Lines & Letters
Northeast Ohio STC Newsletter

President's Column January 2008 — Rewarding our members

By Tricia Spayer (tspayer@yahoo.com)

We have a lot of volunteers and participants in our STC community that we try to recognize. When Bob Young was president of NEO STC (2005-2006), we instituted a volunteer recognition program, loosely based on one established by the Orlando community. This program rewarded the top 15 point earners for the year with an NEO STC polo shirt, which some of us still wear proudly to events. The number 15 was decided based on our budget for the reward items, and it still applies today. The points are awarded for member participation in our community. They are awarded for volunteering for a board or committee position, or by simply attending a networking lunch.

For the last NEO STC year, Stephanie Webster rewarded 15 lucky recipients with these really cool leather Post-It note holders with brass NEO STC labels. These items show others in our workplaces and our communities that we are a part of something special, and that the work we do does count. This year's reward is to be announced at a later date.

Below are the criteria for this year's member rewards program, as decided by the NEO STC Board:

♦ Officers get three points per year to cover all position-related activities.

♦ Several committee chairs get three points per year. Other committee chairs get two points per year. These are weighed based on amount of activity required for that committee.

♦ Committee representatives get two points per year.

♦ Some members receive an additional point per occurrence if they go above and beyond the normal officer or committee activities.

♦ All members get one point per occurrence for attending conferences, monthly meetings, networking lunches, Software Saturdays, or Webinars.

♦ All members get one point per occurrence for publishing an article or getting a re-print of an article in a recognized source.

Points are tracked by our Secretary, Sarah Burke, by reports given by committees. Attendance reports, activity reports, and notification of publishing or other work should be sent to Sarah.

The current point year is being tracked from September 2007 to April 2008, and members will be recognized at the May 2008 meeting. To receive these points, you must be a member of NEO STC with your membership in good standing. Many of you already have several points stacked up, and you don't even know it yet! And for the record, there are four people ahead of me, which goes to show that this system is not fixed. If you would like to know where you stand, send me a message at the e-mail above. There's still time to earn your member points!

That said, I would like to take a moment to recognize a volunteer. There is a lot of work that goes on in the background for some activities, much of which is invisible to most people in our community. I want to thank Anne Paczula for organizing an outstanding Software Saturday on January 12. It was a great class with a great instructor, and we had very good attendance. I am sure all who attended appreciate how smoothly and professionally it ran. Anne made several long trips to Tri-C to organize the event, load software, and create directions for attendees. Thank you Anne, for all your hard work. We appreciate it!

There are other members who also deserve recognition —I hope to thank you in future columns. Have a wonderful new year!

Monthly seminar: February 7: Creating a controlled vocabulary

Have you ever wanted to explore how your organization can develop seamless documentation by using a standard set of terminology? If yes, then join us for February's NEO STC meeting titled Creating a Controlled Vocabulary.

In this informative meeting, Kathleen Ruggeri summarizes how Rockwell Automation created a controlled vocabulary to achieve consistency for documentation from marketing requests to engineering specifications and end-user documentation.

From over 20 sources and 4000+ terms, Rockwell created a standard list of technical terms and definitions, developed a process to validate terms and definitions, and now use their controlled vocabulary to create consistent company information and technical documentation.

Kathleen Ruggeri has 20 years of experience in the Technical and Marketing Communication fields for Rockwell Automation, the leader in industrial automation

products. The Technical Communications group has transitioned from a book-based paradigm to a topic-based XML authoring environment. Kathleen currently manages Information Architects and Editors.

- Date: Thursday, February 7, 2008
- Place: Rockwell Automation, Mayfield Heights

Please note: The chapter is billed per registration. If you register but do not attend, you will be billed for the meeting and meal.

Upcoming events

- 01/26/08: Pittsburgh Software Saturday: Adobe Acrobat and Captivate . See www.stcpgh.org/.
- 1/30/08: Webinar: eDiscovery, The Law and You: Expanding Your Sphere of Influence.* See www.stc.org/webinars/webinars.aspx for detail.
- 2/1/08: NEO STC scholarship application materials available on neostc.org/scholarship.
- 2/7/08: Monthly seminar: Creating a controlled vocabulary.
- 2/13/08: Networking lunch: Vaccaro's 1000 Ghent Road, Fairlawn. RSVP to Jill McCauslin (jmccauslin@radcomservices.com).
- See www.stc.org/webinars/webinars.aspx for detail.
- 2/13/08: Webinar: Converting Captivate Demonstrations into Simulations.* See www.stc.org/webinars/webinars.aspx for detail.
- 3/14 to 3/15: Currents 2008 in Atlanta. See www.stcatlanta.org/currents.htm.
- 3/16 to 3/19: WritersUA Conference in Portland, Oregon. See www.writersua.com/ohc/.
- 3/28/08: Spectrum 2008, held by the Rochester (NY) chapter. See www.stcrochester.org/ for detail.
- 6/1 to 6/4/08: Technical Communication Summit in Philadelphia.

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

Software Saturday beats laundry, chores and carpool any day!

By Lori Neuman (lneuman@ra.rockwell.com), Senior STC Member, Rockwell Automation

Saturday morning. Early. I got up, got dressed like I was going to work, grabbed my coffee, and headed back to college. I left behind my sleeping family, and a laundry list of the usual Saturday chores. I was off to Tri-C to create in XML!

Bernard Aschwanden of BrightPath Solutions was better than I could have imagined. In addition to his vast knowledge, he provided the sort of witty repartee I don't always get to indulge in my daily life. He was quick with the one-liners and sardonic humor as he dished out perhaps the clearest explanation of DITA and XML authoring I have ever heard.

For those of you new to the DITA camp, the acronym stands for Darwin Information Typing Architecture. It is a set of XML-based constructs for authoring. Those of us (myself included) who work at companies embracing DITA know the justifications. Re-using content because it is retrievable and reusable because it is tagged with DITA elements. Freeing up writers to create technical masterpieces because we don't have to spend time formatting. All good. But DITA is also cool because it is XML, and, that, as we know, is the language of the Internet. It impresses my 13-year old stepdaughter (though she won't admit it) to actually know someone who can author web content. I can tell because of the way she fails to hide her covert admiration when I toss out "BRB!" (be right back) in internet-speak when I leave the room, or "ROTFL" (rolling on the floor laughing) when she says something funny.

Back to DITA and XML. After showing us what DITA looks like, and how it fits into the larger world of XML, Bernard got down to it. Although he used specific tools, never once did this session feel like he was shilling for a vendor. Bernard showed us how to author in both Adobe FrameMaker (Structured; V. 8), and JustSystems XMetal, two power players in the emerging DITA authoring world. Bernard pointed out strengths and weaknesses of each tool, and showed us how to go from one tool to the other. For those of us who ever believed that it was easy to convert Word files into something else, like FrameMaker, and were sorely disappointed, this was Nirvana. Because it is XML, and because it used DITA constructs, going between one DITA-compliant software and another is truly painless. As it turns out, FrameMaker is great for authoring because of the simple

authoring pane and tag view it displays. XMetal, on the other hand, is a great single-source engine, allowing you to dynamically create many outputs, including on-line help.

The day whizzed by, aided not only by Bernard's swift, on-track delivery style, but by the boxes (yes, boxes!) of Starbucks Café Verona our Chapter hosts and hostesses provided. Cool authoring tools, my favorite coffee, and a break from the usual grind. Great way to spend my Saturday!

This Software Saturday was sponsored in part by Pressco Technology. Thanks again to Pressco for helping supporting our community's educational endeavors!

NEO STC Board and Committees — We Want You!

By Tricia Spayer (tspayer@yahoo.com)

It is that time of year when we start thinking about next year's board. The NEO STC year runs like a school year — we hold monthly meetings from September through May, with a break for summer. The Administrative Council meets in the summer to plan activities for the following year. The official year turnover date is July 1.

By serving on the board or on a committee, you are expanding your repertoire. As for my experience, I have learned tons of things about leadership, event planning, and many other things that I would have never learned if I just sat here in my department of one, writing day after day. I have heard people mention that this is a great opportunity to simply be a part of a professional organization, that they get to talk to adults who do similar things that they do, or that they get to try new things they wouldn't have been able to otherwise.

To see the positions and committees that our community has available, see: www.neostc.org/official/officers.htm. To see a basic description of some of these positions, see: www.neostc.org/official/bylaws.htm.

We are beginning to plan next year's slate of officers and committees. If you would like to be considered, send me an e-mail at the address above.

NEO STC Scholarship Application Coming in February

By Sarah Burke and Jeanette Evans, Academic Relations Committee Co-Chairs

If you are a technical communication student, then February is your lucky month. NEO STC is offering a $1,000 scholarship for one deserving Ohio undergraduate, graduate, or community college student studying a technical or scientific communication-related field.

Our community is delighted to offer this scholarship 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.

Special thanks goes to Pressco Technology Inc. for donating some of the funds for this scholarship. Pressco Technology Inc. engineers and manufactures high-speed intelligent vision inspection systems for the global food, beverage, and container industry and employs our president, Tricia Spayer.

Watch the NEO STC home page and neostc.org/scholarship in early February for details about eligibility, submission requirements, and deadlines. The winner will be notified by May 1 and recognized at our May meeting.

New Public Relations Chair — Ginny Haas

By Tricia Spayer (tspayer@yahoo.com)

I wish to extend a warm welcome to Ginny Haas as the new NEO STC PR Chair. Ginny was a tremendous help during our Crucial Communicator conference, by soliciting and securing a great number of sponsors, as well as door prizes and giveaways.

Her enthusiasm and professionalism will truly enhance our Administrative Council. Welcome, Ginny!

Book review: *Introduction to DITA: A User Guide to the Darwin Information Typing Architecture*

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

Book information: Linton, Jennifer and Bruski, Kylene. 2006. Comtech Services/Denver, CO [322 pages, including index, $50 USD (soft cover).] Ordering information and sample chapters available at comtech-serv.com/dita2.shtml

As a user guide for the DITA standard, this book presents the basic methodology of DITA and describes its benefits. It also shows step-by-step how to author DITA XML topics, create maps for deliverables, and go through the production processing tasks. It also describes the DITA model and major elements used to create topics. It does an especially good job of explaining task, concept, and reference information types.

Using a task-based approach, the guide is readable and provides the benefits of being in a print form. The print form gives a good birds-eye look with the reference material in the back. I also found the print format effective for unfolding the story of DITA and facilitating comprehension. I would say that the promotional material that appears on the Comtech Web site holds true for the book: If you have been using DITA, or are just joining the DITA community, the book provides you with the information you need to accomplish your goals.

Publisher Comtech is an organization known for working with companies to implement structured writing strategies. Does Comtech practice what it preaches when it comes to writing usable documents? Is this the kind of book you would expect from individuals who are good at explaining the kinds of concepts tackled in the book? In this case, the answer to both questions is yes.

The book is not only a user guide for the DITA standard, it was written using DITA. You would not know from the style or format of the book that it was written using DITA, as it reads like other books. In fact, the book, despite its seemingly dry subject matter, was an interesting read. The style, format, and conventions are as easy on the reader as a *Dummies* book.

How to make your writing "pop"

The perfect storm — an organic article on wordsmithing — sweet!

For more words (and phrases) that should be banished, see the list Lake Superior State University put together this year at www.lssu.edu/banished/current.php

Maybe we could have Webinar on them :-)

Plain Dealer runs article on technical communicators

Our local STC was recently quoted in an article on technical communication in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*. Although Trish Spayer was quoted, she reports that, "This was truly a team effort. The author said she had to make it look like one person was interviewed, so she used my name. However, the meat of the article really should be credited to its rightful owners: Sherri Henkin, Barb Philbrick, Kim Lindsey, Mario Morelos, Bob Young, Sarah Burke, and Jean Church. Please forgive me if I've left your name out (and let me know). This 'interview' took place in July 2007. Many people sent their responses to a set of questions, and I compiled them for the *Plain Dealer* article."

You can read the article at www.cleveland.com/plaindealer/stories/index.ssf?/base/zyjob-0/1199996118201310.xml&coll=2

Member profile: Tenley Orendorff

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

Tenley Orendorff was NEO STC president in 1997-1998. Prior to her presidency, she was vice president and public relations director.

Tenley has worked at Diebold, Inc., for 21 years. Currently, she is a senior technical writer in modules engineering. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and Speech Communications from Manchester College in North Manchester, Indiana. Tenley also attended the masters program at Cleveland State University.

Tenley has been married to Brice Lewis for 31 years and has a 9-year-old daughter, Channing Lewis. Tenley is a graduate of Leadership Stark County and is a sustaining member of the Canton Junior League. Although she isn't as active in STC as she used to be, Tenley is busy serving on several non-profit boards in the Canton area such as the Canton City Schools Foundation, Early

Childhood Resource Center, Canton Preschool, and Worley Elementary School PTA.

Diebold is a global leader in providing integrated self-service delivery and security systems and services. Diebold employs more than 15,000 associates with representation in nearly 90 countries worldwide and is headquartered in Canton. Diebold reported revenue of $2.9 billion in 2006 and is publicly traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol DBD.

Member profile: Paul Holland

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

Paul Holland's résumé reflects many years of work in the field. Regarding his involvement in STC, both here in Ohio and in Texas, he explains that he first joined the NEO STC in the early 90s before moving to Dallas. When living in Dallas, he notes that the Lone Star Chapter (LSC) president "asked me to work on the Web team, which included reporting the Web team's status to the council. During the 2005 election period, the position of secretary opened. I ran for secretary and was elected. After serving as secretary for a year, I focused on the Web team and developed the Web site for the Region 5 conference, working closely with Elizabeth Bailey, the LSC's superb Webmaster. I am still a member of both the NEO and the LSC communities. My most recent work for the LSC was rebuilding their forum board after it was corrupted. The LSC maintains a forum on their site called the Help Desk." It is at stc-dfw.org/HelpDesk/index.php.

After moving back to Cleveland, Paul declared NEO STC as a secondary geographic community. In conversations with Tricia Spayer and Bob Young at the Region 4 booth at National, Paul found that there was an opportunity to work with the Region 4 planning team. Paul is also the Webmaster for the MarComm SIG stcsig.org/mc/.

His current professional obligations are twofold. He runs his own company, BlueGray Communications (bluegraycomm.com) and is also employed as a technical writer for a local communications agency. "When not at work, I am an aggressive cyclist," said Paul. "I also love the Browns, Indians, and Cavaliers; I live and die with whatever team is in season, however, I am counting down to the day pitchers and catchers report to spring training."

Other interests include anything Broadway. He is keenly interested in the creative process in an array of contexts and is convinced all technical writers are frustrated novelists, playwrights, or other creative pursuits.

He is an amateur (and what he calls annoying) maritime historian. His particular interests are ocean liners or post dreadnaught era Naval history. This is one reason he loves Cleveland, pointing out that our lakefront and the Great Lakes have a wonderful maritime heritage. He volunteered on the Steamship Mather Museum for a number of years and his son Tim is one of the youngest Mather volunteers qualified to do hard-hat tours. Hard-hat tours include the generally open spaces, as well as below decks, all the way to her keel (and yes, Paul reassures us, she has a keel), as well as the engineering spaces.

A graduate of Hiram College with a writing degree, he augmented his writing degree with some specific engineering classes at Lakeland Community College.

Paul is a grandfather with five grandsons. Paul served in the United States Marines from 1980 to 1984 (Paris Island, 3rd Battalion trained) and was a part of Cleveland's 3rd Battalion, 25th Marines (USMCR).

Around the Society: Interesting articles from other community newsletters

Our own (well, partly anyway) Paul Holland talks about the Region 4 conference and what makes belonging to and participating in STC a great experience: www.stc-dfw.org/newsletter/current/feature1.html

And not an STC publication, but noticed that Alan Houser got a mention as a country music tune producer in the December 2007 *Angie's List* magazine. See the article and listen to the tune at magazine.angieslist.com/Story/Homestead_History_Contest_winners.

Kent State News: Online Masters degree and Certificate Program in Knowledge Management begins Fall 2008

By Renee Murray zimrood@yahoo.com

Kent State is adding to its offerings in the Information Architecture and Knowledge Management areas. Currently, you can earn a full master's online for the Information Architecture concentration in August 2008 and Knowledge Management concentration now.

Potential applicants can get a head start on the Masters degree by taking online KM courses in the Spring, 2008, available for the online certificate program in Knowledge Management. These courses can be retroactively applied

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to the Master's degree. Online courses offered this Spring include:

Effective Knowledge Management in Organizations

Co-learners will gain practical as well as theoretical insight into the dynamics of knowledge management (KM) within various organizational settings. Emphasis will be given to the human, technological, and business dimensions of KM, both now and looking into the future. It will consider KM systems and tools, KM processes, KM infrastructure, and KM measurement. The course facilitator is Robert Frey, a Principal in the consultancy, Successful Proposal Strategies, LLC. He held the position of Senior Vice President of Knowledge Management and Proposal Development in RS Information Systems, Inc. (RSIS) from 1999 to 2007. Mr. Frey developed and implemented knowledge-sharing and knowledge-transfer mechanisms throughout RSIS to capture and leverage best practices, project success stories, lessons learned, client intelligence, and emerging technologies.

Document, Records and Content Management for the Enterprise

This course provides principles, projects and practices for organizational memory management that includes document, records, media, email and enterprise content management.

The course instructor-facilitator is Len Asprey, who heads a consulting agency, Practical Information Management Solutions Pty Ltd, which offers practical information management and technology consulting to world-wide clients. He coauthored (with Michael Middleton) Integrative Document & Content Management: Strategies for Exploiting Enterprise Knowledge, which won the "Mander Jones Award" in 2003. He was the founding Chair of the Institute for Information Management (IIM) and is a member of AIIM International.

For further information, visit iakm.kent.edu, e-mail iakm@kent.edu or call (330) 672-5840.

Speakers, unite! Share your expertise!

By Amy Vogt (avogt@ppipubs.com)

Can you talk for hours about JavaScript — with your dog? Do your family members start to back away slowly when you bring up 3-D modeling (again)? Have your friends desperately tried to change the subject when you deliver another diatribe about incorrect grammar use?

If so, you may need a new audience!

The Cleveland Technical Societies Council (CTSC) is looking for speakers. CTSC includes representatives from an extensive list of member organizations such as ASME, ACS, and IEEE. NEO STC is also an active member of this group.

At the December 2007 meeting, a board member of CTSC called NEO STC the "common denominator" of all groups in CTSC. Even though the member organizations are diverse, all of them have a need for technical communication.

The speaking needs of the groups in the CTSC vary, but presentation lengths range from 20 to 60 minutes. The audiences may include:

- members of other CTSC societies (presentations for their meetings or events)
- elementary students
- university students
- school boards or parent organizations
- community groups, like a Kiwanis club

If you would be willing to share your expertise — and a presentation — with other Cleveland technical societies, send an e-mail to Amy Vogt (avogt@ppipubs.com) or Tricia Spayer (tspayer@yahoo.com) with your:

- Name
- Contact information
- Presentation title and short description
- Presentation length

NEO STC will put together a list of potential speakers to share with CTSC.

Thanks for your support!

Reference the CTSC Web site: www.ctsc.org

Handy hint: Display footnote styles in Microsoft Word

Have you ever tried to find Footnote styles in the list of Microsoft Word style list?

You can get them to display:

1. On the **Styles and Formatting** panel, from the **Show** list at the bottom, select **Custom**.
2. From the **Category** list, choose **All Styles**.
3. Select **Footnote**.

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Handy hint: Color codes

By Lisa Mileusnich (lmileusnich@parker.com)

Looking for a color? The color codes page at December.com (http://www.december.com/html/spec/colorcodes.html) displays hundreds of color swatches for you to choose from.

The 16 named colors (black, red, and so on) and SVG colors are labeled as such. All other color swatches in the list have descriptive names such as "Coke bottle," "safety cone," or "mouthwash." The color chart shows each color's hexadecimal code, RGB decimal code, RGB percent code, HSL (hue, saturation, light) code, and CMYK code.

December.com also contains a great deal of reference information for colors, as well as links to other color-related sites.

Chapter Reminders

Job news

[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 position, remember to check the NEO STC job site. I have gotten a number of calls recently looking for writers, and I always point them to our jobs site at www.neostc.org/jobs/openings.php! Remember to update your resumes.

Employers: Job listings on the NEO STC Web site are free and reach a targeted audience! See neostc.org/jobs/

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.]

The NEO STC listserv is another way to stay connected with other NEO STC members. It's easy and it does not generate huge amounts of e-mail!

For information on subscribing, see www.neostc.org/official/listserv.htm

Lines & Letters information

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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.