

Lines & Letters

Northeast Ohio STC Newsletter



October 2012 Issue

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President's Column



Welcome to October in Northeast Ohio! This October, NEO STC:

- ◆ had the October Book Club meeting on October 3rd at Panera Bread.
- ◆ have Competition entry deadlines coming up early in the month.
- ◆ have the Developing for Mobile (and for the Unknown) Program Meeting with Neil Perlin on October 19th. (Please note, our October 19th program meeting has moved from Old Carolina Barbecue to Cinecraft Productions. Old Carolina will still be catering the event).
- ◆ have the Writing Canvas Workshop to recognize the National Day on Writing on October 20th at John Carroll University.
- ◆ have an STC-hosted Agile webinar on October 25th.

Remember that if you attend on both October 19th and 20th, you can take advantage of the special promotion! If you register for an October 20th Writing Canvas Workshop package, you can attend the October 19th Program meeting with dinner at the meeting-only price! Pre-registration is required for both events to be eligible for the offer.

Other news to note within the chapter:

- ◆ Our chapter website experienced some technical difficulties in September. We lost our menus on the site for two weeks, and lost the site completely for one day. Paul Holland from our website committee worked through the problem, and resolved it by switching to a new host. Many thanks to Paul for his time and attention to getting us back up again!
- ◆ NEO STC Survey Results - Spring 2012 contains a summary of our survey results from earlier this year. You'll note that we are already practicing several of the high percentage point items, and this is thanks to the hard work of our committee members! Thank you to all of you who completed the survey and provided us with input.
- ◆ Over the past two months, we've had six new members join the chapter. I want to welcome Kristen, Christine, Cassie, Terrance, William, and Ryan to the chapter! I look forward to meeting you soon at an NEO STC event.

News to note from International:

- ◆ If you are a member with a Classic Membership, I encourage you to renew your membership for 2013 between October 1 and December 31 to take advantage of a cost savings! When you renew, please remember to select Northeast Ohio as your chapter!
- ◆ The STC Board of Directors voted to approve a new community-funding model. Under this model, STC communities will receive funding based strictly on the number of members in a chapter or SIG (special interest group). During the budgeting process, all communities will receive a fixed amount of funding per member regardless of projected expenses and income, or estimated reserves at year end. All funding will be contingent upon a budget submission by October 31 and will take effect for 2013.

Finally, I want to recognize our committee volunteers for 2012-13 who have already done a lot of planning for our chapter this year. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact me at janean.voss@att.net:

- ◆ Academic Relations: Sarah Burke and Jeanette Evans
- ◆ Newsletter: Lisa Mileusnich and Jeanette Evans
- ◆ Programs: Ginny Haas, Lynn Nickels, and Kris Henige
- ◆ Webinars: Joann Rasmussen
- ◆ Workshops: Amy Vogt
- ◆ Networking Lunches: Angie Dianetti
- ◆ Sponsorship: Kim Lindsey, Bob Young, and Lori Meyer
- ◆ Membership: Genelle Pretty
- ◆ Competitions: Nicole Derr and Barb Philbrick
- ◆ Book Club: Jill McCauslin
- ◆ Public Relations: Sharon Jendrisak
- ◆ Website: Paul Holland and Denise Kadilak

If you ever have comments, questions, or suggestions about NEO STC, please write to me (janean.voss@att.net). And, I look forward to seeing you again soon at an NEO STC event!

Janean Voss

NEO STC Chapter President

NEO STC Presents at John Carroll University

By Janean Voss

NEO STC has continued to build its relationship with the English and Communications Departments at John Carroll University. We participated in a panel discussion earlier this year, are holding the upcoming Writing Canvas Workshop on October 20 at JCU, and just recently presented for Professor Tom Pace's Introduction to Professional Writing class on October 2. Sarah Burke, Amy Vogt, and Janean Voss represented the chapter for the classroom presentation.

On October 2 we presented a general introduction about the NEO STC chapter, distributed information packets about the chapter, talked about the upcoming Writing Canvas Workshop, and introduced the new student membership funding program we are offering as a chapter. We also had small group discussions where we had the students work on interactive exercises, and:

- ◆ Sarah Burke talked about government business communications (technical editing and proposals).
- ◆ Amy Vogt talked about IT&S change management, training and development in the healthcare industry.
- ◆ Janean Voss talked about IT technical communications.

The students in the Introduction to the Professional Writing class will be participating in the workshop on October 20 too! This will be a great collaboration and networking opportunity for our NEO STC members and these JCU students.

Thank you to Professors Tom Pace and John McBratney, and everyone else at John Carroll University who has been gracious in giving NEO STC an opportunity to present and educate students about the benefits of our organization.

Tech Comm for Engineers

By Tricia Spayer

On September 24, NEO STC President Janean Voss and I had the privilege of addressing EUREKA, the University of Akron's association of Honors Engineers.

I was invited to speak to this group by Matt Ferraro, a member of EUREKA, and a participant in my Swagelok Impact Toastmasters club.

This association meets every other week throughout the school year. They invite guests from various professions to let the students know about different options in engineering professions. What an honor to address such a prestigious group! Members of this association include engineering students studying Mechanical, Electrical, Biomedical, Chemical, Polymer Engineering, and more. Approximately 60 students attended and participated in the presentation. We discussed:

- ◆ What Technical Communication is
- ◆ How to avoid confusing your audience
- ◆ Tips for effective communication

In addition, we discussed why it is important for engineers to have good technical communication skills. Namely, engineers will be asked to write journal articles and specifications, do presentations for their companies, write web content, and most importantly to us – become Subject Matter Experts!

At the end of my presentation, we had a lively Q & A session. Janean presented an excellent story about why she became a technical communicator, and why technical communication is so important. She also emphasized how important professional associations are to any profession. She also gave great examples about how NEO STC helps student members and how attending NEO STC meetings can help the students.

I enjoyed being part of this presentation, and was thoroughly impressed by the number of students attending, their enthusiasm, and their caliber! I wish to thank the leaders of EUREKA for their warm welcome and professional organization.

What is the National Day on Writing?

The site at <http://www.ncte.org/dayonwriting> explains that the National Day on Writing recognizes the significance of writing in our national life, draws attention to the remarkable variety of writing we engage in, and helps writers from all walks of life recognize how important writing is to their lives.

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) established the day and celebrated the first National Day on Writing in 2009. In 2011, the US Senate - at the request of the NCTE - declared October 20 the National Day on Writing.

Writing of course is important to a technical writer or anyone involved in technical communication. Let's thank Janean Voss for initiating a local recognition of the

National Day on Writing with the Writing Canvas workshop at John Carroll on October 20.

How would you like to celebrate writing and/or the National Day on Writing (adapted from <http://www.ncte.org/dayonwriting>)?

- ◆ Attend the Writing Canvas Workshop
- ◆ Write on my own
- ◆ Submit an article to Lines & Letters

Free Archived Seminars

Did you know that STC houses a collection of over 70 free web seminars? Go to <http://www.stc.org/education/online-education/free-archived-seminars> to see the full listing of sessions.

Note that the archived seminars are available to members only, and you must log in to the STC website to access them.

Scholarship Winner Update: Josh Palmer



We recently had a question-and-answer session with Josh Palmer, a former winner of our scholarship in technical communication. His responses are below:

What updates do you have on your educational and professional activities since winning the scholarship?

In the fall of 2012, I graduate from Minnesota University, Mankato with my MA in Professional & Technical Communication (English). In early 2012, I moved to Nashville, TN, where I now work as Senior Technical Writer for Comdata, a payment processing software company.

Of what value to you was winning the scholarship?

The scholarship provided much-needed financial assistance, but it was also a point of pride and an incentive to work even harder. In addition, it encouraged me to get to know the members of Northeast Ohio STC.

In what ways have you been involved in STC and/or other organizations since winning the scholarship?

I am working hard with a few other members of the Middle Tennessee STC to revive the group. I have

agreed to serve as president if we can muster the resources to keep going. I am also a founding member of a new nonprofit that will build a truly unique, community oriented movie theater space in my Nashville neighborhood.

What advice do you have for those thinking of applying for a future scholarship?

I think it's important to convey your story about who you are and why you are following this path.

Is there anything else you would like to share with NEO STC?

I'm glad for another opportunity to express my gratitude for the scholarship. I think Northeast STC is a model chapter.

The photo shows Josh with Sarah Burke, NEO STC Academic Relations Co-chair.

Time to Renew Your STC Membership

It's that time again, folks! Autumn, the season when we think about colorful leaves, warm sweaters, football games played in crisp evening air, and STC membership renewal.

What's that? You've been too busy carving pumpkins and sipping apple cider to look at your renewal options for 2013? We'll give you the straight scoop: Current STC members who renew before December 31 will pay \$195 for a Classic membership. The price will be higher if you wait until January to renew.

Visit the renewal page on the STC site for dues options, membership brochures and applications, and the link to renew online. Please select to join the NEO STC chapter when you renew!

Reminder: Competition deadlines coming soon!

If you are interested in entering submissions or in being a judge for the 2012-2013 NEO STC competitions, the deadlines are coming soon!

This year's entries will be judged by the Rochester STC chapter. If you are judging, you will be judging competitions from the Rochester chapter.

Important deadlines

- ◆ October 7, 2012: Judges applications must be received
- ◆ October 12, 2012: Entries must be received

How to enter

See the Competitions page on this website for entry forms and additional information.

Full competition rules are in the document General Information and Competition Rules.

NEO STC Newsletter Promotion

The newsletter is running a promotion this fall. Every NEO STC member who contributes to the November newsletter (and those who contributed for October) will be entered into a drawing for one of two \$25 Amazon gift cards. The more articles you submit, the more chances you have to win!

Book and article reviews, recent research you've done, software hints - we love them all! Please share, no matter how short or long.

Don't forget to let us know your personal news! We would like to hear about items such as promotions, job changes, marriages, babies, and awards.

To contribute and be eligible for the drawing, please submit articles to newsletter@neostc.org.

From the Editors - October Update

Thank you to all who contributed to this current edition, which we hope you enjoy.

A special thank you goes to our former scholarship winners for providing updates on their current status and thoughts on the scholarship. We are happy to see our past winners active in STC and realizing their potential in the field. Please stay tuned as NEO STC puts together plans for future scholarships and other outreach to students.

Another special thank you goes to the NEO STC board for supporting the idea of a drawing for an Amazon gift card for contributors to this newsletter.

With our upcoming monthly meetings, Writing Canvas event, book club, competitions, academic relations work, and networking luncheons - just some of our NEO STC activities - we hope you find something of interest and value.

For those who contribute to this newsletter, let's hope the writing helps us expand our writing skills and for some, venture into a new and interesting area of skill development.

We try to post a newsletter about a week before a meeting. Please keep this in mind as you think about contributions.

Writing Canvas Workshop Is Coming

In recognition of the National Day on Writing, NEO STC will host the [Writing Canvas Workshop](#) at John Carroll University on Saturday, October 20, 2012!

Don't miss this chance to learn from some great speakers.

- ◆ Neil Perlin - a nationally recognized and respected speaker - will teach us how to create mobile applications with no coding! He explains how to use ViziApps Studio to create simple, but functional, native applications without coding. In an afternoon session, Neil takes a look at Madcap Flare and Adobe RoboHelp and how their most recent versions support mobile outputs.
- ◆ Lynn Nickels addresses writing across genres. She investigates the common structures and elements of various types of documents, allowing you to write various forms of publications without formal training.
- ◆ Denise Kadilak - a past President of NEO STC - looks at new trends in technical writing. She address trends such as DITA, Wikis, social media, and more.
- ◆ Carrie Buchanan conducts a Writing Health and Environmental Issues session. She addresses how breaking stories involving risks to health and the environment can apply to the technical communication field in areas like writing safety instructions, designing product/machine warnings, and more.