

# WriteUp

Volume 16, Number 4

<http://stc.org.region3/sun/www>

July/August 1999



These tri-colored 100% cotton shirts are embroidered with the STC Suncoast chapter logo and are \$30.00 including tax.

To order a shirt, contact Karen Bachmann at [Karen.Bachmann@trcinc.com](mailto:Karen.Bachmann@trcinc.com).

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## The History of the FTCC

By Mark Hanigan, STC First Vice President  
Senior Member, Suncoast Chapter

*Editor's Note: This is part one of two parts in the History of the FTCC. Mark Hanigan wrote this article largely from memory. While he is not sure of the details, he is quite sure of the essence. Unfortunately, the whereabouts of two of the key players—Leah Gravely and Joyce Bernotas—is unknown. If you know the whereabouts of these folks or anyone else who was part of the competition process back then, please let Mark or me know.*

The Society for Technical Communication is an organization of almost 150 chapters, each with its own personality. A chapter's members and the things they do as a chapter define this personality for each. The Florida Technical Communication Competition (FTCC), which is actually a Suncoast Chapter-led function for all of the Florida chapters, is an integral component of our chapter's personality.

But, did you ever wonder how it came about that we put on the FTCC year in and year out? Did we just one day decide to put on a statewide publications and art competition (online was not even conceived at this time)?

To put it simply, the answer is no. The FTCC evolved through a series of events; the first of these occurring some fifteen years ago in 1984. There existed a fledgling Suncoast Chapter with a membership of somewhere between 15 and 20. At that time, the lion's share of the membership worked at Paradyne in Largo.

In the Suncoast chapter's second year, several of its members heard about the

STC competition process. The two-tiered mechanism existed then as it does today—you have to enter and win at a local or regional competition to qualify for entry at the international level. (Back then, international meant the United States and Canada!)

Some Suncoast Chapter members thought that they had "the right stuff" to enter a competition. Five members sought out the nearest local competition, which turned out to be East Tennessee, centered in Knoxville/Oak Ridge. Atlanta did not even have a competition back then; their chapter was a shadow at under 100 members of the 700 plus members they have today. (The Atlanta chapter's growth surge happened in 1991 when the city hosted the Annual Conference.)

Four of the five Suncoast chapter entries earned awards, including three Distinguished. Of course, those three went on to the International Competition (which, I think, was in Seattle.) None won at that level, but Suncoast Chapter nevertheless had "competition fever."

Over the next two years, not much happened. A few members entered the East Tennessee competition in each of those years, but not with the same success as that first year. By 1986, the chapter had grown to over 25, and the idea was being kicked around for the Suncoast Chapter to hold its own competition.

*continued on page 7*

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## Letter from the Editor

Dear Members,

As some of you already know, a longtime Suncoast chapter member, Cathy Knapp, was injured in an auto accident on May 22. This was a serious accident, and Cathy suffered 3 skull fractures and other injuries. With the love and support of her family and friends, Cathy is continuing to recover.

Our chapter wanted to let Cathy and her family know that our thoughts are with them. We collected donations at our June meeting and bought the Knapp family gift certificates for local restaurants. As we all know, cooking is the last thing on anyone's mind when a loved one is in the hospital.

For those who would like to contact Cathy, the family has requested that you send cards only. She has been overwhelmed with gifts, and while they greatly appreciate your generosity, there is limited space in Cathy's hospital room. Cathy Knapp  
915 S. Orleans Ave.  
Tampa, FL 36706-2940



Photo by Paul Gerle, Suncoast Chapter

Melissa Lamb shows off her prize.

On a lighter note, I wanted to mention that our meetings are more than just a chance to learn new technologies and network with fellow technical communicators. You can also win cool prizes. Melissa Lamb (who will probably smack me for including this picture) won the door prize of an Avery Greeting Card Package at our June Chapter Planning meeting. So come on out to our meetings to learn new things, meet great people, and win neat stuff!

Who you callin'  
a freak?

## Newsletter Quote

Compliments of Nancy Reach

Newspaper reporters and technical writers are trained to reveal almost nothing about themselves in their writing. This makes them freaks in the world of writers, since almost all of the other ink-stained wretches in the world reveal a lot about themselves to the reader.

– Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.



Orlando STC chapter's President, Lori Corbett displays her unique style at the June Suncoast chapter meeting.

Photo by Paul Gerle, Suncoast Chapter



## How to Break into Help Consulting

By Jim Sands, Chicago Chapter

Help 101 offers practical tips and educational resources for online Help developers. This column is a regular feature of both WriteUp and Byline, the newsletter of the Chicago chapter.

**Q. I am an independent technical writer. I recently took a RoboHELP class but have no paid experience. How do I break into Help consulting?**

**A.** This is a common question regarding all fields of endeavor. How do I get a job when I have training, but no experience? I would take the following steps:

1. Showcase your new Help authoring skills by producing your resume and portfolio as an online Help file. Produce both a Windows and a HTML Help version. Include a table of contents and an index. Keep it simple, consistent and easy to navigate. Show it to a few colleagues and get their feedback. This simple promotional tool shows a potential client that you have the basic skills to do what you have learned in class. Reproduce the Help files on a CD or diskette and keep them with your portfolio.
2. Attend meetings of your local STC Independent Consulting Special Interest Group. If your chapter does not have one, talk to the chapter president about starting one. This is an excellent place to meet other independent consultants and to network.
3. If your chapter has a Directory of Independent Consultants, it should list RoboHELP specialists. Again, if your chapter does not have a directory, volunteer to help create one. Many consultants hire subcontractors, or know of someone who does. Practice your networking skills and make some contacts. Several of these consultants will probably know of projects that are currently looking for Help authors.
4. If necessary, land your first Help project with one of the many consulting firms in your local area

that subcontract Help authors. Again, networking with STC consultants will produce the names of several of these firms. Above all, don't oversell yourself. Let potential clients know that you are new to Help authoring. Price your services on the conservative side for the first few clients you work with. Keep in touch with other Help consultants as you progress forward, and before you know it, you'll be a Help consulting veteran.

### Want more information?

- *Consulting 101*. 1995. ASTD. ISBN 1-56286-019-4
- *Making Money in Technical Writing*. 1998. Macmillan USA. ISBN 0-02-861883-1
- *The Complete Guide to Consulting Success*. 1997. Upstart Publishing. ISBN 1-57410-055-6.

## Technical Writing Humor

### The Top 10 Sayings We'd Like to See on Office Inspirational Posters

10. When the going gets tough, the tough take a coffee break.
9. You pretend to work, and we'll pretend to pay you.
8. Artificial Intelligence is no match for Natural Stupidity.
7. A person who smiles in the face of adversity probably has a scapegoat.
6. Hang in there, retirement is only thirty years away.
5. Never put off until tomorrow what you can avoid altogether.
4. TEAMWORK means never having to take all the blame yourself.
3. The beatings will continue until morale improves.
2. We put the "K" in kwality.
1. If you can stay calm while all around you is chaos, you probably haven't completely understood the situation.



Clip art compliments of Mark Hanigan and ArtToday® (www.arttoday.com)

If it's really a supercomputer, how come the bullets don't bounce off when I shoot it?

— *The Covert Comic*  
from the *A Gadzillion Things to Think About* web site at  
<http://members.xoom.com/Gadzillion/Think.htm>

## Society Page

With more than 23,000 members and 142 chapters, the Society for Technical Communication (STC)—a nonprofit educational organization—is the largest professional society in the world dedicated to the advancement of the theory and practice of technical communication.

For more information, contact the Society office:

**901 N. Stuart Street  
Arlington, VA 22203-1854  
703-522-4114**

<http://www.stc-va.org>

Facts about the Society for Technical Communication are from STC publications and the Society's Web page.

### STC Welcomes New Chapter

At STC's 46th Annual Conference, the Society announced the formation of STC's new India chapter. The India chapter is part of region 6 and currently includes fifteen members. The India chapter is STC's twentieth chapter outside the United States. The Society has 143 chapters worldwide.

*From the July/August 1999 issue of STC Tieline, the Society leaders' newsletter*



## President's Message

By Eileen McPartland, Suncoast Chapter President

Rocky Point. The meeting will begin at 6:30PM and will be held in the business room. We are looking to fill large and small volunteer positions. For more information, please contact Mark Hanigan at [mark.hanigan@us.pwcglobal.com](mailto:mark.hanigan@us.pwcglobal.com) or 813-348-7410; Victor Chapel at [vachapel@yahoo.com](mailto:vachapel@yahoo.com); or Paul Butt at [paulbutt@email.msn.com](mailto:paulbutt@email.msn.com). Everyone is encouraged to attend this

**FTCC.** This has been the latest buzzword among the administrative council. For those of you who do not know, FTCC is the Florida Technical Communication Competition. The Suncoast chapter traditionally hosts this technical communication competition for the entire state of Florida, and has consequently become well known throughout the national society.

Recently, an announcement was posted on the Suncoast listserv that stated the competition had been canceled. We could not fill all the volunteer positions necessary to host a competition. Co-hosting the Orlando conference this May consumed many of our usual volunteers. Despite these complications, the administrative council is reconsidering this decision and is in the process of coordinating a plan to reinstate this year's competition.

An organizational meeting is scheduled for July 20<sup>th</sup> at Post

*An FTCC  
organizational  
meeting is  
scheduled for July  
20th at Post Rocky  
Point.*

meeting to volunteer or just to learn about the FTCC.

I would like to stress the importance of participating in STC. You may be surprised how much you can benefit from being involved in

this organization. So come out to the meetings, volunteer for FTCC, join the mentor program, and join us in the fun!

*Eileen McPartland*

## Featured Web Site

Submitted by Geri Lou Ciotoli, Suncoast Chapter

<http://flywrite.net/thewriteplace/>

If you'd like a cyber-home free of advertisements and sales pander, check out The Write Place @ Flywrite.net. This amusing website is a labor of love offered by self-described technical writing addict Dawn Lindley. Check out the fun area (<http://flywrite.net/thewriteplace/fun>) to get a chuckle—or relax and learn with a stroll through the Art of Indexing Gallery (<http://flywrite.net/thewriteplace/welcome/index>). With nearly a thousand technical writing links, if you don't find what you need on site, there are plenty of interesting jumping off places.

# Region 3 Director-Sponsor's Report

By Michelle Ratcliffe, Suncoast Chapter

Congratulations again to all of the chapters in our region who were recognized by the Board of Directors for their outstanding accomplishments over this past year! Here is a summary of the actions taken during the May, 1999 Board of Directors meeting in Cincinnati, Ohio.

## Awarded four 1999 STC Chapter Achievement Awards:

Northern Gulf Coast, under 40 members (Region 3)  
Suncoast, 76-150 members (Region 3)  
Southwestern Ohio, 151-300 members (Region 4)  
Atlanta, More than 300 members (Region 3)

## Awarded three 1999 Student Chapter Achievement Awards:

New Mexico Tech and Cedarville College, Under 20 members (student)  
Bowling Green, Over 20 members (student)

## Awarded these 1999 STC Pacesetter Awards:

Southwestern Ontario, Region 1  
Carolina, Region 2  
TransAlpine, Region 3  
Mercer University (Student), Region 3  
Kentuckiana, Region 4  
No. IL Univ. (Student), Region 4  
Southern Arizona, Region 5  
OK State Univ. (Student), Region 5  
Eastern Iowa, Region 6  
Willamette Valley, Region 7  
Montana Tech (Student), Region 7  
East Bay, Region 8

**Amended** Article III, Section 10 C. of the STC Bylaws as follows: "Any senior member of the Society may retire in grade at 50 percent

reduction in annual dues provided the member (1) has been a member in good standing for ten or more years prior to retirement and is (2) either sixty years old or older, or medically retired."

**Approved** this measure which will be added to the STC logo guidelines:

**RESOLVED:** Third-party (non-STC) Web sites may display the STC logo so long as it is used exclusively as a "hot link" to the URL of the STC Web site."

**Approved** the STC Strategic Plan for 1999-2004.

**Approved** a merit grant of \$3,000 USD to the Toronto chapter for the development of a program to attract members from local technical writing courses at community colleges.

**Approved** a merit grant of \$3,000 USD to help establish the Midsouth chapter's planned scholarship in professional communication at the University of Memphis.

**Approved** a merit grant of \$2,000 USD to the Central Ohio chapter to support and secure its scholarship fund.

**Approved** a merit grant of \$1,500 USD for the Bowling Green State University student chapter to support and secure its scholarship fund.

**Approved**, pending verification of its petitioners, the formation of the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire student chapter and a start-up grant of \$150 USD.

**Approved** a merit grant of \$3,000 USD for the Canada West Coast chapter to be applied to a \$3000 CDN scholarship fund established in memory of Julia Broderick.

Approved a research grant proposal in the amount of \$10,000 USD to Michael Steedhouder of The University of Twente (The Nether-

lands) on "Problems of Form Fillers: Paper and Electronic Forms."

**Tentatively** approved a research grant proposal in the amount of \$10,000 USD to Judith Ramey of the University of Washington on "Building a Communication Model for Web Design," subject to revised proposal.

**Tentatively** approved a research grant proposal in the amount of \$10,000 USD to Wendy Winn of Clemson University on "The Rhetorical Power of Design Elements on E-Commerce Web Sites: A Case Study," subject to revised proposal. Changed the site of the 2004 STC Annual Conference from Philadelphia to Baltimore as dates were not available in May in 2004.

## Interim Board Actions

On February 18, 1999, approved the formation of the TransAlpine chapter of STC and authorized a startup grant of \$350 USD.

On April 22, 1999, approved the formation of the India chapter of STC and authorized a startup grant of \$350 USD.

The next Board of Directors meeting is September 16-18, 1999 in Hilton Head, SC. Since the meeting is in our region, it is a great opportunity to see the action first hand.





## Membership Update

By Melissa Lamb  
Suncoast Chapter  
Membership Manager

### New Members

Danielle C. Baars  
Charles Bruce Ford, III  
Keith A. Jackson  
Adrienne M. Kovacs  
Regina M. Morrisey  
Nancy M. O'Connor

### Transferring Members

Jennifer E. Burnham  
Mary Joan Cox  
Michael E. Mills

A warm welcome to all our new and transferring members. We're glad you're part of the Suncoast Chapter.

### Address Changes

If you have an address change, please send your new information to the Database Manager, Denise Passmore at [woodstuck@earthlink.net](mailto:woodstuck@earthlink.net) and send your new address to the Society at [www.stc-va.org/](http://www.stc-va.org/).

## June Chapter Planning Meeting

By Mary Lauby, Suncoast Chapter

This June marked our annual chapter planning meeting. The meeting was held at TECO in downtown Tampa. Each table had a planning theme. There was the Publicity table, the Annual Conference table, and the Newsletter to name a few.

(I was lucky enough to have Mark Hanigan sit at my table (the Newsletter) and offer to write a few articles for me!)

We recognized Karen Bachmann, our past president, with a Presidential Award to thank her for her hard work and dedication to the Suncoast Chapter. Karen has been instrumental in our chapter for many years.

A definite bonus to this meeting was all the free stuff! Representatives from Avery®, BT Office Products International, Inc., and Sanford came out to tell us about

their products and hand out free samples. Loads of samples, that is.

The Avery representative gave an informative and interesting presentation on the various office products Avery offers. Surprisingly, they make more than just labels. We saw

various demos within the presentation, on how to use Avery's software with Microsoft applications.

The Sanford representative introduced their different pens and pencils and explained the research and testing that goes into their

products. When he distributed bags of assorted pens and markers around the room, we looked like a bunch of kids on Christmas Day. We kept exclaiming to each other how nice all the pens and markers were.

The BT Office Products representative ended the evening with a wonderfully short presentation and passed out, yep, you guessed it, even more stuff. A big box full of office product samples. What a treat!



(left to right) Karen Bachmann, the previous Suncoast chapter president, accepting her award from Eileen McPartland, current chapter president.

Photo by Paul Gerle, Suncoast Chapter

## Notes from the Administrative Council Retreat

Reported by Lore Eargle, Suncoast Chapter Secretary

The following bulleted list items summarize a few topics covered in the Administrative Council Retreat held on June 26 at Post Rocky Point:

- The council voted their appreciation for Bob's service as treasurer over the past two years.
- Sunny Zengler is working on publicity for our chapter. The council voted to give her a budget of \$100 for publicity.
- Possible future meeting topics discussed included stress and time management, editing skills, and indexing.

# 47<sup>th</sup> Annual STC Conference Support Committee

## By Nancy Reach, Suncoast Chapter

Members from the Orlando and Suncoast chapters have joined forces to become the 47<sup>th</sup> Annual STC Conference support committee. Read on to meet the committee members:

### Conference Support Manager Lori Corbett, Orlando chapter

Lori recruited the support committee and is responsible for identifying and procuring the program tour options that are offered during the conference. She is also the primary contact to the STC Society office for all conference-related issues. Lori is a technical writer at Triton Network Systems, Inc., a provider of broadband, fixed, wireless network products.

### Corporate Support Manager

### FTCC...Continued from page 1

At this time, Scott Havens was elected to the first of the two years he would serve as president. Members of his Administrative Council included Vice President Beth Terlip and WriteUp newsletter editor Leah Gravely. It was Beth's dream to get a publication and art competition off the ground that year for Suncoast Chapter.

Both Beth and Leah wore multiple "hats" that year. (Sounds familiar doesn't it?) Beth handled the call for entries and receipt of the entries. They both recruited judges and served as judges for the 20-odd entries that were received.

Leah coordinated the awards banquet, which was held a Mexican-style banquet facility. The name escapes me, but it was the location of The Turtle Club by the St. Petersburg-Clearwater International Airport. The banquet was a huge success; with over 35 in attendance, it

### Barbara Odom, Orlando chapter

Barbara is responsible for obtaining donations from both local and national corporations for student attendance grants, publicity, and hospitality activities at the conference.

If you think your company might be interested in donating funds or gifts in exchange for some great publicity, please contact her at [bcodom@aol.com](mailto:bcodom@aol.com). Barbara is a freelance technical writer in Orlando.

### Conference Treasurer W.C. Wiese, Orlando chapter

W.C. is responsible for coordinating reimbursements with the STC Society office and supporting implementation of contractual agreements needed by the Society office.

was the largest turnout for any STC Suncoast Chapter event up to that time.

Over the next four years, the chapter struggled to survive. There were a couple of years where it appeared we might go under. (It is the opinion of this writer that Scott Havens practically single-handedly saved the chapter from demise in 1987; but that's another story!)

Nevertheless, during this time, we continued to put on our humble little competition. It was one of the traditions on which we held to keep our chapter together. Each year was about the same: we had 20 or so entries, of which one or two made it to the International Competition.

We held our annual banquet, which usually resulted in the biggest turnout of the year. We held on and eventually regained our momentum. Chapter growth took us over the 50-member threshold, a goal of then-

W. C. is senior communications supervisor at Lockheed Martin Electronics & Missiles.

### Publicity Manager Nancy Reach, Suncoast chapter

Nancy is managing the teams that develop the 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference website and the newsletters that are delivered daily at the conference. Nancy is also responsible for submitting articles to chapter newsletters and the InterCom. Nancy is a lead technical writer at Nielsen Media Research, the TV ratings company.



Stephanie Bergeron spreads the news about Orlando 2000.

Photo by Bob Bennett, Suncoast Chapter

president Joyce Bernotas.

By 1992, there were seven chapters in Florida: North-Central Florida (Gainesville and Jacksonville—there was no First Coast Chapter then), Space Coast, FIT Student Chapter, Palm Beaches, Everglades (on the verge of folding, even though it was, at the time, the oldest and largest chapter in the state), Orlando, and Suncoast. Soon the leadership this group collected would form a body known as the Florida President's Council. It is from this body and from the roots of the Suncoast Chapter Publications and Art Competition that the FTCC was spawned. But, let me tell you the rest of the story in the next issue of the *WriteUp*. (Look for Part 2 in the Sept/Oct 1999 issue.)

Mary Lauby, **WriteUp** Editor  
3660 E. Bay Drive #523  
Largo, Florida 33771

**STC** society for technical communication

### Mission Statement

To improve the quality and effectiveness  
of technical communication  
for audiences worldwide.

# WriteUp

<http://stc.org.region3/sun/www>

*Kristie Kuczej, Online Edition*

*Address Correction Requested*

**First Class Mail**

## Calendar of Events

*Subject to Change*



**August 5 August Chapter Meeting**  
Holiday Inn SunSpree Resort, St Petersburg  
6:30 PM

**September 2 September Chapter Meeting**  
Steak and Ale on US 19, Clearwater  
6:30 PM

**October 7 Annual Membership Meeting**  
TECO Plaza, Downtown Tampa  
6:30 PM  
This meeting is FREE! Make sure to bring your  
coworkers and friends interested in STC.

## Copy Deadline for Next Issue: September 10

### Purpose

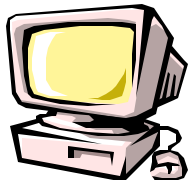
WriteUP communicates chapter and Society news six times per year for the benefit of members and friends of the Suncoast Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication (STC).

### Submissions

Meeting writeups, feature articles, and software/book reviews are encouraged (100-700 words). Preferred formats include MS Word e-mail attachment or text in the body of your e-mail message.

### Reprints

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**<http://stc.org/region3/sun/www>**  
for updates about STC conferences,  
chapter meeting details, and job listings.