

Lines & Letters

Northeast Ohio STC Newsletter



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President's Column

Welcome to the 2012-13 NEO STC year.

Our chapter committees have been working hard over the summer to plan a year for you filled with great activities. Below is just a sample of what's been going on:

- ◆ Our Writing Canvas Workshop at John Carroll University with Neil Perlin and other noteworthy speakers will recognize and celebrate the National Day of Writing on October 20. Thanks to the monies we raised at the December 2011 raffle, we were able to cover a portion of the costs to bring you this workshop, and offer this workshop to our members at under \$100/person during our early bird rate period. Take a look at the details on the website and register today!
- ◆ We are putting into place feedback you gave to us through the Spring Survey, like bringing in a variety of speakers for our monthly programs from inside the chapter and outside the region. Three of our outside expert speakers this year are Neil Perlin, Thea Teich, and Mary Knepper. We also have practitioners from within our chapter and region that are presenting in their areas of expertise. Take a look at our Calendar of Events to see what's all going on!
- ◆ Our competitions are back again this year, and we heard your voice – please exchange with another chapter. We are exchanging with the Rochester chapter this year, and will keep the pricing the same this year for submissions. See the website for complete details.
- ◆ One of the most exciting growth initiatives we have for this year is the opportunity to help fund student memberships. We are working towards a plan for making this a win-win for the chapter and for students.
- ◆ Our academic relations program is reaching out to area universities to gauge their interest in learning more about the field of technical communications through student/worksite half-day shadowing opportunities, classroom speaking opportunities, and real-world classroom projects.
- ◆ Our sponsorship program has plans for expansion and growth with new opportunities for companies

and individuals to sponsor the chapter. News will be announced as plans get finalized.

It's an exciting time to be a member of NEO STC, and to network within the chapter. If you know us, we look forward to seeing you again this year. If you don't know us, give us a try. We welcome all visitors. We have several networking opportunities available, including the monthly programs, workshop, networking lunches, book club, and webinars.

Please write to me with comments, feedback, and suggestions. And I hope to welcome you in person at an event.

Janean Voss

NEO STC Chapter President

Meet the 2012-13 NEO STC Board

Congratulations again to our new 2012-13 NEO STC Board

Janean Voss is our Chapter President, and is looking forward to a year of growth, networking, and great events at NEO STC! She is a Project Leader on the IT Technical Communications team at Parker Hannifin Corporate Headquarters in Cleveland, OH. As a member of NEO STC, she has served as the Public Relations chairperson, Secretary, and as Chapter Vice-President. Janean has an MBA from CWRU, and has been an active member of Toastmasters International, having received her Advanced Communicator Bronze, and Competent Leadership awards.

Paul Holland is our Chapter Vice-President. He is the Marketing Communications Manager for Federal Equipment Company in Cleveland. As a member of NEO STC, he has served as the Website chairperson and on the team for the Region Five Conference. He is the co-manager of the STC Marketing Communications SIG, Webmaster for the Lone Star Chapter, and has also served several terms as Chapter Secretary for the Lone Star Chapter. He's received the Distinguished Chapter Service Award and the Binion Amerson Leadership Award (BALA). He is also active in the Cleveland Chapter of the National Marine Corp Business Network.

Sharon Jendrisak, our Immediate Past President, is excited to watch the growth of the organization through her participation in both her Board role as well as her new role as the Public Relations chairperson. Sharon is currently a Learning and Development Specialist, focusing her attention on Sales Training at GOJO Industries in Akron, OH. She has grown her role in NEO

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STC over the last couple of years, starting her volunteerism in the Membership committee, then expanding her role to the Board.

Kevin Halaburda is the new Chapter Treasurer and brings over a decade of technical communications background to the position. Kevin is a Senior Project Writer at Radcom, Inc., in Hudson, OH, and has worked as a Technical Writer and Business Analyst in nearly all local fields and industries in northeast Ohio. Kevin started as an STC student member in 1996 and graduated a few years later from Baldwin-Wallace College with a Bachelor of Arts in English. He continues to stay active with the NEO STC.

Claudia Thompson is the new Chapter Secretary. She is a Senior Technical Writer and Editor for Keithley Instruments in Solon, Ohio. A returning member of the NEO STC after a few years' absence, Claudia is looking forward to getting more involved in the chapter. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in Journalism with an Advertising minor from the University of Kansas, Lawrence. Claudia has worked in various writing, editing, and graphic design roles for more than 25 years.

From the Editors

Greetings from your 2012-2013 Lines & Letters co-editors, Lisa Mileusnich and Jeanette Evans.

We hope you enjoy this edition of our newsletter and look forward to your future comments and contributions. Thank you to all who contributed to this current posting.

Thank you also to Barb Philbrick for her many years of editing this newsletter. Her contributions to the newsletter and NEO STC have been enormous. We are so lucky to have Barb, her talents, energy, and wonderful good humor. She is now moving on to the Competitions committee.

As your new co-editors, we are looking forward to working on Lines & Letters this year and hope to hear from you at our newsletter@neostc.org address. Your contributions are always welcome. Please consider submitting the following through newsletter@neostc.org or directly into Joomla:

- ◆ book reviews
- ◆ an event or meeting summary
- ◆ items for Talk of the Town including job status updates, speaking engagements, publications, or anything else you feel our readers would enjoy learning about

We would love to feature you in an In the Spotlight section. If you would like to write an In the Spotlight section about an STC member or individual of interest, we would love to hear from you.

The new co-editor, Lisa Mileusnich, joined NEO STC in 2005. She has contributed to this newsletter in the past, most notably with handy hints to readers, trying to come up with a tip for a different software program every month. Lisa has worked for Parker Hannifin Corp. for eight years.

Jeanette Evans joined NEO STC many years ago and became an STC Associate Fellow several years ago. In addition to working on Lines & Letters, Jeanette also tries to write often for Intercom, where she recently published an article on emerging technologies. She also writes book reviews for *Technical Communication* and works with Sarah Burke as a co-chair for the NEO STC Academic Relations committee.

We try to post a newsletter about a week before a meeting. Please keep this in mind as you think about contributions.

Talk of the town

John Carroll University is piloting a new Professional Writing track program this spring, and is looking to launch it this fall. NEO STC has been invited to participate in a panel discussion at JCU in March that will consist of two NEO STC, two English department, and two Communications department representatives. The goal of this panel discussion will be to educate JCU students about the new program, and expose them to opportunities that are available in technical communications. JCU invited Kris Henige and Amy Vogt to be panelists, and Sharon Jendrisak, Sarah Burke, and Genelle Pretty to distribute STC materials and answer questions about membership, scholarship opportunities, and programs. Best of luck to all of you!

Elena and Keiran Dunne introduced Liam Dunne into the world on December 3rd, 2011. They also recently published *Translation and Localization Project Management*, available at <http://benjamins.com/#catalog/books/ata.xvi/mai>. Congratulations!

Good luck to **Bob Dianetti** on his quest for the national STC office of Vice President!

Forbes lists technical writing as a surprising six-figure job: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/jacquelynsmith/2011/08/01/american-most-surprising-six-figure-jobs/>

GiveCamp: Late Nights for a Good Cause

By Nicole Derr

If you missed GiveCamp this year, you missed a good time. The annual event is held at the waterfront in downtown Cleveland. This year, 200 technical volunteers, including four NEO STC members, gathered to implement technical projects for 25 non-profit organizations. According to the Cleveland GiveCamp website:

"GiveCamp is a national event that connects technology talent with the needs of local non-profits. In one weekend, developers, designers, database administrators, and other technology professionals work around the clock to tackle the wish lists of non-profits and create web and software solutions. More than 30 cities across the country host this event and that number continues to grow each year."

Cleveland has been hosting the event for three years. The program is entirely driven by volunteers. This year, Cleveland GiveCamp contributed almost \$625,000 in technical products to area non-profits.

Jean Church volunteered her technical writing skills with two organizations: DigitalLifeBooks and Northeast Ohio Adoption Services (NOAS). She helped write material for the websites that each team created.

There is always need for content at the event, but if you'd prefer to hone another technical skill, there's room for that, too. In addition to technical writing, Kristen Jackson pitched in with some design and development work during the event, while Joann Rasmussen and Nicole Derr worked as Project Managers.

GiveCamp is an around-the-clock, two-and-a-half day event. Work often continues long into the night. Some volunteers even camp out at the event site. It's loud and busy and exciting and uplifting all at the same time.

The volunteers are broken into cross-functional teams that each work with a particular non-profit organization. Teams use a loose Agile methodology to keep everything on schedule. Tools like visual management boards and stand-up meetings allow teams to manage their work so that they can deliver a working product at the end of the weekend. If you're worried about staying motivated in such a fast-paced and driven environment, don't be, because there's plenty of collaboration, innovation, and fun to keep you on your toes.

And if that's not enough, there's an endless array of food and drink to keep you going. There was never a

shortage of coffee or Mountain Dew and the meals - all donated - ran the gamut from a taco bar to a pig roast. It's really exciting to be a part of a project that helps non-profit organizations and the people that they serve. It doesn't hurt that the company, the surroundings, and the food are great, too.

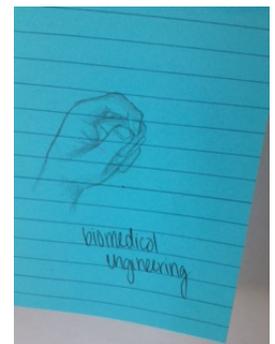
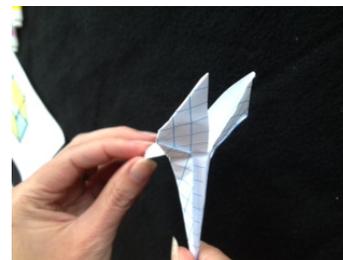
Joann commented, "I really enjoyed GiveCamp and plan to return next year! The planners make it fun and provided a lot of food ... they handed out beer and popsicles ... Everyone was very happy."

If you'd like to join us next year, you can register online at <http://clevelandgivecamp.org/>. We're looking forward to seeing you there.

NEO STC Attends CTSC Event

Ginny Haas and Amy Vogt represented NEO STC at the 66th Annual Scholarship and Achievement Awards event presented by the Cleveland Technical Societies Council (CTSC) this past spring. Our NEO STC representatives met students at the CTSC College and Technical Societies Fair and shared information about technical communication. As Amy explains,

"We asked students what subject they planned to study in college or what they want to be 'when they grow up.' We had gel crayons and post-it notes for them to work with. They could just write their future job on the post-it, they could draw it, or do something 3-D. We had three students who made origami for our display!



One created an amazing pencil drawing that looked like it was from a college-level human figure drawing class.

All of the students' contributions were displayed together at our booth. Our point with this was to show that whatever subject or career a student was interested in, technical communication has a part in it. This field is especially relevant for students with multiple interests. We encouraged students and parents to take brochures and think about our field as another exciting option for their future."

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Ginny and Amy also stayed for dinner and sat with two of the scholarship recipients and their parents. CTSC gave out 18 scholarships to high school seniors. The keynote speaker was Thomas Waltermire, President and CEO of Team NEO.

Thank you to Ginny for the photos. The following shows some of the display.



2012-2013 Competitions

NEO STC is holding an awards competitions this fall and is currently looking for competition entries and judges.

When you submit an entry in the competition, you receive detailed evaluation and feedback from your peers and recognition for your work. In addition, submissions that receive Distinguished Technical Communication or Excellence awards are eligible to be entered in the international competition, where your submission will receive additional evaluation. If you win Best of Show, NEO STC will pay for and send your entry to the international competition.

When you volunteer to judge in the competition, you get the opportunity to contribute to the evolving definition of quality for technical communication. You can also share your expertise, see the best examples of our craft, and make new contacts in the field. This year, we are exchanging entries with the Rochester chapter, so you will get the opportunity to see work from another chapter.

Important deadlines

- ◆ October 7, 2012: Judges applications must be received
- ◆ October 12, 2012: Entries must be received

About the competition

The competition is divided into four distinct categories:

- ◆ Informational Materials
- ◆ Instructional Materials
- ◆ Promotional Materials
- ◆ User Support Materials

There are three award levels:

- ◆ Distinguished Technical Communication
- ◆ Excellence
- ◆ Merit

One of these may be awarded Best in Show.

This year's entries will be judged by the Rochester STC chapter.

How to enter

See the Competitions page on this website for entry forms and additional information.

Full competition rules are available in the document General Information and Competition Rules.

In the spotlight: Jackie Damrau



Book review editor for **Technical Communication** is just one of the roles that Jackie Damrau performs for STC. If you are interested in providing a review, before you can become a reviewer, you must fill out the Reviewer's Profile form from Jackie. Find

Jackie on LinkedIn

(<http://www.linkedin.com/in/jackiedamrau>) or in Twitter (@damrauja).

Currently working as an ARIS Trainer at Software AG, Jackie has has more than 20 years of technical communication experience. She is a Fellow of the Society for Technical Communication (STC), member of the STC Lone Star Community and the Instructional Design & Learning SIG, and general manager of the STC International Summit Awards. She enjoys reading literature and philosophy.

Jackie's Path to Fellow entry on the STC blog, STC's Notebook (<http://notebook.stc.org>) provides an interesting and inspiring account of Jackie's careers, work experience, and STC experience.

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With the full account at <http://notebook.stc.org/path-to-fellow-jackie-damrau-class-of-2008/> here are some excerpts:

“Once upon a time, high school was where I focused on taking business/secretarial courses. Following graduation, I enrolled in a legal secretary program at a local Honolulu, Hawaii business school...Palm trees, coconuts, warm weather ... soon were traded for a small town in Texas. Legal secretary careers were not abundant, so I worked as a secretary and a keypunch operator/secretary.

“The next career stage took me to New Mexico, where the next thirteen years saw my career move from being a legal secretary to many different technical communication positions (technical typist/editor, editorial assistant, and administrative assistant).

“My University of New Mexico (UNM) employment is where I began using LaTeX, a computer text-processing package. ... I returned to Texas to work at the Superconducting Super Collider Laboratory (SSCL) to work as their TeXpert in the Publications Department. For the next seventeen years my technical communication career has seen me working in many industries.

“Achieving my Doctorate was just as personal and rewarding as receiving the honor of Fellow in STC.”

What's New in the Plain Language Movement

Barb Philbrick notes that this article from the Tech Editing SIG might be of interest to our readers:

<http://www.stc-techedit.org/tiki-index.php?page=What%27s+New+in+the+Plain+Language+Movement>