have assisted in the formation of new chapters, helped struggling chapters get back on their feet, and supported more-established chapters in pursuit of their next-level goals. I think that this experience, combined with years of service at chapter administrative council positions, has given me a solid understanding of the types of support that chapters need at the board level.

At the same time, I have learned that one person certainly cannot "do it all." The collective, cooperative efforts of all of us are needed to attain the loftier goals. I am also sensitive to providing support for individual accomplishment. In other words, I believe in letting individual "take ownership" of their respective tasks and challenges.

Mary Wise:

During my term as director-sponsor, I've learned four main lessons:

1. There is no right answer to any problem. I've learned to listen attentively to all opinions. Good ideas are everywhere; by acknowledging the value in everyone's opinion, we can find solutions to the most challenging problems. I'll apply this knowledge by actively seeking out constructive criticism, concrete suggestions, and innovative solutions to the challenges we face.

2. People need both structure and freedom: structure, so that they know what to do and when to do it; and freedom, so that they can do it creatively. I'll apply this knowledge as I have in my career — by providing guidance rather than by micromanaging. The talented people who serve on the board are adult professionals. I will trust them to complete their jobs or to tell me if they cannot.

3. I've learned to ask for help and to accept help when it's offered. The success of the Society does not hang on one person, one group of people, or one segment of membership. The success of the Society depends on all of us working together toward common goals. I'll apply this knowledge by asking our members to help us achieve these goals, by attending chapter meetings, by volunteering at the chapter and Society levels, and by telling us their opinions.

Finally, I've learned that a good sense of humor can carry you through tense times as well as smooth times. I think that we sometimes forget that the Society can be a lot of fun. There's no point in taking on these jobs if we don't receive pleasure from them. I'll apply this knowledge by continuing to look upon the Society as a joyful part of my life. ⌘

STC President to Launch Conference

Meet STC President Jody Heiken on April 12, when she launches the 1997 Region 3 Student Conference! Her keynote address—Probe the Future: Strategies for Tomorrow's Technical Comunicators—will focus on how STC can help you prepare for the future. The conference, hosted by the SpaceTech chapter, is co-sponsored by the Suncoast, First Coast, Palm Beaches, and Orlando chapters.

We hope that you can join us on the Florida Tech campus in Melbourne, Florida, for career-boosting conference sessions that explore career paths, tools, trends, and technologies for the 21st century! For more information, contact Helen Black: hblack@gate.net • (813) 894-2272. ⌘

Employment Opportunities

The Central Florida region continues to be a hotbed of activity for technical writing positions. The following list outlines some of the positions currently available in the area. Remember to check the hotline (262-2064) for the latest employment opportunity information.

Position: **Junior Technical Writer** (Permanent Consultant)
Location: Maitland
Contact: Rob Stadulis, American Computer Technologies, 2301 Maitland Center Parkway, Suite 445, 407/875-1188, FAX 407/875-2058,
email recruiter@actconsulting.com
Description: Design WEB pages, etc. Good writing and people skills.

Position: **Technical Writer**
Location: Naples
Contact: Allen Systems Group, Inc., 750 111th St. South, Naples, FL 34101, Attn: HR, FAX 941/263-1952
Description: Three to five years' experience specializing in software documentation. Entry level also considered. FrameMaker for Windows 95, Adobe Acrobat, creating online documentation and developing standards for online documentation, WordPerfect 5.2 for Windows. Degree in English Composition, Journalism, or Technical Communications.

Position: **Senior Technical Writer** (2 positions)
Location: Orlando
Contact: Attn: HR, Fiserv, 2601 Technology Drive, Orlando, FL 32804
Description: Five years' experience and strong interpersonal skills. Experience with financial software, online documentation, and Microsoft Word.

Position: **Software Technical Writer** (Consultant)
Location: Melbourne
Contact: Harris Corporation, Michael Slate, Aerotek, 800/775-8851 x3546, email mslate@Aeroteck.com
Description: Three to five years' experience specializing in software documentation. Entry level also considered. FrameMaker for Windows 95, Adobe Acrobat, creating online documentation and developing standards for online documentation, WordPerfect 5.2 for Windows. Degree in English Composition, Journalism, or Technical Communications.

Position: **Technical Writer**
Location: Indialantic
Contact: MacKenzie Lovings Faure, Communication Team Lead, Software Productivity Solutions, Inc., 122 Fourth Ave., Indialantic, FL 32903, 407/984-3370,
email mfaure@SPS.com
Description: Three to six years' experience. Skills set: user writing, some marketing writing experience, editing skills, WEB knowledge, multimedia skills using Director. Software skills: Word, FrameMaker.

Position: **Technical Writer** (Consultant to Permanent)
Location: Orlando
Contact: Sandy Montini, RE: Technical Writer Position, TeamAlliance, 101 Southhall Lane, Suite 400, Maitland, FL 32751, 407/667-4890, FAX 800/667-0146, email teamfl@ix.netcom.com
Description: Three to five years' experience specializing in software documentation. Entry level also considered. FrameMaker for Windows 95, Adobe Acrobat, creating online documentation and developing standards for online documentation, WordPerfect 5.2 for Windows. Degree in English Composition, Journalism, or Technical Communications.

Position: **Technical Writer** (Consultant)
Location: Orlando
Contact: Kolby burger, MAXIM group, 407/657-3422
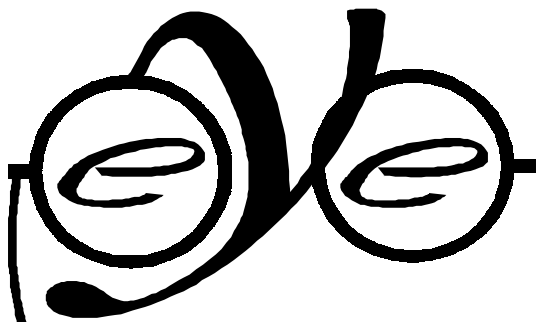Description: Knowledge of RoboHelp.

Position: **Documentation Specialist**
Location: Lakeland
Contact: Mariott Vacation Club International, P.O. Box 890, Lakeland, FL 33802, Attn: HR DS/DR, 813/688-7700, FAX 813/284-5420
Description: Knowledge of FrameMaker 5.0 for Mac, familiar with IS department. Online documentation and desktop publishing.

February 17th

PRESIDENTS' DAY

On Language

Time Marches On

By Mary Kendig

As we settle into what promises to be another action-packed year, it seems appropriate to devote this column to days, months, and years (that is, how to write them). Some of these rules are basic, but I for one believe they bear repeating!

☞ All of us know the correct way to write complete dates (month, day, and year): **February 26, 1997.** However, if we simply want to refer to month and year, no comma is necessary: **February 1997.**

☞ Writers in the U.S. government and in many foreign countries prefer to list day, month, and year. In these instances, no comma is needed between month and year: **26 February 1997.**

☞ If we refer to month and day without including the year, we should not use ordinal endings such as *nd, st,* or *th* after the numeral:

March 25 is correct; **March 25th** is not correct; **the 25th** is also not correct (revise it to read **March 25**). *For street addresses, however, ordinal endings are appropriate: 123 25th Street.*

☞ If we refer to a decade or another time period that we would make plural by adding an *s,* do not use an apostrophe before the *s:* **The 1960s** is correct; **the 1960's** is not correct. However, we should use an apostrophe to indicate missing numerals in a year: **The class of '81** is correct; **the mid-'70s** is correct; **the '90s** is correct.

Speaking of decades, as we prepare for the new millennium (and prepare to deal with the Millennium Bug), I wonder how we will designate the new decade in printed text if we do not want to use the two-zero part—**the '00s**? And how will we refer to it in speech? The **oh-ohs**? The **double-naughts**? Strange, but I guess we'll get used to it. ⚔

LIPPINCOTT *(Continued from Page 1)*

Gail as Nanook of the North

What's next? Writing my dissertation and then looking for a teaching position. Technical communication classes and programs are springing up all over the country, and the world,

for that matter. (We'll just see how far Bob is willing to move!) But wherever we go, the area *must* have an industry base that supports technical communicators, because I'm convinced that a successful academic program—such as UCF's and Minnesota's—needs internship and project opportunities from the "real world" for both students and teachers. STC fosters a symbiotic relationship between industry and academia, so an STC chapter is a must on my shopping list, you betcha. ⚔

Chapter Notes
January Meeting

By Betty Jasper

After welcoming the large gathering and recognizing new folks, Orlando Chapter President Dick Hughes announced receipt of two grants from Society headquarters in Arlington, Virginia: $500 to support the local high school Technical Writing Competition and $2,000 for the Orlando Chapter Scholarship Fund.

Vice President Charlotte Salveson introduced the program for the evening: a panel discussion of online help authoring tools and products, coordinated by Diane Heald. Diane Heald, Robin Myers, and Laurie Benson presented RoboHelp; Etta Jean Smith spoke about ForeHelp; Taylor Jordan discussed Doc-to-Help; and Bob Lanni spoke about HDK. Laurie Benson added related information about HTML help tools. The panel looked at platform options, processes, and product features. A high-tech interest group, spear-headed by Laurie Benson, was initiated at the end of the program.

The happy winners of the January door prizes were Sharon Wissert, Lori Corbett, Jon Kessler, and Melissa Reilier. ⚔

Administrative Council

By Paul Lockwood

The Council received word at its January 9 meeting that Education Committee chair Dan Voss is working with the Society's Certification Committee to select a consultant to look into the certification of our profession. Dan and the other Certification Committee members will be evaluating RFPs to determine who will conduct a 12-month feasibility study.

Chapter President Dick Hughes will be activating the Nominating Committee soon to guarantee a full slate of candidates for the spring elections. ⚔

Coming Up . . .

DATE	TOPIC	LOCATION
FEB. 26	**Chapter Meeting:** CD-ROM— How to Get There from Here 6:30 P.M.—Members:$5.00/Nonmembers: $7.00 R.S.V.P. to Charlotte Salveson at csalveson@paysys.com or 407-660-0343.	Winter Park Civic Center 1050 W. Morse Blvd. Winter Park, FL
FEB. 28	Deadline for submitting articles for the March issue of *Tech Trends*.	
MAR. 27	**Chapter Meeting**: Tour of UCF Laboratory with a presentation by Henrietta Shirk, Visiting Professor and nationally known author on hypertext and online documentation. 6:30 p.m.—Members: $5.00/Nonmembers: $7.00 R.S.V.P. to Charlotte Salveson at csalveson@paysys.com or 407-660-0343.	UCF Campus Humanities & Fine Arts Building Orlando, FL
APR. 5	**Region 3 Conference**—Currents 96: Rising to the Challenge For registration information, visit the conference web site at http://www.osoft.com/stc_atlanta/currents/register.html.	Mercer University Atlanta, GA
APR. 12	**Region 3 Student Conference**: Launching Your Career: Communication for the 21st Century—Keynote address by Jody Heiken. Preregistration fees are $25 (STC Student members); $30 (other students), $40 (other STC members), and $50 (all others). To receive registration material, contact Helen Black at hblack@gate.net.	Florida Institute of Technology Melbourne, FL

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