

Lines & Letters

Northeast Ohio STC Newsletter



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President's column: Fall update and events

By Amy Vogt (avogt@ppipubs.com)

I drive through the Cuyahoga Valley to get to work each day. The leaves are just starting to look a little less like summer and a lot more like fall. There are some hints of scarlet in the landscape (scarlet and of course, gray – since we're in "O-H-I-O"). The morning air is crisp. Mist rises from the winding river. It's beautiful.

While I'm in my car I try to take a few moments to reflect before starting my day. I try not to think too much about the upcoming election, but rather, I think about STC — and avoiding deer.

This fall, NEO STC has a lot planned. Besides our monthly meetings, we have Networking Lunches, Social Networking events, Competitions judging, and a trip to Cedarville University's Regional Conference.

Snakes. A steam engine. Flying bluebirds.

All potential characters in a Harry Potter novel. All seen on the last STC Social Networking hike.

Even though the rain was falling on that Saturday afternoon just before the hike, we still had a good turnout for our last Social Networking event. Thanks to everyone who attended and shared some "STC time" in the Cuyahoga Valley. Due to popular demand, we're planning another NEO STC hike later in the year.

Watch for our upcoming Social Networking events in October and November. We have scheduled a happy hour on October 24th at The Harp, an Irish Pub with a view of Lake Erie. On November 22nd we will enjoy dinner, a musical lecture, and see the Cleveland Orchestra at Severance Hall. Thanks go to Jeanette Evans for coordinating the November event!

Let Denise Kadilak know if you have any ideas about future Social Networking committee events.

Thanks to our volunteers!

Thanks to all of our members who helped to make September's meeting a superb kick-off to the year! Especially, thanks to everyone on the Programs committee and our round table presenters: Renee Murray, David Cherney, Tricia Spayer and Kristen Jackson!

I would like to welcome Julie Mason as a chair of the Membership committee. She's already gotten a strong start with her ideas to help our chapter grow.

Thanks to Jeanette Evans, Tricia Spayer, Angie Dianetti, Bob Young, and Ginny Haas for their support of our Associate Fellow Nominations this year and all of their hard work preparing the forms. The forms were completed and submitted on Monday, October 6, 2008. I wish our nominees good luck!

Traveling to Cedarville University Regional Conference?

The Cedarville University Regional Conference is on Saturday, November 8, 2008. Please contact Amy Vogt or Stephanie Webster if you would be interested in traveling with us to this one-day conference. Cedarville is located in Southwestern Ohio, approximately 3.5 to 4 hours from Cleveland. NEO STC has offered our support to the student chapter and will be donating give-aways for the conference attendees.

New Community Involvement page on our Web site

Thanks to our web site team, Paul Holland and Candace Wintering, we recently added a new Community Involvement page to <http://www.neostc.org/>. Several NEO STC members are actively supporting charities by organizing or participating in local events. The Community Involvement page serves to present this information to our chapter and strengthen our dedication to the community.

We have established just a couple of rules for submittals to this area.

- ◆ Send your request to the Executive Board for approval.
- ◆ The request must be submitted by an NEO STC member who is involved in the event.
- ◆ The types of events should be related to other secular, non-profit organizations, including charities or other technical and related societies.

Café Mugs!

If you are a fan of delicious flavor* and large amounts of hot coffee, you'll love our new NEO STC give-aways this fall. Enter our door prize drawing at the November meeting to win a spacious, blue-accented café mug. You will be the envy of your colleagues, family, and friends. (*Re: the TV Show, *Pysch*)

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Prizes and incentives available

Member-Get-a-Member Campaign from October 6 to December 31, 2008

STC has just announced a new membership campaign. If you encourage a new technical communicator to join STC before the end of the year, you and our chapter can achieve prizes and incentives. Watch stc.org for more information about the details of the campaign.

STC logo updated by Patrick Hoffman

Patrick Hoffman, who will be joining NEO STC to present a Software Saturday this spring, has recently updated the STC logo. See <http://www.stc.org/about/new-logo-index.asp>.

Please contact Amy Vogt for more information about how to get involved with our NEO STC community this year.

November meeting reminder: Creating personal and professional web sites

- ◆ Date: Thursday, November 13, 2008.
- ◆ Place: Mavis Winkle's in Independence

Upcoming events

- ◆ 10/20/08: Deadline for the call for proposals for the 2009 Technical Communication Summit. For complete submission information, please visit the Summit Call for Proposals website: www.softconference.com/subs/stc/2009/.
- ◆ 10/22/08: Introduction to usability. Joint meeting of the Western Michigan chapter and Michigan Usability Professionals' Association. Meeting in Grand Rapids, MI. See <http://www.wms-stc.org/> for information.
- ◆ 10/23/08: Live Web seminar. "Task support clusters: A focused architecture for practical user assistance," presented by Michael Hughes. Sign up at <http://stc.org/edu/seminars01.asp>.
- ◆ 10/23/08: NEO STC competition judges training
- ◆ 10/23/08:NEOUPA event: Card sorting vs. Texas hold'em — What's better for site navigation? See www.neoupa.org
- ◆ 10/24/08: Happy hour at the Harp at 6 p.m. If you plan to attend, please contact denise.kadilak@blackbaud.com, and we'll be sure to save you a seat. For information on The Harp, see <http://www.the-harp.com/index.htm>

- ◆ 10/29/08: Live Web seminar. WinHelp, WebHelp, DotNet Help ... Help! See <http://www.stc.org/edu/seminars01.asp>
- ◆ 10/29 — 11/1/08: DocTrain East in Burlington, MA. See www.doctrain.com/east/.
- ◆ 11/06/08: NEO STC competition consensus judging.
- ◆ 11/08/2008: Cedarville one-day conference. See <http://people.cedarville.edu/stuorg/stc/conference.html>
- ◆ 11/13/08: Monthly seminar: Creating personal/professional web sites.
- ◆ 11/13/2008: World usability day. See <http://www.worldusabilityday.org/>
- ◆ 11/19/08: Live Web seminar. "How to avoid common graphical mistakes that technical communicators make," presented by Naomi Robbins. Sign up at <http://stc.org/edu/seminars01.asp>.
- ◆ 11/20/08: Networking lunch. Glenwillow Grille, 29765 Pettibone Rd., Solon. To RSVP, contact Jill
- ◆ 11/22/08: NEO-STC Social: An Evening at Severance Hall
- ◆ 5/3 - 5/6/09: STC's 2009 Technical Communication Summit in Atlanta, GA.

Envisioning your future: A one-day conference not to be missed

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

For the first time in 16 years, the Cedarville University student chapter of STC is hosting a one-day conference for professionals, students, and academics, where you can interact with, learn from, and create connections with other professionals in your field. Titled "A 2020 Vision for the Future," the conference on November 8 will focus on the future of the technical communication profession. With STC President Mark Clifford as the keynote speaker, special guest speaker Dr. Carolyn Rude, chair of the English department and Professor at Virginia Tech, and various learning sessions, it is guaranteed to be an invaluable experience for your career. Session topics include objectives writing, XML, DITA, instructional design, self-employment, presentation skills, and professional portfolios.

Read more about the conference below and check out the conference website for all of the details! If you are

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interested in attending, please let NEO STC President Amy Vogt know; you may be able to travel with several other NEO STC chapter members who are planning to attend.

- ◆ What: A 2020 Vision for the Future: An STC One-Day Conference
- ◆ Host: Cedarville University Student Chapter of STC
- ◆ Where: Cedarville University, Cedarville, OH (an hour's drive from Dayton and Cincinnati)
- ◆ When: Saturday, November 8, 2008
- ◆ Time: 8:30 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.
- ◆ Cost before October 15: \$15 (undergraduate or graduate students), \$75 (STC members), \$90 (non-STC members)
- ◆ Cost after October 15: \$20 (undergraduate or graduate students), \$80 (STC members), \$95 (non-STC members)
- ◆ Registration: Register online here
- ◆ Registration Deadline: October 30, 2008
- ◆ Lodging: Available in Cedarville, Xenia, and Springfield

NEO STC goes extracurricular: A night at the orchestra on November 22

Join NEO STC for a social event where we meet for dinner at Severance Hall, go to a preconcert lecture, then attend the concert. Please purchase your own concert ticket and plan to pay for your own meal.

Please get your reservation in early as we have a limited number of spots reserved at the restaurant. Contact Jeanette Evans (jeanette.evans@sbcglobal.net) to let her know you will be joining us for dinner.

- ◆ Saturday, November 22 at 8 p.m., Severance Hall
- ◆ 5:30 p.m. — dinner
- ◆ 7:00 p.m. — Preconcert lecture
- ◆ Concert: Bruckner: Symphony No. 8
- ◆ The Cleveland Orchestra, Herbert Blomstedt, conductor
- ◆ Pre-concert lecture: Stephen Hefling, professor of music, CWRU

Severance Restaurant is located on the Street Level of Severance Hall along East Boulevard, overlooking the Wade Lagoon and Fine Arts Garden.

The Bruckner work, as explained in [Wikipedia](#), is not without controversy. When the work was first performed, the well-known critic E. Hanslick left after the slow movement. His review described the symphony as "interesting in detail, but strange as a whole, indeed repellent. The peculiarity of this work consists, to put it briefly, in importing Wagner's dramatic style into the symphony." Wikipedia notes that this was less negative than Hanslick's reviews of Bruckner's earlier symphonies. There were also many positive reviews from Bruckner's admirers. One anonymous writer described the symphony as "the crown of music in our time." Hugo Wolf wrote to a friend that the symphony was the "work of a giant" that "surpasses the other symphonies of the master in intellectual scope, awesomeness, and greatness."

Herbert Blomstedt is to be the conductor. [Wikipedia](#) points out an interesting observation that he is a Seventh-day Adventist. He does not rehearse on Saturdays, the sabbath of the Seventh-day Adventist. However, he does perform concerts on Saturdays, as he does not consider this to be work.

Meeting review: Meet the STC

By Paulette Henning (pmhenning@ra.rockwell.com)

The "Meet the STC" meeting took place September 11th at Mavis Winkle's in Independence, Ohio. It was a round-table discussion of several relevant STC topics.

Amy Vogt spoke on the benefits of an STC membership. Tricia Spayer discussed the topics covered at the 55th Technical Communication Summit. Kristen Jackson presented effective time management. And Renee Murray discussed traditional (W-2) employment trends, while David Cheney discussed contract (1099) employment trends.

Attendees moved from table to table and listened to a 20-minute presentation of the topic. Time was also allotted for questions, socializing, and networking. It was an informative evening for those present.

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Social event review: Hike and dinner

By Brian Smith (smithb6@diebold.com)

The first social event of the new business year for the Northeast Ohio Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication (NEO STC) took place on Saturday, September 27, at 3:30 p.m. Five members, four guests and a dog met in front of the Boston Store on Boston Mills Road to hike along the canal towpath in the Cuyahoga Valley. A light rain was falling as the hikers congregated and introduced themselves, but the weather soon cleared before the hike began. Led by Amy Vogt, NEO STC chapter president, the hike covered two miles of relatively easy terrain, which allowed for conversation and looking for early signs of autumn in the valley. A midland brown snake lying in the path provided entertainment as several brave hikers took turns letting the snake wiggle through their fingers.

Upon returning to the Boston Store, the hikers drove to the Winking Lizard Tavern in Peninsula and socialized outdoors on the deck while enjoying drinks and appetizers. Traveling, continuing education and career goals were general topics of conversation. When asked if the group would consider another hike in the spring, the hikers responded with an enthusiastic "yes" and agreed that the social events were a good way to network.

See the article above, "NEO STC goes extracurricular: A Night at the Orchestra on November 22," for our next NEO STC social event!

Book review: *Elmore Leonard's 10 Rules of Writing*

Review by Jeanette Evans
(jeanette.evans@sbcglobal.net)

By Elmore Leonard; Illustrated by Joe Ciardiello;
Publisher: William Morrow (October 30, 2007); ISBN
0061451460, 85 pages, \$10.17 on Amazon.

This book recently appeared at Mayfield Public Library on the shelf with new publications. I checked out the book, wondering what could be in a recently published book on writing.

At first the book reminded me of the *Illustrated Elements of Style*, which is a great read. Unfortunately, overall, the Leonard book did not work as well. While the ideas are interesting and worthwhile, the presentation was over the top.

When looking on Amazon, I saw that the book did not work for many readers. Of the 23 reviews, 6 reviewers

gave the book the highest rating, while 8 reviewers gave it the lowest rating. Fans of Elmore Leonard tended to love the book. But, one fan who said that Leonard is her favorite writer actually found this book disappointing, noting that the book says no more than does the original New York Times article that contains the same text. She found the rich packaging and illustrations to be excessive and not adding enough to the ideas.

I'm a fan of white space, but in this case there is way too much white space on thick sheets of cardboard-like paper. The illustrations, on the other hand, do add a dimension that makes the reader stop and think. The illustrations go nicely with the advice, which often centers on how the individuals in a story should tell the story. The writer should be in the background. The illustrations focus on individuals, such as Hemingway, who provide examples of writing that emphasizes the characters and their dialog, not the writer.

Who is Elmore Leonard? The Wikipedia entry describes Leonard as a novelist and screenwriter with this one non-fiction book.

What is some more of his advice on writing? He says to rewrite if it sounds like writing. He also says that if breaking the rules of grammar improves the delivery, that is what you should do. That is good advice, worthy of contemplation.

I am happy to have read the book to get the advice and see the presentation, but wished for a more understated delivery. Instead of 10 rules in 84 pages, the same rules on half that number of pages without the cardboard would have been more effective.

Member profile: Stephanie Webster

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

Stephanie Webster has made a great contribution to NEO STC for many years. A past president, Stephanie has also been involved in several community activities, including co-chairing the highly successful Crucial Communicator conference held recently in Cleveland.

In 2002, Stephanie won an NEO STC volunteer of the year award for her work and dedication to present excellent programs for the chapter. She was Programs chair for many years, and has enjoyed mentoring others in this committee. In 2008, with her colleagues, she won a committee of the year award for her work on the Crucial Communicator Core committee.

She was chapter president in the 2006-2007 term, and is currently the chapters' Member At Large. This is an

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advisory role chosen by the Executive board due to Stephanie's dedication and length of service to NEO STC. This position allows Stephanie to continue to promote and encourage future leaders in the community.

A graduate of Cedarville University with an undergraduate degree in the Professional and Technical Communication program, Stephanie is currently working at TMW Systems.

She has held several different positions with TMW, each enhanced through her work with STC. She started as a software writer in the International Department, and then moved into the base application Documentation department. In all her positions, her background with STC allowed her to use organizational networking relationships, confidence gained through committee work, and educational experience to enrich her career path. She was recently promoted to the Technical Training Manager, in charge of organizing and marketing the five geographical TMW University site courses. Her former manager directly correlated her experience with STC as a prime example of how competently Stephanie could manage the position. TMW Systems is a developer of trucking software for dispatch and transportation solutions. The company headquarters are on Chagrin Boulevard in Beachwood.

Stephanie is a Pennsylvania native, but calls Ohio home as she went to college in the southwest part of the state and moved directly to Cleveland after graduating. She recently moved to South Euclid with her husband, Tim, and 2-year-old son, Brandt. They are enjoying getting to know the neighborhood, meet new friends, and love being around the corner from one of our great area Metroparks. They eagerly anticipate the birth of a second son in January!

An experience in green printing

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

After reading recently in Technical Communication the article about green printing, I wanted to share my recent experience in green printing.

This is the story of what happened when our Friends of Euclid Creek dinner dance fund raising committee attempted to find a green printer in the local area.

Why a green printer?

Our community group — The Friends of Euclid Creek — needed several hundred invitations for a dinner dance and fund raiser. As we represent an eco-friendly group, we felt that an eco-friendly printer was obviously the

way to go. Ideally, we would find a low-cost vendor who could also provide some design assistance. As our search unfolded, the definition of eco-friendly print job became more clear.

We approached the project with an open mind. Our committee of four, which later grew to five, began with an Internet research. At first, it looked like our best bet was to find recycled paper at a good price and do the print job ourselves. We seriously considered this option but continued our research to see if we could find better options.

Can anyone in NE Ohio help?

Then, based on a recommendation from an NEO STC member, we found a Cleveland-based printer who gave us a very good price and could provide us with the right turn-around time and design help.

The printer notes that it is doing its part to ensure a sustainable environment. The company website states, "We've obtained both Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Chain-of-Custody Certification and Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) Chain-of-Custody Certification. Ask today how you can begin labeling your marketing communication projects with the FSC or SFI label to help communicate your sustainability efforts." FSC is an international nonprofit organization that develops standards for responsible forest management, and accredits independent third-party organizations to certify forest managers and forest product producers to these standards.

An FSC certification signifies that an organization has in place a tracking system to control and verify certain levels of FSC-certified fiber. The certified groups use at least 10% of FSC-certified fiber from FSC chain-of-custody sources.

Chain-of-custody is the traceable path that logs take from the forest, through the pulp manufacturing process, to the paper mill, all the way through to the certified product sold to an end user. Compliance with this standard means that a group established and engaged in best practices to process pulp derived from certified suppliers who obtain logs that have been harvested:

- ◆ legally
- ◆ from areas where human rights are not violated
- ◆ from forests where high conservation values are embraced

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- ◆ from areas that have not been converted from natural forest to plantations or non-forest uses
- ◆ from trees that have not been genetically modified

Chain-of-custody must be in place at all steps along the supply chain in order for a printed label or package to carry an FSC chain-of-custody label.

This is what we were looking for. We were happy we could find this local connection. We are grateful to the help provided by Jeffrey T. Parsons, Vice President, Business Development at Academy Graphic Communication of Cleveland (<http://www.visitagc.com>) and his interest in supporting eco-friendly initiatives.

Would you like more information?

For more information about sustainable forests, please see <http://www.sfiprogram.org/>.

If you would like more information about the Friends of Euclid Creek, visit <http://friendsofeuclidcreek.nhlink.net/>.

Handy hint: Using unique fonts in a Web page

By Lisa Mileusnich (lmileusnich@parker.com)

A basic rule of Web design is that you should not use unusual fonts, because the people who visit your site may not have those fonts on their computers. Their browsers will then substitute a generic default font such as Times New Roman.

But what if you've discovered a unique font that complements your Web site in every way, and you really want to use it for your headings?

Consider entering the text for each heading (using your desired font) into a graphics program and saving the text as an image. Save the graphics as GIFs with transparent backgrounds so that you can use the text on different colored textures or background colors. With your text headings displayed as graphics, your site visitors won't need your unique font on their computers.

Around STC: Interesting articles

Hints on Office 2007

Microsoft Word has hidden some of its power tools. Rhonda Bracey has written about some of them on her blog <http://cybertext.wordpress.com/> (use the Software > Word category or search for "2007") In particular, see "Word 2007: Where did everything go?" (<http://tinyurl.com/57une3>)

Chapter reminders

Changes to the 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 Northeast Ohio STC listserv has been moved to a new platform called Mailman.

STC has been moving from the Lyris platform to Mailman for several years, with over 50 lists already converted. Until now, this was a voluntary transition. Because of increasing instability with Lyris, STC recently decided to transfer all lists, including ours, before June 30, 2008.

The new address is stcneohio-l@mailman.stc.org. If possible, please white-list anything from @mailman.stc.org to ensure that you receive messages.

To change your settings, go to <http://mailman.stc.org/mailman/listinfo/stcneohio-l>. Scroll down to the bottom of the page to log in.

NOTE: The new platform does not allow you to post from the Web interface, so you MUST use an e-mail client to send messages.

Please let Kris Henige, the NEO STC Listserv Administrator, know if you have any questions.

Premium pages for members

[NOTE: As of 2016, the current NEO STC website does not have password-protected content.]

NEO STC has some Premium pages for NEO STC members only. These pages include links to our very own Wiki, an Employer Directory — a listing of businesses that hire technical communicators — and more.

To enter the Premium pages, you will need a user name and password — this is different from the STC International site. Please contact our Webmaster for password information.

Change of address? Remember to tell the STC office

Send new addresses to the STC office to avoid interrupted delivery of *Intercom* and *Technical Communication*. Some members assume that informing the post office of their new address is enough to ensure that all of their mail is forwarded. However, the United States Postal Service forwards only first-class mail, not

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publications such as *Intercom* and *Technical Communication*.

Members may also update their contact and mailing information on the STC website.

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>.