TECH TRENDS

A Note from the President ..

Happy New Year!
by Lori Corbett

I sincerely hope you all had a wonderful holiday and have renewed vim, vigor, and vitality for the coming year. The next five months are going to be an exciting time for the Orlando chapter. If you have not yet renewed your membership, be sure to do so before the end of February so you can vote in this year's chapter elections.

The 47th Annual Conference is getting closer and closer; it's just over four months away. I just received a proof of the Preliminary Program and this year's conference looks like it's going to be the biggest and best ever. I don't think I've ever seen an STC Annual Conference with more sessions. This year, we have 260 sessions scheduled in 10 time slots. In addition to the basic stems, 25 streams of topics (such as Web Design and Single Sourcing) have been scheduled to reduce competition between sessions that fall into focal areas of study.

It will be an absolutely fantastic three days!

As the host chapter, we have quite a few responsibilities. An immediate need requires local authors to write articles for distribution to the newsletters produced by all Society chapters. Specifically, we are looking for articles on the following topics:

· Shopping for bargains in Orlando
· Childcare at Disney
· Orlando beyond the theme parks
· Entertainment options before, during, and after the conference.

If you would like more information or would like to help, please let me know right away!

Now is the Time to Get Involved

As the new year unfolds, please consider becoming more involved in our chapter. We have experienced tremendous growth during the past year. At the end of 1999, our membership was approximately 150, a net growth of 15 members over the end 1998. To keep the chapter progressive and vibrant, it is imperative that new members with fresh ideas take an active role in the chapter's leadership. Most positions do not require a lot of time, and the rewards are great – I do speak from personal experience!

With the new year, we begin the process of preparing for the annual chapter elections in April. We have many opportunities within our chapter.

Visit the Orlando Chapter Web site at:
http://stc.org/region3/orl/www/

Inside this issue:

Happy New Year (continued)

Please think about the role you would like to take and contact me if you have any questions about elected officer positions or committee opportunities. ❖

Note from the Editor -- I want to reinforce Lori's call for more involvement from our members, especially our newer and/or younger ones. Over the years, I have served in virtually every office the Orlando Chapter has and it is well worth your time and efforts to be part of the Orlando Chapter leadership team. The time commitment is not great, but the rewards are. The knowledge and skills you'll learn, the experience you'll gain, and the friends and network you'll establish will be extremely valuable in the years ahead as the Orlando area's technical communication community and profession continued to grow. It will be the best investment of your time that you'll ever make. ❖

TECH TRENDS

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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 (email) submissions to Dick Hughes at hughesrl@concentric.net.

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

Tech Trends .pdf files available at *http://stc.org/region3/orl/www/*.

Deduct Your STC Dues

(Reprinted from Tieline*, the STC newsletter for chapter leaders.)*

Did you know that you can claim your STC dues as a tax deduction in several ways:

Charitable Expense
All STC members who pay taxes in the United States can deduct at least a portion of their STC dues if they claim this portion as a charitable donation. IRS publication 526 (rev. 1996) defines this option: "You may be able to deduct membership fees or dues you pay to a qualified organization. However, you can deduct only the amount that is more than the value of the benefits you receive." As a 501(c)(3) organization, STC is a qualified organization. The only determination that you need to make is the amount that is more than the value of the benefits you receive. STC's tangible benefits can be estimated at $20 ($10 for the Society's quarterly journal, *Technical Communication,* and $10 for the magazine *Intercom*). The difference between the cost of membership ($95) and tangible benefits ($20) is $75, and you may claim that amount as charitable contribution.

Business Expense
Employees and self-employed consultants may claim the full amount of dues as a business expense.

Miscellaneous Expense
Dues may also be deducted as a miscellaneous deduction. (For these deductions to affect your taxes, the total amount of all miscellaneous deductions must exceed 2 percent of your adjusted gross income.) If dues are deducted as a charitable, business, or miscellaneous expense, they must be deducted from the tax return filed for the year in which they were paid. In other words, dues paid in 1998 can be deducted only on 1998 tax returns. If you have any questions, contact your local IRS representative or an accountant.

Money, Not Time
STC recently received a question concerning the deduction of time or personal services donated to STC. Please be aware that while dues, contributions, and out-of-pocket expenses may be deducted, personal services cannot. ❖

Employment Opportunities

To update our employment services to our members and provide the most current information, all employment listings and opportunities are now listed on our chapter Web site at: ***http://stc.org/region3/orl/www/.***

VP Peeps
To Summarize...

by Gail Lippincott

The Orlando Chapter ended the year with a festive bang. Almost sixty folks attended the riveting FrameMaker presentation by Patrick Koster, an Adobe® Certified Training Provider from Melbourne, Florida. Patrick's excellent reputation as a trainer preceded him – we had attendees from the Suncoast and Space Tech chapters as well. Watch for a chapter email notification about Patrick's spring training session on FrameMaker, offered at a substantial discount to STC members. (Gentle reminder: dues should be paid by February 29.)

Patrick Koster presenting his overview of FrameMaker.

A big thank you goes to Adobe for generously contributing several copies of FrameMaker and Acrobat. Talk about raising the bar on door prize selection! So as not to overwhelm attendees, I decided to save the copies of Adobe GoLive! for the January meeting. Door prize winners included Tim Trese, Jeff Berg, Crystal Breton, Dawn Woods, Joanie Nelson, Allan Rotgers, Gloria Jones, and Marta Moreno.

Member News

The Orlando Chapter congratulates chapter members Karen Lane and Donald Rule on attaining the status of senior member.

We'd also like to welcome the following new Orlando Chapter members:

- Martin N. Gall, III - Student

- David D. Gillette - UCF Dept. of English

- Jason A. Nichols - Student

- Heather Watson Traynham - London Bridge.

Thank you for your support. We look forward to seeing you at one of our upcoming chapter meetings. ❖

Lori Corbett presents Dawn Woods with one of the Adobe product door prizes at our December meeting.

Admin Council

by Din Bissoondial

Highlights from the last chapter Administrative Council meeting of the year included updates on the Education Committee's ongoing High School Technical Writing Competition, discussion of a possible continuing education workshop for chapter members, and a grant proposal to produce electronic publications for chapter education and public relations activities. Vice President Gail Lippincott reported on upcoming chapter meetings and programs; Treasurer W.C. Wiese presented a chapter budget and financial update report; and various chapter service awards were also discussed. ❖

Looking ahead . . .

The drama of a new millennium directs our attention to new trends, and our chapter boasts many trend setters. The **January 25th** will meeting feature chapter members Susan Gonzalez and her Fiserv colleague Betty Roberts, participants in Utah State University's online master's program in technical communication. Susan and Betty will compare their on-line classes to more traditional programs, discussing course flexibility, tuition and other costs, class size, and homework load. Their helpful handouts will include course outlines at and a list of other distance education programs.

Wednesday, February 23 - Winter Park Civic Center

In February we'll take the pulse of local and national markets for technical communicators. Chapter members Din Bissoondial and Barb Odom will head a panel that explores the changing requirements for our profession. Based on historical trends, new technologies, and market shifts, panelists will alert us to exciting roles and opportunities that we can create.

Education News and Updates

Chapter High School Competition

The Orlando Chapter's Central Florida High School Technical Writing Competition judging phase is complete. The number of entries was up over 200% this year and we received our first-ever entries from Brevard County! Competition manager Jon Kessler is contacting all the award winners who will be honored along with their teachers and parents at an upcoming chapter meeting.

The Chapter's Education Committee judges decided to present 10 awards out of more than 30 entries. One $150 Excellence Award will go to Lake Brantley High School student Ethan Heintzelman for his essay on satellite television. Four $75 Merit Awards will go to three Lake Brantley and one Cocoa Beach High School student, and five Honorable Mention certificates will be awarded to four Lake Brantley and one Melbourne Central Catholic High School student.

STC Scholarship Program

Of interest to our student members is the announcement of STC's 2000-2001 college scholarship program. Fourteen awards of $2,500 each will be granted toward school tuition and expenses. Seven awards are granted to graduate students and seven to undergraduates. Applications must be received by February 12, 2000. Application forms and additional information can be obtained from the STC web site at *http://www.stc-va.org/facademic.htm,* through the STC headquar-

Tuesday, March 28 - Winter Park Civic Center

What does the phrase "knowledge management" mean? What implications does this field have for our profession? Chapter member Gwen Thomas champions the management of organizational knowledge as a crucial role for technical communicators. Be prepared to meet this trendsetter's challenge to think outside the typical documentation box. ❖

ters office at (703) 522-4114, or from Ms. Lenore Ridgway at (914) 339-4927.

Teaching Fellowships for Practicing Professionals

STC is in the process of implementing a partnership program with industry and academia that offers paid, short-term teaching assignments (fellowships) for practicing professionals. The goal of these STC teaching fellowships is to promote positive academic and industry connections and to make it possible for practitioners to help in the education and training of future technical communicators. Two teaching fellowships of $2,000 each are available. Typically, a fellowship lasts for one academic quarter or semester; however, the duration of fellowships for which funding may be awarded can be up to one academic year. Proposals must be submitted by April 1 to be considered for summer or fall teaching assignments and by November 1 to be considered for spring teaching assignments. STC will be issuing a more formal news release on this program in the near future. ❖

Help UCF Plan for the Future

The Department of English at UCF is preparing a proposal for the Florida Board of Regents to implement a new PhD degree in Texts and Technology. This degree, designed for academicians as well as professionals in industry, will study the relationship between discourse and technology. Courses will consider the many theoretical, historical, practical, and creative dimensions of technology's influence on texts such as print, film, video, and online environment. For a fuller discussion of the degree, please visit our Web site at *http://ucf.edu/~english/phd.html*.

Here's where you can help. One section of the proposal is a needs assessment that requires letters of support from "interested parties." For the Texts and Technology degree, such interested parties include those companies to which members of the STC belong. To be successful, UCF needs letters of support—brief statements that will note the utility of such a degree to the local economy—to include in their proposal. These letters do not commit your company to any financial or personnel support for the degree; rather, the letters announce your organization's philosophical belief that such a degree would benefit our area.

Please consider seeking your firm's support for this innovative degree program. For further details contact either Dan Jones *(djones@pegasus.cc.ucf.edu)* or John Schell *(schell@pegasus.cc.ucf.edu).* Statements of support on letterhead may be mailed to either of us at the UCF Department of English, Orlando 32816. ❖

What Do You Think ?

STC supports a number of Special Interest Groups (commonly referred to as SIGs). One of the most active SIGs is the Consulting and Independent Contractor Special Interest Group (CICSIG). The CICSIG sponsors an annual survey, has a web page on the Society's web site, and distributes newsletters 3-4 times each year.

Several STC chapters sponsor active local CICSIGs, holding regular meetings at which members share ideas and leads. Many of the local CICSIGs maintain their own web pages and write columns for their chapters' newsletters.

We (the Orlando chapter) would like to start our own local CICSIG if there is enough interest from the chapter membership. The only requirements are:

- STC membership
- A desire to learn more about being independent and share ideas.

If you are interested in becoming a founding member of the Orlando CICSIG, please contact Barbara Odom at bcodom@aol.com. If enough interest is shown, the first meeting location will be announced at the February chapter meeting. ❖

Regional News

by Michelle Ratcliffe

The STC Board will be holding its Winter meeting this month, so I will be providing a full report in the next issue. In the meantime, I wanted to remind everyone of some upcoming workshops coming to Jacksonville that may be of interest.

On February 7-8, JoAnn Hackos, William Hackos, and Henry Korman will present a workshop titled "Documentation Databases: Developing a Single-Sourcing Strategy." Then on October 19-20, they will offer "Developing Standards for Online and Web-Based Communication." The new course format is offered at $650 for each two-day course. If you would like more information on these courses, and to register online, go to the following site: *http://www.usabledesign.com/01seminars/*.

Speaking of web sites, I'd like to let you know about several improvements STC has made to the society web site at *www.stc-va.org*. The background has been brightened, graphics have been added, and expanded sidebar links have been provided to better navigate and search the areas of information offered. I'll briefly describe the site's links/offerings below:

- About STC – history, mission, scope
- Academic Info – programs, dissertations, grants and scholarships
- Books – society publications and order forms
- Chapters – contact information and links to all chapters
- Competitions – information, rules, forms, and past winners
- Conference – review of last Annual Conference, links to regional conferences, information on upcoming Annual Conference
- Grants and Loans – information and applications
- Guides and Brochures – wide variety of administrative, society, and chapter documents
- Honors and Awards – complete description of honors and awards
- Jobs Database – employment positions
- Leader Resources – information for chapter and society leaders
- Membership – membership details, forms, and benefits
- Periodicals – information about society-level periodicals
- SIGs – information and links to all Special Interest Groups
- What's New – current activities and events from society.

There is a wealth of information at your fingertips from this web site. I hope you visit it soon! ❖

Authors and Writers Wanted!

As the host chapter for STC's upcoming 47th Annual Conference, we have an immediate need for local authors to write articles for distribution to newsletters produced by all Society chapters. Specifically, we are looking for articles on the following topics:

- Shopping for bargains in Orlando
- Childcare at Disney
- Orlando beyond the theme parks
- Entertainment options before, during, and after the conference.

If you would be interested in one of these assignments, please contact Chapter President, Lori Corbett, as soon as possible. You can reach Lori at stcmember@aol.com. ❖

eye on Language

by Mary Kendig

Communicating with People with Disabilities

These recommendations have been adapted from many sources as a public service by United Cerebral Palsy Associates, Inc. (UCPA). I think they are important to keep in mind when communicating with people with disabilities, so I'm sharing them with you:

1. Speak directly to the person who is disabled rather than through a companion or sign language interpreter who may be present.

2. Offer to shake hands when introduced. People with limited hand use or an artificial limb can usually shake hands, and offering the left hand is an acceptable greeting.

3. Always identify yourself and others who may be with you when you meet someone with a visual disability. When you are conversing in a group, remember to identify the person to whom you are speaking. When you dine with a friend or co-worker who has a visual disability, ask whether you can describe what is on his or her plate.

4. If you offer assistance, wait until the offer is accepted. Then, listen or ask for instructions.

5. Treat adults as adults. Address people with dis-abilities by their first names only if you are extending the same familiarity to all others. Never patronize people in wheelchairs by patting them on the head or shoulder.

6. Do not lean against or hang on someone's wheel-chair. Bear in mind that people with disabilities treat their chairs as extensions of their bodies, just as people with guide dogs and help dogs treat their dogs. Never distract a work animal from its job without the owner's permission.

7. Listen attentively when you talk with a person who has difficulty speaking, and wait for him or her to finish. If necessary, ask questions that require short answers or a nod. Never pretend to understand; instead, repeat what you have understood and allow the person to respond.

8. Place yourself at eye level when you speak with someone in a wheelchair.

9. Tap a person who has a hearing disability on the shoulder or wave your hand gently to get his or her attention. Look directly at the person, and speak clearly, slowly, and expressively to establish whether the person can read your lips. If so, try to face the light source and keep your hands, ciga-rettes, and food away from your mouth when you speak. Never shout at the person. Just speak in your normal tone of voice. Also, if the person is wearing a hearing aid, don't assume that he or she has the ability to discriminate your speaking voice.

10. Relax. Don't be embarrassed if you happen to use common expressions that seem to relate to a person's disability, such as "Did you hear about this?" or "See you later."

If you are interested in learning more about this sub-ject, Irene M. Ward & Associates, in Columbus, Ohio, offers many informative videos and other training resources covering empowerment, disability rights, and inclusion in the community for people with disabilities. You can contact them at (614) 889-0888 or visit their Web site at http://www.ireneward.com. ❖

Coming Up...

January 25 **Chapter Meeting: The Virtual Classroom: Real-Life Experiences of Distance Learners. Presented by Susan Gonzales and Betty Roberts of Fiserv, Inc.**

Winter Park Civic Center
1050 W. Morse Blvd.
Winter Park, Florida

Members: $5.00 / Nonmembers: $7.00
6:30 p.m.: Sign-in and Networking
7:00 p.m.: Program

February 23 **Chapter Meeting: Marketing Trends in Technical Communication: Chapter members Din Bissoondial and Barb Odom will head a panel to explore the changing requirements for our profession.**

Winter Park Civic Center
1050 W. Morse Blvd.
Winter Park, Florida

` Members: $5.00 / Nonmembers: $7.00
6:30 p.m.: Sign-in and Networking
7:00 p.m.: Program

March 3 **Submission Deadline for the March/April issue of *Tech Trends***

May 21-24, 2000 - STC Annual Conference   **Orlando, Florida**

TECH TRENDS

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—PLEASE FORWARD—

STC

society for technical communication