

Memo to Members

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

STC Orlando Chapter: A Four-Year Chapter of Distinction · May 2007 · Volume 5, Issue 8

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Twin City Tale

BY ERIKA HIGGINS

Just a few weeks ago I had the pleasure of attending STC's Annual Conference in Minneapolis/St. Paul. This was my first experience at the

conference as president of the Orlando Chapter. I cannot tell you how cool it was to be walking the halls of the convention center and to see so many familiar Orlando Chapter member faces. It was especially awesome to see the array of Orlando Chapter Active Member shirts and Orlando Chapter lanyards and pins. Thanks to some great work on the part of some of our student members, we had 10 student attendees from the Orlando Chapter, in addition to the over 15 regular chapter member attendees. Needless to say, I was very proud both as chapter president and as a member of the Orlando Chapter to see such great attendance. Even more exciting is the fact that we were once again dubbed a Chapter of Excellence

during the conference Leadership Day ceremonies. This truly speaks volumes about the quality of the Orlando Chapter.

Now comes the best part as those of us who were able to attend the conference have an opportunity to share our experiences and what we learned with all of you at the annual Washlines meeting in August. I am not quite sure yet what the format of this year's Washlines will be, but you can rest assured it will be another one for the record books.

In the meantime, your Orlando Chapter leaders are already gearing up for the annual Chapter Leaders retreat where we will talk about and plan the upcoming chapter year to make sure we continually provide and increase member value. So, the next time you see one of your Orlando Chapter leaders, be sure to thank them for all of the hard work and hours they put into making sure the chapter is the best that it can be. Thanks, team.

ERIKA HIGGINS IS STC ORLANDO CHAPTER PRESIDENT, A SENIOR MEMBER, AND MEMBER OF THE A-SIG AND IDL SIG. ERIKA WORKS AS AN INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNER IN THE FINANCIAL SERVICES INDUSTRY.

Awards, German Food, and STC Orlando – The Makings of a Great Evening

BY KELLI PHARO

We're gearing up for a night out on the town! That's right—it's time to celebrate our chapter year and our chapter members. We're heading to Hollerbach's Willow Tree Café in downtown historic Sanford for some yummy German food and a night of awards and celebration.

Come join the STC Orlando chapter members as we gather on Tuesday, June 26, at 6:30 p.m. to wrap up our chapter year by recognizing all those who have made it a success. This is our third event at this location, but it promises to also be our best. The restaurant has expanded, added a new A/C unit (no sweating like two years ago!), and is offering us their full menu of dining options. Best of all, no prepaids this year! We're keeping it simple. We'll be ordering at menu prices and paying by separate checks. A delicious dessert selection will also be available for \$4 a person.



Hollerbach's Willow Tree Café is located just miles off I-4 in historic, downtown Sanford on First Street/S.R. 46 in the Antique District. Here are the directions:

From I-4 take exit 101C Sanford/Mount Dora, turn right on S.R. 46, go east for 4.2 miles, and the restaurant is just past the first stop sign on the right.

From the 417 take the US 17-92 exit, turn right on 17-92, head north to First Street, and turn right.

You can get more info from Hollerbach's website: www.willowtreecafe.com.

Please send your RSVP for the awards banquet to vicepresident@stc-orlando.org by Friday, June 22. Everyone is welcome to bring a guest, just be sure to RSVP for your guest too. We hope to see you all there!

If You Missed Our Last Meeting...

BY CINDY SKAWINSKI

... you missed a fantastic birthday party to celebrate the chapter's 30th year! There were decorations, party hats, cake, and a large selection of door prizes for May's meeting at PBS&J. Ashley Carney's Orlando Chapter History project was shared with the group so that attendees could reminisce about years past. Besides our chapter birthday, though, there was something else to commemorate – Orlando's Community of Excellence award from the Technical Communication Summit in Minneapolis! That's right, the Orlando chapter was recognized this year for its contributions to the local technical communication

community during the annual STC conference, which is more than enough reason to party!

The speaker at May's meeting was Dan Beall of Doc-to-Help. Mr. Beall presented *The Past, Present and Future of Help Authoring* to teach us the history as well as the new trends in help authoring software. Help authoring tools have come a long way since the first one was developed for Microsoft Windows in 1988. Currently, HTML help is trendy, but browser-based help is the most used. Mr. Beall predicted that assistance

platform (AP) help will be the wave of the future. It can be updated live rather than only with new software releases. AP help essentially uses XML and was released to a few new users with Microsoft Windows Vista.

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Erika, looking very "presidential"



Our presenter, Dan Beall, gave an informative talk on the past, present & future of online help.



We even had cake and sang "Happy Birthday" to ourselves.



Kelli makes sure she gets the first slice. (This picture was taken two hours before the meeting!)

Getting Yourself Hired

Lesson 4: Past the Expiration Date

BY DALTON HOOPER

If you could find a copy of someone's personal résumé from 30 years ago, you would be both amazed and bewildered by the information it contained.

Evolution

Not long ago, I was cleaning out the garage and came across a résumé my wife had written in the mid 1970s. I was intrigued by how much has changed in the look, feel, and content found in my wife's résumé - which was perfectly fine in its day - versus the résumés of today.

Appearance

Since it is in your best interest to keep up with what's in and what's out, let's begin with a comparison of the overall look and feel of the résumés from "back in the day." Even if all the information contained on my wife's résumé from 1974 were still correct, she would have virtually no chance of being taken seriously if she were to submit that same résumé today.

First of all, it was composed using a typewriter! While a typewritten résumé would certainly be better than a handwritten one, today's abundance of word processors and high-quality printers make them accessible to all. As a matter of fact, anyone can now go to their local public library and use the word processor and printer for little or no cost. Consequently, to submit a typewritten résumé in today's environment would make you come off as sloppy or lazy.

Content

Over the years, much information commonly found on résumés is no longer appropriate or even legal.

As time moves along, more information will cease to be relevant on your résumé, while new information will take its place.

Although commonplace in the past, you should never include information on your résumé such as marital status, age, gender, number of dependants, religion, health concerns, or physical limitations. You shouldn't include this information for two reasons:

1. It is illegal for an employer to use any of this type of information to make a determination of whether to hire you.
2. Most employers are diligent about adhering to the legal hiring guidelines and once you have exposed them to any "illegal" information about yourself, you have in effect, "tainted" their ability to disregard it. An employer may discard your résumé, not because they think you aren't qualified, but because they can no longer be impartial. The hiring manager can't "un-ring" that bell.

Are there other items that you should no longer include on your résumé, even though it may be legal? Absolutely! What is considered essential information and what is considered to be superfluous is always evolving with the business culture, technology, and other norms. Here are a few items I recommend you no longer include on your résumé:

Objective statement.

Objective statements serve no purpose in today's world. They waste valuable space on your résumé stating the obvious ("...seeking a job to .match my goals...blah, blah, blah..."). It is obvious that you are sending the résumé because you are looking for employment. To say so on your résumé is unnecessary. If you

really feel you must include this information, it should be a part of your cover letter verbiage.

References available on request.

Don't put this statement on your résumé. This is also something that is assumed in today's environment. You should always have references ready and available if I want to see them. If it is assumed, then you don't need to state it on the résumé. By the way, never put your list of references on the résumé itself. If I want them, I will ask for them - and you had better have them ready.

Hobbies or interests.

Unless it is a hobby or interest that is absolutely relevant to the position you are seeking and has contributed to your skills and expertise in the field, who cares? Keep this information off your résumé, also.

Your High School academic information.

In today's environment, it is assumed you graduated from high school and whether you made straight As or barely passed, it is only relevant to your college admissions board. Even listing the name of your high school on your résumé makes it appear as if you are desperate for verbiage.

Summary

From time to time, you should browse the internet, looking at the résumés of other professionals in your field to see how the norms are evolving. In a

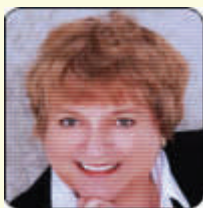
future lesson, I will talk about information that we didn't put on our résumés in years past, but should include now. Good luck!



DALTON HOOPER IS AVAILABLE TO SPEAK

TO YOUR GROUP. FOR DETAILS, VISIT HIS WEBSITE AT WWW.WORDSANDWIT.COM.

Meet Linda Oestreich STC's Newest President



FELLOW
MANAGER, TECHNICAL PUBLICATIONS
HP SOFTWARE
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

What assets—ideas, traits, experience—will you bring to the office of president?

My greatest asset to the Society is the pride I have for being an accomplished communicator. I have spent most of my career learning from, supporting, and connecting with other STC members. I care about people, and I especially care about people in this profession. I support what we do and believe that the world would be a lesser place without us. I have good instincts, know a great deal about business and the people in business, and I understand what it means to embrace changes that are uncomfortable but needed. I look with excitement to our future, yet I will always respect and value our traditions. As President, I hope to help each person in STC embrace a renewed pride in their profession.

What important trend, change, or challenge have you seen evolve during the past two years in the field of technical communication?

Technical communication continues to evolve into a world of strategic thinking, business acumen, and customer advocacy. Those who produce documentation by formula are pre-

sented with poor pay, administrative duties, and career dissatisfaction. Those who understand the business they support, recognize their role in that business, and accurately speak for customers thrive. Whether we support biomedicine, software, hardware, scientific thinking, or government, we must help the world recognize our strength. We must be assertive, conscientious, and self-confident. Our challenge is to change the way we interact with our employers, our colleagues, and our views of ourselves as professionals.

What is the most important issue or problem facing the Society? What are potential actions for approaching the issue or solving the problem?

STC must help its members (and thereby the profession) receive respect for their work and acknowledge our impact on the world. We must believe in ourselves and trust the Society to be the advocate for our profession. When we do, our salaries will grow, folks will understand the importance of our work, and executives will unquestioningly require excellent communication throughout their companies. To manifest this result, we must be proud of our work and seek ways to promote our profession through partnerships, education, collaboration, and common sense. We must ensure that our technology and staff use today's technology, are right for the job, and deliver value. Then we can truly play a key part in the communication of the world.

STC service, honors, and awards

A member since 1979, I served on multiple Society-level committees and have presented at and worked for numerous regional and annual

conferences. I have won various community-level awards and recognition. I have been on the STC Board of Directors for seven years (five as a voting member, two as an assistant to the president), and I have been conference stem manager, special events coordinator, deputy program manager, and program manager. I was elected to the Nominating Committee and managed the Honorary Fellows Nominating Committee. I have served as an officer for the San Diego and Houston chapters. I was STC's Director for Region 5, second vice president, and am now first vice president. I received the Distinguished Chapter Service Award and am an STC Fellow.

Education and other (non-STC) professional affiliations, honors, and awards

I have a B.A. in English from University of California, San Diego, a certificate in project management from Rice University, and a lifetime teaching credential from California Community Colleges. I belong to Women in Technology International and won a Bronze Quill Award from International Association of Business Communicators. I received a special recognition award from the San Diego Vocational Education Commission for contributions to its technical writing programs. I am a former member of the American Society for Training and Development.

Professional experience

My career began as an editorial assistant at a Department of Defense research laboratory. Years later, after becoming a supervisory technical writer/editor, I left to work as a

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Tool Tip:

Try A Green Folder Icon

BY DAVID COVERSTON

If you use Windows Explorer to do a lot of file management, you will appreciate something to make your job just a bit easier. How about this – replace your open folder icon with a green open folder icon?

Of course we are talking about modifying basic parts of the Windows operating system, so a word of caution is in order. There are a couple of different ways to change the system to make it do what you want it to do. The easiest way is to get a tool to make the system changes for you. I'll tell you about one that's free and easy!

The first thing you will need to do is get a greenfolder.ico file and copy it to your hard drive. Tweak Central, at <http://tweakcentral.com/t005.htm> has one you can download. I put this file at the root level on my C drive. This is usually not the best place to store files, and it is the only file that I have placed there on my PC. Tweak Central also has instructions there on modifying your registry and/or a system DLL file to change your Explorer display, but let's do it the easy way with IconTweaker.

Icon Tweaker is a free program that will let you customize icons on your desktop, folder icons, drive icons, network icons, file icons and cursors. Note that Icon Tweaker supports Windows 98 and later, but Vista is not yet supported.

Download and install Icon Tweaker from <http://joost.endoria.net/home>, and we'll get started.

Icon Tweaker has three windows: Themes, Icons, and System. The Themes window is where you can apply a set of icons at once, the Icons window is where you can change individual icons, and the Systems window is where you can change system settings.

If you use screen shots of your system in your documentation, I would not recommend using themes or changing icons, cursors, or anything else that may be included in your screen shots. Your reader will be looking for the default look and may not recognize your

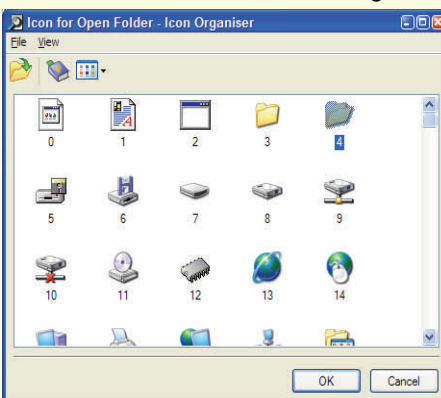
customizations.

Here is how to change your Open Folder Icon to the greenfolder.ico file you have downloaded:

1. Select the Icon window, then the Folders tab.
2. Select the Open Folder icon.
3. Click the Change button in the Current Icon window.
4. When the Icon Organizer dialog box opens, click the Open tool (the first icon on the toolbar).



5. Browse to the greenfolder.ico file you downloaded earlier and select it.
6. Click OK to close the dialog box.



Now when you have a folder open in Explorer, it will display a nice green color. Much easier to see what you are doing. Enjoy!

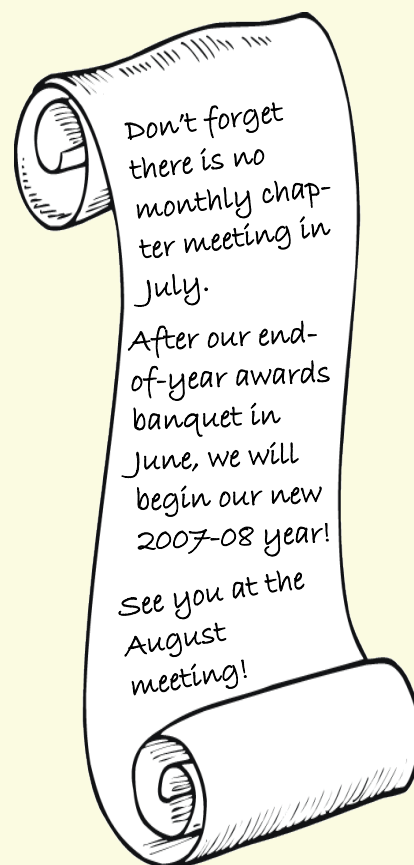
DAVID COVERSTON IS A SENIOR MEMBER OF THE ORLANDO CHAPTER. HE RECEIVED HIS M.A. IN JOURNALISM FROM UF.



Meet Linda Oestreich...

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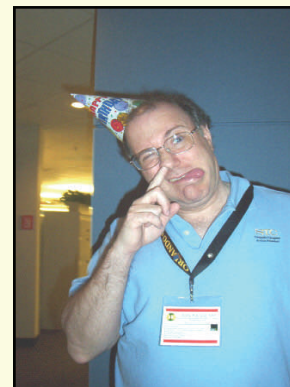
corporate writer for a software firm. I then became manager of corporate communications for a geophysical software and services provider, where I led their efforts in marketing, training, and documentation. Five years later, I took a position as vice president of a technical communication consulting firm. After three years, I returned to software documentation as a senior technical editor. After a short period of independent consulting, I now manage a documentation group for HP Software in San Diego. In my spare time, I often serve as adjunct faculty for local colleges in business and technical writing.



*If You Missed Our Last Meeting...
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To lead us into the future of help authoring, Mr. Beall suggested using Doc-to-Help. Doc-to-Help converts Microsoft Word documents into help files. Using headings and cross-references, Doc-to-Help creates the appropriate help pages and cross-reference links without further user involvement. Mr. Beall also

mentioned that Doc-to-Help offers editor independence – in addition to Microsoft Word, any HTML editor can be used to create and edit source content that will be used in Doc-to-Help. With an informative speaker and lots of chapter festivities and fanfare, May's meeting gave all of the attendees something to celebrate!



Jon has always been very picky.



Bob Shydo and Karen Lane
"live long and prosper."



Peggy Bivins and Mike Murray are spellbound as Dan Beall speaks.



The back row of hecklers just before Security was called.



I wonder if Cindy has a wallet to match *all* of her tops.

Happy 30th Birthday STC Orlando!

Photos from the STC Summit

The 54th annual STC Conference was held in Minneapolis, MN and there were plenty of fellow STC-ers from all over. Enjoy!





Memo
to
Members



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From the Editor's Desk...

Maybe I'm just getting cranky in my old age — or maybe my involvement with technical communicators has raised my awareness of the concept of usability and its presence — or lack of it — in many products and services. As an example, while attending the 54th annual STC conference in Minneapolis a couple of weeks ago, I stayed at a very posh hotel near the convention center.

Although I won't name the hotel here, suffice it to say that it is part of a very recognizable international chain. It all started when I first arrived to check in. I entered the front lobby and, like so many other travelers in 2007, had my rolling luggage behind me. To my surprise, the front desk was at the bottom of a set of stairs and there was no ramp in sight. Now, granted, it was a very lovely marble set of stairs, but I had to bounce my roll-behind luggage down them to get to the front desk.

Upon first entering my room, I was delighted to see a very nice work

area complete with large desk, comfortable chair, and desk lamp. Since I had lots of work to do on my laptop during this visit, I immediately began setting up. It was then I discovered that all the electric outlets near the work area were in use — I

couldn't plug in my laptop and use it without going to the opposite side of the room from the "work area!"

The next morning, I decided to take advantage of the hotel restaurant's breakfast buffet. I was in the mood for

pancakes and they were on the buffet. Oh Boy! The problem was that in the buffet line you came upon the syrup first, then the pancakes, then the butter—and no spreading knife nearby. Oy! Is there a usability expert in the house??

Like I said, it could be that I'm just getting cranky in my old age, but I have never known anyone to pour syrup on an empty plate, place their pancake on top of it, and top with a whole cake of butter.

—Dalton Hooper



Corner of Distinction

Ashley Carney

Ashley hit the ground running as soon as she became an **STC** member. Ashley is one of this year's **Melissa Pellegrin Scholarship Award** recipients, as well as our **Chapter Historian**.

