



# Memo to Members

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## Seventeen Central Florida Students Honored

### Winter Springs High School Dominates Annual High School Technical Writing Competition

by Jon Kessler

The February 25<sup>th</sup> meeting was our chapter's opportunity to meet and inspire the technical communicators of the future, as well as to honor the winners of the 7<sup>th</sup> annual Florida High School Technical Writing Competition. In a show of strength, Winter



### Winter Springs H.S. students took home the lion's share of the prizes in the 7<sup>th</sup> annual high school technical writing contest.

(Back, from left: Mrs. Trent Daniel, Ryan Harvey, Alexia Ash, Katherine Geisler, Eric First, Andrew Lai. Front, from left: Amanda Tarkowski, Meghan Falter, Lauren Brinton, Jillian Tellez, Paulina De-laCruz, Dr. Maureen Warner.)

Springs High School students dominated the competition by garnering 11 out of 17 awards. There were 61 entrants this year, representing nine high schools in four counties.

Our keynote speaker was Dr. Suzy Behel, science teacher at Lake Brantley High School, and longtime supporter of the competition. Dr. Behel described how high school instructors can leverage writing competitions and other tech-

niques to improve their students' writing ability.

"Communication is an integral part of our society," she said. "It is the single most important asset that we have. The STC competition has formed the focal point for teaching technical writing at Lake Brantley. Not only does it provide excellent reward incentives, it offers specific writing guidelines that are especially helpful."

The top two writing contest

awards went to a pair of Winter Springs sophomores, Eric First and Andrew Lai. Each received an Excellence award and a \$150 cash prize. First's essay was entitled "Augmented Reality: A Vision of the Future"; Lai wrote on "Miscommunication: The Role of Cell Cycle Regulators in the Development of Cancer."

Two more tenth graders, Bonnie Li of Lake Brantley High and Alexia Ash of

Winter Springs, captured Merit awards and \$75 prizes for their essays, "The Science Behind Photography" and "The Evolution of Computer Control," respectively.

The top four papers have gone on for further judging in the annual international high school technical writing competition sponsored by STC. Results will be re-

(Continued on page 2)

## Get Published in the STC Newsletter!

If you would like to contribute to the newsletter, please contact **Christina Payne** at [christina.l.payne@lmco.com](mailto:christina.l.payne@lmco.com).

## High School Writing Competition, cont'd

(Continued from page 1)

leased in April. Historically, Central Florida students have performed well in the international competition, including a 1-3-5 finish two years ago.

In addition to the four Excellence and Merit awards, we presented six Achievement awards with \$25 prizes and seven Honorable Mentions.

Since the start of the competition in 1996, Central Florida high school students have earned \$4,325 in cash prizes from STC for their writing prowess.

A complete listing of the award winners, including the titles of their essays, is available at [www.stc-orlando.org/education/highsch/allhsawards.asp](http://www.stc-orlando.org/education/highsch/allhsawards.asp).



**Dr. Jones, Dr. Behel, and Mr. Kessler—three key reasons for the success of our high school writing competition.**

## STC Annual Elections

Voting materials for STC's 2003 election will be available online, therefore you will not receive hardcopy versions of these materials. You'll find candidate statements and an online ballot at [www.intelliscaninc.com/stc.htm](http://www.intelliscaninc.com/stc.htm).

Please review these materials carefully before casting your vote.

To log on to the election site, you'll need your ballot control number (34382) and

your STC member number. (Your member number appears on your membership card and on the label of most mailings from the Society office.)

To participate in the election, you must vote online by **12:00 noon EDT, April 15, 2003**.

Have a say in STC's future: vote today!

If you have any questions regarding the voting procedures or election materials, please contact Anita Dosik at [anita@stc.org](mailto:anita@stc.org).

**Collect the Complete Set!**

## Another New Release from the Orlando Word Mint ... Our Motto: If It Ain't in the Dictionary, Make It Up

**Dewidowfication** (n.) (1) The removal of single-word carry-over lines in a column of text to save space and improve a document's design appearance, achieved by editorial adjustments elsewhere in the paragraph. (2) The re-entry into a nuptial state of a woman whose previous spouse is deceased, with a new partner. Root word is *widow* (n.), meaning (1) a single word of text that falls on a separate line at the end of a paragraph (typography) or (2) a woman whose husband has died of natural causes (misfortune) or been done in (emancipation). Other forms include *dewidowfy* (v.t.), meaning (1) to remove

a single-word carry-over line in a column of text or (2) to enter a nuptial state with a woman whose previous husband is deceased; and *rewidowfy* (v.t.), meaning (1) to reintroduce (albeit unintentionally) widows into a document during a text revision cycle, necessitating a subsequent corrective action known as *redewidowfication* (n.) (from *redewidowfy* [v.t.], to dewidowfy again) or (2) to render a former widow a widow once again, either by killing her second husband, or, if one is her second husband, by dying, either via natural causes or via a deliberate act, such as autodefencetratation (see "Word Mint II," V2N7 of *Memo to Members*). Examples: (1) "We can cor-

rect the two paragraphs of overflow text in the brochure layout via assiduous dewidowfication" (typography). (2) "Claudius widowed and dewidowed Gertrude within 2 months, via fratricide and incest, respectively" (*Hamlet*). (3) "After Marsha defenestrated Harry following his steadfast refusal to *autodezombify* (v. reflexive) (see "Word Mint I," V2N6 of *Memo to Members*) from Monday Night Football, she was dewidowed and subsequently defenestrated by an opportunistic young gigolo who had handled Harry's portfolio at Merrill Lynch" (investment).



# Making the Most of Unemployment

by Gena Shurtleff, Senior Technical Writer at IDX Corporation

A year ago I was facing my second layoff in less than a year. I was able to find a new job within a few weeks despite the hard times in our industry. Here are my tips for finding the right job quickly and making the most of your time without a job.

## Make a Schedule

Job-hunting can be discouraging, so procrastination is an easy trap to fall into. Attack the search in the morning before you can come up with reasons to wait. After you finish your daily tasks, you can spend your afternoons indulging in guilt-free loafing.

It is also important to establish structure in your daily routine. Create a list of tasks to complete every day, week, and month. For example, list each job Web site you check on your task list. Another task might be to call your recruiter or to attend an STC meeting. Completing the tasks ensures that you do your job searching consistently and gives you a sense of accomplishment.

## Get There First

In a perfect world, human resources would carefully read all the resumes they receive to find the best candidate. Unfortunately, most Human Resources departments are swamped and interview the first 3–5 applicants who meet the minimum requirements. Consequently, it is important to be one of the first qualified people to apply to a job. Here are some ways to “speed up” your job application process:

- Create a master cover letter with bullet points covering the skills for which employers commonly ask. When you apply to a job, choose the four or five most relevant bullet points for your letter. This allows you to customize your application without spending hours painstakingly crafting it. Also, since you’ll carefully proofread the master letter, you won’t discover embarrassing typos right after you click “send.”
- Create multiple versions of your resume. If you are targeting two different types of jobs, create different resumes for each purpose. Don’t try to make an “all purpose” resume or customize it for each job application. Having a targeted resume ready means you can apply immediately when you find the right job.
- Create your resume in multiple formats. Different employers ask for different formats. At a minimum you should

have each version of your resume available as Microsoft Word and nicely formatted text files. The text version can be pasted into online applications. Again, since it has been proofread, you’ll avoid putting typos into those online forms.

## Rejuvenate Your Portfolio

Having a great portfolio is important for technical communicators. There is no better time to improve your portfolio than when you are unemployed. This is one of the few times you have the time and the motivation.

- If your portfolio is a little thin, try volunteering your time to a non-profit organization. Include the new work in your portfolio.
- If your portfolio is paper-based, try creating an online version. Employers love being able to see your samples before the interview.
- If your portfolio is out-of-date, add recent work and give it a facelift.

## Sharpen Your Technical Skills

The ability to use specific software applications is one of the most common job requirements for a technical writer. Why not spend your time off learning a new software application or working on a “soft spot” in your skill set?

- Download a trial version if you can’t afford the product. Trial versions are free, and they provide a built-in deadline because they only last for 30 or 60 days.
- Complete the tutorials. Many applications have tutorials that allow you to master the product’s basic capabilities. Create a sample for your portfolio using the product. This won’t give you true working knowledge of the product, but it will prove that you can use it.

## Stay Positive

It can be a real challenge to remain upbeat in the face of unemployment. Have faith in yourself and your skills. Before you know it, you’ll be at work chasing deadlines and wondering why you were in such a rush to get back.

*This article was reprinted with the permission of author Gena Shurtleff and Managing Editor Kelly Malleck from the Puget Sound Chapter STC’s newsletter Sound Off!*

## One Size Fits All, Right?

by Richard Phipps, Employment Committee Manager



This month I want to provide a friendly reminder to be sure to keep a few different versions of your resume on hand.

As writing to your audience is important in technical communications, so is writing to your audience in your job search.

You will want to tailor your resume (and cover letter) to suit the type of position you're seeking.

Rearrange your resume as necessary to feature what's important based on the job description and/

or job title you're seeking.

By keeping these resumes on file, you'll eventually have plenty of modular resume pieces that will make customizing your resume much easier in the future.

In this tight job market, you'll only have about seven seconds to catch the eye of those reading your resume. Be sure it shouts what the reader is seeking.

*Richard Phipps is the Consulting Services Manager for CIBER, Inc, an international information technology consulting company. Prior to that he served as a recruiter and a recruiting manager in his 6 years with CIBER.. Contact Richard at [RPhipps@CIBER.com](mailto:RPhipps@CIBER.com)*

## Technical Writer Position Open at Publix Super Markets, Inc.

Publix Super Markets, Inc. currently has a Technical Writer position open in the Information Systems Department. March 27, 2003 will be the last day that they will accept resumes for this position.

Anyone interested should meet the following qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree in technical communication, English, journalism, or a related field, or a minimum of five years equivalent experience.
- Demonstrated expertise in designing, organizing, writing, and editing usable system documentation.
- Outstanding written and verbal communication skills.
- Ability to analyze information and organize ideas logically.
- Proficient user of MS Word.
- Ability to work well with others and be a team player.
- Outstanding interpersonal and interviewing skills.

**Publix**® *Where shopping is a pleasure.*

- Demonstrated ability to publish documents to an Internet/Intranet environment is preferred.
- Ability to solve problems and think creatively.
- Ability to plan, organize, and follow through on assigned tasks.
- Demonstrated ability to work well under pressure and handle deadlines.
- Must be detail-oriented.
- Ability to work with minimal supervision.
- Must show enthusiasm, initiative, and pride in work.

### Pay Information:

The pay type for this position is monthly salaried with a range starting at \$2,590 and ending at \$3,600. Selected associate may not start at the base pay for the position (an individual's pay will be based on how well he/she meets the posted qualifications).

**To Apply:** To apply for this position, please send in a resume, a statement of interest describing how you meet each of the qualifications, and reason(s) for wanting this position, a cover sheet, and several relevant writing samples to Teri LaCoy at [Publix.IT.Jobs@Publix.com](mailto:Publix.IT.Jobs@Publix.com) or fax the above information to Teri at 863-616-5658.

### Students are Welcome to Apply

If there is a student that is interested in this position, please have him or her send their resume, a statement of interest describing how they meet each of the qualifications, reason(s) for wanting this position, and several relevant writing samples to [publix.it.jobs@imc.publix.com](mailto:publix.it.jobs@imc.publix.com).

*All candidates with the above qualifications are encouraged to apply regardless of race, gender, age, national origin, religion, marital status, or disability.*



**Budget is Balanced; Future is Bright**

## **Special Needs SIG Completes Successful Membership Drive**

As of 2/27, with 98% of the STC membership renewal “precincts” in, the membership of the Special Needs SIG had grown to 222. In all, STC had processed 22,730 memberships, which is certainly good news for the Society.

The Orlando Chapter played a major role in the SNSIG’s successful membership drive, both in terms of the number of members it has in the SIG and also by being the home of two of the SIG’s senior officers and at the epicenter of an intensive 6-month membership drive.

The 222, which is likely to grow to about 230 with “stragglers” on the membership renewals and to around 250 by the end of the year with an influx at the conference, leaves the SNSIG shy of its original target of 300 to cover its budget request on a per capita basis (i.e., using the \$5 SIG fees as its only source of income), but it nonetheless represents a phenomenal growth of 1,110% in less than a year, from a committee of 20 people to a robust and dynamic SIG.

To a significant degree, the SIG owes this success to the dedicated efforts of a small band of volunteers who conducted what it termed “Operation Starfish”—a world-

wide SNSIG membership drive that reached nearly all 150 chapters as well the other SIGs. The volunteers will be acknowledged in the “Starfish Chamber” column in the next issue of the SIG newsletter, *Achieve!*

SIG manager Dan Voss reported that via a mid-year budget adjustment based on its membership growth, strategic budget cuts, private donations, and the promise of corporate sponsorships, the organization is now looking at a balanced and viable budget that will sustain all of its initiatives in the 2002-2003 chapter year, including its efforts before and at the upcoming conference, as well as the likelihood of significant budget growth in 2003-2004.

Most important, he said, was the fact that the SIG has added a great many energetic new colleagues who stand ready to join in its diverse initiatives. Many already have. “Operation Starfish is complete,” he concluded. “Its mission is accomplished. We are viable, we are funded, and our future is assured. Now we can return to our original mission: making this a more accessible world.”



## **Did I Ever Tell You, You’re My Hero?**

Chapter president Mike Murray told a packed house precisely that about Barbara Odom at the February chapter meeting.

Mike made Barbara the second recipient of the chapter’s coveted “Hero Award,” bestowed for service above and beyond the call of duty under emergency circumstances.

In this case, the emergency came at the January chapter meeting, which drew what may have been an all-time chapter record of 86 people—none of whom would have been fed if Barbara hadn’t come to the rescue. The emergency was that the caterer thought the meeting was on Wednesday. Barb discovered

that juicy little tidbit of information about 20 minutes before the meeting.

No problem. After defibrillation, Barb rapidly assembled a team of volunteers and dashed off to a nearby Albertsons. Within a half hour, they were back bearing a very respectable array of refreshments, and the meeting came off on schedule.

Rumors that several other Albertsons customers were left sprawled on the floor by the checkout counters are unconfirmed.



**Barbara Odom, Our Hero!**

## Tool Tips: Word Macros Can Save Valuable Time

By David Coverston



Sometimes you can't find a tool to use for a particular task. However, if you are using Microsoft Word, then there is a possibility that you can make your own tools that will do what you want them to do. For example, often when I am copying text from another Word document, I need to copy it without bringing into my document all the style information carried with the copied text. Likewise, when I copy text from web pages into a Word document, I usually just want to bring in the text without all the HTML formatting that pasting it directly into my document brings. I could choose **Edit>Paste Special>Unformatted Text** from the menu bar, but that's a lot of steps for something I do so often. Instead I made a tool to do this for me at the click of a button.

The time you can save in deleting multiple steps in procedures can really add up quickly, and you will enjoy your work more if you can automate it. I'll walk you through the steps of setting up Word to write macros if you have never done this before, and then I'll give you the code for one of my favorite tools, PasteUnformattedText.

I have used this code in Word 97 and 2000, but it should work for 2002. If you are using Word 95, well, it's time to upgrade. Word 95 has a different language, so this code in this article won't work.

Begin by opening the Visual Basic Editor by choosing **Tools>Macro>Visual Basic Editor** from the menu bar (see Figure 1). The upper window is the Project Explorer, the lower window is the Properties Window. I usually close it because I seldom use it and I like to have lots of free screen space.

Make sure that you have Normal selected in the Project Explorer, then choose **Insert>Module** from the VB Editor menu bar. This will open the Code Window, which is where you will type the code for your macro.

Normal refers to your Normal.dot, the basic template for Word documents. You can store macros in three places in Word— in the Normal template, in a separate template, or in the document itself. By storing your macro in the Normal template, you make it always available.

Next, type (or copy and paste) the following code into the Code Window:

```
Sub PasteUnfText()  
    '      by David Coverston Copyright 2000-2001  
    '      All Rights Reserved  
  
    On Error GoTo errHandler  
    Dim msgBoxTitle As String  
    msgBoxTitle = "Paste Unformatted Text"  
  
    Selection.PasteSpecial Link:=False, DataType:=wdPasteText, Placement:=wdInLine, DisplayAsIcon:=False  
  
errHandler:  
    If Err.Number = 5342 Then  
        MsgBox Prompt:="You have a graphic on the Clipboard", Title:=msgBoxTitle
```

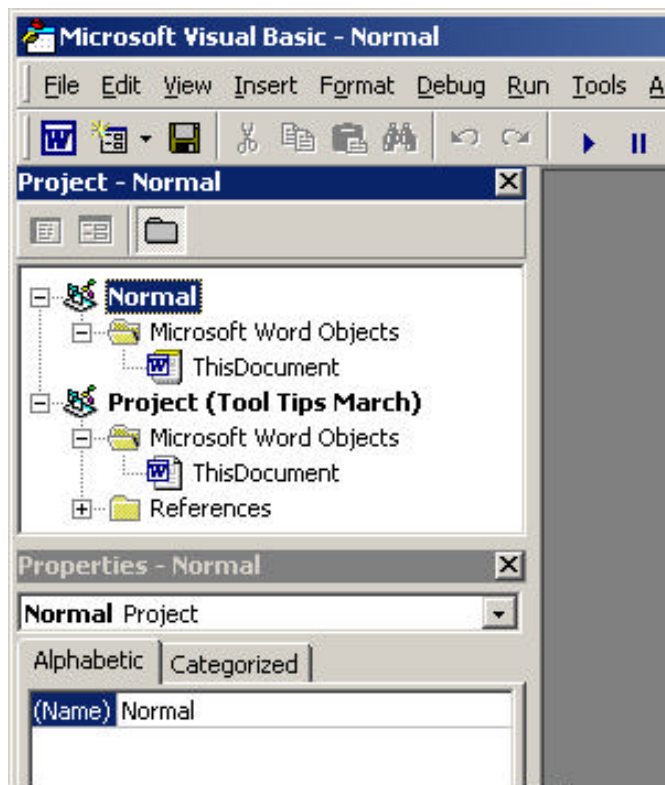


Figure 1

(Continued on page 7)

## Tool Tips, cont'd

(Continued from page 6)

```
Exit Sub
ElseIf Err.Number = 4605 Then
    MsgBox Prompt:="You do not have any text on the Clipboard", Title:=msgBoxTitle
Exit Sub
Else
    Exit Sub
End If

End Sub
```

Your Code Window should now look like Figure 2.

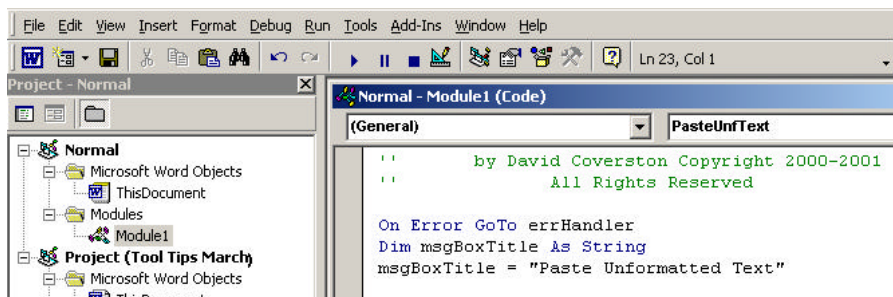


Figure 2

Close the VB Editor now, and we will finish the tool by adding it to your toolbar and making an icon for it. To do that, open the Customize dialog box by choosing **Tools>Customize** from the menu bar. On the Commands tab, select Macros in the Categories list box, then choose **Normal.Module1.PasteUnformattedText** in the Commands list box, see Figure 3. Click and drag the command to your toolbar where you want your tool button placed. I put mine to the right of the Paste tool on my Standard tool bar. That way I have my PasteUnformattedText tool next to my regular Paste tool.

Right-click your new tool button and choose **Default Style** and **Change Button Image** from the context menu, see Figure 4. I use the little jar of paste icon that is used as a icon for pasting in other applications. Now I have my choice of pasting formatted or unformatted text at the click of a button.

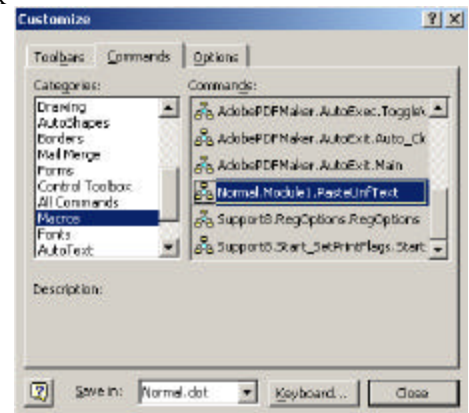


Figure 3

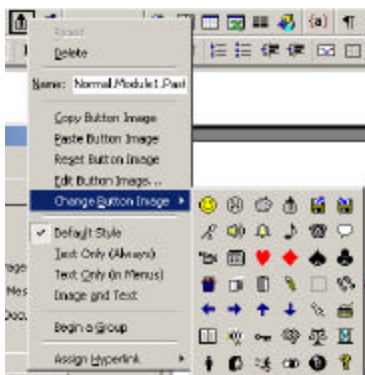


Figure 4

*Technical Notes: Two errors can occur with this macro when pasting from the clipboard as unformatted text. You may have a graphic on the clipboard, or you may not have copied anything to the clipboard. The error handling routines account for both of these and display a message box telling the writer what the error was.*

**February Meeting:****The Benefits of Teaching Technical Communication****Presented by Dr. Suzy Behel**

At our February meeting we presented the awards for the Seventh Annual Florida Technical Writing competition. Dr. Suzy Behel, a science teacher at Lake Brantley High School who also teaches technical communication, was the keynote speaker.

Dr. Behel's presentation, "The Benefits of Teaching Technical Communication," explained the importance of effective communication in science. She said that scientists working with the theory of spontaneous generation were ineffectual because they lacked communication skills.

At Lake Brantley, writing skills are taught early in their curriculum. Beginning with the ninth grade, writing an essay is one-third of their grade in the AP classes.

The STC competition forms a focal point for teaching technical communication skills, Dr. Behel said, providing guidelines for beginning writers, and polishing the skills of the more advanced. Students learn how to define a target audience, then write for that audience. They learn to evaluate the quality of information sources, format bibliographies, cite references, and use tools such as spelling and grammar checkers. They also

learn how to organize their writing, and how to use PERT (Program Evaluation Review Technique), a methodology developed by the U.S. Navy to schedule, organize, and coordinate tasks within a project.

Dr. Behel suggested that STC build on its successes by getting the word out to more science/technology teachers, holding seminars at local high schools, creating a competition Web site and placing the winning submissions on that site. She also suggested rewarding sponsoring teachers and having cosponsors furnish the rewards.

**Dr. Behel, February's keynote speaker****In Defense of Basic Transport—Epilogue****by Dan Voss**

The plucky, battle-worn 1987 Honda Civic that was immortalized in a poignant personal paean in last month's edition (V2N7) of *Memo to Members* has added yet another chapter to its illustrious saga.

Days after the article appeared, the author was battling his way through the daily gauntlet down traffic-clogged I-4 less than a mile north of the St. John's River bridge when his blood was chilled by the tell-tale rumble of a rapidly deflating tire. Simultaneously, he caught the harsh glare of flashing yellow lights in the rear view mirror.

The sound, indeed, was a flat. Had it occurred 60 seconds later, on the bridge, it could have had ugly consequences.

The lights, as it turned out, belonged to a State of Florida Road Ranger, who just happened to be located directly behind the Civic when its left front tire decided to give up the ghost. The friendly shield of the large service vehicle sheltered the little car as it pulled safely off the road onto a narrow sloping shoulder despite the hurtling rush hour

traffic.

The driver of the Road Ranger provided a hydraulic jack which made the tire change a 5-minute proposition despite the steep, surly angle of the shoulder. He also had handy an onboard pneumatic air hose to reinflate the spare tire, which, of course, was also flat.

Seven minutes after the tire blew, the little Civic, once again shielded by the watchful yellow flashers of the Ranger, rolled safely back into the fray on the bustling interstate.

The author, of course, claims that not even the most diehard skeptic could possibly attribute such an event to mere chance. The *Memo to Members* staff is counseling him, but the outlook appears bleak.



**March Meeting:****From Tina to Xena: A Recipe for Professional Empowerment****Presented by Dan Voss and W.C. Wiese**

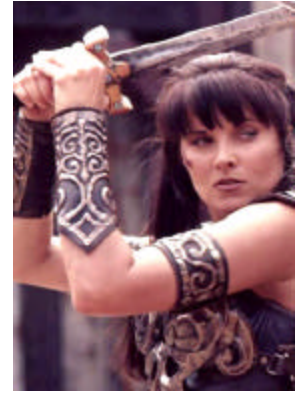
At our next chapter meeting on March 25, Dan Voss and W.C. Wiese, managers in the Communications Department of Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control, will present a workshop program entitled *From Tina to Xena: A Recipe for Professional Empowerment*. Based on their shared experience, Wiese and Voss will also present this successful workshop for a third time at the 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the STC.

Remember the immortal Tina the Brittle Technical Communicator? The program will provide realistic training in the martial art of technical communication – integrated strategic communi-

cation. Learn to view change as an opportunity to increase your impact on the organization. Identify your level of impact, your resources, and your opportunities to control the solution.

You'll graduate as a fully empowered Xena who has earned the right to be respected as a strategic partner in the business.

See you there! (Leave war ponies tied in the parking lot.)



All STC monthly meetings are held at 6:30 p.m. at the Winter Park Civic Center unless otherwise specified.

# April 2003

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	Administrative Council Meeting	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

**Mailing Address:** STC Orlando  
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Orlando, Florida  
32854-0444

## Chapter Meeting Schedule

- **March 25–** *The Tina-Xena Transformation: A Recipe for Professional Empowerment*
- **April 22–** *Employment Progression and Scholarship Awards*
- **May 27–** Panel Discussion on *Help*
- **June 24–** Year-end Banquet

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# UCF Research Team Puts Wrap On STC Grant Project

This month marks the completion of the year-long research project under an STC grant to develop multimedia presentations in support of the Chapter's educational outreach initiative to Central Florida high schools.

Developed by Cindy Hauptner, Suzanne Shomate, and Bob Stultz under the oversight of Dr. Dan Jones and Dan Voss, the year-long project produced a 40-minute presentation defining the profession of technical communication in a manner suitable for a high school audience and a 15-minute presentation describing the Chapter's annual high school technical writing competition.

Cindy and Bob gave a brief peek into the finished presentations after the presenta-

tion of awards to the winners in this year's 7<sup>th</sup> Annual competition at the February 25 chapter meeting. The materials will be posted to an STC Web site in the near future for Society-wide access and use. They will also be available on CD upon request.

Look for an interesting and informative feature article by Cindy and Bob in the April edition of *Memo to Members* presenting an inside view of what it's like to try to produce a "Cadillac" on a Volkswagen-sized grant budget, as well as how challenging it can be to maintain one's sanity while also doing voice-overs for animated characters!