

## This Issue:

Election Time	1
Revised OCSTC Bylaws	1
President's Message	2
Next Meeting	3
More Candidates for Chapter Offices	3
Editor's Desk	4
EduNotes	5
Member Profile—Bill Wood	6
February Meeting Information	6
Society Pages	7
OCSTC Employment Information	7
January Meeting Review	8
Orange Slice—Calendar of Events	8

## Election Time

*Suzanne Madison, OCSTC Nominating Committee*

### OCSTC

The election of OCSTC council members for the 2011–2012 term will be held online March 9 through April 8. Candidate statements and bios are available on our web site at <http://www.ocstc.org/election>. In addition to voting for council members, you will be asked to approve changes to our chapter bylaws to bring them in line with those of the STC. You can view the proposed changes at this same URL.

Only those who have renewed their STC membership for 2011 and have included OCSTC as their chapter will be eligible to vote. If you have not already renewed your membership for this year, be sure to do so before the end of February. You will then receive an email with the link to the voting page.

### STC

The 2011 Society election will also be held March 9 through April 8. Check the STC web site for detailed information about the candidates and to access an area where you can ask questions of the candidates.

You can make both STC and OCSTC your organizations by participating in the elections. Please vote. TS



## Revised OCSTC Bylaws

*By Bill Darnall, OCSTC Bylaws Committee*

Last year, as part of Operation Phoenix, STC revised the organization's bylaws. The STC bylaws are now fully compliant with the corporation of New York state laws, where STC is incorporated. Yes, STC is a New York corporation headquartered in Virginia. The STC bylaws point out that STC is recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational association. Finally, the STC bylaws emphasize that each chapter is an extension of STC. Chapters are not separate legal entities. OCSTC has been, and continues to be a foreign corporation, as far as California is concerned. Yes, as an extension of STC, OCSTC is also governed by New York corporate law.

STC suggested that all chapters rewrite their bylaws so they would be fully compliant with New York law. One can download a suggested chapter bylaws template from the STC web site. A specific suggestion is to make revised chapter bylaws strategic and simple: Leave the procedures out of the bylaws and make it easier to change working procedures. This new structure eliminates the requirement for the general membership to vote on simple operational changes. For example, do you really care on which

*Continued on Page 2 >*



Society for Technical Communication

## Chapter Contacts

OCSTC  
P.O. Box 28751  
Santa Ana, CA 92799-8751

Web site: <http://www.ocstc.org>

### Administrative Council

President, **Michael Opsteegh**,  
[pres@ocstc.org](mailto:pres@ocstc.org)

Past President, **Betsy Malone**,  
[ipp@ocstc.org](mailto:ipp@ocstc.org)

1st Vice Presidents, Programs,  
**Jane Baker and Roger Hunnicutt**,  
[1vp@ocstc.org](mailto:1vp@ocstc.org)

2nd Vice President, Membership,  
**Len Poché**,  
[2vp@ocstc.org](mailto:2vp@ocstc.org)

Treasurer, **Shannon Summers**,  
[trea@ocstc.org](mailto:trea@ocstc.org)

Secretary, **Judy Jones**,  
[sec@ocstc.org](mailto:sec@ocstc.org)

### Appointees

TechniScribe Managing Editor, **Jennifer Gardelle**,  
[techniscribe@ocstc.org](mailto:techniscribe@ocstc.org)

Public Relations Chair, **Betsy Malone**,  
[betsybythebeach@gmail.com](mailto:betsybythebeach@gmail.com)

Education Chair, **Bill Darnall**,  
[edu.bd@ocstc.org](mailto:edu.bd@ocstc.org)

Scholarship Chair, **Carrie Damschroder**,  
[carried@hotmail.com](mailto:carried@hotmail.com)

Webmaster, **Jeff Randolph**,  
[erandolp@ix.netcom.com](mailto:erandolp@ix.netcom.com)

Employment Manager, **Betsy Malone**,  
[betsybythebeach@gmail.com](mailto:betsybythebeach@gmail.com)

### Committees

Nominating Committee:

**Patrick Kelley**, [kelleypa@mindspring.com](mailto:kelleypa@mindspring.com)

**Suzanne Madison**,  
[suzanne@madisonavenuepublications.com](mailto:suzanne@madisonavenuepublications.com)

**Pat Olsen**, [polсен@hotmail.com](mailto:polсен@hotmail.com)

**Jeff Randolph**, [erandop@ix.netcome.com](mailto:erandop@ix.netcome.com)



## President's Message

By *Michael Opsteegh, OCSTC President*



**R**enew your STC membership by the end of February to be eligible to vote in the STC and OCSTC elections. Be sure to select Orange County as your chapter on your renewal application to support your chapter and help maintain a professional association and local resources in Orange County.

### The STC Summit Is around the Corner

It isn't often that the STC Summit is held in our own backyard, so to speak. But, this year, in case you didn't know, it's being held in Sacramento, which makes traveling to and from the Summit more convenient—and cheaper—for those of us in California. The Summit begins May 15 and ends May 18 and is being held at the Sacramento Convention Center.

I attended a Summit for the first time last year in Dallas, and I was blown away by the energy of the event. It was great to actually meet people with whom I had corresponded online in real life. It was also exhilarating to meet new people who have a passion for technical communication, attend presentations by knowledgeable professionals, and even just commiserate over dinner or drinks.

If you haven't had a chance to go to an STC Summit, I highly encourage you to take this opportunity while it's as local as it has been in years.

Register by March 15 to qualify for the early-bird rate. Go to <http://summit.stc.org> for information on how to register for the conference, travel, and tips for convincing your manager or company to pick up the tab. See you in Sacramento! TS



### Revised OCSTC Bylaws

< *Continued from Page 1*

night the administrative council meets? The proposed bylaws are on our web site for your review at <http://www.ocstc.org/election>. You will have a chance to approve or disapprove the revised bylaws when you participate in the general election process in March.

Thanks for taking an interest in the essential (if tedious) aspects of running a chapter. Onward and upward! TS

## Next Meeting

**Topic:** An Introduction to Agile Development for Technical Communication Professionals

**Speaker:** George Schlitz

**When:** Tuesday, February 15, 6–9 P.M.

**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  
Walk-ins, or those registering after the deadline . . . . . \$35  
No-shows billed . . . . . \$26

**Reservations:**

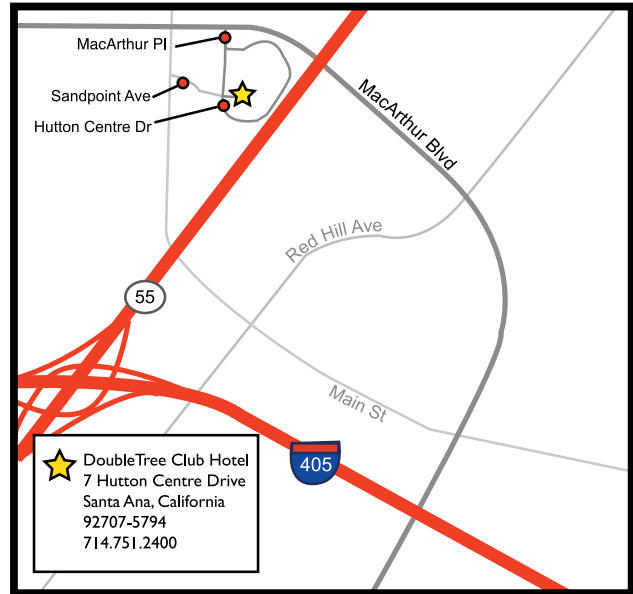
Due by midnight, Sunday, February 13

**Registration:**

Online at <http://www.ocstc.org/dinres.asp>

## 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 [http://www.ocstc.org/list\\_redirect.asp](http://www.ocstc.org/list_redirect.asp).  
Click Join. This list broadcasts only meeting notices and STC announcements

## More Candidates for Chapter Offices

Since candidate information was published in the January issue, two more names have been added to the ballot.

### Assistant Treasurer—Miriam Whitman



**Miriam Whitman** has recently joined our STC chapter and promises to be a very enthusiastic member of our merry band. She is a technical writer and artist who designed and art directed for a variety of clients following graduation from ArtCenter College of Design. Later she produced proposals and marketing collateral for an award-winning construction management firm. Miriam is currently studying web design and development at Cypress, Fullerton, and Saddleback colleges. She is glad to join us and wants to support STC's excellent goals. As she has long preferred wearing many hats, Miriam brings to the position of assistant treasurer several years experience in budget management support for multi-million dollar municipal bond programs.

### Co-Second Vice-President, Membership—Bill Darnall



**Bill Darnall** is a long-time STC senior member. He has served OCSTC as treasurer, employment manager, council member-at-large, and on the Nominating Committee His appointed-committee experience includes audit, PR, and education. In addition to the many roles he's filled over the years, Bill writes the EduNotes column for the *TechniScribe*. As an active and committed member of OCSTC, Bill also regularly attends the administrative council meetings. Bill hopes to use his IT systems experience to assist in developing a comprehensive OCSTC membership database.

## 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

Managing Editor . . . . . Jennifer Gardelle  
Copyeditor . . . . . Teresita del Sol  
Copyeditor . . . . . Anne Stratford  
Copyeditor . . . . . Barbara Young  
Proofreader . . . . . Michael Opsteegh  
Proofreader . . . . . Suzanne Madison  
Web Version . . . . . Jeff Randolph

### Monthly Advertising Rates

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

### Subscriptions

\$10 a year to members of other STC chapters.

TechniScribe

## Editor's Desk

By Jennifer Gardelle, *TechniScribe* Managing Editor



Last month, I went to a fascinating conference—Innovative Smart Grid Technologies. Why did I go, and why would I care to? I went for work, mainly because they asked me to. I was happy to go because I've been hearing a lot about the smart grid, and I was curious to learn more.

Why am I telling you about this, and why should you care? These new technologies will create more writing opportunities! Sound good? You bet.

So, now that I have your attention, think about all the writing opportunities that the Smart Grid will provide. As new technologies are developed, new documentation must be "part of the package." For those of you who were at Joe Welinske's presentation at the January meeting, you heard him challenge us to look for new ways to use our talents. I predict that the smart grid will offer many such opportunities.

Here's a list of some of the obvious ways to get involved in this new technology. (Of course, the pragmatist will find more opportunities.)

### Policies and Procedures

The government and big business are both embroiled in the smart grid. Policies and procedures will be crucial.

### Manuals

This goes without saying. How do companies implement this technology, how do consumers use it? Read the manual!

### Brochures

Brochures are a great way to quickly and easily outline the technology's highlights and introduce people to it. Once you've piqued their interest, you can refer them to the manual you've just written.

### Help

As the digital smart grid technologies are adopted, the companies who provide smart grid services and consumers will all have questions. This is where you come in with the help documentation.

I hope you decide to look more into these technologies, and I hope you find your niche!

For more information, written for the layperson, see *The Smart Grid: An Introduction* at [http://www.oe.energy.gov/DocumentsandMedia/DOE\\_SG\\_Book\\_Single\\_Pages%281%29.pdf](http://www.oe.energy.gov/DocumentsandMedia/DOE_SG_Book_Single_Pages%281%29.pdf). TS

# EduNotes

By Bill Darnall, Chair, Education Committee

## Technical Communication Issues



This month's EduNotes should encourage you to explore additional technical communication issues. We're in an evolving profession. The technical communication environment is one of ever-changing practices, practitioners, technologies, and users' needs. By the way, the EduNotes column has moved online and may transition to a blog. One-

way conversations are unrewarding. I need to hear from my fellow communicators. I have selected six issues for this EduNotes column:

- Certification
- Tools and Applications
- Degree
- Experience
- Regulated Industries
- Professional Membership

### Certification

Certification may be helpful if you are looking for a short-term contract position. It's essential if the contract description requires it. You seldom have a chance for a contract-job interview unless you meet 110% of the requirements. Some government jobs may require certification. If you don't have much on-the-job experience, certification may be your ticket to interviews. If you're currently employed, leverage a recent certification into a higher-paying position. If your hard-earned certification does not match a new job description, don't feature it.

### Tools and Applications

It is impractical for most of us to be proficient in the use of myriad desktop publishing applications, help authoring tools, DITA-based applications, multi-sourcing applications, web-based content management, and screen capture tools. Anyone who is truly proficient in the use of everything has probably not done much real work. Different companies and industries have their preferences for tools and applications. So, spend a little time every month to stay aware of the various and most popular tools and applications.

### Degree

Larger companies often require a degree. Smaller companies are more concerned about cost and on-the-job experience. Here's a true story. One technical communication department in SoCal refuses to hire

tech writers with engineering degrees. This manager believes all technical information must originate exclusively with the company's subject matter experts (SMEs). However, most hiring managers are very happy to have degreed tech writers with demonstrated experience.

### Experience

Personally, I think that experience is very important. However, too much experience can sometimes be a distraction. For example, suppose you have more experience than the hiring manager. During an interview, don't dwell on your years of experience. Show how your experience can help to support that manager's goals. Peer interviews can also be a problem. Suppose you have much more experience than a potential coworker. Talk about how much you enjoy working with others in a team environment. If you lack job-specific experience, you will have to rely on your portfolio to demonstrate any related accomplishments.



### Regulated Industries

You usually need hands-on experience to land a good job in a heavily regulated industry. So, how do you get experience? Unless you are lucky, you may have to get creative and work for a time in a related, but less regulated industry. Another approach is to obtain certification through a recognized training organization. Regulated industries undergo periodic audits. The auditors will insist on matching written procedures with day-to-day activities. Consequently, be sure your written procedures accurately reflect what actually happens.

### Professional Membership

Are professional memberships worth the cost in both time and money? Before web-enabled social networking, a professional membership was about the only way to stay in close contact with your peers. Today, effective professional organizations can be powerful bidirectional information channels. Professional networking is still a benefit, but it may not be the major benefit in this new era. Still, a professional organization offers opportunities to develop real friends, as opposed to virtual acquaintances. If you have a job, it makes it harder to be active simultaneously in several organizations. So, concentrate on one or two professional organizations and maintain your virtual contacts. T5

# Member Profile—Bill Wood

By Len Poché



We have a returning member to OCSTC whom I would like to reintroduce to the chapter. Bill Wood has been focusing on SIGs for his job search, and this year has added OCSTC back into his membership.

Bill is originally from Boston and got his degree in journalism and public relations from Suffolk University. He came to California in October 1989. Since then, he has split his working time between writing technical, marketing, and training content. Bill has worked staff and contract jobs at such companies such as Hyundai, where he prepared documentation for the Salesforce.com launches; Pacific Life where he developed disaster recovery documents; he's also worked at Phoenix Technologies, CH2M HILL, and other companies. Although Bill is in transition, he's recently done extensive work with the US Census that ended in June.

Bill volunteers with Experience Unlimited (EU) in Irvine, a high-level career assistance group that's sponsored by the California EDD ([http://www.edd.ca.gov/Jobs\\_and\\_Training/Experience\\_Unlimited\\_Local\\_Information.htm](http://www.edd.ca.gov/Jobs_and_Training/Experience_Unlimited_Local_Information.htm)). EU

is an organization he's very passionate about. "We volunteer four hours weekly, so it's free to everyone!" Currently, his efforts there involve training job searchers of all professional levels in mock interviews where people practice their skills in salary negotiation, presenting their value to an employer, and closing. While that's Bill's official "position" at EU, he also actively promotes the organization.

Bill lives in Costa Mesa and has a great love for music, spending his spare time playing guitar and drums. He sings tenor in the St. John Neumann church choir and the Irvine Valley College Chorale. Not only has he written and recorded his own CD (which he stills sells!), but he also performs at open-mics.

If there was one piece of advice Bill could give current college students who seek to become technical communicators, he'd say, "See what those jobs require, plus conduct informational interviewing. Make sure you do it before you graduate because students can get software and software training cheap. Try to intern—it may be your first job!"



*Bill Wood. Returning OCSTC member*

You can reach Bill at [billwood323@yahoo.com](mailto:billwood323@yahoo.com). He wants to see your favorite job-searcher blogs. You can view his background at <http://www.writes4you.com/blog> and [www.linkedin.com/in/woodbill](http://www.linkedin.com/in/woodbill) with Recommendations. Experience Unlimited, Irvine Chapter, is a nonprofit, no-fee job-search organization for employers and 260 members—[www.euorangecounty.com](http://www.euorangecounty.com). TS



## February Meeting Information

### An Introduction to Agile Development for Technical Communication Professionals

Join us Tuesday, February 15, 2011, when George



*George Schlitz.  
February presenter*

Schlitz will present some of the basics and more on Agile development. The Agile movement has had a profound effect on many industries involved in project management and product development, despite its roots in software product development. Core principles focused on collaboration, feedback, inspection/adaptation, teamwork, and continuous improvement, as well as a constantly-evolving set of processes and practices can provide opportunities for dramatic project improvement.

George will provide a brief introduction to Agile and Lean. He'll then discuss how they apply to technical communications projects. He'll share real experiences in applying these concepts to technical documentation projects.

### About the Speaker

George Schlitz is a founder of BigVisible Solutions, a coaching and enablement consultancy. He has focused on coaching teams and leaders in improving product development methods and leadership of complex programs and projects. George has had extensive experience consulting in large organizations covering many industries. He's a certified Scrum coach (CSC) and a certified project management professional (PMP). He received two bachelor's degrees (operations management and resource economics) from the University of Massachusetts and an MBA from Bentley College. His professional experience is complemented by 12 years of experience in the US Army. TS



### 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>

### TechniScribe Copyright and Trademark Statement

OCSTC invites writers to submit articles that they wish to be considered for publication. Authors retain copyright to their work and implicitly grant a license to this newsletter to publish the work once online for an indefinite period of time. In your cover letter, please let the editor know if this article has appeared elsewhere, and if it has been submitted for consideration to other publications.

The design and layout of this newsletter are copyrighted as © STC, 2011.

Some articles might refer to companies or products whose names are covered by a trademark or registered trademark. All trademarks are the property of their respective owners. Reference to a specific product does not constitute an endorsement of the product by OCSTC or by STC.

### 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

Our job listing isn't working at this time. Until it is, 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>.

# January Meeting Review

By Eartha Knowles, OCSTC Member

On Saturday, January 29, 41 people attended OCSTC's first chapter meeting for 2011 to hear Joe Welinske, president of Writers UA, give a two-topic presentation geared toward software and online help. His topics were, "Write More, Write Less: Embracing the value of Crafted Words and Images" and "Trends in Software User Assistance."



Joe Welinske presenting at the OCSTC January meeting

in Software User Assistance." However, before the guest speaker could take the floor, everyone indulged in a traditional breakfast buffet, followed by networking activities including guests' introductions. As this was a

chapter meeting, OCSTC's president Michael Opsteegh made some business announcements. Then, we were all set for the guest of honor. He stepped up and delved into a personal anecdote that was a humorous account on his first job as a technical writer. After we all settled down from the laughter, he began the presentation with a provocative statement, "People don't read anymore," which then segued into his first topic.

In "Write More, Write Less: Embracing the value of Crafted Words and Images," Welinske proposed that technical writers write less of the information that users do not read and instead write more documentation on tips that would be practical and helpful to users. He suggested that the technical writer acquire the top reasons for users complaints or as he calls them, "pain points" in order to organize this information into a user-friendly format and by choosing the correct words that will respond to the user's frustrations or concerns with any given product. Welinske

spelled out the challenges in achieving this lofty goal but also suggested the use of craft tools such as blogs, columns, online tutorials, and knowledge bases as forums to directly communicate with the user or the customer. His second topic, "Trends in Software: User Assistance," was more focused on detailed information about video editing, writing instructions for mobile devices and issues and challenges inherent with these tech gadgets, including new formats such as Twitter feeds, RSS feeds, and search engine results.

As this was my first meeting and my introduction to the world of technical writing, I found it hard to grasp the enormity of these changes as it relates to the field. Later, I found out I was not the only one overwhelmed by so much information. I asked a couple of members what they thought of Welinske's talk. Terri said that it was a "lot of information to absorb at once but she preferred the first part of the discussion on the use of correct words for giving instructions on the use of a product before releasing it." Bill described Welinske's presentation as "helpful, insightful, and immensely practical." I also had a sidebar conversation that posed the question at what point does using fewer words jeopardize traditional grammar? The responses all varied but everyone agreed that it was not a question of grammar but one of style, and the employer or the client determined that style, which may not always imply traditional grammar.

Overall, it was a positive experience for me. On the drive home, I recognized the lesson that I took away from my first meeting is that the use of traditional English grammar will always be a topic of debate in this field. TS

*Eartha Knowles recently graduated with a Technical and Professional Communication certificate from California State University, Long Beach. She also has a degree in journalism and is a new member of OCSTC. Welcome, Eartha!*

## Orange Slice: Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Location	Time
February 15	OCSTC Chapter Meeting George Schlit, "An Introduction to Agile Development for Technical Communication Professionals"	DoubleTree Club Hotel, 7 Hutton Centre Dr., Santa Ana, CA, 92707, 714.751.2400	6 P.M.-9 P.M.
March 1	OCSTC Council Meeting	Airport Executive Suites, Irvine	6 P.M.-7 P.M.
March 15	OCSTC Chapter Meeting Michael Opsteegh, Putting Your Best Foot Forward—Creating Documents, Presentations, and Web Pages People Actually Want to Read	DoubleTree Club Hotel, 7 Hutton Centre Dr., Santa Ana, CA, 92707, 714.751.2400	6 P.M.-9 P.M.