



STC society for technical communication



SuperScript Newsletter – Annual Report

- Don Harman, Alyssa Rennie, Michael Trumper, Mai-Ann Sprung, Co-Editors 1999-2000

It's been a fun year, but it has gone by very quickly and we now find ourselves at the end of our 10 issues and handing our responsibilities to the new Editors for the 2000-2001 season. We've enjoyed working closely with a terrifically energetic and supportive Executive Council, and putting the newsletter together was a wonderful change from producing (oftentimes dry) technical content. We learned a lot about newsletter production, and about what goes in to running a chapter of our size, and received tremendous support and encouragement from our chapter members. *SuperScript* was also recognized this year in the STC Newsletter Competition with an Award of Merit in our chapter size category.

As with the example set in the previous 1998-1999 newsletter year, the production of *SuperScript* was undertaken by a team, sharing the editing, proofreading, advertising, and production duties of *SuperScript* and taking turns at the Coordinator helm. This rotating responsibility meant it was much easier to coordinate busy schedules while keeping to a strict publication deadline. With the increasing number of chapter activities, events, and submissions, the job of Editor is definitely best as a shared, team role.

The 1999-2000 season saw the publication of 10 issues of *SuperScript*, including a number of submissions from our new Director-Sponsor, and several half-page ad-

vertisements, which helped to underwrite the costs of production. The advertising contacts will be passed on to the new Editors so that this financial support might continue into the next year. We also established a new relationship with West Canadian as our printer. Although there were a few small glitches in the proof/printing process, these seldom caused a problem with meeting our shipping deadline, and we do recommend continuing with this print house.

After working with Microsoft Publisher (provided by our employer) to produce the newsletter, we recommended to the Executive that the chapter purchase a tool that can be passed from Editor to Editor over the next few years. When first considering taking on the Editor's role, having access to a quality desktop publishing application was crucial—none of us wanted to tackle the job armed only with a word processing application (do-able, but not usually very enjoyable). So we thought the position would be a little more enticing to volunteers if they were given the added incentive of being able to learn and work with a new tool. Adobe PageMaker was chosen and purchased, partly due to the "not-for-profit organization" pricing available at the Uni-

versity of Calgary MicroStore, but also because it's a tool that many technical writers are unlikely to use in their everyday work.

In recent months, it was suggested by the Executive that, although previous Editors had the freedom to remake the newsletter each year, the current format should be retained for a couple more years. Therefore, the current newsletter has been transferred into a PageMaker template, which allows for consistency of the product, and is ready for the new Editors to take over for the July/August 2000 issue. We wish them the best of luck in their new roles, and hope that they have as much fun as we did.

Thanks again, STC Alberta!

The 1999-2000 SuperScript Editors.

With the increasing number of chapter activities, events, and submissions, the job of Editor is definitely best as a shared, team role.

We rookies (the new Editors) would like to thank our outgoing team of Editors for all their hard work. We'd like to give a special thanks to Mai-Ann for being there when we needed her (i.e., 2 am Thursday night...). We hope you enjoy the new additions to the newsletter. We've included some humour with a comic, and a column specially designated for jokes. Enjoy the first issue by the new Editors!

Enjoy the first issue by the new Editors!

- Jessie



A Word from our President

- Mai-Ann Sprung

New

Welcome back! After a brief summer-time pause, the STC Alberta Council is gearing up for the coming 2000-2001 season. As well as the usual Coffee Nights and Thursday night Programs, your Council members already have several events planned, including a Wine & Cheese, Saturday workshops, and, of course, the ever-popular Pub Night (see Mark Your Calendars).

The coming year will also see the return of our successful Mentorship Program and STC Alberta Listserv, and we'll be continuing our efforts to participate in the Smart 2000 Conference in October. We're only in August, and already it's shaping up to be a very eventful year.

For those of you who attended this year's 20/20 Conference and AGM, you have a fairly good idea of the kind of energy and enthusiasm that abounds in this chapter. As *SuperScript* Co-Editor for the past year, I've developed an appreciation of the work involved in leading the chapter, and in creating and maintaining the quality programs and services that our chapter offers. Although Leila (and her predecessors) made it look effortless, it's not. But, hand-in-hand with the hard work was the fun I had with an energetic and supportive Council. In fact, one of the most

compelling reasons for my taking on this role is to have another chance to work with this enthusiastic, dedicated, and talented group of individuals.

But even more encouraging than the knowledge that we aren't doing something wrong, was the information-sharing and brainstorming that elicited some solid ideas—ideas we can put to work here at home.

The Conference and AGM—a huge hit again this year—were preceded by a breakfast meeting with Ellen Fenwick, Director-Sponsor of Region 7, who was our Keynote Speaker at the AGM later that evening. A gracious leader, Ellen immediately put everyone at ease, and opened the floor to discuss the issues our Council faces. What quickly emerged as one of our chapter's primary concerns is how to continually nurture individuals into the leadership roles needed to keep our chapter vibrant and dynamic. Ellen offered her experience and support to the incoming Council, and also encouraged us to send representatives to one of the Leadership Work-

shops she would be holding in July.

Seeking to take advantage of this opportunity, Blair McNaughton, Secretary for 2000-2001, and I headed to the Seattle workshop. If there's one thing I learned, it is this: we are not alone. Much larger chapters face the same leadership issues as we do, and are struggling to understand and develop methods of succession that will remove the yearly guess-work from finding new Council members. But even more encouraging than the knowledge that we aren't doing something wrong, was the information-sharing and brainstorming that elicited some solid ideas—ideas we can put to work here at home. Leaving the workshop, I was pumped! Now I felt as though I had an achievable goal I could bring to the Council table this year, and take on as my standard: sustainable leadership.

If we want to see our chapter continue its recent growth without burning out those who accept leadership positions, sustainable leadership is necessary. More importantly, it's possible. So, with that in mind, you might be getting a phone call....

- Don't worry, we're working on a picture for Mai-Ann.

Alberta STC Executive Council 2000-2001

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Register for the Pan-Pacific Conference...*there's still time!*

- Jay Mead

Registration for the Region 7/8 Pan-Pacific Conference is running at a record clip. But there is still time to register and be part of this fun and historic event. Said conference chair Jack Molisani, "We're delighted at the strong turnout to date. Attending this conference means an opportunity to network with fellow professionals, an opportunity to learn, and of course an opportunity to enjoy getting to know some great people!" The conference takes place October 19-21 in Honolulu, Hawaii (see www.pan-pacific.org for complete information).

Molisani continued, "There's still space for more registrants." While rooms at the conference hotel, the Renaissance Ilikai on Waikiki Beach, are nearly booked (and may be sold out by the time this article is printed), rooms of comparable quality and price have been reserved just steps away from the Ilikai, at the Hawaii Prince. Furthermore, with some 100 workshops and sessions planned for the conference program, there will be plenty of sessions to accommodate everyone at the conference.

Surprisingly Affordable

Conference costs are surprisingly low, and "are a bargain considering the incredible value of this conference," said Molisani. The conference fee is \$275, and hotel accommodations can be had for as little as \$57.50 per person, double occupancy. Discount airfare is also available.

For best travel rates, contact the conference travel agency, Seawind Tours and Travel, at 1-800-424-3324, or e-mail stppc@seawindtours.com

or dhiyane@seawindtours.com.

To register for the conference, download the preliminary program from the conference Web site (www.pan-pacific.org).

Conference Programs: Abundant Choices

Every communicator will leave this conference with much more than just a suntan. Program sessions address the needs of beginners and experts alike. More than 100 speakers will share their knowledge and insights with conference participants in 70 sessions and 32 full- and half-day workshops. Topics cover writing and project management, career development, knowledge management, mentoring, collaboration, contracting and job searching, project management, distance learning, training and development, and even contract law and ethics. In addition, as befits an international conference, translation and writing for international audiences is thoroughly covered.

The keynote speaker for the conference is Martha Baer, senior contributing editor at *Wired* magazine. Baer has served as a writer, editor, consultant, producer, and research chief for the publication, guiding it to its edgy, pre-eminent voice while covering technology and Silicon Valley. Her wide-ranging talk will deal with technical style, audience, and interface issues, as well as the state of our profession as seen from one of today's most exciting publications.

Conference programs were mailed to all STC members in Regions 7 and 8 in June. If you didn't receive yours, or if you'd like an updated copy, see the conference Web site (www.pan-pacific.org).

Tours and Activities in Paradise

If you find the idea of spending time on the most beautiful beach in the world appealing, this conference is for you. And what's a trip to Hawaii without a luau? You'll have an opportunity to sample the fare of the islands and the culture of Polynesia at our luau on Thursday night, as well as take a dinner cruise on Saturday to view the magnificent Waikiki waterfront!

For More Information

Visit the conference Web site (www.pan-pacific.org) for more information about the program. For travel information, contact Seawind Tours and Travel at 1-800-424-3324 or 1-800-949-4144. For any other questions, contact conference chair Jack Molisani, jackm@ClarityTechnical.com.

There's still time to register—see you in Waikiki! 🍹

If you find the idea of spending time on the most beautiful beach in the world appealing, this conference is for you.

More than 100 speakers will share their knowledge and insights with conference participants.

Jay Mead is past-president of the STC Rocky Mountain Chapter, and PR chair for the Pan-Pacific Conference.

May 2000 Board of Directors Meeting

Ellen Fenwick, Region 7 Director-Sponsor

The STC International Board of Directors approved the following items of business at the spring board meeting on May 20, 2000 in Orlando, Florida (all dollar amounts are USD).

Merit Grants

- Michigan Tech University student chapter for a \$3,000 scholarship fund for seed money to cover expenses for selected students to attend the STC annual and regional conferences.
- Northeast Ohio chapter for \$500 to support and expand its mentoring program.
- Northeast Ohio chapter for \$1,000 to enhance its publicity program.
- Central Ohio chapter for \$1,500 to offer a Region 4 leadership training workshop and conference for leaders of both student and professional chapters.

- Singapore chapter for shipping expenses not to exceed \$1,000 to send the winning 1999-2000 International Technical Publications Competition entries.

Loans

- Multi-chapter loan of \$2,500 for the Region 6 Conference.

Research Grants

- Saul Carliner for \$9,960 for "What Do We Manage? A Survey of the Management Portfolios of Large Technical Communications Departments."
- Michael Albers and Loel Kim for \$10,000 for "User Web Browsing Characteristics Using a Palm Handheld for Information Retrieval."

Interim Executive Council Actions

- Dissolution of the Illinois State University student chapter effective January 20, 2000.

Continued on page 5.

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Next session starts in September!

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tickle my funny bone...

"NOW I'M NO ALPHA GEEK, AND THE BATTLE FAXES WARNED ME NOT TO PUT THIS IN TO THE NEWSLETTER CUZ THEY FIGURED A BUNCH OF BLAMESTORMING TECHIES WOULD GET BEEPILEPSY, BUT I CLEARED IT WITH THE ADMINISPHERE SO I DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT GETTING UNINSTALLED."

If you didn't understand the previous paragraph, then we came along just in time. Welcome to a brand new column in our newsletter. This column is dedicated to making techies laugh at the things that make us most mad: WORK. We already have to learn the technical jargon to do our jobs, now we can learn some FUN new office lingo. (And if you DID understand the first paragraph, you are such a mouse potato.)

ADMINISPHERE: The rarified organizational layers of upper management, e.g., "We have to do it, the orders came from the adminisphere."

ALPHA GEEK: The person in your group who knows the most about computers.

BATTLE FAXES: Flurry of hostile faxes exchanged by warring lawyers.

BEEPILEPSY: That quick body jolt you see when somebody's beeper goes off.

BLAMESTORMING: Getting together with a group of coworkers to talk about why a deadline was missed or a proposal was rejected.

MOUSE POTATO: The cyber generation's answer to the couch potato, someone who surfs or plays games at the computer for hours at a time.

UNINSTALLED: Fired from the job, e.g., "They uninstalled Freddie today."

Reactions of a Writer – June Coffee Night

- Suzanne Scott

While the official topic of June's coffee get-together was how to improve the Alberta chapter of the STC, the biggest issue of the night was the format of the newsletter. The current paper newsletter costs a fair amount to produce, and the money saved by distributing it in electronic form could be used to provide services to chapter members. It seems simple enough; we do live in the electronic age. It would be easy to produce, to distribute, and to maintain. We would even save a couple of trees in the process.

The arguments against the electronic format are valid, but it seems as though the barriers could easily be overcome. Would it be such a great effort, for example, to produce a paper version for those who don't have access to e-mail?

And, if it is such an onerous task to read more than a couple of sentences on the computer screen, wouldn't it be ok to print out the electronic version and read it while that annoying box is turned off?

To me, an electronic newsletter makes a great deal of logical sense, but I would still rather have a professionally produced version, on quality paper, even though it requires a greater expenditure of STC dues. The paper version is in no way functionally superior, so why are so few members willing to give up the paper version?

It is a visceral reaction. Perhaps it is because we live in such a computerized world, and generating a collection of words for mass distribution has become trivial. A paper newsletter is tangible proof that we know a bit about type-setting and printing—it is a symbol of our passion for producing written material. It is more than a cute little online brochure produced with the latest home publishing software.

This is, however, the reaction of a writer. I'm sure that there are technical communicators out there who consider my sentiments conceited and old fashioned. However, the assumption is that the electronic newsletter would be a reproduction of the paper version, but there is no reason the electronic version can't be a wizzy replacement with hyperlinks and interactive multimedia that better serves the technical writing community.

Now all we need are some web savvy volunteers. 📧

May 2000 Board of Directors Meeting

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- Formation of the Montana chapter with a \$200 startup grant and dissolution of the Montana student chapter effective February 15, 2000.
- Formation of the Long Island chapter effective March 13, 2000 with a \$350 startup grant.

Industry Fellowship for Faculty

- An Industry Fellowship for Faculty of \$2,000 USD to Dwedor Morais Ford contingent on her obtaining an industry internship position. 📧

The Taste of Bitter Ink

Jeremy Schroeder, the creator of our Bitter Ink comic (on the next page), is a Technical Writer at GE Harris Energy Control Systems. He finished his last course two months ago ("finally," he says), and is now a graduate of Mount Royal College's Bachelor of Applied Communications program. In his spare time, he likes to poke fun at his profession by drawing comics about poor technical writers who get used and abused. He also hates office politics...and thence was born...Bitter Ink.

Any comments or questions for Jeremy? He can be reached at jeremy.schroeder@ps.ge.com.

STC Alberta's June AGM well-attended

- Caroline Kutschke

About 55 people attended the Alberta chapter's 20/20 Conference and Annual General Meeting on June 24, helping to make the chapter's second professional development and AGM combined event a success.

The AGM opened with an entertaining and thought-provoking keynote address by Region 7 Director-Sponsor, Ellen Fenwick, on the similarities between technical writers and detectives. Next, outgoing President Leila Meyer highlighted the year's accomplishments, thanked all volunteers and introduced incoming chapter President Mai-Ann Sprung. Meyer also introduced outgoing and incoming executive, committee members, and AGM volunteers.

Evening highlights included words of thanks to Leila Meyer from the executive and committee members read by Darren Tenor, Coffee Night and Special Events coordinator, as well as presentation of the STC President's pin to Leila for her hard work in the past year. Other highlights/news include:

- Outgoing *SuperScript* editor Don Harman announced Edmonton member Perry Shulak as winner of the Chapter Newsletter Competition. Shulak's winning article, *Interactive Media a Valuable Communication Tool if Used Properly* appeared in

the May issue of *SuperScript*.

- The chapter's cash balance for the end of the fiscal year June 30, 2000 is \$7,446.54, reported Treasurer Ian Hawkins. The balance at the beginning of the fiscal year (July 1, 1999) was \$6,048.84. Total income was about \$19,575, including \$7,406.00 dues rebate from STC International. Exact figures will be available after the year-end audit. A large expense is expected for the upcoming year, mostly related to Smart 2000.
- Edmonton's activities, mostly coffee nights, are growing and becoming more popular, reported Edmonton Liaison Angela Wiens. Members considered launching an Edmonton chapter but chose to remain within the Alberta chapter.
- The chapter activities throughout the year included regularly attended programs (on Thursdays and Saturdays), and coffee nights in Calgary and Edmonton, a newly launched listserv, a busy jobline, a popular mentorship program (now at 17 mentors and 14 mentored), and a spiffily re-designed Web site.

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STC Alberta Executive Council for 2000-2001

Elected Officers

Position	Name	Home	Office	Email
President	Mai-Ann Sprung	281-3299	716-4470	maianns@merak.com
Vice President	Sue Scott	252-8084		suescott@telusplanet.net
Secretary	Blair McNaughton	281-3299		final.draft@home.com
Treasurer	Ian Hawkins	245-0399	245-0399	ihawkins@telusplanet.net
Past President	Leila Meyer	938-3389	850-0695	leila.meyer@olantra.com

Coordinators

Position	Name	Home	Office	Email
Archivist	Grant Sorensen	244-6552	240-5513	wallis@telusplanet.net
Cnd. Issues Committee	Glenn Ruhl		240-6732	gruhl@mtroyal.ab.ca
Coffee Night	Darren Tenor	287-6529		tenor@nucleus.com
Competitions	Brian O'Malley	282-4399		omalley@nucleus.com
Education	Ken Schatzke	242-4962		ksschatzke@home.com
Jobline	Lucinda Yaworski	288-8209		yaworskl@cadvision.com
Membership	Leila Meyer	938-3389	850-0695	leila.meyer@olantra.com
Member Directory/Survey	Brian O'Malley	282-4399		omalley@nucleus.com
Mentorship	Fena Maucieri	275-6336	730-7569	fena.maucieri@windriver.com
Newsletter Editors	Kim Yarmuch	210-2639		kimy@telusplanet.net
	Jessie Channey	280-5632		jchanney@hotmail.com
	Helen Schleedoorn	235-3134	231-4345	hschlee1@isma.com
Programs	Caroline Kutschke	262-1940		carolink@telusplanet.net
Public Relations	Kathryn Bruce	240-9750		kathy1999_99@yahoo.com
Registration/Hospitality	Caroline Kutschke	262-1940		carolink@telusplanet.net
Special Events	Darren Tenor	287-6529	216-0536	tenor@nucleus.com
STC Alberta List	Leila Meyer	938-3389	850-0695	leila.meyer@olantra.com
Volunteers	Laurie Holtby		246-0416	holtby@cadvision.com
Webmaster	Gillian Ward	286-1518	974-1309	gillian.ward@mail.nrginfo.com

Liaisons

Position	Name	Home	Office	Email
Edmonton	Angela Wiens	(780) 426-3510	(780) 438-2323	awiens@telusplanet.net
MRC	Glenn Ruhl		240-6732	gruhl@mtroyal.ab.ca



Mark Your Calendars!

Executive Meetings

Merak building
322-11 Avenue SW

Mon., August 21, 2000
Mon., September 20, 2000

All members are welcome.

Wine & Cheese

Memorial Park Library
1221, 2 Street SW

September 30 @ 7 pm

Workshops

Mount Royal College

Sat., November 18, 2000
Editing for Technical Writers

Presented by Walter Bruno

Sat., January 13, 2000
Advanced Microsoft Word

Presented by Brian O'Malley

Sat., March 17, 2000

Advanced Adobe

FrameMaker

Presented by Philip Sharman

Coffee Night

Annie's Books

912 - 16 Avenue NW

Tues., September 14, 2000

Programs

MacDougall Centre

Thursday, October 19, 2000

Thursday, Nov 23, 2000

Thursday, Dec 21, 2000

Speakers and topics to be announced.

STC Alberta's June AGM well-attended

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- The chapter held its first membership survey since 1997. Results are expected in September.
- The chapter held its first Publication and Online Competition and announced winners.
- Membership reached 221.
- The chapter began developing press kits to promote technical communication and the chapter to Alberta's business community as well as a new chapter brochure.

20/20 Conference

Feedback from the professional development seminars at the 20/20 Conference at the Village Park Inn will be posted on the AGM page on the chapter's Web site in August. Speaker Keith Karain's presentation on XML will also be posted. Members interested in presenting a workshop or seminar at next year's event are invited to submit proposals to the AGM planning committee.

Chapter members are also welcome to suggest speakers and/or topics they would like to see covered. For the time being, please send topic and speaker proposals and suggestions to Programs Coordinator Caroline Kutschke at carolink@telusplanet.net.

TAKE NOTE...



THE AUGUST MEETING OF STC WILL BE AT A NEW LOCATION AND NEW TIME. WE WILL NOW MEET AT THE MERAK BUILDING (WITH FREE PARKING!!) AT 5:30. UNLESS YOU WANT TO BE FRISKED BY BUILDING SECURITY, BE ON TIME.

(YOU WON'T REALLY GET FRISKED. UNLESS YOU ASK REAL NICE...)

STC Alberta would like to welcome the following new members to our growing chapter:



New Members:

Micki Bjorjum, Calgary

Kirk Layton, Calgary

Annae Jensen, Strathmore

Scott Hildebrandt, Calgary

And special recognition for our senior members:

Nancy Sequeira

Sherri Mullin

Don Manuel

Ruth Maryniuk

Mary Nasi

Bevelyn MacLise Park

Donna Lyn Levia

Gillian Ward

Margie Diakuw

SuperScript

SuperScript is the official newsletter of the Alberta Chapter of STC, the Society for Technical Communication, 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.

Reprints: Original articles appearing in *SuperScript* may be freely reprinted, provided that the author and source are acknowledged, and a copy of the reprint is promptly sent to the Editors. Reprints may not be edited for content, or used for commercial or morally repugnant purposes.

Distribution: *SuperScript* is distributed to members in Alberta and Northwest Territories, to all Canadian chapters and Region 7 chapters of the STC, and to interested companies and individuals upon request. Circulation is 225.

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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