

Lines & Letters

Northeast Ohio STC Newsletter



September 2014

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President's Corner

Greetings, and welcome to another informative and fun-filled year with NEO STC!

I hope that you all had an enjoyable summer. I would like to use this space right at the top of the newsletter to congratulate the NEO STC Newsletter Committee. Not only did they win Committee of the Year at the banquet in May, but they submitted an entry for the first time to the Apex Awards and received an Award of Excellence! Co-editors Jeanette Evans and Lynn Nickels are back on the newsletter again, and I look forward to reading their articles. I am proud to work with both of them.

The first meeting of the 2014-15 program year will be held on Thursday, September 11, at Parker Hannifin in Mayfield Heights. Brad Henry will present Google Glass: the Technical Writing Paradigm Shift. Brad was selected as one of first Google Glass Explorers for his research with efficacy and human interaction using wearable devices, and he is an engaging and dynamic speaker. Those who attend the meeting may get an opportunity to experience Google Glass for themselves! For more information and registration details, click here.

Please note that NEO STC will not be holding competitions this year. If you, or someone else at your workplace, would like to enter technical communication materials in the STC competition, you can review the STC website for a list of other chapters that are holding local competitions. The Chicago chapter competition is now open, as is the New York Metro/Philadelphia Metro/Houston regional competition, and the Carolina chapter is also planning a 2014 competition. If you are interested in a judging opportunity, the New York/Philadelphia/Houston competition will accept applications for remote judges.

Our committee members have been hard at work planning the program meetings and other activities for 2014-15. I hope to see you at one of our meetings, workshops, networking lunches, or social outings this year! If you are interested in volunteering on one of our committees, please send me an email at lmileusnich@parker.com.

Kind regards,

Lisa Mileusnich, NEO STC Chapter President

Upcoming Events

NEO STC events

- ◆ 9/11/14: Chapter meeting, "Google Glass: the Technical Writing Paradigm Shift," presented by Brad Henry, at Parker Hannifin in Mayfield Heights.
- ◆ 9/16/14: Networking lunch, at Crave in Akron.
- ◆ 10/8/14: Chapter meeting, "Content Strategy: What is it and Why is it Important?" presented by Denise Kadilak, at Keithley Instruments in Solon. (Please note that this meeting is on a Wednesday.)

Other events and dates of interest

- ◆ 9/10/14: Society of Professional Journalists meeting, "Cocktails and Conversation with Facebook Content Strategist Jonathon Colman," at The Press Club
- ◆ 9/17/14: Project Management Institute (Northeast Ohio Chapter) meeting, "BYOC – Bring Your Own Challenge," at Westfield Insurance – Blair Center
- ◆ 9/25/14: UXPA meeting, "The Creative Process (speaker Ben Henderson)," at Rockwell Automation

Do You Know Columbus, Ohio?

The STC Summit is returning to Ohio next year!

Mark your calendars: **21 – 24 June 2015**. Start planning now! Those of us in Northeast Ohio have an easy 2 ½ hour drive to Columbus. No worrying about luggage limits, TSA security checks, or exorbitant air fare! How about carpooling with someone? Send your whole documentation team to the Summit!

Plan now to attend next year's Summit and be a part of the action instead of just reading about it here.

Wanted: Members who know Columbus. Have you lived there? Worked there? Visited there? Consider writing articles for STC's Intercom magazine, Notebook Blog, and Summit Web site. We need your expertise. The Society will be requesting articles, tips, and tidbits about Columbus. Contact Tricia Spayer using the subject line "STC Summit Columbus" if you can help.

Examples of what STC is looking for:

- ◆ Tourist events [<http://summit.stc.org/hotel-travel/optional-tourist-events/>]
- ◆ Notebook blog guest posts [<http://notebook.stc.org/summit-14-join-us-at-the-phoenix-art-museum-after-the-summit/>]
- ◆ What to see and do [<http://intercom.stc.org/2013/11/what-to-see-and-do-while-in-phoenix/>]

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Call for proposals

See the [Call](#) with proposals due 5:00 PM EDT, Friday, 12 September, 2014.

Take a quiz about Columbus

Here are some of the questions from an [online quiz](#), which also gives answers.

1. What large college is located in Columbus?
2. Which of the following fast-food chains is NOT based in the Columbus area? Wendy's, White Castle, or Sonic?

In the Spotlight: Rebecca Steh

Everyone, please welcome Rebecca Steh!

Becky is currently working for Rockwell Automation as a technical writing intern for the Global Sales and Marketing department in the training division. Her duties include helping the training instructors with their training manuals, preparing labs and various activities to increase customer understanding and satisfaction. Becky's long-term career goal is to obtain a full time position in the technical writing or marketing field. She wants to continue to expand the technical communication skills she has learned during the past six years and be known as a valuable asset to the company.

The NEO STC connection – "I actually got my start at Rockwell with the help of professional connections I made with the members of the NEO STC. This past March, I participated in a panel that discussed the challenges of stepping into the professional writing field as a college student. At the time of the panel, I was a graduate student in my final semester obtaining my master's degree from Youngstown State University. I was pursuing a degree in Professional Writing and Editing, which was in the process of changing to Professional and Technical Writing, and I received the degree in May of 2014. I also received an undergraduate degree in journalism in May of 2012."

Becky said she credits the The NEO STC for giving her the chance to learn from professionals in communication. "I had a unique opportunity to look at the successes of many other technical communicators and see how many different career opportunities a degree in the field gave me. In turn, I was able to talk to them a little bit about what the new technical communicators of my generation are learning and what struggles we face as we get there. I talked about a lot of the different theories that we were learning about when

it came to technical writing, but I also talked about the struggles of building up an adequate portfolio to get the type of job students in my field were pursuing. I also worked with the NEO STC again recently to help create the events calendar for the year to keep everyone organized and aware of what the organization is doing."

In her personal time, Becky said, "I enjoy creative writing, and working as a technical writer only helps to improve my skills to effectively communicate my ideas, even if they are works of fiction. I also take a special interest in the spread of knowledge about individuals who suffer from various forms of developmental disabilities. I have a sister with epilepsy who I have seen grow into a fascinating, unique and happy individual. I enjoy community events that help to spread awareness about people like my sister and help the world understand how truly special each and every individual is, despite all of our differences."

Becky said she also enjoys the outdoors and summer weather, "which, as most of us in Ohio know, doesn't always last long!"

An AHA! Moment

By Tricia Spayer

(Note from editor: This post appeared on Tricia Spayer's blog thinking about the NEO STC leadership workshop she presented earlier this year.)

I had an AHA! moment last week. Those of you who know me, know that I'm shy, introverted, and somewhat reticent. That does not make me afraid to step out and take risks, though. That's how you become a leader and grow.



I've come to realize that I like this leadership thing. It's not about me. It's about helping people develop their skills. That's nice because it takes the spotlight off of me and makes me feel good when others see themselves improving. The AHA moment came last week when I was preparing to present the Toastmasters Success Leadership Series Part I: Characteristics of Effective Leaders. It was going to be a 90-minute presentation, and I really wanted to be well prepared. When I was emailing my co-chair, Amy, about the workshop, I realized my feet were tapping, my blood started pumping, and I was really excited to do this. A few years ago, I would have been a basket case. Blood all in my legs – lead legs. Butterflies – or rather pterodactyls – in my stomach, and I would have not slept all week!

I was excited about this presentation, though! Really looked forward to it. I knew the subject, I truly enjoy the subject, and I wanted to share what knowledge I had with my colleagues. The presentation went really well. And fast! Who knew 90 minutes could fly by so quickly! This moment made me realize how much Toastmasters has given to me. It's prepared me for these events, and I actually look forward to them with eagerness and excitement, rather than fear and dread.

Toastmasters works!!!

Book Review: *The Go Giver*

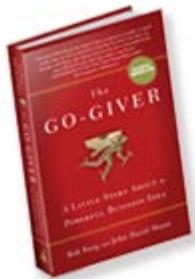
Reviewed by Angie Dianetti

The Go-Giver by Bob Burg and John David Man

This powerful little book was given to me as a gift by a fellow business owner, who said it had changed his life and his business. I was skeptical, because I'm not usually fond of business parables. But, this one does not have mice or penguins, frogs or even Babylonians as the main characters. (OK, so I guess I read a lot of these types of books for someone that doesn't care for them much!)



The main character is a salesman named Joe. Joe is a real go-getter. He works hard and long but success seems just out of his grasp. He becomes desperate to make his goal for the quarter and he's running out of time. Joe sets up a meeting with a legendary consultant that promises to show him the laws of success over the next five days. But there is a catch – he must act on each law before he comes to the next meeting.



So, in a very predictable way, Joe attends each session, learns a new law, and puts it into practice no matter how ridiculous it seems to him, and becomes very successful. So, why did I like the book? –Because the ideas are very powerful and they work. If you follow Joe through the process and put the laws into practice, you will experience how powerful they can be. It's not rocket science or anything new – just good common sense that isn't so common.

Article Review: *Why Online Identity Matters*

Reviewed by Jeanette Evans

Why Online Identity Matters: How to Overcome What Scares Us About Our Online Identities (Brian Croxall, The Chronicle of Higher Education–The Digital Campus, April 25, 2014)

"If you were thinking of hiring [someone], how would you learn more about her?" That is a variation of the question author Brian Croxall asks in his article when he begins examining questions related to online identity. Concerning the question about a possible new hire, the answer, of course, shows that many would search online for information about the person. That is one reason why online identity matters.

While this article addresses, specifically, an academic community, we can also learn something by looking at the author's arguments to see if they apply in our community. Croxall, a digital-humanities strategist at Emory University, and lecturer in English, argues that today "our peers lack the time to read our work" and "before the Internet, it was hard to get published."

He argues that publishing today is not a "scarcity; now it is attention that is a scarce commodity, as we are bombarded with more and more information." Why not put your work on the Internet to make it easier for people to see it? That is essentially the question Croxall asks. Here are some reasons people give for not putting their work on the Internet.

- ◆ Building a website is too hard.
- ◆ Someone will steal your work.
- ◆ It will take too much time.

Croxall addresses each of these reasons. Building a website today is easy. If you put your work on a website you can document your ideas so you can discourage stealing by showing when you developed the idea. The time commitment may be great, but you can manage it with a compromise, such as a monthly, not daily, update.

If you have no digital identity, says Croxall, you run the risk of "becoming irrelevant. And in this age of rapidly shifting scholarly communication, one of the most effective ways to be a scholar is to be online." Can we argue something similar for those of us who work in the area of communication? The best answer I can give is probably "Yes!"

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Newsletter Notes

(and random thoughts)

By Jeanette Evans

We are off to a great start for our new term with our new officers and committee chairs. Stay tuned also for a new format for our web site and newsletter using WordPress instead of Joomla.

A thank you goes out to Lisa Mileusnich and all who met over the summer to plan our new year. Thank you to Kim Lindsey, Paul Holland, and everyone else involved for their work in setting up the WordPress site that should soon become functional.

Trust, Compassion, Stability, Hope: Thoughts on Leaders and Teams

Several months ago, I attended a departmental retreat where we discussed the book *Strengths Based Leadership – Great Leaders, Teams, and Why People Follow* by Tom Rath and Barry Conchie, Gallup Press, 2008.

Trust, compassion, stability, hope – these are, according to the research described in the book, a follower's four basic needs. How does a leader tap into these to increase an organization's effectiveness? The answer comes through examples of specific leaders, like Wendy Kopp. Wendy is the founder and CEO of Teach for America and provides one example of how strengths reflect the person. Wendy's strengths are achiever, competition, responsibility, relator, and strategic.

Want to figure out how you fit in? Assessing your own strengths by taking the test provided in the book can help. Maybe your top strength is communication. You find it "easy to put thoughts into words." To lead with communication, you could build trust, for example, by speaking "about people to their faces just as you would when they are not around" as the authors suggest.

What leader has the most positive influence in your daily life? That is a question posed in the book. You could think about the answer even if you do not read the book. What three words best describe what this person contributed to your life? That is another question to ask to gain insight into what makes a great leader.

The book is based on research done over decades by Gallup scientists on the topic of leadership. They've surveyed a million work teams, conducted more than 50,000 in-depth interviews with leaders, and even interviewed 20,000 followers to ask what they admired in the most important leader in their life. You might

enjoy reading the book to see the results of the survey and see how you and the groups you know – including NEO STC – stack up.

An eLearning Glossary of Note

Nick Vasiloff's eLearning Glossary provides useful, brief definitions, URL sources, and terms such as ADDIE, alignment, andragogy, backward design, big data, heutagogy, holistic rubrics, LMS, OERs, and universal design for learning.

For example, heutagogy is "rooted in the Greek word for self, 'ἑυτος' ('heutos'), describes a connectivist orientation that details a highly autonomous, self-guided, self-determined approach to learning. Heutagogy is most commonly linked to "Education 3.0" – a model where learning is anything but linear, and learners decide the tools, resources, route, and progression of their individual learning needs."

If you can use a refresher or are otherwise interested, see the glossary

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/19_toe43KjQf-cXzhd9YOSeRSwRjyFTGEVJcKp8GgzsM/edit#gid=0].

Google Glass: A Few Words

Since I don't know much – or should I say anything – about Google Glass. A visit to Google's site [<http://www.google.com/glass/start/>] and Wikipedia helped me learn more about this wearable computer with head-mounted display, as well as some applications in healthcare and journalism, with Time Magazine calling it one of the best inventions of the year 2012. A thank you goes out to all involved for bringing the topic to our attention.

Is Text Dead?

This proposal [<http://panelpicker.sxsw.com/vote/40322>] for SXSW 2015 provides food for thought. Text is Dead! Long Live Visual! Image is everything and nowhere is that more true than in our social media activities.

Lines & Letters Information

Thanks for reading!

We want to thank you for reading the latest edition of our award-winning newsletter and send a big thanks to all in NEO STC for supporting Lines & Letters. Love it? Hate it? Let us know! Contact us: newsletter@neostc.org

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See something interesting? Tell us about it!

Please send your article drafts and ideas to
newsletter@neostc.org.

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.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Newsletter archive

If you're looking for issues of our newsletter prior to September 2014, our [Newsletter Archive](#) is the place to look. There, you will find full-text searchable PDFs of L&L issues going back through the 2000-2001 chapter year.