

Memo to Members

The newsletter of the Orlando Central Florida Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication



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December 2009

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Memo to Members

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President's corner

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To view details about a particular event, hover your mouse over the highlighted date. To RSVP, click on the highlighted date.

Regular Meeting		ADCO Meeting		Special Event		
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
April 2012						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					
May 2012						
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
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Sometimes wishes come true. And sometimes cake does not fall from the sky—no matter how much I want it to happen. And along these 50/50 wish-granting lines, I share some 50/50 news with you all this month.

We all know times are tough, and if you've been paying attention to STC society news, you know we have been struggling financially as a whole. To address this, STC headquarters cut their budget significantly, rearranged some things, and changed the dues structure for 2010. The good news is, there may be a glimmer of hope at the end of the tunnel. The not-so-good news—dues are going up. Budget numbers show that previous dues did not cover what it cost

to support a member. So you'll see a noticeable jump in dues this coming year.

Another change is that you must now opt in to being a member of a chapter. Whereas the fee for this was previously part of your base dues, you will now need to pay a bit extra for this privilege. So keep in mind, if you are signing up electronically, when you get to the second screen, you will be able to select the Orlando Chapter as your chapter of choice.



Kelli and daughter, Lexie, tame the wild Dumbo

So many of you may be asking, "What benefit do I get for joining the Orlando Chapter?" I'm glad you asked. There are several member-only benefits in our chapter. Such as:

- ➔ Access to our jobs listings
- ➔ Discounts to monthly meetings and workshops
- ➔ Access to the discussion list
- ➔ Active member points towards the EOY active member shirt
- ➔ Voting rights
- ➔ Ability to hold office

Some of these benefits will mean even more in the new year. In 2010 Orlando Chapter members and non-member students will be able to attend our monthly meetings for just \$10, while non-STC members and members at-large will be charged \$20. The student member fee will remain at \$5. And even deeper discounts will be had by Chapter members at our upcoming Spring workshops (stay tuned for details on this!). All this to say, you will quickly recoup the little extra you must pay for chapter membership.

Because of the new financial model that the society has adopted, it has been communicated to us that in 2010 our number of chapter members will affect how headquarters supports us financially. This means that your dollars now will affect our future ability to bring more quality programs to Central Florida. So we encourage you to do what you can to support Orlando Chapter.

Let me close by wishing all of you and yours a blessed and happy holiday season. Here's hoping cake falls from the sky! And as always, please let me or a member of our administrative council know what we can do to serve you better.

Kelli
president@stc-orlando.org

NOT A MEMBER?

Want more information on being an STC Orlando Chapter member? You can contact our Membership Manager, David Coverston, by clicking here. Your first meeting is free!

ACTIVE MEMBER SHIRTS

Want to be in the running for an Active Member polo shirt? You can contact our Active Members Manager, W.C. Wiese, by clicking here.

RISING STARS



Want to help our Chapter in support of our educational outreach initiative? You can make a tax-free donation. Just click on the above image for more information.

STC ORLANDO LOGO ITEMS



Show your STC Orlando pride by purchasing an item imprinted with the STC Orlando logo! Click on the above image to see the catalogue and/or to place an order.

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The view from number two

by Dalton Hooper

STC Orlando Chapter Vice President

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Fear of speaking in public has been identified as the number one fear of most people in America. Unfortunately, it is nearly impossible to journey through a career these days without having to speak to an audience at some point along the way.

As you may know, I speak in public for a living. I have always loved doing it, but even I get nervous before a presentation and probably always will. I have learned a few truisms along the way that help to control (not overcome) the anxiety. Here are three of them.



1. Never tell the audience that you are nervous or unprepared. It either will not show, will not matter, or is obvious. Once you acknowledge your shortcomings to the audience, you have sabotaged all credibility and lost the audience's focus on your subject matter. Your competence to speak to them will be all they are likely to process from that point on.

2. Being nervous is a good thing. If you have no anxiety prior to addressing an audience, that is a bad sign. It can mean you are over-confident and/or undervalue your audience. Be wary of a complete lack of nervousness.

3. No one in the audience knows what you know. It is easy to convince yourself you are unqualified to speak to an audience on a particular topic. Don't forget that no one in the audience (or the world!) knows exactly the same as you know. No one has had the same experiences as you. No one has lived a life exactly like yours. The purpose of your speaking to this audience is to share *your* perspective on a particular subject. Someone else may have a more complete experience regarding the subject matter, but that doesn't invalidate yours. You are unique.

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If you missed our November meetings...

by Cindy Skawinski

STC Orlando Chapter Secretary

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...you missed an engaging presentation on blogs and podcasts, as well as a celebration of thanks organized by the Orlando Chapter.



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SOCIETY FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION (STC)



Mission: STC advances the theory and practice of technical communication across all user abilities and media so that both businesses and customers benefit from safe, appropriate, and effective use of products, information, and services.

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The Orlando Chapter held its regular monthly meeting on a special night, Thursday, November 5, to accommodate the schedule of the informative presenter, blogger, and podcaster, Tom Johnson. Tom is widely recognized as an expert on blogging and podcasting in the international STC community, and is currently an active member in the Intermountain Chapter. While visiting us in central Florida, Tom presented "*Simple Steps to Get Started with Blogging and Podcasting*".

Here are just a few useful tidbits from Tom's straightforward presentation on tools and techniques for these social media staples:

- An online presence is important to hiring managers - if a potential employer enters your name in a search engine and does not receive results, they could be less likely to hire you. However, it is also important to take control of your online identity to make sure your online presence reflects positively on your career and accomplishments.
- When beginning a blog or podcast, pick a general topic and brand your focus. Sticking to your topic will give your audience a reason to come back. If you don't know which topic may be comfortable for you, create new content a few times a week for a month or two and see what subject naturally reoccurs.
- Blog entries are most effective when you share personal stories with voice. Stories about overcoming conflict or personal experiences will capture readers' interest and will help you develop your personal brand in the world of blogging. Combine personal and informational content, when possible, to give readers encouragement to return.
- The process for creating a podcast is simple - plan the episode, record it, edit it, and publish it. However, Tom cautioned that you have to start listening to podcasts before you'll truly be inspired to record. podcasts on a wide variety of subjects are available for free using Apple's iTunes software.



Tom Johnson presenting at Nov. 2009 meeting

To learn more about Tom and his advice on blogging, podcasting, and other tools and techniques for Technical Communicators, visit his blog at idratherbewriting.com.

In addition to Tom's informative presentation, the Orlando Chapter came together on its regular meeting night, Tuesday, November 17 at Mimi's Cafe in Altamonte to show appreciation for its membership and provide a networking opportunity for local Technical Communicators. Attendees chatted while enjoying free appetizers courtesy of the Chapter. The Future Technical Communicators club from the University of Central Florida organized donations for Second Harvest Food Bank. It was a wonderful opportunity to give thanks and celebrate the season with friends.

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This month's program...

There will be no regular meeting of the STC Orlando Chapter this month (December), to allow our members to spend this time celebrating the holiday season with their families.

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Happenings

The Seminole County Regional Science, Math, & Engineering Fair

The Seminole County Regional Science, Math, & Engineering Fair is Saturday, February 20, 2010. Last year, 30 Seminole students went on to compete and many took prizes in the State competition. Four individual students and two teams from Seminole County High Schools went to International and several came home with prizes! Professionals in the sciences, math, and engineering fields are needed to judge the event from 8 AM until 3PM. In addition, sponsorships and awards from professional societies, companies, and individuals are needed, and volunteers are needed to assist in logistics for the event. There are also year-round opportunities to mentor students who are preparing projects. Don't miss the public display of projects during mall hours on February 20 at the Seminole Towne Center Mall in Sanford. For more information, contact the Fair Judging and Awards Committee Chair, Michele Mingoia, at 407-806-4442.

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Monthly Blog Posting by STC President Debuts

STC President Cindy Currie debuted The Prez Dispenser, a monthly blog from Currie that aims to provide a more informal link between STC members and the President. For October, Currie discussed her "STC story" and the route she took in technical communication to where she is today. [Click here to read the full posting.](#)

STC Relaunches Online Buyers Guide & Consultant Directory with Enhancements

Thanks to STC Senior Member Bill Swallow for his bookmarks and security additions to the revised [Online Buyers Guide & Consultant Directory](#). Check the STC website for the updated online buyers guide, which also lists technical communication consultants. In addition to companies that provide products and services, the names and contact information of more than 700 technical communicators who undertake single projects, ongoing programs, or perform contract work are listed. Many of the listings include a 50-word description summarizing the individual's strengths and expertise. The Guide & Directory is fully searchable and presented in PDF format for viewing or downloading.

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Feature: Mentoring kickoff

by Dan Heath
Mentoring Program Chair

On November 10th, members of the Orlando chapter met at *Farris and Foster's Famous Chocolate Factory* in Baldwin Park to kick off the 2009 - 2010 year of the Orlando STC mentoring program. The event, one of Farris and Foster's chocolate parties, gave participants the chance to play chocolatier.

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The mentoring program pairs UCF technical communication



students with local professionals with the goal of bridging the gap between industry and academe. Mentors act as counselors to help students set and achieve goals for developing career direction and skills.

The mentoring program is proof of the strong symbiotic relationship the Orlando chapter has with the UCF technical communication program. Throughout the years, the program at UCF has replenished the Orlando chapter's membership with a steady stream of talented communicators and leaders. Local professionals have, in turn, made themselves accessible to students through the chapter. STC members have helped students obtain internships and jobs, as well as advice and practical industry knowledge.



The kickoff event was an opportunity for mentors and student "mentees" to get to know each other and bond over some delicious treats. Farris and Foster's supplied milk, dark, and white chocolate along with an array of things with which to mix it, including: fresh fruits, nuts, chocolate chips, marshmallows, peanut butter, and sprinkles. The chocolate factory also offered a number of ways to shape our chocolate candies, including over 500 different molds, truffles, cups, and even a conveyor belt

like the one in the famous episode of *I Love Lucy!* We were each given a half pound of chocolate and encouraged to be creative.

All in all, the event was a success and a wonderful time. Orlando STC members unleashed their ingenuity to design some impressive chocolate creations. We all sampled and took home some delicious goodies. More importantly though, the mentoring program got off to a strong start as we began forging relationships over something we can all agree on: chocolate!



For more information about the mentoring program, contact Dan Heath at mentorship@stc-orlando.org.



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