

Memo to Members

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



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October 2011

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Memo to Members



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From the Editor's Desk



Alex Garcia

Hello friends and members of the Orlando Chapter STC!

I am settling into my role as Memo to Members Editor nicely. Everyday, I learn at least one new thing about the WordPress.com platform. I hope to learn even more from my new Mentee, Brittney Adams, who describes herself as a "WordPress Guru." Who knows, you might see her assume a role as Associate Editor in the months to come.

As for my career developments, I am currently between assignments as a Senior Proposal Editor, and am always looking to network to find that next great gig. My spirits are high, though, as it's only a matter of time until networking with the great folks at the Orlando Chapter STC lands me at a direct, stable position. My LinkedIn public profile is: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/alexrgarcia>. Add me and let's network!

Enjoy this month's newsletter where you'll find information about our new employment database (which I will be signing up for at midnight on Nov 1st), and see how much fun the Mentors and Mentees had at their 2011 kick-off meeting. Also, Sarah Baca bravely takes the reigns of "Fun with Numb3rs" with her first Treasurer's report.

Are you on Facebook? "Like" the Orlando Chapter STC at: [Orlando Chapter STC on Facebook](#)

Follow us on Twitter: [STCOrlando on Twitter](#)

Do YOU have an article you'd like to submit for Memo to Members? Don't be shy... email me at newsletter@stc-orlando.org You will get an Active Member point for your submission.

Until next time,

Alex Garcia
Editor
Orlando Chapter STC Memo to Members

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President's Corner

By Karen Lane
President
Orlando Chapter STC

We in the Orlando Chapter STC are fortunate to have a dedicated and enthusiastic Administrative Council (AdCo) working mostly behind the scenes to ensure quality meetings and other programs for our members and guests. As the face of technical

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Karen Lane

communication in our community, we try very hard to “get it right.” But in case you have ever wondered what it is that your Administrative Council does, here’s a brief highlight of the kinds of things we do to make your STC experience more interesting and useful.

Meetings

This one is the most obvious: When you attend our third-Tuesday chapter meetings, you find other members present to greet you, check you in, and answer your questions. The evening’s program is ready for your edification,

and you can snack on a light supper as you network with your peers. All this is planned by your AdCo, often months in advance. The greeting table is staffed by David Coverston, your membership manager, Gail Lippincott, hospitality chair, hosts the refreshment area, and Debra Johnson, program manager and vice president, arranges for the speaker, topic, and supporting A/V. And don’t forget the after-the-party-party led by *Memo-to-Members* editor Alex Garcia, which is a visit to a local watering hole for a continuation of the networking after most meetings. You don’t want to miss it!

Scholarships and Competitions

AdCo members head up the Rising Stars (fundraising), Melissa Pellegrin Scholarship, High School Writing Competition (run by Jon Kessler), and Jaffe Award (outstanding technical communicator) programs. These worthy initiatives aim to support the next generation of technical communicators through cash awards and seek to encourage outstanding practices in technical communication through peer recognition. Director Erika Higgins ably leads up several of these efforts, seemingly everywhere and doing everything. And she has plenty of help in the form of AdCo volunteers who serve as judges and evaluators for the programs mentioned.

Chapter Achievements and Other Recognitions

Your Orlando Chapter has been a beacon in the STC world for innovative programs and an active membership. That doesn’t happen by itself. In addition to providing world-class technical programs at our meetings, the AdCo gives you many opportunities to boost your career profile and skills while enhancing the Orlando Chapter experience for others.

For ten years we’ve recognized chapter volunteerism through our Active Member program, ably headed by W.C. Wiese, no slouch in the activity category himself. W.C. is not only a former Orlando Chapter president and 5-year treasurer. He also served two terms as STC treasurer and is now serving on the STC board—that’s the international board!—as Director. W.C. keeps track of member activities. You do not have to be on the AdCo to earn a coveted Active Member shirt, by the way. You merely have to be active in the chapter.

In addition to running the Active Member program, AdCo members are responsible for charting chapter achievements. Patricia Cruz, recent UCF graduate, has been diligently keeping the chapter on course for a possible designation of Chapter of Distinction. Orlando is a five-time winner of this recognition, and we are on track to show well at judging time.

In other recognitions, the AdCo considers nominations for the Society awards to individuals: Distinguished Chapter Service Award and Distinguished Service Award for Students.

Public Relations and Other Communications

Over the years, the position of Public Relations chair has sometimes sat vacant, but this year we have a strong presence on the AdCo to “tell our powerful tale” to the

larger community. Our membership brochure is brand-new and has been collaboratively created by Jennifer Wolff and members of the AdCo. This marketing tool will not only help the chapter move forward with increased membership but also will aid members by giving them a tool to explain to their employers and colleagues about our organization and why membership is a wise professional investment.

We have a presence on MySTC and a chapter announcements list, overseen by our communications chair, Erika Higgins. She has been responsible for our recent Facebook and Twitter notices, so make sure you follow us on both (@STCORLANDO) to learn the latest about chapter happenings.

And let us not forget the newsletter you are reading right now, *Memo to Members*, edited by another AdCo volunteer, Alex Garcia. If you have news or information you think would be of use to your colleagues, he is always interested in hearing from you.

Employment Notices

For some members, this is the reason they joined the chapter. Notices of job openings and opportunities have taken a quantum jump in frequency and number since Dalton Hooper, employment manager and immediate past president of the chapter, took it over. The notices are fresh and geographically targeted. If you are looking for work, either permanent or contract, you don't want to miss Dalton's notices, but to get the notices you need to be an Orlando Chapter member.

FTC and Mentoring

Since the earliest days of the Orlando Chapter, STC and UCF have enjoyed a close partnership. Gloria Jaffe, for whom the Jaffe Award is named, was an early leader in founding the chapter, along with her "mentee" and colleague, Dr. Dan Jones. Thus, supporting and nurturing the next generation of technical communicators has always been a priority for our chapter. Led by Dan Voss and a succession of student co-chairs (currently Bethany Bowles), the mentor-mentee program (M&Ms for short) has been a model to the rest of STC and has been copied elsewhere as its value is recognized. And the STC-FTC connection is actively at work in the AdCo in other ways, too; typically several FTC officers attend AdCo meetings, and the student interests are well advocated by them.

The STC-UCF connection comes into focus most prominently in the joint meeting held every January. AdCo members assist FTC officers and other UCF students to plan the program, arrange for a speaker, provide refreshments, and promote the meeting to the larger UCF community.

The AdCo Approach

As you have seen, your Administrative Council is busily at work for you. But wait: who is the AdCo? Well, it's you. As my descriptions should have convinced you, no one works alone. Our chapter is fortunate indeed to have willing helpers whenever the need arises. And should you wish to become more active by running for office, nominating chair Kelli Pharo would be glad to speak with you about your possible future role.

But you don't have to be elected to participate. We can always use a little help, and *little* is the operative word. If you can do just one thing, say yes when asked, step forward where there is a need, you will find the payback to be much greater than the effort.

At the very least, when you participate in chapter activities, as I hope you will do, take a moment to thank the volunteers for their time and energy. They are the reason you have a chapter and its programs. And if those programs are of value to you, join us in making them happen!

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A View From Number Two

by Debra Johnson
Vice President



Debra Johnson

Orlando Chapter STC

Debra is currently the Lead Documentation Specialist at Wyndham Vacation Ownership in Orlando, FL where she is responsible for setting up and leading the Technical Communications discipline within Wyndham's Information Technology department.

Welcome to October! First thing...I want to thank Tracy Rud for her presentation last month. I had no idea what went into writing fiction and getting published. She was an awesome mentor to me



and continues to be a great friend.

Ok, so now it's time to announce our October chapter meeting program. It's happening on Tuesday Oct 18, 2011.

We will be hosting an STC-provided webinar, *Starting and Building a Freelance Business, presented by Katherine Nagel, Ruth Thaler-Carter*. This webinar talks about what it takes to freelance part- or full-time. Building a freelance business, like nurturing a garden, is hard work. Learn about marketing and customer relationship strategies and more. It will be a great learning experience; having the knowledge to get work in any economy. So please join us.

Winter Park Civic Center

1050 Morse Blvd

Winter Park, FL 32839

Refreshments 6:30pm - Program 7:00pm

So we'll see you there....

Please RSVP vicepresident@stc-orlando.org so we know you are coming and bring someone with you!!!

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If You Missed Last Meeting...



Alex Garcia

By Alex Garcia
Editor
Memo to Members Newsletter
Orlando Chapter STC

...You missed swordfights, cannonballs, alternate-time narratives—and the revelation that there are only six big publishers in the US literary scene. Tracy Rud took us on a swashbuckling voyage through her career as a Technical Writer, published fiction author, and professional mentor to our very own Vice-President, Debra Johnson. She detailed how her participation in a writers group with the head of a Boutique publisher, Nightbird Publishing, allowed her to publish her first novel, *Sea Beggar*.

Tracy explained the difference between a the Big-six publishers, a Boutique publisher, a vanity press, and self-publishing, while reminding Chapter members that everyone has at least one novel inside them. Who knows, had you been at the meeting, you

might have been inspired to pen the next best-seller!

More about Tracy from her website, www.TracyRud.com:

Although she has an M.S. in Technical Communication Management, and divides her time between technical writing and fiction writing and editing, at one time Tracy majored in music. Music plays a big role in her writing, and in fact, if you said that mathematics is the universal language, she'd argue and say that *music* is actually the universal language.

When not near the ocean, Tracy resides in North Metro Atlanta with her husband and daughter. SEA BEGGAR is Tracy's debut novel. Her short story "Midnight Writer" appears in the anthology NIGHTBIRD SINGING IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT (Nightbird Publishing, 2009).

Description of Sea Beggar, also from www.TracyRud.com:

The odds are against the *Sea Beggar*, because the closer she gets to completing her mission, the treacheries increase. There is a deadly faction of pirates broken off from the Spanish armada who also seek the treasure the *Sea Beggar* carries. The *Sea Beggar* crew must be wily to keep this faction guessing, so with the help of the Benedictine monks in Montserrat, Spain, they hide the treasure. Can these sea rovers finish what they started and return the treasure to its rightful owner?

Back in present day, after finding the treasure buried in secrets and sand for nearly 300 years, Macy discovers something more important—a sense of belonging. But her discovery does not stop there. She also finds that the legacy the lady pirate, Keary Dunbarton, left is *her* legacy as well, and this is the true treasure of the *Sea Beggar*.

It's a great summer read, so jump-start your vacation with this high-impact pirate adventure!

Sea Beggar is available for purchase from Knightbird Publishing at:

http://nightbirdpubs.com/buy_nightbird_books

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Fun with Numb3rs



Sarah Baca

By Sarah Baca
Treasurer
Orlando Chapter STC

The Administrative Council of the Orlando Chapter STC has been working hard to make sure we can keep offering fun and educational events in the current economic climate. We have some very exciting events in the remaining months of 2011 and coming up in 2012.

We are very excited about the merger with the SpaceTech Chapter, which was recently approved by the Board of Directors. This means that we can start planning for an event on the East Coast for the technical communicators who live there. I have some friends in that area, and I can't wait to meet them on the

East Coast for an official STC Networking Event. Stay tuned for details about this and other exciting events that are coming up.

We have also budgeted for the website makeover. I can't wait to see what the new website will look like. I know that John Kessler and the website committee have been working very hard on transporting the information from our previous site over to the new one and electing the new look and features for the new website.

This is a great time to be involved in the Orlando Chapter of STC. Just like everyone

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else, we've been challenged by the financial difficulties caused by the recession. These challenges force us to focus on what really matters and prioritize. The friendships that I've formed are definitely better than anything money can buy.

As a recent college graduate, I am so grateful that I found this group to help me navigate the stormy waters of the current job market. The knowledge I've gained from the meetings and the experiences of my fellow technical communicators is priceless to me. As Treasurer, I definitely appreciate that return on investment!

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Mentoring Program off to Rousing Start in 9th Year



Bethany Bowles



Dan Voss

By Bethany Bowles and Dan Voss
Co-Managers
STC Orlando Mentoring Program (M&Ms)

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OPERATION 9-9-9 has begun! Our STC chapter has launched the 9th successful year of its mentoring program with 9 mentors and 9 mentees joining in a "get-to-know-you" kick-off meeting at Painted by Hue in Waterford Lakes on September 29. Everyone had the opportunity to

paint his/her own ceramics as well as to partake in refreshments that included hand-made sandwiches, snacks, soft drinks, cake, and, of course, M&M's.

For those who are less artistically inclined, it was an opportunity to step outside of their box and try something new! And, with one notable exception, the results were quite impressive.

The mentors and mentees learned who their partners would be for this year's program (see box). Based on the steady "buzz" of conversation amidst the flying paintbrushes, the "M&M's" wasted no time getting started on establishing goals, objectives, and activities for their mentoring relationships, which will run through May 2012.

The mentoring program, pairing professionals in the STC Orlando Chapter with technical communication students at UCF, has had a highly successful legacy since its inception in 2003. The model for a number of other successful mentoring programs in the Society, including a program partnering the STC-France Chapter with the University of Paris, the Orlando mentoring program—co-sponsored by the STC-Orlando Chapter and Future Technical Communicators (FTC) at UCF—has been instrumental in sustaining and enriching the dynamic partnership with the university that has been a major factor in making our chapter an acknowledged leader in the Society.

In its 9 years, the program has nurtured 70 mentor/mentee ("M&M") relationships, many of which have blossomed into long-term professional relationships and friendships. Mentees have received valuable assistance in job search and placement, skills development, project management, big-company "politics," and many other areas of endeavor. Mentors have had the immense personal satisfaction of helping new technical communicators as they enter our profession.

"Perhaps most gratifying is the fact that several former mentees have gone on to serve as mentors," observed Dan Voss, who, with Bethany Bowles, co-manages this year's program. "That plus the fact that Bethany has taught me how to use Facebook. Not how to paint coffee mugs, unfortunately, but one out of two isn't bad."

In past years, the mentor and mentees communication was tracked through contact logs, but this year they have been put aside in favor of Facebook. The new STC/FTC

Mentorship group on Facebook is a great social networking tool which enables the M&M's to share their progress in an interactive page. Rachael Blankenbecklor has already proudly proclaimed to our Facebook group, "I have a meeting planned for Friday with my mentor and we're looking to go big on this project perhaps! Our first endeavor is to possibly make a short presentation for our local STC chapter about the MySTC website."

Inspired by the variety of suggested activities, largely contributed by last year's program coordinator, Patricia Cruz, several M&M pairs have already gotten down to work (see box below).



M&M Bonding Moments

- Review a technical book or guide for *Memo to Members* newsletter
- Oversee the production of an FTC newsletter: gather, edit, and insert articles into FTC newsletter template; create PDF
- Preview the upcoming STC Annual Conference by highlighting a presentation being done by local members (for *Memo to Members* and FTC newsletters)
- Develop flyer and press release to promote the joint STC/FTC meeting in January
- Create a short, fun article for *Memo to Members* that teaches a grammar and/or mechanics point – creative formatting encouraged!
- Judge the STC High School Writing Competition: Mentor and Mentee will judge separately, then reflect on experience in a short article for *Memo to Members* and FTC newsletters
- Profile a Central Florida technical writing employer in a short article for *Memo to Members* and FTC newsletters
- Arrange a job-shadowing visit for the mentee to learn more about the workplace
- Work together to create a portfolio for the mentee to use when job-hunting
- Revise the FTC constitution bylaws to include new events and practices
- Write a short review of one or more Web sites that would interest or help readers of *Memo to Members* and FTC newsletters

For example, Rachael Blankenbecklor and Erika Higgins are undertaking an ambitious project: developing a user tutorial for the new MySTC web platform—the need for which has already been identified at the Society level. Debra Johnson and Jessica Campbell have already arranged a job shadowing.

In order to encourage the M&M's to post on the Facebook group, Bethany proposed a contest. The first mentor/mentee pair to post on Facebook what project from the M&M Bonding page they are working on, and then show proof of completion, will become the proud owners of an M&M mug, compliments of Gail Lippincott. Confident in the success of her project with her mentee, Erika Higgins already issued a challenge: "Try to keep up with us fellow M&Ms. The mug is ours."

OPERATION 9-9-9: Success!!!

The Line-Up: This Year's M&M's

- ☞ Rachael Blankenbecklor and Erika Higgins
- ☞ Jessica Campbell and Debra Johnson
- ☞ Jennifer Blackwell and Mark Wray
- ☞ Aidan Hitchingham and Mary Burns
- ☞ Rashelle Oberle and Diane Heald
- ☞ Steven Harbor and David Coverston

- ☒ Zachary Sawyer and W.C. Wiese
- ☒ Brittney Adams and Alex Garcia
- ☒ Bethany Bowles and Dan Voss

Program managers: Bethany Bowles and Dan Voss

Meet the Mentors and Mentees



Alex Garcia and Brittney Adams discuss their common love of Edgar Allan Poe.



Dan Voss and Bethany Bowles benefit from the artistic talents of Rachael Blankenbecklor in the absence of her mentor, Erika Higgins.



David Coverston and Steven Harbor work on their pottery while getting to know each other.



Diane Heald and Rashelle Oberle manage to look wonderfully photogenic while painting their pieces.



Mary Burns shares some surprising information with her mentee, Aidan Hitchingham.



Debra Johnson and Jessica Campbell making some ambitious choices in their painting that led to beautiful results.



Zach Sawyer gives a thumbs-up while his piece is drying, as his mentor W.C. Wiese shares some words of wisdom.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

STC LINKS

- [STC Headquarters](#)
- [STC Orlando chapter](#)
- [STC Palm Beaches chapter](#)
- [STC SpaceTech chapter](#)
- [STC Suncoast chapter](#)

EMPLOYMENT

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

Our Chapter web store is now open!
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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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Click on the above image to go to Amazon.com. A percentage of your purchase is rebated to the Orlando Chapter.

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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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10,617 views

