

Contents

President's Message	2
Next Meeting	3
Editor's Desk	3
Call for International Competition Judges	4
New E-Mail Contacts	4
Chapter Contacts	5
November Meeting Review	5
What Do Technical Communicators Do?	6
Clear Preferences on Usage Questions	7
Do We Have Your Address?	7
EduNotes From B&B: Getting Back on Track	7
Certification—Boon or Bane?	9
OCSTC Employment Information	10
Meeting Fees Increase in January 2007	10
Membership News 11	
First-Time Attendees in November	11
Calendar of Events	12
December Meeting Topic	12

Creating Video / Web Seminars

By Guy Ball, OCSTC Senior Member

While text is still best for presenting many types of reference and procedural information, video can be very effective when illustrating product features, clarifying system configurations, and supplementing complex written procedures. The trick is to merge the two so they complement each other and deliver a dynamic documentation package as either an online or CD-based "web seminar."

Although the multimedia concept has been around for some time, creating a seminar like this traditionally requires a good-sized team of writers, videographers, graphic artists, subject matter experts (SMEs), and a manager to keep the team working smoothly. If you already have a large staff or access to graphic professionals, congratulations!

Our staffing situation is totally the opposite. We have to make do with a single writer and one SME. The plus of this situation is that it allows us to deliver the final product faster and less expensively—both important considerations for our cost-conscious management.

We take advantage of our low-cost (but high-quality) video camera and simplified video-editing software to deliver additional "visual documentation" to our service support team and customers. For us the trick is to look "clean" and professional while not getting caught producing a Hollywood extravaganza that would demand tons of staff time and weeks of extra work with little extra benefit. Instead of "fancy," we make sure our content and delivery is effective both from communications and cost perspectives.

Our final output (on the web or CD) includes a combination of video, Adobe PDF, and HTML files. Our worldwide service team members all have laptops, so if they can't access the Internet from their work facilities, they can use the CD.

The first step in creating a project efficiently is to understand and plan well. No secret there. We ask what our purpose is:

- Fix a problem
- Document a new process or tool

Publication Policies

TechniScribe is published 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 format, RTF (Rich-Text Format), ASCII, or in the body of an e-mail message.
- Send material to the managing editor (techniscribe@ocstc.org) five weeks before the date it will be published.

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President's Message

By Jeff Randolph, OCSTC Chapter President



The election season is fast approaching. By the time you read this, Society for Technical Communication (STC) will have announced its slate of officers for the 2007-2008 term. I hope you think about an OCSTC chapter office *you* will consider for the 2007-2008 term.

It is time to give back to your fellow members, the chapter, and STC by running for a chapter office. Is there a new initiative the chapter has not yet undertaken that you want to see through? Do you have a vision of where we should be in several years? Want to exercise your expertise, or gain experience? Have you served as a leader in another organization and want to bring a new perspective to OCSTC? After years of taking in meetings and newsletters, do you simply have an urge to "give back"?

The chapter offices are:

- President
- First Vice-President of Programs
- Second Vice-President of Membership
- Treasurer
- Secretary
- Two Nominating Committee members

There are also non-elected positions available. If you don't see yourself as a "leader," Ken Blanchard, author of *One-Minute Manager*, said that by serving, you are leading. You also work as part of a team. So if you have ever read any of Patrick Lencioni's books (such as *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, *Death by Meeting*, *The Four Obsessions of an Extraordinary Executive*), or even Jack Welch's book *Winning* (and want to test his principles), you can put their assertions into practice.

Or perhaps you work for a company where your career path will require management skill but, ironically, have no way of demonstrating that skill *within* the company.

If you are interested, please check the OCSTC web site for more details. The members of this year's nominating committee are listed there and in *TechniScribe*. Committee members and current council members can explain what duties the positions entail.

Continued on Page 11 >

Next Meeting

Topic: **Surveys—Support Your Company, Support Yourself**

Speaker Sharon Burton

When: Tuesday, Dec. 12, 6-9 p.m.

Where: DoubleTree Club Hotel
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:

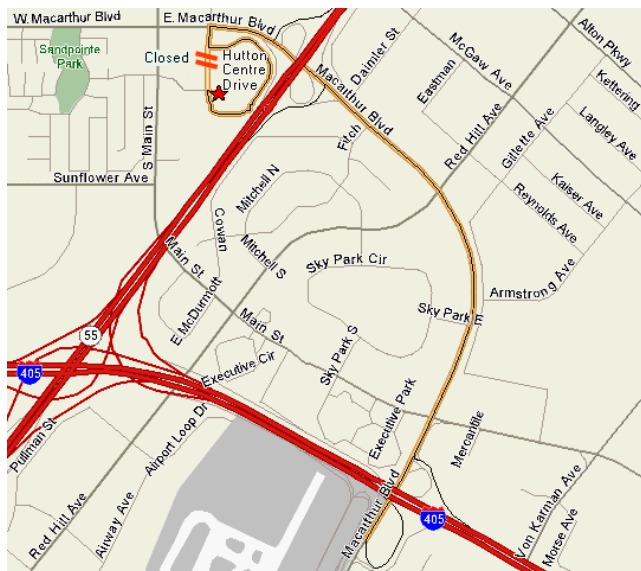
Due by midnight, Friday, Dec. 8.

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.



Colophon

TechniScribe is produced using Microsoft Word 2003 SP2 for PC. Arial and Palatino Linotype are used for heading and text fonts.

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Editor's Desk

By Jim Marchant, TechniScribe Managing Editor



Ever taken a writing test? Not just any old writing test, but one posed as part of a job interview.

There's been an upsurge in discussion on this issue, with comments from several competing viewpoints and with no particular consensus emerging.

Technical publications managers seem to like the idea. It can quickly spot the pretenders—those with no proven writing aptitude, but who think the job title sounds nice. The managers also say “it’s a writing job...what do you expect?”

Job seekers usually react with skepticism. They wonder if a test can really demonstrate anything useful. The tests, of necessity, must be generic in nature, and on a simple subject that anyone should be able to understand, such as instructions for making a peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwich.

The skeptics argue that these kinds of topics don't demonstrate the ability to interview, organize, and quickly grasp new concepts. (See John Garison's article on Page 6 for more on this theme.)

For some interviews, a test is sent out beforehand, with the candidate bringing the results to the interview. The skeptics argue that anyone could then google the subject and paste together internet research without showing much skill.

Another technique is an unannounced test. The focus can be not only on the result, but also on the initial reaction (shock, dismay, worry, enthusiasm). The rebuttal to this technique can be strong: Trying to provoke a reaction can be seen as a diabolical “mind game,” and some people “don't want to work for a company like that.” It raises the question of ethics with many objectors.

And so the debate continues. Not many people say they've been required to take such a test, but their voices perhaps are crowded out by the more vociferous protestors.

How about you? Have you taken such a test, or administered one? Is it a useful hiring tool or a sneaky, misdirected tactic?

Send your articles and ideas to Jim at techniscribe@ocstc.org ♦15♦

Call for International Competition Judges

STC is inviting technical communicators to serve as judges in STC's international competitions (technical publications, technical art, or online communication). Judging in the international competitions provides a novel opportunity to share information with peers, and get a view of some of the best work in the field. Judges serve on teams of three to evaluate entries that have already received distinguished awards at the local or regional level. A team judges the entries in one or more categories, and the number of entries varies by competition and category. The judging and determination of awards are completed before or on the day of judging.

Judges may be either on-site or remote. There are advantages to both, but because of funding considerations, the number of on-site judges is limited and some applicants for on-site judging may be invited to judge on a remote team. On-site applicants should indicate whether their employer is willing to fund all or part of their travel expenses.

On-site judges meet in Arlington, VA, at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, March 24, 2007. Rooms will be reserved for Friday and Saturday. Priority may be given to persons who have partial or full corporate travel support.

Off-site judges make the initial and final decision on awards during a telephone conference call. The team selects a mutually agreeable date and time for the call, allowing time for mailing of the entries, and

electronic submission of evaluation forms, awards list, and Best of Show forms to the Society office by March 20, 2007.

All judges must meet at least two of the following criteria:

- Master's degree or higher in technical communication or related field
- Senior membership in STC
- Seven years in technical communication or a related field (STC membership not required)
- Strong publishing background (five articles or one book)
- Teaching experience in communication or a related field (five years full-time or seven years adjunct or part-time)
- Winner of an STC or other communication competition award
- Certification by a communication-related professional organization

Judging experience and breadth of activity in STC may also be considered.

Complete the application, available at http://www.stc.org/compl/internationalCompetitions01_forms.asp by Dec. 1. Selections will be posted the first week of February.

For more information, contact Karen Baranich, STC Competitions Manager, 803.217.7299 or kbaranich@scana.com. ♦T5♦

New E-mail Contacts Improve Membership Feedback

To make it easier to contact OCSTC Council members, the contacts Web page, <http://www.ocstc.org/execbdtb.asp>, has been updated with the following new e-mail addresses:

President	Jeff Randolph	pres@ocstc.org	949.583.9402
1st Vice-President, Programs	Bruce Tepley	1vp@ocstc.org	714.540.7968
2nd Vice-President, Membership	Michael Opsteegh	2vp@ocstc.org	714.323.8717 (h) 949.725.4713 (w)
Treasurer	Betsy Malone	trea@ocstc.org	949.645.5853
Secretary	Colleen Brown	sec@ocstc.org	
Newsletter Editor	Jim Marchant	techniscribe@ocstc.org	714.579.1799

Advantages of the New Addresses

- The e-mail addresses do not change, even when new Council members take office.
- Titles used in these e-mail addresses indicate the duties of the officer, in a way that's easy to remember.

If you have any suggestions or opportunities for the chapter's meetings or other activities, don't hesitate to e-mail a Council member. All our members have a voice in chapter activities, and Council members are always glad to hear from you. The chapter is the membership, after all. ♦T5♦

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November Meeting Review

By *Chris Seraidaris*, OCSTC Member

Most technical communicators produce instructional information, but seldom do we write persuasively. In his "White Papers in Your Future" presentation, Beau Cain, STC Region 8 director, challenged assumptions about writing to inform versus writing to persuade.

Beau compared how-to documents and white papers. Manuals and guides focus on the "how," supporting a product or service after the sale, and white papers are focused on the "why," helping make the sale.

White papers, he said, are not datasheets, which contain specifications but little narrative. Nor are they product briefs, which focus on features and benefits—not the problem they solve. And they are not advertisements, which often use an emotional appeal.

White papers present a problem and its solution, informing buying-decision makers. Beau implied that white papers are platforms for persuasion—essays that describe problems that the products or services solve. They can provide marketing statements for data sheets, be the foundation for product briefs, and focus the goal of advertisements.

Beau described seven types of white papers:

Thought Leadership: Establishes a product or organization as the leading solution provider.

Business Benefits: Explains why there is a need for the product or service.

Competitive Analysis: Clarifies why a product is superior to its competition.

Position Paper: A company's view about a standard or industry regulation.

Corporate Overview: Positions a company or its strategy.

Evaluator's Guide: Provides an explanation of features that solve problems or meet specific needs.

ROI Analysis: Evaluates the product's Return On Investment after purchase.

Beau offered a white paper writing formula: Develop a thesis, write the conclusion, write the opening or closing statement, then make several points supporting the thesis. For technical communicators interested in increasing their value to their companies, writing white papers can demonstrate their investigational and analytic skills.

For more information, Beau recommended Michael Stelzner's book, *Writing White Papers*, and his web site, www.whitepapersource.com. ♦15♦

What Do Technical Communicators Do?

By John Garison, STC Associate Fellow; Member, Boston, Northern New England, and Vermont Chapters

A contributor on the *Techwr-I* listserv wrote that she was going to represent a university and its technical writing program at a college fair. She said, "I was hoping to put together a list of what tech writers do, so that when I am asked that question, I can give some interesting answers, and not just the generic 'write manuals and stuff' reply." John Garison posted the following response:

What we "do" and what we "make" are different questions. What I think we do is something I have said before: As I tell my tech comm students, the five skills all good writers have are:

- Conceptualization—the ability to pick up the big picture very quickly
- Investigation—the ability to flesh out and expand the big picture through any means possible
- Assimilation—the ability to "own" the information inside my head
- Organization—the ability to figure out the best way to explain it to others
- Regurgitation—the ability to get the words out and onto "paper"

I can learn almost any application in a short amount of time. After you've seen a few dozen, you start to see the common components even if they do very dissimilar things. You either learn how to learn fast, or you become ineffectual.

On my current project, I managed to learn it enough to turn out a basic but complete help system (first draft level of completeness) in just two weeks so that it was able to be sent to an early level adopter.

What I "make" is something a bit different.

I make whatever my employer or clients want me to make. That is not to say I do not have a lot of input (or all of the input in some cases), but what I produce has to work with a lot of other material, not just stand by itself.

I make or have made all of the following at one time or another (but not all at once) and in various media (print, PDF, online):

- Operating systems manuals
- System utilities manuals
- Programming language manuals
- Investment application database guides
- Real estate management system guides
- Word processing system guides

- Data sheets for a myriad of products and applications
- Internationalization handbooks
- Specifications for electronic printing systems
- Guides for industrial process engineering applications
- Presentations for documentation
- ROI
- Conference brochures
- Designing conference contents
- eLearning application guides for administrators, teachers and students
- User assistance for online publishing system
- Guides for workflow application (scanning, OCR, annotation, distribution)
- User assistance for business process applications
- Enterprise network management applications
- Software encryption export application guides

As you can see, it is a *very* varied lot. That's what makes it all fun.

I also tell my students that I get to be Sir Arthur Conan Doyle for a living: Half my life as Sherlock Holmes ferreting out clues and putting together the puzzle pieces and half as Dr. Watson writing it up for the edification of others.

My education is a BA in English and Philosophy.

The philosophy part is invaluable as it taught me how to take something large, complex, and totally without corporeal existence and keep it organized in my mind so that I understand it and can see how changes in one area lead to often unexpected results in another. That's the assimilation thing I mentioned earlier. So, I love what I do. It isn't for everyone, and not everyone has the same approach as I do, but it works for me.

John describes himself as a freelance technical writer, course developer, and all-around wordsmith living in south-central Vermont. He can be contacted at john@garisons.com ♦TFS♦



Clear Preferences on Usage Questions

By Jim Marchant, TechniScribe Editor

Never hit—especially the keyboard. That is the unanimous consensus of those at the October OCSTC meeting that answered the *TechniQuery* questionnaire on common usage style.

The options offered for directing a reader to activate a keyboard key were “Hit Enter,” “Push Enter,” or “Press Enter.” No one selected “hit” or “push,” but 11 votes favored “press.”

Apparently no one (except, at my shop, the programmers) writes about “drop-down” without hyphenating it. The score is nine favoring the hyphen and no votes for omitting it.

There is almost unanimous support for “drop-down menu,” as well, with only one vote for using “drop-down” alone and nine preferring the combined form. Elaine Randolph reminds us that “the Microsoft Manual of Style says ‘don’t use drop-down.’ ”

It is OK with us to “click OK,” with 11 in favor, and there was only a single vote for “click the OK button.”

Do you “highlight,” “click,” or “select” a screen object? This question might have been misleading, as the “screen object” detail was not provided, and it could have been confused with highlighting, as with a transparent color, or dragging a mouse across some text before copying or deleting. And these terms can exist together, as in “click on the photo to select and highlight it.” “Select” was the winner here, with 10

votes. “Click” received only two votes, and “highlight” just one.

Speaking of the mouse, to nine of us it has a “pointer”; to two of us, a “cursor.” The question was not clear that this did not refer to the mouse itself (a pointing device), but to the symbol on the screen that moves with it.

When transversing a hierarchical display, or nested windows, only two respondents “drill down.” The remaining 10 “navigate,” instead.

To most of us—that is, nine—“Menu Bar” is two words. “Menubar” was chosen by two.

The same ratio applies to the “display” of windows, which nine favor. For only two, windows “appear.”

The only preference on which the respondents are about equally divided is on how to change the proportion of a screen object. Six of them would call that a “resize,” while five would say a “zoom.” ♦T5♦

EduNotes From B&B: Getting Back on Track

By Bill Darnall, OCSTC Senior Member

Starting in December, the free OCSTC-sponsored class *Information Architecture and Content Management for Technical Communicators* will be running on a new track.

Lessons 1 and 2 have been available for several months. Development of additional lessons was delayed because of my inability to juggle the demands of an unexpected large number of students and my own day-to-day business activities. Nearly 300 students are enrolled in four different groups. It is clear we need to get our Learning Management System (LMS) up and running.

The schedule for availability of the remaining four lessons is as follows:

Lesson 3: December 1 Lesson 4: January 15
Lesson 5: March 5 Lesson 6: April 23

Each of the four lessons will continue to include self-tests and exercises. Managing quizzes for individual lessons is beyond our current capabilities. However, I will continue to address questions and comments as they are submitted. Current plans include a way to certify course participation as well as course completion.

Contact Bill at EDU.bd@ocstc.org ♦T5♦

Do We Have Your Address?

Do you know an OCSTC member who is not receiving *TechniScribe* in the mail? Addresses for new members, or changes to existing addresses, take several months to arrive from STC headquarters. Contact an OCSTC Council member directly for more immediate response. ♦T5♦



Creating Video / Web Seminars

< Continued from Page 1

- Highlight some feature of the product or its servicing

More specific concerns are:

- What will the project look like?
- Is it important to include a video?
- Will a single video be enough?
- Will the video show live action (with a person or the system)?
- Will we use a screen capture program to demonstrate how the software behaves?
- Are written procedures and reference drawings included?

Usually, we decide on some sort of video and add some text-based procedures in PDF or online help. By adding video, we've improved the comprehension of the written procedures so that the service staff can use the text portion for reference and detailed information.

In my case, my "actors" are my more knowledgeable engineers or first-tier support engineers. (Oddly enough, some of the normally quiet ones do quite well when you turn the camera on them.) We meet and roughly plan what the content will be and then how we will break it up into manageable chunks. I try to stick to 4 to 6 minutes maximum for each video. (Although it doesn't always work, that's the goal.) Any longer and most viewers start getting antsy and click away.

Long discussions are often divided into shorter "chapters." This also forces us to develop our content more efficiently and not include more than we need. It's a good bargaining chip with the SMEs, who too often want to explain every nuance of a system while on video. (I offer to let them speak in depth on other video segments—keeping my main one short.) In past articles in *TechniScribe*, I've talked about scripting and video production. So I'll skip that for now.

In most cases, we use live-action video. Our SMEs usually have a good idea of what they want to say and I just videotape them while they're performing the procedure they're discussing.

This is all "live" and often handheld—I try to use a tripod when I can, but often I just try to be very steady as I move along with the expert. I also later shoot some secondary close-up footage ("B" roll, if you want to know the jargon) so I can edit it into the main footage during cuts, narration flubs, or when I don't follow with the camera well enough.

I've gotten good at doing the video with one or two



"takes." The better experts don't need to memorize their lines if they just speak to the subject matter. Realize that a couple of minor flubs will not hurt you. I suspect they become more "human" to our audience—and our service team members like to see what the engineer back in Irvine

looks like.

While sometimes the experts drone on, I can use my video editing tools to crop or cut during the final edit. (This is where the "B" roll footage becomes important, to cover abrupt changes.)

So once we have the video shot and "in the can" (I love that Hollywood talk), I'll edit the video. Yes, you can use the higher priced video-editing software packages if you're familiar with them. If you are not, I recommend you stick with something simpler (and easier to learn) unless your company will pay for training (or you have a coworker who can help).

I was a former user of Adobe's *Premiere Pro*, but our department budget allowed for Adobe *Elements*, which I've been pretty happy with. I export the final edited video to a high quality WMV (Windows Media Video) format, which is easily displayed by our Windows-based laptops.

I also use Techsmith's *Camtasia* to record the installation, configuration, and use of software. It's a wonderfully simple program that captures every on-screen move, and you can narrate while recording, or dub in narration later. This is wonderful for getting programmers involved. (Also, you can edit it to shorten pauses or correct errors.)

Adobe's *Captivate* is a similar program.

Let's skip ahead to where you have collected the finished videos, PDFs of a procedure or two, and maybe some drawings for reference.

Rather than just release a disk with a couple of files on it, I want to offer a more sophisticated media piece. It's not really too difficult. I use FrontPage to create a very simple HTML "home page" and have it automatically start when the disk is inserted into the user's drive.

On that first page, I have a menu of links to the videos or other selections. I'll add some photos as clickable links and select fonts that are resident on their computers. (Clickable icons can be created in Photoshop.) I make it look artistically pleasing

Continued on Page 9 >

Certification—Boon or Bane?

By Bill Thomas, Senior Member, Rocky Mountain Chapter

Since I first joined STC in 1974, there have been discussions of whether technical communicators form a profession and whether certification would be a good idea. There have been roundtables, articles, recommendations, and hallway discussions in companies, chapter meetings, and presentations at STC conferences.

With the STC revitalization and transformation initiative, there has been renewed interest in certification. A task force has been formed to look into answers. At the July meeting of the STC Board, President Paula Berger stated, "I have asked Jonathan Baker and Dan Wise to lead a Certification Evaluation Task Force. The purpose is to investigate the issue of certification from all sides—value to employers and members, financial impact, feasibility of implementation, interest level—and report to the Society in May, 2007, about their findings." Jon Baker is a Program Manager in Technical Publications Operations for EMC Corporation and Dan Wise is an editor with the International Code Council.

Jon and Dan and 18 STC members from the U.S. and Canada have been meeting via conference call to determine the starting point and progression of this task. Once the questions have been determined, the task force members will pursue answers and make a report to the STC board.

Questions typically asked have been along these lines:

- Is there a body of knowledge defining this profession?
- What would be the core competencies required?
- Would certification help or hurt the cause of the technical communicator in the field?
- How would employers react to certification?
- Would academia respond positively to a professional body of knowledge and teach standard courses to develop certified students?
- Would STC provide post-graduate, continuing education courses?
- Should certification be based on knowledge, experience or both?
- Would there be levels of certification (basic, advanced, master)?
- Will there be financial concerns on the part of STC, academia, employers, or practitioners that need to be addressed?
- Do international or cultural considerations need

to be addressed?

- How would certification be marketed to sell the value of such a program and the profession to practitioners, employers, and academia?
- Would professional certification enhance the group or cause some to leave?

Send comments or recommendations for this task force to consider to STC_CTF@yahoo.com. If you would like to participate, contact Jon Baker, jbaker2525@earthlink.net, or DWise@iccsafe.org.

♦TJ♦

Creating Video / Web Seminars

< Continued from Page 8

(mimicking other pages I have in my idea file), and I'm done.

On some feature-packed web seminars, I've included several layers of web pages that offer something more like a full web site. I'll add technical bulletins, original manufacturer manuals, and troubleshooting aids. I also offer links to external sites and contact e-mails to encourage the user to keep coming back to this CD as a resource.

If I had more space, I would continue about field testing your work, developing a collection of web site seminar examples to provide ideas for the graphically challenged (like me), dealing with tough SMEs (and tougher managers) who want a larger (and costlier) seminar, and how to sneak in your first multimedia project when no one wants to give you the opportunity. But that gives me reasons to write more articles.

To sum up, we've developed a solid formula that delivers quality video-based seminars both fast and inexpensively. We get rave reviews from our service staff and customers for their clarity and ease of use. Our major customers love it because they can see the quality of the training and that it's uniformly delivered. My management likes it because we're delivering effective service instruction without hurting our financial bottom line. And if they're happy, I'm happy (and gainfully employed).

Guy D. Ball is a senior technical writer for EADS-North America Defense Test and Services in Irvine, CA. During the last seven years, he has helped develop more than 80 multimedia presentations. His latest book, Early Santa Ana, was published this summer. He lives in Tustin, CA, and can be contacted at guyball@pacbell.net.

Society Pages



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 15,000 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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If you would like to receive e-mail notification about upcoming OCSTC meetings, visit http://www.ocstc.org/list_redirect.asp.

Click **Join**. This list broadcasts only meeting notices and STC announcements

OCSTC Employment Information

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

Staff Jobs

<http://www.ocstc.org/employe.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.

Society-Level Job Listings

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

Meeting Fees Increase in January 2007

Due to an increase in meal rates by the Doubletree Club Hotel, the OCSTC chapter council has approved an increase in meeting fees, starting with the January 2007 meeting.

The increase will be \$1 more than the current fees for all attendee categories. Here is the new schedule:

Members with reservations	\$23
Students with reservations	\$17
Nonmembers with reservations	\$28
Walk-ins or those registering after deadline	\$32
No-shows billed	\$23

This is the first increase in student fees in about five years.



Orange Juice:

Membership News

By Michael Opsteegh, OCSTC 2nd Vice President, Membership

OCSTC Members: 277

STC Members: 15,451



Season's greetings, everyone! At this time of year, more than at any other time, our minds turn to thoughts of gatherings and celebrations with family and friends. It is important that we place ourselves with people who make us feel safe and share our interests. No matter where you go this

holiday season, be safe and be merry.

People continue to come to OCSTC chapter meeting for various reasons. For some, the reason may be the meeting topic. Others may like the food.

I think it is because of the opportunity to meet and visit with people with common interests and goals.

The chapter, as a whole, welcomes new folks to meetings and encourages them to return. There is a nonthreatening, even nurturing, attitude put forth by OCSTC members. Most of them are not shy about introducing themselves, or chatting up a new member.

OCSTC provides a real sense of community that is important to each of our professional lives. This kind of support cannot be found in a Special Interest Group (SIG), and it cannot be found in a newsletter article like this, but it can be found when you are able to surround yourself with other professional communicators.

If you're having a hard time thinking of resolutions for the New Year, I have some suggestions (feel free to use them):

- I will finally stop entering two spaces after each period.
- I will start reading every word of the *TechniScribe*.
- I will stop letting the air out of my boss's tires.
- I will beat Jim at sumo wrestling.
- I will stop obsessing over the difference between who and whom.
- I will drink more water.
- I will learn a new tool.

- I will try something new—decaf, maybe. I'm sure you can come up with much better resolutions than these.

Have a wonderful holiday.

I wish everyone the best in 2007! ♦T♦

First-Time Attendees in November



Jolene Cooper, Cathryn Park, Raymund Miclat

President's Message

< Continued From Page 2

The Nominating Committee Chair for this year's election is Elaine Randolph (elaine.randolph@cox.net).

Remember, you can also give back to the chapter in another way: Our rechartering effort is under way. In the past, this has meant that we essentially produced a strategic plan. This year, rechartering also means that our goals and our local vision must be in line with the STC vision. Further, in recent correspondence, STC has mentioned rechartering as a requirement for requesting funds from STC under their soon-to-be-unveiled zero-based budget plans. A zero-based budget must be a part of our recharter submission to STC.

Next month, I'll continue my review of *Winning*. We'll look at Jack Welch's ideas to put you in a good position with hiring managers, including the people in Human Resources, and how to cope with companies in a state of change. We'll also examine how you can tell when you are in the right job because, "When you find the right job, you'll never have to work again." ♦T♦

Calendar of Events

- December 7 Los Angeles STC Chapter Lunchtime Forum, 11:45 A.M., Embassy Suites Hotel, El Segundo
- December 12 OCSTC Chapter Meeting, 6 P.M., Doubletree Club Hotel, Santa Ana
- December 13 San Diego STC Chapter Meeting, 5 P.M., Marriott Courtyard in Kearny Mesa, "Separating the Documentation Processes," Alan Goodman.
- December 21 Inland Empire STC Chapter Meeting, 6:30-9 P.M., Peking Chinese Restaurant, Riverside

December Meeting Topic

Surveys: Support Your Company, Support Yourself



Sharon Burton has been in the technical communication field for 15 years. In that time, she's run Anthrobytes Consulting, started the Inland Empire STC chapter, created the Technical Writing Certificate program at UCR Extension, spoken at events around the country, won STC awards for her work, and occasionally slept.

Currently, Sharon works as Technical Publications Manager at Wonderware in Lake Forest, teaches baby engineers at UCR, and occasionally does stand-up comedy in Southern California. Her current research focus is finding out who users are and then designing the information the users need to accomplish their work. This talk comes out of that research. ♦TS♦

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