

Memo to Members

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



[HOME](#) [ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL](#)

April 2011

11
04
2011

Memo to Members



Inside this issue:



- [President's Corner](#)
- [A View from Number Two](#)
- [If You Missed Last Meeting...](#)
- [2011 STC Orlando Chapter Elections](#)
- [Call it an STC "Tribe" ... It Really Works for Us at the University of Central Florida](#)
- [Tool Tips: Exttools](#)

[VIEW A SELECTED MONTH](#)

Select Month

[SEARCH THIS SITE](#)

[CALENDAR OF EVENTS](#)

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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
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

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President's Corner



By Dalton Hooper
President
Orlando Chapter STC

11
04
2011

Spring is here

It's Springtime in Orlando! There is much to see and experience — especially if you are an STC Orlando Chapter member. On the 19th of this month (April), we will have our annual High School Writing Competition Awards Banquet. The winners of this competition will be announced and scholarships awarded. Also, this year's winner(s) of the Melissa Pellegrin scholarship will be announced and awarded. This is

one of our most prestigious meetings each year and is an integral part of our chapter's legacy.

2011 Society level election results

Voting for the 2011 STC society level officers ended on March 30. The results were as follows:

Vice President

➔ Alan Houser

Director (two spots)

➔ Rich Maggiani

➔ Tricia Spayer

Treasurer

➔ Aiessa Moyna

Nominating Committee (two spots)

➔ Jack Molisani

➔ Leah Guren

Orlando chapter election of officers

Also at the April 19th meeting, elections will be held for the 2011-2012 Orlando chapter officers. Voting will take place from 7:00-7:10p.m. The results will be announced later in the meeting. The slate of candidates is as follows:

President

➔ Karen Lane

Vice President

➔ Debra Johnson (incumbent)

Secretary

➔ Michele Damron (incumbent)

Treasurer

➔ Sarah Baca

You can find more details by visiting our chapter website (www.stc-orlando.org).

Want to post a job opening? You can contact our Employment Manager, Dalton Hooper, by clicking here.

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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A View from #2



By Debra Johnson
Vice President
Orlando Chapter STC

11
04
2011

Hello everyone! It's been a while since my last article and I apologize for that. We have a new editor-in-chief for our newsletter...so I am now back on schedule. Thanks, Alex, for taking on the job.

It's April and I have a great deal on my plate right now...I am running for re-election as Vice President; I am preparing to attend the 2011 International Summit in Sacramento, CA. in mid-May; about to expand my team at Wyndham Vacation Ownership, Inc., again; and I am really excited to see who the winners are for the high school writing competition and the Pellegrin

Scholarship on April 19, 2011.

This year at the 2011 STC Summit, I plan on earning a certificate in Technical Communications Management and attending all of the supporting sessions for that program, among others. It was during my planning for this trip, I received an email sent to the STC-Orlando Administrative Council, of which I am a member. I read it and found it quite mystifying and very disappointing...

Someone, who shall remain nameless, felt there was no value for the money in STC for young people; that there was no representation for young people in the STC; and that STC was not "catering" to the younger generation. WHAT THE....?

When I was a young technical communicator in Atlanta just starting out... I was eager to find knowledge, acceptance, and validation in this field, so I could progress and become as great as I could be. I found all of what I needed at the time as a student member of the STC Atlanta Chapter. What could be more valuable to an entry level person than to have unlimited access to experience, skill, and wisdom? I was eager to ask questions, I was grateful to get answers, I was excited to volunteer, and I was thankful to learn from those smarter and more experienced. How do you put a price on that?

I never once asked or expected STC to fuss over me or make it easier. I felt it was my duty to participate; to earn my way, to volunteer for everything I could, and to partner with those who know more. What better way to grow in your field or to get representation within an organization than to become a true "Padawan" to an elite group of people in your chosen profession? As a "newbie in the field," I kept my mouth shut, my ears open....I asked no one "to cater" to me. I was appreciative. It is one thing to say you cannot afford membership...it is another to exclaim to the Administrative Council, who have years and years, and years of experience, that there is no value in being among them and that you feel they should cater to you...

I don't know... Do other young people feel as though STC Orlando or Intergalactic should cater to them? Doesn't a person have to show up to be counted for representation? Am I off base here? Or, Is this just a comment from a person who really didn't think, before he or she spoke about what value really is...

It sounded as though this feeling of self-entitlement superseded all else?

Actually, what it really sounds like to me is this person doesn't understand what true



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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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value and worth are. Good luck getting a reference from one of us...

Worth something to somebody,

Debra

vicepresident@stc-orlando.org

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If You Missed Last Meeting...



By Michele Damron
Secretary
Orlando Chapter STC

11
04
2011

... you missed a lively panel discussion filled with relevant tips for surviving today's job market. What to wear, what to omit on your resume, and what not to post on your facebook page—these topics and more were covered as Jim Schultman, Managing Director of Tech USA, and Diana Cagle, Senior Manager, Business Services for Florida Virtual School, responded to audience questions.

As the evening progressed, it became clear that in some ways, the more things change, the more they stay the same. For instance, dressing to impress is still a must for making that all-important first impression.

Become Your Best Professional Self

While presenting yourself as professionally as possible will never go out of style, there are a few things to think about now that might not have been a concern for job seekers even a few years ago. Be aware of the following tips in order to avoid pitfalls and shine like the professional you are:

- ☞ Know that your online persona will be checked, either by the hiring company's Human Resources department or by the recruiting company. Here's how you make it work to your advantage:
 - o Match your LinkedIn profile to your resume. Be aware that recruiting companies like Tech USA *often* search for employees on LinkedIn!
 - o Avoid all questionable content and language on your Facebook and Twitter sites. Wouldn't say it or show it at work? Then don't display it on your social networking sites.
 - o Obtain LinkedIn recommendations from individuals as high as possible on your company's organizational chart—Directors, CEOs, Vice Presidents. Having a recommendation written by your Manager may be helpful, but a glowing recommendation by your office mate probably isn't going to mean a lot to a hiring manager.
- ☞ Be as professional as possible in every area that could be observed by the hiring company.
 - o Keep your cell and home phone recorded answering messages professional, and by all means ditch the wacky ring tones.
 - o Wear a full suit to a face-to-face meeting, especially to the first interview. (Yes, this applies to even computer programmers.)
 - o Tell your references that you are job seeking so they will be prepared and

professional when receiving a call from a potential hiring company.

Rethink Your Resume

So assuming you look great and are Mr. or Ms. Total Professional, how can you stand out among the huge numbers of job seekers in this current economy? According to Jim and Donna, following these specific resume guidelines will increase your chances of getting into the interview chair:

- Omit the cover letter; it won't be read. Hiring managers simply have no time to read cover letters. (Include it *only* if it is specifically requested.)
- Omit the objective statement. Everyone knows these can be tailored to the desired position. Also, Jim & Donna prefer resumes without summaries.
- Omit references, and do not even include the line "references available upon request." It's a given that you have them; the company will ask if they want the information.
- Include education, certifications, and job history.
- Include a brief explanation for time gaps longer than 6 months. For instance, "First-time Mom, January to June 2000."
- Include technical skills or tools used on the job in your job history descriptions. If you mention a skill or tool in a summary or list, be careful to show in your job history descriptions how you used that skill or tool.
- Keep your resume 100% free of errors.
- Think carefully about flow, structure, sequence, and use of white space.

Prepare for the Interview

You've reworked your resume and buffed your professional image to a high shine. You've received a phone call asking for an interview! Don't panic—these strategies given by Jim and Diana will help you prepare for the big day.

- Prepare work samples (you may be asked for these in the resume stage or in the interview stage). Diana says that work samples are the number one thing she looks for when she is considering hiring someone. Don't just include a snippet; take care to make it look complete, or else provide the first section of a longer document.
- Research the company. Know everything possible about the company and the position, and even research the interviewer if possible.
- Prepare a list of intelligent, relevant, specific questions to ask during the interview.
 - o Ask questions such as, What qualifications would a successful candidate have? What does a typical day look like for this position?
 - o Google their company and current news events; ask how these current events could impact their company.
 - o Do ask about culture, job requirements, keys to success.
 - o Do NOT ask about salary, benefits, potential challenges to overcome. These can be addressed further down the line and are not appropriate at an initial interview.
 - o Ask questions in which the answers will provide you with specific, valuable information.
- Be sure to address and maintain eye contact with all interviewers in a panel interview situation. It's easy to address your comments to the one person who appears to be in charge, but you don't want to be mistaken—or rude.

In a nutshell, be as professional as possible in every area of your life; prepare excellent work samples and keep your resume succinct and concise; and be prepared not only to answer questions but also to ask relevant, informed questions during the interview process.

2011 STC Orlando Chapter Elections

According to the bylaws of the Orlando Chapter STC, the annual business meeting of the chapter will be held on April 19 at the time of the regular chapter meeting (7pm). At this time, we will hold chapter elections for four officer positions. The Nominating Committee has announced the following slate of officers for the 2011–2012 chapter year:

11
04
2011

President: Karen Lane
Vice–President: Debra Johnson
Secretary: Michele Damron
Treasurer: Sarah Baca

In order to vote in the chapter election, you must

1. Be a member in good standing of the Orlando Chapter STC. Student members, regular members, and senior members are all eligible to vote.

2a. Be present at the April 19, 2011, chapter meeting and submit your ballot by 7:10pm.

or

2b. Print out and mail your ballot to the chapter post–office box

The Orlando Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication
Post Office Box 540444
Orlando, FL 32854–0444

to arrive no later than April 18, 2011. Have your STC membership number on the outside envelope.

Candidate Bios:

Karen Lane (President) is a freelance technical editor and indexer and a graduate of the technical communication (formerly technical writing) master’s program at UCF. She served as the Orlando Chapter treasurer from 2001 to 2006 and has served as Employment Manager since 2006. Karen also participates as judge for the High School Technical Writing Competition and has been part of the Orlando Chapter mentorship program since its inception. At the Society level, Karen participates as lead judge for the International Summit Competition and serves on three Society–level committees (Competitions, Organizational Synergies, and Community Achievement Awards). For many years she was an active participant on various Summit Program Committees, and chaired that committee for the 2008 Summit in Philadelphia. Karen is an STC Fellow and makes her home in Merritt Island with her family. She has sung with the Bach Festival Choir for 24 years and enjoys knitting in her spare time.

Debra Johnson (Vice President) is the current Vice President for the Orlando STC Chapter and is running for re–election. She would like to continue her role, which has been to support the President, Treasurer, and Secretary, act as the Program Director securing guest speakers and programs of interest for the chapter meetings, and mentor UCF students. Debra has served as a judge for the 2011 Orlando Science Challenge and the 2011 Orlando Chapter High School Technical Writing Competition, visits other chapters promoting the Orlando chapter programs, and supports the Future Technical Communicators of UCF.

Debra has been a technical communicator for over 16 years and worked in numerous industries. She currently leads a growing team of Senior Documentation Specialists at Wyndham Vacation ownership, Inc., a division of Wyndham Worldwide Hotels and Resorts. Debra is the employee representative for IT on the Count on Me! Council for WVO. She is in the process of implementing new methodologies for documenting and managing information for their IT department with the aspirations of going enterprise wide. Debra works closely with Business Analysts, Technical Solution Analysts, Project Managers, and other SMEs. She manages documentation projects in accordance with established WVO guidelines. She works with her Sr. Manager on resource management,

forecasting, and project management of documentation projects. Debra also provides training, mentoring, and direction for other documentation specialists.

Michele Damron (Secretary) joined the Orlando Chapter in February 2008. She served on the Administrative Council as the Community Achievement Award chair for the past three years, adding the role of Secretary this past year. A former Melissa Pellegrin Memorial Scholarship recipient and graduate of UCF's Technical Communication master's program, Michele works as a freelance technical communicator. When not working, reading, writing, or homeschooling, Michele enjoys boating and educational field trips with her husband, Jonathan, and their two boys, Jordan and Jared.

Sarah Baca (Treasurer) is a senior at the University of Central Florida, majoring in English—Technical Communication with a minor in Marketing. This past year, she served as the president of Future Technical Communicators @ UCF, as the UCF-STC Liaison, and as the Student Representative for the Community Affairs Committee. She was also accepted into Sigma Tau Chi, STC's Honor Society. Sarah is co-presenting with Dan Voss at the STC Summit on Leadership Day, and they are also presenting for the Academic and Management SIGs. She plans to become a freelance writer after graduation, working under her company name Nerdy Knights LLC, which she established in 2009. Sarah has had experience with government proposal writing and editing, as well as creating newsletters and website content. She celebrates ten years of marriage with Jerry this year and they have three boys: JJ (age 6), Benjamin (age 5), and Zachary (age 3). She also has three stepchildren, who live with them every other week: Kyla (age 16) and Joshua & Gage (age 12, both with high-functioning Autism).

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Call it an STC “Tribe” ... It Really Works for Us at the University of Central Florida



By Sarah Baca
Student member, STC Orlando Chapter
President, Future Technical Communicators (FTC), at the
University of Central Florida
Student representative, STC Community Affairs Committee (CAC)

11
04
2011

I had always liked the Jane Howard quote, “Call it a clan, call it a network, call it a tribe, call it a family: Whatever you call it, whoever you are, you need one.” However, I didn't understand how a tribe could form until I joined Future Technical Communicators (FTC), a student organization at my school, the University of Central Florida (UCF). FTC is not a student chapter of The Society for Technical Communication, but we do work closely with the Orlando Chapter of The Society for Technical Communication (STC).

(At Right) Sarah attacking cake at the recent Orlando-STC “Thanks Dinner,” which served as our November chapter meeting.



In this group, I have found my tribe. These people laughed at my grammar knock-knock jokes and offered me advice when I thought about dropping my minor. I have an amazing mentor who encourages me when I am feeling down, and I attend the monthly meetings to supplement my university education. A lot of students join professional clubs just for a line on their resumes, but they are missing out on so much connection and fun when they don't get involved with these awesome people.

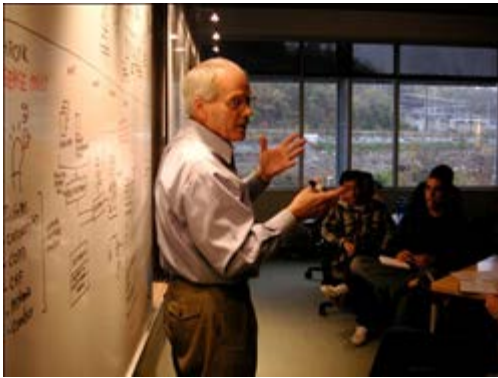
This year, as president of FTC, I have become more involved with STC. I am on the Community Affairs Committee as the Student Representative. My Orlando-STC mentor, Dan Voss, is also on the committee, and we've been working together to discover what

other STC Student Members are experiencing. We are still in the process of contacting everyone, but I've been really excited to talk to students across the country who are members of STC. We all have the same worries: Will we be able to find jobs when we graduate? How can we enhance our chances of getting a job? Are we graduating with the knowledge we need to find the job we want?

As Dan and I have been working on the CAC committee, we've been looking at the current model for the student chapters of STC. The current student chapter model is great because it allows students to become involved in STC and helps prepare them for becoming professional members of the society. Student members can attend the online webinars and are able to participate in the online social site that STC unveiled this year. They also have access to income information from STC, which will allow them to negotiate higher salaries when they enter the working world. Dan and I know from personal experience that the model we're using at UCF offers significant benefits. We do not have an official STC student chapter but many of our FTC members, have also joined STC as student members of the Orlando Chapter, carrying on a tradition that goes back to the early 1980's. But I wouldn't know about those ancient times; ask Dan!



We've been talking to STC Student Chapters and we have learned that because student chapters of STC are not officially affiliated with their universities, they can often lose out on benefits they could receive as a university club. As we have learned at UCF, these can be quite substantial, including financial support for us to attend the STC conference, money to draw top-notch speakers in our field, free meeting space, access to UCF's publicity department and media to attract new members and promote events.



(At Left) Don Moyer presented a workshop in Orlando, which was paid for by UCF's Student Government Association as a benefit for Future Technical Communicators.

Dan and I have talked about whether it might be possible to combine the benefits of an STC student chapter and a university club. When I was invited to serve on the CAC, he became involved with it as well.

One of the ideas we have been talking about is the idea of forming "hybrid" student chapter model. This is how Dan described it:

Instead of having only a STC Student Chapter or only a club at a university, we could have both, which (1) form at the same time as a joint effort, (2) form by combining an existing STC student chapter with an existing club, (3) form by establishing an STC student chapter as a "subset" of an existing club, or (4) form by establishing a club as a "superset" of an existing STC student chapter to bring it within the official infrastructure of the university, with full benefits on top of the benefits of STC affiliation. Since membership in clubs is usually either free or for a nominal fee, we anticipate that in the hybrid organization whereas all STC student chapter members would probably also be club members, the reverse would not always be true. But in many, if not most, cases, the officers could be common to both organizations and the activities could be jointly planned, executed, and experienced. The faculty advisor could often also be shared.

How do you like this idea? This idea allows students to have the benefit of being both STC members and members of a university club. Student chapters of STC that are already formed won't have to change their model if it's working for them, but if they want to start or affiliate with a university club, we will help them.

Our second affiliation, as student members of the STC Orlando Chapter has been just as beneficial. We've gotten a lot from the wonderful mentoring program, great speakers and programs at chapter meetings, the chance to become involved in chapter activities, leadership opportunities within the chapter itself, and, as my good fortune shows, even at the Society level. In addition to the fun I'm having, it could translate into a higher salary when I graduate. How sweet is that?

Many of the STC student chapters we've contacted are located close to an STC

geographical community, yet the two communities have not established an ongoing partnership. We see a major opportunity there, on both sides—a true win-win situation. Other student chapters are not close to local chapters, so they are kind of floating alone, and don't have a chance to have a relationship like the one our club has with the Orlando Chapter of STC. These are a couple of things that CAC, Dan, and I are hoping to help with this year.

We have suggested potential modifications to the model bylaws for STC student chapters that would allow the formation of “hybrid” communities that are affiliated both with STC and with the university where the STC student chapter is located. The STC executive director, Kathryn Burton, has asked STC's legal counsel to review these proposed changes to ensure they comply with New York State Law.

And Kathryn told us at a recent CAC meeting that starting with the 2012 STC year, the basic STC student membership will also include membership in one STC geographical community and one SIG (in case you aren't familiar, a SIG is a special interest group, so you can have a smaller community with others who share your specific interest.). We nearly cheered when she informed us about that upcoming change in fee structure, because we see this as a fantastic opportunity for student chapters to form partnerships with their local STC chapters in the way we at UCF have done with the Orlando Chapter.

So what do you think? Do you think that students are important to STC? Do you think a hybrid model with university as well as STC affiliation might work? Do you see the benefits of partnerships between student chapters and STC geographical communities?

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Tool Tips – Extools

by David Coverston

Extools



I recently read an article that said that Excel was the most frequently used business tool. So it is not too surprising that I find myself using Excel on daily basis. Of course there are tasks I need to accomplish that Excel doesn't do or that I don't have the time to write a macro to do. Let me introduce you to one of the most comprehensive free add-ins for Excel – Extools.

Here are some of the tools Extools gives you:

Delete Empty Cells In Columns

Check For Duplicates

➔ Sort worksheets in ascending order

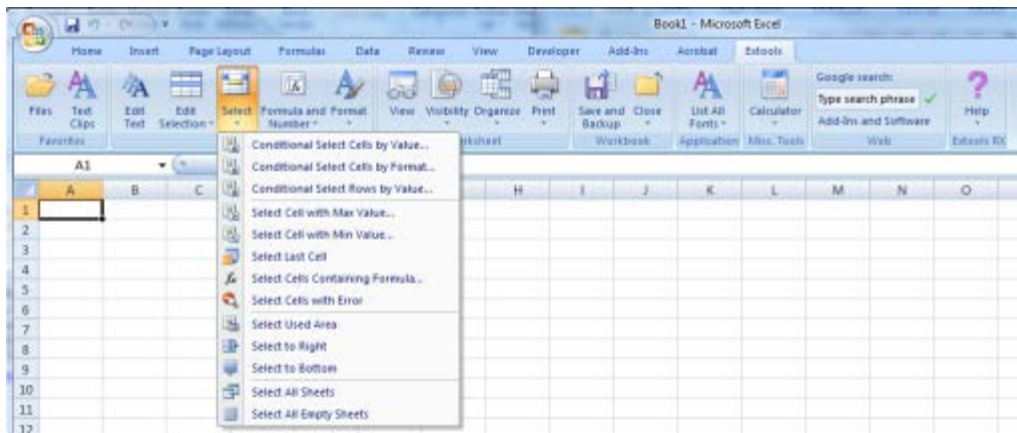
➔ Unhide All Hidden Rows/Columns

➔ Remove the space characters to the Left or Right of the cell contents

➔ Delete Empty Rows

These are just some of the ones that I find useful on a regular basis out of over 70 tools in this set. The Extools RX for 2007 version installs with its own ribbon tab. There are versions for previous releases of Excel as well. A help file is included with descriptions of all the tools. Installation is fairly straight forward, and instructions and the download can be found on the website, <http://www.excel-extools.com>

11
04
2011



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