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## 2012 Spotlight Awards Celebration and Networking Event

By Carrie Chambers, Public Relations Manager

The documents and help files have been received. The judges have reviewed and critiqued all of the entries. Now it's time to celebrate!

If you entered the competition, if you'd like to see who entered and what they entered, if you volunteered or judged competition entries, you're invited to attend the celebration and networking event on Saturday, January 28, in San Juan Capistrano.

The evening will feature a presentation of all of the award-winning entries while we honor the technical communicators who created them. The evening will begin with some friendly mingling and, of course, a cash bar (you will receive one coupon for a free adult beverage with your paid RSVP)! Then, we'll sit down for a delicious dinner and the awards presentation. The Content Wrangler, Scott Abel, will be at the event officiating and presenting awards. There will also be plenty of time for viewing the winning entries. The evening promises to be a lively event that you won't want to miss!

The event's details are listed below.

**What:** 2012 Spotlight Awards Celebration and Networking Event

**When:** Saturday, January 28, 2012, 6-9 P.M.

**Menu:** Your choice of a beef, chicken, seafood, or vegetarian entrée, which includes a salad; unlimited coffee, tea, and soft drinks; one coupon for a free adult beverage; and choice of one of two desserts, one of which isn't chocolate.

**Where:** Sarducci's Capistrano Depot  
26701 Verdugo St.  
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675  
949.493.9593

<http://www.capistranodepot.com/index.html>

**Cost:** This year, we continue to offer reduced pricing to help our attendees during frugal economic times!

- \$25/person for competition volunteers and judges with reservations by January 7



Society for  
Technical  
Communication

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## Chapter Contacts

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[nominating@ocstc.org](mailto:nominating@ocstc.org)



## President's Message

By *Michael Opsteegh, OCSTC President*



It's hard to believe that it's 2012 already! Where did 2011 go? As you make the customary New Year's resolutions to lose weight, exercise, or spend more time with your family, I encourage you to make some professional resolutions as well. Resolve to learn a new tool. Resolve to take a class. Resolve to read more articles

on technical communication and spend less time on Facebook.

### Resolve to Renew Your OCSTC Membership

Every year around this time, we are reminded to renew our individual STC memberships. As you renew your STC membership, please select Orange County as your chapter.

Selecting Orange County ensures that STC will allocate the appropriate funds that enable OCSTC to continue to provide programs, resources, and services to technical communicators in Orange County and throughout southern California. In addition to our meeting and networking events, newsletter, and outreach activities, the chapter is working to launch our new job and résumé board and blog. Member dues help fund these initiatives.

Additionally, the chapter needs a sufficient number of registered members in order to sustain its charter. If too few members renew their chapter membership, STC could suspend the chapter's charter, and that would not be good for any technical communicator in or around Orange County.

Your chapter leaders are working hard to provide resources to help you advance your career and to help create awareness of technical communication in the Orange County job market. Show your support by renewing your membership.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, see me at the next chapter meeting or email me at [president@ocstc.org](mailto:president@ocstc.org). TS



Orange County Chapter  
Society for Technical Communication

## Next Meeting

Topic: RoboHelp 9 Workshop

Speaker: Beth Gerber

When: Saturday, January 14, 9 A.M.–noon

Where: DoubleTree Club Hotel  
7 Hutton Centre Drive  
Santa Ana, CA 92707  
714.751.2400

Cost: Members with reservations . . . . . \$26  
Students with reservations . . . . . \$20  
STC member, speaker-only . . . . . \$12  
Nonmembers with reservations . . . . . \$31  
Nonmember, speaker-only . . . . . \$15  
Walk-ins, or those registering after  
the deadline . . . . . \$35  
Walk-ins, or those registering after  
the deadline, speaker only . . . . . \$16  
No-shows billed . . . . . \$26

### Reservations:

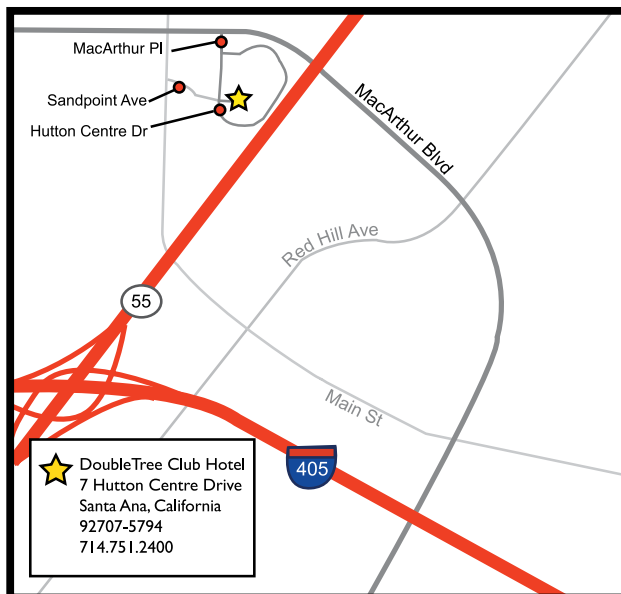
Due by midnight, Thursday, January 12

### Registration:

Online at <http://www.ocstc.org/events>

## Directions to the DoubleTree Club Hotel

Map of the I-405 and SR-55 area. The star below indicates the hotel location. Parking is FREE.



If you would like to receive email notifications about upcoming OCSTC meetings, visit [www.ocstc.org](http://www.ocstc.org) and sign up for our mailing list.

This list broadcasts only meeting notices and STC announcements

## January Meeting Information

### About the Presentation

Join us for our RoboHelp 9 workshop on Saturday morning, January 14. It will be taught by Beth Gerber and her associates at Lighttext, Inc., an authorized Adobe training center and consulting firm and OCSTC's newest sponsor.

As a special incentive to attend, Adobe has kindly donated a copy of RoboHelp 9 as a raffle prize!

Beth will cover both beginning and intermediate material. She'll show you how to open a project, create content, add navigation, organize your help system, and finalize the project for publishing. You'll see some sample outputs and go "under the hood" to learn how to properly design and author your own RoboHelp projects. And much more!

To take part in the workshop exercises you must download and install the 30-day trial of RoboHelp 9 or the full TCS 3.5 before the workshop ([www.adobe.com/downloads](http://www.adobe.com/downloads)).

### About the Speaker

Beth Gerber is co-owner and president of Lighttext, Inc., a firm that specializes in quality consulting in policy and procedure development, curriculum design, and training delivery, primarily for the financial services industry. Additionally, Lighttext provides a suite of courses through the Lighttext Training Center, authorized by Adobe Systems. Their course offerings cater to learning professionals and include Policy and Procedure Development, Curriculum Design, Presentation Skills, Adobe RoboHelp, and Captivate product training.

Beth is a former vice president of Home Savings of America with management responsibilities for training, policy and procedure, and loan servicing operational departments. TS

## Publication Policies

*TechniScribe* is published 11 to 12 times a year as a benefit to the members of the Orange County Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication. The goal of the publication is to reflect the interests, needs, and objectives of OCSTC members. *TechniScribe* strives to be an advocate for, and an inspiration to, technical communicators by keeping them connected to each other and to opportunities for professional growth.

Articles published in this newsletter may be reprinted in other STC publications if permission is obtained from the author, credit is properly given, and one copy of the reprint is sent to the *TechniScribe* managing editor.

### Submission Information

The editorial team retains and exercises the right to edit submitted and requested material for clarity, length, and appropriateness.

When submitting material, please remember to:

- Include a 25-word biography about yourself.
- Send articles in Word (doc, docx), Rich-Text Format (RTF), ASCII (txt), or in the body of an email message.
- Send material to the managing editor ([techniscribe@ocstc.org](mailto:techniscribe@ocstc.org)) five weeks before the date it will be published.

### Editorial Staff

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*Proofreader* . . . . . Suzanne Madison

### Monthly Advertising Rates

1/4 page . . . . . \$40  
1/3 page . . . . . \$45  
1/2 page . . . . . \$60  
Full page . . . . . \$80

TechniScribe

## Editor's Desk

By Jennifer Gardelle, *TechniScribe* Managing Editor



Happy New Year, and I hope you had a very happy holiday season! If you're like me, it was a time for giving, receiving, and manuals!

There might not be an official season for manuals, but think of all the gifts you gave and received last month. I bet they all included some sort

of manual or informational leaflet, maybe even an informational paragraph. Regardless, most things come with some sort of manual, which is good for us.

So, tell me, did you scrutinize and quietly critique the manuals you read? C'mon, you should have taken the day off and forgotten about what you do for a living for just one day (or eight)! Okay, I have to confess, I also scrutinized and critiqued the manuals I read.

It's sort of fun to look them over, especially if it wasn't your responsibility to get them out the door. And it's interesting to see the different types. There are manuals that a team of writers labored over and others that seemed to have been thrown together.

There are also pictographic manuals (take, for instance, Ikea's). This type, in my opinion, is very well thought out, and it avoids translation fees (sorry to my friends who translate for a living). They're very simple and show the user (in Ikea's case, the furniture buyer) how to assemble his or her new purchase step by step using only diagrams.

This is also one way to make sure people are paying attention to what you've crafted. Ever skip a step and end up with an extra piece and a crooked chair?

What sort of manuals did you appreciate, hate, laugh about, or plan to emulate? Feel free to email me at [techniscribe@ocstc.org](mailto:techniscribe@ocstc.org)—I'd love to hear from you. TS

Did you know that shopping at Amazon.com is not only a great place to find books and other items, it's also a great way to give back to the OCSTC! The next time you shop at Amazon, please access the site via [OCSTC.org](http://OCSTC.org). Amazon donates a percentage of your purchase to the chapter.

Thank you!

amazon.com®

# Beginning Adobe Illustrator for Technical Communicators

By Len Poché, 2nd VP Membership

Hey all. I'm back for another round of Beginning Adobe Illustrator for Technical Communicators (and they said it wouldn't last....)

Again, I cover how to draw without having to use the Pen tool. As powerful as the Pen tool is, it may be the most difficult aspect of Illustrator for newbies to learn. Here, I focus on some of Illustrator's newest features that let you draw without a fuss.



Figure 1. The Blob Brush.

If you have Illustrator CS4 or CS5, you have a great feature called the Blob Brush (see the circled tool in Figure 1). While the name is somewhat unglamorous, this tool can make drawing simple and even fun.

You can also get to the Blob Brush by pressing the Shift+B hotkey.

The beauty of this tool is that it lets you scribble in Illustrator, creating a solid shape based on what you've done. Use this as an opportunity to unleash your inner kindergartener. Here's what I mean....

I made some random scrawls with the Blob Brush and came up with the mess in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Using the Blob Brush.

Ordinarily, this is nothing to write home about. But when we look at this object's outline by using Ctrl-Y, we can see what Illustrator has really done (see Figure 3).

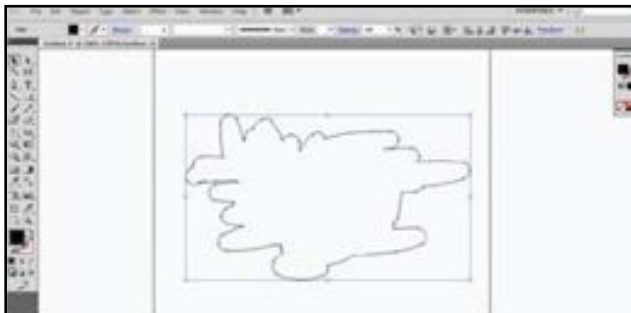


Figure 3. Object's outline.

Here's one contiguous shape that can be edited, colored, resized, or transformed in any way to suit your purposes. Obviously, you probably wouldn't want to create a shape like this, but my point is that you can create shapes with something as crude as the Blob Brush without having to use the Pen tool.

Here are a couple of pointers that will help you refine what you do with the Blob Brush. Double-click on the icon in the Illustrator toolbox to get a Tool Options box that allows you to plug in some custom settings (see Figure 4).

Experiment with these at your leisure. I'd like instead to focus on an aspect of the Blob Brush that will help you the most. Take a look at your onscreen cursor when you use the Blob Brush (see Figure 5).

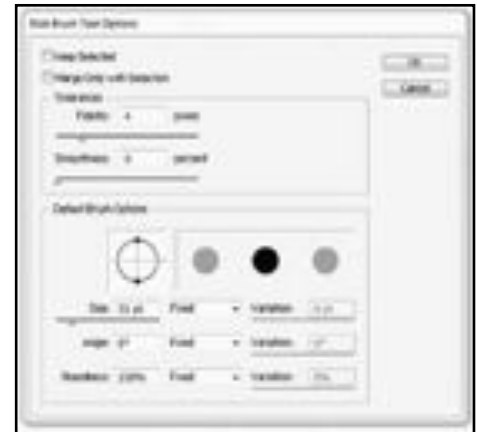


Figure 4. Blob Brush tool options box.



Figure 5. Onscreen cursor.

What you're seeing there is a little paintbrush symbol with a circle towards the end of it. The circle represents the actual brush size. So if you need to paint with smaller or bigger strokes, that symbol will give you an indication of what you'll be painting with.

To change the size of the circle (and hence, your brush), press the bracket keys on your keyboard (the "[ " and "]" keys). The left bracket sizes your brush down and, of course, the right bracket is up.

It may be difficult to get the resulting path just right. And without expertise in using the Pen tool, you may be looking for trouble when you try to adjust what you've done with the Blob Brush. Next month's column will help out on this at length, but there is a simple tool that lets you fine-tune your paths. It's the Smooth tool (see Figure 6).



Figure 6. Smooth tool.

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## November Meeting Review

By Bianca Szczeniak, OCSTC Member

OCSTC's Annual Holiday and Networking Party on November 15<sup>th</sup> was absolutely mad—*Mad Men*, that is! This year's *Mad Men* theme came alive with swanky décor and classy, vintage-inspired attire.



Since no workshop was scheduled for this meeting, attending STC members got an extra chance to relax and connect with their fellow technical communicators. In between bites of turkey and mashed potatoes, we discussed the landscape of the technical writing field, education and technical communication certification programs, and of course, how to get a job as a tech writer. While swapping stories about experiences we have had searching for and finding jobs, quite a few of us agreed that networking is essential to getting a job or shifting careers. One member even mentioned that she found out about her current job through her sister's boyfriend's poker buddy! Whether it's creating and maintaining your LinkedIn account, searching Monster.com, attending STC events, or even getting to know people better, networking is a great way to find out about opportunities.

Following dinner, attendees got a chance to let loose and play some games! First, all members participated in a Q&A bingo, during which we found out who drives a pickup, who is over six feet tall, and who likes to listen to jazz. Afterward, we settled into groups to play two great word games—Boggle and Apples to Apples. These games make great presents for wordsmiths! Creativity and laughter ensued.

The meeting concluded with a few reminders. First, STC membership renewal time is here! STC is offering the same membership rates as last year. With the many resources that STC offers throughout the year, membership is truly the gift that keeps giving, so don't forget to add "STC membership" to your holiday wish list. The second announcement was a reminder to register and prepare for the Adobe RoboHelp workshop in January, facilitated by Beth Gerber from Lighttext.

Happy holidays! See you in 2012! T5

## Lighttext—Our New Sponsor

By TechniScribe Staff

Lighttext Inc. is OCSTC's latest sponsor. For information about how to become a chapter sponsor, contact our public relations chair, Betsy Malone, at [pastpresident@ocstc.org](mailto:pastpresident@ocstc.org).

Lighttext is a provider of exceptional consulting to its clients in the area of policy and procedure documentation and training development and delivery. Our professional staff is able to apply a wide range of learning solutions to any organization. Our proven strategy of exhibiting values and depth of knowledge while employing the right tools allows us to deliver the appropriate solutions to our customers.

Lighttext also offers courses in procedural writing, curriculum design, and training delivery, utilizing our expert knowledge and professional experience. As an Authorized Adobe Training Center, we merge real world procedure and curriculum writing skills with Adobe RoboHelp and Captivate product training. Learn how combining personal values and knowledge with some great tools can help you support your customer or employer as a learning professional at [Lighttext.com](http://Lighttext.com). T5



## 2012 Spotlight Awards Celebration

< Continued from Page 1

- \$35/person for award recipients and guests with early bird reservations by January 7
- \$30/person for competition volunteers and judges with reservations by January 18
- \$40/person for award recipients and guests with reservations by January 18
- \$50/person for all attendees after January 18 and walk-ins without reservations

There are no discounts for spouses, significant others, or multiple attendees from the same company.

Please plan to pay by cash, check (made payable to STC Spotlight Awards), or PayPal; no credit cards will be accepted at the door. If you'd like to pay by credit card, prepay using PayPal when you register online.

**Dress:** Business or semiformal attire

**RSVP:** By Saturday, January 7, for early bird rates, or by Wednesday, January 18, for regular rates at [www.stcspotlightawards.org/banquet.html](http://www.stcspotlightawards.org/banquet.html). Winners, contributors, volunteers, and judges may invite guests.

### Driving Directions:

- From Interstate 5, exit Ortega Hwy. (exit 82), and turn west.
- Follow Ortega Hwy. about half a mile to Camino Capistrano (last light) and turn left (south).
- At the first light (Verdugo St.), turn right (west).
- At the first alley way, turn right (north) into the free parking lot.
- Park in the plaza or along the area by the railway tracks. Sarducci's is the brick building to the left of the railway cars.

Because the restaurant is actually in the train station, consider making your commute easier by riding an Amtrak or Metrolink train to and from the event!

**Train schedules from the north** (Los Angeles, Orange County):

Amtrak 582 departs Los Angeles at 4:10 P.M. and arrives in San Juan Capistrano at 5:22 P.M.

Amtrak 595 departs San Juan Capistrano at 9:41 P.M. and arrives in Los Angeles at 11:05 P.M.

**Train schedules from the south** (San Diego):

Amtrak 785 departs San Diego at 4:00 P.M. and arrives in San Juan Capistrano at 5:26 P.M.

Amtrak 1790 departs San Juan Capistrano at 8:48 P.M. and arrives in San Diego at 10:15 P.M.

For more information on the train schedules, go to [www.amtrak.com](http://www.amtrak.com) or [www.metrolinktrains.com](http://www.metrolinktrains.com).

For more information and to RSVP, go to <http://www.stcspotlightawards.org/banquet.html>.

We'll see you in the spotlight! T5



## Beginning Adobe Illustrator

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You won't see this normally in your Illustrator tools. That's because it's hidden underneath the Pencil Tool. You have to click on the Pencil Tool, keep the mouse button down, and select the Smooth Tool when the fly out menu appears.

The Smooth Tool does what you might think. It smooths out the areas of your paths that might be more jagged or angular than you'd like them to be. Just click and hold the mouse button while moving over the area of the path that you feel needs attention and watch this tool do its magic. If the first path doesn't do the trick, repeating the process will increase the effect. As with the Blob Brush Tool, you can double-click on the Smooth Tool icon and get an options box that lets you customize your settings.

That's all for this lesson. I hope I gave you a few tips that will allow you to create shapes with Illustrator without having to use the Pen Tool (for now). This one is remarkably similar to drawing with crayons, something most of us did when we were children. The only issue here is if we can stay within the lines.

For this month's tip on Illustrator resources, I direct you to the wonders of social media. You can get quite a lot of tips by following the right accounts on Twitter and Facebook. Many Illustrator experts have presences there (Bert Monroy, Morty Golding, Rufus Deuchler, A.J. Wood, and Deke McClelland to name a few). There are official Adobe accounts there as well. All of these post regularly with tips and tutorials to get you up to speed.

As always, you learn best by doing. I encourage you to experiment with the Blob Brush and Smooth Tools and see what you come up with. Just remember, there's always the Undo button. T5



## STC Mission Statement

STC advances the theory and practice of technical communication across all user abilities and all media.

## Positioning Statement

STC helps you design effective communication for a technical world through information sharing and industry leadership.

The Society for Technical Communication (STC) is the world's largest organization for technical communicators.

Its members include writers, editors, illustrators, printers, publishers, photographers, educators, and students.

Dues are \$75–395 per year. Membership is open to anyone engaged in some phase of technical communication, interested in the arts and sciences of technical communication, and in allied arts and sciences.

Society for Technical Communication  
9401 Lee Highway, Suite 300  
Fairfax, VA 22031-1803

703.522.4114 (voice); <http://www.stc.org>

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## Colophon

*TechniScribe* is written using Microsoft Word, and laid out using Adobe InDesign CS3 for Macintosh. Gill Sans and Palatino Linotype are used for heading and text fonts. PDFs are produced using Adobe Acrobat Professional 8.

*TechniScribe* relies on the following editorial references for style: *American Heritage Dictionary*, *Chicago Manual of Style*, and *Words into Type*.

## OCSTC Employment Information

Go to <http://twitter.com/STCSoCal>, where you'll find employment and general information about the San Diego and Orange County chapters.

### Inquiries

If you have an inquiry, email our employment manager, Betsy Malone, at [betsybythebeach@gmail.com](mailto:betsybythebeach@gmail.com).

### Society-Level Job Listings

STC maintains job listings on the Internet. You can download the listings from the STC web site at <http://jobs.stc.org>.



## Sponsor Corner



Author-it Software Corporation (ASC) is a world leader in enterprise software for authoring, content management, publishing, and localization. Its flagship product, Author-it Enterprise Authoring Platform (EAP), is a user-friendly software solution providing everything you need to author, manage, publish and deliver documentation. ASC has offices in San Jose and Newport Beach, California; Dubai, UAE; Sydney, Australia; and Auckland, New Zealand.



roundpeg offers consulting, web development, and training services to both individuals and corporations, focused primarily on Adobe products. Started in San Francisco 15 years ago, roundpeg now offers classes in Newport Beach, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Santa Clara.

As Adobe's largest training partner on the west coast, roundpeg sees training as not only a separate service, but strives to support the client through the entire lifecycle of a project. The firm prides itself on its small class sizes—often no more than six participants—in order to provide the kind of one-on-one training often needed when students are learning high-tech or complex software applications. In addition to on-site classes, instruction is available via e-learning. All instructors are Adobe certified.

**Special thanks to Author-it, Lighttext, and roundpeg, OCSTC's sponsors!**

## Orange Slice: Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Location	Time
January 10	OCSTC Council Meeting	Airport Executive Suites, Irvine	6 P.M.-7 P.M.
January 14 (Saturday)	OCSTC Chapter Meeting Beth Gerber , "RoboHelp 9 Workshop"	DoubleTree Club Hotel, 7 Hutton Centre Dr., Santa Ana, CA, 92707, 714.751.2400	9 A.M.– noon
February 7	OCSTC Council Meeting	Airport Executive Suites, Irvine	6 P.M.-7 P.M.
February 21	OCSTC Chapter Meeting Carolann Kowalski, "How Technical Communicators Can Apply User-Centered Design"	DoubleTree Club Hotel, 7 Hutton Centre Dr., Santa Ana, CA, 92707, 714.751.2400	
March 6	OCSTC Council Meeting	Airport Executive Suites, Irvine	6 P.M.-7 P.M.
March 20	OCSTC Chapter Meeting TBD	DoubleTree Club Hotel, 7 Hutton Centre Dr., Santa Ana, CA, 92707, 714.751.2400	6 P.M.-9 P.M.