

WriteUp

Volume 16, Number 6

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

Nov/Dec 1999

Logos Unveiled at Chapter Meeting

By Bill Graham, Suncoast Chapter Treasurer

FTCC Judging Consensus Day

Yes, it's more news about the FTCC!

And you thought you had heard the last of it. Not a chance. This spectacular competition is a tradition in our society. Read all about it on page 7.

During the November meeting, the Suncoast chapter had the privilege of viewing Tim Parmentier's art. Tim is a freelance graphic artist. In his latest project, Tim is preparing a mural for one of the ships in the Royal Caribbean Cruise Line.

Tim passed around several samples to show us the quality and nature of his work. He also discussed life as a freelance graphic artist. While Tim was with us, he also presented three new designs for a chapter logo.

All of the logos were impressive, and you can view them below. Remember, however, that the chapter has not voted to adopt a new logo. We just wanted to show you what we saw.

When Tim finished speaking, Victor Chapel took over and discussed several web graphic formats. The graphic formats included JPEG (good for pictures), GIF (good for artwork), and a new format called PNG (Portable Network Graphic).

GIF, and the less common TIFF, use a patented compression algorithm called LZW, which is owned by Unisys. Unisys has tried to charge LZW

licensing fees. Therefore, companies that use GIFs would have to pay. Victor said that a group of developers created PNG to be totally free, with all the functions of GIF. They are also working on an animation-specific format known as MNG. For more information visit <http://graphicswiz.com/png/>.

The November meeting also broke new ground in the way we charge admission. Students may now attend our meetings at half price. A large group of students from USF joined us this time, and we were pleased to have them with us. Students are welcome and encouraged to attend all of our meetings. To qualify as a student, one must be registered for a minimum of two courses during the semester in which the meeting takes place.

Finally, everyone at the meeting was fortunate enough to eat free of charge. We started to collect admission at the beginning of the meeting, but decided to give everyone a full refund at the end. Does this happen regularly? Is this a new trend? No. We just felt a little generous that evening. That probably will not happen again any time soon. Still, we hope you enjoyed it. Happy Holidays!

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Letter from the Editor



Year in Review

This past year has been a busy one for the Suncoast chapter. Under Eileen McPartland's guidance, we kicked off the Suncoast Chapter Mentor Program. Various members teamed up with student chapter members from USF to share valuable lessons and life experiences. And don't forget about the FTCC and the preparation for the annual conference in Orlando in May of 2000. We've all been busy!

Well, on a different note, I wanted to tell you all that I'm proud to be a part of this great organization that's reaching out across the world to share ideas and information on communication and technology. As a newsletter editor, I receive newsletters from chapters all across the nation. It's interesting to see what chapters in other states are doing. Recently, I received the newsletter **i-contact** from the STC chapter in Israel and I found it very impressive. I didn't even know we had a chapter in Israel!

Recently, I visited the main Web site (www.stc-va.org) to see what other exotic chapters exist. We have chapters in the following locations: Austria, Belgium, France, India, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, Sweden, Taiwan, the United Kingdom, and nine chapters in Canada. I think it's fascinating that the Society for Technical Communication has reached almost all corners of the globe.

If you're wondering how you can learn about those chapters in other countries, definitely make an effort to attend the annual conference this year. The conference provides the perfect opportunity to meet members from all over the world. So mark May 21-24 on your calendars.

Oh, and thanks to everyone who has written an article, suggested a quote, or submitted a Web site to feature. Keep it coming!

Mary Lauby



Newsletter Quote

Submitted by Stephanie Bergeron,
Suncoast Chapter

"When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less."

"The question is," said Alice, "whether you *can* make words mean so many different things."

"The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master—that's all."

"Through the Looking Glass" by Lewis Carroll



Adding User Comments to Help Systems

By Jim Sands, Chicago Chapter

Windows Help allows users to add customized comments to your production Help files through the Annotation feature. You can create an annotation to any Help topic using a Notepad text entry dialog, and then store the results on your local drive or a network server. Once the annotations are created in an .ANN file, they can be accessed at any time by all Help users. This allows customization of your Help to include procedures specific to individual departments, software workarounds, etc. Help authors can even use this feature to document the changes required in topics when testing their own Help. However, before promoting the use of this feature, there are a few things to keep in mind.

First, you should always store the .ANN file in the same folder as the

Help files. If you are placing it on a network drive, you may want to make it a read-only file, to prevent users from modifying each other's comments. Even if the network file is read-only, individual users can still create their own annotation file on their local drive.

Secondly, annotations should be used on software that is not apt to be changed frequently. Annotations are created in a relative file, which links the user comments to existing Help topic names. If you are going to be modifying the Help system every month because of software changes, many of the existing annotations will be lost when you add, modify, or delete Help topic names. This can be frustrating for your users, when they find out that all of their valuable comments were lost with the last software update. If

your software (and your Help) changes frequently, you may want to consider using hyperlinks in your Help that link to separate procedural documents, instead of annotations.

Want more information?

Designing Windows 95 Help. 1996. Que Corporation. ISBN 0-7897-0362-9.

Developing Online Help for Windows 95 Help. 1996. Thomson Press. ISBN 185032-211-2.

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.

Technical Writing Humor—Meeting BINGO



Do you keep falling asleep in meetings?

Here's something to change all of that...**Meeting BINGO!**

How to play: Simply check off five words in one meeting and shout out "BINGO!" It's that easy!

Bingo words and phrases:

- SYNERGY
- TAKE THAT OFFLINE
- STRATEGIC FIT
- AT THE END OF THE DAY
- GAP ANALYSIS
- BEST PRACTICE
- THE BOTTOM LINE
- CORE BUSINESS
- LESSONS LEARNED
- TOUCH BASE
- REVISIT
- GAME PLAN
- BANDWIDTH
- HARDBALL
- OUT OF THE LOOP
- GO THE EXTRA MILE
- BENCHMARK
- THE BIG PICTURE
- VALUE-ADDED
- MOVERS AND SHAKERS
- BALL PARK
- PROACTIVE, NOT REACTIVE
- WIN-WIN SITUATION
- THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX
- FAST TRACK
- EMPOWER EMPLOYEES
- NO BLAME
- STRETCH THE ENVELOPE
- KNOWLEDGE BASE
- RESULTS-DRIVEN
- TOTAL QUALITY
- SLIPPERY SLOPE

- MINDSET
- PUT THIS ONE TO BED
- CLIENT-FOCUSED
- QUALITY-DRIVEN
- MOVE THE GOAL POST

Testimonials from players:

"I had only been in the meeting for five minutes when I yelled Bingo."

"My attention span at meetings has improved dramatically."

"I feel that the game has enhanced the overall quality of meetings per se on a quid pro quo basis."

From the GrammarLady.com Newsletter, Vol.1, Oct. 25, 1999, Issue 14

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.

Competitions

The Society for Technical Communication provides a variety of programs to recognize members and other technical communication professionals at the Society and chapter levels. These programs fall into four major categories: individual achievement competitions; chapter and Society achievement competitions; grants and scholarships; and professional recognition programs. Individuals, chapters, and special interest research groups are honored annually for their achievements in the technical communication field through these programs and competitions.



President's Message

By Eileen McPartland, Suncoast Chapter President

COMe join the Suncoast chapter as we mingle and **MUN**ch with friends and **Col**leagues **AT** our **DE**cember social. This is a time for you to ask any questions you may have about software, find out what other people do on a daily basis, meet with your mentor, or just relax and socialize with new or old friends. Let's unite for this festive holiday season and expand our network. The more great people we have, the more educated we are as an organization!

1999 has been a fantastic year for the Suncoast chapter. We kicked off the year winning the chapter achievement award, had a tremendous turnout for the Florida Technical Communication Competition (FTCC), had numerous high caliber speakers, launched the mentor pro-

gram (which has been an extreme success), and achieved many more accomplishments. I'm excited to see what we can do in the year 2000.

Next year we can look forward to the International conference in Orlando, many more high caliber speakers (look for Neil Perlin this February), another successful year of the Florida Technical Communication Competition, continued mentoring all around, and much more. Is the year 2000 the year for you to become more involved in the organization?

There are many ways you can volunteer. Whether it's working the door at a meeting or running for an officer position, you can make a difference. Every person counts, so join us in our continued success.

Eileen McPartland

Featured Web Site

TechWeb: The IT Network
TechEncyclopedia

www.techweb.com/encyclopedia/

This site contains more than 13,000 definitions of computer terms and concepts. It is a service of CMPnet and the Computer Language Company, Inc. You can search for a specific word or term, or you can get a random definition.

This site also includes links to other pages, such as the TechWeb News site for the latest headlines in computer technology. You can even copy the HTML code and put TechEncyclopedia searching capability on your Web site. It includes instructions for using CMPnet search boxes and gives you the simple steps to insert the forms for these searches on your site. In addition to the TechEncyclopedia search box, you can choose from CMPnet's selection of search boxes to put on your site.



Region 3 Director-Sponsor's Report

By Michelle Ratcliffe, Suncoast Chapter



Fall Board Report

Neither rain, nor snow, nor dark of night ... but Floyd, that's another story! Thanks to hurricane Floyd, STC had its first "virtual Board meeting" this fall.

That's right! We may not have executed business in the environment we had planned – we were supposed to meet on the South Carolina coast on the same day that Floyd came through – but we still were able to conduct business.

These are some of the decisions made at the 1999 STC Fall Board of Directors meeting.

The FY 2000 budget was approved. With expected income of \$4,574,500 USD, our budgeted surplus for the year is \$12,019 USD.

The board approved a new dues structure effective January 1, 2000. Regular member dues will be \$110 USD. Student member dues will be \$45 USD.

Five merit grant and loan applications were approved:

- The Atlanta chapter's \$3,000 USD grant will help establish their scholarship program.
- The Chicago chapter's \$1,000 USD loan will support a series of technical training programs, and its \$2,000 USD grant will be used to start a public relations program.
- The Wisconsin chapter's \$3,000 USD grant will be used to develop and expand their mentorship program.

- The Aloha and Los Angeles chapters' multi-chapter \$6,000 USD loan will be used for the joint Region 7/Region 8 Pan-Pacific Conference to be held in October 2000.

The External Relations Committee presented a two-year plan that will develop and roll out the STC brand. The first step in this plan will be to publish the *Request for Proposals (RFP) for Brand Development*, which was reviewed and approved by the Board.

The vendor selected for this phase of the plan will conduct branding research – interviewing and surveying various STC audiences – and work with a team representing all aspects of the Society to determine preliminary brand components and tools. At the May 2000 Board meeting, the brand and tools will be presented to the Board for approval.

Keep your eyes open for the RFP, which will be posted on www.stc-va.org in October.

The guidelines for the Teaching Fellowship for Practicing Professionals was approved. Under this new program, which is similar to the existing Faculty Internship Grant Program, the Society may award stipends to enable practicing professionals in the field of technical communication to serve as adjunct or visiting faculty in colleges and universities. If you are interested in learning more about this program, the guidelines will be posted on www.stc-va.org in October.

Starting in the year 2000–2001, an online category will be added to the existing hard copy category for the

International Student Technical Writing Competition.

Many committee management appointments were approved. Included in these appointments are the managers of the External Relations committees:

Donna Sakson (Puget Sound), Corporate Identity

Amy Dolcourt (Los Angeles), Community Outreach

Jeff Staples (Houston), Public Relations Resources Network

Deborah Silvi (Houston), Corporate Support

Katherine Staples (Austin), 50th Anniversary

Dave Garrett (Rocky Mountain), Special Project – Promotional Booth

Mollye Barrett (Wisconsin), Special Project – Technical Communications Celebrations

Lottie Applewhite (North Carolina), Special Project – Journal Editor's Fellowship

The appointment of Charles Fisher (Washington, DC) as Technical Program Manager for the 49th Annual Conference in Nashville, Tennessee was approved.



Membership Update

By Melissa Lamb
Suncoast Chapter
Membership Manager

New Members for August

Gloria Cortes
Katrina Fay
Kimberly Morrow
Andrea Saroiu
Marni Scott

Transferring Member for August

Merle Metcalfe

Senior Members for September

Lynn Christensen
Jennifer Geaslen Henzmann
Phyllis Hunt

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.

Call for STC Newsletter Competition Judges

Judging in the newsletter competition is one of the most rewarding ways to participate in STC. Plus, judges for this competition will have an opportunity to evaluate some of STC's best chapter, student chapter, and SIG newsletters!

Checklist for 1999–2000 STC Newsletter Competition Judges

- Have you earned an award in an STC Newsletter Competition?
- Are you interested in evaluating design and editorial quality of STC newsletters?
- Are you available for judging during the month of February?

If you answered yes to these questions, the newsletter competition manager would like to hear from you!

Deadline for Applications

Please contact Helen Black by January 5, 2000. She'll send you a *Judge's Information Form* by e-mail, which requests information for assigning entries and for recognizing competition judges in the *STC Honors and Awards* brochure!

Contact Information

Helen Black, Manager
STC Newsletter Competition
hblack@gate.net
(314) 514-7347



SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Each year, STC offers scholarships to full-time graduate and undergraduate students pursuing careers in technical communication.

Fourteen awards of \$2,500 each will be granted for academic year 2000-2001.

Application deadline is February 12, 2000.

Application forms and instructions are available from the STC office:

901 N. Stuart Street, Suite 904
Arlington, VA 22203-1822
(703) 522-4114

Coming together at the FTCC Consensus Judging Day

By Mary Lauby, Suncoast Chapter

The FTCC Consensus Judging Day took place on Saturday, November 13, at the Knowledge Development Center (KDC) in Tampa. Victor Chapel and Mark Hanigan led the lively group in our judging activities. As a first-time judge, I was excited to experience the judging process, meet members from area chapters, and take part in this tradition of our chapter. I wanted to take this opportunity to recognize the people who made it happen.

The judges by chapter included:

First Coast

Allie Johnson
Lee Johnson
Jeanine McGuire

Orlando

Lori Corbett
Karen Lane
Gail Lippincott
Paula O'Brien
Sharyn Pierce
Gwen Thomas
W.C. Wiese
Dawn Woods



Who says judging is all work and no play? Marc Brooks (right) takes the opportunity to goof off with Victor Chapel.

Palm Beaches

Mike Rosenblum
Joan Smith

Space Tech

Linda Lee



Mark Hanigan gives Michelle Ratcliffe a big thank you kiss for helping out.

Suncoast

Marc Brooks
Paul Butt
Honorita Capell
Karin Carlan
Candace Cervenka
Geri Lou Ciotoli
Cindy Farris
Paul Gerle
Glen Gonzalez
Scott Havens
Matthew Holman
Lisa Kerce
Mary Lauby
John Kilroy
Melissa Lamb
Amy Lisk
Pete Matassa
Eileen McPartland
Kimberly Morrow
Denise Passmore
LaJuana Pruitt-Spaeth
Alesandro Ruriani
Marilyn Sedelmyer
Katherine Stark
Dina Stenz
Jeannie Wilson
Archer Zemmels

Volunteers

Carrie Campbell
Tracey-Ann Cockburn
Cicely Coney
Lore Eargle
Mary Greer
Michelle Ratcliffe

FTCC Committee

Victor Chapel, FTCC Co-chair
Paul Butt, FTCC Co-chair
Mark Hanigan, FTCC Co-chair
Tracey Bryant, Call for Entries
Archer Zemmels, Entries Receiving
Judy Reynolds, Printing
Laura McGrover, Banquet
Lou Martindale, Publicity
Scott Shea, Awards
Karen Bachmann, Correspondence
Joanna Cristalli, Database
Paul Gerle, Judges Trainer
Kristie Kuczej, Website



Paul Butt (left) continues to work as Dina Stenz and Archer Zemmels take a break to smile for the camera.

A big thank you to the great folks at KDC for letting us use the facility. I hope everyone enjoyed their FTCC judging experience.

Photographs by Mary Lauby

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



- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| December 2 | December Social
Clubhouse at Post Rocky Point Apartments, Tampa
6:30 PM |
| January 6 | January Chapter Meeting
Chapter topic and location to be announced.
6:30 PM |
| January 22 | FTCC Awards Banquet
Museum of Science and Industry (MOSI), Tampa
5 PM–10 PM |

Copy Deadline for Next Issue: January 7

Purpose

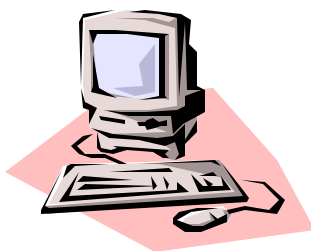
WriteUP communicates chapter and Society news six times per year for the benefit of members and friends of the Suncoast Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication (STC).

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.

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