Have an article?
Submit a new article or Chapter Meeting summary to newsletter@stc-orlando.org. If it's printed, you win a $5 chapter meeting discount voucher.

You Can't Get Experience Without…Experience!

ALEX GARCIA

Alex shares insight from his summer internship at Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp. in Boulder, Colorado.

This article provides tips for finding and securing your internship, conducting phone interviews, preparing for your internship, blending in as quickly as possible to your office environment, getting the most out of your internship, and bringing internship knowledge back to your studies in the fall.

WOW…I Need Experience!

So, you are sitting in your introductory technical writing class one day when you realize that this stuff sounds pretty interesting. It even sounds like something you might want to do for a living after college. But how do you get started? When the instructor is not looking—not that you would ever get off task—you jump on a computer and log-on to a job search Web site like Monster.com. After searching for "technical writer" several job listings appear. You peruse the listings and find that every one of them asks for at least 1 to 4 years of technical writing experience, and some even contain scary words like XML, digital asset management, white papers, single sourcing, and Sarbanes-Oxley. You suddenly realize that what you are learning in class will not be enough to help you compete in today's marketplace. Just as your teacher ends his or her lecture, you log-off the computer and shrug to yourself, "Wow…I need experience!"

This article will help you learn what you need to land an internship. What? You are not a technical writer? Don't worry—most of my suggestions will help you no matter what field you are in, from Astronomy to Zoology!

OK, Now What?

Now that you are determined to get some experience in technical writing, you need to know where to look for your summer internship. That's right, you need to actively look for an internship, because very few will land in your lap. As a student, you have many places that will help you with your job search: STC, school career fairs, friends and family—the list goes on and on. Be creative, and you will find the internship that fits you like a glove.

STC

Being a member of STC is your first step in the right direction to getting an internship. As a member, you have access to the STC Career Resource Center, located at www.jobs.stc.org. Familiarize yourself with this database, upload your resume, and apply for positions.

Also, the next time you are at your local STC chapter meeting, make it apparent that you want experience. Senior STC members are eager to help students get started, so don't be afraid to ask. Remember, who you know may make a difference when your resume comes across the hiring manager's desk.

Career Fairs

At the University of Central Florida, we have a very helpful resource: Career Services and Experiential Learning. This office helps students gain employment during and after college by conducting workshops and career counseling. I am sure that your school has a similar office, and if so, give it a visit.

Each semester, Career Services and Experiential Learning holds a Career Fair in which over 200 companies come to meet with students. These types of events are a great way to see what a company is really all about. Find out when your school's next career fair is. When the day arrives, get all dressed up, print out some resumes, and put your best foot forward—because it might get you in the door!

Experience
(Continued from page 1)

Networking

If you've heard it once, you've heard it a million times—it is often who you know in a company that will get you an interview, if not hired. If you are serious about getting an internship this summer, ask around. Your teachers are a great resource, as they may know people in the industry. You may also want to ask members of organizations in which you are involved, like fraternities, sororities, honor societies, and sports teams.

with you. There are a few things to remember to make your phone interview go smoothly:

- Keep it quiet – Put the dog away, get a babysitter, don't talk from the car during rush-hour traffic.

- Stand up and walk around – Standing lets more air into your lungs and lets you project your voice better.

- Get plenty of sleep – This one is a no-brainer. If you are tired, you won't be able to tell the manager what an asset you'll be to the company!

charged. The last thing you want is to lose the opportunity because your phone died in the middle of the interview!

Ready, Set...Plan!

The whiteness of snow has given way to the greenness of spring and the dawn of your new career. Your successful phone interview led to a hiring offer, and after a successful STC Conference in Las Vegas, you are ready to start your internship.

If you are like me, you chose an out-of-state internship. I traveled to Boulder, Colorado to work in

Expand your horizons!

The Ring of Opportunity

Congratulations! All your hard work and persistence have paid off! You applied for a few internships and got some interviews. Some companies are even out of state and the hiring manager called to set up a phone interview

- Drink water – Keep a glass of water handy in case the interview goes long or your throat gets scratchy.

- Charge your phone – if you absolutely need to give a cell phone number, make sure it is

the Communication Services department of Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp. College is the time to expand your horizons and see new places before the real world comes knocking. Some companies will pay your travel ex-

Recognizing Winners When You See 'Em

BY GAIL LIPPINCOTT, PRESIDENT

We all like to be recognized for our contributions, and the Orlando Chapter specializes in recognitions. Consider, for instance, the brilliant Jaffe Award and Active Member Shirt initiative that W.C. Wiese launched. And Mike Murray has to be the all-time champion of creating awards to thank people (think of the G.U.T.S. certificate and the awesome President's Award eagle). I've delightedly given G.U.T.S. (Give Up The 'Scuses) certificates to Lexi Graham, Christina Hammock, and Peggy Bivins for stepping forward to take a chance with the Hospitality Committee, Jaffe Awards, and Education Committee, respectively.

At the February meeting, I'll get to give Carla Tarantino her G.U.T.S. award for taking on the Community Achievement Awards (CAA) project that documents all the wonderful activities in which are members are involved. We have some spectacular entries for the CAA this year as we compete for our FOURTH year as a Chapter of Distinction (see last year's citations

The inspirational Dr. Dan Jones.

at www.stc.org/awards_chpt Achievement_winners.asp). This month, I am particularly pleased to announce Society-level awards garnered by several hard-working chapter members.

The most prestigious of these awards goes to our treasurer, Karen Lane, who was elected to Associate Fellow status this year! Karen will get her tiara at the Las Vegas Conference during the Tuesday night banquet as she joins about two-dozen new Associate Fellows on stage. (You can check out the list through 2005 at www.stc.org/honors.asp).

Exemplary leader, Karen Lane.

Karen's citation on her plaque and in the Honors booklet will read,

> For cutting-edge subject matter expertise in indexing, multiple professional presentations and publications, longstanding and invaluable service to the Orlando chapter, and exemplary leadership and contributions to the STC Annual conference.

The chapter also nominated two members for the Society's Distinguished Chapter Service Award (DCSA); both nominations were accepted. The Society created this

Mark Hanigan, tireless role model.

formal award to "acknowledge the work of chapter members who provide exemplary service to the Society through their dedication to the chapter and its activities." It is clear that Dan Jones and Mark Hanigan more than deserve this recognition, and they will receive their plaques on Leadership Day at the Las Vegas Conference.

Dan's citation will read,

> For serving as an inspiration and role model to generations of students and supporting their entry into the profession of technical communication, and for sustained contributions to the Orlando Chapter.
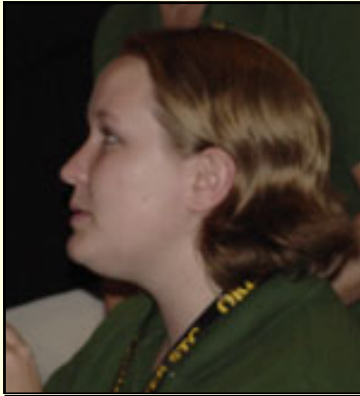
Mark's citation will read,

> For serving as an inspiration to members both new and established through your sustained enthusiasm and can-do spirit.

You can find the complete list of DCSA winners (organized by chapter and year awarded) at www.stc.org/PDF_Files/ STC_Distinguished.pdf.

Recognizing Winners
(Continued from page 3)

Jen Selix, extraordinary student member.

One more feather in our cap and another notable entry for the Community Achievement Award list that Carla is putting together: Last year we took the opportunity to nominate a student for the Society's first-ever Distinguished Service Award for Students, "designed to recognize exemplary dedication by student members to a student or professional community and its activities." We danced and high-fived when our own Jen Selix was one of only three students in the world to win this award (see the short list at www.stc.org/awards_DSAS_winners.asp).

I am pleased to report that our DSAS nomination this year was accepted as well. Congratulations to Alex Garcia, president of the Future Technical Communicators (FTC) at UCF and active member of the Orlando Chapter's mentoring program and Administrative Council. Joining Dan and Mark at Leadership Day, Alex also will receive his plaque, which will contain this citation:

For your unfailing willingness to initiate and wholeheartedly support innovative and successful activities for both the Future Technical Communicators club at the University of Central Florida and the Orlando Chapter STC.

The final feather in our gorgeous plumage, and one that especially gratifies me, is the election of our second-ever student to Sigma Tau Chi, STC's honor society. We've only had one UCF student attain this status (Mary Ellen Gomrad, in 1997), and I made it one of my goals this year to change that statistic. I was so pleased that Peggy Bivins applied, having no doubt that she would be accepted. Her acceptance letter reads,

> You have demonstrated academic excellence and possess the potential to distinguish yourself as a member of the technical communication profession.

Peggy will be honored in Las Vegas at the student reception on Sunday afternoon. In addition to a free year of STC membership, she

Alex Garcia, of FTC fame.

will also get an STC pin (to beautify her chapter lanyard), a T-shirt, and a certificate (see the entire list of members at www.stc.org/awards_STX_members.asp). Congratulations, Peggy!

Peggy Bivins, Sigma Tau Chi member.

And now, a round of applause to our Society-level winners. Stay tuned next month—come to the March 28 meeting to see Gloria Jaffe present the 4th Annual Jaffe Outstanding Technical Communicator Award. (The deadline for nominations is March 3rd. Contact Christina Hammock for details).

We are a chapter of champions! Congratulations to all—you make us very proud. **—MtM**

GAIL LIPPINCOTT IS STC ORLANDO CHAPTER PRESIDENT, AN ASSOCIATE FELLOW, AND MANAGER OF THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STEM FOR STC'S 53RD ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN LAS VEGAS IN MAY 2006. GAIL TEACHES TECHNICAL WRITING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA.

Conferences and Seminars!

From R2D2 to the Matrix: A Galaxy of Online Learning Style, Motivational, and Blended Learning Examples
UCF Teaching Academy, Room 117
March 21, 4:00pm-5:30pm

Curtis Bonk provides best practices in online teaching that creatively engage students into deeper and better learning. Dr. Atsusi Hirumi (hirumi@mail.ucf.edu) has more info. Directions are online here: info.campusmap.ucf.edu.

Photoshop World Conference + Expo
Miami, FL, March 22-24

Photoshop World is the essential conference for, photographers, Photoshop users, video editors, and Web designers eager to be on the cutting-edge of Photoshop CS2 and digital imaging techniques. Register online at www.photoshopworld.com or call 800-738-8513 Monday-Friday, 8:30 am-7:00 pm.

DITA 2006
Raleigh, NC, March 23-25
conf.travelthepath.com

Save $245 off the full admission (discount code: STC)

Enterprise Information World
Secaucus, NJ, May 23-25
www.enterpriseinformationworld.com/ Save $300 before April 25, 2006 (discount code: EIW-IT-0506)

Gilbane Conference on Content Management Technologies
San Francisco, CA, April 24-26
lighthouseseminars.com/
Save $100　(discount code: WRANGLER)

—MtM

Identify this Orlando Chapter Member!

ANSWER IN NEXT MONTH'S *MEMO TO MEMBERS*

Who's this bathing beauty? Are we just trying to throw you off with the black and white photo? *You decide.*

Who knew Drew Hoffmann was such a cute little kid? Now we all do.

Rising Stars III: The Orlando Chapter Needs Your Help!

BY BONNIE SPIVEY, MANAGER, PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE AND COORDINATOR, RISING STARS FUNDRAISER

For the past few years, the Orlando Chapter STC, in conjunction with the Future Technical Communicators (FTC) Club at UCF, has depended on the generosity of the technical writing community and its contributions to the Rising Stars fundraiser to support our educational outreach initiatives as well as to help sustain the chapter's general operating budget. This year is no different! With the Melissa Pellegrin Memorial Scholarship and the High School Writing Competition on the line, we need your help.

As you may recall from years past, we offer two ways for you to show your support:

- Personal Sponsorship program: Orlando Chapter members can make a tax-deductible personal contribution to the Chapter's educational outreach initiative

- Corporate Sponsorship program: Central Florida businesses can join us in a partnership to support our rising young stars

You can find details on both sponsorship programs at our Rising Stars Web page (www.stc-orlando.org/education/risingstars.asp).

If you are willing to help us in our Corporate Sponsorship initiative, please contact coordinator, Bonnie Spivey at bonnie.spivey@mastec.com and she will set you up with businesses to contact and mail you copies of our Corporate Sponsorship brochure.

If you would like to participate in the Personal Sponsorship program, please complete the

Experience
(Continued from page 2)

penses and provide you with housing during your stay if you are not a local. Microsoft interns even get a rental car for the summer!

When planning for your departure, you might want to consider going on a shopping spree. Make sure your wardrobe reflects the corporate scene of your company. Because you've likely never been to the company, be prepared for every situation. That is, bring a lot of clothes. If you are flying, you may have to ship some of your belongings. And remember, unless your internship is on the Moon, you can buy anything you forgot when you get there.

Finally, try to get in contact with your future summer roommates to find out who is bringing what. Going away to an internship is just like going away to college. You don't want to show up to an apartment with four video game consoles and no television. Your company's human resources department should provide you with you roommates' contact information. An email introduction or even a phone call will help break the ice.

The Experience...Experience

Once you arrive at your internship, get settled in and acquainted with your new environment. Each office has a different dynamic, so try to adhere to it as much as possible. When you leave at the end of the summer, you want to be remembered for your positive contributions to the company.

You have a lot to offer your new company. As a technical writing student, you have the advantage of having cutting edge theories about the subject. Remember that technical writing as a degree program only dates back to the mid 1980s. That means your supervisors and the people around you might have degrees in a variety of disciplines, something that makes working in a technical writing department truly fascinating.

Mentoring

Upon starting your internship, the company or department should assign you a direct supervisor as a point of contact to guide you through the internship process. Try to get as much knowledge from this person as you can, and form a strong relationship with him or her. Before you know it, a mentor-

Alex enjoys acquainting himself with his new environment.

mentee relationship is born. The company may have a formal intern mentoring program, as was the case at Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp. (BATC). Most interns at BATC had both a mentor and a project lead, depending on the size of their project. Throughout the summer, there is constant feedback between interns and human resources personnel to gauge the program's success. If your company does not have as formal mentoring program, find a person within your department who you click with and foster a mentoring relationship with him or her.

Theory vs. Practice

Let's say you are in a meeting with your new team, and you are discussing the contents of a PowerPoint slideshow. As the project lead scrolls through the presentation, you notice the slides are unusually busy, as if a ton of information was shoe-horned to fit into a prescribed number of slides. You think back to your visual design class and are certain that the project lead is breaking all types of design constructs. However, just because you have encyclopedic knowledge of design theory, it does not mean you should brazenly question the design during the meeting.

Alex and his peers tackled tough problems in Colorado...

February Meeting Preview

BY ROSE PETRALIA

Join the Orlando chapter as we return to our regular meet-up place, the Winter Park Civic Center, Tuesday, February 28th.

We'll welcome Ian Koss, who brings 15 years of experience as *Ink19* magazine editor (and a large box of free cds, I'm told) to his discussion, *Writing for Online Media vs. Print Media.*

Bring a friend or two and every question you've ever had about writing for the Web and its inherent differences from good old-fashioned paper publication. We'll begin mingling at 6:30, then Ian will take the stage promptly at 7 pm.

Admission is $5 for student members, $8 for members and student non-members, and $15 for non-members. Check out *Ink19* on the World Wide Web: www.ink19.com. **—MtM**

Rising Stars Needs You
(Continued from page 5)

application (available at the new Rising Stars web page) and send your check to Chapter Treasurer Karen Lane at the address provided on the application.

Both the Corporate and Personal sponsorship programs have incentives and benefits for participants, based on their level of financial support--but *every* contribution is greatly appreciated, no matter the amount. Corporate incentives have a business focus (e.g., free newsletter ads and Web click-throughs), whereas personal incentives are oriented toward STC involvement (e.g., chapter pins, Café Press shirts).

Bear in mind that while the funds raised through these two initiatives are earmarked for our high school and college outreach programs (e.g., the annual high school writing competition and the Pellegrin Memorial Scholarship Fund for UCF students), the impact of a successful fund-raiser will also substantially benefit the chapter's general operating budget, which presently covers a significant portion of our educational outreach activities.

We urge chapter members to consider this opportunity to promote the development of talented new technical communicators in our community, as well as to help the chapter maintain the fiscal solvency it needs to sustain its overall professional development initiatives on behalf of the general membership. **—MtM**

BONNIE SPIVEY IS A TECHNICAL WRITER FOR MASTEC NORTH AMERICA, INC. IN DOWNTOWN ORLANDO. BONNIE CURRENTLY MANAGES STC ORLANDO CHAPTER'S PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE AND IS A MENTOR IN THE STC-UCF MENTORING PROGRAM. SHE IS ALSO COORDINATING THIS YEAR'S RISING STARS FUNDRAISER AND WILL ACCEPT YOUR DONATIONS WITH HER USUAL CHARM AND GRACE. BONNIE HAS A BA IN ENGLISH-TECHNICAL WRITING FROM UCF. REACH BONNIE HERE: PUBLICITY@STC-ORLANDO.ORG
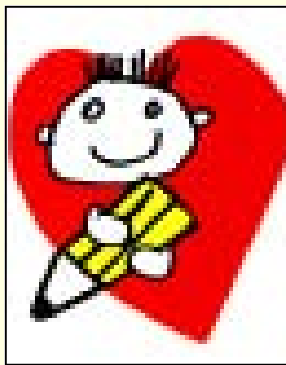
A Gift for Teaching School Supply Drive Takes Off

BY BONNIE SPIVEY, MANAGER, PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE AND COORDINATOR, RISING STARS FUNDRAISER

Congratulations to everyone on the successful launch of our January-February school supply drive!

We will continue collecting pens, pencils, paper and other items for the "A Gift for Teaching" organization at the February chapter meeting. Proceeds will be distributed to teachers of needy students throughout the Central Florida area. Plus, bring a school supply on Tuesday, February 28th and receive an extra ticket to the door prize raffle!!

What can you donate?

♥ Pens, pencils, colored pencils, markers, crayons

♥ Scissors, glue, rulers, highlighters, pencil boxes, lined paper

♥ Backpacks, old magazines, and more

For more information on "A Gift for Teaching," visit their Web site: www.agiftforteaching.org. **—MtM**

If You Missed Our Last Meeting...

BY DAVID COVERSTON

...you missed the "Rhetoric of Video-game Design," presented by Alice Robison, a doctoral student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Alice Robison at the mic.

Alice views videogame design as a writing and teaching process and says we should look at what video-games have to teach us about learning and literacy. Her advisor, James Paul Gee, has even written a book "What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Learning and Literacy."

So what's important about games?

- Games use active, critical learning.

- Games can be used for learning that should not be passive learning.

- Games encourage players to look at the game as a design space.

- Games furnish us with a symbolic space where we can learn about inter-relationships within and across multiple signs.

- Games let us construct identities.

Game texts have an "internal design grammar." Players "read" these texts and then make a meaning out of what the game is trying to get them to do. There is a reciprocity between the game players and the game designers.

Alice is taking a qualitative approach to her study of games. The question she wants to answer is "How do we know that games do what they were designed to do?" Design is a rhetorical practice. There are structurally similar relationships between the following participants:
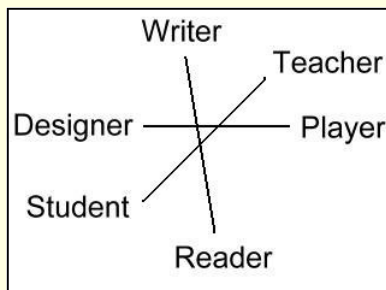
Who plays games? Alice said half of all Americans older than six play games. The average player age is thirty. A very interesting statistic about media use is that 93 percent of gamers read books or newspapers daily. Virtually all college students play games, and 65 percent are regular players.

Who makes games? Over 80 percent of game designers are white males.

Questions game designers should ask themselves:

- What do I want players of my game to say about it?

- What are my goals for this game?

- What kind of experiences do I want my game's players to have?

Attendees perused the International STC Online Communication Exhibit before and after the meeting.

In addition to Alice's lively presentation, meeting attendees had a peek at the 2005 STC International Online Communication Competition (IOCC) and International Technical Art Competition (ITAC) winning entries. Thanks to Bonnie Spivey for making the exhibit happen.

See you at the next meeting!
—MtM

Mike Murray for STC Director 2006-2007

Working for the World of STC

www.stc.org/candidatesFAQ/index.asp

Peachpit User Group Information

NEWS FROM PEACHPIT

As an official User Group, STC Orlando Chapter members are eligible for a 30% discount off the list price of any Peachpit books. At checkout, right before entering your credit card number, just enter the user group coupon code UE-23AA-PEUF (case-sensitive). This coupon code is an exclusive offer that may not be used with other coupon codes.

Find lots of interesting titles at www.peachpit.com.

BOOKS FOR REVIEW

A great benefit of membership is free review copies (I still didn't write my review *but I'm gonna!*). To request a free book for review, send an e-mail to user-groups@peachpit.com.

Your email should list the following information IN THE FORMAT THAT FOLLOWS:

STC Orlando Chapter (this is our group name)/YOUR NAME
ADDRESS
PHONE
QUANTITY
ISBN AND TITLE NAME

Members have 90 days to complete a review for the *Memo to Members*; once it's published here, it gets sent to Peachpit. So, not only do you get to keep a great book, you get a $5-off meeting coupon for submitting an article. Sweet!

Peachpit also likes reviewers to try to post their reviews to Web sites such as Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and Borders. **—MtM**

Adobe Premiere Pro 2.0 Classroom in a Book

$34.99 (Save 30%)*

The Photoshop Channels Book, The

$27.99 (Save 30%)*

Adobe After Effects 7.0 Classroom in a Book

$34.99 (Save 30%)*

New titles from Peachpit...

Job Posting Update

BY RICHARD PHIPPS, EMPLOYMENT MANAGER

Job postings are now being e-mailed directly to STC members, so don't miss out! Remember to confirm that you have a valid email address on file with STC. You can update your email address by going to www.stc.org/.

Always Able,
Richard Phipps

Have you checked out STC's new Member Forum yet?

Why not now?

forum.stcforum.org

Experience
(Continued from page 6)

Doing so could offend the people in the room and, depending on the office environment, could be considered insubordination.

Instead, wait until the meeting is over and calmly approach the project lead with your concerns. Better yet, talk to your mentor about how to handle situations such as this one. If your mentor agrees with your thoughts and ideas, you may be asked to present your thoughts at the next team meeting. In this real case that happened to me last summer, the PowerPoint slideshow was part of a Customer Design Review presentation for a proposal, and the company indeed limited the number of slides in the show. But don't worry—you are there to learn, and implicitly applying theory to your practice is part of that learning process.

It's All About the Contacts

Once you are settled into your position as an intern, don't be afraid to wander outside of your cubicle. Meet as many people as you can, both within and outside your department. Begin a collection of business cards, and treasure them as you would a collection of baseball cards when you were a kid. You never know—one of them may be the key to success after college.

Leaving Your Legacy

Towards the end of your internship, you need to document everything you have done during your stay. If you are in the middle of a project, make it easier for the company to bring in someone to continue where you left off. Always think about your user, and never assume that the next person will know about the project or the even the company. Make sure you leave this documentation in the hands of both your mentor and project lead, which will ensure that it does not get lost.

And That's a Wrap!

During the last few weeks of your internship, analyze your experience with the company and if it is a place you can see yourself working for when you graduate. That way, if your project lead or mentor brings up the subject, you won't be caught off guard. Always keep the door unlocked, because you never know where you'll be once the real world comes a knocking!

School Daze

It's the fall again. The leaves are changing color, John Madden's voice blares from the TV every Monday night, and that means you've hit the books again. I know—it's a tough transition from 40+ hour workweeks to late night study sessions and homecoming pep rallies. Oh, and there is all that free time again. The best thing to do is to stay active and involved. My mentor and dear friend, 3-time Orlando Chapter STC President Mike Murray, once said that if you rest on your laurels, they collapse. That is, apply that internship knowledge once you get back to school. If you don't keep everything you learned that summer in perspective, it will disappear. Apply the teamwork skills to your technical writing team projects in class. Better yet, inform the class and your teacher about what is happening in the workplace today. Yes, it's the theory vs. practice conundrum again, so don't interfere with your teacher's theory lesson. Instead, let your actions speak for you, and you will become a leader within your peers.

Perspective

I've covered a lot of information in this paper. Remember, this is one student's view of his internship experience, so take it at face value. I hope that you will be able to use the lessons included here to have a successful internship this summer. Because remember, you can't get experience without experience, but after this summer, it will be no problem!

Alex gives the thumbs-up to Internships!

Congratulations! —MtM

ALEX GARCIA IS A 5TH YEAR SENIOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA, MAJORING IN SPACE ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY AND TECHNICAL WRITING. HE IS PRESIDENT OF THE *FUTURE TECHNICAL COMMUNICATORS* CLUB AND HAS BEEN A STUDENT MEMBER OF STC SINCE 2004. HE IS A FOUNDING FATHER OF THE MU PSI CHAPTER OF SIGMA NU FRATERNITY, FOR WHICH HE SERVES AS LEAD CHAIRMAN AND COORDINATED THE COMPILATION OF THE COLONY'S 300-PAGE PETITION FOR CHARTERING.

IN 2005, ALEX WAS AWARDED THE STC DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD FOR STUDENTS AND THE MELISSA PELLEGRIN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP BY THE ORLANDO CHAPTER STC. HE ALSO CAPTURED THE 2005 SARA E. DUFFY SCHOLARSHIP, GIVEN BY THE UCF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT.

IN HIS SPARE TIME, ALEX PLAYS TENNIS, ATTENDS WRESTLING SHOWS, AND WATCHES INDEPENDENT, RARE, AND FOREIGN FILMS. *E-MAIL HIM!* ALEX.R.GARCIA@GMAIL.COM

Tool Tips: Copernic Desktop Search

By David Coverston, Orlando Chapter Secretary

How much time do you spend looking for information? You know you had it in a document somewhere, but you can't remember the name of the document, so you can't find it. Maybe you remember that it was a Word document or a PDF file, or that there was a particular phrase in the document you want to find, but it still eludes you. Well, you are not alone. A white paper by Adobe quotes a study estimating that "while professionals spend only 5% to 15% of their time reading information, they spend up to 50% of their time looking for it." If you work on a lot of different projects, it can be pretty difficult to remember which project the information you are looking for might be in.

This month's featured tool may help you. It has sure helped me. There are a number of desktop search programs available, both free and commercial. Some are more intrusive than others, and features vary from one to another. But before I tell you about the one I use, let me first tell you why I chose it, and then you can decide if it is right for you.

First, I do not like intrusive software. I do not like "ET software." That is,
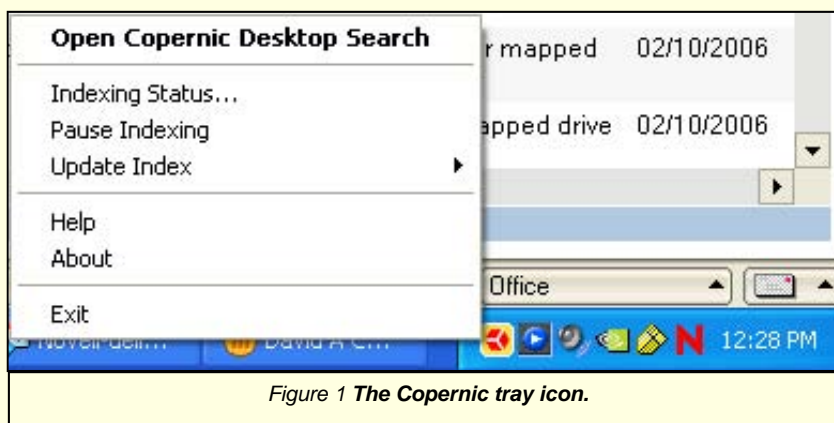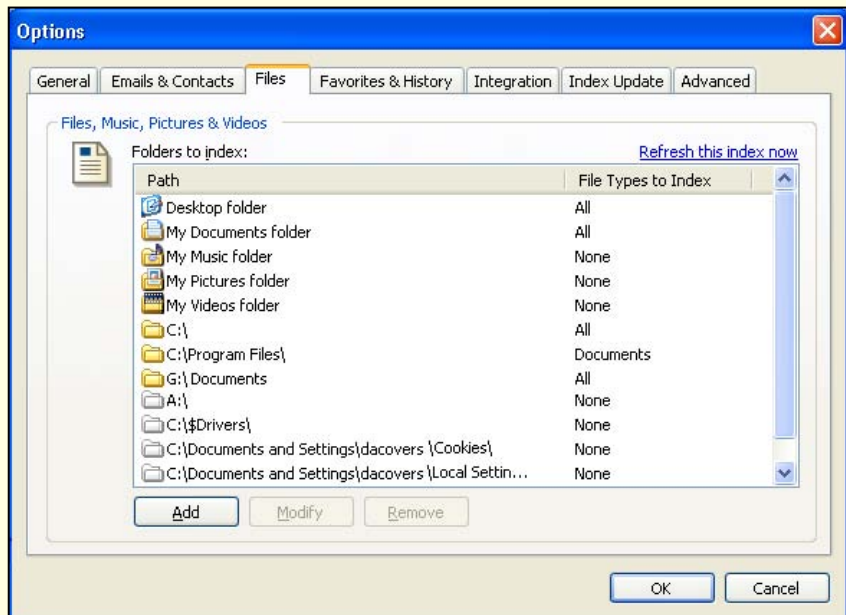

Figure 2 **The Files tab on the Options dialog box.**

software that likes to phone home and report on my activities. Not that I am doing anything I shouldn't be doing, but I'm willing to forgo some convenience for privacy—and to preclude any security risks.

Second, a feature I wanted was the ability to search network files, since some of my documents are stored on a network.

Third, the file types I need to search the most are text files, Word documents, PDF files, and html files. So I preferred a search tool that would

support all those formats without requiring me to install additional software to do it.

Fourth, price is important. My favorite price is free. And no advertisements either, please.

For these reasons, I use Copernic Desktop Search. Copernic has taken the top spot in more than one evaluation. See the links at the end of this article to decide for yourself what tool would best suit your needs.

Copernic is a free search tool available from www.copernic.com. The download is an executable file, so just double-click the file and follow the prompts to install it. Copernic can search Word, PowerPoint, Excel, WordPerfect, Acrobat, HTML, text, and XML files, and more. It can search through emails, if you use Outlook or Thunderbird, and search for metadata on graphic and music files.

Figure 1 **The Copernic tray icon.**

Tool Tips: Copernic Search
(Continued from page 12)

Figure 3 A completed search

After the initial setup, Copernic lives as an icon in the system tray area of your Windows task bar. Right-click on the icon, then choose Open Copernic Desktop Search to begin your search.

Like all desktop search programs, Copernic works by first building an index of the files you want to search. You select the folders you want to search (or ignore) on the Files tab of the Options dialog box. Copernic builds an index of the files you want to search and gives you options of when and how you want to update that index.

One quirk of this tab is that to exclude items like your floppy drive or a particular folder, you must click Add, then select None. This process reminds me of the Windows logic that to turn your computer off, you click Start, then Shut Down.

You can quickly check or set the indexing status from the tray icon. Set the indexing to occur in the background so that you can work on other things and it won't slow you down.

To begin a search, open the program and type your term in the Search For text box. Copernic begins searching as soon as you begin typing in the search window. You can use the search operators AND, OR, NOT, as well as quotation marks, parenthesis, and filename searches. You can also limit your search to a file type or a particular folder by selecting those items in the
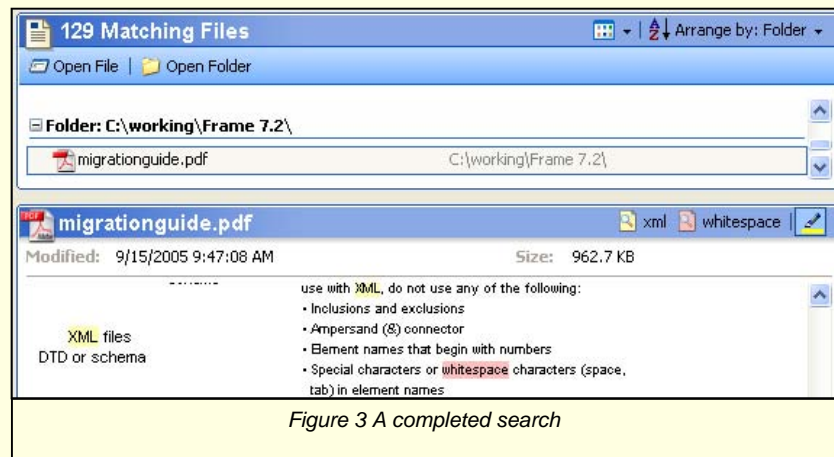
drop-down lists in the Refine Search text box.

Clicking a filename in the Files list (which changes to the Matching Files list) opens the document in the Preview window. Double-clicking the filename will open it in the associated application. Your search terms are highlighted in different colors on the Preview window title bar, matching the highlighted terms in the document. The Preview window changes to display the name of the selected file. Clicking a term on the title bar will take you to the hit in the document. Right-clicking the folder list opens a context menu with the choices of Open This folder, Expand All Groups, and Collapse All Groups. There are more features, but to appreciate them, download a copy and try it for yourself.

In a few comparisons I read, some reviewers considered Copernic's lack of certain features as a drawback, but this lack may be just what you might want. For example, not having an integrated Internet search function caused some applications to be rated lower in some comparisons,

but in my opinion, I would rather have these functions separated.

If you want to find out more, check these reviews out:

A cnet.com review of desktop search software: reviews.cnet.com/4520-3684_7-6313062-1.html

An evaluation of 12 desktop search tools by the University of Wisconsin-Madison: www.uwebc.org/decisiontools/

Comments on Copernic: arstechnica.com/reviews/apps/desktop-search.ars/3.

DAVID COVERSTON IS A SENIOR MEMBER OF THE ORLANDO CHAPTER. HE RECEIVED HIS M.A. IN JOURNALISM FROM UF. DAVID ENJOYS TEACHING OTHERS HOW TO BE MORE PRODUCTIVE, AND HIS TOOL TIPS ARTICLES HAVE BEEN REPRINTED IN SEVERAL CHAPTER NEWSLETTERS.

January and February were the last two months to be added to the Roman calendar, since the Romans originally considered winter a monthless period.

M&M Happenings

By Kelli Pharo

The STC-FTC Mentoring Program is alive and well. Here's an update on what we've been doing and what's coming up.

M&M, Mid-Year, Pre-Valentine, Feel-the-Luv Dinner

On January 17 the mentors and mentees (M&Ms) had at great time at the M&M, Mid-Year, Pre-Valentine, Feel-the-Luv Dinner at the Roadhouse Grill in Winter Park. In preparation for Valentine's Day, we got into the "luv" groove by exchanging M&M valentines and telling what we "luv" about the M&M program and/or our M&M partners. That doggy on Tom Schenck's shoulder is a Valentine gift from his mentee, Karen White. We also enjoyed a yummy dinner and fun conversation. It was an enjoyable, encouraging evening.

During the course of the evening, we discussed an exciting upcoming activity. This year, we have been encouraging volunteerism in the mentoring program, in an effort to reach out to our community and make a difference in someone's life. As a part of this effort, we will be

Tom Schenck and his new friend.

conducting an M&M workshop for pre-college kids on Saturday, April 8, from 10:00 a.m. to noon.

The M&Ms, as a part of the FTC Saturday morning workshop series, are inviting in the kids from Boys and Girls Town, in Oviedo. These are kids that come from difficult home-life situations; many of them have been removed from their parents/families and live at the facility as they learn independent life skills. Because of some hard breaks in life, many of the kids are not on track in school, and the idea of college may be overwhelming for them. We're going to bring the kids over to UCF, talk to them about how important it

Erin and Allison sit pretty.

is to stay on track in school, tell them what it's like to attend college (this is where the FTC members can speak up), tell them what it's like to work in the field of technical communication (STC professionals can help with this), and then give them a tour of the campus. The tour will familiarize the kids with certain areas of campus, like how to register and where the different colleges are located.

I pitched this idea to one of the 14-year-old girls at Boys and Girls Town, who wants to be a professional chef. She had no idea about UCF's Rosen College of Hospitality Management, and didn't even know what UCF was. She asked if it's in Florida! I think we can really

Karen, Peggy, and Gail spread cheer.

encourage these kids towards better things!

M&Ms Donate Art to Ronald McDonald House

Three of our illustrious M&Ms visited the Ronald McDonald House in Winter Park on Sunday, February 12. They came bearing gifts of art that they painted at the M&M kick-off event. Karen Lane and her mentee, Peggy Bivins, donated their ceramic fish, and Gail Lippincott, on behalf of her mentee Jen Selix, donated their ceramic lizard. The representatives of the Ronald McDonald House were happy to receive these treasures, which will become part of the cheery décor in a couple of their tropically decorated rooms. Thanks for representing us, ladies!

Thank you to all the mentors and mentees for all the great work you are doing. You guys are making a difference! **—MtM**

Kelli Pharo is a technical editor for PBS&J, a nation-wide engineering and planning consulting firm, and the chair of our Orlando STC mentoring program. When she isn't using her artistic talent to paint groovy hippos, she and her husband spend their time renovating their home or playing with their children and three dogs.

Communicator Spotlight: Carla Tarantino

BY ROSE PETRALIA

Carla Tarantino is a Graphic Artist at Lockheed Martin in Orlando. She's also a new STC member, so if you're feeling chatty, send her a welcome at cgraziat@mac.com.

What educational path led you to where you are today?

I have a Bachelor's degree in Art with a specialization in Animation and a minor in Creative Writing. I am currently taking graduate courses in Technical Writing.

That's a creative education! What made you pursue technical communication?

After graduating from UCF I entered Lockheed Martin in an Associate Graphic Artist position. While working with Lockheed I was introduced to STC and learned about Technical writing.

As a graphic artist, do you find yourself involved with strictly drawing, or are you pretty darned thankful for

your Creative Writing minor?

On a daily basis I am responsible for a variety of tasks including writing Test Program Instruction Manuals and creating the graphics that are used in them. I work closely with engineering and logistics departments to ensure the quality of these documents.

Your normal day...

I process graphic/art requests from engineers and update the manuals for delivery.

What tools do you use?

Adobe FrameMaker, Illustrator, Acrobat, SolidWorks, and the MS Office Suite.

Why do you think it's important to maintain a network of tech writing peers?

Because it keeps me informed of what is going on in the industry.

I know you're the Orlando Chapter Photographer—what else are you doing with STC?

I am currently managing the Community Achievement Award Committee. If you have done any notable activities for Technical Communications, such as publishing articles or entering competitions let me know so that you can help our chapter earn the Chapter of Excellence Award for the 4th year in a row. —MtM

ROSE PETRALIA WRITES SIMULATION AND TRAINING MANUALS FOR DEI SERVICES CORPORATION IN WINTER PARK, FL. WHEN SHE'S NOT DEFENDING THE NATION, SHE WRESTLES HER THREE TEENAGERS.

A Rose by Any Other Name...

SUBMITTED BY W.C. WIESE

W.C. thought these rearrangements of seemingly benign words were pretty clever...What do you think?

dormitory: *dirty room*

Presbyterian: *best in prayer*

astronomer: *moon starer*

desperation: *a rope ends it*

the eyes: *they see*

George Bush: *he bugs Gore*

the Morse code: *here come dots*

slot machines: *cash lost in me*

snooze alarms: *alas! no more z's*

election results: *lies - let's recount*

a decimal point: *I'm a dot in place*

the earthquakes: *that queer shake*

eleven plus two: *twelve plus one*

mother-in-law: *woman Hitler*

animosity: *is no amity* —MtM

Review: Adobe Photoshop Elements

By Guy Ball, STC Senior Member

There is no question. Adobe Photo-Shop is the industry standard for graphic professionals. But at $600 a pop, it's a bit pricey for technical writers who only occasionally need to use the software to edit or fine-tune a photo, or who use only a limited subset of the features. I've always enjoyed PhotoShop's clear menu and tool bar functions, so when I've tried other photo programs, I've always found myself coming back (often to an earlier version that I had purchased long ago). I don't pretend to know all the advanced PhotoShop features—don't need to. So spending that kind of money for my limited usage was never cost-effective.

Fortunately, Adobe has taken the most useful features for low-to-medium-level users and packaged them as Photoshop Elements. In the past, this program was delivered free with other Adobe products, like Premiere, and offered only a few PhotoShop features. The latest versions of this software offer virtually every feature technical writers would need and more. And priced at under $100, you can't beat the value.

PhotoShop Elements 3, and the most recently released version 4, offers all the standard editing tools you would expect in any photo program. You can crop and save to other formats. You have the ability to easily change the quality level if file size is an issue. You have a full range of options with tonal changes—simple adjustments like lighting/levels, and the more complex adjustments which require a practiced eye, like Shadows/Highlights or Adjust Hue/Saturation. Need to get rid of per-son? That's easy. Just use your Clone/Rubber Stamp tool to cover them with copies of the wall next to them. Presto. What person? (I also like to use this tool to slim up people or remove blemishes.)

> "...Adobe has taken the most useful features for low-to-medium-level users and packaged them as Photoshop Elements."

With the Resize function, you can easily change an image to a specified pixel size to post on the Web. Want to burn in a specific light area of a photo or dodge a dark area? The tools are right up front on the toolbar. Have a slightly out-of focus shot that you need to use? Try the sharpening tools. Want to set up several layers of text, multiple photos, and different background? Elements offers this as well. Got red-eye in that photo of your boss that you need for a newsletter? Click a button and she no longer looks like an alien.

With recent versions of Elements, Adobe folded in the Photo Album software they had been selling separately. This is a great product that allows you to easily organize your photos. You can automatically catalog every image on your hard drive, which helps you find "missing" photos that you know are on your hard drive "somewhere." By adding "tags" (keywords) to your photos, you can search and find certain images at the click of a button—regardless of where they are on your computer. I'm currently using it to track the hundreds of photos (taken at different times) of a complex machine, so I can pull out a smaller, focused selection when I need them.

Another feature I like a lot is the automatic downloading of my digital photos into the Elements photo organizer. I just hook the camera through the USB cable and the computer downloads all of the images into a new directory named to the current day's date. All the images are automatically included in their organizer, ready for me to tag. And then it asks if I want to delete them off my memory card. Saves me time and effort—and I love it. (I know my camera has a program to do this, but I love it built into my photo editor.)

Other features of the program you may find useful include burning a dynamic slide show to CD or DVD and automatically creating a photo album that you can print. You can apply text effects and add frames around your pictures as well as build panoramic photos with the Photomerge function.

I was very happy with PhotoShop Elements 3 and I am basing my review on that version. Adobe has just released a new version, PhotoShop Elements 4. My employer purchased the new version and I'm trying to determine if it's worth the upgrade at home. It has a few new features, but nothing I can't live without. Meanwhile, several reviews on amazon.com are critical of version 4 and recommend staying with 3. While I don't think the new version would be a negative to buy, if you have 3, you might just want to stay with it for now. I'll know more in a few weeks….

So if you're looking for power and great photo-editing features in a

Photoshop Elements
(Continued from page 16)

very inexpensive package—and something that stays in the Adobe and PhotoShop families, give Photo-Shop Elements a try. You won't be sorry.
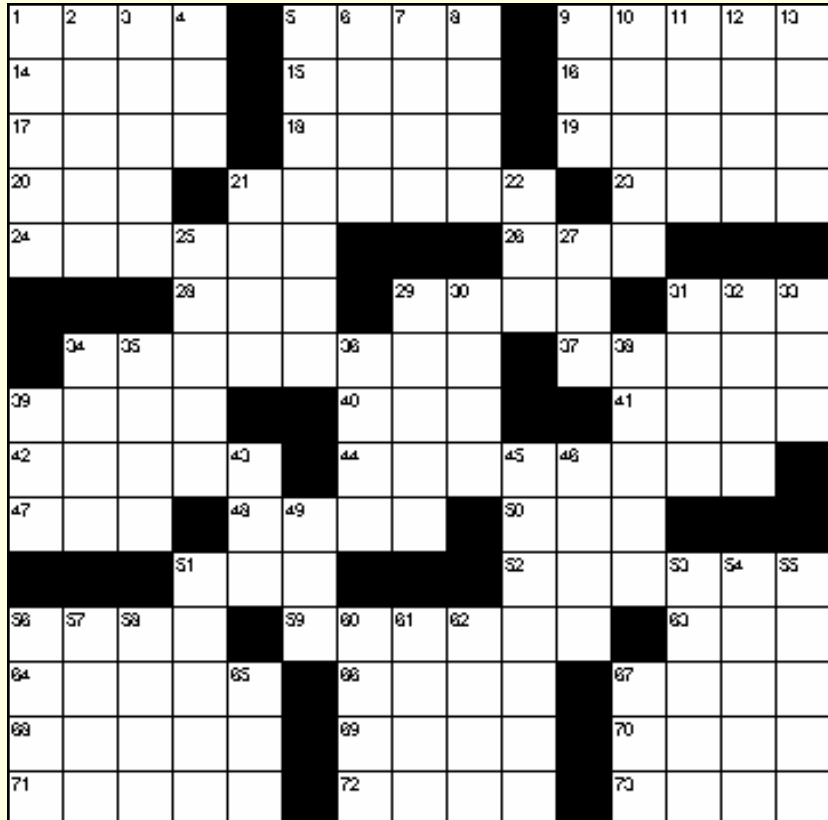
GUY BALL HAS WRITTEN ON A VARIETY OF TECHNOLOGY AND MULTIMEDIA TOPICS FOR INTERCOM AND VARIOUS STC CHAPTER NEWSLETTERS. HE WORKS FOR EADS-NORTH AMERICA DEFENSE AS A SENIOR TECHNICAL WRITER. HIS NEXT BOOK, IMAGES OF AMERICA: SANTA ANA, WILL BE PUBLISHED BY IN SUMMER 2006. HE CAN BE REACHED AT GUYBALL@PACBELL.NET.

THIS ARTICLE WAS ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN *THE TECHNISCRIBE*, THE ORANGE COUNTY (CA) STC CHAPTER'S NEWSLETTER.

Star Trek, The Next Generation

FOR THE GEEK IN ALL OF US... SOLUTION IN NEXT MONTH'S EDITION

Constructed using Crossword Weaver at www.varietygames.com

ACROSS

1   Captain Picard
5   ___ grey, Captain's tea
9   First officer
14   Ammunition
15   Veer
16   ___ Oyl (Popeye's girl-friend)
17   Adam's son
18   Sensible
19   ___ and dined
20   Relation
21   Mother ___
23   Air (prefix)
24   Catchword
26   Headed
28   Curve
29   Give off
31   Compass point
34   California white wine
37   Dickens' "___ of Two Cit-ies" (2 wds.)
39   Lowest phaser setting
40   ___ A Small World...
41   Middle East dweller
42   Planet
44   Adorn
47   Time period
48   Former Soviet Union
50   Transgression
51   "Number ___"
52   Lure
56   Baby's name for Dad
59   At sea
63   Negative
64   Similar
66   Branch
67   "no ___ luck"
68   Steals
69   Presidents office
70   Ship's counselor
71   Concerning
72   Mr. Rodenberry
73   Dinner, for example

DOWN

1   Child's game
2   Electronic communication
3   Protein part, with 'acid'
4   Not (prefix)
5   Gist
6   Winged
7   Ancien German character
8   Dregs
9   Propel with oars
10   Book by Homer
11   Cow
12   "___ After" Drew Barry-more movie
13   Do it again
21   Sour
22   Boxer Muhammad
25   Thin
27   Airport abbr.
29   Come in the door
30   Tableland
31   Klingon leiutenant
32   Kill
33   Net
34   Sun
35   Halo
36   Chest bones
38   Contaminate
39   Perceive
43   Barbarian
45   Useful
46   Color
49   Ocean
51   Made of oak
53   Make used to
54   Powdered chocolate
55   Type of alcohol
56   Android
57   Actor Alda
58   Levee
60   Beat up
61   Not taped
62   Asian nation
65   Eastern Time
67   Short-term memory

STC Memo to Members

February 2006 · Volume 4, Issue 10

Memo to Members is published monthly and distributed via the STC Orlando Chapter LISTSERV. View archived issues at our Web site: www.stc-orlando.org/newsletter/newsltr.asp. Comments and letters of opinion are always welcome and should be directed to the editor.

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From the Editor's Desk...

Enjoy the issue, grasshopper!

See you at the meeting!

...rose

Mark Your Calendars:

02/28 **Chapter Meeting.** Writing for Online Media vs. Print Media with Ian Koss, *Ink 19* editor. Winter Park Civic Center, 6:30 p.m.

03/14 **Admin Council Meeting.** Pizzeria Uno, 6:30 p.m.

03/21 **From R2D2 to the Matrix.** UCF Teaching Academy, Room 117 March 21, 4:00p.m.-5:30 p.m. hirumi@mail.ucf.edu.

03/22 **Photoshop World Conference & Expo.** Miami, FL. www.photoshopworld.com.

03/23 **DITA 2006.** Raleigh, NC,. conf.travelthepath.com.

04/20 **State Science and Engineering Fair.**

04/24 **Gilbane Conference on Content Management Technologies.** San Francisco, CA. lighthouseseminars.com/.

05/07 **STC Conference.** Las Vegas.

05/14 **Mother's Day**

05/23 **Enterprise Information World.** Secaucus, NJ. www.enterpriseinformationworld.com/.

Corner of Distinction

Congratulations,
Peggy Bivins!

Peggy has been awarded membership in Sigma Tau Chi, STC's student honor society.