

# SuperScript

Volume 10, Issue 3



SOCIETY FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION



## Successful Mentorship Program to Continue

- Blair McNaughton, Mentorship Coordinator

As we roll into fall, it's time to get the Mentorship Program up and rolling as well. After only two years, the Alberta Chapter's Mentorship Program has been incredibly successful. At an STC leadership workshop last year, I heard stories of mentorship programs, in larger chapters than ours, that were struggling with only a few mentors and either no or enormous demand for their services. In two years the Alberta Chapter program has matched 25 mentors with over 30 mentorees. Congratulations go out to everyone who participated in the program and, of course, to Fena Maucieri, who conceived and nurtured the program to where it is today.

By the time this newsletter is published most of you will have received an e-mail regarding participation in the Mentorship Program. I hope that many of you consider participating in this program. Whether you are new to the profession or a seasoned pro, there are always new and challenging opportunities around the corner. What better way to meet those challenges than armed with the knowledge and experience of someone who has tackled those challenges before you?


For mentors, this is an opportunity to share your knowledge and expertise and

to make a contribution to the technical writing profession. With most technical communicators entering the field from other professions, shared knowledge is how many of us have found our way and developed any number of new skills. The mentorship relationship can range from a single telephone or e-mail conversation to a day of job shadowing to ongoing support and advice. As the mentor, you select the approach and kind of commitment that you are willing to make and are matched accordingly with mentorees.

If you're interested in participating in the Mentorship Program, as either a mentor or mentoree, just e-mail me, Blair McNaughton, at [mentorship@stc-alberta.org](mailto:mentorship@stc-alberta.org) and I'll forward a registration/information form. As the year progresses, I hope to implement a Web-based registration and possibly even a Web database to assist in matching mentors and mentorees. Identities and contact information will never be posted, but hopefully, allowing STC members to peruse a list of mentor interests and skill sets and of mentoree needs will focus and speed up the matching process.

Everyone who has participated in the Mentorship Program over the past year will also be receiving a brief survey to

help us evaluate and improve upon the current offering. I hope you are able to take the time to complete the survey to let the Chapter Executive and myself know about your experience with the program. Your feedback is vital to the continued success of this service.

I look forward to hearing from anyone interested in becoming involved with the Mentorship Program. With your interest and participation we will all benefit from professional growth and development through your sharing of ideas, skills, and experience. 

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The mission of the Society for Technical Communication is to improve the quality and effectiveness of technical communication for audiences worldwide.



## A Word from Our President

- Ian Hawkins

Last year, we asked members their opinions on changing our newsletter from a printed version to an online version. We had solid, though not unanimous, support, mainly because we promised to use the funds freed up by this move to benefit our membership in other ways.

This year, one of our major projects will be figuring out the best ways to deliver more value to our members.

### Improved training opportunities

The results from our opinion poll on hosting a workshop with JoAnn Hackos are in. We had strong interest from our members, so the Executive Council has decided to proceed with the event. We have already started looking for a suitable location and date, probably sometime early next year. Of the topics available, we have chosen *User and Task Analysis for Information Design*.

I should note that not all the people who answered our questionnaire were happy about the Chapter subsidizing the cost. Although I have some sympathy for this viewpoint, I think hosting an event like this is a worthwhile expense for us. Our mission is to improve the quality of technical communication for our members and our employers and users. If we can accomplish some of that through better training opportunities, then we are performing a good service. No matter what we do, some members will benefit more than others. In every case, the only people who benefit are those who attend. One challenge for us is to offer a wide enough selection of opportunities for our members that the benefits are spread around.


### Other improvements in programs

As I announced last month, we have started supplying the coffee at our coffee nights. Edmonton members will be happy to learn that refreshments at their coffee nights will also be paid for by the Chapter. You can show your support for this idea by participating. We hope to see some new faces at the coffee nights.

We have lowered prices for STC members to attend our Saturday workshops. The new prices are \$50 for members and \$25 for student members. Non-member prices remain the same. See the *Mark Your Calendars* page for more details.

As an update to last month's request for newsletter articles, we have raised the amount of the newsletter award to \$100 (one award maximum per year). Just think about it, the reward for contributing to the newsletter is not only world-wide fame, it could also include fortune. The editors are looking for anything that could be of interest to our members and other technical communicators.

We are also looking for other ideas from our members on ways to improve the Chapter. This will be a topic at the October meeting of the Executive Council. Feel free to attend, or send your suggestions to any of the members of the Council. All Executive Council meetings are open to members, and we welcome any input. The only possible hazard is you might be asked to volunteer for something!

Once again, if you have any suggestions for the Chapter, please let me know. My e-mail ([president@stc-alberta.org](mailto:president@stc-alberta.org)) is always open. 

## Alberta Chapter STC Executive Council 2001-2002

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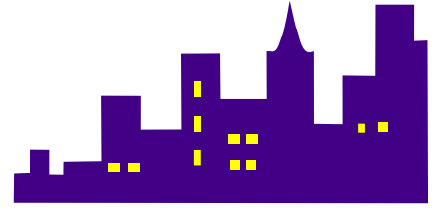
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# EDMONTON

V

- Lorraine Gorman, Edmonton Correspondent



E

I want to welcome everyone back to the Edmonton STC group for another exciting year of learning, sharing, and otherwise commiserating with each other. I am Lorraine Gorman, your Edmonton correspondent. My job is to get information for and about the Edmonton group to the editors at *SuperScript* in time for each edition.

N

Since Angela Wiens has now retired from the position of Edmonton liaison, I want to take this opportunity to thank her for organizing our meetings and inspiring our spirits over the past couple of years and to especially thank Marcia Wright for taking over the task.

T

The Edmonton group will continue to meet on the second Thursday of each month.

S

## Last meeting

Our first meeting was on September 13 at 7:30 pm at the Second Cup on Jasper Avenue. Peter Adamski demonstrated our wonderful new Edmonton STC Web page, which he developed over the summer. This enthusiastic group of Edmontonian STC members was pleased with Peter's work.

We also discussed the up-coming activities for the year. We decided that we would have an indexing workshop, Visual Basic Macros in Word workshop, the much loved Grammar Goodies presentation, something on FrameMaker, and of course the annual Christmas social. Let the year begin!

## Next meeting

Our next meeting will be October 18, 2001 at 7:30 at Second Cup at 11640 104 Avenue (Oliver Square) and will pose the contentious question: Descriptivist or Prescriptivist: where is your allegiance? It will be a discussion of "Tense Present", David Foster Wallace's review of *A Dictionary of Modern American Usage*.

The article appeared in the April edition of *Harper's* magazine, and judging by the letters published in subsequent issues, it considerably enflamed the continuing debate between descriptive and prescriptive grammarians.

To get the full effect of the article, read it as it was published in the April edition of Harper's. If that's not possible, try this link: [http://www.findarticles.com/cf\\_0/m1111/1811\\_302/72732951/p1/article.jhtml](http://www.findarticles.com/cf_0/m1111/1811_302/72732951/p1/article.jhtml).

A word of caution: don't let the first page of the article confuse you. It's simply a list of questionable English expressions strung together for effect. Also, Wallace's non-fiction pieces are littered with footnotes. I trust you'll enjoy the article and come prepared to enthusiastically discuss some of the grammar bugbears people take issue with.

## Of interest

The Editors' Association of Canada will be presenting a workshop by Jim Taylor on Monday, November 26 from 9 am to 4 pm at the Alberta Teachers' Association, 11010-142 Street, Edmonton. The cost will be \$135 for non-members of EAC, which includes lunch.

Jim Taylor, whose writing and editing experience is extensive, developed Eight-Step Editing as a workshop for the Editors' Association of Canada in 1985. Using a step-by-step process, the program identifies the most common factors in writing that become obstacles for readers. It not only helps you recognize the problems, it shows you quick and simple techniques for fixing them. Whether you're a novice or a seasoned editor, a would-be writer, or a supervisor of others' writing, this course will help you make your words work better.

Please register via the EAC's Web site, <http://www.editors.ca/prairie/prairie.htm>. 

## Subject: Yes—I am fine!

*This posting is from Barbara Giammona, a technical writer and member of STC's Management SIG who lives in New York City.*

Hello everyone—yes I am fine! Thankfully, I do not work in the World Trade Center, but I do live about 500 yards from it and pass through it each morning on the way to work, as I did on Tuesday morning. On a normal morning, I would have been standing on the subway platform underneath 2 World Trade Center (South Tower) at 8:45 am. By the grace of God, I went into work an hour early that morning and experienced the event by watching it from my office window in Midtown.

I have not been able to get back into my home, but have been assured that the building is sound. The quality of the air and lack of services may make my once pristine and lovely neighborhood uninhabitable for some time. And the lack of the Trade Center and its central transportation and service hub will isolate my neighborhood from the rest of Manhattan. So the future will have some challenges. But we will face them day by day. I am incredibly thankful and blessed to be safe and with my husband, who also was safely at his Midtown office and actually saw the first plane hit the North Tower from his office window.

**So the future will have some challenges. But we will face them day by day.**

My firm had 3,500 employees at the Trade Center. My husband's firm [had] 1,700. Many, many are unaccounted for. It is indeed a tragedy of unbearable proportions. I have a second home outside the city (again blessed!) to which I have retreated. But I am safe....

In response to the emergency, my documentation team has been called in to begin documenting the technology requirements for the displaced Trade Center staff who will be relocated following these events.

Thanks everyone.  
Barb

*When SuperScript contacted Barb, she had an update for us...*

Miraculously, Morgan Stanley lost only six employees to the tragedy. My husband's firm, Marsh McLennan, lost over 300. It has been an enormously sad time for New York. But we are starting to recover. Last night, my husband and I went to see a Broadway show! This week, I have a full docket of meetings at work.

We still have not been able to return to our apartment, except to retrieve a few personal belongings and some clothing. It may be a couple more weeks before our apartment building is opened again. In the meantime, we are staying at a hotel during the week and at our home

*Continued on Page 5*

## Canadian Issues Committee becomes Canadian Issues SIG

*- Glenn Ruhl, Canadian Issues Coordinator*

*The Canadian Issues Committee is taking a new direction. Here is some information about the CIC forwarded to me by Alexa Campbell.*

In May 2001, the STC formed a new SIG devoted to improving communication among its Canadian members. Alexa Campbell, a long-time member of the STC, is serving as SIG manager. Canadian STC members, and others who are interested in Canadian issues, are invited to join this new group.

Right now, STC members can sign up for the Canadian Issues SIG for free until the end of the year. SIG membership dues will be billed in the 2002 STC dues notices scheduled to be sent out in November.

To sign up for SIG membership, e-mail your request to the STC membership department ([membership@stc.org](mailto:membership@stc.org)). Key to the success of any organization are the enthusiasm and support of its members. I hope many of you will step forward to help make this one of the most effective and active SIGs in STC.

We need volunteers to fill important positions of newsletter editor, webmaster, mailing list coordinator, and membership coordinator. The tasks are neither hard nor time-consuming; however, they will take commitment.

We already have established a mailing list that will be a good source for exchanging information and ideas. To subscribe to the list, go to <http://lists.stc.org/cgi-bin/lyris.pl?enter=stc-ca-l> and click the "Join stc-ca-l" button. Complete the information and you're there. (Note that the l is a lower case L.)

Here is some further information about the Canadian Issues SIG, its mission, its name, and its goals.

### Mission Statement

The Canadian Issues SIG fosters communication among Canadian members of STC to allow them to exchange information and to discuss issues within STC that

- are of a particular concern to Canadian members.
- arise by reason of political, socioeconomic, and geographical constraints because the members reside in Canada.

### Rationale for Name

The name reflects the membership of the SIG, and carries on the title of the Canadian Issues Committee, which was formed in 1990. In the ten years of its operation, this committee helped identify and resolve many issues of concern to Canadian members of STC. Membership in the SIG is not necessarily restricted to Canadian members but is open to anyone with an interest in the special needs and concerns of Canadian STC members.

*Continued on Page 5*

# CIC Becomes SIG

Continued from Page 4

## Areas of Interest


The Canadian Issues SIG explores the following areas of interest:

- Increasing the technical communications profile and reputation across Canada.
- Monitoring, helping shape, and publicizing technical communication education in Canada.
- Helping evolve standards to encourage a consistency in the technical communications courses offered across Canada.
- Communicating the value of technical communication to business, industry and academe.
- Enabling educational institutions, industry and practitioners to share ideas about technical communication.
- Promoting a professional development program for Canadian technical communicators, by making it easier to advertise such programs.

## Goals

The following are the goals of the Canadian Issues SIG:


- To link Canadian chapters, which are spread out geographically, and which lack a unified voice in STC internationally.

- To provide opportunities for Canadian members to communicate about needs, concerns and issues that are unique to Canada by virtue of geography, economics or politics.
- To provide a venue for promoting professional development activities for Canadian members. 

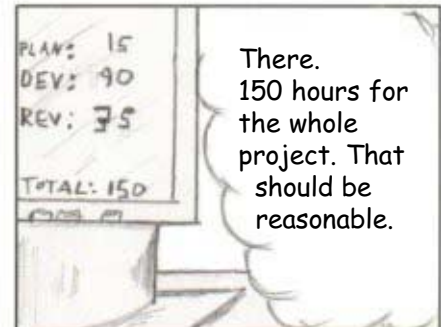
## Subject: Yes—I am fine!

Continued from Page 4

outside the city on the weekends. When we do return, there will be the aforementioned challenges (as no shopping, restaurants, phone service, cable, or transportation are restored in the neighborhood). The main question will be the healthfulness of living there—as the quality of the air and water are both uncertain.

While it is an uncertain time for me, it is also an exciting time. I've never felt so supported, loved and cared for. Friends from all over the world—many, many of them from STC—have been in touch expressing their concern and offering their support. I continue to feel incredibly thankful and blessed! 

# Bitter Ink.



© 2001 Jeremy Schroeder

# Learn the Language of the Web at November Workshop

- Ken Schatzke, Workshops Coordinator

HTML, or Hypertext Markup Language, is the computer lingua franca of the World Wide Web as well as the base technology of many online help formats, including Microsoft HTML Help, JavaHelp, Oracle Help, and several browser-based formats.

As a technical communicator, you have probably encountered at least some HTML in your everyday work. You may have created HTML for the Internet or an intranet using software tools such as Adobe GoLive, Macromedia Dreamweaver, or Microsoft FrontPage. Or you may be converting existing documentation to HTML using RoboHELP or Adobe FrameMaker with WebWorks Publisher.

If you have ever wanted to look under the hood of these software tools, to create HTML from scratch, or to understand what HTML is and what it can and can't do, the STC's upcoming workshop, HTML Basics, is for you.

HTML Basics will focus on the following topics:

- Getting started
- Formatting text
- Using colour
- Inserting images
- Connecting with links
- Page layout with tables
- Publishing Web pages.

Participants attending HTML Basics should have Windows 95, 98, or Me file management skills, including:

- Saving, renaming, copying, deleting and finding files.
- Managing files saved in various folders on different drives.
- Working with and manipulating multiple windows on screen.
- Comprehension of file extensions and file sizes.


Murray Nicholson, a local Internet instructor and facilitator, will introduce you to HTML in this workshop. As an instructor, Murray has developed and delivered courses in Web page design using HTML, FrontPage, Dreamweaver and JavaScript as well as courses in Internet research, Web graphics, Web site promotion and e-business. He is a regular Internet instructor at Mount Royal College, SAIT, Chinook College, and Bow Valley College and has also conducted numerous customized Internet workshops for educators, business people, teens, and kids computer camps. In addition, he is a member of the Calgary Chamber of Commerce and the International Webmasters Association and serves on the Board of Directors of the Calgary Community Network Association.

## Saturday Workshop

<b>Topic:</b>	HTML Basics
<b>Instructor:</b>	Murray Nicholson
<b>Location:</b>	Mount Royal College (Room E141) 4825 Richard Road SW
<b>Date:</b>	Saturday, November 10, 2001
<b>Time:</b>	9 am to 4 pm
<b>Fee:</b>	\$50.00 for STC members \$25.00 for STC student members \$110.00 for non-members

**Registration:** Required. To register, e-mail the Hospitality and Registration Coordinator at [registration@stc-alberta.org](mailto:registration@stc-alberta.org), indicating your name and the workshop you want to attend. (Registration must be cancelled one week in advance of the workshop, or the registrant will be billed the workshop fees.)

## Note

Participants interested in learning more about the workshop should visit <http://www.deerford.com/stc/outline.htm>. 

## Of Interest to Technical Writers...

**The Editors' Association of Canada (Prairie Provinces Branch) welcomes one and all to a very informal pub night, October 15, 5:30 pm at Molly Malone's, 1153 Kensington Crescent NW. Join like-minded word people for some good cheer and good conversation.**


**If you wish to attend, e-mail [eac-calgary@cadvision.com](mailto:eac-calgary@cadvision.com).**

**On November 23, the EAC will present an editing workshop. See their Web site or next month's *SuperScript* for more details.**

## Competition Deadlines Extended

The deadline for entering the competition has been extended to October 12, so you still have a some time to get your entries in. Remember that the annual competition is one of the best ways to receive anonymous professional feedback about your work. Judges in St. Louis will review entries from our chapter, and we will review entries from theirs. Regardless of how long you have worked as a technical communicator, you can benefit from new perspectives on your work.

The deadline has also been extended for people who would like to participate as judges. Judging can be a great learning experience, as you and a team of other judges work together, focusing on the essentials of effective communication. Experience as a judge can also be a nice addition to a resume, and it shows your commitment to the advancement of the profession.

If you are planning to submit an entry please contact Brian O'Malley, our Competitions Coordinator ([omalley@nucleus.com](mailto:omalley@nucleus.com)), immediately, so we can provide an entry count to St. Louis. You can also contact Brian if you have any questions about the competition, or Jeanne Gonnason, our Judging Coordinator ([techedit@telusplanet.net](mailto:techedit@telusplanet.net)), if you have questions about the judging process. We hope to see our members participate, both as entrants and judges. Look for more details at <http://www.stc-alberta.org/competitions.html>. 

*This item was freely adapted from Leila's announcement—thanks, Leila!*


## How Polite Are Your Documents?

- Grant Sorensen, Programs Coordinator


If you have ever wondered how your audience reacts to your documents, you should attend the October 18<sup>th</sup> STC program.

Bill Bunn, a local technical writer and long-time instructor in the Technical Writing department of Mount Royal College, will discuss the Politeness Theory and its implications for technical communication. This theory states that different types of documents require a different degree of politeness.

Mr. Bunn will show how the Politeness Theory can help you determine the appropriate social distance between your documents and your audience and if what the documentation requires your audience to do is appropriate to this social distance.

To register for this program, complete and submit the online registration form at <http://www.stcalberta.org/registration.html>. 

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\$  
\$ The annual STC Wine & Cheese was held on  
\$ Wednesday, September 9, at the Memorial  
\$ Park Library. Everyone who registered early  
\$ was entered into the draw for door prizes.  
\$  
\$ And the winners were...  
\$  
\$ Debbie Barry STC travel mug  
\$ Glenn Ruhl \$10 Indigo gift certificate  
\$ John Switzer RoboHelp CD and a pen  
\$  
\$ \$ \$ \$  
\$  
\$ Looking for some easy money? Why not  
\$ write an article about one of your more  
\$ exciting – or not so exciting – days on the  
\$ job? Submit an article to the SuperScript  
\$ and if we publish it, we could give you \$100!  
\$  
\$ To qualify for next month's newsletter, send  
\$ your article to [newsletter@stc-alberta.org](mailto:newsletter@stc-alberta.org) by  
\$ October 31, 2001. Good Luck!  
\$  
\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$



## Membership News

**Five members joined the Alberta Chapter in August 2001. Welcome to the STC!**

Ann Marie Downey, Calgary  
Jule Ellis, Calgary  
Danita Haysom, Edmonton  
Judy Roberts, Calgary  
Stephen Roney, Athabasca

**Four members recently achieved Senior member status. Congratulations!**

Jennifer Bley  
Terry Hockaday  
E. Carey Fougere  
Don Green



# Mark Your Calendars!

## Programs

Attend programs to discover the ideas and technologies that affect today's technical communicators.

**Location:** MacDougall Centre  
455-6 Street SW, Calgary

**Time:** Third Thursday of the month, 7 pm to 9 pm  
*Please arrive by 6:30 pm for registration.*

**Registration:** **Recommended.** Register by the Monday prior to the program.

<b>Fee:</b>	Registered	Drop-in
Members	\$5.00	\$10.00
Student Members	Free	8.00
Non-members	10.00	13.00

## Workshops

Attend workshops to gain in-depth knowledge and skill through instruction and hands-on activities.

**Location:** Mount Royal College (Room E141)  
4825 Richard Road SW, Calgary  
*\$8.00 parking passes can be purchased from the parking office located by the West Gate.*

**Time:** Scheduled Saturdays, 9 am to 4 pm

**Registration:** **Required.** Register at least 10 days prior to the workshop.  
*Registration must be cancelled one week in advance of the workshop or the registrant will be billed for workshop fees.*

<b>Fee:</b>	Members	\$50.00
	Student Members	25.00
	Non-members	110.00

## Coffee Nights

Attend coffee nights to meet with your fellow technical communicators and discuss a monthly topic in a casual setting.

**Location:** Annie's Books (Literary Salon)  
912-16 Avenue NW, Calgary  
*Parking is available behind Tim Hortons.*

**Time:** Second Tuesday of the month, 7 pm to 9 pm

**Registration:** Not required.

**Fee:** Free for both members and non-members.

## Executive Meetings

**Location:** Merak Building  
600, 322-11 Avenue SW, Calgary

**Time:** Third Monday of the month, 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm  
*Building doors are locked after 5:30 pm.*

## October 2001

Tuesday, 9 **Technical Writing Horror Stories**  
Coffee Night\*

Monday, 15 Executive Meeting *New night this month!*

Thursday, 18 **How Polite Are Your Documents?**  
Bill Bunn

## November 2001

Saturday, 10 **HTML Basics by Murray Nicholson**  
Workshop

Thursday, 15 **History of Technical Publications on the Prairies**  
Diana Patterson

Monday, 19 Executive Meeting

Tuesday, 27 **Java Night**  
Coffee Night\* *New night this month!*

## December 2001

Monday, 10 Executive Meeting

Tuesday, 11 **Technical Writing Books and Resources**  
Coffee Night\*

\*STC will pay for your refreshments at Coffee Nights held in September to December.



## To register...

To register for programs and workshops, use our online registration form at <http://www.stc-alberta.org/registration.html>.

# SuperScript

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Rosemary Reed        Lorraine Gorman  
Jean Bauer

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*SuperScript* is the official newsletter of the Society for Technical Communication Alberta Chapter and is published 10 times annually, including double issues in July-August, and December-January.

**Submissions:** The Editors invite readers to submit articles, news, reviews, and other items of interest. Articles may be edited for size. Note: By submitting an article, you implicitly grant a license to *SuperScript* to run the article and for other STC publications to reprint it without permission. Copyright is held by the writer. In your cover letter, please let the editors know if this article has run elsewhere, and if it has been submitted for consideration to other publications.

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**Distribution:** *SuperScript* is distributed to members in Alberta and the Northwest Territories, to all Canadian chapters, and Region 7 chapters of STC, and to interested companies and individuals upon request. Circulation is 275.

**Advertising:** *SuperScript* accepts advertising of interest to our readership, and which furthers professional development. We reserve the right to limit or refuse advertising.

### Rates:

Full page	\$160.00	Quarter page	\$50.00
Half page	\$100.00	Business card	\$20.00

To place an advertisement: send your cheque, payable in advance, to Society for Technical Communication, Alberta Chapter, Attn: Treasurer, at:

**STC Alberta Chapter**  
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Calgary AB T2P 3C3  
Web site: [www.stc-alberta.org](http://www.stc-alberta.org)