TECH

TRENDS

A Note from the President …

Auld Lang Syne
by Lori Corbett

It's hard to believe the chapter year is just about finished. It seems like just yesterday I became the president of this wonderful chapter. We've had a great year with many accomplishments. By working together, we will conclude the 1999-2000 chapter year as hosts of the STC Annual Conference this month. It certainly has been serious fun (Mary Wise's theme for the year).

I have attended the conference each year since 1993. For me, the conference resuscitates and recharges my batteries for the long hours and hard work of the coming year. I'm sure you all are registered by now, but if not, I really hope you'll consider attending at least one day of the conference. This year the conference is in our own back yard – what an opportunity!
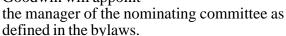
My heartfelt congratulations go to the winners of our chapter elections:

• President: Marty Goodwin
• Vice President: Ann Vogt
• Secretary: Paula O'Brien
• Treasurer: W.C. Wiese
• Nominating Committee: Barbara Odom

The new board will be inducted at our June meeting and I know the chapter will be in capable leadership hands during the next year.

Unfortunately, Bob Lanni withdrew from the election after the ballots were mailed. Our chapter bylaws do not specifically address this issue. After conferring with Bill Paskert (keeper of the chapter bylaws),

he and I decided the new administrative council will appoint the second nominating committee member. In addition, incoming president Marty Goodwin will appoint the manager of the nominating committee as defined in the bylaws.

I would like to end my last column as president of the Orlando Chapter with a challenge to all members. Take a good look at the chapter and the work it does to support technical communication professionals and students. Identify a committee where you think you'd like to help and join in the fun. We have lots of committees (such as publicity, newsletter, and education). Each committee has lots of things it would like to accomplish. Won't you help?

Thank you all for your support over the last year. It's been a great experience. ❖

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

VP Peeps
To Summarize...

by Gail Lippincott

The last two meetings of this chapter year, April and June, allow us to honor outstanding technical communicators, reflect on our past achievements, and infuse our work with new vision and excitement. The May conference, of course, does all three in grand style!

The delicious food at the April Awards buffet, catered by Bubbalou's Bodacious Barbeque, was a perfect accompaniment to Mark Hanigan's upbeat vision of what makes a good leader, based on the metaphor of a Leadership Armada. Mark, a member of the Suncoast (Tampa Bay area) chapter, is the Society's incoming president, and we were fortunate to snag him on one of his few free evenings. If you missed his excellent presentation, he'll be happy to send you a copy. You can contact him at onwritetrk@aol.com.

Mark, impressed with our meeting attendance and great food, was wowed by the efforts of our Education Committee. The hard work of these nine chapter members culminated in Jon Kessler's awarding certificates and checks for our 10 top entries in the High

School Technical Writing Competition, plus a Society-level Honorable Mention from the International Competition. Three of these outstanding young writers and their parents were able to attend the meeting, and all seemed to enjoy interacting with our members.

Jon Kessler presents Merit Award to high school winner Jeannie Hu.

Through endeavors such as the Competition, we hope to entice such bright people to our profession. In that vein, Dan Jones proudly bestowed two Melissa Pellegrin Memorial scholarships on an excellent undergraduate and graduate UCF student, respectively. From the clarity of their letters of application, the students at UCF clearly promise to provide us with many intelligent and resourceful colleagues.

Dan Jones congratulates Mireille Shebbein, this year's recipient of the Pellegrin undergraduate scholarship.

As I reflect on the wonderful meetings we've had this year, I appreciate the challenge faced by my soon-to-be colleagues in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area. Will the Lone

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TECH TRENDS

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

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/.*

Star chapter show the same willing and enthusiastic spirit demonstrated by Orlando members? Every meeting this year featured a chapter member as presenter or host, from Paula O'Brien's hospitable welcome to JoAnn Hackos in July to David Gillette and J.D. Applen's generous accommodation of our March FrameMaker sessions in the UCF technical writing lab.

Chapter members at the FrameMaker 2 session at UCF.

Orlando members may need a little persuasive nagging, but then they come through en masse. Last August, our Washlines event, for instance, rounded up Cincinnati conference attendees/presenters Nikki Burley, Ruth Eversole, Gwen Thomas, Dan Voss, and W. C. Wiese, who regaled us with tales of their most memorable sessions and events. Barb Odom flexed her networking skills to put together another stellar panel for February. Barb posed insightful questions to the chapter and her panelists, encouraging Din Bissoondial, Bob Lanni, Joe Mooney, and Etta Jean Smith to analyze marketing trends and ponder the impact of future business practices on our profession. Both sessions encouraged lively discussion, as participatory sessions should.

Let there be no doubt that we have very smart and talented members who are willing to share their expertise. Look how many folks flocked to hear Jim Druckenmiller demystify Cold Fusion for us in September, followed by Karen Lane's fun excursion into the labyrinth of indexing online in October.

Member News

The Orlando Chapter extends special congratulations to chapter member Sharon Wissert who was recently awarded the Distinguished Chapter Service Award for her outstanding work and dedication in both maintaining and redesigning the chapter's web site. Chapter president, Lori Corbett presents Sharon with her award below. ❖

In January, Susan Gonzalez and her point/counterpoint colleague Betty Roberts updated their Cincinnati conference presentation to highlight the good and not-so-good points of earning a master's degree through distance education classes. Attendees at the March meeting almost exceeded the room's capacity as Gwen Thomas challenged us to learn the tools and techniques of Knowledge Management.

If we don't know the information ourselves, we certainly know how to seek subject matter experts. The December speaker, a friend of STC, was highly recommended by other Florida chapters. Patrick Koster's introduction to FrameMaker was an extremely successful meeting, and his very warm reception led to an excellent professional development opportunity for our members. In March

Admin Council

by Dick Hughes

The May 11th meeting of the chapter's Administrative Council included the announcement that chapter secretary, Din Bissoondial, has resigned due to family and professional obligations. Marty Goodwin and Ann Vogt, respective incoming president and vice president, were in attendance, and immediate past president, Dick Hughes, recorded the minutes of the meeting. Activity reports were given for the Education Committee, Employment, Newsletter, Programs, CICSIG, Annual Conference, Treasurer, and Bylaws areas. Plans were made for the leadership transition in late June. ❖

our Education Committee coordinated two Saturday training sessions at UCF, and Patrick substantially discounted the FrameMaker classes to chapter members. All together, 24 members, plus one from Suncoast, took advantage of this low-cost training opportunity.

At the April meeting, the Education Committee, of which I am a member, proudly introduced young technical communicators-in-training to a knowledgeable, sharing community of professionals. At the same time, everyone there participated in Mark Hanigan's vision and goals for the Society during his presidency, goals that can motivate each chapter member individually and the chapter as a cooperative entity. With the spirit and knowledge you all have shown this past year, I know the Orlando chapter will continue to do great things—and have fun too—this coming year. Lookout, Lone Star chapter! ❖

Looking ahead . . .

Next meeting
Wednesday, June 28
Gina's on the Water, behind Altamonte Mall

The end-of-the-chapter-year Installation Dinner allows us to pat our backs and rub our tummies at the same time. Join the outgoing officers in officially welcoming the newly elected members of the Administrative Council. Other chapter members who have worked hard, mostly behind the scenes, will be publicly recognized with, um, appropriate awards (fair warning!).

This dinner meeting is not all pomp and circumstance, however. We are pleased to welcome attorney Scott Draughon who specializes in computer technology products and services. The Jacksonville chapter enthusiastically recommends Scott, whose energetic and responsive discussion began with Web copyright, trademarks, and patents, and then moved to address members' questions about noncompete and confidentiality agreements.

Join us for an unforgettable evening. Time, menu, dinner prices, and directions will be announced on the Website and chapter listserv. Mark Wednesday, June 28, on your calendar now! ❖

Education News and Updates

Lake Brantley Rules Technical Writing Competition

Lake Brantley students dominated the Orlando Chapter's 4th Annual Central Florida High School Technical Writing Competition, carrying off eight of ten awards. The other award winners were from Cocoa Beach and Melbourne Central Catholic High Schools. In all, one $150 Excellence award, four $75 Merit awards, and five $25 Honorable Mention awards were presented.

Ethan Heintzelman, a sophomore at Lake Brantley High School, earned the Excellence award for his essay, "Satellite Television." Cocoa Beach High School sophomore Sean R. Samuelson received a Merit award for his essay, "What are the Major Benefits of C++ Programming?" Three Lake Brantley sophomores also earned Merit awards: Jeannie Hu for "Spina Bifida," Angela Goodwin for "The Effects of Melatonin on the Bodies of Organisms," and Sean Amormino for "Autoimmune Diseases."

The Honorable Mention winners included Megha Shah, a junior at Melbourne Central Catholic, who wrote "Insomnia and Melatonin: Is there a Significant Association?" Three sophomores and one junior from Lake Brantley also won $25 Honorable Mentions: Michael Behr for "The New Future in Biotechnology: Human Gene Therapy," Nancy Brown for "Female Athletes and Eating Disorders," and Christine Offerman for "The Hubble Space Telescope," and junior Alyssa M. Zelkowitz for "An Introduction to the Role of
Outer Membrane Proteins in Mediating Antibiotic Resistance in B. cepacia."

Five of the entries, the Excellence and Merit winners, now move on to the 2000 STC International High School Technical Writing Competition. Winners will be honored at the 47th Annual Conference, to be held in Orlando. ❖

UCF Updates

Program News - Plans for the English Department's new Ph.D. in Texts and Technology are proceeding smoothly. The department faculty recently approved a draft of the proposal for the program, and other faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences will review the proposal "unofficially" this summer. Sometime during the next academic year (2000-2001), the proposal will be formally submitted to the Board of Regents for approval. If all goes according to plan, the Ph.D. program will be in place beginning during the fall of 2001. Also, the Board of Advisors for the undergraduate technical writing program met on campus on April 20 to listen to student presentations and to join the UCF technical writing faculty for dinner and conversation afterwards.

Student News - Two UCF students were recently awarded Melissa Pellegrin Scholarships from the Orlando Chapter of STC. The chapter's nine-member Education Committee selected the two students over the many who submitted applications for these scholarships. Graduate technical writing student Rudy McDaniel (photo right) and undergraduate technical writing student Mireille Shebbein each received a $500.00 check and certificate at the chapter's April 26 meeting. Both students will also have their names engraved on the Melissa Pellegrin Scholarship plaque which permanently resides in the UCF English Department.

Graduations - Three technical writing undergraduates were graduated this spring: Rae Hanson, Jeannette Brinton, and Melinda Carey.

Faculty News - Many of the UCF technical writing faculty recently gave presentations at this year's annual conference of the Association of Teachers of Technical Writing (ATTW). About 150 teachers of technical communication attended the ATTW conference. Dan Jones and Paul Dombrowski participated in a panel discussion titled "Teaching the Introductory Technical Communicatiion Course Online." Paul also gave a presentation titled "Teaching Ethics in Technical Communication Research Through GAO Reports." Karla Kitalong presented a talk titled "Technology Autobiographies in Technical Communication Courses: Participatory Design of Teaching Spaces." J.D. Applen presented a paper titled "Indexing Information and the Construction of Large-Scale Web Sites." Also, most of the UCF technical writing faculty and several technical writing graduate students will give presentations at STC's annual conference in May. ❖

Xerographics Ad (drop in)

Regional News

by Michelle Ratcliffe

Upcoming Conferences

We often get so involved in our own area/chapter/region we forget the many conference and learning opportunities STC offers in other regions. Here are a few that may be of interest:

Region 5 Conference – October 13-14, 2000
STC's New Mexico Kachina chapter is hosting the 2000 Region 5 Conference at the Sheraton Old Town Hotel in Albuquerque. The conference theme is "Navigating the New Century." For more information, visit the chapter's web site at *www.stc.org/region5/nkc*.

Pan-Pacific Conference – October 19-21, 2000
STC regions 7 and 8 will hold a joint conference in Waikiki Beach, Honolulu, Hawaii. This conference is being held in Hawaii to better enable STC members in the Pacific Rim area to attend, and to foster better communications between the members of region 7 and region 8. For more information, visit the web site *www.pan-pacific.com*.

ACM Conference on Universal Usability – November 16-17, 2000
The Association for Computing Machinery's (ACM's) Conference on Universal Usability (CUU) will be held in November in Washington, D.C. This event is sponsored by ACM's special interest group for computer/human interaction (SIGCHI), in cooperation with STC and several other societies. For a full description of the conference, visit their web site at *www.acm.org/sigs/sigchi/cuu*.

Other News to Note

Here are some other items of interest from around the region that may be of interest:

Writer's Digest Honors STC Office Web Site
The STC office web site (*www.stc-va.org*) has been rated one of the "101 Best Web Sites for Writers," according to *Writer's Digest Magazine*. The May issue of *Writer's Digest* features the new "101" list on its cover and will have the list available on its web site at *www.writersdigest.com*.

Full-Service Employment Resource Available on the TECHWR-L Web Site
"Employment Central" (EC) is a free, full-service database of technical writing-specific jobs and personal profiles. EC offers a targeted employment resource for the technical communication community that aims to make recruiting and job hunting easier and more effective than searching through listings on less-specific employment resources. For more information on this resource, visit *http://www.raycomm.com/techwhirl/employment/*.

Valuable Educational Conference Notes Available on Orlando Web Site
One of STC's recently elected Fellows, Dr. Dan Jones from the University of Central Florida in Orlando, has posted a lot of interesting and informative conference notes on the Orlando Chapter's web site. Dan attends several educational and technical communications conferences annually and has unselfishly made his comprehensive notes available to all. His most recent postings have been from the IPCC in New Orleans; if interested, visit the web site at *http://www.stc.org/region3/orl/education/IPCC99/*. ❖

Position Open ...

Since this will be the last issue of *Tech Trends* I will be able to produce, we are seeking a person who is interested in assuming the position of Managing Editor. This is an opportunity to help make *Tech Trends* an even better product for our members. If you are interested, please contact either me directly at *dhughes@ema-inc.com* or incoming president Marty Goodwin at *goodwinm@intuitive-info.com*. ❖

eye *on Language*

by Mary Kendig

"SPRING IS IN THE AIR"

Ah, springtime. At this lovely time of year, while most people daydream about fun things like chirping birds, flowers in bloom, and vacations in Maui, my more responsible thoughts turn to that nightmarish ritual called spring cleaning. (Aren't I just a barrel of fun?) And in this age of computers, isn't it wonderful that we have now been tasked with yet another form of cleaning: the purging of electronic files? It's just too much happiness to take in now, isn't it?

Well, as it so happens, I was doing some spring cleaning of my electronic files the other day when I discovered a few partially formed ideas for past Eye on Language columns that somehow never made it to full-blown column status. (After all, there's only so much you can write about certain grammatical topics without stretching the point.) Nevertheless, I've seen the following grammar rules ignored often enough, so I know these items are worth sharing, even if in "spring blowout" form. So here goes.

SOME TIPS ABOUT MODIFIERS

If a modifying word or phrase refers to two nouns, it should appear with the first noun mentioned.

INCORRECT: The answers should be written on the left side, not the right side, of the form.
CORRECT: The answers should be written on the left side of the form, not the right side.

Unmodified nouns might need an article (a, an, or the) to clarify their meaning.

AMBIGUOUS: The participant and manager attended the meeting.
(Is the participant and manager one person, or are they two people? If two people:)
CLEAR: The participant and the manager attended the meeting.

HOW TO BE DEFINITE ABOUT INDEFINITE ARTICLES

The indefinite articles "a" and "an" are often misused. Here's the general rule: Use "an" before words beginning with a vowel sound, and use "a" before words beginning with a consonant sound. This rule has exceptions, however (of course!). For example, you would use "a" before the words ewe, one, union, unit, to name a few. An important note: "An" in front of words such as historical is now seldom used. In other words, use a historical, not an historical.

Regarding abbreviations, the sample principle of sound governs the choice of a or an before an abbreviation when the name of the first letter begins with a vowel sound, such as ms, NCO, EEOC. You must decide whether the abbreviation is to be read as letters or as the words represented by the letters. For example, if ms is to be read as "manuscript," then "a" ms is correct. If it is to be read as the letters "em-es," then "an" ms is correct.

LATIN ABBREVIATIONS

Use plain English rather than Latin abbreviations whenever possible. The only exception might be if you absolutely, positively need to conserve characters because you have limited space (for example, in tables). Generally, however, follow these guidelines:

- Use "that is" instead of i.e. (id est, in Latin).

- Use "for example" instead of e.g. (exempli gratia, in Latin).

- Avoid the words "and so on" and "etc.," especially if they accompany the words "that is" and "for example," because they are redundant in such instances.

CLARIFYING COMPOUND CONFUSION

If you're using a compound adjective of which one compo-

Coming Up...

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

June 28 Chapter Meeting: End-of-the-Year Installation Dinner for New Chapter Officers and Program on Computer Technology and Internet Law with Attorney Scott Draughon.

Gina's on the Water
Cranes Roost (behind Altamonte Mall)
Altamonte Springs

Time, menu, prices, and directions to be announced on Listserv and Web Site.

July 5 Submission Deadline for July/August issue of *Tech Trends*

Eye on Language (continued)

nent is an adverb and the other an adjective or a participle, hyphenate the compound phrase if it appears before the noun it is modifying, as in well-organized presentation and much-improved growth. If the compound follows the noun, it can be set as two words, as in presentation was well organized and growth is much improved. However, if the adverb ends in –ly, a hyphen is not necessary, even if the phrase appears before the noun. A mistake some of us make is to hyphenate compounds such as carefully planned speech and poorly written essay when hyphenation isn't necessary because of the presence of the –ly ending.

There now. My extraneous electronic files are suitably purged, and we're all a little better for it. Alas, if only this newsletter were a juicy novel, and we were reading it on that beach in Maui. . . .❖

TECH TRENDS

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—PLEASE FORWARD—

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