

# Lines & Letters

## Northeast Ohio STC Newsletter



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### President's column: Reflecting on our goals and progress

*By Bob Young (Ryoung1956@sbcglobal.net)*

As we embark on a new year, I thought I would review the progress NEO STC has made toward its goals in the past few months. It's wise to occasionally glance in the rearview mirror to see where you have been while charting new directions.

First, the steady effort of the Public Relations Committee has resulted in two Northeast Ohio companies making donations to us. I'm pleased to announce that MAXIMUS has given a \$500 donation for our membership recognition program. A month earlier, Rockwell Automation pledged \$100 to sponsor a program or activity.

We thank both companies for the generous sponsorships that will be earmarked for various activities, such as the year-end volunteer awards. The officers and board members have discussed purchasing NEO STC embroidered polo shirts as special recognition for any members who volunteer and have accumulated 15 points. (One point is awarded per volunteer activity or meeting/luncheon attendance.)

We are also proud of our three, long-time sustaining organizations: Rockwell (Allen/Bradley), Hyland Software, and PPI Technical Communication.

Obviously, the revitalized effort to market our organization through interaction with other professional organizations, mailing press releases and brochures, and printing meeting programs has not gone unnoticed. We have received interest from outside parties wanting to advertise on our Web site and in the newsletter. This topic will be discussed at the January 10 Board meeting at the Independence library.

We hope the sponsorship will become a trend. But, remember, our members are the best ambassadors for explaining STC's purpose and encouraging co-workers and friends to attend meetings.

The Programs Committee continues to offer diverse and innovative meetings, as evidenced by plans for the next two months. Quite fittingly, the theme for the January 12 meeting at the AmeriSuites Hotel is marketing. Edward Stevens, the president of Cleveland PR firm, Stevens Barons Communications, will discuss:

- ◆ How we can examine our personal strengths and talents to earn greater appreciation and money. Why, with all our technical knowledge, are we not

consulted more often when specs are being drafted? Stevens will share with us how to change this perspective.

- ◆ How we can learn to "market" ourselves and adapt to ever changing market forces to explore different opportunities.

As a bonus, on January 21 members have the opportunity to attend a full-day training course on Adobe FrameMaker and ePublisher Pro at a bargain price. Alan Houser will show the basics of each tool, with some special tricks thrown in for just \$50 for STC members. See <http://www.neostc.org/> for more details and to register for the session at the Cuyahoga Community College Western Campus.

In February, our meeting will be at the Great Lakes Science Center for a firsthand look at how planning and design are incorporated into a learning environment. Val Davillier, the director of exhibits at the Science Center, will discuss the planning, setup and design of the "Grossology" exhibit. Also, NEO STC member Lori Klepfer will share with us how, as technical and information design specialists, we can incorporate the same sign-posting techniques to enhance the user experience for learning. Families are welcome to attend the February 4 event for what should be a unique and memorable experience.

In terms of membership, we have 12 new members, including five in the month of November. We also have five reinstated members and nine members have been saluted for their five years of service to STC and their profession. But those numbers do not come close to telling the story of the volunteer spirit behind the scenes. In fact, I'm constantly impressed at the willingness of our members to step forward to handle tasks that are necessary but done by unsung heroes.

This especially applies for the Employment Committee, which has vastly improved our capabilities of getting employers to post their job postings with us first. Barb Philbrick and Brian Baddour also have done admirable duties with the newsletter and Web site, respectively.

Last, but certainly not least, if you cannot attend a meeting I encourage you to go to a networking luncheon. Jill McCauslin and Angie Dianetti tirelessly try to offer the monthly noon luncheons at different restaurants throughout Northeast Ohio. We will continue to explore various menu offerings thanks to the input of our members.

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So, that's where we are today. We have a lot going on with you in mind. I hope you share my enthusiasm as we step into 2006 to build on our proud tradition.

Cheers!

### January 12 meeting: Market yourself!

Join us Thursday, January 12, as we begin the new year with a marketing presentation by Ed Stevens, a member of the Cleveland Advertising Association's Hall of Fame.

Stevens, president of advertising and PR firm Stevens Baron Communications, will share ideas on how we can gain more appreciation by top management and, possibly, make more money with our enhanced marketing savvy.

After rising through the ranks of Dix & Eaton to become Vice-Chairman, Stevens ran the Corporate Communications Departments for two Fortune 500 utilities. Stevens is well-schooled in branding, inquiry management, crisis communications, marketing communications, investor relations, and media relations. Stevens served as president of the Cleveland Advertising Association and the Greater Cleveland Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA). Stevens was honored as the Erie Ad Club's Ad "Person of the Year" and received the George Meade Award for Community Service. In 2002, Stevens Baron Communications earned the SBN Pillar Award for service to the community. In May of 2005, he was inducted into the Cleveland Advertising Association Hall of Fame.

See <http://www.neostc.org/calendar/20060112.html> for additional details and online registration.

The Consultants and Independent Contractors Special Interest Group (CIC-SIG) will meet immediately before the main meeting.

New members: Meet Bob in the AmeriSuites lobby at 5:30 for the new members meeting.

### Upcoming events

- ◆ 1/10/2006: NEO STC Board Meeting. Independence library.
- ◆ 1/11/2006: Webinar: Textual Bloopers and How to Avoid Them. No local host site yet.\*
- ◆ 1/12/2006: Monthly meeting: Ed Stevens presents "Best foot forward on different paths."
- ◆ 1/17/2006: Networking lunch. Pickwick & Frolic, 2035 East 4th St., Cleveland.

- ◆ 1/21/2006: Software Saturday: Webinar: Alan Houser's hands-on FrameMaker 7.2 and WebWorks ePublisher Pro training.
- ◆ 2/4/2006: Monthly Meeting: GLSC curator presents: "How Content Management Unfolds an Exhibit." Great Lakes Science Center, Cleveland. Families welcome!
- ◆ 2/15/2006: Networking lunch. Serio's, 2732 East Aurora Rd., Twinsburg.
- ◆ 5/7 to 5/10/2006: STC's 53rd Annual Conference and Exhibition at the Paris and Bally's Las Vegas hotels in Las Vegas, Nevada. Conference registration costs are now posted online at [www.stc.org/53rdConf/53confRegInfo01.asp](http://www.stc.org/53rdConf/53confRegInfo01.asp).

**\* Note that the chapter is not sponsoring these seminars.** If you would like to host a seminar, please e-mail us.

Reminder: If you RSVP but do not show up for a meeting, it costs the chapter money — we have to pay up-front for meals. Please remember to let the Programs Committee ([programs@neostc.org](mailto:programs@neostc.org)) know in advance if you have registered but cannot make it to a meeting.

### Non-NEO STC events

- ◆ 2/16/2006: Copyright Law Issues in the Digital Communication Age.

Wondering if you can copyright that great internet marketing campaign you just finished? Can someone use your ideas in their blog? Do you or your employer own the copyright? Join us as Sharon L. Toerek, of Toerek Co. LPA, discusses copyright law issues for the modern day communications and marketing professional. There is no fee to attend and refreshments will be provided. We would love to see you there!

Speaker: Sharon L. Toerek, practicing lawyer in the areas of copyrights; trademarks; intellectual property law; and business law.

Where: Cinecraft Productions, Inc., 2515 Franklin Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44113

When: Thursday February 16, 2006

Register by sending an e-mail to [dan@cinecraft.com](mailto:dan@cinecraft.com) or call 216.781.2300.

- ◆ 1/25/2006: Content Management 101: How Does It Work? webinar. 1:00 pm Eastern time. Presented by Vasont Systems' Senior Sales Engineer, Bret

Freeman. This free webinar is the first of a four-part series. For more information, see <https://lra100.livemeeting.com/LRSRegistration/EC/vasont/1751668212.aspx>.

- ◆ 1/13/2006: XML/XSL Technology Overview webinar (TrackAccess). 11 a.m. Eastern time, 60 minutes. Cost: \$19.95. In this session, you'll learn about Extensible Markup Language (XML) and its companion technology, Extensible Stylesheet Language (XSL). Intended for individuals with little or no prior knowledge of XML. Presented by Scriptorium Publishing. For more information, see [http://store.scriptorium.com/Browse\\_dept\\_items.asp/categ\\_id/27/parent\\_ids/0](http://store.scriptorium.com/Browse_dept_items.asp/categ_id/27/parent_ids/0)
- ◆ 2/3/2006: Managing Implementation of Structured Authoring webinar (TrackAccess). 11 a.m. Eastern time, 90 minutes. Cost: \$19.95. In this webcast, Sarah O'Keefe will deliver a live presentation on structured authoring implementation. Presented by Scriptorium Publishing. For more information, see [http://store.scriptorium.com/Browse\\_dept\\_items.asp/categ\\_id/27/parent\\_ids/0](http://store.scriptorium.com/Browse_dept_items.asp/categ_id/27/parent_ids/0)

### Software Saturday January 21

**Note:** This session is quickly filling up (17 registrants in a room capacity of 22).

Alan Houser, a certified Adobe instructor, will provide a full-day teaching seminar on Adobe FrameMaker 7.2 and Quadralay's WebWorks ePublisher Pro on January 21, 2006 at Cuyahoga Community College's Western Campus in Parma. The hands-on training is from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. at the Parma location. Please RSVP by Tuesday, January 17.

If you are curious about FrameMaker or want to learn some new features, this hands-on workshop is a perfect opportunity. Attendees will work on state-of-the-art PCs in Room C245 at Tri-C's Visual Communication and Design School.

You will learn how to:

- ◆ Use a FrameMaker template to write topic-oriented documentation.
  - ◆ Use FrameMaker's tables, cross-references, variables, and conditional text to create easy-to-maintain documents.
  - ◆ Publish your FrameMaker documents to PDF and choose appropriate PDF settings.
- ◆ Use WebWorks ePublisher Pro to generate single source online help from FrameMaker.
  - ◆ Customize your online help projects.
  - ◆ Use WebWorks ePublisher Pro to generate single source online help from FrameMaker.

WebWorks ePublisher Pro is Quadralay's newest product. The software converts templates in FrameMaker as well as Microsoft Word into multiple platforms with relative ease. Word users also will benefit from ePublisher's new design features that automatically map the styles in the single source copy to online Help, Web-based applications, and the increasingly popular mobile devices.

Alan Houser is president of Group Wellesley, Inc., a firm that provides consulting, training, and application development services to support single source publishing, electronic publishing, and XML-based publishing. Alan is an Adobe Certified Instructor in FrameMaker and Acrobat, and provides training and consulting for clients across North America. Alan holds a B.S. in Electrical Engineering and an M.A. in Professional Writing from Carnegie Mellon University. Alan is co-author of *XML Weekend Crash Course*, published in 2001 by John Wiley and Sons.

RSVP by Tuesday, January 17, to [programs@neostc.org](mailto:programs@neostc.org) or call 330-966-4568. Include names and e-mail addresses of all attendees.

### Upcoming board meeting

The next Board Meeting is scheduled for January 10 from 6 pm to 8:45 pm at the Independence Library at 6361 Selig Drive in Independence. Officers and committee chairpersons are expected to attend this important meeting.

Committee chairpersons are to write a one-page report on what their respective groups have accomplished to date toward their goals. Please provide several copies of your committee report for all in attendance.

Please let President Bob Young ([Ryoung1956@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Ryoung1956@sbcglobal.net)) or Vice President Stephanie Webster ([swebster@tmwsystems.com](mailto:swebster@tmwsystems.com)) know if you need any equipment for the report presentations or if you cannot attend this meeting.

For directions to the library, see <http://www.cuyahogalibrary.org> and click the Branches tab.

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### December meeting review: Holiday social hour and food drive

*By Stephanie Webster (swebster15@hotmail.com)*

NEO STC was in good spirits on December 8th! Hoggy's restaurant was a warm, relaxing atmosphere to gather round the table and catch up with other members. We had a great spread of food — but we apologize to those looking for the chocolate chip cookies. Next year we'll have to bring some red and green sprinkled sugar cookies!

We were glad to have a new visitor come, brave the cold weather, and dine with us! We hope you will be able to come to many more NEO STC activities!

Thanks to all who generously donated to the Cleveland Food Bank, both those who came to the meeting and other members. We were able to raise \$100 in cash, and a full carload of non-perishable food — a total of 175 pounds! Special thanks to the Spayer family and the employees of MAXIMUS, Inc., for their abundant gifts!

Annual donations are a great way for our chapter to be actively involved with our community. The staff at the Cleveland Food Bank was overjoyed with your contributions!

### NEO STC competition winners

*By Candace Wintering, NEO STC Competition Manager*

The NEO STC chapter holds an annual competition to recognize outstanding work in the technical communication field. The competition provides technical communicators a valuable opportunity to receive a critique of their work from fellow professionals as well as recognition for their efforts. A team of judges evaluates each entry according to standards of excellence for its category and then comes to a consensus on the award an entry should receive. We are pleased to announce the following awards for the 2005-2006 NEO STC Competition:

**Award of Excellence:** Presented to Stephanie Mohar and Maria M. Hlas from National City Corporation for the National City Home Equity Broker Web Site Quick Reference. Category: Technical Publications Competition

**Award of Merit:** Presented to Tricia Spayer from Pressco Technology Inc. for the Intellispec System Manual. Category: Technical Publications Competition.

**Award of Excellence:** Presented to Tom Hudson and Meloyde Khattak from BMC Software, Inc. for MAINVIEW for OS/390 Interactive Guide. Category: Online Competition.

We will showcase our competition winners at our March meeting, so plan to attend and congratulate them.

Thanks again to our competition judges.

### Welcome to new and transferred members!

Marian Cronin, Jennifer Forbus, Teresa Hessler, Sharon Jendrisak, and Evelyn Kozik.

We look forward to seeing you at an upcoming chapter event!

### Member profile: Kris Henige

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

Kris Henige is Technical 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 now includes four writers and the IT department assistant.

The team designs and develops communications and training materials that help employees, customers, suppliers, and distributors use Parker's enterprise business systems and portals. The team also manages many employee development activities in IT, including a mentoring program for new hires and new managers, monthly "Lunch Time Learning" sessions, and an orientation program for new IT hires.

As part of the IT management team, Kris helps provide strategic direction and is on the selection committee for new IT managers and executives.

Kris joined STC in 1986 as a student member at Bowling Green State University. She is a past chapter president of NEO STC, and she received the Distinguished Chapter Service Award in 2004. Her current chapter duties include managing the chapter listserv and printing and mailing the monthly meeting cards. She has served as a competitions judge at the chapter and international levels for several years. She is also a member of STC's Management SIG.

She taught continuing education courses in technical communication at Cuyahoga Community College and is a

certified DDI (Development Dimensions International) instructor.

Kris lives in the city of Orange with her husband Jeff Foster, who works in IT at Progressive Insurance. Her hobbies include keeping up with current events, music, reading, and travel. "Jeff prefers to stay close to home because we have an older house on two acres that requires a lot of work. So, once or twice a year, I go off by myself with my subway maps and guidebooks to explore big cities. It is exhilarating to focus on the here-and-now: where am I going and how will I get myself there?" In 2004, Kris went to Norway, and, in 2005, visited the cities of Stockholm, Helsinki, and Tallinn, Estonia.

### NEO STC leads our category in growth!

Our chapter is leading our community category in membership growth percentage from June 30, 2005, through January 4, 2006. Chapters are ranked in the size category that was attained on June 30, 2005. The numbers in parentheses show the number of communities in each category as of June 30, 2005.

Thanks go to new members and to all the volunteers who helped with the membership drive!

### Professional Chapters, Size Category 4 – 76 to 150 members (twenty-seven communities)

Community	Percent growth since June 30, 2005
Northeast Ohio	17.52
New Mexico Kachina	17.09
United Kingdom	16.67

### The Power of "No"

*By Deborah Gill-Hesselgrave*

*Reprinted from the San Diego Signature, the newsletter of the San Diego Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication. <http://www.stc-sd.org/newsletter/newsletter.htm>*

I was reminded again today that sometimes success comes from saying no, not yes.

Some years ago, I was facing extreme burnout due to all the obligations to which I had committed myself and my team. As I was teetering on the edge of sanity (and my

team was plotting my demise), I realized that I actually had the power to say, "No."

The full telling of this realization will take longer than the event itself, so here is the "Cliff's Notes" version:

My project board was booked for three months solid. My team was working extended hours. I was picking up overflow, doing "special" projects for major stakeholders, and project managing all of the above. The catalyst for change occurred when one of my clients, who is also a key influencer in my professional world, called about a new project. Because he had worked with me steadily over the years, he simply launched into a description of what he needed and when he needed it.

Before my revelation, I would have taken down the details he was providing me and begun the process of fully assessing his project, scheduling it, and figuring out who was going to do what. This time, after he was done telling me what he wanted me to know, I gently explained that I wouldn't be able to even begin thinking about his project for at least 2 weeks, and without breaking stride, I offered to reserve a kickoff date that was nearly a month away, explaining that this was the earliest I'd have staff available for him. Of course, I made sure to mention that if his need was immediate and mission-critical, I'd be happy to help him find another consultant to work with him that time.

It wasn't until after he responded to what was essentially a "no" message that I realized how fearful I had been of telling him that I couldn't just hop to it as I had in the past. As it turned out, he actually appreciated having me tell him that we wouldn't be able to take on his project right then and there. Some months later, during the project post mortem, he confided that how I had handled (temporarily) "denying" him his request had increased his appreciation of me and how I did business. (He mentioned stuff like honesty and integrity and tellin' it like it is — which I guess I do.)

Henceforth, I have relied on the power of no to help me balance my professional and personal lives and to make sure that I am saving my yeses for important, not just urgent, endeavors.

Back to today's reminder: A professional acquaintance informed me that she was resigning a volunteer job, albeit an extremely important and high-profile one, because she realized that she could not do it justice and maintain the level of quality, professionalism, and integrity in her other endeavors. Guess what? That gal is on my short list of people to call when I need a

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professional resource from her practice area. I know she will only accept a project that she knows she can do and do well because she knows the power of no.

### STC dues are tax deductible

If you pay taxes in the United States, keep in mind that STC dues are tax deductible. Please note, however, that dues must be deducted from the tax return filed for the year in which they were paid. In other words, dues paid in 2005 may be deducted only from 2005 tax returns. Therefore, if you pay your 2006 dues on or before December 31, 2005, these dues can be deducted only from your 2005 return.

You can claim dues as a deduction in several ways: as a charitable expense, a business expense, or a miscellaneous deduction.

**Charitable Expense:** All STC members who pay taxes in the United States can deduct at least a portion of their STC dues if they claim this portion as a charitable donation. IRS publications 526 (rev. 2003) and 17 define this option:

You may be able to deduct membership fees or dues you pay to a qualified organization. However, you can deduct only the amount that is more than the value of the benefits you receive. As a 501(c)(3) organization, STC is a qualified organization. To determine the amount of charitable contribution you can claim, subtract the cost of tangible benefits you receive from STC from the amount of dues you paid in 2005. STC's tangible benefits can be estimated at \$30 per year: \$15 for the Society's quarterly journal, *Technical Communication*, and \$15 for the magazine, *Intercom*. The amount of dues you paid depends on your membership category. Classic members and limited members determine their charitable contribution by subtracting the cost of tangible benefits (\$30) from the cost of dues for 2005 (\$145 for classic members, \$125 for limited members). Because student members and e-members do not receive printed versions of *Technical Communication* or *Intercom*, they do not receive tangible benefits, and may deduct the full amount of dues for 2005: \$135 for e-members and \$50 for student members. (For more information about deductions for each category of membership, please refer to page 29 of the January 2006 issue of *Intercom*.)

**Business Expense:** Employers and self-employed consultants may claim the full amount of dues as a business expense.

**Miscellaneous Deduction:** Those who do not fall into the categories defined above may claim the amount of dues as a miscellaneous deduction. (For miscellaneous deductions to affect taxes, the total amount of miscellaneous deductions must exceed 2 percent of your adjusted gross income.)

**Money, Not Time:** Please be aware that while dues, contributions, and out-of-pocket expenses may be deducted, personal services, such as volunteer time, may not.

If you have any questions, please contact your local IRS office, <http://www.irs.gov> or accountant.

### STC asks for your feedback

In early January, STC will invite members to submit feedback on topics scheduled to be discussed at the next meeting of the Society board of directors, January 26–28, in Atlanta, Georgia. The feedback will be collected via the STC Web site. A synopsis of member input will be shared with the board and posted on the members-only section of the Web site.

An e-mail will be sent to all members explaining the purpose of this initiative. This method of gathering information will become a regular practice prior to all future board meetings. Please take this opportunity to participate in shaping STC's future.

### Handy hint: Microsoft Office Picture Manager

*By Barbara Philbrick (caslon@alltel.net)*

There is a handy utility included with Office 2003 called Microsoft Office Picture Manager. To open, select the **Start** menu, select **All Programs**, then go to **Microsoft Office > Microsoft Office Tools** and click **Microsoft Office Picture Manager**.

A good first step is to point Picture Manager to your pictures. From the **File** menu, select **Locate Pictures**. You can then scan for pictures from the right panel.

Photos first show up as thumbnails. You can use the **Zoom** bar at the bottom of the window to increase or decrease the size of the thumbnails.

Picture Manager also features some standard editing tools, like brightness and contrast, color adjust, crop, rotate and flip, and red eye removal. It has an AutoCorrect feature, but I have gotten inconsistent results — sometimes it makes good suggestions, but

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other times they are bizarre. Fortunately, the tool also comes with an undo button!

Two options I find particularly useful are the resize and rename options. The resize options let you quickly choose sizes appropriate for printing, e-mail, or Web publishing. I find the rename feature to be easier to use than the rename option in Windows Explorer, except that you must click OK before moving to the next picture. However, getting a better thumbnail view of the picture while renaming, and not accidentally opening the file while trying to rename it, trump the occasional missed OK.

I hope you find this utility as useful as I do!

### **Jobs database**

[NOTE: As of 2014, employment resources have shifted to the chapter's LinkedIn presence. Please refer to the [current chapter website](#) for details.]

If you are looking for a technical communicator or looking for a new position, remember to check the NEO STC job site (<http://www.neostc.org/jobs/openings.php>).

If your company has a job opening, please contact any member of the NEO STC Employment Committee:

- ◆ Sarah Burke ([sarahwilsonburke@hotmail.com](mailto:sarahwilsonburke@hotmail.com))
- ◆ Nams Malik ([nmalik@software.rockwell.com](mailto:nmalik@software.rockwell.com))
- ◆ Sherri Henkin ([sleah47@juno.com](mailto:sleah47@juno.com))

Job listings on the NEO STC Web site are free and reach a targeted audience!

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