TECH Trends

STC's 45th Annual Conference Offers Opportunities for Fun

By Jerri L. Houdayer

If you are planning to attend STC's 45th Annual Conference in Anaheim, California, you are probably making arrangements for hotel accommodations, determining what types of sessions you will want to attend, and deciding what kinds of fun you'll have in your free time. Well, deciding what to do outside the conference may be the most difficult choice, because Southern California has literally hundreds of attractions, shopping options and learning opportunities, enough to fill several summer vacations.

Where Do You Start?

Here are a few things to do and see in Southern California. Keep them in mind as you plan your trip. And remember: for more information about the conference in general, consult the Preliminary Program (Note: This year's Preliminary Program will be the March issue of *Intercom*).

Fast Rides

Hold on to your fanny packs, kids, and get set to roller coast, splash, scream, bounce and whirl to a bevy of exciting rides for riders of all ages at Knotts Berry Farm and Disneyland. Both of these famous theme parks recently increased their "scream factor" by adding additional roller coasters, or increasing the size of existing ones. In fact, Knotts Berry Farm recently added two roller coaster rides (Jaguar and Windjammer) and is currently planning construction on the world's largest all-wooden roller coaster. No word yet whether it will be ready

by the time of the conference.... If you've got smaller passengers and are interested in smaller thrills, check out Adventure City, just down the street from Knott's Berry Farm. Adventure City is a miniature theme park set inside a collection of hobby shops, appropriately called Hobby City. There are tiny trains to ride, a small (but zippy) roller coaster, a beautiful 1920s era musical carousel, petting zoo, video games, acting theatre and much more to captivate the interest of small and big children alike.

Beachin' It

Orange County's beaches are arguably the most beautiful in the world, and best of all, there are lots of them! There is a beach setting to suit any taste, including Laguna Beach with its world-renowned

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

A Note from the President . . .
Welcome to Springtime!

By Dick Hughes

The azaleas are in bloom, the grass is greening up, the sunshine is becoming warmer, and the chapter is getting ready once again for its annual elections in April. I'd like to thank the members of the chapter's Administrative Council who agreed to continue in office and other members who agreed to join the chapter's leadership team for the first time—without your support, we wouldn't have a chapter. I'd also like to thank the many committee leaders and members for their unselfish contributions to the chapter this year.

Chapter Accomplishments

The Orlando chapter has accomplished a lot this year:

❑ Our Conference Committee successfully moved our annual Region 3 Trends Conference to the fall and expanded the format to two days. We continue to be excited about moving toward our opportunity of helping host the STC Annual Conference in 2000.

❑ Our Education Committee helped establish the Melissa Pellegrin Memorial Scholarship Fund with much more of an initial investment than we ever dreamed of.

❑ Our Membership Committee has taken a great stride in updating and creating a digital membership database.

❑ Our Programs Committee has consistently organized and presented excellent and inexpensive monthly programs.

❑ Our Website Committee is in the process of updating and enhancing our chapter web pages.

❑ Our Employment Manager has had a great year of maintaining and listing job opportunities on our chapter hotline.

❑ Our newsletter's new managing editor, Nadia Bojilova, has done a wonderful job taking over *Tech Trends*

Dick Hughes

**President
Orlando
Chapter STC**

from world traveler Lori Corbett. Nadia is always looking for topical news items. If you have any ideas for articles, please give her a call.

Looking Forward

There are a few things coming up in the months ahead that I'd like to remind you about. In addition to our regular monthly chapter meetings/programs on March 25 and April 22, we have the Region 3 Currents Conference in Atlanta on March 20-21 and the STC Region 3 Student Conference on March 28 at the Florida Institute of Technology in Melbourne. The fee for the student conference is very reasonable ($25 for students and $40 for regular members). I hope to see many of our student members take advantage of this opportunity.

Also, watch for your official chapter election ballot in early April and be sure to return it promptly, or attend the April 22 chapter meeting to hand it in. And of course, the STC 45th Annual Conference is coming up in May in Anaheim, California. If you plan on attending, it's time to start your paperwork. ✠

Conference, *cont'd from page 1*

art community, Newport Beach, where the rich and famous glide their yachts into private harbors; Huntington Beach, the surfing capital; and Mother's Beach, where alert lifeguards patrol a calm sandy inlet while toddlers splash in the warm sun.

Museums

Southern California has its fair share of the cultured and traditional historical museums. But what may be of greater interest are the eclectic collections that have helped define California. Such museums as Bower's, in Santa Ana, illustrating the vivid and often violent history of the old Southwest, Motts' Miniatures Museum, the Queen Mary (now the worlds largest floating hotel), The Los Angeles Car Culture Museum, and even a Ripley's Believe It Or Not Museum.

Recreational Activities

Skydiving, trampoline lessons, surfing, wine-tasting, murder-mystery dinner theatres, shopping, scuba-diving, whale-watching, birdwatching, hiking, world-class golfing, baseball games, Blimp rides—just about anything you can think of to do for fun is available in the Southern California area. The Anaheim/Orange County Visitor and Convention Bureau can help with more information about fun activities in the area. You can contact them through their Web site at http://www.anaheimoc.org or at (714) 999-8999. ⌘

Thanks for the Opportunity!

By Alice Atkins

I want to thank the Society for Technical Communications for giving me the opportunity to get involved in the production of *Tech Trends*. I've been working on the newsletter for two years now. It was a great opportunity to get to know many of you. But, it's time for me to pass the creative portion of the newsletter on to one of you.

Let me tell you a little about the responsibilities of the Production Coordinator. As you may know, the newsletter is produced on a bi-monthly basis. Technical writers are encouraged to submit articles to the *Tech Trends* managing editor, Nadia Bojilova. Nadia manages the newsletter content, edits the articles and passes them along via e-mail to me, the Production Coordinator. I determine the layout of the articles and add any corresponding artwork, photographs, pull-quotes, captions, etc. Nadia reviews a preliminary layout and makes any last minute suggestions. I incorporate the final edits and forward the newsletter on to the printer. The last step in the process is when I convert the existing layout into an Adobe PDF document for the chapter website and send the file to Bill Paskert to upload. That's all there is to it!

Sound interesting? If you are interested in designing the *Tech Trends* newsletter for the coming year, please feel free to call (407-767-9016) and ask me questions. I will be happy to assist the next designer through the transition period. ⌘

Admin Council

By Laurie Benson

The administrative council is researching investment funds to hold the Melissa Pellegrin scholarship fund. We want to make an informed decision about where to invest these funds so that we can obtain a favorable rate of return and enable this fund to grow strong and lucrative.

We are also approaching our annual election of officers. The STC year runs from July to June and so the time is approaching for those considering running for an office on the Administrative Council. The beginning of a new year is also a good time to volunteer to serve on a committee such as the Education, Programs, Conference, the Employment Hot Line, Membership, Publicity, Newsletter, and ByLaws. Contact Dick Hughes at 660-2552 to find out how you can join one of these committees. ⌘

Attention!!! We Need YOU!!
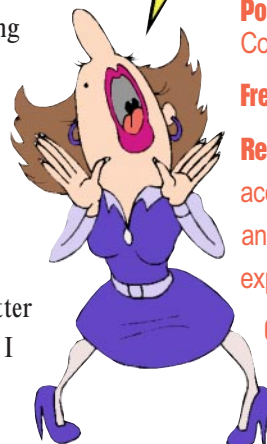
Position: Production Coordinator, *Tech Trends*

Frequency: Bi-monthly

Requirements: Must have access to a page layout program and some page layout experience

Contact: Dick Hughes at 660-2552 or hughesrl@cdm.com

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: Technical Writer
Location: Houston, Texas
Contact: Christine Hayes, BMC Software, 2101 City West Blvd., Houston, TX 77042, 713-918-1941, Email: Christine_Hayes@BMC.com
Description: Permanent position for a technical writer with a minimum of 2-3 years experience. Develop user manuals using FrameMaker for this computer network security software company. Required skills: Windows95 or Windows NT Desired skills: FrameMaker and RoboHelp.

Position: Senior Technical Writer
Location: Orlando, FL
Contact: Felicia Slattery, Technical Recruiter, Ciber, Inc. 2180 West S.R. 434, Ste. 4148, Longwood, FL 32779-5011, 407-682-1300 or 475-3025 Fax: 407-682-6564, fsciber@worldramp.net
Description: Assist with formatting, editing, writing, etc, in a MS Word and FrameMaker environment. Development and maintenance of design, diagnostic, and customer document training materials. Required Skills: FrameMaker, MS Word. Desired Skills: Host, UNIX, Windows, AS/400 based software programs.

Position: Technical Trainer
Location: Orlando
Contact: Walt Disney World Co. Information Services Professional Recruiter, Alicia Drummond, 828-7462
Description: Permanent position. Experience: BS degree in computer science or education. Design training programs for proprietary software system.

Position: Consultant Technical Writer
Location: Longwood
Contact: Rodney Reese, Aerotek, 1-800-859-3101 or 475-3025, Fax: 475-3091
Description: Coding and fixing of software manuals. Software editing and documentation skills Experience with mainframes and knowledge of FrameMaker. Civil designer or drafter with autocad 12,13, or 14 and with EITHER Eaglepoint, Autodesk or Softdesk experience. (6 month to perm position located in the north Orlando area.)

Position: Consultant Technical Writer (multiple positions)
Location: Jacksonville
Contact: Quentin Brown, Professional Software Solutions, Inc., 888-880-9774
Description: Experienced writer in information systems (e.g., user manuals, online help - html). Length 3-6 months.

Position: Technical Writer (multiple positions)
Contact: Janet Mazza or Andy Spinks, Software Resources, Inc. 195 Wekiva Springs Rd., Suite 214, Longwood, FL 32779, 869-8033, Fax: 869-1174
Description: Call for further details.

Volunteer at the Anaheim Conference!

The Anaheim Conference Committee is looking for volunteers to serve in the following areas:

❑   Hospitality booth
❑   Answer questions for those who are waiting in line
❑   Competition exhibit
❑   Greet people or hand out newsletters
❑   Host a table topic for networking luncheon

To volunteer for one of these areas, please contact Jerry Houdayer at jerri.l.houdayer@boeing.com. The committe is throwing a pre-conference party for all conference volunteers. In addition, each volunteer will receive a CD-ROM containing all conference seminars **Free!** Sign up and volunteer today!

Chapter Notes

By Laurie Benson and Lori Corbett

January Meeting

Have you ever thought about getting certified as a technical communicator? Right now, a certification process or mechanism doesn't exist. Also, it is unclear whether a certification program would be a benefit or a hindrance to our profession.

The STC National Office has contracted with Professional Testing, Inc. to conduct a random survey of STC members to determine whether its members are in favor of certification. If most members are overwhelmingly in favor of certification, STC may take additional steps to initiate such a program. It is the responsibility of a professional society after all, to serve its members and assist them to meet their goals.

Since our society is a diverse group, we may not agree on our goals. And on top of that, we are likely to have diverse opinions as to whether certification would help us achieve those goals. Certification has been deemed a topic worthy of STC consideration, and therefore, it is worthy of your time to consider this issue. In fact, you may be one of the members selected to respond to the written survey. If so, you have already received the survey in the mail.

The January meeting was an opportunity to talk to representatives of Professional Testing, Inc. and get a first hand look at the written survey. At the meeting, we divided into small groups to discuss what effect certification would have upon technical communicators. **Cynthia D. Woodley** of Professional Testing, Inc. welcomed the input from our chapter even when it was pointed out that some of their questions seemed to be worded in such a way as to predispose the advantages of certification.

Certification has some strong opponents as well as some strong proponents and you may hear more about this issue in the future. We'll be sure to keep you posted as news develops.

February Meeting

For our February chapter meeting, **Laurie Benson** and **Jon Kessler** (STC members working at Imagesoft Technologies) presented an excellent introduction to RoboHelp. After showing us a completed project, Jon and Laurie walked us through setting up and starting a help project.

The demonstration was extremely well received, especially after audience members commented that several companies in the

> **Laurie Benson and Jon Kessler presented an excellent introduction to RoboHelp**

Orlando area are seeking writers with RoboHelp experience.

In other chapter news, **Dick Hughe**s presented **Ann Vogt** with the third Mellissa Pellegrin Memorial Scholarship for the 1997-98 school year.

After receiving another donation from EDS, funding for the scholarship is doing better than expected with current funding up to about $6,000. Dick also announced

that the Orlando Chapter has received early word that **Dan Jones** has been elected as an Associated Fellow of the Society. The official presentation will be made at the 1998 STC Annual Meeting in Anaheim, California. Congratulations Dan, way to go!

As always, the meeting ended with the door-prize presentations. Wes Tracy and Alicia Baskin each received $10 Borders bookstore certificates.

Dan Jones' name was pulled for the third prize, a beautiful plant, which he graciously presented to **Ann Vogt**. ⌘
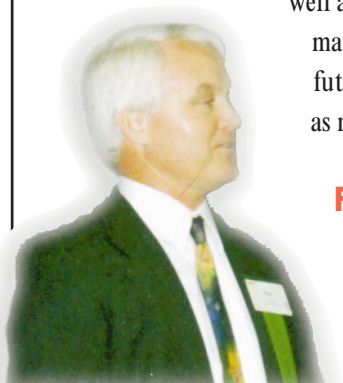
Learn About Your Candidates for Second Vice President

By Elizabeth Babcock, Manager, STC Nominating Committee

Each year, when you receive your ballot for the STC election, you're faced with a series of difficult decisions — and this year, I believe the Nominating Committee has made those decisions harder than ever by naming a slate of outstanding candidates.

Of all the choices on the ballot, perhaps the most significant is for second vice president, since whomever you elect will be managing Chapter Affairs (the director-sponsors) this year and the administrative committees of the Society next year. The following year, 2000-2001, that person will manage the first entirely 21st-century STC board as the Society's president. All that depends on this year's vote, since STC has an automatic succession through the presidential "chairs."

In an attempt to help you make an informed decision about the candidates for second vice president, the STC Nominating Committee posed an open-ended question to the excellent candidates, Jamie Conklin and Mark Hanigan, who are running for that office this year. Here are their answers.

What would you like to emphasize to the STC members as they consider you as a candidate this year?

Jamie Conklin: I believe that the most important issue facing the Society is change.

The economy is changing, and the everyday world of work is changing. Our tools and media are changing. And, to fill our new roles and responsibilities, we are changing our own values and behavior.

This spirit of change is evident in STC through our internationalization, our increasing focus on interactive electronic media, and our growing interest in understanding how we add value to our organizations. We have the opportunity to become one of the leading professions in the new information economy. Senior executives proclaim the need to gain a competitive advantage by harnessing the intellectual capital within organizations, and they are looking for skilled people to lead the way.

Their eyes are often coming to rest on us.

How can STC manage this change? By scanning the horizon for emerging trends, and adapting the Society's governance and services accordingly. By promoting increased internationalization that gives us the global perspective that we need. And by offering services that help our members make the transition to new information technology and new organizational responsibilities.

Years ago, Marshall McLuhan wrote of the time when people would "learn a living." The phrase resonates for me. Our profession proves that McLuhan was right. I know that I "learn" my living, and I am willing to bet that most of you do, too. These are exciting days, and I would be honored to work with all STCers to ensure that we contribute meaningfully to the creation of a new world of work.

> **Of all the choices on the ballot, perhaps the most significant is for second vice president**

Mark Hanigan: I have spent the last year completing a term as the Society secretary. This, in combination with my other Society experiences as director-sponsor, as manager of the International Technical Publications Competition, and as a member of various other committees, gives me the broad-based experience I need to manage STC at the Society level.

But more important, I feel that all of my life's experiences prepare me for this position. I have had my share of victories, but I have also had my share of days that were not mine to win. I think I have learned the most from the latter. I learned to accept the outcome with grace and dignity, I developed an empathy for others, and I strengthened myself so that I would have a better chance to succeed the next time around!

Briefly, I think that I bring these qualities to the proverbial table:

Experience — I have over 19 years in our profession; almost as many in STC.

Dedication — I am committed to STC, to our profession, and to you, our membership.

Warmth — I genuinely like people and am an approachable person.

Leadership — I believe that we get the most out of involvement; my leadership style is a participatory one in all facets. I also enjoy learning from others and providing a platform for them to demonstrate their strong suits!

Humor/Fun — I believe in the adage: "Take what you do seriously, but don't take yourself too seriously."

If I win, I promise to serve to the best of my ability.

Get Ready for the April Elections

Announcing the Candidates Running for Office in the April Election:

Presidential Candidate

Dick Hughes

President: . . . . .Dick Hughes
Vice President: . . . . .Carl Feigenbaum
. . . . .Lori Corbett
Secretary: . . . . .Laurie Benson
Treasurer: . . . . .William C. Wiese
Nominating
Committee: . . . . .Paul Dombrowski
. . . . .Gloria Jones

Look for your ballot (including more details on each candidate) in the mail soon!

Vice-Presidential Candidate

Lori Corbett

Secretarial Candidate

Laurie Benson

Treasurer Candidate
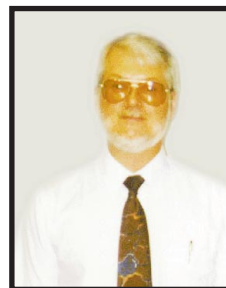
W.C. Wiese

Regional News:
Winter Board Meeting Notes

By Michelle Ratcliffe

In January, the STC Board of Directors met in Vancouver, BC, to take care of winter business items. The Canada West Coast chapter hosted the meeting and arranged an evening event at the First Nations House of Learning (The Longhouse) on the University of British Columbia campus, replete with a salmon dinner and aboriginal dancers. It was wonderful — and the weather was not even that cold to a Floridian like me!

Society-Level Additions

❏ Created Technical Editing SIG
❏ Approved the new Technical Editing SIG and named Tom Hoyt of the Willamette Valley chapter as the SIG manager

STC Board Reaches Out to Chapters

During the winter board meeting, the STC Board approved several action items to facilitate chapter activities, including:

❏ Establishing a travel budget for visits to chapter and regional activities for the Society Immediate Past President, Society Secretary, and Society Treasurer, starting in the STC Year 1998-99.
❏ Adding a "roadmap" and other information to the Chapter Handbook, to help small, medium, student, and non-North American chapters plan activities.
❏ Providing an area at the Annual Conference for organizations related to STC to display materials.

The Board also approved a new financial reporting process for student chapters to coincide with a fiscal year of May 1 through April 30, making it more convenient for student chapters to file their financial reports during the school year.

STC Awards, Grants and Loans

The following grants and loans were approved at the Winter Board Meeting:

❏ $10,000 research grant for Hans van der Meij of the Department of Instructional Technology, the Netherlands, for a study of "The Design and Role of Screen Captures in Software Documentation."
❏ $3,000 merit grant for the Chicago chapter to launch a publicity campaign for their chapter members' professional development and improved visibility of the profession among Chicago area businesses, students, and educators — through its publicity and education committees.
❏ $2,000 merit grant for the East Tennessee chapter (Region 3) to make the J. Paul Blakely Scholarship, established in 1975, closer to being self-sufficient. This fund provides a $500 annual scholarship and a $100 Blakely Award of Excellence for undergraduate students of technical communication at The University of Tennessee.
❏ $1,500 loan for the SpaceTech chapter (Region 3) to help pay the administrative costs associated with the Region 3 Student Conference on March 28, 1998.

Way to go Chicago, ETC, and SpaceTech!

Committee Managers Named

The STC Board approved Austin Brown as the 1997-98 Manager of the Nominating Committee and Annette Reilly as the 1997-98 Manager of the Strategic Planning Committee.

New Category Added to ISETC Competition

The STC Board added a new award category to the International Science and Engineering Technical Communication Competition for team projects, with an award amount of $250 for each member of the winning team.

Student Chapter Dissolved

The Wright State University Student Chapter was dissolved.

STC Approves Changes to Bylaws

The STC Board approved changes to the bylaws in Article VI - COMMITTEES, Section 4. Standing Committees, that tightened up the wording and changed the bylaws to more closely reflect the current functions of the Conference Advisory Committee and the Recognitions Advisory Committee. The two paragraphs affected now read as follows:

The conference advisory committee provides guidance and continuity in the planning and management of annual conferences by making the expertise of its members available to current and future conferences. Its members are selected principally from past conference program managers and members who have expertise in managing elements of conferences at the international, regional, and chapter levels.

Eye on Language

"Capital"-isms

By Mary Kendig

Some weeks ago, a friend suggested that it would be useful to devote an Eye column to the basic principles of capitalization. After half a minute of pseudo-serious contemplation, I happily retorted, "That's a capital idea!" (Short pause here so you can collectively roll your eyes and groan, just as my friend did before she shook her head and walked off.)

All puns aside, I agree that it would be beneficial to review the basics, so here goes. (Most of these rules come from the *Microsoft Manual of Style for Technical Publications*.)

In Text:

❑ Never use all uppercase letters for emphasis. (Use italic or bold type instead, but *sparingly.)*

❑ Always introduce an acronym in text by spelling it out completely at first mention and following it with the acronym in parentheses. Thereafter, just use the acronym.

❑ In general, avoid excessive capitalization. Use lowercase unless you have a specific reason for capitalizing something.

❑ Don't capitalize the spelled-out form of an acronym (unless it is the name of an organization, of course).

❑ Follow the capitalization rules or conventions of software (or a specific product) as necessary.

In Titles and Headings:

❑ Capitalize all nouns, verbs (including *Is* and other forms of *Be*, adverbs (including *Than* and *When),* adjectives (including *This* and *That),* and pronouns (including *Its).*

❑ Always capitalize the first and last words, regardless of their part of speech ("Here's What to Look For").

❑ Capitalize prepositions that are part of a verb phrase ("Backing Up Your Disk").

❑ Capitalize the second word in compound words if it is a noun or proper adjective or the words have equal weight (Cross-Reference).

❑ In table column headings, capitalize only the first word of each column heading.

❑ Do not capitalize articles (*a*, *an*, *the*) unless the article is the first word.

❑ Do not capitalize coordinate conjunctions (*and*, *but*, *for*, *nor*, *or*).

❑ Do not capitalize prepositions of four letters or fewer.

❑ Do not capitalize to in an infinitive phrase ("How to Win Friends and Influence People").

❑ Do not capitalize the second word in compound words (a) if it is a part of speech other than a noun or proper adjective, or (b) if it is a participle modifying the first word (How-to, Set-top Box).

In closing, here's a message for my friend: Now that I've condensed this information for you (and others), I hope that you will, as they say, **capital**ize on this learning opportunity. (Insert your additional groans here.) ✠

Regional, *cont'd from page 8*

The recognitions advisory committee provides guidance and continuity in planning and managing all Society recognition programs at the international, regional, and chapter levels. The committee makes the expertise of its members available to conference planning committees to provide advice and guidance on standards and procedures for recognition activities at the annual conference.

If you have any comments or questions on the change in the bylaws, please feel free to contact me.

Michelle Ratcliffe

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

Michelle Ratcliffe

Coming Up . . .

DATE	TOPIC	LOCATION
MAR. 25	**Chapter Meeting:** Presentation on Graphic File Formats. 6:30 p.m.—Members: $5.00 / Nonmembers: $7.00 R.S.V.P. to Gwen Thomas at (407) 660-8807 x 403 or gthomas@paysys.com.	Winter Park Civic Center 1050 W. Morse Blvd. Winter Park, Florida
MAR. 28	**1998 Region 3 Student Conference.** Hosted by the STC Space Tech Chapter. For more information refer to www.stc.org/region3/pbc/Student_Conference/student_conf.html.	Florida Institute of Technology 150 West University Blvd. Melbourne, Florida
APR. 1	**Deadline for submitting proposals for STC Internship Grants.**	
APR. 16–17	**Developing HTML Help:** an intermediate level, seminar style class offered by the University of Washington. For more information, contact Susan Stone at sstone@u.washigton.edu.	Seattle, Washington
APR. 22	**Chapter Meeting:** Election and TBD. 6:30 p.m.—Members: $5.00 / Nonmembers: $7.00 R.S.V.P. to Gwen Thomas at (407) 660-8807 x 403 or gthomas@paysys.com.	Winter Park Civic Center 1050 W. Morse Blvd. Winter Park, Florida
APR. 29	**Deadline for submitting articles for the May/June issue of *Tech Trends.***	
MAY 17–20	**45th STC Annual Conference.** Please refer to the March issue of *Intercom* for detailed information about conference activities.	Anaheim Hilton & Towers Anaheim Convention Center Anaheim, California