

STC COPYboard

The Newsletter of the Central New York Chapter, Society for Technical Communication

Volume 10, No. 3 - March 2000

President's Message

by Richard Inch

Ever wondered how I came to be president? Sometimes I do, too. We do employ a very fluid, loosely structured process for choosing and installing chapter officers. A member shows an interest in our chapter. In the fall, the member is asked if they'd be willing to accept it, and if they are, BINGO, the position is theirs. In my case I showed interest in helping the chapter grow; last fall Doc asked me if I would accept the position as President. I said yes. BINGO, I'm the prez.

This newsletter discusses the chapter officer election process as described in the STC Handbook. A few people have asked why we don't hold a more formal process. Truthfully, we are a small chapter where few members want a position as a chapter officer; a formal, highly-structured election process does not seem to make much sense for us.

However, maybe our process is too loose and could use some refinement. I'll let you be the judge of that. If anyone wants to step forward and become our Nominating Committee Manager, I'm all for it. Thanks to the internet, I see no reason why anyone has to "live in Syracuse". Why not a President from Morrisville, a vice prez from Owego, a Secretary from Manlius and a Treasurer from Skaneateles? Where are the Chapter Bylaws that state that meetings have to be held in Syracuse? Gosh, can you imagine a group of zealous STCr's from the Southern Tier deciding to run an election, become elected as chapter officers and then move the chapter meetings from Syracuse to Ithaca? Why not?

I want to thank everyone who shared with me their opinions about our chapter. Please, continue to keep me in touch. Our listserv more and more brings us all together at a moment's notice. Our newsletter remains our most important communication tool; I hope you see improvements with every issue. We are moving our chapter meetings to an earlier start time in a nicer room at a more central location. So far, it's been a great year! ■

Russell M. Terry
1922 - 2000

Gentle Giant

The greatest thing about Russ Terry was not that in any weather he'd drive the two hours to attend our chapter meetings even though he lived, worked, and belonged to the Rochester Chapter: It was that he traveled with his dog.

Sometimes when I didn't have the time, or didn't care about the topic, I'd go anyway just to see Russ with his gold-handled walking stick, and his great dog. But, as Shakespeare said through King Lear, "Thou come no more."

Highly regarded, Russ Terry was President of the Rochester Chapter, then International STC President, 1976-77, before he became a Fellow of the Society.

His late wife, Ruth, also was a Fellow, perhaps making them unique in STC annals. A bright, humorous, gentle man with a warm smile and the composure of a sage, the Terry "presence" will continue with us... because "To live in hearts we leave behind is not to die."

— M. D. Morris, P.E., F-STC



Adobe's Lori DeFurio to Speak March 15th

Lori DeFurio, Applications Engineer, Adobe Systems Incorporated, will be the speaker at our March 15 meeting. Laurie will be showing us FrameMaker, a software tool designed for authoring and publishing long, structured, content-rich documents across computer platforms, and Acrobat, which will convert electronic documents into Adobe PDF files that can be viewed, annotated, and printed on any computer. If time allows, we'll also look at GoLive – with the innovative visual-design tools in this Web authoring program, you can create and manage cutting-edge Web sites.

Lori DeFurio has more than 13 years experience in the technical document publishing industry. She started her publishing career working with GML (the precursor to SGML). She was employed as an SGML Consultant for 4 years prior to joining Adobe. At Adobe, she has concentrated on SGML/XML, database, and structured publishing solutions. She currently is the Acrobat Enterprise Technical Specialist in the Northeast. ■

Please Note Our New Location and Time For CNY Chapter Meetings!

By popular request, we are changing our Chapter's meeting time and place. Meetings remain on the third Wednesday of the month. However, the meeting time, formerly 7:00 PM, has been moved up to **6:00 PM**. The new location for our monthly meetings has been changed to **Leybold Inficon** in East Syracuse. 'Free' refreshments – a snack tray of varied choices...cookies, chips, fruit, etc. plus sodas and coffee – will be provided, paid for out of our Chapter Treasury.

Other advantages include: easier to get to than Betts Library (just off route 481, route 690 and the Thruway); unlimited parking; soft, comfortable chairs; and *free* overhead and LCD projectors. We thank Leybold Inficon for this generous accommodation! ■
(See Map, pg. 2, for directions.)

It's Conference Time!

By Kitty Aughey, Director-Sponsor Region 1

The Society for Technical Communication will hold its 47th Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida, May 21-24, 2000. The conference will feature more than 250 technical sessions covering technical writing, editing, management, Web design, multimedia, and other subjects of interest to technical communicators. The STC annual conference is the largest conference in the world that focuses on the arts and sciences of technical communication. Conference events address the needs of technical (continued on pg. 4)

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CNY STC Website:

www.stc.org/region1/cny

CNY STC Listserv: cnystc-l@stc.org

(broadcasts to all CNY members)

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Submit letters and articles to the Editor via E-mail. Deadline: 1st day of the month of publication.

To broadcast CNY Job leads to our CNY STC

Listserv via email:

cnystc-l@stc.org

CNY STC Website Jobs Listings:

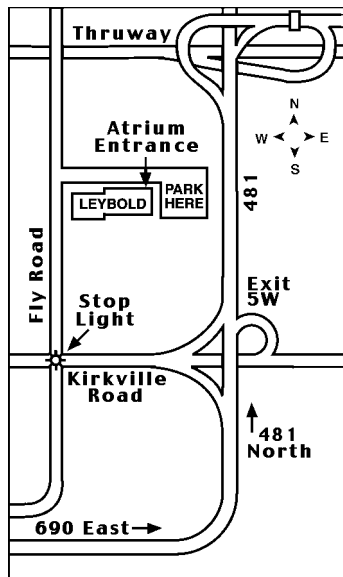
www.stc.org/region1/cny/jobs.htm

To post jobs, contact Ann Louise

(jlouise1@twcny.rr.com).

All CNY STC meetings are free and take place at Leybold Inficon, East Syracuse, from 6PM to 8:00PM on the third Wednesday of the month.

Meeting room phone: 315-434-2512.



Feedback

Richard,

My name is Dave Daly and I am an Information Designer (hip word for tech writer) at Philips Broadband Networks. In your President's message in this month's newsletter you invited more feedback, so here come my thoughts. I have been a member of the chapter for 6 years but have a very difficult time making it to meetings (I stopped trying some time ago), but I wanted to say the newsletter and the "bounce" e-mails have improved drastically and I am really enjoying some of the interaction (albeit electronic) and information I am now getting from the chapter. I see so much academic, professional, and personal growth going on in our chapter that I am very encouraged and hopeful. Thank you for your hard work so far. Just wanted you to know that some of the silent members who can't make the meetings are still listening, still absorbing, and still "active" members.

Dave Daly (dave.daly@philips.com)

Dear CNY STC members,

The STC Toronto Chapter is sponsoring our Spring Education Day 2000 (April 15, 2000, 8:30 am to 4:00 pm). The event, being promoted all around the Great Lakes and New England states, Ontario, and Quebec, will be a great opportunity for CNY STC members to come up to Toronto for a weekend, learn some new skills, and have a great time. Our Theme is, "Skills People Actually Use" The intent of the day is for people to learn hands-on skills that they can use right away.

Keynote speaker: Rex Murphy of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

Keynote subject: "Communication in an Age of Clamour"

Place: Toronto Colony Hotel (behind City Hall)

Workshops: 3 sessions in the day, we're aiming for a choice of 5-7 per session.

Workshop subjects: Currently the list includes XML, Project Management, Effective Training Techniques, Planning and Implementing a Communication Strategy, Graphics for Beginners, Wordless Manuals, NAFTA, Technical Writing, and You, Say it Write (writing skills), Personal Finance for Contractors, Judging in STC Competitions, and more.

Cost: Before March 15: Members C\$125, Non-Members C\$200, Students C\$75

After March 15: Members C\$150, Non-Members C\$250, Students C\$75.

This conference is an incredible bargain for our American friends! (The Canadian Dollar is currently worth approximately US\$0.695). For more information, please visit our web site at <http://www.stctoronto.org/events>, or contact me directly if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Robert Milkovich, Spring Education Day Coordinator, STC Toronto Chapter
robert@amazing.on.ca. Work Phone: 905-764-5499 x478

SIGs: A Good Investment

by George F. Hayhoe

Fellow, South Carolina Chapter

In a recent discussion on TECHWR-L, an e-mail discussion list for technical communicators that is not affiliated with STC, several posters debated whether STC SIGs are worth the \$5 per SIG assessment that the Society instituted a few years ago for SIG membership. Some writers noted that they didn't see any value returned from the SIGs they belonged to, while others observed that their experience had been quite different.

I belong to seven STC SIGs. Admittedly, some provide more value for the dollar than others (at least in terms of tangible benefits such as newsletters and listserv activity), but all of them have been well worth the investment.

I'd like to offer a few observations based on my experience as a SIG member as well as four years on STC's board of directors and two years on the SIG advisory committee in the early 90s:

- As with chapters, each SIG's level of activity is entirely a result of volunteer effort. None of the \$5 SIG dues is paid to volunteers, who donate their time. The larger, more enthusiastic, and giving the membership, the more bang the members get from their bucks.

How Chapter Leadership is Supposed to Work

I lifted this (OCR, actually) from the Chapter Handbook. It speaks of the process a chapter should follow with regard to electing the chapter's Administrative Council. The council is typically composed of the president, vice president, treasurer, secretary, and immediate past president. The Administrative Council makeup could vary depending on a chapter's bylaws. (The CNY Chapter has no bylaws that I am aware of.) – Richard

What Does a Nominating Committee Manager Do?

According to the Chapter Handbook, the Nominating Committee Manager:

- Directs a committee of three to five members who preferably have a wide circle of acquaintances in the chapter;
- Conducts a preliminary planning session to assign responsibilities, establish deadlines, and distribute copies of the membership roster;
- Invites members, through the newsletter and announcements at chapter meetings, to run for office or to suggest possible candidates;
- Assembles the committee, as needed, to evaluate the qualifications of possible candidates proposed by chapter members, as well as by committee members;
- Assigns committee members to approach possible candidates who are qualified to run for office to determine their willingness to stand for election;
- Advises the administrative council of potential candidates who are willing to run, and announces the slate in the newsletter and at a chapter meeting;
- Guides the election process from preparation of a ballot and holding the election to overseeing the collection and counting of ballots (the election should be held well before the final chapter meeting of the year, preferably in March or early April);
- Reports results to the administrative council and the candidates as soon as they are known;
- Gives results to the newsletter editor for publication before the installation ceremonies;
- Gives the chapter treasurer the names and addresses of the elected officers for inclusion in the chapter's financial report to the Society;
- Reminds the president to notify the STC office and director-sponsor of new officers;
- May be assigned to identify candidates for other purposes, such as local recognition, distinguished chapter service award, associate fellows, or candidates for Society-level office.

How are Chapter Elections to be Held?

From Articles of Incorporations and Bylaws, Article IX, Chapters, Section 4, Operations, F. Chapter elections:

"Chapter officers are elected annually in time for the new officers to attend the annual business meeting of the Society as representatives of their chapter. A chapter nominating committee and a chapter tellers committee handle the elections. The nominating committee consists of three or five members at the discretion of the chapter president.

Either two or three members of the nominating committee are elected by the membership. The nominating committee manager is appointed by the chapter president, who also appoints one member to a five-member committee. If chapter elections are conducted similarly to Society elections (Article VIII), nominations by petition must bear the signature of 10 percent of the chapter membership.

Chapter elections may be conducted at a regularly scheduled meeting of the membership provided that a preliminary slate of candidates has been announced to the membership at least six weeks prior to the date of the election, and a final slate of candidates, if different from the preliminary slate, has been announced at least ten days prior to the date of the election." ■

- The most tangible SIG products are their newsletters. Paper, production, printing, and postage are incredibly expensive, and those costs continue to rise.
- As with most professional organizations, the cost of delivering SIG services exceeds the fee the organization charges its members. The SIG membership surcharge recovers only a portion of the cost per member for the services provided.
- STC's board of directors debated charging for SIG membership for at least 4-5 years before instituting the additional fee a few years ago. The argument for SIG dues was to shift part of the expense of SIGs directly to those who use SIG services. The board delayed implementing the surcharge for several years to allow the SIGs to grow sufficiently so that the additional fee wouldn't have an adverse effect on membership. Despite the additional cost, SIG membership has grown each year, not declined.
- The thoughtful and informative Annual Conference sessions offered by many SIGs (amounting essentially to SIG stems in a couple of cases) have added significant value to the conference, which was an extraordinary value to begin with.
- The ID SIG is about to become the first SIG to sponsor a special section in an issue of STC's journal, Technical Communication. The May 2000 issue will feature an introduction, three commentaries, a bibliography, and three articles on information design.

Would I prefer that there was no additional fee for STC SIG membership? Of course I would, but I know that it isn't a realistic expectation, and I'm quite satisfied with the return on my investment in the seven SIGs I'm a member of. But if I belonged to a SIG that was not returning adequate value for my financial investment, I'd have two alternatives. I could volunteer to help solve the problem by taking an active role in the SIG, or I could "vote with my feet" and not renew my SIG membership next year. ■

(Editor's Note: More info about STC SIGs can be found on the STC Regional and Chapter website: <http://www.stc.org/SIGs.html>)

Mark Your Calendar!

All our meetings will be held on the third Wednesday of the month at a **NEW LOCATION: Leybold Inficon** in East Syracuse (see map on page 2.) Meetings start promptly at 6:00 p.m. Here is how our calendar is shaping up for 2000:

(Note: we don't hold meetings in May, July or August.)

March

Lori Ann Defurio, Application Engineer, New England & Upstate NY Adobe Systems, Inc., will give a presentation on FrameMaker and Acrobat.

April

The Student Chapter at SUNY IT in Utica will be hosting the April meeting, at SUNY IT. The date for the STC CNY Chapter April meeting at SUNY IT has been set for April 19 starting at 7:30 in G152 Donovan Hall. Speaker: Russ Kahn, on Digital Photography.

June

A get-acquainted picnic at Green Lakes Park in Fayetteville NY is in the works. The chapter will pay for the picnic. If you are interested in attending, please contact Richard Inch. If you are interested in helping with the planning for this event, Richard would really like to hear from you!

September

Wendi Evans, Proposal Desk Manager at AppliedTheory in Syracuse, is building a Proposal Group and will talk about how the Group is evolving and the approaches they are taking to implement proposal generation services for AppliedTheory.

October

Our first Ithaca Meeting – a great opportunity for Southern Tier members to get involved! (details to come)

November

(to be announced)

...Conference Time! *(from page 1)*

communicators at every level of experience, from entry level to senior management. You will find an exciting Preliminary Program and Registration booklet in the March issue of **Intercom**.

This year the conference is in Orlando. What a wonderful place for the entire family with Walt Disney World, SeaWorld, Kennedy Space Center and Universal Studios close by. Work and play – a great opportunity!

The Region 1 Reception will be held from 5:30 to 7:30 PM on Monday, May 22. The location is going to be on the conference site. Please join us - sign in by chapter (other chapter members will know who is attending) - door prize drawings every half-hour - lots of networking!

The Regional Networking Luncheon is Wednesday, May 24 from 12:15 to 2:00 PM - lots more networking!

Please join Mickey, Minnie and Me at this spectacular conference!

Information on the conference is available at <http://www.stc-va.org>. A copy of the conference Preliminary Program, including a registration form, can be obtained by calling (703) 522-4114 x200. ■

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