

# Lines & Letters

## Northeast Ohio STC Newsletter



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### President's Corner

Hi all,

Hope your 2014 is off to a great start because the NEO is off and rolling at full speed into a great new year.

Accomplishments for January include:

- ◆ Budget approved by National and funds received (thanks Debbie Mekker)
- ◆ CAA submitted on time (thanks Lisa, Janean, and especially Claudia)

Our January meeting was well attended and successful. Alan Houser presented a terrific program on the Adobe Technical Communication Suite that was both informative and entertaining.

Our February meeting will be a real treat for two reasons. Anytime the community gets to visit a facility like Keithley, one of Cleveland's major players in the tech community, that is a privilege.

Secondly, as in previous presentations this year (Janean Voss, and Denise Kadilak in November), I am jazzed when we get great presentations from NEO's local talent. The reason the NEO is one of the strongest communities in the STC is the talent and expertise within its own ranks. Tricia Spayer and Claudia Thompson will be presenting a discussion entitled "What is Author-it?" Author-it is a staple in the tech comm community and familiarity with it is invaluable, even if you don't currently use the application.

As always, if you are interested in getting more involved as a volunteer, please feel free to contact me.

**Paul Holland**

PS. This month's lady is a bit unique. She is the SS Normandie; the first French ship introduced in this column. She was built in Saint-Nazaire, France, for the French Line Compagnie Générale Transatlantique and entered service in 1935. Many consider her to be the greatest Ocean Liner ever, though I do not fall in that group. What I find fascinating about her, and you see this in the ships from the English, German, and French lines, is how the stereotype of the culture is reflected in their architecture. The French produced stout, well-designed ships but with a distinct nod to elegance and style. Her chief rival was the RMS Queen Mary, also elegant but clearly a working gal, whereas the Normandie was just beautiful. Her rounded, wider smoke stacks and raised bow gave her a more finished, and sleeker look. In 1942, she caught fire after the United

States seized her to use as a troop transport and was subsequently deemed a loss in 1946. Too short a life for arguably one of the most beautiful ocean liners ever.

### NEO STC Board Opportunities – 2014/15

The NEO STC continues to be one of the strongest and most active chapters in the society. As with most organizations, chapters are only as strong as the members who pull together to help the chapter succeed. This is your opportunity to join the chapter board and help run this amazing chapter!

Who is on our Chapter Board?

- ◆ Chapter Officers: Chapter President, Vice President, Immediate Past President, Treasurer, and Secretary
- ◆ Committee Chairpersons: Currently, this includes our Programs, Sponsorship/Advertising, Website, Workshop, Membership, Book Club, Networking, Public Relations, Newsletter, Academic Relations, and Competitions committee chairpersons

Responsibilities:

- ◆ Chapter Officers: Perform tasks as defined for the respective roles
- ◆ Committee Chairpersons: Perform tasks as defined for the respective roles. Defines a plan for the respective committee during the summer.
- ◆ Attend bi-annual chapter board meeting to share plans and progress
- ◆ Work individually (or on a team, depending on role) to carry out tasks during the year defined during the planning phase
- ◆ Transition duties upon completion of term

Commitment:

- ◆ All board members are asked to commit from July 2014 – June 2015. The monthly tasks typically take approximately 2-10 hours a month, but this varies based on the role.

Who we're looking for:

For 2014/15, we have known openings for:

- ◆ Chapter Vice President
- ◆ Programs (co-chairperson)
- ◆ Competitions
- ◆ Sponsorship/Advertising

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If you are interested in any of the other chapter officer or committee chairperson positions identified above in the Who is our Chapter Board? section, please indicate that when you apply. We can put you in touch with that team/chairperson.

Qualifications:

- ◆ Current NEO STC chapter member in good standing
- ◆ Passionate about wanting to play a role in the future of your chapter. Passion over years of experience plays a critical role.
- ◆ Interested in having fun, networking with fellow professionals, and putting plans into action!
- ◆ No prior experience necessary, but a desire to learn and apply skills

Benefits of being a board member:

- ◆ Increase your professional networking opportunities inside and outside the chapter
- ◆ Develop your leadership acumen
- ◆ Build on a skillset in a specific area
- ◆ Be a part of a team that has for over 10 years received recognition from STC international for its outstanding service to its members
- ◆ Receive free meal at bi-annual board meetings

Next Steps:

Aside from our members (you!), our all-volunteer board is the lifeline of the organization. If you or someone you know may be interested in joining the board, please complete the survey, and a current chapter officer will be in touch with you. All applications must be completed by Friday, February 28.

The current NEO STC officers will carefully evaluate each application and follow up with candidates.

Questions are welcome and may be directed to:

- ◆ NEO STC Vice President Lisa Mileusnich
- ◆ NEO STC Immediate Past President Janean Voss

### Don't Forget to Vote! Check out the National STC Candidates

For full information on the candidates, visit <http://www.stc.org/about-stc/leadership/stcelection>. The 2014 Society election is scheduled to begin at 10 AM

EST (GMT-5) on March 10 and will close at 5 PM EST (GMT-5) on March 21.

The positions and candidates are listed below.

PRESIDENT

- ◆ Kit Brown-Hoekstra will automatically succeed from Vice President.

CANDIDATES FOR VICE PRESIDENT

- ◆ Bernard Aschwanden
- ◆ Paul Mueller

CANDIDATE FOR SECRETARY

- ◆ Alyssa Fox

CANDIDATES FOR DIRECTOR (TWO POSITIONS TO BE ELECTED)

- ◆ Charles Fisher
- ◆ Ray Gallon
- ◆ Mak Pandit

CANDIDATES FOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE (TWO POSITIONS TO BE ELECTED)

- ◆ Donn DeBoard
- ◆ Marta Rauch

### Scholarship Update



Starting February 1, we have a scholarship recipient search in progress and have been supporting this worthwhile activity for several years now.

See our Scholarship page for details.

Our last winner was Sarah Perrine, who attends Youngstown State and appears in the picture with Immediate Past President Janean Voss.

Please contact Sarah Burke or Jeanette Evans for information about entering or judging the scholarship.

### AMWA Conference Update: A Video!

Kim Lindsey and Ginny Haas attended the AMWA (American Medical Writers Association) conference in November 2013, representing STC at an exhibitor booth.

Click here to view a video of their experience!  
<http://youtu.be/kSlx5lgjJfM>

### March Program Meeting Preview: YSU – Starting a Technical Writing Program

*By Lynn Nickels*

Youngstown State University — A Case Study: The challenges of starting a Professional and Technical Writing program at the collegiate level, from inception, to student participation, to employment.

Many colleges in the state of Ohio offer writing degrees, but as careers in technology continue to rise, the demand for writers with a focused degree in technical writing also grows — not only in Ohio, but nation-wide.

In the past, technically-focused writing programs seemed to wane; however, with the need for trained technical writers on the increase, projected by upwards of 15% by the year 2022, according to the Occupational Outlook Handbook, colleges have begun to re-implement these specialized programs.

Youngstown State University is one such university. Now with a resurgence in the need for tech writers, as well as the need for refocusing the name of its Professional Writing and Editing program, YSU implemented its new Professional and Technical Writing Program last fall.

NEO STC's March Program meeting will feature a panel discussion exploring the challenges professors at YSU have faced in getting the new program off the ground.

Coordinator of the new program, Dr. Jay Gordon, has 15 years of teaching in the English department under his belt at YSU. He has doctoral and master's degrees in rhetoric from Carnegie Mellon and a B.A. in philosophy from Brandeis.

Assistant Professor Dr. Karen Kaiser Lee worked closely with Dr. Gordon on development of the new program and is now an assistant professor at YSU where she primarily teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in the program.

Current English Department Chair Dr. Julia M. Gergits and retired professor and STC Associate Fellow Dr. Bege Bowers will talk about the history of technical writing programs at YSU.

"The newer program was developed in part to make the major more "technical," design-oriented, and communication-specific and less similar to the literature major, as well as more suited to the current technical/professional communication professions. The old program's design allowed so much freedom in course selection that students weren't getting enough of a common core. Also, the journalism major had been developed after the original PWE major was developed, so the new program didn't have to accommodate the students who wanted to go into journalism," Bege said.

Attendees will also hear from two students currently enrolled in the new program at YSU. Senior Sarah Perrine and graduate student Rebecca Steh will discuss why they chose the program and what they hope to learn. They will also talk about their goals and potential challenges with regard to finding employment in the field after graduation.

"I think the new program is a great adjustment! It helps students who are interested in specific fields get more experience with formalized writing in these other departments," said Sarah.

And finally, we will have the opportunity to listen and talk to two employers in the current marketplace who hire technical writers. Kathleen Rugerri of Rockwell Automation, and Bob Dianetti of Radcom, Inc., will give us an insider's view into what employees look for — both from students just out of college and from job-seekers in general.

Look for upcoming registration information at <http://www.neostc.org>.

### Five Questions with the NEO STC Competitions Committee

The newsletter is featuring a different committee each month (using a Q&A format) to learn about what they do and how they help our chapter.

The highlighted committee for this month is Competitions, represented by Barb Philbrick and Nicole Derr. We asked them five questions:

#### 1. What is the Competitions Committee?

It's the committee that organizes and runs the local technical communication competition.

#### 2. Why is the Competitions Committee important to the chapter?

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For the chapter, it's a way to get us noticed nationally. For members, it is a chance to get outside feedback on their work.

Both members and non-members, regardless of experience level, can volunteer to be judges. It's a great opportunity to meet others in our profession, to see what your peers are producing, to mentor less-experienced technical communicators, and to learn more about the field.

### **3. What tasks do you work on with the Competitions Committee?**

The co-chairs work on these items: Announce and plan competitions; send out calls for judges and entries. Select judges. Coordinate transfer of entries with another STC chapter (for the last two years, Rochester). Meet with judges and remind them of the guidelines for judging. Meet with them again after they have judged the pieces to assign award levels to the entries. Ship the entries to other chapter. Prepare certificates and announce the winners.

### **4. How did you get involved with this committee?**

Barb: After I finished with the newsletter, I was looking for another role I could fill, so volunteered for competitions.

Nicole: I got involved because I was looking to give back to the local tech comm community. We had not done competitions in two years, so it was a good opportunity to make a difference.

### **5. In 2013, NEO STC exchanged entries with the Rochester chapter. What is the advantage of exchanging competition entries?**

Exchanging prevents problems with a conflict of interest (for example, judging a colleague's piece) and any possible resentments because of negative comments. It also gives us a perspective outside our local area.

Thank you to the Competitions Committee for your hard work and dedication to STC! If you would like more information about this committee, please contact Nicole or Barb. If you would like to volunteer with the Competitions Committee or any of our other chapter committees, please contact chapter president Paul Holland.

## **New Promotion for Newsletter Starts March 1**

Enter our latest Lines & Letters promotion. Submit an article starting March 1, 2014, and ending February 28, 2015, to be eligible for a fabulous prize!

Stay tuned for details on the prize, which will be comparable to past prizes of a Kindle or gift card. We plan to pick a winner at our March, 2015, meeting.

Join the ranks of past winners that include Barb Philbrick, who should now be enjoying the Kindle she won when we picked her name at our December, 2013, general meeting.

## **In the Spotlight: Gail Pogue**

*By Lynn Nickels and Gail Pogue*



Meet Gail Pogue! Gail has been a member of NEO STC since 2001 and has quite an interesting history in the field of technical communications, both as a writer for large companies and as an independent contractor.

Gail says she, "gained broad experience in the medical diagnostics industry at Abbott Laboratories in Abbott Park IL, including R&D, Marketing, and Clinical Research. Many of my experiences at Abbott required technical communications, including instructing customers on the use of medical diagnostic tests and instruments."

After her family moved to Ohio in 1993, she telecommuted for Abbott and other Illinois companies through a medical/technical writing consulting group, Ledell, Inc. The types of writing she did included clinical summaries, FDA 510(k) submissions, manufacturing documentation updates, and technical meeting summaries.

In 1996, she became part of the technical communications department at Chiron Diagnostics (formerly Ciba Corning Diagnostics) in Oberlin OH, where she wrote customer technical bulletins and task-oriented service and user's guides for their medical diagnostic equipment.

Bayer Diagnostics purchased Chiron Diagnostics in 1998 and closed the Oberlin facility in 2001, after transferring the R&D and technical communications groups to their Tarrytown NY facility. Gail was retained for a few years as a contract technical writer through a technical communications consulting group, iDesign & Delivery.

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Through the years, her business has expanded as clients have left companies and joined new ones. She has researched and written customer and service information using a variety of software tools as an independent contractor or as a member of iDesign & Delivery or Ledell, Inc. Clients have included a large cosmetic company, a nonprofit standards organization, major medical diagnostic and pharmaceutical companies, and small biotech companies in various parts of the US.

Gail participated as a judge for the NEO STC chapter's publications competition in 2001-2002. She also helped to coordinate the awards banquet in 2001, with the help of Cheryl Bennett and Jeanette Evans. That year, she attended the STC Technical Communication Summit in Chicago.

Gail double-majored in college and holds a BS – Medical Technology from DePaul University, Chicago, IL, and a BS – Education (Spanish minor) from Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, IN. She says she enjoys many types of “family activities,” including hiking, cross-country skiing, going to Cleveland Indians games, and touring various museums in the area. She also participates in a local book club, Zumba exercise classes and volunteers at her church.

### Adobe TCS4

*By Joann Rasmussen, APR, MBA*



Alan Houser introduces tips & techniques for Adobe TCS4 . . . and challenges the audience: How well do you know the STC?

Alan Houser, president of Group Wellesley, Inc., STC Fellow and immediate past president, introduced those who attended the NEO STC's January 9 program to new tips and tricks in Adobe Technical Suite 4 (TCS4).

Adobe updated it with FrameMaker 11, RoboHelp 10, Captivate 6, Acrobat X/XI Pro and Presenter 8, but eliminated Photoshop CS5 and replaced it with Illustrator CS6.

TCS4, said Houser, allows technical communicators to develop, manage, publish, and re-distribute data across the enterprise. He demonstrated how users can send data developed in FrameMaker for technical documentations in .pdf format to RoboHelp for online help applications, for example.

The best part of TCS4? According to Houser, it's the new multi-screen HTML5 output capabilities. When Steve Jobs and Apple said it wanted no part of Flash's .swf output, technical communicators demanded software that could harness the power of HTML5, Javascript, and CSS3. TCS4 generates data that works seamlessly on the PC, the tablet, Androids, smartphones and all Apple devices. Technical communicators can develop data with settings formatted for multiple projects.

Before introducing TCS4, Houser spent a few minutes quizzing participants about the present STC governance and its member benefits. By listening to members and promoting the profession, STC offers members greater value, said Houser. Houser compared the STC's new goals and brand with the transformation of Fleetwood Mac from a blues band to one of the greatest performers of all time, showing the audience album covers from Fleetwood Mac of the '60s and '70s.

“When did Fleetwood Mac become the producer of the fourth highest selling album in history?” After flashing pictures of Lindsey Buckingham and Stevie Nicks, who joined the band in 1975, he explained. “The band created a new image and brand for itself when it hired this duo and developed a strategy for success.” Houser explained that new STC leadership plans to offer members more webinars from thought leaders, certificate programs, and more online education programs. Although in-person seminars and summits provide members with “invaluable experiences,” online opportunities defray the cost of travel to summits and seminars.

A follow-up...just five days after Houser's presentation, Adobe introduced TCS5. This release includes FrameMaker 12, RoboHelp 11, Acrobat XI, Presenter 9, and Captivate 7. TCS5 further improves multi-channel publishing, structured/XML authoring, cross-product integration, and collaboration. Details are available at: <http://www.adobe.com/products/technicalcommunicationuite.html>

Devore Technologies of Beachwood, Ohio, hosted the event, and participants enjoyed a cornucopia of food from Bob Evans. (Thank you to Joann for providing the photo.)

## Best of Show Winner: Cheryl Knight



Lines & Letters recently talked with Cheryl Knight, winner of the Best of Show award in the recent NEO STC publications competition. She answered questions about the Teaching for Online Learning entry that won.

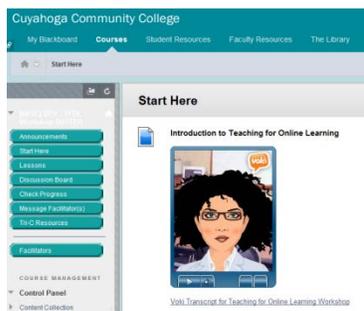
### 1. Who is the audience for the entry/site?

The target audience for this workshop is Cuyahoga Community College's (Tri-C) faculty members who would like to or are required to teach in the blended or online format. They have completed part one of the training successfully and are ready to move on to expand their knowledge. This is a requirement for faculty who are new to teaching in the blended or online format, but it is also open to all faculty interested in the elements of a course site design.

### 2. What is the purpose of the entry/site?

The purpose of this workshop is to build a greater understanding of how course design and delivery can affect the learner's experience. It also covers a wide variety of skills needed to build a course in the Blackboard learning management system, universally used at Tri-C. We feel that it is important for each instructor to gain experience using the learning management system, therefore we included a practical application assignment.

### 3. What tools did you use to create the entry?



The workshop uses a wide variety of technology tools to expose our instructors to many different options. We tried to provide an innovative environment without being intimidating. The content of the workshop is housed in the institution's learning management system, and

individual modules were designed to be accessible to all users of all abilities. This is also known as universal design.

### 4. How did you learn about the NEO STC competition?

The technical writer/analyst in our department brought this to our attention.

### 5. Of what value is the feedback of the judges?

The judges' feedback was very helpful because I believe in the concept of continuous improvement. A learning experience such as this workshop is never perfect, and every new set of eyes helps enhance the workshop. The comments provided were comprehensive and thoughtful. I very much appreciate all of the judges taking time to thoroughly review our entry.

### 6. What is your current position at Cuyahoga Community College?

I am an instructional designer for the college based out of the Office of eLearning & Innovation.

## Newsletter Notes: eMerge Returns

by Jeanette Evans (co-editor, Lines & Letters)



We are off to a great start for 2014 with our January and February programs and activities. With February comes, of course, Valentine's Day, when people think about love. It goes without saying that we hope you love our NEO STC activities and newsletter or at least like them. In this issue we especially hope you like the content including the interesting recap by Joann Ramussen of Alan Houser's presentation and the announcement about you being eligible for a drawing to win a prize if you submit an article to this newsletter.

Thinking ahead to spring and the months to come, eMerge could be a local conference of interest to some of you. Cuyahoga Community College and the Office of eLearning & Innovation are hosting this third annual eMerge Blended Learning Conference at Corporate College East, a Division of Cuyahoga Community College, on March 13, 2014.

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The eMerge Conference is Northeast Ohio's premiere conference specifically aimed at bringing higher education faculty and professionals together to address challenges, discuss innovations, and share strategies for teaching and learning in blended learning.

Keynote speaker Michelle Pacansky-Brock is a noted educator, award-winning online faculty development specialist, and author of *Best Practices for Teaching with Emerging Technologies* (Routeledge, 2012) and the ebook *How to Humanize Your Online Class with VoiceThread* (Smashwords, 2013).

Many institutions are using Blended Learning as a way to meet enrollment demands, provide more flexible learning options to students, and explore online learning environments. As the need for flexibility increases exponentially, new solutions and effective practices must be created to accommodate diminishing resources and enhanced learning for this "merged" learning environment.