



Looking Back, Moving Forward The Melissa Pellegrin Scholarship...

By Dan Voss

If Melissa could be here, she would never believe the amount of recognition she is receiving from her professional peers.”

Thus spoke Fred Flesche in addressing the Trends '97 conference attendees at an emotionally charged dedication ceremony for the Melissa Pellegrin Memorial Scholarship Fund, which honors the memory of his daughter.

Melissa, a 1994 graduate of the University of Central Florida and a member of STC's Orlando chapter, died last spring. An exceptional student who earned an STC undergraduate scholarship, Melissa went on to serve on the Orlando Chapter's Education Committee following her graduation.

Silence gripped the audience as Dr. Dan Jones, who taught Melissa in several classes at UCF, delivered a touching tribute to her memory. He and chapter president Dick Hughes then dedicated a plaque that will permanently reside in the UCF English Department, bearing the names of those who receive Pellegrin scholarships each year.

This year's UCF scholarship recipients were undergraduate Sharon Wissert and two graduate students—Michele Damron and Melanie Woods.

Excellence awards, also under the aegis of the Pellegrin Fund, were presented to two community college students—Burton Braman from Seminole Community College and Luis Perez from Valencia Community College.

Melissa was employed as a technical communicator with TRC, Inc., in Tampa. Melissa's parents, her employer, and her coworkers all made substantial contributions to the fund, giving it a consider-

able boost towards the goal of achieving a self-sustaining endowment that will fund scholarships—and continue the memoriam—in perpetuity.

Education Committee Manager Dan Voss presented commemorative plaques to TRC, with Victor Chapel (Melissa's fiance) accepting, and to her parents.

In his acceptance remarks, Fred Flesche stressed how committed Melissa was to the value of education and how appropriate it was that the chapter had chosen this means of honoring her memory. He said it was a great comfort to himself and Melissa's mother that many deserving students would benefit over the years from the fund that bears their daughter's name.

If you wish to make a tax-deductible contribution to the endowment, please send it to:

Melissa Pellegrin Memorial Scholarship Fund:
Treasurer, STC Orlando Chapter
P.O. Box 1343
Orlando, FL 32802-1343
(IRS ID #31-0919557) ☒

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

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A Note from the President . . . And Just Around the Corner...



By Dick Hughes

Can you believe it? The holiday season is almost upon us; where did the year go? Before we turn that corner I want to thank all of you who supported the chapter at the Trends '97 conference. Our first two-day conference was a definite success, and we are delighted that Dr. Price's workshop had such a good

turnout. We are incorporating some of your ideas and suggestions into our pre-planning for Trends '98.

Opportunities

As the end of 1997 draws near, and 1998 looms ahead, I'd like to offer you opportunities to help the Orlando Chapter and to save yourself some money.

We need volunteers to work on several of our committees in the new year, including: Conference, Education, Newsletter, and Publicity.

We have several needs in each of these exciting areas; we would like to add your input and expertise to these vital activities. Please call me at 660-2552 or e-mail me at hughesrl@cdm.com if you can help.

On the money-saving note, please remember that as the new year approaches,

so does your STC membership renewal. If you renew your membership or become a new member before the end of this year (1997), your membership is automatically extended through 1998. Where are you going to find sessions and workshops like those at Trends '97 for \$99 (the member rate)?

Another item of interest is STC's annual call for research grants. If you are interested in submitting an application, the deadline is February 15, 1998. I have the official guidelines; so if you're itching to do some "cutting edge" research in our field, I'll be glad to give you the paperwork.

And last but not least, I hope to see all of you at our November 20 meeting at UCF, where we will participate in the designing and building of a Web page. ☒

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Tech Trends, published six times per year, is the official publication of the STC Orlando Chapter. We encourage letters, articles and other items from STC members for publication. Please refer to "Coming Up" for deadline information. Address submissions to Lori Corbett, 26924 Becker Court, Leesburg, FL 34748; e-mail: Corbettlj@aol.com

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 reprint.

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Atlanta Chapter Seeks Presenters for Annual Currents Conference

By Mary Menz

The Atlanta chapter of STC is currently accepting proposals for papers to be presented at Currents '98, its tenth annual conference, to be held in Atlanta on March 21, 1998. The theme and focus of this year's conference is "Informing the World."

Presentations geared to help technical communicators explore new ways to communicate with world-wide audiences are encouraged. Potential presenters must submit a 100-300 word abstract for a 1 hour and 15 minute presentation. The deadline for submissions is November 21, and selected presenters will be notified by December 19.

Currents—the annual regional conference of the Atlanta chapter—brings together technical communicators such as writers, editors, educators, engineers, programmers, illustrators, printers, scientists, publishers, information designers, etc., throughout the Southeast.

Visit the Atlanta chapter Web site at www.pobox.com/~stc-atlanta for proposal and submission requirements or contact Mary Anne Castranio at maryanne.castranio@mapics.com or Mary Menz at marymenz@mindspring.com. ☒

Member Spotlight: A Salute to Dan Jones

By Alicia Baskin

In 1979, when some of our current STC membership were contemplating high school graduation, Daniel (Dan) Jones began teaching technical writing at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University here in Florida, later moving to University of Central Florida. During his 14 years teaching at UCF, he has received two department teaching awards and the College Teacher Award (1995). Today UCF has a state-of-art writing lab, due in large part to Jones' efforts in promoting technical writing.

Our local chapter of STC owes a debt of gratitude to Daniel Jones, Ph.D. Over the years he has chaired and led committees, written articles and books, raised support and awareness, and most importantly, taught and inspired a generation of technical communicators. While teaching, Jones has actively participated in our chapter, chairing several chapter committees, such as the education and nominating committees, which have raised both funds and leaders. In addition, he coordinated the

chapter's newsletter production from 1985 to 1990.

Currently, Jones is promoting his new books: *Technical Writing Style and Technical Communicator's Handbook*. These books, published by Allyn and Bacon, define a clear writing style for any technical writing application. His previous book, *Defining Technical Communication*, is an anthology of articles published by STC.

Even though Jones has written award-winning articles and three books, educating others, he says, is still more important. He has stated that helping students to realize their potential and become professional technical writers is his greatest professional accomplishment.

As we near the end of this century, technical writing continues to change. As Dr. Jonathan Price (keynote speaker at **Trends '97**) pointed out, more and more information is transferred electronically. Jones' research of the Internet as an information media fits that trend. And, his research into technical prose stylistics for computer documentation seeks to answer

the immediate and future needs of technical writers.

As our media changes and our work roles become redefined, one of the constants for technical writing will always be teaching. When you consider the contributions Jones makes to STC through teaching, it is good to know that he is a consistent part of our changing profession. ✨



Dr. Dan Jones

Multimedia for the Technical Communicator

November 20th
UCF Writing Lab

See how easy it is to build a multimedia web page. If you remember when the Web was something a spider made (and if you're just as scared of both kinds!) this meeting is one you shouldn't miss. R.S.V.P. to Gwen Thomas at (407) 660-8807 x403 or gthomas @paysys.com.

Chapter Notes

By Laurie Benson

The September meeting focused on International issues. With several of our local companies expanding into overseas markets, there is no time like the present to discuss localization of our publications. In case you are not familiar with that word, "localization" of a document goes further than simply translating it from one language into another by also considering cultural issues. Nadejda

Bojilova pointed out in her presentation that culture and language combine to form a "vicious" circle as each influences the other. Kathleen K. Hennessy from Berlitz Translation Services showed us how her company handles translating not only publications, but also videos, CBTs, and Web pages. An important tip from Kathleen is to remember that when you create graphics, build and keep the text on a separate layer so that the text in the picture can be translated to another language without requiring recomposition of the image. ✨

Employment Opportunities

By Loretta Lott

Here are the additions to our employment hotline. Remember to check the hotline (262-2064) for the latest employment opportunity information.



Position: Assistant Technical Writer
Location: Gainesville
Contact: Documentation Manager, Medical Manager
 Research and Development, 15151 NW 99th St.,
 Alachua, FL 32615; Fax: 904/462-1505,
 Attn.: Ben Plumb
Description: Write and research for technical manuals and software systems. Requires expert knowledge of WordPerfect 6.1, good written and verbal communication skills, organizational ability, and attention to detail. Technical writing course work and/or degree preferred. Send resume and salary history.

Position: Documentation Specialist
Location: Lake Mary
Contact: HR Dept. DS 10/06, HTE Inc., 1000 Business
 Center Drive, Lake Mary, FL 32746;
 Fax: 407/304-1045
Description: Document and test software products. Send resume, salary requirement, and writing samples.

Position: Contract Technical Writers
Location: Maitland
Contact: Kristin Carozza, The Registry, 1900 Summit
 Tower Blvd., Suite 810, Orlando 32810; Phone:
 407/916-9119 (888/830-9119);
 Fax: 407/916-2997; E-mail: kcarozza@tri.com
Description: One RoboHELP developer for a six-month contract in Mt. Dora.
 Two technical writers with JAD experience. No contract length stated.

Position: Contract Technical Writer
Location: Orlando
Contact: Laura Gorsky, Interim Technology;
 Phone: 407/839-4707
Description: Framemaker 5, RoboHELP 3, Word 6, and Win95 or WinNT. No contract length stated.

Position: Contract Technical Writers
Location: Orlando
Contact: Carla French, Technical Director, Carley
 Corporation, 3203 Lawton Road, Suite 251,
 Orlando, FL 32803; Phone: 407/894-5575;
 Fax: 407/895-3865
Description: Senior Level Writer, Beginning/Intermediate. Word 6.0 and Powerpoint 4.0. Updating and reformatting existing instructor-led curricula for military courses. 20-40 hours per week. Work from home or a company facility. Thirteen-month contract (11/97-12/98).

Position: Contract Junior Technical Writer
Location: Orlando
Contact: James Hawley, Romac International;
 Phone: 407/843-0765; Fax: 407/841-8857
Description: 1+ years of experience or junior-level writing position. Write and edit manuals. Knowledge of Word, Framemaker, Visio, Pagemaker, Adobe Acrobat. No contract length stated.

Position: Technical Writer Consultant
Location: Orlando
Contact: CIBER, Inc., Attn: Felicia Slattery, 2180 S.R.
 434, Suite 4148. Longwood, FL. 32779-5011;
 Phone: 800/800-0682; Fax: 407/682-6564;
 e-mail: fsciber@worldramp.net (ASCII Text
 Please)
Description: Two- to three-month contract; requires interfacing with a Quality Assurance department, working with Internet Applications and ISO 9000 standards. Must be a self-starter, able to describe complex business, operational, and engineering processes in simple terms. Experience working with flow-charts and similar techniques desired.



Trends '97 provided a wonderful opportunity to interact with faculty members, students, technical communication professionals, and experts who shared valuable knowledge about our field. Dr. Price's Saturday workshop was a refreshing session, in which he encouraged professionalism and provided an excellent guideline for the online help development process. For me, Trends '97 was a great success!

—Melba Medina, Walt Disney World

How can we out-tech the techies? One way is through attending or presenting at STC conferences. Yes, I said presenting. The Trends '97 conference was a small step towards bringing us more in touch with the new technologies that are emerging rapidly. Keeping in the forefront of these technologies is not just a nicety but is essential to our survival as respected communication professionals.

—Laurie Benson, ImageSoft Technologies

Friday's concurrent sessions gave us a chance to hear about current methods and issues in technical communications, providing overviews of a variety of topics without the time and expense required to attend full-length commercial seminars on each topic. From these sessions, we could determine which topics were relevant enough to our professional lives and personal interests to merit further pursuit on our own. Even topics that were not directly linked to our day-to-day activities were engaging, just from the standpoint of keeping up with what is going on "out there" in the world of technical communication.

—Fred Jaskowski, PaySys International, Inc.

Regional News: STC Actively Celebrates Autumn

By Michelle Ratcliffe

Wow, is it October already? I can hardly believe it, but it must be true—the evidence is all there.

STC chapter meetings are back in full swing, competition deadlines are looming on the horizon, and we've already concluded two of the five conferences offered in Region 3— Practical Career Help and Information in Communication Conference (PCHICC pronounced “peachick”) and Trends. Oh, and of course for those of you who live north of Tampa, there are probably other signs too, like changing foliage, lower temperatures, and that sort of thing.

Last week, I attended the first PCHICC in Knoxville, TN. This conference was designed for the University of Tennessee students interested in technical communication as well as for students who may not yet know about the technical communication field or who are not in a traditionally related degree program.

I have to tell you this was one of those experiences that really makes me glad I am involved with STC. I spoke about the organization of STC, the benefits of STC membership, and the importance of establishing, building, and cultivating a personal and professional network. The interaction with both the attendees and the conference planning committee was tremendous. It is easy to rejuvenate your professional spirit when surrounded by such enthusiasm, curiosity, and energy. This was the same feeling I got from participating in the Region 3 Student Conference last year. I highly recommend participating in these events. Not only do

you feel good by sharing your experience, you make great contacts for future recruits.

Congratulations to Sharon Sharp and the PCHICC committee and to Alice Sennott and the Trends committee for your successes!

Pssst! Hint, Hint (yes, you)

It is not too late to enter an STC competition. Check www.stc.org for a list of competitions and deadlines. Also, check with the contacts to see if they need any judges or volunteers to help with judging day. This is a great opportunity to keep up with the happenings with a relatively low impact time commitment.

Notable Notes

Activity for selecting nominees from your chapter for Distinguished Chapter Service awards should be well under way. The Society encourages each chapter to submit at least one nomination each year. If you have fewer than 100 members, you may nominate one person. If you have more than 100 members, you may nominate one person for every 100 members.

To nominate someone, your chapter administrative council must submit the name of the nominee with a brief paragraph explaining why the individual is being nominated. The nomination should also include a brief citation.

The Board uses this general criteria when considering to make the award to individuals:

- Length of chapter membership
- Consistency of service during the time of chapter membership
- Variety of service to STC.

After your chapter selects a nominee, the next step is to submit nominations to me by November 1. After reviewing the nomination, I present my recommendations to the board of directors at the January board meeting. The board reviews the recommendations and authorizes the signing and distribution of the beautiful Distinguished Chapter Service Award plaques. For the formal guidelines for the award, contact the Society office in Arlington.

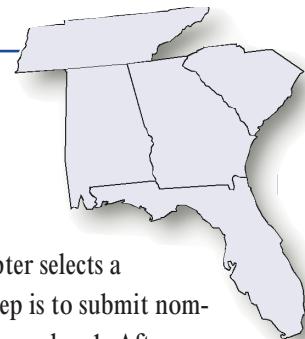
Michelle Ratcliffe
8942 Bayaud Drive
Tampa, FL 33626
813/920-3539
Ratcliffe@msn.com ✉

Admin Council

By Laurie Benson

At the October meeting, the administrative council reviewed the attendance and evaluation results from **Trends '97**. Attendance met our goals and most of the sessions received more positive than negative evaluations. A popular comment was that the sessions were too short to cover the technologically advanced topics to the extent they deserve. We plan to request more information about each session's content next year so time can be allocated more appropriately.

Believe it or not, it's not too soon to start planning for **Trends '98**. If you have any suggestions for a keynote speaker, please let us know or better yet, volunteer to be on the conference committee for **Trends '98**. ✉





on Language

Want to Pump You(r Sentences) Up!

By Mary Kendig

Have you ever noticed that some of the most common sentence constructions we use these days contain a bunch of words we could do without? Two frequently used wordy constructions are *there is/are* and *it is*. I call these “empty words” or “false subjects” (among other things). Take the following sentences (please):

- There are no additional repairs needed.
- There are five factors that influenced our decision.
- It is this phase that is the most important.

- We feel that it is critical that the costs be explained.

Ugh. Just where are the elusive real subjects in these sentences? They are buried in the middle of a bunch of empty, limp words - words that do nothing but weaken what could be concise, perhaps even powerful, sentences. Here, if you will, are the “Arnold Schwarzenegger versions” of the above sentences:

- No additional repairs are needed.
- Five factors influenced our decision.
- This phase is the most important.
We feel that explaining the costs is critical.

Ah, much better. Strong, concise, direct—truly “pumped up.”

Now, in addition to wondering about the current state of my mental health, perhaps you may be muttering, “Yeah, right. But sometimes, you just can’t get around

using *it is* or *there is/there are* in a sentence.” Well, you are correct. Take this sentence, for instance:

It is raining.

The word *it* is an abstraction, but what could you say instead? Ask yourself, What is raining? (Not too loudly, however, or people will stare.) In this case, no other word or words would be as functional or expedient as the false subject *it*. However, only in such limited circumstances as “It is raining” or “It is noon” are false subjects acceptable. Otherwise, these fakers **must** be eliminated.

So, I hope that from now on, when you see the words *it is* or *there is/there are* in a sentence, a little bell will go off inside your heads. This bell should signal you to rework the sentence and eliminate the empty, weak, false subject. If on hearing this bell, however, you see people beginning to rush toward the stairwell, forget the sentence and run like heck, because it’s probably the fire alarm! ❗

Coming Up . . .

DATE	TOPIC	LOCATION
Nov. 15	<p>Entry Deadline: Florida Technical Communication Competition (Student Level) Contact: Lore Eargle at leargle@miscrod.com</p>	
Nov. 20	<p>Chapter Meeting: Multimedia for the Technical Communicator, presented by David Gillette and Dan Jones 6:30 p.m.—Members: \$5.00 / Nonmembers: \$7.00. R.S.V.P. to Gwen Thomas at gthomas@paysys.com or 407-660-8807 ext. 403</p>	University of Central Florida Orlando, FL
Nov. 21	<p>Deadline: Currents '98, Call for Presenters. For more information, see “Atlanta Chapter Seeks Presenters for Annual Currents Conference” on page 2.</p>	
Dec. 9	<p>Chapter Meeting: Holiday Party Details to be announced.</p>	4th Fighter Group Orlando, FL
Jan. 3	<p>Deadline: December/January issue of <i>Tech Trends</i>.</p>	
Feb. 8-11	<p>6th Annual Online Help Conference For more information, contact WinWriters at 800-838-8999 or www.winwriters.com</p>	Seattle, WA