

SuperScript



society for technical communication



2000-2001 Publications and Online Competition Results

- Brian O'Malley, Competitions Coordinator

The results of the publications and online competitions held last fall are now in. We received 6 entries in the online competition and 10 in publications, from Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge, and Reno, Nevada. All Alberta chapter entries were judged by members of the St. Louis chapter. With an entry from outside the chapter and judging by members on the other side of the 49th, we had a truly international flair this year. And, judging by the inquiries already received about next year's competition from members in Montreal, Washington and Israel, our next round will be even more successful.



exemplary job of handling the challenging workload within the tight deadlines, very ably coordinated by Ruth Maryniuk. Thank you to all! Among the 26 entries in the St. Louis publications competition, we awarded 2 Distinguished, 7 Excellence and 11 Merit awards. In the online competition, 5 received Excellence and 3 Merit.

The Alberta chapter will celebrate our competition successes at an awards reception on March 7, beginning at 7 PM. Winners and judges will receive invitations to this event in mid February.

Alberta's entry count was down from last year, but our performance improved, with 3 entries receiving awards of Distinguished Technical Communication. None of our entries were so honoured in our first competition held last year. The Distinguished winners are now competing against similar entries from other local chapter competitions worldwide.

St. Louis sent us 35 entries to judge, and Alberta's 27 judges did an

May I have the envelope please...

Online Competition

Distinguished

Alain Soucie, Edie Tusor and Vince Dansereau, Calgary AB
Category: Tutorials/Training
eClerk Multimedia Tutorial

Paul Sparrow-Clarke, Sheila Torgunrud and Lorne Diemeter, Lethbridge AB
Category: Books

Lethbridge Research Centre: Innovating for a Sustainable Future

Merit

Marie Frison Klassen, Calgary AB
Category: Help
Merak Peep Online Help

Laurie Holtby and Sean Nason, Calgary AB
Category: Help
Soft-Q Online Help

Publications Competition

Distinguished

Brian O'Malley, Calgary AB
Category: Quick Reference Guides
Locomotive Matrix Quick Reference

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A Word from our President

- Mai-Ann Sprung

Sustainable Leadership: Ensuring the Future Success of our Chapter

With our chapter competition, Smart 2000 conference, the transition to the online newsletter, and many other chapter events over, we finally have time to focus on another goal the Council has proposed this year: sustainable leadership. Before you turn the page to find out about the next exciting workshop or coffee night topic, ask yourself this: *would you be willing to volunteer for the chapter if your work load and time commitment were clearly defined and required only a few hours a month?*

In our eyes, the goal of sustainable leadership is about ensuring that the chapter can continue to offer quality events, information, training, and support to you, the members. It was only a couple of years ago that we had difficulties filling many Council positions, creating a huge burden on those who did step forward to help out. Without question, the greatest difficulty for most potential volunteers was the time commitment required. In fact, I had my own

doubts about the time required by the role of President, and it's certainly had its moments... but, it has also been a lot of fun and an extremely valuable experience – one that would benefit anyone wanting to develop leadership, delegation, and project management skills.

But I'm not here to sell you on volunteering for President, honest. My main purpose in renewing this discussion is to give you an idea of the kind of things we're considering to make succession easier. Typically, the Council runs for 2-3 years with many of the same faces alternating roles until they suffer burnout, leaving the remaining people scrambling to fill vacant positions and ensure chapter plans and events are not jeopardized. We'd like to see

this cycle come to an end – an appropriate goal for the International Year of the Volunteer.

Would you be willing to volunteer for the chapter if your work load and time commitment were clearly defined and required only a few hours a month?

A couple of changes have already been informally instituted that we'd like to suggest become a standard. The Newsletter Coordinator's position has evolved into a team effort, each member rotating through

layout, editing, and production to ensure that they have a reduced time requirement for 2 out of 3 months. Likewise, the Webmaster's role has just transitioned from a one-person job to a team of 4; updating, editing, and continued development of our Web site has gone from being one huge and time-consuming task to several smaller, more manageable jobs. A similar evolution occurred at the end of last year when the role of Programs Coordinator was split into

Continued on Page 3

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Demystifying Java

- Ken Schatzke, Programs Coordinator



There are many common misconceptions about Java in today's technological environments. Most of the confusion is caused because Java is a young programming language that has been rapidly adopted (and extended) by millions of programmers and is used in several different ways. This has produced a wide number of terms such as applets, servlets, enterprise java beans (EJB), Java Server Pages (JSP) and the Java Virtual Machine (JVM) that identify different components and implementations of Java.

"Demystifying Java" will focus on the truth about Java. Have you ever asked yourself:

- Are those JavaScript errors that are common when Web browsing caused because of Java?
- Is the write once, run anywhere slogan a reality?
- Is Java syntax really like C or C++?
- When I load a Java applet it is really slow to start; is this really the future of programming?

This program will answer these questions plus define common Java terminology, identify areas where Java is commonly used in Calgary, and demonstrate some of the Java projects produced locally.

Instructor


Roland Davis works for Sun Microsystems, the founder and standard-bearer of the Java programming language.

Day, Time, and Place

"Demystifying Java" will be held on Thursday, March 15, from 7:00 to 9:00 pm at McDougall Centre (455-6 Street SW, Calgary).

Please arrive at 6:30 pm for registration and payment purposes.

Registration

Pre-registration is recommended, and the deadline is Monday, March 12. Please pre-register by e-mailing Kim McKenzie at kim.mckenzie@home.com, indicating your name, contact information, and that you wish to attend the Java program. 


Sustainable Leadership (cont'd)

Continued from Page 2

three positions: Programs, Education, and Special Events.

Our proposal is to formally create smaller *teams* who work with an actual *Coordinator* (in the past, "Coordinator" has usually meant "the only person doing this job"). This framework offers a better succession path for those who want to volunteer their time and learn new skills but have little or no experience in an area, or are not comfortable stepping into a Coordinator's position. The team's tasks can be divided according to each member's skills and availability, making the Coordinator's position more manageable. Everyone enjoys the benefit of knowledgeable support when they really need the extra

helping hand, and the workload doesn't fall on only one person's shoulders. This type of organizational structure requires more people be involved, but everyone wins when individual time commitments are lessened and more people get to experience the professional and personal benefits of volunteering in a professional organization.

Although the Programs, Newsletter, and Webmaster positions have undergone this transition informally, we're hoping to formalize this framework and recruit accordingly for the 2001-2002 Executive Council. 

PROGRAM REMINDER

Managing Change to an XML Set

by Robin Etherington

Thursday, February 15
McDougall Centre
7:00 to 9:00 pm
(Please arrive at 6:30
for registration purposes)

If XML authoring is a possibility in your future, be sure to attend this program. You will learn some of the basics in selecting an XML set and managing expectations after you have implemented that set.

Book Review - XML: A Primer 2nd Edition

- Robin Etherington, Senior Member

XML: A Primer 2nd Edition

By Simon St. Laurent.
Foster City, CA: MIS Press, M&T Books, 1999
ISBN 0-7645-3310-X

Are you curious about XML (eXtensible Markup Language)? Are you just starting to hear and read about XML and want to know the basics and its current status? Do you want to know why XML is becoming the current standard on the Internet and for future web development (involving e-commerce and information management over the web)? Do you want to have a ball park idea of XML's relationship with both HTML and SGML, and how it interacts with programming languages such as Java script?


If so, *XML: A Primer* may be the book for you (\$29.99). I have two confessions: 1) I understood many

of the concepts and DTD (Document Type Definition) development basics better after I took an 'Intro to XML' course (Global Knowledge training vendor: <http://am.globalknowledge.com/index.html>). 2) I couldn't put the book down, nor did I fall asleep reading it in bed. I underlined so much, that I see as much yellow highlighter as I do white pages. That is, it is well written and it has a lot of information.

It covers a range of topics from why XML evolved from SGML, its influence on our developing and managing information and on web development, the basic building blocks of XML, DTDs and Cascading Style Sheets, processing XML – processors, repositories and gateways, and the future evolution of XML and the web.

XML is a standard (a W3C recommendation) that offers flexibility, simplicity and readability by both

people and machines. While HTML affords us the ability to present information on the web, XML allows us to manage and exchange information. The World Wide Web Consortium is the standards organization responsible for several of the standards important to the web, including HTML, XML, HTTP and Cascading Style Sheets. You may want to keep on eye on the standards for both XML and HTML as they evolve over the next couple of years. The url is: <http://www.w3.org/XML/>

This is a useful book to start reading about XML. If you want to pursue the topic there are several excellent books readily available at reliable bookstores, as well as websites with tutorials and information. Also, there are other training vendors than Global Knowledge that offer XML courses, including the University of Calgary. 

Support for Technical Writing . . .

Tech Writing at MRC

Part-time certificates

One course offered in Spring 2001

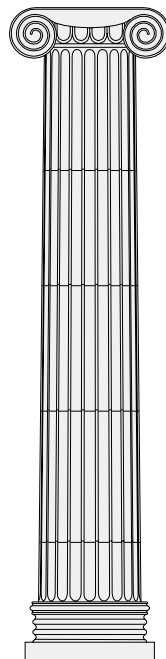
Full-time degree program

Applications are now being received

Create an Award

Now you can help technical writing put its best foot forward.

Make your company a benefactor of MRC's Technical Writing Degree program.



Help us to recognize and support the best of a new generation. Talk to us about donating funds for a scholarship in your company's name. It's tax deductible.



MOUNT ROYAL COLLEGE

Web: www.mtroyal.ab.ca

Contact the department: 403-240-5913

MRC Advising Centre: 403-240-0148

Looking For Volunteers for this Year's Annual General Meeting

- Sue Scott, VP and AGM Chairperson

There are still volunteer positions available for the 2001 AGM committee. It's a great opportunity to get involved with chapter activities. Also, if you volunteer for the conference and AGM committee, you may register for the conference at no charge, but you must register and pay for your AGM dinner. If you are interested in volunteering for any of the positions listed below please contact Laurie Holtby, (holtby@cadvision.com)

Speaker Coordinator

Books speakers, obtains speaker-biographies and session information, determines A/V requirements, buys honorarium gifts, and assigns meet and greet volunteers.

Registration Coordinator

Designs registration forms and gets them printed, mails out forms, re-

ceives registrations and sends confirmation email messages upon receipt of registration, and prepares registration packages for attendees.

Donation Coordinator

Contacts corporations to donate cash, door prizes, and tote bag items.

Public Relations Coordinator


Advertises the conference and AGM on the chapter website, in the newsletter, on TECHWR-L, and in the newspaper.

Sign coordinator

Designs and orders signs for the conference and session rooms. The sign coordinator also designs and orders conference handouts.



Additional volunteers

Are required for the day of the event to set up the travelling exhibit, set up signs, greet registrants and hand out tote bags, greet and introduce speakers, etc. Note: people volunteering for the day of the event only do not receive free registration to the conference, unless their duties cause them to miss sessions. 

Competition Results (cont'd)

Continued from Page 1

Corinn Gruenwald, Calgary AB
Category: Software Guides
eClerk User Guide Package

Brian O'Malley, Calgary AB
Category: Training Materials
Introduction to Business Objects
Training Guide


Merit

Marie Frison Klassen, Calgary AB
Category: Training Materials
Merak Peep Training Guide

Corinn Gruenwald and Edie Tusor,
Calgary AB
Category: Software Guides
eMerchant pro User Guide

Brian O'Malley, Calgary AB
Category: Software Guides
Customer Master File (CMF) User
Guide

Mark Salinas, Rick Sorensen and Jan
Harris, Reno NV
Category: Promotional Materials
IGT Corporate Image Advertisement

Congratulations! and thank you to all
of our competition participants and
judges. 

Reminder

STC Membership dues must
be renewed by **February
28, 2001.**



Membership dues can be
renewed by mail, fax or
online at [www.stc-va.org/
renewal.htm](http://www.stc-va.org/renewal.htm)

Winter STC Board of Directors Meeting

- Ellen Fenwick, Region 7 Director-Sponsor

The winter STC Board of Directors meeting was held in San Diego, California, USA, on 18-20 January 2001. San Diego is warmer than anyplace in Region 7 in January, that's for sure!

Actions Taken at the Meeting

- Formation of three new chapters was approved, bringing the total number of chapters worldwide to 153 (120 regular chapters and 33 student chapters):
 - Australia chapter, with a \$350 USD start-up grant (Region 5).
 - Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute student chapter (Troy, New York, USA), with a \$150 USD start-up grant (Region 1).
 - Hill Country student chapter (San Marcos, Texas, USA), with a \$150 USD start-up grant (Region 5).
- The following appointments to Society-level committees were approved: Kathryn M. Poe (Manager, STC Public Relations Competition Committee) and Paula Stanzioni (Manager, Education & Research Special Interest Group).
- Fiscal year 2001 income and expenses as of 31 October 2000 were reviewed and approved. Income and expenses are well within budget. STC will be returning about two-thirds of a million dollars to chapters to support their fiscal year 2001 programs and activities.
- A merit grant of \$3,000 USD was awarded to the Mercer University student chapter to build its scholarship fund.
- A research grant of \$10,000 USD was awarded to Eva R. Brumberger for a study entitled *The Rhetoric of Typography: A Study Investigating Typeface Personality and Its Impact on the Reading Process.*

Honors Bestowed

The Board of Directors winter gathering is especially enjoyable, because it is at this meeting that the year's Fellow, Associate Fellow, and Sigma Tau Chi student fraternity honors are bestowed. Join me in congratulating Region 7's newest additions to these honorary ranks:

- Associate Fellow: Kate K. Harper and John V. Hedtke, both from the Puget Sound chapter.
- Sigma Tau Chi: Rebecca J. Bryson and Karen E. Kasonic from the University of Washington, and Mark C. Nelson from Utah State University.

Other Items of Interest

New STC logo. A graphic toolkit and templates for STC materials will be made available to chapters (presidents, newsletter editors, and webmasters), Society-level committees, and Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and placed on the STC Web site in March. These tools will help guide groups in implementing the new look. Work is underway to redesign the STC Web site. Watch for the first official use of the new logo in the *Preliminary Annual Conference Program* - out soon!


Elections. This year, the balloting process will include an option to vote online. The 2001 election material will contain information necessary to ensure secure online voting. Voting online will be optional - members may still choose to vote by mail.

Membership. STC continues to grow at a steady rate, and membership now stands at 23,553. Total membership is projected to reach 26,000 by the end of March. Current distribution of membership: U.S. 87.2%, Canada 8.6%, other countries 4.1%. STC's annualized 10-year growth rate is 4.6%, with growth rates as follows: U.S. 3.9%, Canada 10.8%, other countries 11.7% (the greatest area of growth).

Membership directory. The STC membership directory has been placed online. It allows members to search on members' first and last names. The results display the member's name, address, phone, fax, e-mail, chapter, grade, and date joined.

Annual Conference. Preparations for the 48th Annual Conference in Chicago, Illinois, USA, in May 2001 are well underway. The conference program committee reviewed nearly 400 proposals and selected about 440 speakers for 256 sessions. About 41 booths have already been contracted for the vendor exhibit.

Technical Communication journal. Abstracts and PDFs of the 1996 and 1997 issues have now been posted on the Technical Communication Online Web site. Recommendations from usability studies performed by graduate students at Mercer University have been incorporated in the Web site. Check it out!

STC governance. This year, the STC Board of Directors is conducting a series of workshops at its regular meetings to evaluate governance. This activity is an outgrowth of STC's new mission statement: "Designing the future of technical communication." What model of governance would be most effective in leading STC into that future? Aspects being evaluated include the structure of representation, the way that decisions are made, the balance of volunteer and office staff workloads, and communication patterns. A clear picture of leadership has dominated the workshops: one that focuses on trends, vision, strategy, and best practices; that embraces outside influences; that concentrates on setting policy rather than on operational details. A concluding workshop in May will set short-term and long-term goals for meeting those objectives. 

Speakers Series - Special Topics in Usability

Don't miss out

The Department of Technical Communication at the University of Washington (UW) now offers its Winter Quarter Speakers Series, Special Topics in Usability, via the web in streaming video!

For the past 10 years members of the UW community as well as members of the professional community have been invited to attend this Speakers Series held Fridays from 12:30-1:20 pm. Now you don't have to fight the traffic to hear our nationally renowned speakers and professionals talking about current issues in usability testing.

Watch Every Week

Beginning January 5 the Speakers Series lecture will be taped during the

live Friday seminar throughout winter quarter. By Friday afternoon you will be able to log on and view the lecture in the comfort of your office or home via the web in streaming video. Sign up with your coworkers and learn more about what other usability specialists are practicing and discovering. Videos will be available for on-demand viewing at any time.

Register Soon

The tuition fee for the Winter Quarter Speakers Series is \$400, plus a \$20 registration fee. To register, call 206-543-2310 or 1-800-543-2320. The Registration number is # 56981. If you have questions, please contact Kate Long at katelong@u.washington.edu.

STC Alberta welcomes these new members to our growing chapter:

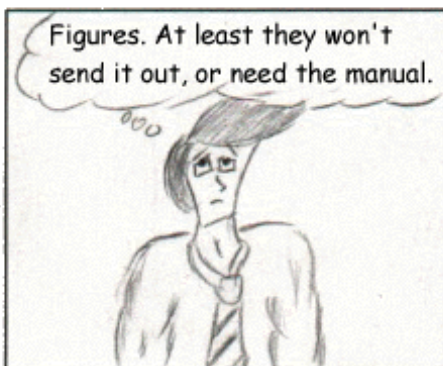
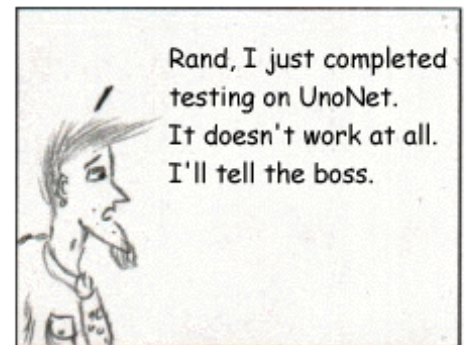
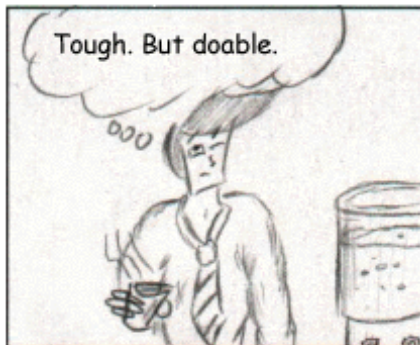
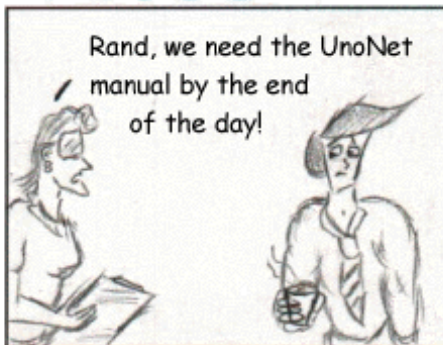
Andrew Wills
Bonnie Schott
Bruce Holman
Dale James
Goldwin Edison McEwen
Joanne Heaton
Maureen Lynch
Robin Maguire
Sharon Ruta

Congratulations to the following members on achieving Senior Member status:

Bill Bunn
Rosemary Reed
Cheryl Goodale
Theresa M. Slator
Kim E. McKenzie



Bitter Ink.



© 2001 Jeremy Schroeder



Mark Your Calendars!

Thursday Programs

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

Location: MacDougall Centre
455-6 Street SW, Calgary

Time: 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm
Please arrive by 6:30 pm for registration.

Pre-registration: **Recommended.** Pre-register by the Monday prior to the program.

Fee:	Pre-register	Drop-in
Members	\$7.00	\$10.00
Student Members	5.00	8.00
Non-members	10.00	13.00

Saturday Programs

Attend Saturday programs to gain in-depth knowledge and skill in areas such as editing, Microsoft Word, and Adobe FrameMaker.

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: 9:00 am to 4:00 pm (unless otherwise stated)

Pre-registration: **Required.** Pre-register at least ten days prior to the program. **Note:** registration must be cancelled 1 week in advance of the Program or registrant will be billed for course fees.

Fee:	Members	\$75.00
	Student Members	50.00
	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 Horton's.

Time: 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Pre-registration: Not required.

Fee: Free for both members and non-members.

Executive Meetings

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

Time: 5:30 pm (Building doors are locked after 5:30pm)

February 2001

- Monday, 12 Executive Meeting (New Night)
- Thursday, 15 **Managing Change to an XML Set**
Thursday Program
- Tuesday, 27 **Bulletproof: Job Security** (New night)
Coffee Night

March 2001

- Thursday, 15 **Demystifying Java**
Thursday Program
- Saturday, 17 **Advanced Adobe FrameMaker**
Saturday Program
- Monday, 19 Executive Meeting
- Tuesday, 27 **It's Alive: Focus on Portfolios**
Coffee Night

April 2001

- Tuesday, 10 **A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Water Cooler...**
Coffee Night
- Monday, 16 Executive Meeting
- Thursday, 19 **Ethics in Technical Communication**
Thursday Program

May 2001

- Tuesday, 8 **How Can We Improve?**
Coffee Night
- Monday, 14 Executive Meeting (New night)
- Thursday, 17 **Quality Assurance**
Jim Armstrong

To pre-register...

To pre-register for Thursday and Saturday programs, e-mail Kim McKenzie, our hospitality coordinator, at kim.mckenzie@home.com, indicating your name and the program you wish to attend.

SuperScript

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Submissions: the Editors invite readers to submit articles, news, reviews, and other items of interest. Articles may be edited for size.

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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:

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