

TECH

STC
society for technical communication
Orlando Chapter
Volume 3, Number 5
March/April 1999

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A Note from the President . . .

Some Items on My List

by Dick Hughes

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Three items make up this issue's column. First, I'd like to thank all of you who attended our February 24 chapter meeting to learn about and planning for the STC Annual Conference this year in Cincinnati and next year here in Orlando. I realize this was a departure from our typical "content-oriented" monthly meetings, but with a bit of a vacuum in the Conference Support Committee organization at the society level, I felt we needed to try and get ourselves "up-to-speed" on what we need to do to get ready for the Annual Conference in 2000. The year 2000 conference is an event supported by all Florida chapters, however, since we are here in the host city, we have an obligation to take an active role in its success. We will keep you informed of ways you can help.

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Secondly, I need to put out a "Call for Editors" for this, our chapter newsletter, *Tech Trends*. Nadejda Bojilova, this newsletter's one-woman Managing Editor/Design Editor/Layout Editor/Production Coordinator is moving into new areas of responsibility and will be unable to continue in this role after the next issue. That means that we need to find some capable, enthusiastic, and willing to help newsletter editor by the end of the chapter year in June. We have been using PageMaker® as our desktop publishing tool and have a fairly automated layout process established. We need some talented volunteers to help with new design concepts, article placement and layout refinement, content editing and proofreading, and printing coordination. If you would like to be a part of the *Tech Trends* team, please contact me at

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660-2552 or via e-mail at hughesrl@cdm.com.

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Finally, according to chapter bylaws, I'd like to alert all members to the upcoming annual chapter elections in April. The chapter's nominating committee has developed the following proposed slate of officers for the 1999-2000 chapter year:

- President – Lori Corbett
- Vice President – Gail Lippincott
- Secretary – Carl Feigenbaum
- Treasurer – W.C. Wiese
- Nominating Committee – Laurie Benson and Bill Paskert.



Special election ballots will be mailed to all paid chapter members in early April. You can return your ballot by mail or bring it to the April 28 chapter meeting. Details will be included in the mailing. ☒

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Chapter Notes

by Laurie Benson

January Meeting

Independent Consulting, Barbara Odom, speaker

Technical communication by its nature lends itself to independent contracting. Or does it? Many aspects of our work can be done from a remote site with minimal interviews with technical experts or hands on exploration of an application.

Barbara Odom is close to the two-year mark as an independent freelancer. She says that work is available to support freelancing and that freelance life can be exciting and challenging. You won't need to complain about your boss or the burden of office politics.

Barbara shared the following tips with her audience:

1. Always keep looking for your next job. Send out more bids than you can handle because you probably won't win them all. Track your contacts and maintain a marketing database.
2. Invest in a quality fax machine that can also make copies. You'll need a separate fax and phone lines, a tape backup device, and a reliable Internet Service Provider. You'll need a room you can use for clients that may drop in, a good printer, and a telephone at your desk.
3. Request a deposit up front, at the midway point, and at completion. Calculate your hourly rates or your fixed bids carefully so that you can cover your overhead and indirect costs such as insurance and sick time. Budget carefully because you'll need to pay the IRS estimated taxes quarterly and your clients may not pay you on time.
4. Maintain a separate business checking account. Keep a business diary of whom you talk to and what was discussed.
5. You'll need to manage your time and maintain discipline. Find ways to prevent feelings of social disconnect by doing volunteer work and scheduling lunches with associates. ☒

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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 Nadejda Bojilova, 975 Vineridge Run #308, Altamonte Springs, FL 32714, or send them to nbojilova@paysys.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 print.



February Meeting

Dick Hughes and Maria Babilon discuss the organization and responsibilities of the STC annual conference support committee at the February 24 meeting. Maria, who is the Conference Support Committee Manager for this year's annual conference in Cincinnati, flew down from Dayton, Ohio especially to attend our meeting to help us learn about what needs to be done to prepare for the conference here in 2000.

VP Peeps

Springing into Action

by Lori Corbett

Our March and April meetings promise to be both exciting and intriguing.

March Meeting Information

On Thursday, March 25, we will take our annual field trip. This year, we have the opportunity to tour the Full Sail Center for the Recording Arts, one of the world's foremost schools for digital media, audio, film, and video careers. Deborah Lewandowski will take us through the facility where they emphasize hand-on experience in the learning process.

To ensure that we do not overwhelm Full Sail with too many attendees, I have set up the following RSVP guidelines:

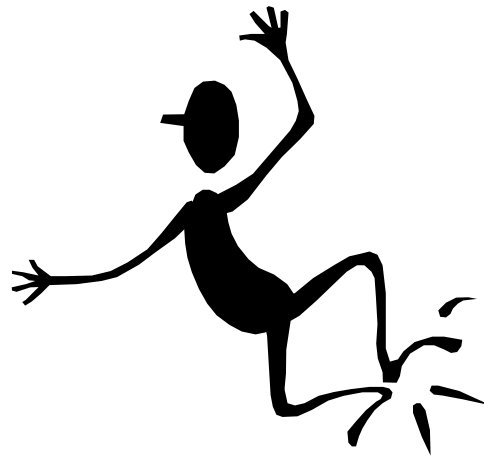
Members: RSVP no earlier than Thursday, March 18.
Nonmembers: RSVP no earlier than Monday, March 22.

Do not try to RSVP after 6:00 p.m. on March 23.

RSVPs will be accepted **only** via e-mail to stcmember@aol.com. All requests will receive a response verifying whether the request can be accepted and if so, the exact meeting location.

April Meeting Information

On Wednesday, April 26, Frank Dasse will present "Looking Forward to Retirement: a financial checkup."



Mr. Dasse will show us what to expect our financial needs will be at retirement, and provide information about how to accomplish those financial goals. Whether you are 25 or 50 years old, you are sure to learn more about planning for your retirement.

Future Planning

I hope you are all busy planning your trip to Cincinnati, Ohio, to attend the 46th Annual STC Conference on May 16 through 19. Not only will we be busy promoting Orlando as the site for next year's conference, we can also cheer Dan Voss as he accepts the honor of Associate Fellow to be bestowed at the Honors Banquet.

Even if you cannot attend this year's conference, we have many volunteer opportunities for the next year's conference. As it approaches, we'll keep you posted on all available positions.

I look forward to seeing you at this year's conference. You know I'll be there – the good Lord willing and the creek don't rise. ☒

Admin Council

by Laurie Benson

The council is researching what we need to do in our local chapter to prepare for the National Conference in Orlando in 2000. Our first task is to maintain a booth at this year's National Conference in Cincinnati. We hope there will be a strong turnout in Cincinnati and that those attending from the Florida chapters will volunteer a few hours of their time that week to take turns manning the Orlando 2000 booth.

On another note, the Nominating Committee has been officially called to action and will be soliciting nominations for next year's ballot. Remember, our local STC Chapter can only achieve what the local members work together to create. ☒

Employment Opportunities

by Diane Heald

Here are the last additions to our employment hotline. From now on, you can view all job postings on our STC Orlando Chapter Web site: <http://stc.org/region3/orl/www>. If you would like to know about available jobs as soon as they are received or if you have a job opening to post, contact Diane Heald at heald@iag.net.

Position Technical Writer
Location Lake Mary
Contact Suzanne Williams, Human Resources, HTE, Inc., 1000 Business Center Dr., Lake Mary, FL; web site: www.hteinc.com

Description Develop online help and training materials. Financial software and RoboHelp experience preferred.

Position Technical Writer
Location Maitland
Contact Alex Schweizer, Avio International Corporation, fax: 407-667-4105, aschweizer@avio.com

Description Technical Writer with BA/BS degree and experience documenting software in a Windows/client-server environment. Skills: strong writing/editing and online help authoring. Microsoft products, HTML, DTP, graphics, and similar tools are value added. Check out our web site at <http://www.avio.com> for more info about the company. We're fast-paced, self-directed, and team-oriented. We're cutting edge and we're into the latest technologies so fax or email your resume to the contact listed above.

Position Technical Writer
Location Heathrow
Contact Apply online at: www.seagatesoftware.com/careers (choose the 'Hire me' option) or e-mail to seagatensm@webhire.com (reference source 'STC' in the subject line), fax 1-800-245-3197 (reference source 'STC' on your cover sheet)

Description Senior level position responsible for creating integrated computer information products, including paper-based

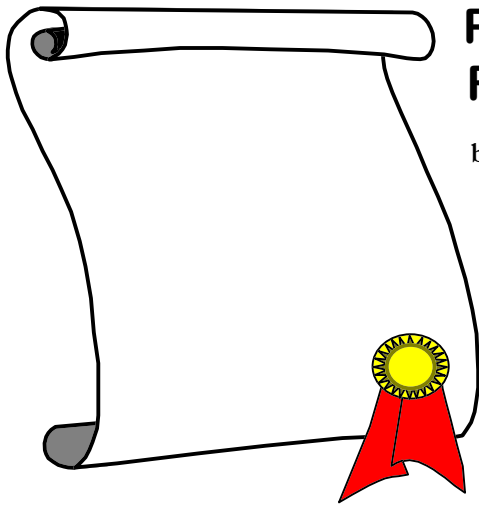


and online documentation, and online help systems. You will prepare documents used for internal/customer education and/or marketing, such as white papers and product reviewer's guides. Five+ years experience in the computer industry, preferably for a large software company, developing printed/online user documentation, online help, and marketing documents. Experience setting up and leading small to medium size writing projects a plus. Supervisory and project management skills required. Experience with FrameMaker and RoboHelp (or other WinHelp authoring tool) required. Familiarity with HTML preferred.

Position Three positions, see below
Location Tampa, Florida area
Contact Martha Collins, Pricewaterhouse Coopers LLP, P.O. Box 30004, Tampa, FL 33630-3004, martha.d.collins@us.pwcglobal.com

Descriptions

- 1. Assistant Technical Communicator:** Perform document management functions. Assists in document maintenance and publishing technical materials using print and electronic media
- 2. HTML/Web Specialist:** Design, create, and maintain the financial organization's site on Knowledge Curve. Assist in writing and publishing technical communication material using print and electronic media.
- 3. Technical Communication Lead:** Oversee the writing, maintenance, editing, and publishing of financial organization's technical communication material using print and electronic media. ☒



Pellegrin Memorial Scholarship Fund Reaches Milestone Ahead of Schedule

by Dan Voss

Reported Chapter Treasurer W.C. Wiese, “Our 5-year goal was to build the fund to a \$10,000 level, capable of generating approximately \$1,000 in earnings each year on a self-sustaining basis. We have accomplished this *sooner* and in a *larger* way than we ever anticipated.”

To be exact, the ledger now shows \$11,195.68, based on the December statement from the mutual funds in which the scholarship fund is invested, plus the latest contributions

Two years ago when the Orlando Chapter inaugurated the Melissa Pellegrin Memorial Scholarship Fund to honor the memory of an esteemed friend and colleague, our goal was to build the fund into a self-sustaining endowment within five years.

Thanks to an outpouring of generosity from Melissa’s friends, family, and colleagues—both within and outside STC—as well as two sizable grants from the STC Board, the fund has grown much more quickly than we ever imagined possible.

In fact, we reached the first milestone—the capability to earn sufficient funds to match historical financial scholarship levels for the undergraduate and graduate awards at the University of Central Florida—exactly three years ahead of that schedule!

“This is a wonderful tribute to Melissa and an accomplishment of which the Chapter can rightfully be proud,” declared Dan Voss, manager of the sponsoring Education Committee. “Not only is the fund now self-sustaining, I am confident it will continue to *grow*—offering us even more opportunities to support education.” ☒

Editor’s Note:

If you wish to add your support to the Melissa Pellegrin Memorial Scholarship Fund, you may send your tax-deductible contribution to the Treasurer, STC Orlando Chapter, P.O. Box 1343, Orlando, FL 32802-1343. Make the check payable to STC Orlando Chapter and indicate “Scholarship Fund” on the memo line. (The IRS ID is 31-0919557.) ☒

Xerographics Ad

Regional News

Recent Events

by Michelle Ratcliffe

The STC board of directors meeting on January 22 - 23 in San Jose, CA, was hosted by the Silicon Valley chapter. In addition to the regular board meeting agenda, the Silicon Valley chapter arranged for us to be guests for presentations at Cisco Systems' and IBM's Santa Teresa Laboratory on some of the latest developments in documentation development and delivery. They also hosted a most enjoyable evening gala complete with an improvisational comedy team and dancing. It was a fantastic opportunity to meet members from one of STC's largest chapters and exchange ideas.

Here are some of the actions taken or announcements made at the 1999 Winter Board Meeting:

- In Region 3, the Orlando Chapter's request for a \$500 merit grant to expand and enhance the chapter's high school technical writing competition was approved.
- In Region 3, the Orlando Chapter's request for a \$2,500 merit grant to move the chapter's scholarship fund closer to self-sustaining status was approved.
- In Region 6, a new chapter in Regina, Saskatchewan, was approved and startup funds of \$350 were allocated.
- In Region 7, the Metropolitan State student chapter in Denver, CO, was dissolved.
- A pilot project involving 10 high school teachers, enabling them to attend the week-long Institute in Technical Communication at Hinds Community College, Raymond, Mississippi, during the summer of 1999, was approved

and \$11,000 allocated to cover the teachers' registration and room and board. If you know any teachers who may be interested, contact Dana Chisnell, manager of the Practical Communication Committee (chisnell@ziplink.net).

- The Society office reports membership renewals are at an all-time high. Also, a Competitions database is now available and the STC office is handling much of the administrative and notification work involved in the Competitions — 11 currently.
- Chapters contemplating hosting a regional conference can check out the services of Chapter and Regional Conferences Committee, chaired by George Hoerter and Linda Oestreich. This committee can help you negotiate for space, plan events, create a schedule, order meals, develop a budget, and assist in ensuring you

stay on track. The availability of such help plus the fact that regional conferences are becoming more and more profitable for chapters should encourage chapters to sponsor such events.

- WWW.STC-VA.ORG now has a secure server. You can now submit membership applications and conference registration forms online along with your credit card information. However, dues cannot be renewed online yet. The Preliminary Conference Program will be online soon, along with the 1998 Conference Proceedings — which will also be searchable.

I am looking forward to seeing all of you in Cincinnati!

Michelle Ratcliffe
8942 Bayaud Drive
Tampa, FL 33626
813/920.3539
mratcliffe@msn.com. ☒

Online Documentation Ad

Eye on Language

Getting "Test"-y

by Mary Kendig



Have you ever wondered (or cared to know) just how good your grammar skills are? Here's a short test that will reveal some of your grammatical strengths and shortcomings. Several of the following items are based on questions in a brochure entitled, *How Good Is Your Grammar?* The original test consists of 25 questions and is published by the International Writing Institute, Inc., in Cleveland, Ohio. This version (mercifully) is shorter, and I've modified the content of the original somewhat.

So go ahead! Give it a try if you're the least bit interested or curious. (Do I have to say it? No cheating!)

1. True or false: A period or comma always goes inside quotation marks.
2. What punctuation mark will most effectively separate the parts of this sentence?
Researchers don't like to report the details about failed projects/you can understand why.
3. Should the two parts of this sentence be separated by a comma?
Jane called to confirm the delivery date and asked that you call the shipper.
4. Name the type of error in this sentence, and correct the sentence.
After it was examined thoroughly, we decided that the car was a good buy.
5. Is the phrase separated by commas in the following

sentence essential or nonessential?

NARF, the name of the new organization, stands for North American Research Facilities.

6. Is the following sentence correct? (If not, fix it.)
He founded the company in Belleville, Illinois in 1994.

7. How about the following sentence? Correct or incorrect? (If it's incorrect, fix it.)

She was the subject of an intense nationwide search.

8. Is *from* or *than* correct in the following sentence?
My results seem to be different from/than yours.

9. Change one word to make the following sentence correct.

Each of the new employees need training.

10. Identify the error in the following sentence.

Please provide the required information, such as your name, address, and telephone number, etc., on the first page of the form.

11. Is the following sentence correct? (If not, fix it.)
I sent the package to 155 7th Street, Newark, Delaware.

12. Does the pronoun in the following sentence match its noun (antecedent)?

The committee has added a new section to their report.

13. Is the following sentence correct? (If not, fix it.)

Refer to the new specification, FX00912 for information regarding system requirements.

Oh, almost forgot. If you'd like to know (or confirm) the correct answers, you'll find them in the next *Eye on Language* column. If you don't want to wait, send an e-mail at mjkendig@gate.net, I'll respond with the answers. ☒

Gain Invaluable Experience

by Nadejda Bojilova

Hello there, budding editors and graphic designers!

Wouldn't you like to gain a great experience in your chosen field by joining the Tech Trends team as an editor? If you are interested, read on...



Positions: Managing Editor and Production Editor.

Frequency of the Publication: Bi-monthly

Requirements: Some experience with writing, editing, or laying out professional newsletters. Knowledge of Microsoft Word and PageMaker desirable. The position requires 5 - 6 hours of your time every other month.

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

Coming Up...

- March 25 Chapter Meeting. Tour of Full Sail Center for the Recording Arts.** Attendance is limited. RSVP required for participation. See “Springing into Action” on page 3 for details.
Members \$5.00 / Nonmembers: \$7.00
6:30 p.m. – Time for networking
7:00 p.m. – Business meeting and presentation/discussion
- April 28 Chapter Meeting. Looking Forward to Retirement: a financial checkup and Chapter Elections.** The first part of the meeting is presented by Frank Dasse, certified financial planner
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
- May 3 Submission Deadline for the May/June issue of TechTrends.**
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.
- May 16-19 STC Annual Conference.**
- Full Sail Center
3300 University Blvd.
Winter Park, Florida
- Winter Park Civic Center
1050 W. Morse Blvd.
Winter Park, Florida
- Cincinnati, OH

TECH TRENDS

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Orlando, FL 32802-1343

—PLEASE FORWARD—



society for technical communication