



Super Script

September 2000



society for technical communication



Smart 2000 and You

- Fei Min Lorente, Chair, Smart 2000 Committee

The Smart 2000 conference will take place in Calgary from October 23rd to 26th. It is aimed at leading edge technology, processes, business practices, and professionals, and follows the theme "Smart People, Smart Places, and Smart Policies". The conference wants to attract people from business, education, health, research, and government—in short, our employers and clients. Since this is a prime opportunity to educate people about technical communication and the STC, we will be operating a display booth during the conference. In an attempt to raise the profile of technical communicators and the STC, the display will illustrate what technical communicators do, how they increase a company's efficiency and profits, and the function of the STC.

Volunteering in the STC Booth

Dates: October 23rd to 26th

Exhibition Hours are 10:00 to 5:00.

Each day will be divided into two shifts. Each shift requires two volunteers.

Lunch will be supplied from 12:00 to 1:00. Before or after your shift, enjoy some of the other displays, including a smart home classroom, and truck.

Volunteering for the Smart 2000 Conference

The Smart 2000 conference organizers have agreed to give us our booth space at the conference, worth \$2800, in exchange for advertising for registrants and conference volunteers. If you don't want to be just an attendee, you can get a piece of the action by volunteering, before or during the conference.

To encourage volunteering for the conference, all of the Smart 2000 volunteers will be entered in a draw for prizes from the STC Alberta Chapter. You will also be able to leave your business cards at the STC booth at the conference.

If none of the volunteer positions below appeal to you, you might consider volunteering to be a speaker at the conference. Think of the publicity! You can make a name for yourself, promote technical communication and the STC all at the same time!

Possible Volunteer Jobs for Smart 2000

You can see that some of the jobs provide opportunities for you to practice your communication skills, network, make contacts with potential employers, and just have fun!

Have a look, and check those jobs that might be of interest to you:

- Write articles for the newsletter (probably only 1 or 2 more newsletters)
- Write one-page appeals to specific industries and professions explaining why they would want to attend the conference
- Assist with registration during the conference, perhaps supervise the registration group
- Help with mail-outs (expect to send a preliminary program in mid-July and a final program in mid-September)
- Create maps of Calgary and the convention centre
- Procure gifts for speakers

- Organize the "pageantry" (i.e., working on the decorating committee)*
- Create graphics displays (banners, signs announcing next speaker, etc.)*
- Place signs and decorations*
- Give directions/hand out maps
- Act as "gophers" during the conference
- Look after the volunteer lounge, speakers lounge, media lounge, or staff area
- Arrange identification for the volunteers (such as designing and ordering T-shirts)
- Organize volunteers working at the convention (starting a few weeks before the convention)
- Act as facilities liaison with the convention centre
- Be buddies for out-of-town speakers and panelists
- Show people how to use the Shaw e-mail stations and contact Shaw in case of problems
- Take down signs/decorations; arrange for disposal
- Contact/write for free publicity closer to the conference date

*These positions will be working together.

Please see page 4 for contact information if you'd like to help organize Smart 2000 or work in the display booth.

missing in
action!!

A Word from our President

- Mai-Ann Sprung

With the whole year spreading out before us and already filling up quickly, I thought I'd take this opportunity to let you know about the STC events your Executive Council is planning. As well as the usual Programs, Coffee Nights, and Saturday workshops, the next couple of months see important networking opportunities in which you might want to participate.

To start the year off right, we are holding our second annual Wine and Cheese reception on September 28 at the Memorial Park Library. The new Executive Council will be introduced, and we'll welcome new Mount Royal College students to the technical writing fold. Despite the freak rainfall that turned to a nice icy sheen last year, we had a large turnout of senior members and newcomers alike, making the night a great kickoff to a very busy and successful year.

All members and non-members are welcome, and the reception begins at 7:00 pm.

Plans for our chapter's participation in the Smart2000 Conference and Exhibition are also well underway. Our own Smart2000

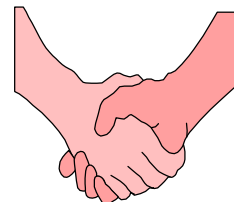
The next couple of months see important networking opportunities in which you might want to participate.

Committee, led by Fei Min Lorente, has been hard at work selecting a portable booth and organizing design work that will promote technical communications and the STC to the high tech industries represented at the conference. As part of our agreement with the Smart2000

Planning Committee, we are also trying to gather volunteers to help with the varied duties of such a large conference. There are plenty of opportunities to become involved in this conference, so please visit our web site (www.stc.org/region7), the Smart2000 Conference and Exhibition site (www.smart2000.org), or the front page of this newsletter for more information on how you can get involved.

For more information about these and other events, please see the **STC Year-At-A-Glance** and **Mark Your Calendars** segments of this newsletter, or check out our STC Alberta web site (www.stc.org/region7).

I look forward to seeing some new faces out there this year!



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STC Alberta Chapter Mentorship Program

- Fena Mauceri, Mentorship Coordinator, 2000-2001

The STC Alberta Chapter launched a mentoring program in 1999 with over 30 individuals participating throughout the year. Basically, the program allows individuals to define their own objectives and scope of involvement.

The mentoring program is not tied to any particular educational institution or program; it is simply a way to connect individuals and provide a networking system that is more focused. Mentors, and those being mentored, can participate at a number of levels, ranging from telephone interviews to job shadowing, as detailed below.

Discussions

Entails a phone call or personal interview with questions prepared by the individual wishing to be mentored. This type of arrangement could extend to several meetings if

necessary and desired.

E-mail Buddy

E-mail communication between the mentor and the individual wishing to be mentored. This type of communication is useful for individuals who are in a junior technical writing position as a lone writer and would like advice/support from a more senior technical writer.

Job Shadow

The individual wishing to be mentored observes the mentor at work. This type of activity may require signing non-disclosure agreements and/or employer permission.

The mentor should determine the scope and procedure of the job shadow so it fits into their daily schedule.

How do I get involved?

1. Visit the Web site at www.stc.org/region7/alb/mentor.html or let Fena Maucieri know you are interested in the program by sending email to fena.maucieri@windriver.com or by calling 275-6336.
2. Fill out the appropriate form and send it back to Fena.
3. Fena will compare all the forms and attempt to match individuals.
4. If there is a match, both parties will be notified via e-mail or phone. The mentor will be responsible for making initial contact. If there is not a match, Fena will actively look for a mentor. 📧

A Note from Manitoba

It's nearly September and time to return our thoughts to STC Manitoba. The September issue of Manuscript is now on the Web site; have a look! It's an easy way to get back into stride.

www.stc.org/region6/man/www/newsletters/STCsept2000.pdf

Be sure to check out the menu for the September 15th dinner with the STC Board of Directors. You won't be able to resist it! Hope to see you there.

As always, I welcome any feedback on the newsletter. If you want to submit something, GREAT! Contact me and I'll give you some guidelines.

Regards,

Elsie Neufeld, Newsletter Editor
STC Manitoba

IMPORTANT NEWS: JOBLINE CODE

Lucinda Yaworski, Jobline Coordinator

One of the many benefits enjoyed by members of the Alberta STC is access to the Jobline. Members can find out exactly which companies are looking for people and what skill sets they are looking for. The Jobline also greatly benefits companies. They can focus their recruiting efforts directly on a specific target audience—technical communicators.

It is easy to see that access to the Jobline is of value to STC Alberta members and a measurable benefit of membership. To protect this value, it is necessary to periodically change the Jobline access code to ensure only STC members have that access.

Effective November 1, 2000, there will be a new Jobline access code. To get the new code, simply send me an e-mail with your full name (as it is registered with STC) and information on how I can contact you. My e-mail address is: yaworski@cadvision.com

You can also give me a call at (403) 288-8209.



Do you know how you learn? Should you care?

- Caroline Kutschke, Programs/Hospitality

So maybe you write well. But are you making assumptions about your readers' ability to understand and learn? Do you know how you learn and does your style of learning differ from others? Which is right? Is there is a right way?

On Thursday, October 19, the University of Calgary's Dr. Barbara Schneider will present Learning Styles - An Introduction. After a brief lecture, attendees will take a 5-minute test to identify their own styles. A workshop on how to apply learning styles theory when writing for audiences will follow. Handouts will be provided.

Learning styles theory studies the way that people approach the world and how they learn, e.g., when we write, we often assume our readers will understand everything because we assume they are like us. But of course, they are not; many of us write, read, and learn in different ways. How to identify the ways in which we learn and how to use the different

styles are just a sampling of the world of learning styles theory. This theory and practice can be applied both at the office and at home.

Dr. Schneider, of the U of C's Faculty of Communication and Culture, presented last May's well-received program on Plain Language. (See "Do You Write Effectively?" on page 3 in the June issue of *SuperScript*.)

To understand how learning styles are studied and can be applied, you are invited to attend the STC Alberta chapter's October Thursday night program.

The program will be held at the MacDougall Centre, 5th Avenue and 6th Street SW, Calgary. The presentation starts at 7 pm, but please

show up from 6:30 pm on to sign in, get your receipt and to mingle with your peers.

The deadline for advance registration is Monday, October 16. The fee is \$5 for students, \$7 for STC chapter members, and \$10 for non-members. Please call 230-6072 and then press 2 to register for this program (leave your name and contact information after the beep which occurs after the program message.)



COMPETITIONS!

Watch for the call for entries—it's coming soon! The Alberta Chapter is holding Publications and Online technical competitions.

If you would like to work in the STC display booth during the Smart 2000 Conference, please contact:

Fei Min Lorente
lorente@telusplanet.net
Grant Sorensen
wallis@telusplanet.net

If you would like to help out the Smart 2000 conference organizers, please e-mail Marj Koepke at info@smart2000.org, and cc me at lorente@telusplanet.net so that I can enter your name

Pan-Pacific Conference Update

A few spots left!

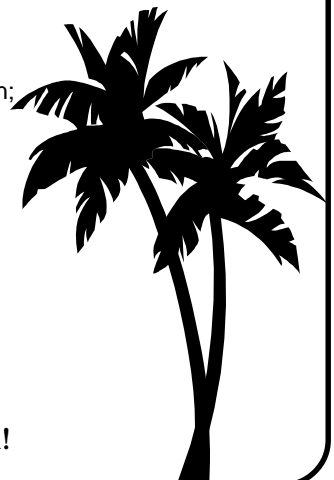
As you read this, the Region 7/8 Pan-Pacific Conference is probably only weeks or days away. Like those of you lucky enough to attend, we're looking forward to a remarkable conference in one of the most beautiful places in the world. October 19-21: we hope it's on your calendar!

For those of you who have considered attending: there's still time! Over 400 communicators have already registered, and there's still space for you too. Be a part of this fun and historic event; at this conference you'll network with fellow professionals; you'll have an opportunity to learn; and of course you'll enjoy getting to know some great people. The conference features over 100 sessions and workshops, as well as time to enjoy magnificent Waikiki Beach.

Conference costs are surprisingly affordable, with discounted hotel rates and airfares available. For best travel rates, contact the conference travel agency, Seawind Tours and Travel, at 1-800-424-3324, or e-mail stcppc@seawindtours.com.

To register for the conference, download the preliminary program from the conference Web site: www.pan-pacific.org. For any other questions, contact conference chair Jack Molisani, jackm@ClarityTechnical.com.

Remember, there's still time to register—see you in Waikiki!



20/20 Conference Feedback Analysis

- Caroline Kutschke, Programs/Hospitality

Comments about the AGM 20/20 Conference last June were mostly positive, judging from the replies on the feedback forms attendees filled out that day. Volunteers collected about 74 forms at the conference—a number reflecting not the amount of people that attended, but rather the numbers of forms filled out after each of the four sessions (i.e., one person may have filled out two forms). Note that not all forms were filled out completely and not everyone filled out the forms.

Almost all attendees were members. Their comments ranged from being enthusiastic about sessions and the entire conference and Annual General Meeting, to concerns about

the difficulty of getting information about the chapter's Annual General Meeting, which as some remarked, is meant to be a business meeting. Also, some felt the volunteer appreciation segments of the evening were too long. Most were satisfied with the date, time, venue, events, and cost. A small number complained about the cost of the meal, the length of the sessions, and location of the conference.

The speakers, Bill Bunn, Claire Huene, Michael Trumper, and Keith Karain, all received favourable comments. Negative remarks targeted the lack of handouts, length of sessions and for some, relevance to technical writers.

Continued on page 7.

For Thought...



Dreams come a size too big so that we can grow into them.

-Josie Bisset

Never let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do.

-John Wooden

Appreciation in any form at any time brightens anyone's existence.

-Ruth Stafford Peale

*I'm sure I speak for all the new editors this year when I extend a huge **THANKS!** to Jessie for tackling the first newsletter on her own. Great job Jessie! - Kim*

Reactions of a Writer
- June Coffee Night
July/Aug issue

The correct author is:
Alan Yamada
-sorry Alan!

WHAT'S IN THE STC ARCHIVES?



THE STC ARCHIVES INCLUDE A COLLECTION OF DEMO CDS THAT MEMBERS CAN BORROW IF THEY WANT TO LEARN A NEW SOFTWARE APPLICATION. CURRENTLY, THE CD COLLECTION INCLUDES:

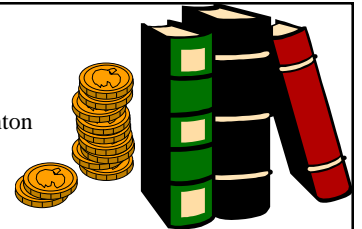
- ✓ ADOBE FRAMEMAKER 5.5 - DEMO VERSION
- ✓ ROBOHELP HTML HELP - STARTER KIT
- ✓ FOREFRONT'S HELP HIGHLIGHTS - FOREHELP PREMIER 2000

IF YOU WANT TO BORROW ANY OF THESE CDS, PLEASE CONTACT:

GRANT SORENSEN
WALLIS@TELUSPLANET.NET

Edmonton News

On Thursday, September 14, 2000, STC Members in Edmonton had their first meeting in the form of a book sale! The event was held at Natalie Cook's home.



Paperbacks were sold for \$1 and hardcovers were sold for \$2.

A word from Angela:

For the remainder of the year, we'll be trying very hard to meet on the second Thursday of each month. If the volunteer is unable to book Chapters for that date (because it's a first-come first-serve booking, but only two weeks in advance), then we'll have a list of backup locations. If you know of any locations we could have on our list (does your office have a meeting room?), please let me know.

I have a volunteer for October, but the rest of the year is open. If you have a topic you'd like to share with the group, please consider presenting at one of our meetings. Again, the "volunteer of the month" books the facility, picks a topic, runs the meeting, and writes an article for SuperScript. Please ask if you have questions or need some help with a topic!

Thanks, Natalie, for the use of your home. It's very much appreciated.

Angela Wiens
STC Alberta Chapter, Edmonton Liaison

The Taste of Bitter Ink

Jeremy Schroeder, the creator of our Bitter Ink comic, 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

- Jessie Channey

This write-up—and Bitter Ink—first appeared in the July/August newsletter. Thanks for a great contribution to SuperScript Jeremy!

-Kim

What is a Coffee Night?



Coffee Nights are opportunities for people interested in technical communication to get together and meet one another in an informal and relaxed atmosphere. Whether we stick to the night's topic or go off on some bizarre tangent, Coffee Nights are fun, flexible and free. Non-members are welcome! Come on down and see what all the fuss is about.

Coffee Nights are held monthly at:
Annie's Books (912 – 16th Avenue NW).

See page 8 for a detailed listing of upcoming coffee nights and special events.

Online-learning.com

Online Professional Development for Technical Writers

✓ Online Learning is now offering a **20% discount** for courses if registrants mention they are **STC members**.

✓ Several new 6-week part-time courses are available due to market demand.

Bitter Ink.

We need more consistency in our documents



Our current manuals have three names for the same thing. Digital point, Status point, and Binary point.



We're confusing our readers. We need to pick one of those terms, and stick with it.



Digital is the correct term
Status is incorrect

Plus binary used binary...
But digital and binary mean the same thing...



JUST PICK ONE!



I should have gone into Journalism

I heard Computer point once...



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20/20 Conference Feedback Analysis

Continued from page 5.

Some felt the XML session would have benefited from following the Single Sourcing session and that it didn't address the needs of the technical writing industry well enough. Many commented on the need for more learning about single sourcing and XML.

As to how they would apply what they learned, most said they would use the information in their work environment, in professional development and as a springboard for further research.

Newsletter—electronic or paper?

When asked how members preferred to receive SuperScript, 31 selected by print, 26 selected by e-mail and 11 selected the web as method of delivery.

What topics are of interest to members?

Online Help rated the highest number of selections (28) in the form's Topic of Interest to Members section, while Project Management garnered 26 selections.

The following topics rated similarly:

Multi-media – 24
Audience Analysis - 23
Communication – 22
HTML – 22
Editing – 21

Attendees selected the remaining topics as follows:

Script Writing: 19
Indexing: 17
Research Methods: 17
Graphic Design: 16

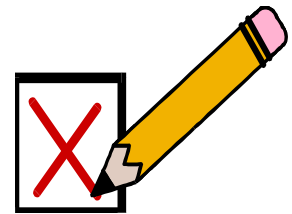
Engineering: 6
Health and Medicine: 5
Mentorship: 5
Public Relations: 5
Self-help: 5
Insurance/Liability: 4
Canadian Issues: 4
International Issues: 4
Entrepreneurship: 4
Ergonomics: 3
Languages: 3
Business Law: 3
Other Organizations: 2
Competitions: 1
Print Production: 1
Public Speaking: 1

Online Help rated the highest number of selections (28) in the form's Topic of Interest to Members section, while Project Management garnered 26 selections.

Other topics of interest included combining technical writing with marketing, information architecture, Quadralay, and more information about XML. Some people also suggested Useability as a topic.

Compiled results of the survey will be available on the website.

Group Dynamics: 14
Computers: 11
Interviews: 10
Grammar: 13
Oil & Gas: 9
Computer Hardware: 8
Consulting: 8
Ethics: 8
Marketing: 8



Alberta Chapter Launches Listserv

- Leila Meyer, President, 1999-2000 (see October 1999 SuperScript)

The members of the Alberta chapter of the STC are geographically diverse, and we're introducing a way to bring everybody together—a listserv.

The listserv is an online community for members of STC Alberta to communicate with each other about technical communication and the STC.

To subscribe, send a blank e-mail message to join-stc_alberta@lists.stc.org (hyphen between "join" and "STC"; underscore between "stc" and "alberta"). The list administrator will verify your membership and add you to the list. This process normally occurs within 24 hours. Talk to you online!

This article can be found in its entirety on the Alberta chapter's web site.

Mark Your Calendars!



Coffee Nights 2000

September 12th, 2000
Gosh! Wow! Self-promotion!

October 10th, 2000
Technical Writing Horror Stories II

November 14th, 2000
Incorporation and other minor miracles

December 12th, 2000
Building a better style guide

> > >

Special Events 2000

Thursday, September 28
Wine and Cheese
(7:00 to 10 pm)
Location: The Memorial Park Library (1221 – 2 St. SW)
Cost: 6\$ per person

Kick off the year with yet another opportunity to meet and greet your fellow communicators.

Meet the new executive and make some new friends. We'll supply the food, just don't be late! Book in advance (230-6072) and have your name included in a draw for door prizes!

STC Alberta's Year-At-A-Glance

SEPTEMBER 2000

12 Coffee Night
Topic: Gosh! Wow! Self-promotion!

18 Executive Meeting
Don't forget the new location!

28 Wine & Cheese Evening



OCTOBER 2000

10 Coffee Night
Topic: Technical Writing Horror Stories II.

16 Executive Meeting

19 Thursday Program
Topic: Learning Styles with Dr. Barbara Schneider.



NOVEMBER 2000

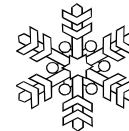
14 Coffee Night
Topic: Incorporation and Other Minor Miracles.

18 Saturday Workshop
Topic: Editorial Responsibilities: An Introduction with Walter Bruno. 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m., East Wing Lecture Hall, Mount Royal College. Members \$50, Student Members \$30 and Non-Members \$85.



20 Executive Meeting

23 Thursday Program
Topic: TBA

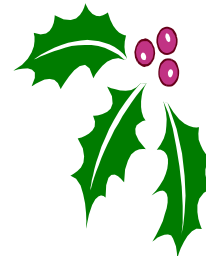


DECEMBER 2000

12 Coffee Night
Topic: Building a Better Style Guide.

18 Executive Meeting

21 Thursday Program
Topic: TBA



SuperScript

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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.

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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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Box 2947, Station M
Calgary AB T2P 3C3
Web site: <http://stc.org/region7/alb>
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