

Lines & Letters

Northeast Ohio STC Newsletter



March 2015

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Page 1

President's Corner

Hello, and welcome to another newsletter! I'm sure you've noticed this year that the NEO STC website is in a different format. We have moved from Joomla to WordPress, which allows us to use plug-ins and other tools to customize the site. Our Website committee of Paul Holland and Kim Lindsey has managed this transition and provided some training to other teams (such as Newsletter) who populate content in the site. NEO STC is seeking additional volunteers to manage the website content and learn how the back end of the system works. Do you use WordPress already, or are you interested in learning WordPress and website management? This would be a perfect opportunity for you to enhance your web skills, give back to the chapter, and add volunteering to your resume. To join the Website committee, please send me an e-mail.

I'm delighted to announce that Bob Young is receiving the Fellow honor, and Amy Vogt is receiving the Associate Fellow honor in 2015! They will be formally recognized at the STC Summit in Columbus this June. You can read more about Bob and Amy in this newsletter issue. A hearty congratulations to them both!

Applications for the NEO STC scholarship are due March 31. Visit the scholarship page on the website to see the full details and download an application. If you are interested in judging the scholarship, send an e-mail to scholarships@neostc.org.

We have some exciting networking events planned for the rest of this year! Coming up on March 18, we will visit Cleveland Whiskey at the MAGNET business incubator building in Cleveland, near the CSU campus. In April a lunch is scheduled at Bar Louie in Crocker Park, and the May lunch will be at Cheesecake Factory in Legacy Village. Check the Networking Lunches and Socials page for details. Thank you to our Networking committee of Angie Dianetti and Ginny Haas for planning our networking lunches and social outings.

The next NEO STC program meeting will be on March 12 in Brecksville. Jennifer Loudiana will present "Apps Apps Apps! Apps you can use to stay organized and work on the go!"

Kind regards,

Lisa Mileusnich, NEO STC Chapter President

NEO STC Board Opportunities 2015/2016

NEO STC continues to be one of the strongest and most active chapters in the society. As with most organizations, chapters are only as strong as the members who pull together to help the chapter succeed. This is your opportunity to join the board and help run this amazing chapter!

Who is on our chapter board?

- ◆ Chapter Officers: Chapter President, Vice President, Immediate Past President, Treasurer, and Secretary
- ◆ Committee Chairpersons: Currently, this includes our Programs, Sponsorship/Advertising, Website, Workshop, Membership, Book Club, Networking, Public Relations, Newsletter, Academic Relations, and Competitions committee chairpersons

Responsibilities

- ◆ Chapter Officers: Perform tasks as defined for the respective roles
- ◆ Committee Chairpersons: Perform tasks as defined for the respective roles. Defines a plan for the committee during the summer.
- ◆ Attend twice-yearly chapter board meeting to share plans and progress
- ◆ Work individually (or on a team, depending on role) to carry out tasks during the year defined during the planning phase
- ◆ Transition duties upon completion of term

Commitment

- ◆ All board members are asked to commit from July 2015 – June 2016. The monthly tasks typically take approximately 2-10 hours a month, but this varies based on the role.

Who we're looking for

For 2015/16, we have known openings for:

- ◆ Chapter Vice President
- ◆ Programs (co-chairperson)
- ◆ Competitions
- ◆ Public Relations
- ◆ Website
- ◆ Workshops

Lines & Letters

Northeast Ohio STC Newsletter



March 2015

© NEO STC

Page 2

If you are interested in any of the other chapter officer or committee chairperson positions listed above, please indicate that when you apply. We can put you in touch with that team/chairperson.

Qualifications

- ◆ Current NEO STC chapter member in good standing
- ◆ Passionate about wanting to play a role in the future of your chapter. Passion over years of experience plays a critical role.
- ◆ Interested in having fun, networking with fellow professionals, and putting plans into action!
- ◆ No prior experience necessary, but a desire to learn and apply skills

Benefits of being a board member

- ◆ Increase your professional networking opportunities inside and outside the chapter
- ◆ Develop your leadership acumen
- ◆ Build on a skillset in a specific area
- ◆ Be a part of a team that has for more than 10 years received recognition from STC International for its outstanding service to its members
- ◆ Receive free meal at two board meetings

Next Steps

Aside from our members (you!), our all-volunteer board is the lifeline of the organization. If you or someone you know may be interested in joining the board, please complete the survey, and a current chapter officer will be in touch with you. All applications must be completed by Friday, February 27.

The current NEO STC officers will carefully evaluate each application and follow up with candidates.

Contact for More Info or Questions

Questions are welcome and may be directed to:

- ◆ NEO STC Vice President - Brian Smith (brian.smith@diebold.com)
- ◆ NEO STC Immediate Past President - Paul Holland (paul_holland@mac.com)

NEO STC at Youngstown State University

By Ashleigh Petts

On February 5, Lynn Nickels and Janean Voss, members of the NEO STC Academic Relations committee, spoke to

eight students in Dr. Karen Kaiser Lee's Professional & Technical Writing Senior Project class at Youngstown State University (YSU). This class is a requirement for students completing the B.A. in Professional and Technical Writing (PTW) at YSU and is the capstone class in the major.

NEO STC Presentation

To begin the class, Janean delivered an "Introduction to Technical Writing" presentation. As part of the presentation, she compared academic writing and technical writing, covered tips for how to become a technical writer, and shared the general traits and attributes of technical writers.

Next, Lynn and Janean each led a small group session, sharing with the students their backgrounds, tips for how to get into the field, current daily duties, and professional writing samples. The students asked insightful questions, inquiring about: "Do technical writers need to think about reading level in their documentation?" and "Should I apply for a job even if I don't meet all of the qualifications?"

Lynn's overall message to the students was to persevere. Lynn notes, "It's a good idea for students to go on interviews, even if they don't feel 100% qualified. They should take along a portfolio, and make it clear that they are willing to learn." She encouraged students to consider that even if they don't get hired, at least they've gained interviewing experience to learn from and use in the future.

Janean echoed Lynn's advice, and let the students know that there are opportunities available for them with a B.A. degree. In most instances, a graduate-level degree in the field is not required to get an entry-level position. Janean also explained the benefits of joining professional organizations like STC. These organizations allow students to network with professionals in the field, learn about job opportunities, develop skills through volunteer opportunities, and augment their formal education.

Professional and Technical Writing at YSU

YSU's B.A. in PTW program focuses on the writing, editing, and design of both electronic and paper documents for businesses, organizations, and institutions. The program gives students the opportunity to both analyze existing texts and create documents of their own for a portfolio.

In addition to the B.A. in PTW, students at YSU can earn an undergraduate minor in PTW, graduate certificate in

Lines & Letters

Northeast Ohio STC Newsletter



March 2015

© NEO STC

Page 3

PTW, or the M.A. in PTW. For more information on professional and technical writing at YSU, visit the English Department's website.

Invitation to NEO STC Members

You can also participate in NEO STC's academic relations outreach opportunities and bring your valuable practitioner perspective to students. For the capstone project in this YSU class, each student is currently working with a client, analyzing and researching their client's needs, and writing and designing documentation to meet those needs. Lynn and Janean plan to return to YSU in May to hear the student capstone project presentations, and they will provide feedback to the students alongside faculty members. If you are interested in joining them, please contact scholarships@neostc.org.

NEO STC at the NEO English Symposium

By Kate Dodds

"What can you do with an English major?," "You will never get a job in literature or writing," and "You're studying English? You must want to be a teacher!," are all typical for an English major/minor to hear. The misconceptions of jobs in the English field were put to rest Saturday, February 7, at the NEO English Symposium at Ursuline College in Pepper Pike, Ohio.

Students from The University of Mount Union, Walsh University, and Malone University traveled to Ursuline to spend the day learning from panelists who work in the field every day. Students had the opportunity to ask recent graduates about their career paths and strategies. They heard from career services, learned ways to stand out amongst the crowd, and had the opportunity to hear from the professional groups the Society for Technical Communicators (STC) and the International Association for Business Communicators (IABC).

In between sessions, the hallways were buzzing with students networking and discussing future career goals. It was interesting to hear what their paths were leading towards. Public relations, journalism, and publishing were a few of the most popular; most students had no idea about the realm of possibilities in the field of English. After hearing from the panelists, it was clear that they were excited to begin researching new possibilities.

NEO STC members Janean Voss and Ashleigh Petts discussed their career paths and gave an interesting

overview of what a typical day is like for them. They also discussed the benefits and opportunities they have had through STC. Student ears perked up when student memberships were discussed and scholarships were mentioned.

The symposium was very beneficial for the more than 40 students in attendance. As a recent grad, I know students want to know more about their field of study and what possibilities are out there for them, but they simply do not know where to start looking. The symposium was a great starting place. I can't imagine anyone walking away doubting their major of choice after hearing all of the possibilities they have.

The organizing committee is hoping to make the symposium an annual event.

In the Spotlight: Nancy Duarte

By Jeanette Evans

If you plan to attend the 2015 STC Summit, the keynote address from Nancy Duarte should be unforgettable. As noted on stc.org, "presentations are the lingua franca of business and those who master communicating with them rise faster than their peers, reach more customers than their competitors, and turn causes into a groundswell," and Nancy has much to say about how to give a great presentation.

In her TED talk – *Secret Structures of Great Talks* – Nancy gets inspiration from Steve Jobs with his presentations on iPhones and the "I've Got a Dream" speech from Martin Luther King, Jr.

A communication expert featured in *Wired*, *CNN*, *Forbes*, and *Fortune*, Nancy has created presentations for businesses that include Apple, Cisco, HP, GE, and Google.

Her award-winning books include the *HBR Guide to Persuasive Presentations* and *slide:ology: The Art and Science of Creating Great Presentations*. It is no surprise that Nancy received Microsoft's MVP Award for helping people work better with Microsoft PowerPoint. She also worked with Al Gore on the documentary slide show called *An Inconvenient Truth*.

Talk of the Town

Jill McCauslin and **Amy Vogt** spoke in the Cleveland ATD panel discussion, "What Comes First – the Documentation or the Training?" on February 19.

Lines & Letters

Northeast Ohio STC Newsletter



March 2015

© NEO STC

Page 4

NEO STC member **Jill McCauslin** and former members **Denise Kadilak** and **Sherri Henkin** will be presenting at the STC Summit in June. ***Congratulations!***

5 Ways to Provide a Warm Welcome

By Janean Voss

NEO STC events, like program meetings and networking events, are great places to meet people who work in technical communications. Do you have a hard time breaking the ice when you attend these events? Here are some quick tips to help:

1. **Introduce yourself to someone new.** It can be as simple as saying, "Hi, I don't think I've met you yet. My name is..."
2. **Sit with different people every so often when you attend an event.** Sitting in the same place or with the same people might be part of your routine, but consider changing it up once in awhile in order to meet new people.
3. **Engage the people you introduced yourself to in conversation.** Engage in a conversation about what you do, exchange business cards, and go from there.
4. **Share a cup of coffee or a meal with someone.** Are you planning an outing to get coffee or lunch with others in the group? Consider inviting someone new from an event to join you.
5. **Act as a guide.** Does someone look lost or are they sitting off by themselves? Engage them in conversation, and assist them with questions.

We have been seeing some great attendance at our events, and it is all too easy to get lost in the crowd. Remembering what it feels like to be the "new person" can help remind us to extend a helping hand, offer a kind smile, and provide a warm welcome to NEO STC.

Do you have any tips that you'd like to share? Do you remember what it was like to be new at NEO STC? Share your stories with us at newsletter@neostc.org.

Find a Mentor or Be a Mentor

For information about the STC Mentor Board see <http://www.stc.org/education/1414-mentor-board>.

According to the site, the board is "where professionals connect to establish mentor/mentee relationships that foster personal and professional growth and development. Serving as a mentor or becoming a

mentee can help you direct your future, expand your professional network, gain knowledge and perspective on the workplace, and deliver tremendous personal satisfaction."

Ten Ideas for Blog Posts

By Jeanette Evans

Find the article [10 Ideas to Inspire Your Next Blog Post](#) at the Social Media Examiner site. Here is a listing of the ideas. Maybe you will find an idea of note.

1. Answer common questions
2. Create a "how to" post
3. Make an announcement
4. Host a Q and A
5. Feature an employee
6. Review a new product
7. Compare products
8. Educate customers
9. Compile Top-10 lists
10. Repurpose YouTube videos

We Want To Hear From You Before Our Summer Break

As we wind down toward the end of our NEO STC program year and terms for the current officers, we also get closer to the summer break we take for this newsletter.

For our post-March edition, we plan an issue covering a couple of months plus the announcement of the winners of our promotion. As a reminder, we plan to pick two winners in a raffle of those who contributed to this newsletter with contributions coming before the end of March. Each winner will get a \$50 Amazon gift certificate.

Let's not forget that we want to hear about your thoughts and experiences when it comes to the Summit coming up in beautiful Ohio.