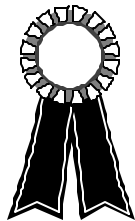


WriteUp

Volume 16, Number 3

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

May/June 1999



Suncoast Chapter does it again!

The Suncoast Chapter won the Chapter Achievement Award for Region 3. Read about this and other winners in Michelle Ratcliffe's Director-Sponsor Report on page 5.

In this issue:

- [Editor's Letter.....2](#)
- [May Meeting.....3](#)
- [Help 101.....3](#)
- [Society Page.....4](#)
- [President's Message...4](#)
- [Director-Sponsor's Report.....5](#)
- [Technical Writing Humor.....5](#)
- [Membership update.....6](#)

New Officers for 1999–2000

By Mary Lauby

The Suncoast Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication proudly announces the new officers for 1999–2000. Eileen McPartland is our new Chapter President and is anxious to bring continued success to our great chapter.

Paul Butt is bringing his expertise to our chapter as Vice President. Lore Eargle is gracious enough to continue to serve as Secretary. Debra Mixon is our new Area Program Coordinator, taking over for Scott Shea. Bill Graham will be our new Treasurer, starting in June. Bob Bennett isn't ready to let go just yet.



Photo by Bob Bennett, Suncoast Chapter

New officers (and one old one) left to right: Eileen McPartland, Debra Mixon, Lore Eargle, Karen Bachmann, Paul Butt, Bill Graham, Melissa Lamb, and editor, Mary Lauby

Melissa Lamb is our new Membership Manager, taking care of welcoming the new members. I'm over on the far right, and I'm the incoming newsletter editor. Not shown is Denise Passmore, our Membership Data-

base manager.

We're all ready to make this year the best yet for our chapter. We're counting on each member to help us spread the word about the Suncoast chapter.

Special Conference Section on Pages 6–7

Including Articles by Karen Bachmann, Stephanie Bergeron, and Lore Eargle

If you didn't make it to this year's annual conference in Cincinnati, Ohio a few weeks ago, don't despair. We have four articles from Suncoast chapter members who were there.



Karen Bachmann shares her conference experiences with us. Who's Bogo? Karen tells us, along with detailing all she learned about the Usability SIG.

Lore Eargle learned about the complex financial interworkings of STC. Her article explains how the IRS defines our Society. And don't forget to catch Stephanie Bergeron's story about how she and other members spread the word about next year's conference.

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Letter from the Editor, Mary Lauby

Hello fellow STC members! I'm your new STC Suncoast chapter newsletter editor. I'm excited about this new challenge, and hope to make this newsletter a continued success. Much thanks to Helen Black, our outgoing editor for her hard work on the newsletter. She served for two years and produced an award-winning newsletter that gained our chapter much recognition at the Society level.

I also want to thank Helen for all her help and guidance during my learning process. She made it easy for me to transition into my new role.

A big thank you to Bob Bennett, our chapter historian, newsletter photographer, and treasurer for the pictures for my first newsletter.

That's him graciously accepting his Suncoast Standout award from outgoing president, Karen Bachmann. (I don't know who took that picture, though.)



Karen Bachmann with Bob Bennett



Helen Black with her husband, Bruce

Photo by Bob Bennett, Suncoast Chapter

I have some ideas for the newsletter, but I'd like to hear what you have to say. I'd like to know what you think of this first issue and I

hope to get many suggestions. I'm planning to include a recurring humor section. So if you feel like it, send me an e-mail and tell me what you find funny. What do you think of the Help 101 feature? Would you like to see more articles of that type? Thanks in advance for your help. I look forward to this year as the WriteUp editor and I hope to make our newsletter a continued success.

Mary Lauby

Volunteers Needed for 2000 Conference in Orlando

The Orlando chapter needs volunteers for next year's annual conference held right here in Florida.

To entice you to volunteer, each committee manager receives a paid registration to the conference. The support management opportunities include:

- Deputy Manager

- Publicity Manager
- Corporate Support Manager

For more information, contact Lori Corbett at: stcmember@aol.com or write her:

c/o Triton Network Systems, Inc.
8529 SouthPark Circle, 4th Floor
Orlando, Florida 32819



What Help Engines Are Out There?

By Jim Sands, Chicago Chapter

Q. What Help engines are currently available?

A. Help engine technology has changed dramatically over the last few years, and one of your 1999 resolutions may be to upgrade your current systems from WinHelp. If you're considering an upgrade to a new Help engine, be sure to check the Help Engine Scorecard maintained by Karen Mobley at <http://www.stc.org/pics/online/hyperviews/resources/hlpengsc.htm>.

This scorecard tracks and compares the features of available help

engine technology. Once you know the features you want in your upgrade, the scorecard can tell you what Help engines will give you what you want.

For example, if you must have full-text searching when you upgrade, RoboHELP's WebHelp may not be your answer, but HTML Help would work. Likewise, if you plan to deliver your Help on Unix as well as Windows, HTML Help is probably not as good of a choice as Jelp. As with any upgrade decision, determine what your Help engine needs and wants are first. Then use the scorecard to assist your choice.

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.

Have a question about Help?

Jim Sands is an independent on-line Help consultant and welcomes your questions and comments. Send questions to ohlp@msn.com, 847-918-8761, or to Sands & Associates, 650 Whitney Court, Suite 404, Gurnee, IL 60031. All questions will be answered in *Help 101* rather than individually.

May Suncoast Meeting: Chapter Annual Awards

By Mary Lauby

Our May meeting was held at the SunSpree Resort in St. Petersburg on the 6th. In addition to honoring our chapter officers with awards, we were entertained by SirenSong, a professional storytelling group.

The storytellers mesmerized us with tales and unique drama. Their costumes and acting created a dramatic and very different feel to our meeting.

Stephanie Bergeron, our outgoing Membership/Database Manager, and Jamie Clark were awarded with Distinguished Chapter Service Awards for their service to the chapter over the past years. The Chapter Service

Award is a Society-level award given to nominated members approved by the STC Board.

Bob Bennett, our historian/photographer and outgoing treasurer, and Helen Black, our outgoing newsletter, editor were presented with a Suncoast Standout Award.

All members who had volunteered throughout the past year received a certificate of recognition for their service to the Chapter.

Eileen spoke about her ideas for our chapter for the coming year. She talked about the Suncoast Chapter

Mentor Program she is establishing. This is the program's first year, and Eileen has a lot of exciting plans for this program. If you're interested in becoming a mentor, or if you just want to learn more about the program, call or send Eileen an e-mail. Her information is in the Chapter Officers section of this newsletter on page 2.



Stephanie accepting her award

Photo by Bob Bennett, Suncoast Chapter



SirenSong going all out with the props

Photo by Bob Bennett, Suncoast Chapter

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.

Society Goals

- Enhance the professionalism of the members and the status of the profession.
- Provide information through publications, reports, and conferences.
- Report on new communication technologies, methods, and applications.
- Provide recognition and awards.
- Provide services to members at all levels of the Society.
- Promote the education of members and support research activities in the field.
- Give service to industry and academe.

From the STC 1998 Annual Report



President's Message

By Eileen McPartland, Suncoast Chapter President

A New Beginning

Welcome to a new STC year. I am excited to serve as the new Suncoast Chapter President, and I am looking forward to an exciting year with a lot of opportunities.

Succeeding Karen Bachmann will definitely be a challenge

because she went above and beyond a President's call of duty. She not only accomplished all her goals as President, but exceeded all expectations. Karen brought so much life to this chapter and I hope I can follow in her footsteps.

I would like to welcome all the new officers and thank them for stepping up to the plate. I would also like to thank the existing officers and the many volunteers for continuing to contribute their time and effort to the Society.

My main goal as President is to increase the transfer of knowledge between professionals, peers, and students. The initial effort towards achieving this goal is to implement a mentor program. This program is scheduled to launch this September at the University of South Florida. Students will be mentored by STC professionals. This is only the beginning of a long mentoring process.

My main goal as President is to increase the transfer of knowledge between professionals, peers and students

My hope is that we can expand the traditional method of a student/professional mentor program to include peer to peer and chapter to chapter mentoring. Our Society as a whole is one big mentor program. Everyone in the Society has something

to contribute to our profession. My hope is that we, as a chapter, can take full advantage of all this knowledge.

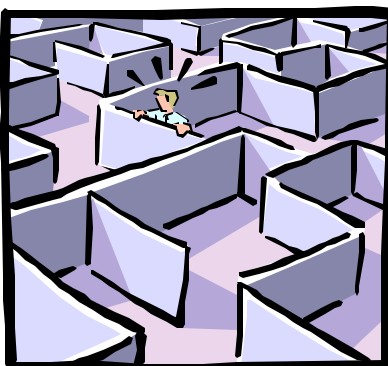
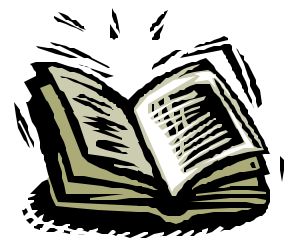
Eileen McPartland

Quote of the Month

Compliments of Stephanie Bergeron

The worth of a book is what you can carry away from it.

James Bryce



Stand out from the crowd!

Write an article for the newsletter. It's a great way to get noticed.

Contact Mary Lauby at
727-538-9373 or
mary.lauby@att.net

Region 3 Director-Sponsor's Report

By Michelle Ratcliffe, Suncoast Chapter

It is a great time of year to congratulate and celebrate as it is the end of the STC year. We have plenty of both to do in region 3! Please join me in congratulating these Chapter Achievement Award winners in Region 3.

- **Atlanta (more than 300 members)**
- **Suncoast (76-150 members)**
- **Northern Gulf Coast (less than 40 members)**

The Chapter Achievement Award is a very special award given by the Society's Board of Directors each year. It recognizes the outstanding achievements of a chapter over the course of the year. Chapters submit an application for the award that recaps their initiatives, accomplishments, and activities. The Board considers each application and gives an award in each category. The categories are based on chapter size.

Please also join me in congratulating these Pacesetter Award winning

chapters in our region.

• **TransAlpine**
 • **Mercer University Student chapter**
 The Pacesetter is another special award given by the Society's Board of Directors each year. The Pacesetter recognizes outstanding achievement through a single event or activity conducted by a chapter in the year. The TransAlpine chapter was recognized for their innovative efforts and tremendous enthusiasm in forming a new chapter that comprises members in four countries and spreads throughout a significant geographic area.

The Mercer University Student chapter was recognized for its outstanding efforts in planning, organizing, and hosting a fantastic student conference for our region. The conference was developed through the joint efforts of student and professional members, was attended by more than 60 attendees.

At the conference, we also cele-

brated Ken Rainey of the Atlanta chapter for receiving the Jay R.

Gould Award for Excellence in Teaching Technical Communication and our newest Associate Fellows in the region, Jeanne Dole of the East Tennessee chapter and Dan Voss of the Orlando chapter.

There are so very many other accomplishments and achievements to celebrate as chapters and as individuals in the region. Many members were recognized through the Society's competitions and through the recognition programs of chapters. Please take a moment to congratulate and celebrate the many achievements of members and chapters in this great year!



Technical Writing Humor

Here are some golden rules for writing:

How to Write Good

1. Avoid alliteration. Always.
2. Prepositions are not words to end sentences with.
3. Avoid cliches like the plague. (They're old hat.)
4. Employ the vernacular.
5. Eschew ampersands & abbreviations, etc.
6. Parenthetical remarks, (however relevant) are unnecessary.
7. It is wrong to ever split an infinitive.
8. Contractions aren't necessary.
9. Foreign words are not apropos.
10. One should never generalize.
11. Comparisons are as bad as cliches.
12. Don't be redundant; don't use more words than necessary. It's highly superfluous.
13. Be more or less specific.
14. Understatement is always best.
15. Exaggeration is a billion times worse than understatement.
16. One-word sentences? Eliminate.
17. Analogies in writing are like feathers on a snake.
18. The passive voice is to be avoided.

Hey, this is funny stuff!



19. Even if a mixed metaphor sings, it should be derailed.
20. Who needs rhetorical questions?

Source unknown



Membership Update

By Melissa Lamb
Suncoast Chapter
Membership Manager

New Members

Nichole Carrillo
Alan Goldberg
Anthony Lauby
Judy Reynolds

Transferring Members

Carol Furlong
Carol Walker

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.

Karen's Conference Experiences

By Karen Bachmann, Suncoast Chapter

International Focus

Before I tell you about Bogo, let me provide some background for those who have never attended an annual conference.

The name badges for the conference measure 4 ¼ x 3 ¼. Many conference attendees decorate the

considerable space with pins and stickers indicating their affiliations with Special Interest Groups (SIGs), their chapters, or Society events and activities. Some stickers are just for fun. "I know Bogo!" and "I don't know Bogo!" were created just for fun, but I think they eventually served another purpose.

Bogo Vatovec is a person. Specifically, he is a technical writer from Slovenia and a member of the new TransAlpine chapter that covers from Germany south through Italy. (As a side note, TransAlpine is the first non-American chapter in our region and now has a reputation as the "Chocolate Chapter.")

Our Growing Field

For the first time, I participated in the Usability SIG business meeting. I was amazed to learn that the SIG includes approximately 1,300 members. And the number of technical communicators specializing in, or at least providing a voice for, usability in their companies continues to grow. Other SIGs have experienced phenomenal growth as well. This suggests the many ways technical communicators contribute in new areas for our companies.

Often, as we struggle through the daily grind of producing manuals, online help, user interfaces, and all the many deliverables we produce,

The interest in knowing Bogo seemed to raise awareness of the international focus of the conference. If you didn't know Bogo, you could meet him and cross out the "don't" from the "I don't know Bogo!" sticker. "Think International!" stickers were also available. STC leaders are committed to make the Society a truly international organization. India and Saskatchewan were the other non-US chapters formed this past year.

While the Society definitely faces some hurdles with internationalization, membership in Europe, Australia, Asia, and the Middle East continues to grow, and those members are starting to take on roles as STC leaders. I had a chance to meet several of the TransAlpine members (I'd met Bogo at an earlier conference), and I believe STC will gain much by expanding our horizons.

As for Bogo, he seemed to take the unexpected fame (he didn't create or distribute the stickers) with good humor.

we lose sight of what an exciting and burgeoning profession we are in. The STC Annual Conference is a perfect place to rekindle our excitement for our field and share that with other technical communicators—2,300 at this year's conference. Some of them doing exactly what we do and others showing us new possibilities.

Next year's conference in Orlando is expected to draw even more attendees. If you've never been to an annual conference, this is the perfect chance for you to go and have your own excellent experiences to share.

Hello my name is:
Karen Bachmann
I know Bogo!

Orlando: Team 2000

By Stephanie Bergeron, Suncoast Chapter

Microsoft® Office 2000 is minor compared to Orlando: Team 2000... After the Chapter Leadership meeting, all available Florida STC chapter members gathered to review the plan for next year's conference in Orlando. Normally, the following year's conference host chapter has an information booth. But not us. No, we did something different, and definitely more fun.

We each received two t-shirts

with the Renaissance Communications theme logo on the front and the words "Ask me about Orlando 2000" in monstrous purple letters on the back. We also received a supply of highlighters and stickers with the theme logo and conference dates.

We were then tasked with spreading the word to the more than 2000 attendees. And spread the word we did. By the time we

Ask me about Orlando 2000



finished, a large proportion of attendees and speakers had our stickers on their badges and our highlighters in their

hands.

We are off to a great start in preparing for an undoubtedly successful conference next year.

Financial Issues Discussed at the Conference

By Lore Eargle, Suncoast Chapter Vice President

At the Leadership Conference held on Sunday morning before the beginning of the STC Conference, Executive Director Bill Stolgitis gave a presentation on some knotty financial issues which chapters often have trouble unraveling. He also answered a number of questions and assured us that he is available to answer financial and legal issues we confront on the chapter level.

He explained that the Society for Technical Communication is a non-profit corporation, which is a legal designation. This means that STC is owned by the public, not by its members. STC can build net worth but cannot distribute dividends to its members. So, STC can make a profit but not too much of one. He pointed out that, if profits approach or exceed three times expenses, a warning flag goes up which signals the IRS to investigate.

STC is also a 501(c)(3) organization, which is a tax designation. Until 1968 STC was a 501(c)(6) organization, which is the designation of the American Medical Association (AMA) and American Bar Association (ABA). The 501(c)(3)

category is for scientific, educational, and charitable organizations. In this realm, "charitable" refers to "public good or purpose." The 501(c)(3) status allows STC to pay fewer taxes than the 501(c)(6) status did. This is in exchange for performing a public good. This also means that we cannot restrict our services only to those who pay a membership fee, as the AMA and ABA do.

We can, however, charge a nominal fee to non-members for services to recoup the cost of providing the services. For example, we could charge a reasonable fee for employment information services, programs, or workshops. However, STC's Special Interest Groups (SIGs) which have Web sites with employment information or chapters with list-serves cannot restrict these to members only. Anyone who requests access must receive it.

Any income from ads in newsletters, fees for mailing lists, and so on is considered "unrelated business." We must send such revenue to the society office so that they can handle the taxes. We are exempt from federal, state, and local income

taxes and from sales taxes in most states.



We can accept donations from corporate sponsors and the corporations that donate can deduct all of the donation. The corporation must understand, however, that such an arrangement requires that no strings be attached to the sponsorship. Still, if a corporation asks to display materials on a table in the back of the room at a meeting, we can do that.

We cannot accept or provide endorsements because an endorsement implies that an exchange of services takes place. We can thank a corporation for donating, for example, print a thank you in a program. If you have legal or financial questions about the business of the chapter, please ask one of the administrative council members. If we cannot answer the questions, we can call on Bill Stolgitis for assistance.

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



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
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Calendar of Events

Subject to Change



- June 26** **Annual Administrative Council Retreat**
Post Apartments at Rocky Point, Tampa
(For Administrative Council members only)
- July 1** **Suncoast Chapter Summer Social**
Post Apartments at Rocky Point, Tampa
6:30 PM
- August 5** **Suncoast Chapter Meeting**
Location and topic TBA

Copy Deadline for Next Issue: July 9

Purpose

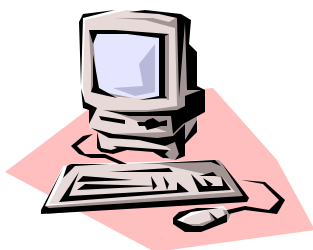
WriteUP communicates chapter and Society news six times per year for the benefit of members and friends of the Suncoast Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication (STC).

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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for updates about STC conferences,
chapter meeting details, and job listings.