

Lines & Letters

Northeast Ohio STC Newsletter



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President's column: International STC's financial ills: Painful for everyone

By denise.kadilak@blackbaud.com

As many of you already know, the International STC experienced a rough year financially. Before I get into the details of how this affects our chapter, let me first provide International's justification for the budgeting issues they faced. The chapter leaders received the following explanation from Cynthia Currie, STC President, 2009-2010:

The shortfall is primarily due to the negative impact the recession has had on our two main sources of revenue—membership dues and the annual conference. The revenue generated by these two sources provides the funding for most of the member benefits and Society activities. The 2009 conference was successful, but it did not generate the surplus that it has in the past. Similarly, the recession left us with a loss of about \$400,000 USD in principal and interest from our investments, which have traditionally been used to provide support for activities that have as yet no revenue source, such as the Body of Knowledge and other key committee work.

The recession brought to light underlying weaknesses in our pricing structure that now force us to change the way we provide benefits. For years, STC has been adding and expanding services and activities to benefit members and the profession without taking a hard look at how to sustain those activities. And with only periodic, modest increases in fees, the costs to sustain those services and activities have outpaced our dues and total revenue to the point that the Society has actually been subsidizing these activities.

(As I'm sure you figured out from the second paragraph, our dues will be going up, but more about that in a minute.)

To survive the remainder of this year and next, International cut their budget, took out a loan, and demanded funds from chapters. To comply with the directives we received from International, the NEO STC this summer prepared a budget plan, justifying the amount of money we need to make it through the last quarter of 2009 and the four quarters of 2010. This was not an easy process, but we did our best to justify keeping the \$11,500 we had in our bank account. In the end, we had to send International a check for about

\$1,800 — the amount they deemed a surplus in our budget. In addition, the chapter will not receive any "pass-through" money from International for the remainder of this year and all of next year. The pass-through money represents the \$25 each of us pays the STC to belong to a chapter. Normally this money is collected by International and passed through to chapters.

Of course the NEO STC has had lots of company in facing this new budgeting reality — International mandated all 101 chapters to comply with their zero-balance budgeting plan, and legal action was threatened against chapters that resisted. To date, the chapter-contributions have helped reduce a \$470,000 deficit faced by International in the fourth quarter of 2009, allowing the Society to stay viable until dues money starts arriving early next year.

What does this mean for the NEO STC?

Short-term, our chapter is in great shape. Thanks to the dedicated individuals who have led this chapter for the past several years, morale is high and we are financially solid through 2010. After that, it depends on how International decides to handle chapter funding. The talk at Leadership Day in Atlanta this past spring suggests that the Society plans to move all chapters to the zero-based budget permanently, which means the chapter receives enough money to cover budgeted expenses each year. No surplus or safety-net funds are allowed. This may make all-day workshops and regional conferences difficult to plan in the future, but really it's too soon to tell exactly how this will affect us as a chapter.

I can, however, tell you how it will affect each one of us individually. As I mentioned earlier, we will have to dig deeper to pay our membership dues next year. Here is a breakdown of what we can expect for 2010:

- ◆ Basic Member (does not include membership in a chapter or SIG): \$215
- ◆ Gold Package (includes membership in one chapter and one SIG, registration for seminars/webinars, one online certificate course, the Salary Survey, and a Premium listing in the Online Buyers Guide & Consultant Directory): \$395
- ◆ Students: \$75
- ◆ Retirees: \$145

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Add-ons:

- ◆ Chapter: \$25/each
- ◆ SIG: \$10/each
- ◆ All members will receive the electronic version of the STC publications. Print subscriptions to Intercom and Technical Communication are available for \$30 USD and \$75 USD, respectively

A payment plan will be implemented for dues, allowing us to spread the fee out over four payments if we use a credit card. International did not announce a frequency for the payment plan but details should be available on the Society's website. The 2010 membership renewal opened online at noon EDT (GMT -4) on Thursday, 15 October.

All this being said, PLEASE RENEW!

I know this is a long column, chock-full of mostly bad news. Despite all this, I have every intention of renewing my membership in 2010. I've enjoyed nine great years as a member of this Society, and the best of those years have been the last six I spent with the NEO STC. We have a wonderful chapter — we attract respected and well-known speakers, provide free access to the STC-hosted Webinars, offer resources for local job searchers, organize several networking events a month, and much more. It is WELL WORTH FOUR PAYMENTS OF \$60!

I want to thank you all!

October workshop: Employability: Achieving your career goals

This full-day seminar will take place Saturday, October 24, in the Mavis Winkle Auditorium in Independence.

An exciting slate of top-notch speakers will present on a variety of employment-related topics.

Beth Wilson, Career Counselor with the Cuyahoga County Public, Maple Heights Library Career Center. Beth will discuss the latest trends for résumés and cover letters. How can you make yours stand out and still be computer scannable? Beth brings to us the considerable resources of CCPL's Career Center (formerly InfoPLACE), a nationally-recognized free employment service.

Patricia Coyne, Program Developer in Career Development at the Cuyahoga Valley Career Center. She will discuss behavioral interviewing — two words that strike fear in the heart of job seekers everywhere. But there is a way to prepare for the challenge and ace the

interview! Patricia will help you plan in advance and practice how to "work the plan."

Camille Tillman, Independent Online Marketing Professional and Career Consultant at Lee Hecht Harrison. You have posted your résumé on NEO STC and Monster — now what? Should you start a blog? Is your LinkedIn profile as good as it could be? Camille's popular session on promoting yourself online will help you make the right choices about personal branding.

Danielle Turcola, President of Professionalism International, Inc. Ever wonder what kind of first impression you make on others? Or if there is a way you can better control what they see? A popular national speaker and business coach, Danielle will lead us in an interactive session on developing a business presence that can contribute to both personal and business success.

Who will benefit from this workshop?

- ◆ Members in transition who want an edge in their job search
- ◆ Consultants, independent contractors and freelancers looking to polish their image
- ◆ Anyone planning for a career move or promotion

Price is \$50 for STC members and \$100 for non-members. See <http://www.neostc.org/calendar/20091024.html> to register online.

Upcoming events

NEO STC events

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

- ◆ 10/24/09: October workshop: Employability: Achieving your career goals.
- ◆ 10/30/09: CSU Career Fair in the Woodling Gym. See http://www.csucareerfair.com/company_list.php.
- ◆ 11/6/09: Social networking: Collaborate over happy hour! Meet with CTSC and members of other technical societies in Cleveland. 5 pm at the Rock Bottom Brewery in the Power House on the West Bank of the Flats; 2000 Sycamore Street; Cleveland, OH 44113. Meet in the lower-level bar area. Note: The information on the NEO STC website is incorrect; it is November 6 at Rock Bottom.

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- ◆ 11/11/09: Networking lunch. Fat Fish Blue, Downtown Cleveland.
- ◆ 11/12/09: Monthly seminar: WebWorks ePublisherPro Demonstration at Parker, 6035 Parkland Blvd., Mayfield Heights, OH, 44124.
- ◆ 12/5/09: Social networking: Shopping, ice skating and dinner. Outdoor German Market in Akron. 3 pm at Lock 3 - Akron, Ohio, 200 S. Main St, Akron, OH 44308, 330-375-2877.
- ◆ 12/10/09: Holiday party and competition award banquet. Bar Louie in Legacy Village.
- ◆ 12/11/09: Networking lunch. LeFever's Riverside Grille, Cuyahoga Falls.

Other events of interest

- ◆ 10/29/09: STC IDL SIG webinar, "Conducting the job task analysis: Stickie bingo for better course design." See <http://tinyurl.com/ylgb7ze>.
- ◆ 11/10/09: Cleveland InDesign User Group meeting. See <http://www.indesignusergroup.com/chapters/cleveland/>.
- ◆ 5/2 — 5/5/10: Technical Communication Summit 2010 in Dallas, Texas.

Survey says: Too many of us are unemployed

By Paul Hanrahan (pauleahanrahan@cox.net)

The Employment Committee recently distributed a survey assessing the local job market for our membership. The survey had an impressive 56 respondents (our membership is over 200). The results of the survey indicate that the degree of unemployment in our organization is a reflection of the economy at large. The distressing aspect of the unemployment figure is that 90% of those without work have been out for six months or more. The survey indicates that the period of unemployment amongst our membership is longer during the current recession than in the past. Among those still working, several people mentioned that they had made concessions by taking on additional work or cuts in pay.

In conversation with some of the membership who are out of work, we found they had turned to working independently, being self-employed, on a contract or 1099 basis.

An unusual aspect of the survey is the 23% of the membership that we estimate are self-employed, as opposed to a more traditional employer-employee relationship. Still, sixty percent of our membership are employed by a corporation. About half of us who are self-employed are working on our own. Of those working for an employer, the largest percentage, about 36%, have been on the job for one to five years. Current figures quoted by career services professionals for job longevity are consistent with the one to five year figure. Career services professionals at CSU advise students that they may change jobs five to eight times in a forty-year career.

A majority of us who are in the midst of a "career transition" have been using the NEO STC website to find job openings. Results indicate that on a scale of one to five the usefulness of the NEO STC in seeking employment rates about a 3.8. About 9.3% felt the NEO STC was not beneficial to them when seeking employment.

The survey asked respondents to provide suggestions and comments. Among the suggestions was a request for workshops for those out of work. Several other suggestions encourage those of us on the employment committee to be more proactive about encouraging employers to use our job posting page on the NEO STC website. As one respondent put it, "How do we make ourselves more visible to employers and encourage them to post jobs with us?"

NEO STC holiday raffle

The NEO STC would like to once again incorporate a fundraising raffle into its year-end holiday party. We have, however, run into a slight roadblock. For a number of legal reasons, the International STC has changed its direction on fund raising and is discouraging chapters against raising money for nonprofits. This is not unusual for organizations such as STC. For example, Toastmasters also does not do any fund raising within its chapters. The laws governing nonprofits raising money for other nonprofits have just grown too complex.

During the board meeting in August, many raffle options were discussed, and after some debate, the board decided we would go forward with the raffle and use the money to give away a few free registrations to our spring workshop. If we raise enough money, we may be able to give away more free registrations to our fall 2010 yet-to-be-determined workshop.

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How it works

This event is designed to offer items for our raffle. When the purchaser buys tickets, the purchaser will notate each ticket, identifying the raffle item for which the ticket is intended. At the end of our December 10th holiday party, one winning ticket will be pulled for each item raffled.

What we need from you

Items to raffle in whatever form you choose:

- ◆ gift cards/certificates to local stores, restaurants, salons, etc.
- ◆ event tickets, such as sports, theater, and movie tickets
- ◆ items, such as books you haven't gotten around to reading, tools you're passing along, new software you haven't installed yet, professional services you or your company can perform, and so on
- ◆ gift baskets you've bought or put together yourself

You can pledge an item, which means you are obligated to provide the item when it becomes available. Examples are concert tickets that haven't gone on sale yet or a software product that hasn't been released yet. We know you're good for it.

TICKETS can be purchased during the December 10th holiday party for \$1 each or 11/\$10. You can buy multiple tickets for one item if desired or split them among several items.

CHECKS or CASH. We can accept checks or cash — sorry, no credit cards. If you pay by check, please be sure your check amount matches the amount for the number of tickets you are submitting. Inaccurate amounts will not cause us to choose for you. We just won't include your tickets. Your check, however, will be considered a donation, so thank you on behalf of the NEO STC! Make your check out to the Northeast Ohio STC.

NIGHT OF THE EVENT! Please be sure to bring the items you donated and pick up what you've won. Good luck!

Still have questions? Email programs@neostc.org.

Call for scholarship judges

By Sarah Burke and Jeanette Evans

We are pleased to announce that NEO STC plans to team up with the Southwestern Ohio chapter (SWO STC)

to offer a \$1,000 scholarship. Please read on for details on this first-time endeavor and our call for judges.

So you think you can judge? Do you think that judging might be for you? Are you interested in learning more about the next generation of technical communicators? If so, consider volunteering to be a judge for the 2010 all-Ohio STC student scholarship. This scholarship — for the first time — is being jointly offered by the Northeast Ohio and Southwestern Ohio STC chapters.

Who is eligible to judge?

Any NEO STC, SWO STC, or Central Ohio STC member in good standing who has at least five years of experience in the field, who is not currently affiliated with a learning institution or technical communication program, and who does not currently work with an applicant is eligible to judge.

How much time of my time will be required and when?

Judging is a great way to give back to STC and to your profession and will only demand a few hours of your time to review and discuss the entries. In April 2010, judges will evaluate the scholarship applications and then discuss their observations with other judges. Judges will consider several items — among them the potential of each applicant to contribute to the future of the profession. We plan to use consensus-style judging conducted via conference call. Applications will be distributed electronically in advance of this call. We will also meet (also virtually) once in October or November 2009 to review scholarship eligibility and requirements and finalize the scholarship application materials.

Can you tell me more about the all-Ohio STC scholarship?

This \$1,000 scholarship is designed to encourage local academic excellence, provide the profession with educated communicators, and promote greater awareness of and participation in STC. Applicants will be evaluated based on their potential to contribute to the profession. Undergraduate, graduate, or community college students pursuing degrees or certificates in technical or scientific communication from accredited Ohio institutions are eligible to apply.

Watch neostc.org/scholarship for more details about the scholarship. Some important dates to note follow:

- ◆ February 1, 2010 — official launch of scholarship
- ◆ April 1, 2010 — scholarship application submission deadline
- ◆ May 1, 2010 — winner announced

How can I volunteer to be a judge?

If you are interested in helping to select a deserving student for the 2010 all-Ohio scholarship, please contact Sarah Burke, the Northeast Ohio STC Chapter's Academic Relations Co-Chair, at sarahwilsonburke@hotmail.com by October 31.

The talk of the town

Paul Holland named 2009 outstanding SIG volunteer of the year

Paul Holland, a senior member of the STC Lone Star Community and Northeast Ohio Chapter, was awarded this honor. His plaque citation reads

"For your dedication, leadership, passion, and ongoing support of the STC Marketing Communication SIG and its members."

For the full story, see

http://www.stc.org/intercom/PDFs/2009/20090910_21-24.pdf

RADCOM recognized as a top women-owned business

In recognition of the economic power of privately held businesses, DiversityBusiness.com, the nations' leading business-to-business internet site, recently named Radcom, Inc. as one of the top women-owned businesses in Ohio. Radcom ranked 65th as a top women-owned businesses in Ohio. The winning companies were honored at a special awards ceremony at DiversityBusiness.com's 9th Annual Multicultural Business Conference at the Disney's Contemporary Resort in Orlando, Florida. For the complete list of winning companies, please visit:

<http://www.diversitybusiness.com>.

Food and the great outdoors — NEO STC's social events

By Amy Vogt (avogt11@yahoo.com)

I have a confession to make. As the chair of the NEO STC Social Committee this year, I've chosen the types of activities that I love to do for our NEO STC Socials. Over the last few months, we've hiked through the National Park; listened to the Cleveland Orchestra from the lawn at Blossom Music Center; enjoyed some pizza at Dewey's in Lakewood, Ohio; ridden the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad; biked on the Tow Path trail; and tasted some wine at Wolf Creek winery. It would be difficult for

me to choose a favorite from this list; I've enjoyed them all!

Most of these activities have two things in common: they've been outside and they involve food. We are so lucky to have an extensive park system in Northeast Ohio and so many opportunities to get outside and enjoy our natural surroundings! It's a beautiful area in all seasons. We also have some members who make incredible appetizers. Ginny Haas and Nicole Derr shared some delicious treats with us in October!

There have been some potential new members and past members at the events. Our former NEO STC webmaster, Brian Baddour, and his family joined us for two of the socials. We had Robert Kelleher, a technical communicator all the way from Orlando, Florida, meet us at Wolf Creek Winery.

Our next social is a collaborative event with the Cleveland Technical Societies Council. It is scheduled for Friday, November 6, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. We'll meet at Rock Bottom Brewery in Cleveland, Ohio. Watch for more details on the website and through email about this event. It will be a great way to network and meet members from other societies.

Contact Amy Vogt if you have any ideas for future events or if you need more information about any of the currently scheduled NEO STC socials.

Handy hint: Automatic chapter numbering in Microsoft Word

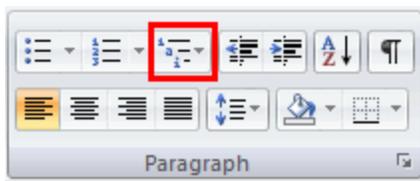
By Lisa Mileusnich (lmileusnich@parker.com)

I have been working on a user manual in Word that's grown to over 100 pages. I would love to move it to Adobe FrameMaker, but the client requires that it stay in Word. Our solution is to have each chapter in a separate Word document. (The chapters are easy enough to combine once they're all converted to PDF.)

Over the next few newsletters, I'll be sharing some tips I've learned about Word while working on this project. This month is a handy hint to nudge Word into acting a little like FrameMaker: automatic chapter numbering. My example is for Word 2007, but this feature is definitely available in older versions.

1. Make sure that your chapter headings are using one of Word's built-in heading styles. (Of course, you've already modified the style's formatting to meet your own needs or match a company style guide.)

- Place your cursor in the first heading text (for example, "Creating Your User Profile").
- Click the **Multilevel List** button (in the Paragraph section on the Home tab) and select the last option, **Chapter 1**.



Now the heading reads "Chapter 1 Creating Your User Profile."

- With the cursor still in the heading text, click the **Multilevel List** button again and select **Define New Multilevel List**. (Not an intuitive option name. You are going to modify the list you just created.)
- Format your numbering as necessary in the Multilevel List dialog box. You can replace the word "Chapter" with "Appendix" or other text as necessary, and add a dash, colon, or other spacing elements.
- Click **More** to update other options for your numbering scheme.
- Click **OK**.

The numbering scheme is automatically applied to your heading and is attached to the heading style. You can also create additional numbering schemes for the other heading levels in your document.

Book review: *Practicing Science Communication in the Information Age: Theorising Professional Practices*

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

Practicing Science Communication in the Information Age: Theorising Professional Practices. Richard Holliman, Jeff Thomas, Sam Smidt, Eileen Scanlon, and Elizabeth Whitelegg, eds. 2009. Oxford: Oxford University Press. [ISBN 978-0-19-955267-2. 264 pages, including index. \$ 40.00 USD (softcover).]

For individuals involved in the practice or teaching of science communication or individuals with a general interest in the topics of science communication and research, this book is an interesting and valuable read. In particular, editors for scientific communication

journals, teachers in science communication or education, science researchers, or anyone generally interested in related topics will find the book worthwhile.

In addition to the chapters, the book has valuable features that many readers will appreciate. These features include a section on how to use the book, list of abbreviations, thorough index, and thoughtful closing notes.

The sections of the book include communicating post-academic science, developing trends in scientists' communicating, accessing contemporary science, consensus and controversy, popularizing science, and practicing public engagement. These chapters represent an interesting scope of topics and a lot to grasp.

- ♦ Communicating post-academic science includes three chapters: scientists communicating; ethical codes and scientific norms (the role of communication in maintaining the social contract for science); patents and the dissemination of scientific knowledge. What is common in this section is the focus on post-academic communication due in part to a cultural evolution 'where science nowadays is more influenced than hitherto by commercial, political and social forces...'
- ♦ Accessing contemporary science includes two chapters: science communication across disciplines; communicating physics in the information age. The focus here is on communication issues in interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary scientific study with nanotechnology provided as an example and new channels of communication such as blogs and wikis.
- ♦ Consensus and controversy covers two chapters: peer review in science journals (past, present and future); controversy and consensus. Ideas covered in the peer review section include thoughts on authentication of scientific findings with thoughts on media savvy scientists appearing in the chapter as well. The chapter on controversy and consensus includes topics related to public dialog and scientific community interaction on controversial issues such as genetically modified food and cloning.
- ♦ Popularizing science covers three chapters: where do books fit in the information age; science communication in fiction; speaking to the world (radio and other audio). These topics cover a thoughtful and timely range of subjects related to traditional and new formats of books and science communication in contemporary fiction and audio.

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- ◆ Practicing public engagement includes two chapters: the development of *Our Dynamic Earth*; engaging through dialogue (international experiences of *Café Scientifique*). More excellent food for thought appears with these topics concerning relaying scientific information in displays such as “*Our Dynamic Earth*” and communicating in non-traditional formats such as the *Café Scientifique*.

Biographies of the contributors show the background of the individuals who helped to develop the ideas presented in the book. Here is a sampling:

- ◆ Matthew Chalmers pursues a freelance career in science journalism and media training, worked as a features editor at *Physics World*, and holds a PhD in experimental particle physics.
- ◆ Richard Holliman is a senior lecturer in science communication at the Open University. He completed a PhD investigating scientific research in television and newspapers.
- ◆ Charlotte Schultze holds a PhD in cell biology and is an associate lecturer and associate teaching fellow at the Open University.
- ◆ Eileen Scanlon is a professor of educational technology at the Open University and author of books on communicating science and science learning.
- ◆ Elizabeth Wager provides training, writing, and publication consultation services and was previously head of international medical publications for Glaxo-Wellcome. She is a member of the editorial board of the *Medscape Journal of Medicine*.

These and other interesting contributors provide an often fascinating take on issues facing today’s science communication teachers, practitioners, and researchers.

Note to readers of *Lines and Letters*: I’m currently preparing a review of this book for *Technical Communication*, so parts of this text may appear in a future version of *Technical Communication*.

In the spotlight: Julie Mason

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

Currently co-chair of the Membership Committee, Julie Mason has been involved with NEO STC for two years. Last year, she and Sharon Jendrisak worked together to help our chapter win both the membership drive and the renewal campaign, resulting in a net membership increase of 14%. Julie also served as president of the

student STC chapter at Bowling Green State University, where she earned her bachelor’s degree in Scientific and Technical Communication with minors in linguistics and art.

Julie currently works at Parker Hannifin, a global engineering company headquartered in Mayfield Heights. As a technical writer in the corporate information technology department, she documents enterprise software applications and creates training for end users throughout the company. In 2008 she and her co-workers received an Award of Merit in the NEO STC technical publications competition for a suite of training materials. She has also proofread textbooks for publisher Pearson Education and created marketing materials for her university.

To balance all the time spent in front of the computer at work, Julie likes to hike and bike, experiment with cooking, travel, and take various classes. She serves as a horticulture volunteer in the exotic glasshouse at the Cleveland Botanical Garden, and enjoys visiting Cleveland’s amazing array of restaurants and museums.

An Ohio native, Julie has lived in all of the state’s major quadrants — Dayton, Toledo (Bowling Green), Columbus, and Cleveland. She spent the past two years in the delightfully eclectic Coventry neighborhood of Cleveland Heights, and recently moved to the East Fourth entertainment district in the heart of downtown Cleveland. She and her partner, Dan, are excited about the chance to live in and promote the growth of the region’s urban core.

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.

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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.

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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>.