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Membership Categories for 2006

Editor's note: Have you already renewed your STC membership for 2006? If not, be sure to read the following article reprinted from Tieline, the Society Leaders' Newsletter (http://www.stc.org/tielineltie0511/0511_announce.htm#categories), volume XVIII, Issue 9. Membership options have changed since last year. If you have not already done so, you can renew your membership online at www.stc.org using your membership number and password.

Following are descriptions of the membership categories offered to STC members for 2006. Please note that members who select classic membership or e-membership have more community options than in 2005.

Classic Membership (\$150)

Classic membership entitles members to the paper versions of *Intercom* and *Technical Communication* and access to the online versions, and full access to the members-only area of the STC web site. Members in this category may choose one of the following community options for 2006: two chapters, one chapter and two SIGs, or four SIGs. Classic members may join additional SIGs at a cost of \$5 per SIG and additional chapters at a cost of \$10 per chapter.

E-Membership (\$140)

E-membership entitles members to the same benefits as classic membership, except that e-members do not receive paper copies of *Intercom* and *Technical Communication*. Members in this category may choose one of the following community options for 2006: two chapters, one chapter and two SIGs, or four SIGs. E-members may join additional SIGs at a cost of \$5 per SIG and additional chapters at a cost of \$10 per chapter.

Limited Membership (\$130)

Limited membership includes subscriptions to the paper versions of *Intercom* and *Technical Communication* and full access to the members-only area of the STC web site. Limited memberships do not include membership in chapters or SIGs.

Student Membership (\$55)

Student members receive the same benefits as e-members, but have no voting rights. In addition, student members may join an unlimited

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Publication Policies

The *TechniScribe* is published 11 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. The *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 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 format, RTF (Rich-Text Format), ASCII, or in the body of an e-mail message.
- Send material to the managing editor (suzanne@madisonavenuepublications.com) five weeks prior to the date it will be published.

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- Full page \$80

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President's Message

By Jeff Randolph, OCSTC Chapter President



One of the more personally influential books and one that has helped me over the years is *The Psychology of Winning*, by Dr. Denis Waitley. Written in 1979, it is one work in his trilogy of motivational books (the others being *The Seeds of Greatness* and

the Winner's Edge) written in an era when self-help books were—and as they continue to be—the core reading for success. Tom Peters, Lee Iacocca, and Ken Blanchard are just a few writers from this period.

As I re-read the book recently, I was struck with the underlying structure of the writing. Whether you're a "skimmer," a serial reader, or just looking for the facts, this book will fit your style. Corresponding with each of the "Ten Qualities of a Total Winner" described below, Dr. Waitley offers a definition, examples, and action plans.

Positive Self-Awareness. Winners know their potential, the resources available, and are committed to maximizing potential, recognizing new challenges, and practicing empathy.

Positive Self-Esteem. Winners appreciate their own value. This is a "learned behavior," and it requires a lifelong commitment to self-development. The best reinforcement is positive "self-talk."

Positive Self-Control. Winners realize that life is a continual "do-it-yourself" and "do-it-to-yourself" program. Our past actions have each of us in the position we are currently in, and we have the power to realize that and take action to change.

Positive Self-Motivation. Because we know where we are and what our potential is, we also know we're empowered (motivated) to change our circumstances. We know there'll always be new technologies and trends, and this excites us to continue to learn and grow.

Positive Self-Expectancy. "Winners expect to win. They know that so-called 'luck' is actually the intersection of preparation and awareness." (This principle sounds similar to more current motivational speakers like Coach Pat Riley whose formula is: Winning = Desire + Self-control + Preparation.)

Positive Self-Image. It's not who or what you are that holds you back, but it's your belief in what you are *not*

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Next Meeting

Topic: An Overview of Trends, Tools, and Technologies in Software User Assistance

Speaker: Joe Welinske

When: Tuesday, February 21, 2006, 6:00–9:00 P.M.

Where: Doubletree Club Hotel
7 Hutton Centre Drive
Santa Ana, CA 92702
714.751.2400

Cost: Members with reservations **\$22**
Students with reservations **\$16**
Nonmembers with reservations **\$27**
Walk-ins or those registering after the deadline **\$31**
No-shows billed **\$22**

Reservations:

Reservations are due by 12:00 P.M., Friday, February 17, 2006

Registration:

Register online at www.ocstc.org/dinres.asp

Directions to the Doubletree Club Hotel



From the North 405

Exit at MacArthur Blvd. and turn right. Continue on MacArthur Blvd., passing over the 405 Freeway, and later passing under the 55 Freeway. At the second traffic light beyond the underpass, turn left onto Hutton Centre Drive. At the traffic light (for Sandpointe Ave.), turn left into the hotel entrance.

From the South 405

Exit at MacArthur Blvd. and turn right. Continue on MacArthur Blvd., passing under the 55 Freeway. At the second traffic light beyond the underpass, turn left onto Hutton Centre Drive. At the traffic light (for Sandpointe Ave.), turn left into the hotel entrance.

From the North 55

Exit at MacArthur Blvd. and turn left, passing under the 55 Freeway. At the second traffic light beyond the underpass, turn left onto Hutton Centre Drive. At the traffic light (for Sandpointe Ave.), turn left into the hotel entrance.

From the South 55

Exit at MacArthur Blvd. and turn right and then move quickly into the left lane. At the first traffic light, turn left onto Hutton Centre Drive. At the traffic light (for Sandpointe Ave.), turn left into the hotel entrance. ♦TS♦

Editor's Desk

By Suzanne Madison, TechniScribe Managing Editor



Did you notice somewhat of a different look and feel to the *TechniScribe* this month? Did you notice more "reprinted" information, filler quotations, and graphics? There is a reason for this difference.

To get you the *TechniScribe* in time to remind you of the upcoming chapter meeting, our editorial team begins work on each issue six weeks in advance. If you count back six weeks from February 1, you'll find we were all in the middle of holiday preparations. *TechniScribe* content was not high on anyone's to-do list.

Still, I believe our team has put together an interesting and informative newsletter for you. What we *do* have this month are our regular features ("President's Message," "EduNotes," "Words of Wisdom," "Frame-Maker Tips," past meeting review, "Membership News," and information about the upcoming meeting), plus information on "STC Membership Categories for 2006," reprinted from the *Tieline*, the newsletter for STC leaders, and an informative article about the word "which" reprinted from the *Carolina Communiqué*. Teresita shares with us a review of Matthew Stern's book, *Offline*, as well as an extra tip for using Word.

The *TechniScribe* is *your* newsletter, just as OCSTC is *your* chapter. The more you participate in both, the greater the benefits you will derive. Won't you think about what you can contribute? Perhaps you've read a good technical communication-related book lately, or learned a software tip that would help others. Perhaps you have ideas for chapter activities or meeting speakers. Won't you please share with the rest of the chapter? I guarantee that you will get much more out the experience than the effort you put in.

A Challenge

We all have challenges in our work, be it dealing with SMEs, formatting, software glitches, deadlines, etc. How have you overcome these difficulties? My challenge to you is: Send me a short description of your biggest challenge in 2005, and how you overcame the issue. If I hear from enough of you, perhaps we can make "Challenges in Technical Communication" a new column in the *TechniScribe*.

To contribute your time to the chapter, contact any of the chapter leaders listed on page six under "Chapter Contacts." To contribute to the *TechniScribe*, e-mail your material to me at suzanne@madisonavenuepublications.com.

We look forward to hearing from you. ♦TS♦

The Work Menu in Word

By Teresita del Sol, OCSTC Senior Member

Here's the number one Word tip as published at <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/assistance/HA100749611033.aspx>. This is from Crabby's Tip of the Month.

Imagine yourself creating numerous Word documents each day. There are several you know you will want to return to, but by that time they have filtered down through your 'recent' documents and are now in some default location. Typically, you have to go looking for them. The Work menu in Word can save a lot of time.

Note: Let me disappoint you right off the bat and tell you that "No, this menu is not available in any other Office program except Word." (Don't we wish! We should start a campaign to make it available in ALL programs. It's *that* good.)

1. On the *Tools* menu, click **Customize** and then click the **Commands** tab.
2. Under *Categories*, click **Built-in menus**, and then from under *Commands*, drag the *Work* menu to your toolbar.
3. To add a file to the *Work* menu, open the file, click the **Work** menu, and then click **Add to Work Menu**.
4. To access a file you've already added, on the *Work* menu, click the file name.
5. To delete a file from that menu, press **Ctrl+Alt+** and when your mouse cursor turns into a minus sign, click the **Work** menu and then click the file you want to delete.

This actually works. I copied eight documents into my work menu and they're all there whenever I need to reference them.

Teresita is currently a Lead Technical Writer at the Impac Companies in Irvine, CA. ♦TS♦

Editor's note: Do you have a software tip you'd like to share with other members? Just e-mail the information to suzanne@madisonavenuepublications.com.

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number of SIGs and up to two chapters (one student and one professional). Students may join additional chapters at a cost of \$10 per chapter.

Retired Membership (\$75)

Retired membership entitles members to the same benefits as classic membership at a reduced rate. To qualify for retired membership, an individual must have been a member of STC for 10 or more years, and must be either 60 years of age or medically retired. ♦TS♦

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that holds you back. Dr. Waitley points out the internal and external stimuli that shape our self-image.

Positive Self-Direction. Self-motivation can only take you so far; it can get you started. Self-direction is the perpetual-motion machine. You must establish clearly defined goals, write them down, and then continually re-evaluate those goals, revising as necessary.

Positive Self-Discipline. When we know who we are, feel good about ourselves, know where we are going, and have written down our goals, we learn to keep our eye on the prize and learn "to do from within when doing without."

Positive Self-Dimension. Winners do not gloat over victory; they learn to project good habits and help others achieve similar success. Self-dimension also means balance. Do you find yourself spending more time in one aspect of your life to the detriment of others? Perhaps you neglect some aspects altogether?

Positive Self-Projection. Winners project success. In screen or stage terms, this is called "presence." Winners look their best and are always well spoken. They are accessible and never aloof.

While some of the examples and success stories in the book are dated (i.e. O.J. Simpson), the principles and the plan are excellent. If you don't have time to read the book, I encourage you to buy the cassette or audio-CD version. We can all apply Dr. Waitley's principles for marked improvement in our lives and careers.

To share your thoughts with Jeff, e-mail him at erandolp@ix.netcom.com. ♦TS♦



STC SoCal Technical Communication Competition

By Carrie Damschroder, OCSTC Senior Member

2006 Spotlight Awards Banquet

The documents, art, and help files have been sent in. The judges have reviewed and critiqued all of the entries. Now it's time to celebrate the STC Southern California Technical Communication Competition participants and winners at the 2006 Spotlight Awards Banquet!

If you entered the competition, or if you'd like to see who entered and what they entered, you're invited to attend the banquet on Saturday, February 25, in Irvine, CA. The evening will feature a presentation of all the

continued on page 11>

"Words" of Wisdom

Hints on the Use of Microsoft Word 2000 - 2003

By Vivian Carroll, OCSTC Member

This month's topic is Form Layout and Protection.

For information on Form Basics, see the January 2006 issue.

Form Layout

Although forms can be created in any document using tabs for spacing, it's useful to create a form using a table. One reason is that text will wrap within a cell rather than bump the next tabbed item out of alignment. Here are tips for creating a form in a table.

1. First, design your form on paper. Plan to put a label in one cell and a form field in the next cell.
2. Second, create a Word table with the maximum number of columns (cells) that you will need on any one line and as many rows as you will need. Enter labels and form fields where you want them. Widen or merge cells to leave room for longer responses. **Alt+Drag** can be used to move cell borders in minute increments. For text form fields, you can also specify a maximum length in the field's options.
3. Format the labels in one font and fields in another so that when the form is printed, it is easy to distinguish the information the user typed. To format a form field, select the field and then assign the formatting.
4. If you never want the form to grow in length, select the rows and set their heights to exact amounts. Select **Table | Table Properties**, select the **Row** tab, and specify an exact height.
5. If you want to protect some rows but not others, insert section breaks. For example, if you create a memo form and want to protect the *To* and *From* fields while allowing the user to be able to freely type in the memo row below, select the memo row, then select **Insert | Break**, and select **Continuous**. Protect the form as described below. The reason for not protecting some areas is to allow the user access to the Spell Checker and other features that aren't available in protected sections of the form.
6. Remove all of the cell borders if desired. The users can opt to turn off the table gridlines.

Form Protection

Although you can protect a form using the **Protect Form** button on the Forms toolbar, you have more options if you select **Tools | Protect Document** and select **Forms**. If you inserted section breaks into your form, click **Sections** and then check the sections that you want to protect. Add a password if you don't want the user to be able to unprotect the form. (In Word 2003,

select **Tools | Protect Document**, under **Editing Restrictions** check **Allow only this type of editing in the document**, and select **Filling in forms**. If you inserted section breaks, click **Select Sections**. Then click **Yes, Start Enforcing Protection**.)

Vivian is a Certified Microsoft Office Specialist, Master. STC members are welcome to contact Vivian at vcvc@aol.com or 714.996.1409. ♦TS♦



EduNotes from B&B

By Bill Darnall and Brian McCaleb, OCSTC Senior Members

Information Architecture and Content Management

The OCSTC Education committee is offering an online course entitled *Information Architecture and Content Management for Technical Writers*. This will be a foundation course available without cost to STC members and other professionals who have an interest in technical writing.

For the next six months we'll study the complex spectrum of information presentation, storage, and retrieval. As technical writers, our perspective is related to—but different from—the perspective of computer scientists and database architects. Our job is to provide focused information for targeted audiences. The same information must be presented in different ways for different audiences. Consequently, we are interested in information content management to facilitate the repurposing of information.

OCSTC members (and non-members) who are interested and have not received an e-mail opportunity to sign up for the course are welcome to enroll at ocstc.org. Don't miss this free opportunity!

Bill and Brian co-chair the OCSTC Education Committee. E-mail your comments and suggestions about education to Bill at mesawriter@sbcglobal.net or to Brian at mccalebb@acm.org. ♦TS♦

A writer is a person for whom writing is more difficult than it is for other people.

Thomas Mann

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Offline: A Book Review

By *Teresita del Sol*, OCSTC Senior Member

Offline by Matthew Arnold Stern
Lake Forest, CA
Copyright ©2005
208 pages

Herman Bartleby's lab reminded her of a cave, dark and mysterious. Bartleby, as everyone called him, was not to be disturbed. All Bartleby ever wanted was for things not to change. He "preferred not to..."

Lucy Merriweather moved from Seattle, Washington, to Irvine, California, because she believed she could change things for the better. As an experienced QA manager, she believed in the intrinsic goodness of every being, until she met Bartleby.

The book begins on Monday, August 20, 2001 at 8:27 A.M. and ends on Friday August 31, 2001, at 6:00 P.M. During those two weeks, all the characters come into full bloom, and the plot develops into an edge-of-your-seat mystery that foreshadows a surprise ending.

Why am I writing about this novel in a technical writing publication? The author uses date and time stamp sub-headings to focus the reader on the element of time. These stamps lead the reader through two weeks in the life of a QA department's staff, following the all too familiar merger of two high-tech companies, and the resulting changes of personnel and personalities.

Stern is in his true element in a "techy" environment. He brings his audience into the high-tech world of Irvine, sprinkling local landmarks throughout the story.

Offline is a superb novel enriched by excellent use of the English language, and it's worth reading, especially by those who love to write. Over a steaming-hot cup of tea or a tall coffee, enjoy the rhythm of the language with a well-written plot, well-textured characters—and a surprise ending, written by one of our chapter's own members.

Congratulations, Matthew. I enjoyed reading your first book!

Offline is available at Barnes and Noble in Irvine (Barranca and Culver). Obtain additional information on Matthew's web site at:

www.matthewarnoldstern.com. ♦TS♦



The Wicked Which and Other Fairytales

By Andrea Wenger, Senior Member, Carolina Chapter

This article is reprinted from the Fourth Quarter, 2005 issue of the Carolina Communiqué.

Popular culture is filled with myths about grammar. Taught by generations of English teachers, these stories admonish little children to cling to the straight and narrow path, rather than venturing into the woods of creative communication. Some of these stories are usage guidelines rather than rules, but others are pure fantasy, the flight of some pedagogue's imagination.

The Restrictive Which

Professional writers are warned to avoid the dreaded restrictive *which*. We're told to use the word *that* as the relative pronoun when introducing a restrictive clause (one that's essential to the meaning of the expression), and the word *which* when introducing a non-restrictive clause (one that supplements the meaning). But is a restrictive *which* always wicked?

In one of the most famous speeches of the twentieth century, President Franklin D. Roosevelt used a restrictive *which*:

Yesterday, December 7, 1941—a date *which* will live in infamy—the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.

Is this statement rendered less potent by the use of the word *which* rather than *that*? Hardly. The fashion of using *that* to signify a restrictive connotation has never been imitated in speech.

Where written and spoken communication agree is in the presence of a pause (signified in writing by a comma) before the relative pronoun in a nonrestrictive connotation, and the absence of a pause (or comma) in a restrictive one. As long as you follow the rules for comma use, readers will understand your meaning regardless of your choice of *which* or *that*.

Generally, I avoid the restrictive *which*, but judgment always trumps rote. I won't write "that that I know to be true" when "that which I know to be true" sounds a hundred times better. Follow your style guide, but trust your inner voice (assuming your inner voice doesn't sound like Charles Manson's).

There's No "Of" There

For brevity's sake, the word "of" can be safely omitted after "all" and "both" in such expressions as "all of the time" (*all the time*) and "both of the writers" (*both writers*). However, using "of" in these expressions is perfectly grammatical.

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- Rail Car – locomotive, light rail or signaling maintenance documentation

We also put Documentation/Training Project Managers to work managing complex training and documentation projects.



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Split Infinitives

It's widely believed that verb phrases, and particularly infinitives, should not be split. This idea is nonsense. Usually, the best place for an adverb is immediately before the verb it modifies:

I wanted to completely replace my business wardrobe, but I had carelessly left my credit card at the shoe store.

That being said, splitting an infinitive may not be the best choice, particularly if the split is long (such as with a string of adverbs or an adverbial phrase).

For the sake of parallelism, avoid splitting an infinitive when using a correlative conjunction (such as either...or):

I want to buy either pink shoes or *purple shoes*.

not:

I want to either buy pink shoes or purple shoes.

Beginning Sentences with Conjunctions

It's fine to begin a sentence, and even a paragraph, with a conjunction. But do so sparingly, or risk the invective of the Wizard of Oz to the Cowardly Lion: "You, my friend, are a victim of disorganized thinking!"

The real problem occurs when the conjunction introduces a fragment rather than a complete sentence; but I assume that if you work as a technical communicator, you know a fragment when you see one. Occasional fragments are fine where the tone is casual or informal, but they should be avoided in instructional material.

Ending Sentences with Prepositions

There's never been a time in the history of the English language when folks didn't end sentences with prepositions. In speech, we do it all the time. Written language, to be effective, should maintain the same flow as speech. Rearranging a sentence to avoid ending it with a preposition often results in an unnatural construction that jars the reader. Follow the advice in *Eats, Shoots & Leaves*, Lynne Truss's rollicking book on punctuation, and don't write like a stupid person. (She said this specifically in reference to comma use, but it applies equally well to all elements of expression.)

Contractions

As you've probably noticed, I believe in using contractions to give prose a natural feel. That being said, I never use them in technical documentation; maybe I'm afraid that the text will lose its ring of authority. If the document is promotional rather than

instructional, a more relaxed tone may be appropriate. Follow your style guide.

Use of Second Person

In high school, I was taught to use *one* instead of *you* as the indefinite pronoun in written communication. But does anyone ever use this convention in speech? The Queen of England, maybe, and those who wish they were the Queen of England. For the rest of us, the second person pronoun is natural and comfortable; in technical writing, it's mandatory. Involve your readers by addressing them directly: "You must enter a password" is clearer and more powerful than "A password must be entered" or "Entry of a password is required."

Let's face it: If you don't tell a third-grader not to start a sentence with a conjunction, he'll start every sentence with a conjunction. If you don't tell him not to end a sentence with a preposition, he'll end every sentence with a preposition. When your grammar-school teacher's voice resonates in your head, admonishing you with these non-rules, remind yourself that her job was to teach illiterate children how to compose sentences, not to teach professional communicators how to write elegant prose.

Grammar is a matter of structure, while usage is a matter of style. And style depends on audience and intent. Obviously, you'll adopt a different tone when writing an article for the *Journal of the American Medical Association* than when writing the next great chick lit novel. The tone of instructional material should be authoritative, but accessible; stiff writing is dead on the page and doesn't serve our customers. ♦TS♦

There is no future in any job. The future lies in the person holding the job.

George Crane

Colophon

The *TechniScribe* is produced using Adobe PageMaker 7.0 for PC. Arial and Palatino are used for heading and text fonts.

The PDF on the OCSTC web site is distilled from an EPS using Adobe Acrobat Distiller 5.0.5.

FrameMaker Tips

By Mary Ann Howell, OCSTC Senior Member

Converting Microsoft® Word Documents to FrameMaker

Converting Word documents into FrameMaker is such a common task, it's the first thing I teach my beginning FrameMaker students. Word documents, for the most part, convert smoothly to FrameMaker documents. First, remove all graphics from the Word file, then open a FrameMaker document, and from the *File* menu, select **Import | File**.

How neatly the process goes depends on how well the original Word author used Word styles. If the Word content is all in Normal style with overrides, you are in for a lot of paragraph tagging by hand in FrameMaker. But if Word styles were used correctly, you can match the styles to the appropriate FrameMaker paragraph tags.

These Word styles move into the FrameMaker documents as unofficial paragraph tags, and you can convert them into the corresponding paragraph tags as a global function, one tag type at a time. From any tab in the *Paragraph Designer*, select **Commands: | Global Update Options**.

For step-by-step instructions on global tag conversions, go to the web site of FrameMaker expert Lisa Jahred: www.lisajahred.com/pdf/converttags.pdf. (While you're there, check out her other excellent FrameMaker tips.)

For more information on document conversions, read pages 57-58 and page 187 in *The Complete Reference FrameMaker 7* by Sarah O'Keefe.

If you're doing a lot of Word-to-document conversion, Tim Murray's classic document, "Converting Between Word and Frame" may interest you:

www.techknowledgecorp.com/public/word2frame.pdf.

Third-party paragraph conversion tools are available as well, such as

- Blueberry's Filtrix: www.blueberry.com/w97.htm
- Silicon Prairie's Paragraph Tool: www.siliconprairiesoftware.com/index.html
- Carmen Publishing's FindChangeSpecial 2.1: www.frameexpert.com/plugins/index.htm

I haven't used these tools yet, but if you have, please report back. The idea for this column came from one of our readers— thanks for the feedback, John!

Mary Ann is an Adobe Certified Expert in FrameMaker 7 and Acrobat 6. E-mail her at maryann@hikaripub.com or check out her web site at www.hikaripub.com. ♦TS♦

January Meeting Review

By Pamela Armstead, OCSTC Senior Member

If the audible ohhhs and ahhs were any indication, the January 17th OCSTC meeting was one of the best and most informative presentations our chapter has witnessed in some time—and one of the best attended. Why? Probably because the featured presenter promised to answer a question on the lips of many STC members: "What the heck happened to RoboHelp?"

The answer man was Mike Hamilton, VP of product management for a new company called MadCap Software and former product manager for RoboHelp. Mr. Hamilton squelched the gossip and gave us the facts about the precarious transition of BlueSky Software to eHelp, to Macromedia, and finally to Adobe, where RoboHelp now lives on fragile life support.

Hamilton candidly explained that things started off well in the acquisitions, but soon dissolved in a slow process that included the killing of key software features, surprise staff layoffs, and finally, the demise of his entire RoboHelp team in March of 2005. Hamilton alone was asked to stay on, but he soon left Adobe, disheartened by the experience. Weeks later, admittedly disgruntled, Hamilton and key members of his former team met at a restaurant under the guise of a birthday celebration. But something amazing happened at the gathering. The group took their expertise and their sour grapes and made lemonade. They called it Flare.

Now Flare is "more than an update to RoboHelp"—it's a bona fide rival. Mr. Hamilton used the rest of the presentation to show us exactly what Flare can do, providing an on-screen feature tutorial, fielding questions from enthused writers, and giving his audience straight talk about Flare's strengths, limitations, and hopes for the future. With three betas under its belt (and a talented group of 150 testers picked from an eager 6,000), MadCap appears poised to prove that Flare is the software tool that everyone wanted RoboHelp to be. Flare may be released as early as March of this year.

Following are a few highlights of Flare functionality that made an audience of tech writers ecstatic.

- A Word-like graphical interface
- A fully functional upgrade path from RoboHelp (it can import all of your legacy content)
- A standards compliant, XML workflow written in C #.
- Support of the MAML scheme for Windows® Vista
- Support of many export formats
- A more Word-like editor (without the "quirky" RoboHelp text limitations and proprietary code underneath)
- Import of xpj, .mpj, and .hjp formats
- Unicode ♦TS♦



STC Mission Statement

Creating and supporting a forum for communities of practice in the profession of technical communication.

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 more than 17,000 members include writers, editors, illustrators, printers, publishers, photographers, educators, and students.

Dues are \$55–150 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.

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Our job listing is entirely online at the OCSTC web site; pages are updated as jobs are submitted.

Staff Jobs

www.ocstc.org/employme.asp

Contract Jobs

www.ocstc.org/contractme.asp

If you have an inquiry or a job to post, e-mail Jeff Randolph at erandolp@ix.netcom.com.

A limited number of printed copies of the OCSTC web site listings are available at monthly chapter meetings.

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STC maintains job listings on the Internet. You can download the listings from the STC web site at

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Orange Juice: Membership News

By Betsy Malone, OCSTC 2nd VP Membership

OCSTC Members: 310

STC Members: 17,176

Welcome our newest OCSTC members:

- Terri Hinton
- Trudy Pearson
- Linda Ramaglino

Happy Valentine's Day! Allergic to flowers? On a low carb, candy-free diet? Tell your sweetheart over a lavish candlelight dinner that you'd prefer a sentimental, long-lasting gift of an STC membership!

Did You Know... Fun Facts

- Approximately one billion Valentine's Day cards are sent each year.
- In order of popularity, Valentine's Day cards are given to: teachers, children, mothers, wives, and then sweethearts.
- The expression "wearing your heart on your sleeve" comes from a Valentine's Day party tradition. Young women would write their names on slips of paper to be drawn by young men. A man would then wear a woman's name on his sleeve to claim her as his valentine.

Sweet Tooth?

- **1,006** – Number of U.S. locations producing chocolate and cocoa products in 2002. These establishments employed 42,538 people. California led the nation in the number of such establishments (with 114) followed by Pennsylvania (with 100).
- **3,782** – Number of confectionery and nut stores in the United States in 2002. Often referred to as candy stores, they are among the best sources of sweets for Valentine's Day.
- **24.6** pounds of candy consumed per capita by Americans in 2003; it is believed a large portion is consumed around Valentine's Day. Candy consumption has actually declined over the last few years; in 1997, each American gobbled more than 27 pounds of candy.

Everything's Coming Up Lilies?

- **\$425 million** – Combined wholesale value of domestically produced cut flowers in 2003 for all operations in 36 states with \$100,000 or more in sales. California was the leading producer, accounting for 3/4 of this amount—\$306 million).
- **\$52 million** – Combined wholesale value of domestically produced cut roses in 2003 for all

operations in 36 states with \$100,000 or more in sales. Among all types of cut flowers, roses were second in receipts to lilies (\$70 million).

- **23,094** – Number of florists nationwide in 2002. These businesses employed 119,117 people.

Diamonds, Whose Friend?

- There were **28,914** jewelry stores in the U.S. in 2002. In February 2004, these stores sold \$2.4 billion worth of merchandise—a much higher total than in the preceding or succeeding months.

Cupid, Draw Back your Bow!

- **2.2 million** – Number of marriages that take place in the United States annually. That works out to about 6,000 a day.
- **138,600** – Number of marriages performed in Nevada during 2003. So many couples "tie the knot" in the Silver State that it ranked fourth nationally in marriages, even though its total population that year was 35th.

Sources: US Census Bureau and Care2.com

For membership information, e-mail Betsy at betsybythebeach@adelphia.net. ♦TS♦

<STC SoCal Technical Communication Competition from page 4

award-winning entries while we honor the technical communicators who created them. The event's details are listed below.

What: 2006 Spotlight Awards Banquet

When: Saturday, February 25, 2006
5:30 P.M. cocktails (no-host bar); 6:30 P.M. dinner (Italian dinner with chicken, fish, and vegetarian selections)

Where: Prego Ristorante
18420 Von Karman Ave.
Irvine, CA 92712
949.533.1333

www.pregoristoranti.com

Cost: \$45/person with reservations
\$55/person without reservations
\$34/person for competition volunteers and judges with reservations

Dress: Business or semiformal attire

RSVP: By February 17, 2006, to Karen Bergen at kbergen@comcast.net

We'll see you in the spotlight!

Carrie is the Public Relations Manager for the STC SoCal Technical Communication Competition. ♦TS♦

Calendar of Events

- February 2 Los Angeles STC Chapter Lunchtime Forum, Embassy Suites Hotel, El Segundo
- February 7 OCSTC Administrative Council Meeting, 6:00 P.M., Airport Executive Suites, Irvine
- February 16 Inland Empire STC Chapter Meeting, Peking Chinese Restaurant, Riverside
- February 21 OCSTC Chapter Meeting, 6:00 P.M., Doubletree Club Hotel, Santa Ana

February Meeting Topic

An Overview of Trends, Tools, and Technologies in Software User Assistance



The results of our meeting survey on the OCSTC web site showed that you want the latest information about the tools and technologies of our trade. We're happy to comply! In January, Mike Hamilton of MadCap Software shared with us future goals of the originators of RoboHelp. At February's meeting, Joe Welinske, the world expert on user assistance, brings us up to date on happenings in this realm. This special 75-minute session covers trends that concern the future of all of us as technical writers. Joe's cutting-edge overview of the latest in software user assistance defines key terminology, highlights the most important technologies, and predicts future directions.

Joe Welinske is the president of WritersUA, formerly known as WinWriters, a company devoted to providing training and information for user assistance professionals. The WritersUA/WinWriters Conference draws hundreds of attendees each year from around the world to share the latest in user assistance design and implementation. The free content on www.writersUA.com attracts over 20,000 visitors each month.

Joe is a pioneer of software documentation. Together with Scott Boggan and David Farkas, Joe authored the popular book *Developing Online Help for Windows*. He has also taught online Help courses at the University of Washington and UC Santa Cruz. Joe received a BS in Industrial Engineering from the University of Illinois in 1981 and an MS in Adult Instructional Management from Loyola University in 1987.

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