

President's Corner - June 2014

Hi all,

As always, I want to thank the team that made last month's awards meeting such a success.

In particular, to Janean Voss, who organized the banquet and facilities to perfection. She has been a wonderful Immediate Past President. She also was awarded the President's Achievement Award, which was well deserved. She has put an indelible mark on the NEO community and will be listed with many of the leaders in the community who have been instrumental in establishing the Distinguished legacy of excellence this community enjoys! (See what I did there...;-))

Other awards included:

- ◆ Recognition of Tricia Spayer's Associate Fellowship
- ◆ Volunteer of the Year – Tricia Spayer
- ◆ Rookie Volunteer of the Year – Debbie Mekker
- ◆ Committee of the Year – Newsletter
- ◆ Volunteer Recognition Achievement Award – Jeanette Evans, Lisa Mileusnich, Lynn Nickels, Joann Rasmussen, Claudia Thompson

Special thanks to Lisa Mileusnich, who has been an absolute Rock Star this year and invaluable to our community's efforts.

The NEO website will be updated during the summer with new events as they become available, but on June 20, the Social Events Committee has a visit scheduled to the Thorncreek Winery in Aurora. If you are interested, please RSVP your registration to Ginny Haas by Tuesday, June 18.

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

Paul Holland

PS. I skipped the ship last month, but was informed those were enjoyed, so I am including one last ship. In the spirit of peace and beauty, I am going with an ocean liner, and this is the greatest liner built in the United States. She is the SS United States, designed by one of our preeminent Naval architects, Francis Gibbs.

Mr. Gibbs designed the Liberty ships, which were significant contributors during the second World War. Gibbs and Cox, which is still in business, designed more than 70 percent of U.S. tonnage launched during World

War II and as of "...2003, more than 150 warships built to the firm's designs, including 60 percent of the U.S. Navy's surface combatant fleet, were on active duty in nearly 20 Navies."

The SS United States was built in 1952 for United States Lines and she was specifically designed to capture the Blue Riband, an award given to the passenger liner that records the highest speed on the trans-Atlantic run. Over the years, the competition had typically been between Cunard, White Star, and the French and German lines. The SS United States was our first attempt, and she captured the Blue Riband with ease; she still holds that record.

Fire was always a risk on the high seas, even in contemporary ships, so Gibbs designed her to use aluminum extensively, which also rendered her superstructure lighter, and hence, faster.

She is fighting for her life now. She is the last ocean liner from the Golden Era of Sea Travel and the greatest American passenger ship built. Hopefully, she will be saved as a museum or alternate-use facility similar to the RMS Queen Mary in Long Beach, but if not, here she is, at speed, at sea, where she belongs. Beautiful Gal!

Upcoming Events Summer 2014

NEO STC events

- ◆ All NEO STC events are listed in the Events Calendar.
- ◆ 6/20/14: Social event, at Thorncreek Winery in Aurora.
- ◆ Watch the website for additional networking events and our 2014-15 lineup of programs!

Other events and dates of interest

- ◆ 6/19/14: NEO PMI meeting, "2013 Project of the Year Presentation: Jo-Ann.com Order Management System Project," presented by Matt McConnell, at the Jo-Ann Training Center in Hudson. Details.
- ◆ 6/19/14: UXPA Cleveland meeting, "Branding, Usability, and Product Voice: Creating a Consistent Customer Experience," at OverDrive in Cleveland. Details.
- ◆ Visit the STC website for the most current list of Live Web Seminars.

Another Great Year: 2014 NEO STC Awards, Recognition, and Election

By Claudia Thompson

It's been another outstanding year for NEO STC — a year of successful events and initiatives made possible by our dedicated and hard-working volunteers, community partners, and corporate sponsors.

On May 8, 2014, NEO STC celebrated this success with its annual Election and Awards Dinner at Signature of Solon in Solon, Ohio.

Voting for the NEO STC 2014/2015 officers was also held during the event, with results announced at the end of the evening.

To kick off the event, Paul Holland, 2013/2014 NEO STC President, reviewed the year's achievements and expressed his thanks for the hard work everyone put in to make these achievements possible. He then began the presentation of awards; a summary of these awards follows.

COMMUNITY-LEVEL AWARDS



NEO STC is a community of distinction!

This year, NEO STC earned the following community-level award for the second year in a row:

Community Achievement Award, Community of Distinction. The highest possible level of community recognition, NEO STC earned this award for exceptional service to its members and for meeting Society goals well beyond expectations. The citation for the award reads:

"For your dedication to your members and to the promotion of the technical communication field with an impressive number of initiatives and strong ties to the community and students in your area."

SOCIETY-LEVEL AWARDS

A number of NEO STC members received honors for their extended service to both the Society and NEO STC:

- ◆ Tricia Spayer, Associate Fellow. The STC organization bestows the rank of Associate Fellow upon a senior member who has attained distinction in the field of technical communication.
- ◆ Kim Lindsey and Sharon Jendrisak, Distinguished Chapter Service Award. This award acknowledges members who provide exemplary service to the Society.
- ◆ Douglas Kirchgessler, Julie Mims, Lynn Nickels, Daniel Reichers, and Doug Zachau, New Senior Members. These NEO STC members received Senior status for five years of continuous STC membership.

NEO STC VOLUNTEER AWARDS

Each year NEO STC recognizes its volunteers for their service in several categories. This year's winners:

- ◆ Jeanette Evans, Lisa Mileusnich, Lynn Nickels, Joann Rasmussen, and Claudia Thompson, NEO STC Volunteer Recognition Award. This award recognizes extended volunteer efforts and active participation during the year.
- ◆ Debbie Mekker, Rookie Volunteer of the Year. Awarded for active participation in NEO STC as a new chapter volunteer.
- ◆ Tricia Spayer, Volunteer of the Year. This award is reserved for exceptional volunteer service and dedication to the NEO STC community.
- ◆ Jeanette Evans, Lisa Mileusnich, and Lynn Nickels, Newsletter, Committee of the Year. Each year, one committee is identified for its exceptional contributions to the community; the Newsletter Committee earned this distinction for its exceptionally smooth and reliable performance throughout the year.
- ◆ Janean Voss, President's Achievement Award. Awarded for outstanding contributions to the community; Janean earned this award for her continued dedication to the chapter and active involvement in many initiatives.

ELECTION RESULTS: 2014-15 admin board

Following the awards ceremony, the votes for 2014/2015 NEO STC Board positions were counted.

Fourteen members of the NEO STC community voted, which was a quorum of the NEO STC membership.

The vote was unanimous for the 2014/2015 candidates for the open board positions of Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

The board identified below will serve in their respective roles from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015:

- ◆ Lisa Mileusnich, NEO STC President
- ◆ Brian Smith, NEO STC Vice President
- ◆ Debbie Mekker, NEO STC Treasurer
- ◆ Claudia Thompson, NEO STC Secretary
- ◆ Paul Holland, NEO STC Immediate Past President

Help Wanted: Workshops Chair

NEO STC still has an opening available for a Workshops Committee chairperson.

For more information about the duties of this committee, see the recent "Five Questions" article with Tricia Spayer and Amy Vogt, who ran workshops in 2013-14.

Planning a workshop usually begins in June or July (if the workshop will be held in the fall).

Please contact Lisa Mileusnich if you are interested in volunteering. You can recruit a friend and make it a co-chair experience!

Top 10 Lessons Learned at #STC14

By Tricia Spayer

This year's STC Summit in Phoenix was especially memorable for me. It was memorable because:

- ◆ I was recognized as Associate Fellow!!
- ◆ I spoke at a progression about graphics
- ◆ I got to announce the winners of the Community Achievement Awards and Pacesetter awards, both at Leadership Day and at the Honors Banquet
- ◆ Incoming President, Lisa Mileusnich, and I stayed an extra day to visit the Grand Canyon

Top 10 things I learned at Summit this year:

- ◆ Lisa Mileusnich and Claudia Thompson are awesome to hang out with! NEO STC is in great hands for 2014-2015! (not that it wasn't before, but you know what I mean)

- ◆ Responsive Design – the big buzz word around the Summit this year. Although many of you have heard this term before, I finally found out what it meant, and learned how to apply it to technical documentation. In short,



your web output is created so that it displays well on desktops, tablets, phones,

and other devices that haven't been developed yet. Check out sites like Microsoft.com and Princess.com to see examples. Squish your desktop browser to phone size and see the magic happen. Check out Nicky Bleiel's slides on Slideshare.

- ◆ Motivating Users – Scott DeLoach provides a lot of useful information. Users want: quick answers, examples, procedures, and reasons. They love tips, teasers with expanded links, insider details, expert information, quizzes, contests, and challenges. They want to see documentation options such as: getting started fast, XYZ technical reference, for beginners, and for expert users. Invite them back by providing means for bookmarking, favorites, breadcrumbs, and RSS feeds. Don't tell users; show them with tutorials and demos. In short, get them to want to read your content!!
- ◆ Targeted Documentation – Companies using this technique only document things that really need



explanation. They don't document things for the least-skilled user. They document best practices and share examples. They provide troubleshooting information. Alyssa Fox shares her slides on Slideshare.

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- ◆ Monetizing Your Content – Jack Molisani evangelizes that you need to promote what you do. Things you create save money in your organization, and can even make money. Shrink your documentation: use the 80-20 rule. 80% of your customers are using 20% of your features – document those first. Reusing content saves money on translations. Jack shares his slides on Slideshare.
- ◆ SQUIDDS has a "TechComm Responsive Publishing Suite" output to HTML5. They produced a documentation suite for machines that have more than 3,000 parts. They apply QR code stickers to each piece on the machine. The customer scans the QR code, and their mobile tech pubs application brings up the documentation for that piece. No more searching or even knowing what the piece is called! Squidds shares their slides on Slideshare.
- ◆ Global Content Strategy with Alan J. Porter – even a company as globally reaching as Caterpillar, extending to 180 countries with 300 products, needs to pare down its localizations. To figure out their globalization strategy, they asked: how to deliver information, who (at Caterpillar) does what, and what the cultural nuances were. They used videos with pieces they can replace (replace a clip of a U.S. service person with a clip of a Taiwanese service person, for example), and re-used more images, graphics, and symbols. They identified the top 10 languages which represent 80% of their upcoming business opportunities, and translated to those languages. Their biggest challenge is jargon – they need to translate engineer-speak to customer-speak.
- ◆ Lightning Talks are funny and a much-needed mental break mid-conference-day.
- ◆ Kelsey Ruger taught us how to build a creative habit. Creative people do not have special powers – they simply practice their talent more than non-creative people do. Start framing questions another way: for example, instead of asking "how do I build a toaster," ask "how can I toast my bread?" Kelsey shares his slides on Slideshare.
- ◆ It's a dry heat!

In the Spotlight: Kris Henige

Say hello to Kris Henige!

Kris is an Enterprise Resource Manager in the Information



Technology (IT) department at the Parker Hannifin Corporation. She started at Parker as a junior writer in 1988, and in 1998 became manager of the technical communications team, which currently includes NEO STC members Janean Voss, Lisa Mileusnich, and Genelle Pretty.

Kris's team develops instructions and training materials that help employees and business partners use Parker's enterprise business software and portals. They also manage IT employee development activities, including a mentoring program and college recruiting. Kris also co-teaches an orientation program for new IT employees with Parker's CIO. As part of the IT management team, Kris helps provide strategic direction, and she serves on the advisory boards for the information systems programs at Kent State University and Ohio University.

Kris joined STC in 1986 as a student member at Bowling Green State University. She is a past NEO STC president, and received the Distinguished Chapter Service Award in 2004. Her current chapter duties include writing and printing the meeting programs and nametags. She has served as a competitions judge at the chapter and international levels, and is a member of STC's Academic SIG. In the early 2000s, she helped develop a technical communication certificate program at Cuyahoga Community College, and taught courses in the program. In 2003, she coordinated NEO STC's participation at the Intel Science and Engineering Fair, which was held in Cleveland that year.

Kris lives in Orange with her husband Jeff Foster, who works in IT at Progressive Insurance. One of their hobbies is watching golf. "Jeff and I met on the Parker golf league years ago, but now instead of playing, we watch people who are actually good at it. We've attended the PGA tournament in Akron for years, and have attended two U.S. Women's Opens, a U.S. Senior Men's Open, and the U.S. Women's Amateur."

My 2014 STC Summit Experience

By Lisa Mileusnich

The 2014 STC Summit in Phoenix was my first STC conference. I had a great time, and I'm already looking forward to next year!

Some of my personal highlights from the Summit included:

- ◆ Leadership Day, where I got to meet and network with other chapter leaders. We shared ideas,

discussed common problems and solutions, and traded a lot of business cards.

- ◆ The Annual Business Meeting, where I witnessed Robert's Rules of Order in action. Outgoing Society President Nicky Bleiel handed over the gavel to Incoming President Kit Brown-Hoekstra.
- ◆ The Honors Banquet, at which NEO STC was formally recognized for our Community of Distinction award! Tricia Spayer also received her Associate Fellow award, and I was delighted to be there in person to see her honored in front of her peers.
- ◆ The vendor expo and its free goodies. The STC bookstore, Community Affairs Committee (CAC) table, and Summit Competition winning entries were also set up in the expo hall.

Of course the education sessions were an important part of the Summit. The presentations I attended were all very informative, but I think my favorites were:

- ◆ "Design Challenges in Multichannel Content Publishing Using HATs" by Neil Perlin
- ◆ "Creating Help Systems for the Modern User" by Kevin Siegel
- ◆ "Bridging the Gap: Connecting Industry to the Classroom" by Brittany McCrigler
- ◆ Lightning Talks, where each presenter gets 15 seconds per slide and cannot control the timing. Also, the "ninja" presenter does not know what the slides are before seeing them. This makes for some unintentional comic performances!

I'm very glad I had the opportunity to attend the Summit and meet STC members from around the world. Sightseeing in Phoenix with Tricia and Claudia was also a lot of fun!

SNEAK PREVIEW OF 2015: If you haven't already read Tricia's updates in this newsletter, the 2015 Summit will be held in Columbus, Ohio! I'm hoping that NEO STC can have a strong presence there. Watch for more information in Lines & Letters during the coming year.

Talk of the Town

Tricia Spayer has two great bits of news:

- ◆ She earned her Advanced Communicator Gold award from Toastmasters International and explains, "This is the highest communication achievement you can reach in Toastmasters. It means that I have completed the levels of: Competent Communicator,

Advanced Communicator Bronze, and Advanced Communicator Silver, prior to achieving Gold. It also means I have completed at least six Advanced Communication manuals, mentored new members, presented workshops, and learned many valuable speaking skills. It doesn't mean that I am finished, though! I am working toward my Advanced Leader Silver award in the Leadership track, and working toward Toastmasters' highest achievement: Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM). And I get to start over again working toward my second set of awards. It is a blast learning and mentoring these skills!"

- ◆ She presented at the 2014 Annual STC Summit. About her Destination: Graphics presentation Tricia says, "When planning a trip, it's essential to know your destination. Your destination will determine the length of the trip, the means of getting there, and what you need to pack. This is also true for graphics. You need to know where the graphics are going to be seen (destination), how to prepare them for your output (means of getting there), and what format to use (what to pack)."

Sarah Burke and her husband Brian welcomed their third child and first son, Colm (pronounced Cull-um) Patrick Burke, into the world on April 21, at 8:31 a.m. He weighed in at 8 lb 8 oz and was 20.25 inches long. His big sisters, Moira and Fiona, cannot wait to teach him what they know. Super congratulations go out to Sarah and her family!

Jill McCauslin is looking to possibly reinvent our NEO STC book club into an online format. Please stay tuned for details.

Lynn Nickels, Lisa Mileusnich, and Jeanette Evans - the newsletter committee - won the Committee of the Year award at our NEO STC award banquet in May and want to thank everyone who made this possible.

Professional & Technical Writing Program at Youngstown State University – Senior Project Summary

By Janean Voss

On May 6-7, Kris Henige, Lisa Mileusnich, and I attended the senior project presentations for the B.A. Professional & Technical Writing (PTW) program at Youngstown State University (YSU). YSU offers a B.A. degree in PTW, M.A. degree in English with a PTW track, and PTW graduate certificate.

The PTW program teaches the writing, editing, and design of both electronic and paper documents for businesses, organizations, and institutions. The objective of the program is to help students gain important knowledge and skills valued in the field by engaging them in both the critical analysis of existing works, as well as the production of original materials they can add to a professional portfolio.

The senior semester project allows PTW students to choose, work with, and produce original output for a client. They learn and apply interviewing, project planning, negotiation, and time management skills, as well as writing, design, and editing. They produced output that included items like newsletters, brochures, manuals, and checklists.

During the student presentations, we, and the PTW faculty, provided feedback and asked the students questions about their processes, lessons learned, and outputs. Overall, the students did well with their presentations, and the projects were well organized and followed a logical process.

We appreciated the opportunity to attend these presentations and provide insight as professionals working in the field. Dr. Jay Gordon, Associate Professor in the program, stated "You all had great questions and comments, and I think everyone benefitted — the students as well as the PTW faculty. I think we should make this a tradition."

Our chapter plans to continue to build this relationship with the PTW program, and will have opportunities for others in the chapter to get involved in the future.

Five Questions with the Education/Workshops 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 Education/Workshops, represented by Tricia Spayer and Amy Vogt. This talented committee is putting on a leadership workshop on April 26! See the workshop page on the website for details.

We asked them five questions:

1. What is the Education/Workshops Committee?

NEO STC began the Education/Workshops Committee in 2006. The main goal of this committee

is to provide high-quality and affordable educational opportunities for our members and the community.

The presentations during our regular chapter meetings are typically an hour in length, but workshops range from three to eight hours. This format allows for an in-depth exploration of a topic - often with interactive, hands-on training. The committee often recruits well-known experts in the field as speakers.

2. Why is the Workshops Committee important to the chapter?

This committee supports our community's professional and educational growth. Often our members share a need for industry-specific training that would be difficult to find or too expensive to coordinate on an individual basis. We strive to make our events low-cost and within reach for all.

3. What tasks do you work on with the Workshops Committee?

This committee's volunteers work on the following tasks:

Determine the educational topic

Propose the topic to the board and request approval

Recruit workshop speaker(s)

Welcome them to the area and invite them to lunch or dinner

Arrange for their travel and accommodations (if applicable)

Support any printing of hand-outs or other special requests

Plan the event's schedule

Acquire a location/venue

Draft the communications for Constant Contact (or other email or media releases)

Draft the information for the NEO STC website

Create 1-page flyers to advertise event

Plan the menu and purchase food (if applicable)

Track RSVPs for the event

Plan or support fund-raising activities for future events

Determine budget for future events

4. How did you get involved with this committee?

Amy: I was on the first Education/Workshops Committee in 2006 with Denise Kadilak. At the time, it was my first opportunity to volunteer and get more involved with NEO STC. I was involved with training for my job, so it seemed like a natural fit to support training opportunities for the chapter too. This first volunteer position helped me to transition into additional fulfilling volunteer positions with NEO STC and a career shift into instructional design and training.

Tricia: This was my first year on the Education Committee – I was asked! I felt this was a good fit for me, as I have developed many STC connections throughout the international organization, and felt that I could work well with presenters I knew.

5. How does the committee determine the workshop topic and speaker?

We conduct surveys to help determine the most relevant educational topics for our community.

Each year, some NEO STC members travel to the STC Technical Communications Summit and provide us with feedback about their favorite training sessions and speakers. We use this feedback to recruit STC "superstars" to come to our area. When discussing the event with our speakers, we ask for their feedback about the topic, venue, and timing.

In addition, NEO STC sends a call for presenters for our monthly meetings and workshops once a year. Within this call for proposals, we often receive proposals that fit our members' educational needs for an in-depth workshop.

Thank you to the Education/Workshops Committee for your hard work and dedication to STC! If you would like more information about this committee, please contact Amy or Tricia. If you would like to volunteer with the Workshops Committee or any of our other chapter committees, please contact Chapter President Paul Holland.

Angie Dianetti Visits Walsh University

Angie Dianetti met with students at Walsh University in April to discuss careers in technical communication. She notes, "it was great – beautiful day for a drive and wonderful students." She goes on to say:

I was impressed with the students showing interest in their careers. It was a beautiful Sunday evening –

and we've had so few of those – it really showed commitment to themselves to get there. The other speakers at the event discussed interviewing and job hunting skills, as well as use of social media and the importance of networking. They also heard about graduate school options.

Walsh is a Catholic university located in North Canton. It is a beautiful campus – made me wish I could go back to school. There were five students that attended – a graduate student, three seniors and a sophomore – all English majors. One of the seniors, Tim Flanagan, is specifically looking for a career in Technical Writing. As English majors, many of the students have been hassled by people that have told them that they will never get a job with an English degree. I believe they all left the session knowing that they have a valuable skill set and that there are jobs out there.

I really wanted to make sure that the students know that learning how to think and communicate is the most important thing they can do in school. Many of the jobs that they will be doing 20 years from now have not yet been invented. Many current technical communicators came to this field from other disciplines and many will go on to other disciplines before their careers are over. What we do know is that technology will continue to change and at break-neck speeds. We also know that it is human beings that use technology and that it takes human beings to make sure we use it well and with good purpose. Although technical skills are what you need to get a job today, those things will always be changing. It is critical to always be learning and staying on top of what you need to get a job today, those things will always be changing. It is critical to always be learning and staying on top of your profession. But don't stop there – read, study history, English, languages, and religion – because it is as human beings that we shape the future.

Cleveland GiveCamp

Cleveland GiveCamp is kicking off another round of assisting area non-profit organizations and needs your help! They are looking for individuals to donate their time and talent to create documentation for various Web and mobile apps developed throughout the weekend. If you are available during the weekend of July 18-20, please visit <http://www.clevelandgivecamp.org/> for more information or to sign up. Sponsors of the event will provide food and beverages throughout the weekend.

Note: You do not need to be present at GiveCamp for the entire weekend. The most critical period is Friday evening, but you can work with your project manager if you need to work offsite for a period of time or have other obligations to address during the weekend timeframe.

Site Review: Social Media Examiner

By Jeanette Evans

With 152K followers on Twitter, 91K followers on Google+ and 250K likes on Facebook, this site has enough traffic to make me think it is worth reading.

How do you build a content strategy using a social media audit? That topic caught my attention on this site with a step-by-step overview provided to answer the question. Was there something to sell on this site? Yes, the audit was something you could buy. But, I found this informative and not offensive. Maybe I am too forgiving.

Why write a business blog? That is another topic addressed on the blog when I visited (April 17, 2014). The answer according to the site involves the chance to provide content to:

- ◆ clients
- ◆ potential clients
- ◆ partners

What can you do to have a successful business blog? Here is some of what the site lists.

- ◆ establish goals and a purpose
- ◆ research the audience
- ◆ identify blog writers, frequency, and an editorial calendar
- ◆ market and measure success

Yes, some of this is obvious, but having it spelled out has merits. If you are interested in this topic, a visit to this site at <http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/> could be useful.