

MEMO TO MEMBERS



"Creating and supporting a forum for communities of practice in the profession of technical communication."

STC Orlando Chapter: A 2003 and 2004 Chapter of Distinction

Volume 3, Issue 10 November - December 2004

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Welcome New Members

Winner of STC's Chapter of Distinction Award, 2003 and 2004



From the President's Desk

What Can You Get for \$20? In STC — a *lot*!

By Mike Murray, Orlando Chapter President

If you haven't already, you'll soon be receiving an e-mail (or

snail mail) notice from the Society for Technical Communication (STC) asking you to renew your membership online. As you complete the renewal process, you'll be asked to select the type of membership you want. The following table displays the membership types and associated benefits that come with each. You'll only need a few seconds to notice that the difference between a "Classic" membership and a "Limited" membership is only \$20. That's right – only \$20! I strongly recommend either the "Classic" or the "E" membership (no paper copies) as your obvious choice.

And don't forget to select chapter affiliation as one of your options.

So what can you get for \$20?

The answer is – pretty much the world of technical communications! What value do you personally put on even *one* of the



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Tuesday, December 14th at 6:30 PM

Adobe Acrobat 6.0

By Christina Hammock, Orlando Chapter Vice President

Do you use Adobe Acrobat? Do you want to learn how to make the most of this versatile tool? Then you

won't want to miss our December Chapter meeting.

December's meeting promises to be an informative program. Patrick Koster of Koster and Associates will be giving us a presentation on Adobe Acrobat 6 Professional. If you use Acrobat, this is a meeting you won't want to miss!

Mr. Koster will provide a brief overview of Adobe Acrobat's functionality:

- ✓ Creating PDF files
- ✓ Manipulating/Editing PDF files
- ✓ Creating navigational structures
- ✓ Setting security passwords/other PDF document preferences
- ✓ Using markup tools and implementing online review process using PDF files
- ✓ Batch processing PDF files
- ✓ Optimizing PDF files
- ✓ PDF forms

Patrick Koster is an Adobe Certified Expert/

Instructor with Adobe InDesign, Acrobat, Illustrator, PageMaker, GoLive, and FrameMaker. He has provided customized hands-on training throughout the United States since 1998. For a partial list of his clients visit his web site – www.koster.net.

We will be holding a holiday food drive at this meeting as well. Donate non-perishable food items at the meeting and receive an extra door prize ticket!



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When you renew your STC membership this year you will notice several new options. It is very important that you choose to maintain your membership in the **Orlando Chapter** so we can continue to provide the meetings, employment resources, and other services that we all enjoy. Please refer to this "Sample Ballot" when renewing your membership.





Membership Information: Select either "Classic" or "Electronic" Membership.

Membership Type:	Classic <u>▼</u>
	Classic
	Electronic
	Limited

Geographic-Based Communities: Select Orlando!

Geographic-Based
Communities:

	Chapter - Location (sorted by location)		
	Orlando - Orlando, FL	•	
	Australia - Australia, Sydney		
TransAlpine - Austria, Vienna			
	Belgium - Belgium, Mechelen		

The Value of Chapter Meetings: Services Exchange and STC Support

By Mike Murray, Orlando Chapter President

There comes a time when every professional in every industry needs information. Whether you're looking for a job, a mentor, referrals to specific companies or industries, or information about software or any of the technical communications disciplines, you'll find what you need at an Orlando Chapter meeting. Similarly, you probably have contacts and knowledge that could help others.

That's why these monthly STC meetings are hugely popular with so many technical communicators who see their attendance as one of the most valuable benefits of their STC membership.

By choosing either "Classic" or "E" membership when you renew and select chapter membership, you ensure yourself the opportunity to attend monthly meetings and participate in our member-selected topics. Our members can give you helpful advice and point you toward additional resources that will provide you with the answers you need to advance your career.

So how much would you pay to ensure yourself of having constant access to these resources? It all depends on how much you value your career. See you at the next chapter meeting! **MtM**

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♦ Microsoft Word

◆RoboHelp

◆FrameMaker

♦ HTML Basics

Topics that have been requested:

STC Members Help Make FTC Workshops a Success

♦ Photoshop

♦ Studio MX

◆ Macromedia

◆ Dreamweaver

By Jennifer Selix, President FTC

As the fall term draws to a close, the Future Technical Communicators (FTC) at the University of Central Florida is

celebrating a record breaking season of Free Computer Skills Workshops. Attendance has skyrocketed over the last four months, with the Macromedia Dreamweaver Workshop bringing in over fifty participants. Also, the number of non-FTC affiliated participants has continued to grow at an amazing rate.

The growth and success of the FTC Workshop Series is greatly attributed to the powerful bond between the STC Orlando Chapter of Distinction and the University of Central Florida. STC Orlando members continue to volunteer their time and knowledge to help increase the skill base of UCF students, faculty, staff, and the entire Orlando community. Special thanks go out to Bonnie Spivey and Christina

Hammock for presenting this semester. Their sessions on Microsoft Word Styles and Advanced Microsoft Word

Applications were amazingly successful, and requests have been made for a repeat of these sessions in the spring.

If you have a special skill or program proficiency that you would like to share with the Orlando Community, please contact Jennifer Selix (futuretek2004@hotmail.com) to discuss the possibility of presenting at a FTC Free Skills

Workshop this spring.

Thanks again to all of you who have helped to make this semester successful. We encourage all STC Orlando members to take advantage of these educational and resume building activities. **MtM**

What Can You Get. . . , continued

(Continued from page 1)

following benefits of chapter affiliation, let alone *all* of them?

- ✓ Chapter members-only access (coming soon) to job opportunities
- ✓ Chapter members-only access (coming soon) to chapter meeting presentations and handouts
- ✓ Demonstrations of the latest technical communications processes and tools
- Direct contact with industry experts (speakers and members)
- Hands-on exhibits, including award-winning documentation
- ✓ Instant, real-time, face-to-face network of experts in various fields willing to help with your technical communications questions
- Personal job assistance and access to potential employers
- ✓ Special training opportunities of all kinds, such as telephone seminars, weekend workshops, university presentations, and more
- ✓ "Soft" skills training, such as leadership, mentoring, public speaking, team development and management, business budgeting, long-range planning, and lots of self-confidence

Will you invest an extra \$20 in your career – in your future?

The English author C. S. Lewis once said, "The future is something which everyone reaches at the rate of 60 minutes an hour, whatever he does, whoever he be." Take the time now to invest in your future because the future is now! Of course, you could always spend the \$20 on a movie for short-term pleasure. As for myself, my future is worth hundreds of times that \$20. How about you? **MtM**

	New III	dividual Membership Categor	ica. Cuais di	iiu Dellellita	
Membership Category	Publications:	Communities	Voting Privileges	Cost (in USD)	
"Classic"	Paper copies of Intercom and Technical Communicaton, and access to the online versions.	Members choose between: 1 chapter and 1 SIG, or 3 SIGs Additional SIGs available for 5 each; additional chapters for \$10 each.	Yes	U.S. members: Canadian members: Overseas members: Retired members*:	145.00 145.00 + \$15 postage 145.00 + \$35 postage 72.50
"Limited"	Paper copies of Intercom and Technical Communicaton, and access to the online versions.	None.	Yes	U.S. members: Canadian members: Overseas members:	125.00 125.00 + \$15 postage 125.00 + \$35 postage
"E"	Online access to Intercom and Technical Communicaton. No paper copies.	Members choose between: 1 chapter and 1 SIG, or 3 SIGs Additional SIGs available for 5 each; additional chapters for \$10 each.	Yes	U.S. members: Canadian members: Overseas members:	135.00 135.00 135.00
Student	Online access to Intercom and Technical Communicaton. No paper copies.	Members choose between: • 1 chapter and 1 SIG, or • 3 SIGs Additional SIGs available for \$5 each; additional chapters for \$10 each.	No	U.S. members: Canadian members: Overseas members:	50.00 50.00 50.00

^{*}To qualify, an individual must be retired and have been an STC member for at least 10 years. Retired members are not counted in the calculation for rebate amounts.

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Tool Tips: Copier and Calculator

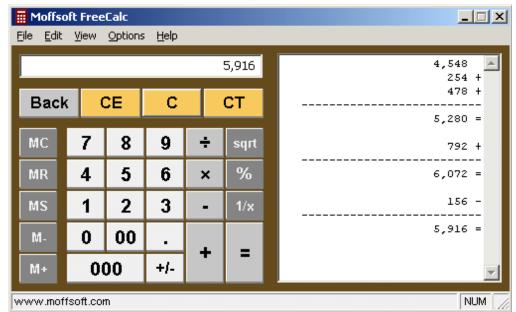
By David Coverston, Chapter Secretary

I would like to introduce you to a couple of useful utilities in this issue that are particularly suited for a technical writer who works at home, or for general home use. Both of these utilities bring functions to the computer that I have missed on their corresponding hardware counterparts.

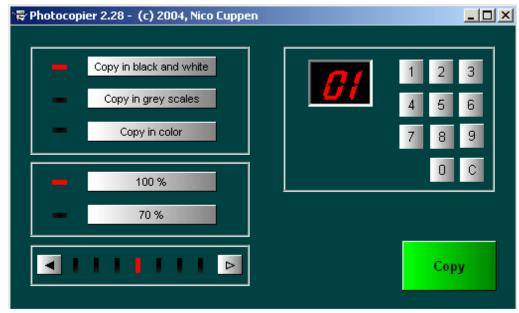
First is a calculator program. Yes, I know that Windows has a built-in calculator, and it even has scientific functions. But I seldom use it. What is it that the old calculators had that most of the computer equivalents don't have? A tape with a running total.

Meet Moffsoft FreeCalc. A computer calculator with a running totals tape that you can print. What a concept! Whatever you are calculating, when you need to keep track of the items you have entered, nothing beats having a printable tape.

The price is right -free- but there is a more advanced version offering such features as multiple file formats for the Save Tape



Moffsoft FreeCalc



Photocopier

function, toolbars, item counts, and date & time calculations to mention a few. You can set FreeCalc to run at startup and can store it in the tray area of your Taskbar.

You can get the program from http://www.moffsoft.com/. The program comes with an installation routine, so all you have to do is double-click the MoffFreeCalcSetup.exe and follow the prompts.

The other freeware I want to introduce to you is a program I found to make my scanner do what I wanted it to do. Some scanners come with a copy button, but mine didn't. As a matter of fact, I have two scanners and neither one of them has a copy button. I have several graphic editors, but sometimes it is a hassle to start a graphics editor and scan something when all I really want to do is a simple copy function.

Photocopier is just what I needed. It's simple, and does what I wanted it to do. All I have to do is start Photocopier, put my original document on the scanner, and click **Copy** to get a copy.

I even like the icon it puts on my desktop.

(Continued on page 5)

Tool Tips, continued

(Continued from page 4)

You can output your copy in black & white, gray scale, or color, providing that you have a color printer (of course). You can also scale your output down to 70 per cent.



Photocopier also has two versions, the freeware Photocopier and the shareware Photocopier Pro. For 20 bucks you can get the version that lets you preview the scanned image before you print it, manipulate the scanned image from the preview window, control the scan resolution, and use an Auto crop function.

Click the Copy button and Photocopier automatically starts your USB scanner and prints directly from it to your printer. You can print up to 99 copies by setting the number of copies shown in the red LED numbers.

If you have a SCSI scanner, you will need to turn it on before you boot the computer. Otherwise, your computer can't find the scanner, so you won't be able to use it with this or any other program. There is a trick that will sometimes let you use the scanner when you turn it on after you have started your computer. It works by telling the computer to scan for hardware changes.

Here's how to do this: Right-click the My Computer icon on your desktop and choose Properties. Click the Hardware tab on the System Properties dialog box, then click the Device Manager button. Right-click the Computer icon in the Device Manager window, and choose Scan for hardware changes from the pop-up menu. If your scanner shows up in the Device Manager window, then the scanner will work without rebooting. It doesn't always work, but it is worth a try.



If You Missed Our October Meeting. . .

By David Coverston, Orlando Chapter Secretary

Then you missed learning about single-sourcing and content management systems. Brett Freeman of Vasont Systems spoke on Selecting the Right Content Management System. Content management can mean different things to different people, Brett said. The way he defines it is "managing bits and pieces of information that make up your documentation."

Single sourcing means using information over and over again. When you single source information, you:

- reuse the content
- write the content once
- store the content in a single location
- repurpose the content.

A total documentation solution will include (1) a way to input and output data, (2) a content management solution that sits on top of a database, and (3) a formatting and publishing tool.

A content management project plan consists of the following sequence:

- (1) Define your business goals
- (2) Quantify your current costs
- (3) Develop the technical solution
- (4) Develop costs for your solution
- (5) Develop your ROI
- (6) Select your vendors
- (7) Implement your solution.

One useful tip for finding about systems is to ask the vendor about his or her last five implementations—ask how long the implementations took.

Your business goals can include reduced costs, improved accuracy, and improved customer experience. Quantifying goals is difficult, Brett said. One of the big challenges of gathering metrics is that your regular work still has to be done. But if you can map out your current state, you can also identify opportunities for improvement.

When you create your technical solution, you have to develop a content model. Brett said that content modeling should be intuitive, repurposeable, definable, and available. One common model is the widely used DocBook. "IBM's answer to DocBook" is Darwin Information Typing Architecture (DITA). DITA has started out small, but as more is added to the model, he expects that it will become as difficult to use as DocBook.

Your technical solution must take into account factors such as the content life cycle, re-use strategy, authoring tools, review procedures, version control, and multi-language requirements. "An out-of-the-box solution does not exist," Brett said. So you should push vendors to show you functionality that you need.

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Presented by Dr. Atsusi "2c" Hirumi The Design and Sequencing of e-Learning Interactions: A Grounded Approach

By Christina Hammock

November's meeting gave us an exciting look into the field of Instructional Design and Online Training. Dr. Hirumi discussed some of the challenges in designing Online Training and explained how with little time, training, and resources trainers revert back to what they know best, teacher-led



Dr. Atsusi "2C" Hirumi

instructional methods and materials. Dr. Hirumi then presented a three-level framework for classifying elearning interactions and illustrated how the framework could be used to:

- Design e-learning interactions and alternative elearning environments
- Analyze planned interaction to optimize learning and reduce the need for costly revisions
- Organize research on e-learning interactions to help interpret findings and guide future studies.

Dr. Atsusi "2c" Hirumi is an Associate Professor and Co-Coordinator of the Instructional Technology Program at UCF. Dr. Hirumi received his B.S. in Biology from Purdue University, his M.A. in Educational Technology from San Diego State University, and his Ph.D. in Instructional Systems Technology from Florida State University.

For the past 10 years Dr. Hirumi has focused on developing systems to train K-12, university, and corporate educators on the systematic design of interactive distance education. He has authored a number of journal articles and several book chapters on e-learning and has made over 100 presentations at international, national, and state conferences on related topics. Honors include the TxDLA Award for Commitment to Excellence and Innovation; UHCL School of Education Star Faculty Award for Research, Teaching, and Service; the Phi Delta Kappa Outstanding University Practitioner Award; the Ruby Diamond Scholarship Award for Developing Scholars; and the Gagne-Briggs Outstanding Doctoral Student Award. Dr. Hirumi is also the only two-time winner of the WebCT Award for Exemplary Online Course Work. MtM

If You Missed Our Last Meeting. . .

By David Coverston, Chapter Secretary

If you missed our last meeting you missed an excellent presentation on the most requested meeting topic, Online Training. Dr. Atsusi Hirumi, from the University of Central Florida, blended theory with practice in his talk about how we should design online training.

A common mistake for an instructor who is designing online learning is to rely on lecture—based materials that the instructor has used in traditional classes, Atsusi said. We go into "survival mode" and revert to what we know. Teacher directed methods are typically based on speaking and listening—not engaging the student.

The difference between classroom instruction and online learning is the spontaneity of interactions in the traditional classroom. There are limited opportunities for real-time spontaneous interactions online. To compensate for this lack, interactions must be planned and sequenced as an integral part of e-learning, Atsusi said. You want to reduce the feeling of isolation and anonymity. Atsusi said he thinks that the available literature fails to provide novice online instructors with the framework they need to be effective. His framework takes the output of one task and uses it as the input for the next task. The three tasks are Objectives, Instructions, and Assessment. Atsusi said if he could change one thing about current methods, it would be this: that these three tasks would be aligned.

Atsusi gave a five-step systematic process for applying the framework:

- 1. Select your instructional strategy. Base it on your goals and objectives. Sequence events to facilitate learning. Familiarize yourself with the Information Process theory of learning.
- 2. Operationalize your strategy. Use your experience. Get others involved because instructional design is now a group effort. Combine your experiences with theory.
- 3. Learn about the types of interactions. Will your design be synchronous or asynchronous?
- 4. Map out your tools. What types of media will you use? What is the capacity of the media you want to use?
- Analyze interaction. Many instructors say online learning takes too much time, but often that is because they design too many interactions. Design, develop, and test one module before you do other modules. Use flowcharts, storyboarding, and prototypes.

Atsusi said that online educational designers need storytellers—this is where technical writers fit in. Instructional designers and technical writers make a good fit.

Atsusi then gave a online demonstration of a course he designed in Flash. Everyone got a stack of handouts, and the audience participated in a lively discussion of how Macromedia Breeze, an eLearning development and delivery application , fits in an online learning environment. **MEM**

If You Missed Our October, continued

(Continued from page 5)

Choosing a content management system requires a lot of investigation, with information that is difficult to acquire. Places you can gather information include colleagues who have implemented content management, trade shows, user groups, vendors and consultants. Brett suggested that you should "try to get invited to vendors' user groups before you buy." As a source of information, vendors have expertise in their own systems and industry knowledge, but are biased toward solutions involving their products. Consultants also have industry knowledge and have (presumably) implemented various products. But they can be expensive and may not be product-neutral.

The three components of a system are the authoring tools, the content repository, and the publishing engine. Authoring tools include XMLSpy, FrameMaker, Arbortext Epic Editor, and Xmetal. Content repositories include Vasont, Content@, and SiberSafe. Two formatting engines Brett mentioned are FrameMaker and Antenna House.

One final recommendation Brett made was to get the book *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* by Malcolm Gladwell.

Wow. Was that a lot to miss? **MtM**

Google Plans New Service for Scientists and Scholars

New York Times, 11-18-04

Google Scholar is a result of the company's collaboration with a number of scientific and academic publishers and is intended as a first stop for researchers looking for scholarly literature like peer-reviewed papers, books, abstracts and technical reports. The engineer who led the project, Anurag Acharya, said the company had received broad cooperation from academic, scientific and technical publishers like the Association of Computing Machinery, Nature, the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers and the Online Computer Library Center.

Mr. Acharya, who started the Google Scholar project, said his motivation, in part, had been a desire to help the academic community from which Google! emerged. The project was also an effort, said Mr. Acharya, 39, to address a problem he confronted as an undergraduate in India. As a student he found materials in his college library, at times, to be significantly out of date. "We don't know where the next breakthrough will come from," he said. "We want everyone to be able to stand on the shoulders of giants.

"Google Scholar is another reflection of changing habits in the academic world," said a representative of HighWire Press. In the past decade, students and researchers have begun to go to online search engines first. http://scholar.google.com MtM



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stu·dent (stdnt, styd-)

n.

One who is enrolled or attends classes at a school, college, or university. One who studies something: *a student of*

contemporary dance. An attentive observer: a student of world affairs.

The STC board of directors has voted to amend the new student member category to provide more benefits to students. The student membership now entitles



students to join one student chapter, one professional chapter, and an unlimited number of STC special interest groups.

Student membership dues are \$50; students can join additional chapters at a cost of \$10 per chapter.

The board also adopted a more stringent definition of student membership. To be eligible for student membership, a member must now be a full-time student. Previously, professional technical communicators enrolled in part-time continuing education classes could qualify for student membership. The new definition ensures that the benefits of student membership are available, as intended, only to students.

Student Member. Student Member. To be eligible for student membership, an applicant must be (1) enrolled in an accredited university, college, community college, or technical school; (2) considered a full-time student according to the criteria of the school he or she is attending; and (3) preparing for a career in technical communication.

SANTA HAS CHECKED HIS LIST TWICE, HAVE NOU????



If you're missing a few people on your list, why not use our Amazon click-through to get that last-minute holiday shopping done. Your friends and family will thank you and so will your Orlando chapter.

Giving Back to the Community

STC and UCF Partner in Holiday Food Drive

By Bonnie Spivey

Don't miss your last chance to contribute to the STC-UCF Holiday Food Drive! Bring your canned goods to the December chapter meeting and receive an extra ticket towards the evening's door-prize raffle. Folks in the UCF area may also drop off donations prior to December 14th in the Technical Writing Lab and main office of the English

Department.



Congratulations to everyone for a hugely successful first round! At last month's meeting, we amassed three carloads of canned goods.

Where do the proceeds go? Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida, the largest food bank in our area, will distribute our donations to more than 450 nonprofit partner agencies, benefiting the hurricane-weary citizens of Brevard, Lake, Orange, Osceola, Seminole, and Volusia counties.

Society News

***ACADEMIC PROGRAMS DATABASE IS UP AND RUNNING

To assist those interested in pursuing a career in technical communication, STC provides a database of academic programs worldwide. Schools are welcome to add their programs to the database. For more information visit: http://www.stc.org/academicDatabase.asp

**U.S. MEMBERS: DEDUCT YOUR STC DUES!

If you pay taxes in the United States, keep in mind that STC dues are tax deductible. Please note, however, that dues must be deducted from the tax return filed for the year in which they were paid. In other words, dues paid in 2004 may be deducted only from 2004 tax returns. Therefore, if you pay your 2005 dues on or before December 31,2004, these dues can be deducted only from your 2004 return. Members who have questions should contact their local IRS office or their accountant. **MtM**

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



elections, and just the plain business of life. But at last we are feeling the cooler temperatures and the festive atmosphere of the holidays. We are eternally grateful to all of you for your generous donations during our November food drive and look forward to an equally impressive show of generosity at the December meeting. Have a safe and happy holiday.

As always, I welcome your feedback and opinions, so feel free to e-mail me at newsletter@stc-orlando.org.

Thanks for reading, *Eríka*

YOUR OPINION COUNTS

Remember to let a chapter leader (red badge) know if you

have any ideas for ways we can make chapter meetings even more valuable to you. **MtM**

ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP CORNER

Your chapter remains on a roll with an outstanding turnout for November's meeting. With 44 members and guests attending, the November meeting sustained an annual increase beginning with 23 (2001) and increasing to 32 (2002) and 37 (2003). This year's increase is 19 percent over last

That brings year-to-date participation to 138, which is 41 percent larger than last year. Fifty-five Orlando Chapter members have earned points so far.

year's attendance.

Current active membership points leaders are:

- ★ Jon Kessler
- ★ Mike Murray
- ★ Christina Hammock
- ★ Karen Lane
- ★ Gail Lippincott
- ★ Jennifer Selix
- ★ Bonnie Spivey
- ★ William Wiese
- ★ Mark Hanigan★ David Coverston

- ★ Daniel Voss
- ★ Mark Wray
- ★ Alex Garcia
- ★ Sara Morris
- * Rosalie Petralia
- ★ Erika Coto
- ★ Robin Horn
- ★ Laurel Moll
- ★ Richard Phipps
- ★ Allison Johnson

Mark Your Calendars!

December 8th, 2004: Highlighting
Hazards: Mastering Warnings and Error
Messages
Presenter: Leah Guren. Level: All Levels. Type:
Telephone. http://stc.webex.com/

December 8th: First Day of Hanukkah

December 14th: Chapter Meeting at the
Winter Park Civic Center, 6:30 PM

December 25th: Christmas Day

THE ORLANDO CHAPTER OF STC WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS!



- **★**Jeremy Boehl
- ★Anthony Hunter
- **★**Daniel Metzler
- **★**Nan Parker
- ★Edward Santsaver

Memo to Members is published monthly for members of the STC-Orlando chapter and distributed via our e-mail distribution list. This newsletter is also available on our chapter Web site at www.stc-orlando.org under the link Newsletters. Comments, suggestions, and questions are always welcome and should be directed to the Editor, Erika Coto, at newsletter@stc-orlando.

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