Lines & Letters

Northeast Ohio STC Newsletter

President's column: Renewal challenges

By Denise Kadilak (denise.kadilak@blackbaud.com)

The Cleveland economy is going down. STC membership rates are going up. Not an ideal scenario, but this is the reality facing the NEO STC and its members in 2010. The chapter's challenge is to prove that it and the STC are worth the new $240 membership fee ($60/month if you opt for the four-month payment plan).

We plan to accomplish this by continuing to provide quality services — skills workshops, monthly programs, free access to STC-hosted webinars, job listings, training and conference discounts, and networking opportunities, to name a few, and charge less for them. In the past, to encourage nonmembers to participate and introduce them to the benefits of an NEO STC membership, we kept the price differential between members and nonmembers relatively small — much to the dismay of the International STC.

This year, the differential increased, in some cases to twice the member fee. For the STC-hosted Webinars, so long as we find a host and have six people register, the NEO STC pays the $79 registration fee and invites all members to view the Webinar for free. Nonmembers wishing to join are charged $20. Workshop registration fees for nonmembers are double those for members, and in the future we hope to position ourselves to charge members even less and offer a handful of free seats to selected members — probably through a raffle. In addition, the chapter maintains a comprehensive Jobs page on its website, listing area job postings and inviting members to post their résumés to the site for free (nonmembers are charged $10/month). [NOTE: As of 2014, employment resources have shifted to the chapter's LinkedIn presence. Please refer to the current chapter website for details.]

In addition to the chapter-specific benefits I just listed, the full membership price of course includes all benefits offered by the International STC: subscriptions to Intercom and Technical Communication; substantial discounts to the Society's international conference; and a 14-day head start on job listings. For a complete list of Society benefits, see the online brochure posted on the STC website.

I do not want to minimize the pain the new fee structure will cause members. I just want to encourage everyone to take a close look at what the membership offers, both locally at the chapter level and internationally at the Society level. This is an incredible amount of service for what averages out to be $20 a month. I hope everyone will take this into account and decide that in the long run, membership renewal is the smart and economical choice.

December meeting: Holiday dinner, competitions award banquet and holiday raffle

Please join the Northeast Ohio STC community for its December 10, 2009 dinner and competitions award banquet.

♦ Date: Thursday, December 10, 2009

♦ Place: Bar Louie @ Legacy Village

To register for the program, see the NEO STC website at http://www.neostc.org/calendar/20091210.html. You can also prepay through PayPal on the website.

NEO STC holiday raffle

We are doing a holiday raffle again this year at the holiday dinner! This year, the funds raised from the raffle will be used to give away registrations to upcoming STC workshops. Tickets can be purchased at the holiday dinner (cash or checks only).

We can still use items to raffle! If you have something to contribute, let us know.

For more information on the raffle and ideas for contributions, see Holiday raffle, or email Denise Kadilak.

Thanks to Parker Hannifin for hosting our November meeting!

Upcoming events

NEO STC events

Unless otherwise noted, see NEO STC website for detail about an event.

♦ 12/5/09: **CANCELLED*** Social networking: Shopping, ice skating and dinner.

♦ 12/10/09: Holiday party and competition award banquet. Bar Louie in Legacy Village.

♦ 12/11/09: Networking lunch. The River Brasserie & Bar (formerly LeFever's Riverside Grille), 2291 Riverfront Pkwy., Cuyahoga Falls.

Other events of interest

♦ 11/20/09: East Tennessee chapter competition deadline. See http://www.stc-etc.org/tiki-index.php

- 11/30/09: "The Write Stuff with Wylie and Warner." The Press Club of Cleveland presents two world-class writing coaches at all-day seminar. http://writestuff.eventbrite.com/

- 12/2/09: Facilitation Skills by Radcom, Inc. http://radcomservices.com/Services_Training_Offerings.htm

- 12/9/09: Intermediate Adobe FrameMaker by Radcom, Inc. http://radcomservices.com/Services_Training_Offerings.htm

- 12/16/09: SWO STC: Twittering, Facebooking, et al.: Their place in business at Indiana Wesleyan, Dayton, OH. See http://www.swo-btlines.com/swostc/meetings-and-events/.

- 1/20/10: SWO STC: WordPress: A very inexpensive and easy way to build websites (webinar). See http://www.swo-btlines.com/swostc/meetings-and-events/.

- 1/27/10: Gold Quill Award early bird entry deadline. http://www.iabc.com/awards/gq/

- 5/2 — 5/5/10: Technical Communication Summit 2010 in Dallas, Texas.

Employability workshop review

By Paul Hanrahan (pauleahanrahan@cox.net)

The employability workshop that NEO STC hosted on October 24th provided me with a fresh perspective on my job search strategy. The workshop presenters were above average in knowledge, well organized and instructive on how to improve the likelihood of securing work. Oftentimes, when I go to a workshop for a job search strategy tune-up I am overwhelmed by "H.R. Speak." The presenters kept H.R. speak to a minimum while providing me with actionable advice in the four areas they covered:

- Résumé Tips and Trends — Beth Wilson

- Bringing Your Best to the Behavioral Interview — Bill Carpenter

- 5½ Ways to Promote Yourself Online — Camille Tillman

- Developing Your Business Presence — Danielle Turcola

The first presentation, Résumé Tips and Trends, emphasized the evolution of the résumé from a mailed hard copy document to an electronic record included in a database and scanned by a computer. Ms. Wilson explained how to adapt to the trend away from snail mail to soft copy résumés containing key words that assist in attracting the attention of H.R. and hiring managers. In addition to explaining big picture changes in the mode of delivery of résumés, Ms. Wilson delved into the details of current thinking on the format and form of résumés. The details on how to best structure a functional résumé for those transitioning to a job with a new title was especially valuable.

Ms. Wilson made it clear that the one purpose of a résumé was to secure an interview. Mr. Carpenter, the second presenter, described the anatomy of a behavioral interview, which is increasingly common among larger employers. Mr. Carpenter explained that while smaller employers may engage an interviewer in behavioral interview-style questions, they were less likely to have the expertise in place to accurately interpret the results of a behavioral interview. Mr. Carpenter translated the "H.R. Speak" of the behavioral interview into a decipherable form that can be understood and prepared for. Key to understanding behavioral interviews, according to Mr. Carpenter, is understanding what is meant by "transferrable skills." A series of common-sense questions aimed at self-examination can assist an interviewee in understanding what transferable skills they can address effectively during a behavioral interview:

1. What work was I doing when I was the happiest?

2. What did others have to say about my work?

3. When was I the most successful?

The questions are intended to reveal transferable skills in three areas:

1. Knowledge and expertise

2. Interpersonal

3. Interpersonal traits

Behavioral interviews are intended to see who, among a number of qualified candidates, would be the best fit for a given organization. Mr. Carpenter summarized the attitude of a successful behavioral interviewee as, "I am here to be invited back."

In the third presentation of the workshop, Camille Tillman provided a step-by-step strategy for using more contemporary social media to assist in securing an interview. Before exploiting social media for purposes of securing work, a prospective employee needs to know

what is already available about them online. Ms. Tillman referred to negative material, even if it is about someone else with the same name, as "digital dirt." After finding what is online, a person in a job search needs to push any digital dirt aside by using a variety of tools to promote a positive source of information about themselves on the Internet.

In the "Get Exposure" phase of a social media job search effort a candidate can start with the following websites:

- http://www.monster.com/
- http://hotjobs.yahoo.com/
- http://www.careerbuilder.com/
- http://www.indeed.com/

Aside from posting at "meta job board" such as Monster or Indeed, those in a career transition were encouraged by Ms. Tillman to prudently use LinkedIn and FaceBook. Ms. Tillman provided in-depth instruction and advice on how best to use LinkedIn and FaceBook to network and promote oneself online. A variety of other topics, such as videos on YouTube demonstrating professional expertise, online portfolios and using blogs to establish relationships while in search of work were also touched on. Ms. Tillman clearly explained how to develop an Internet presence that could result in job offers or leads.

Following Ms. Tillman's presentation was Danielle Turcola's talk on dressing for success and making a good first impression on employers. Many of the job hunter's concerns addressed by Ms. Turcola could be handled with a blue suit, white shirt, wing tips and a tasteful tie. This interviewer is grateful that a traditional professional male business "uniform" is still acceptable. Other issues such as accents, mannerisms, tone of voice and even how one walks were also a topics Ms. Turcola touched on in an entertaining and engaging fashion.

APEX 2010 entry forms available in December

It is not too early to start thinking about entering the APEX 2010 annual competition for writers, editors, business and nonprofit communicators, and publications staff.

APEX 2010 entry forms and information will be available starting in December 2009. The APEX 2010 Brochure and Easy Entry Form will be available to download at that time. See

http://www.apexawards.com/apexawards.htm for more detail.

The APEX web site suggests starting a "Winner's File" now of your best publications, writing samples, design, videos and websites. Come January, you will have plenty of outstanding samples to choose from when you enter APEX.

Awards are given in 122 communications categories, in 11 main categories including: newsletters; magazines and journals; magapapers and newspapers; annual reports; brochures, manuals and reports; video and electronic publications; Web and intranet sites; campaigns, programs and plans; writing; design and illustration; and special publications. These categories were for APEX 2009. Some categories may change for APEX 2010. However, the 2009 categories should be helpful in advance planning. Next year's APEX 2010 Categories List and complete entry information are available in December 2009.

What APEX winners receive includes plaques for Grand Award winners and certificates for Award of Excellence winners. Electronic versions of the APEX logo (EPS and GIF) also will be available to download by APEX Award winners.

Donate items for the holiday raffle

The NEO STC needs items for its holiday raffle to be held during our Holiday Party December 10th at Bar Louie in Lyndhurst.

Money raised from this year's raffle will be used to fund free admission to upcoming NEO STC workshops. The number of free seats available depends on how much money we raise in December.

Although you do not have to register donated gifts in advance —- please feel free to bring anything you want the day of the event — advanced notice of gifts is greatly appreciated. If you know now what you'd like to donate, please contact Denise Kadilak.

Some examples of items donated for last year's raffle include two tickets to the Cleveland Orchestra, a one-day lift ticket to Boston Mills, wine baskets, books, and specialty food baskets.

For details about the raffle and how it works, please see http://www.neostc.org/special/holiday_special_09.htm or contact Denise.

November meeting covers WebWorks ePublisherPro and more

By Paulette Henning (pmhenning@ra.rockwell.com)

On November 12, 2009, approximately 20 people gathered at Parker Hannifin to listen to Alan Porter give a presentation on "Why Publishing is No Longer the Last Step in the Process — WebWorks ePublisherPro." Alan started out by defining that publishing is providing printed material to the public. He explained that the reason we publish is to share information with others. He moved through the history of publishing from paintings in a cave to where we are today with wikis, blogs, knowledge bases, and the web.

Alan illustrated paradigms of publishing and the customary publishing process, which after creating and incorporating material, publishing is the last step in the process. He explained that we need to think differently about publishing in this current age.

The public uses data differently today. With home computers, the ability to access material from multiple places, and the fact that the public wants to contribute to published material, we need to acknowledge that roles are changing.

We need to let go of the control we feel we have over our published material and listen to what the public is telling us. Alan concluded that when creating, incorporating, publishing, and responding to feedback of published material, publishing was never the last step in the process — it was one step in a cyclic process. When the public provides feedback on our published material, which is easier and quicker with current media such as wikis and blogs, the cycle starts over again.

Alan gave us a presentation of WebWorks ePublisherPro and explained some of the benefits of the software — one benefit being that the user can choose up to 14 outputs. He concluded the presentation with a question and answer session. The webinar was both interesting and informative.

The talk of the town

Radcom, Inc. has been recognized by the 2009 Weatherhead 100 as one of the 100 fastest growing companies in Northeast Ohio based on revenues from 2004 to 2008. Radcom is an instructional design and technical communication consulting firm based in Hudson, Ohio. The 2009 winners will be honored at the Weatherhead 100 Awards on December 3 at Executive Caterers of Landerhaven.

For more information on Radcom, see
http://www.radcomservices.com/

On perseverance in the career search

By Sherri Henkin (sleah47@juno.com)

Searching for new career opportunities requires creativity and perseverance. We need to creatively find leads, people and opportunities to showcase our work. The process is quite challenging and the road can be long — that's where perseverance comes in. Those of us in search mode must resolve to stick with the process until we reach our goal.

My friend and fellow blogger, Jane Levesque, did just that. Here's her story:

"After being out of work since February, I re-entered the work force on Monday, November 9. I started part-time as the production manager for the custom content business at MedCity News in Cleveland.

"Back in March, I learned that the contact of one of my husband's contacts was looking for freelance writers. I sent in my résumé and writing samples. I exchanged a couple of emails with one of the company owners, and then nothing happened for a long time."

[Sherri's note: In the meantime, Jane expanded her network (which is how we met); explored new career paths; augmented her skills at Radcom and Cleveland State University, and created a blog.]

"In October, out of the blue, I got a call from that same company co-owner. He had kept my résumé since March because he knew he would need someone with production management skills in the future. The co-owner conducted an "on-the-spot" phone interview. Two

in-person interviews later, I had the job. Oh, and it didn't hurt that one of my connections (who also knows the co-owner I mentioned) endorsed me in an email to the owner."

Jane's reflections about the process:

"To the best of my knowledge, this job was not advertised. I think my story demonstrates that knowing the right people can be very helpful and that you can't assume a company has forgotten you, even if you haven't heard from them in a long time. The disappointments and dead ends are just steps along the twisty path to employment. Additionally, networking made me more outgoing. My blog recharged my creativity. Without the unemployment, those things likely would not have bloomed."

The lessons I learned from Jane's experience are:

- Identify a goal
- Meet new people
- Follow all leads
- Be prepared for "instant interviews"
- Keep moving forward

After reading Jane's recent post about her dad, it's no wonder that Jane persevered in this process. One of her dad's maxims was "Don't quit." She didn't.Jane's blog: http://writingismyvitamin.blogspot.com/

Handy hint: Microsoft Word exclusion dictionary

By Lisa Mileusnich (lmileusnich@parker.com)

The Microsoft Word "exclusion dictionary" allows you to mark specific words as misspelled. For example, you might notice that you always type "manger" for "manager" and you want Word to flag it. Also, the standard Word dictionary contains many words that are either misspelled or obscure. Take for instance, "delver" instead of "deliver." Type that in a Word document and you won't notice the familiar red underline, because it's in Word's main dictionary.

Steps for creating the exclusion dictionary:

1. Open Windows Explorer.
2. Navigate to C:\Documents and Settings\<USERNAME>\Application Data\Microsoft\Proof\. If you can't see the Application Data folder, change your folder

options (under the Tools menu) to show hidden files and folders.
3. Right-click on the file area and select **New > Text Document**.
4. Name the text document **Mssp3en.exc**.
5. When Windows asks you if you are sure you want to change the file extension, click **Yes**.
6. Double-click on the new file to open it in Notepad. If Windows does not know which application to use, choose **Select the program from a list** and then select **Notepad**.
7. In the text document, type or paste the words that you want to show as spelling errors in Word.
8. Save the text document.
9. Restart Microsoft Word (if it was running).

Some words to consider adding to your exclude dictionary are:

- mw
- vender
- delver
- thx
- kina
- und
- fro
- storey
- cal

Additional information can be found in Microsoft Word's Help file under the title "Specify a preferred spelling for a word" or through this MS Knowledge Base article.

Thanks to Sarah Burke for pointing out this Microsoft Word feature!

Handy hint: Restart page numbering in Microsoft Word

By Lisa Mileusnich (lmileusnich@parker.com)

This month's tip is for restarting page numbering for each chapter in Word 2007: 1-1, 2-1, etc. Some organizations or clients may prefer that documents are numbered this way.

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1. Set up automatic numbering in your chapter headings (this hint was in the October 2009 newsletter).

2. If your chapters are in a single document, make sure you have each chapter in its own section, so you can restart the page numbering. You must repeat this process in each section. (If your chapters are in separate documents, you must repeat this process for each document.)

3. Insert the page number in the header or footer.

4. On the Header and Footer Tools – Design tab, click **Page Number > Format Page Numbers**.

5. In the Page Number Format dialog box, select **Include chapter number**.

6. Select your chapter heading style and choose a separator.

7. If you are using a document with sections, select **Start at** and set the number to **1**. This will start each section over at page 1, and the chapter numbering is automatically included.

8. Click **OK**.

Your page numbering should be set up to start over in each section, and the chapter number (with separator) should appear before the page number. If the chapter number does not appear, it is probably "hidden" and must be corrected in the chapter heading style.

1. Place your cursor in the chapter heading, click the **Multilevel List** button (in the Paragraph section on the Home tab), and select **Define New Multilevel List**.

2. In the Multilevel List dialog box, click **Font**.

3. In the Font dialog box, clear the **Hidden** check box (in the Effects section). You may have to click the box twice to clear it.

4. Click **OK** in both dialog boxes.

The page numbering should appear as desired.

In the spotlight: Sharon Jendrisak

By Jeanette Evans (jeanette.evans@sbcglobal.net)

Sharon Jendrisak is currently a co-chair of the NEO STC Membership Committee. Committee of the Year honors went to Sharon and her co-chair for her Membership Committee work. Sharon and co-chair Julie Mason

received the award for obtaining outstanding results with the 2008-2009 membership drives. There were two national drives: the new member drive and the renewal drive. Sharon and Julie won both drives resulting in prizes and national recognition for NEO STC.

Having worked in training and technical writing for over six years, Sharon is a member of the eLearning Guild and currently a project writer for Radcom, Inc.

Sharon uses a variety of software applications to develop storyboards, program eLearning courses, create graphics, and write various types of print and online technical communication. She has experience working in a large variety of industries including finance, insurance, healthcare, manufacturing, higher education, and IT. Sharon has also worked on a project for an accounting consulting firm where she developed a help system using a single-source process between FrameMaker and RoboHelp.

A graduate of Kent State University with a degree in advertising, Sharon is a self-proclaimed research geek.

Concerning her first year as an NEO STC committee member, Sharon said, "I am glad to have co-chaired the Membership Committee. It's taught me a lot about recruiting, communication, and planning. It's also given me the opportunity to talk to a lot of the members, including board members and new members. It's a great way to meet colleagues in my profession and to help the new members integrate with the society. Because of our efforts, we have gained new members from other cities and states."

Sharon lives in the Ellet area of Akron with her husband, dog, and two children (ages 7 and 1½). You can reach Sharon at SJendrisak@radcomservices.com.

Of interest

Great visuals

Great visuals that inspire better communication: Target prescriptions, Ikea instructions, and the "Eat This, Not That" feature from Men's Health magazine. For links and comments, see http://www.davisandco.com/resources/smarttips/2009-11-02.php>

How to get an interview using a T-letter

Get more interviews with a T-letter: http://www.techwr-l.com/articles/employment/tletter>

Chapter reminders

Are you following STC on Twitter yet?

Amazon.com helps fund STC

Reaching Amazon.com through the portal on the home page of STC's website (www.stc.org) contributes to funding programs that have no direct revenue stream, such as committee work. STC receives a small percentage from every purchase made through the portal.

Join NEO STC on LinkedIn

Our chapter now has a group on LinkedIn named Northeast Ohio STC Community.

Join our LinkedIn Group on http://www.LinkedIn.com (you must be a member of LinkedIn, which is free for a basic membership). FYI : There will be waiting period while your membership is approved.

NEO STC listserv

[NOTE: As of 2015, the chapter listserv has been supplanted by our LinkedIn presence. Please refer to the current chapter website for details.]

To subscribe or change your settings for the Northeast Ohio STC listserv, see http://mailman.stc.org/mailman/listinfo/stcneohio-l.

Please let Kris Henige, the NEO STC Listserv Administrator, know if you have any questions.

Premium pages for members

[NOTE: As of 2016, the current NEO STC website does not have password-protected content.]

NEO STC has some Premium pages for NEO STC members only. These pages include links to our very own Wiki, an Employer Directory — a listing of businesses that hire technical communicators — and more.

To enter the Premium pages, you will need a user name and password — this is different from the STC International site. Please contact our Webmaster for password information.

Change of address? Remember to tell the STC office

Send new addresses to the STC office to avoid interrupted delivery of *Intercom* and *Technical Communication*. Some members assume that informing the post office of their new address is enough to ensure that all of their mail is forwarded. However, the United States Postal Service forwards only first-class mail, not publications such as *Intercom* and *Technical Communication*.

Members may also update their contact and mailing information on the STC website.

Lines & Letters information

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Love it? Hate it? Let us know! Contact us: newsletter@neostc.org

See something interesting? Tell us about it!

Many of our NEO STC members are also members of another STC community or SIG. If you receive a newsletter and find an interesting article, please consider passing it on to the Lines and Letters editors at newsletter@neostc.org.

You can also submit articles directly through http://www.neostc.org/lines/submit.html.