

# Lines & Letters

## Northeast Ohio STC Newsletter



April 2015

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### President's Corner

*"Spring is the time of plans and projects." ~ Leo Tolstoy*

And indeed, we are already starting our planning for our next year of NEO STC programs in 2015-16! If you or someone you know would be interested in presenting to our chapter next year at a program meeting or workshop, we encourage you to submit a speaking proposal.

We also still have some volunteer openings, specifically the Treasurer role, and places on our Programs and Workshops committees. If you want to get involved in your award-winning chapter, please send me an e-mail.

I am very happy to announce that Janean Voss is NEO STC's 2015 recipient of the Distinguished Chapter Service Award! Janean is a long-time volunteer with our chapter and is truly deserving of this honor. She will be formally recognized at our awards banquet in May. You can read more about Janean (and Fellow Bob Young and Associate Fellow Amy Vogt) in this newsletter issue.

I also want to personally invite all of you to the NEO STC Annual Awards Banquet and Election, to be held on Thursday, May 14. This is your opportunity to congratulate our award winners, thank our volunteers, and vote in the chapter officer election. We'll also have a guest speaker from American Greetings! Click here to register.

The STC Summit is coming up at the end of June in Columbus, and I hope to see you there! If you'll be attending, be sure to let me or Brian Smith know. The chapter is organizing a dinner on Sunday, June 21 for NEO STC attendees.

I would also like to extend a warm welcome to Jason V, Kaylin T, Michael Y, and Madeline P, who have joined NEO STC since December. We are glad you are part of our chapter!

Kind regards,

*Lisa Milleusnich, NEO STC Chapter President*

### Janean Voss Receives Distinguished Chapter Service Award

The Northeast Ohio Community of the Society for Technical Communication is pleased to announce that Janean Voss has achieved the Distinguished Chapter Service Award. Her service to NEO STC has been a source of pride and inspiration to all of us.

Janean has been a valuable asset to our chapter and has volunteered in leadership consistently since 2009. She is a strong leader, and fellow chapter members seek her out for guidance and support. Since joining STC, she has served in numerous capacities. Though her contributions are too many to list here, we would like to recognize Janean specifically for her outstanding efforts in the following roles:

- ◆ Academic Relations chair (2014-present)
- ◆ Chapter Vice President, President, and Immediate Past President (2011-2014). During Janean's presidency, we received the Community of Distinction and Pacesetter awards. (The Pacesetter was for the NEO STC book club, which Janean founded in 2012.)
- ◆ Presenter of "Career as a Technical Writer" as part of a "Careers in Communications" panel discussion at our November 2013 program meeting
- ◆ NEO STC Volunteer of the Year award winner (2012)
- ◆ Programs committee co-chair (2011-2012)
- ◆ Chapter Secretary (2010-2011)
- ◆ Public Relations chair (2009-2010)

Janean's experience and wisdom have been invaluable to NEO STC. We hope that she will remain a crucial part of our community for years to come.

Please stay tuned and make arrangements to help us to formally recognize Janean for her achievements at our NEO STC Annual Chapter Awards Banquet and Election on May 14.

The Distinguished Chapter Service Award recognizes the hard work and commitment of STC's community leaders. The award recognizes an individual's exemplary effort, energy, and dedication to their community and its activities. This award is the highest level of recognition that a member can receive for service to their community.

Congratulations, Janean!

### NEO STC at the University of Akron

*By Ashleigh Petts*

Many thanks to Professor Kelly Webb Bronstrup for giving NEO STC the opportunity to speak to her classes on March 11 at the University of Akron.

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I had the opportunity to speak to students in three sections of Professor Webb Bronstrup's Technical Report Writing course.

First, I provided information on my background and discussed daily duties in technical communications in the software industry. Next, I talked about writing in the workplace in general, highlighting the kinds of genres students may encounter in their professional careers (for example, technical reports, proposals, and emails). Finally, I opened up the floor for questions.

Professor Webb Bronstrup's students were bright and attentive. They asked me about resume writing, the job search process, and internships, among other topics.

### 2014 Year in Review

The STC [2014 Year in Review](#) summary (on the Society website) highlights accomplishments, major initiatives, and updates on programming that advance the mission of STC.

### Writing Technical Blogs

*By Lynn Nickels*

Writing a blog may seem intimidating at first, especially a technical blog, but it's actually quite easy. A little bit of this kind of writing and a little bit of that, a little conversation and some humor, and voila! You have a blog!

As technical writers, we all know how to write processes, and writing a blog is just that. I don't want to say it's pure formula writing, but—well, it's close!

To me, writing a technical blog is a little bit of journalistic writing, a little bit of technical expertise, with some relaxed, conversational writing and a bit of comedy thrown in for good measure.

The first step is to have in mind the direction you want your blog to go in ahead of time. It may take some time to mull around a catchy hook in your head. I like to use analogies, but a question or shocking statement works, too. The introductory paragraphs are where you pose a problem that your audience needs to solve. The hook should draw them in to find the solution.

Once you have a solid idea for your story, you need to get information from your subject matter experts about the solution to the problem. Write down several interview questions and if you don't have time to meet in person, send them an email as it works just as well. Be sure to ask your SMEs leading questions so that the

story goes in the direction you intend. The questions can be about HOW a new product your company is producing, or a new process or training module that is being offered, can solve a common problem. It's important not to direct the audience directly to a product – as then it becomes too salesy, and that can turn a reader off. Whatever the topic, arrange your questions in a way that are logical, leading the reader toward a solution—but don't give them the answer right away...

Your Call to Action will direct the reader to a SME and that's where they will get the answer. This could be you or one of your interviewees. Direct the audience to find out more information about how to get concrete solutions to their problem by contacting you via email. It's also a good idea to attach a link to your profile on LinkedIn for credibility. And don't forget those SEO words! Those are the buzz words that those little crawlers on the Web will search for.

That's it! Now that wasn't too hard, was it?