



# PrintQueue

April 2002

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## Announcing the Spring 2002 Program for the Central New York Chapter of the STC

- April 11, 2002 7:15 PM** **SUNY IT Technical Communication Student Presentations**  
**Place:** SUNY Institute of Technology, 12 North-Horatio Street, Utica, NY, G238 Donovan Hall  
**To register:** contact Russ Kahn at 315.792.7438 or russ@sunyit.edu Join in this opportunity to discover how students approaching graduation view current challenges in our profession, and get a first look at potential employees.
- May 14, 2002 10:00 AM - 1:30 PM** **Adobe Photoshop Workshop**  
**Place:** SUNY Institute of Technology, 12 North-Horatio Street, Utica, NY, 2147 Donovan Hall  
**Speaker:** Dr. Russell L. Kahn has been teaching digital photography for three years. He has a Ph.D. in Information Science from SUNY Albany and a Masters in Journalism from Newhouse School of Communication - Syracuse University.  
**To register:** contact Russ Kahn at 315.792.7438 or russ@sunyit.edu This workshop is limited to 20 participants.
- June 13, 2002 5:30-8:00 PM** **CNY-STC 2002 Business and Networking Banquet**  
**Place:** Turning Stone Casino, Verona, NY  
**Speaker:** Kitty Aughey, a member of STC's Board of Directors, recently retired from Eastman Kodak Company where she served as Manager of Global Initiatives; she now runs a consulting business. Her presentation, "The Power of STC and Awards," promises to show new and senior members alike how to leverage their involvement in STC to achieve career goals.  
**To register:** contact Veronika Freeman at 315.793.2054, ext. 253, or veronika@mqb.com  
**Cost:** \$8.00 for STC members and \$12.00 for non-Members. There is a fee waiver available for students and the un- or under-employed.  
Networking lasts from 5:30 PM – 6:00 PM, the dinner and chapter business will take place from 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM, and the presentation will last from 7:00 PM – 8:00 PM.

### Don't Miss the April 11 Student Presentations

*Here's a preview of the presenters and their subjects. All of the students are seniors in the Professional and Technical Communication program at SUNY Institute of Technology in Utica, New York -Ed.*

- Susan Sutton**, Information Architecture
- Lisa Lazzara**, Design for the Visually Impaired
- Chuck Scroger**, Testing for Usability by understanding the user experience
- Kathy Countryman**, Copyediting for consistency - a discussion of common errors and techniques for correcting them
- Kelly Kennerknecht**, Testing Web Designs for Usability and Clarity
- Angela Criblear**, Designing Products for the International Environment: Usability and User Interface Design

# What's On My Mind

## A Column from the CNY STC President

You see before you the first issue of the new Central New York Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication. It represents a triumph of sorts as the Central New York chapter reaches out to you, our membership, for ideas and inspiration. As president of the chapter, I've made a commitment to work with you to make this chapter work. We've already held three successful meetings since I came on board in July, and I sincerely hope to see you at future gatherings of the chapter.

First and foremost I want to thank Tipton Zehr and Veronika Freeman for working to make this first issue a reality. Tipton is a recent graduate from the Professional and Technical Communication Program, where I teach. She finished at the top of the class for our program and was editor of our student newspaper. We are very lucky to have her at the helm.

### Some background

Some background about myself. I have been a member of STC for about 20 years, and had been president and program chair of the East Bay Chapter of the STC, in northern California, before moving here about ten years ago. I am now an Associate Professor at the State University of New York Institute of Technology in Utica and chair of the Communication and Literature Department. I help oversee the department's Professional and Technical Communication program and help direct the graduate program. This includes an undergraduate program with tracks in Graphic Design, Writing and Editing, and Software Documentation, and a graduate program in Information

Design and Technology. Two years ago I earned a Ph.D. in Information Science, and I have recently published articles about the methods organizations use to respond managerially to the sudden infusion of technology in the workplace.

### The future of the chapter: What do you want?

I had a number of hopes for the chapter when I took over as president. The first was to set up a series of workshop/presentations, where members can come to learn by doing. We've already run workshops on indexing and digital photography and we have others coming up. Please, if you have a skill that you are willing to share, contact our program chair, Doug Eaton, or me with your ideas. We are also always looking for workshop locations in the Syracuse area. We generally need access to a set of 15 or 20 computers.

I also hope we can have a meeting about finding jobs in a difficult economy. Perhaps we can hold a job fair and resume workshop for technical communicators.

I am also hoping we can have a mentoring program, in which we match up students with chapter members working in industry.

Most importantly, we need to hear from you about what you want and where you might be willing to become involved in the coming year. Our chapter is at about 60 members and growing; because the chapter receives 40 percent of your dues, we need to spend your money in a way that gives you the best return on your investment.

## And Now, a Word from our Director-Sponsor Candidates...

STC members have already received ballots by mail. You must return your ballot by April 15 to make your vote count. Two of the candidates running for the Region 1 Director/Sponsor position submitted articles outlining their platforms to the CNY STC. We run those submissions (unedited) on the next two pages in hopes of helping the undecided to make a choice. -Ed.

### Jonathan Baker: Running for Region 1 Director-Sponsor

Before I launch into a lot of whys and wherefores, I thought I would explain what the role of the Director-Sponsor is. Currently, the D/S serves as both a director of STC, that is, sits on the Board of Directors of STC, and performs functions as a sponsor or advocate for the chapters in a region. The D/S is elected to a three year term and may not hold office for successive terms.

Achievement Awards, and many other tasks. Also, the D/S helps organize and plan regional activities, such as regional conferences.

#### What type of person fills this role?

Ideally, you would want a person with vision, leadership experience in both STC and chapter activities, and the ability to communicate. In addition, you would expect that this person would be a team player, who would understand and be able to articulate a positive view of STC and the chapters represented.

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#### What is the director role?

The director helps decide the business and professional direction of STC. In this role the D/S attends and participates in the business meetings that STC holds in various locations.

#### What is the sponsor role?

A sponsor is a liaison between the chapters in a region and STC or the other way around, if you prefer. As the sponsor for a region, the D/S is expected to visit each chapter at least once during the course of the three year term. In addition, the D/S reports to STC on the status of each chapter at the business meetings. The D/S can advocate for chapters in terms of grants and other benefits STC provides. In addition, the D/S can guide the chapters through the process of developing and holding competitions, preparing entries for the STC PR competitions, Chapter

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This newsletter invites writers to submit articles that they wish to be considered for publication. Note: By submitting an article, you implicitly grant a license to this newsletter to run the article and for other STC publications to reprint it without permission. Copyright is held by the writer. In your cover letter, please let the editor know if this article has run elsewhere, and if it has been submitted for consideration to other publications. Submit letters and articles to the Editor via E-mail. Deadline: 1st day of the month of publication.

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## Jonathan Baker, continued

### Who is Jonathan Baker?

I have been in the technical writing business since 1986. I became active in STC-Boston Chapter in the early 1990s. Prior to becoming a technical writer, I spent a number of years freelancing editorial services to the publishing industry and later worked for a number of publishing houses editing and producing professional- and college-level books. My last publishing job was at Digital Press, a group within Digital Equipment Corporation. In 1986, Digital helped me make the transition to technical writing.

I worked at Digital until late 1992 and then, due to layoffs, made the transition from employee to contractor. Since early 1993, I have worked as a contract writer for numerous companies in the Boston area, including: Hewlett-Packard, Fidelity Investments, Pelago Networks, and most recently at EMC Corp. In 2001, I moved back into the ranks of employee as a Technical Publications Manager for EMC Corp.

In terms of my experience with STC –Boston Chapter, I have held many roles from being on the Program Committee to eventually being elected to the council and following the path into the executive roles in that chapter (Second V.P., First V.P., President, and Immediate Past President). During my tenure, we: moved the Boston Broadside, our award winning newsletter, from hardcopy to online delivery; developed and continue to deliver the premier chapter web site in STC; brought our finances back under control, and managed to provide those things our 1,100+ members have come to expect from our chapter.

Currently, I am filling an STC role as STC Publications Portal Committee Manager. You can see the results of the committee's work on the STC web site [http://www.stc.org/member\\_pubs.html](http://www.stc.org/member_pubs.html). I have also presented chapter-related topics at the last two STC Annual Conferences. And I am a recipient of the STC Distinguished Chapter Service Award and numerous Boston Chapter Service Awards.

### And why is he running for Director-Sponsor Region 1?

For the most part I am running because it is the natural progression. That is, most D/Ss come from the ranks for significant chapter contributors and past chapter presidents. On a more personal level, I am running because I see an opportunity to contribute and to add value. Some people call this giving back. I call it making things happen. I have a vision of STC as a collaborative, supportive organization for all technical communicators. The opportunity to educate and help others grow in the business that has nurtured me is one I can't pass up. I know that this sounds like a lot of Mom and apple pie, but the simple reality is that this is something that I can do and that satisfies a deep inner need.

So, with that, please vote for Jonathan W. Baker when you cast your ballot for Region 1 Director-Sponsor.



## Donna Ford: Running for Region 1 Director-Sponsor

*I can't always tell why a thing fascinates me, but I always know when it does.*

Tossing my hat in the ring for Region 1 Director-Sponsor is one of those fascinating ideas that I never dreamed possible. All the more reason for doing it! The waters may prove deeper and less familiar than anything I've done to date, but the vessel, STC, is the same.

The society has provided many opportunities since I joined 11 years ago... particularly contact with peers who daily deal with issues common to technical communicators and still enjoy it. Who else but a group of technical communicators would tour a museum's exhibit and joyfully critique the museum's brochure design? That's what we four ITPC judges did two years ago in Atlanta. Try that with your spouse!

Serving at the chapter level, first as a competitions judge and then on the board for several years, has been my way of thanking STC and of realizing what I enjoy best — sharing knowledge. I see the Region 1 Director-Sponsor position as a further opportunity to share what I've learned with others and to help them achieve their personal goals.

### Shared Experience

For example, at this October's Central Connecticut STC meeting for students, I spoke about the software tools that ought to be familiar to today's technical communicators (see chart at <http://www.writeondesign.com/misc/toolsfortechwrite.htm>). This was in answer to questions I'm often asked by students, engineers and others in technical positions as they consider becoming technical writers:

- "I can write. What else do I need to do?" *Try learning the software tools used in this profession.*
- "Which ones?" *Here's the list. Word and HTML, for starters.*
- "How do I learn them?" *Take a course at the local community college. Or download 30-day trial versions and practice with a project you've always wanted to do...create your own website... build an interactive CD...print a brochure to market your hobby.*
- "Who can I ask for help?" *Any STC member; check the Chapter membership directory for a list of experts who use that tool.*

For all technical communicators, I add these hints:

- Learn to troubleshoot software tools – Call or email technical support. Study the online knowledge bases. If anyone in your office has a problem with a tool, find out what they did to resolve it. We don't get paid for knowing Word; we get paid for knowing how to make Word do what needs to be done.
- Be prepared for change – You can't predict the future, but you should be well-read in order to get a head start...before yesterday's trends become today's tool set. STC provides two great resources: *intercom* and the *Technical Communication Journal*.
- In between jobs? *Practice with a new software tool so you can spruce up your resume.*

*Continued on back page*

**Donna Ford:** continued

**Shared Resources**

Personal travels over the years have taken me to every state/province included in Region 1. (Note that the UK, France, and Sweden are no longer included in this Region and that New Jersey and Philadelphia chapters have been added.) I am familiar with the economic scenarios, product lines, job market, and needs of technical communicators who live and work here. More than that... I, too, am personally affected by these industry/marketing trends.

Regardless of this election's outcome, you may consider me a resource willing to travel. Feel free to invite me to speak at your chapter's meeting/conference. I have worked as technical writer, web designer, and CBT/curriculum developer. Information design and current software tools are favorite subjects. Or use my website ([www.writeondesign.com](http://www.writeondesign.com)) as a resource.

With STC members eagerly embracing the latest communication strategies, from email to listservs to Yahoo groups, there is no reason for its members to be strangers. Email your questions and concerns ([donna@evolve.net](mailto:donna@evolve.net)). Answers are available.

Your Region 1 Director-Sponsor will always be glad to hear from *YOU!*



*Dr. Russell L. Kahn, CNY chapter president, instructs several STC members who attended the January 11 Photoshop workshop at the SUNY Institute of Technology in Utica, New York. Pictured from left to right are Carol Rightenour, Russell Kahn, Craig McGowan, and Mona Devestel.*



## Sharpen Your Focus

Come to the  
CNY STC

### Photoshop Workshop

**May 14, 10 AM to 1:30 PM**  
at SUNY Institute of Technology

To register, contact Russ Kahn at 315.792.7438 or [russ@sunyit.edu](mailto:russ@sunyit.edu)  
There is no cost to STC members, but seating is limited to 20 participants

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Adobe Photoshop Workshop	May 14, 2002
CNY-STC 2002 Business and Networking Banquet	June 13, 2002

*Look inside to see more  
of what your local STC  
has to offer you in 2002!*

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