



# The Quill

The Newsletter for the Southwestern Ontario Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication



September 1999 Volume 11 Number 1

[www.stc.waterloo.on.ca](http://www.stc.waterloo.on.ca)

## Welcome to a New Southwestern Ontario STC Year!

### Meet Our New President, Holly Curtis

I'm truly honoured to be President this year. Having served on various portfolios such as program, membership, education, public relations, and volunteer, I see the President role as a natural outcome. I've watched and learned a lot from our past presidents and I hope to come close to performing at their top-notch level. I've already learned that what Leanne and Deb have said is true: "being a President is the most fun job of all". It's rewarding to sit back and watch a highly motivated, enthusiastic and experienced council plan the year's events. I'm very lucky to have such an outstanding council—a perfect mix of veterans and newcomers. It's going to be a great year.



■ to look for ways to strengthen our membership and improve our presence within the community.

As far as our program and workshops are concerned, Ted Edwins and Pam Sittler are in control and ready for some

hard work. Ted has big plans for a year full of variety, both in topics and in formats. He's taking the program one step further by exploring some topics related to our profession, like stress management and home office challenges. With Ted's past experience as Education Manager and Competition

Manager, he's certainly up to the challenge of one of the busiest jobs on the council.

Using feedback from last year's membership survey, Pam is working hard right now to line up some potential speakers for our spring workshop. With previous headliners like Joanne Hackos and Jared Spool, Pam has some big boots to fill, but her primary focus remains meeting the needs of our chapter members and providing a topic that interests us.

### Program brainstorming

Members and community — that's what it's all about. Or at least that seems to be the theme for this year within our chapter. At our first council meeting on August 19, we did some brainstorming for this year's chapter goals. We ended up with two central themes:

■ to keep the chapter running smoothly, with its strong monthly program and exceptional workshop

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### Announcing

#### Region 7 Conference: Still Writing After All These Years

With all the attention given to new media and technologies, it's easy to forget that certain competencies are at the core of technical communication. The conference will help us sharpen our basic skills and learn about the technologies and issues that are fast becoming an essential part of our experience.

STC's Puget Sound Chapter is hosting the conference, which will be held October 14 - 16, 1999 in Bellevue, Washington. The conference approaches its theme from the standpoint of the basic communication principles. Two full days of presentations are organized into Toolbox Topics that address work skills, management practices, and technologies in the new digital medium.

For complete details and to register, visit the Region 7 Conference Web site (<http://www.stc-psc.org/region7/index.html>).

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STC society for technical communication



“Going to the opera, like getting drunk, is a sin that carries its own punishment with it.”

— Hannah More (1775)

“Only the paranoid survive”

— boss of a certain chip manufacturer

I base most of my fashion taste on what doesn't itch.

— Gilda Radner

This will never be a civilized country until we expend more money for books than we do for chewing gum.”

— Elbert Hubbard

“Time is an illusion, lunchtime doubly so.”

— Douglas Adams

Time's fun when you're having flies.

— Kermit the Frog

# Another action-packed year awaits

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## Membership and public relations

After some discussion, it was obvious that the council felt that our chapter's greatest asset is our membership. Realizing that the members have a lot to offer to each other and that we, as a council, could provide more benefits to our members, we looked at ways to make this happen. Some of our plans include:



*Developing and maintaining affiliations with local related professional organizations, as demonstrated by our paid actors*

■ Building resource lists. This includes lists of potential speakers and industry experts, for the Program's benefit and for members requiring access to experts in the field. We also considered assembling reading lists and book reviews, built from member input.

■ Compiling our chapter archives. Jack McFadden and Leanne Logan have been collecting archives from our 10-year history. This includes awards, the entire Quill library, and other member and chapter achievements.

■ Developing and maintaining affiliations with local related professional organizations like Communitech, other writing-related associations and the academic community. With a link to these organizations, our members can find out about other opportunities and our professional identity gains strength within the community.

■ Increasing our Public Relations effort with advertising and information-sharing.

■ Providing mentoring support to our members. Council members are enthusiastic about the opportunity to offer advice, share experiences and provide guidance for new

members. As a general rule, all council members are available to lend a hand to the chapter's members.

■ Using our website to share more information about local and regional events and to provide resources for members.

There are also plans underway to update our resource catalog, which is a collection of personal profiles, voluntarily contributed by our members for use by potential employers.

## An exciting year awaits all of us

So, as you can probably guess, it's going to be an action-packed and exciting year. With our regular monthly meetings, a workshop event in the spring, our annual publications and online competition, the scholarship competition, a high school writing competition and plenty of special projects, we've got our work cut out for us. But, we're up to the challenge.

I should also mention that the chapter couldn't run as smoothly as it has in the past without the behind-the-scenes work from people in these portfolios and committees: Membership, Treasurer, Employment, Public Relations, Web, Hospitality, Email List, Vice-President, Canadian Issues, Recorder, Liaisons to High School, Colleges and the Universities, and the Quill crew. There's a lot of list keeping, fact finding, information sharing, box carting, number crunching, phone calls, HTMLing, hand-shaking and writing that goes into these jobs. You'll hear from these council people over the year—their contributions are important to the success of the chapter.

## Lurk no more!

If you are a new member or even a lurking member, now's a good opportunity for you to get involved. As Cathy McNair will tell you, there are still a few committees that need volunteers. Volunteering is a good way to get to know your peers and the profession. You'll find it can be very rewarding. Even if you can't volunteer, you can still make contributions to the chapter by attending and participating in the general meetings or by sharing your ideas with any council member. And if you haven't done so already, please take the networking time after our general meetings to introduce yourself to others and make some friends. You'll find we have quite an impressive group of talented people, with many different backgrounds.





Thursday night - Potluck supper. Prayer and medication to follow.

Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our church and community.

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

The rosebud on the alter this morning is to announce the birth of David Alan Belzer, the son of Rev. and Mrs. Julius Belzer.

This afternoon there will be a meeting in the South and North ends of the church. Children will be baptized at both ends..

This being Easter Sunday, we will ask Mrs. Lewis to come forward and lay an egg on the alter.

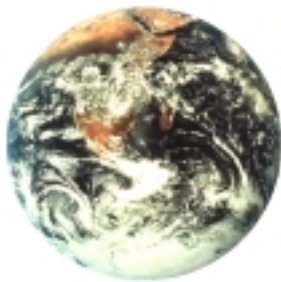
A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall. Music will follow.

# Writing for the World Wide Web

## Tips for tackling this unique medium

by Maia Shapley, Online SIG Coordinator

Web pages are uniquely different from hard copy in terms of non-linear space, navigation and information retrieval. Online readers have a desire to retrieve information quickly and efficiently; they learn to scan large amounts of text while looking for valuable information. It takes practice to read on-screen instructions which are typically displayed in a non-linear fashion. Web design principles play an important role in the development of an effective medium.



### Writing and formatting techniques

Author T. Wilkinson (1998) recommends some writing and formatting techniques for web-based content:

- Use an inverted pyramid approach to position the most important information up front.
- Use half the word count of conventional writing.
- Highlight keywords (links, typeface variations, and colour)
- Use meaningful subheadings
- Use bulleted lists
- Create one-idea paragraphs

Online readers tend to have little patience for lengthy features and redundant information (Taylor, 1999). Avoid information overload. Keep segments short and self-contained (Bonime & Pohlman, 1999). Promote understanding by providing multiple explanations on the same topic (McCormick & Jones, 1998).

### How to create a Web page

McCormick & Jones (1998) offers the following advice on how to create a Web Page:

- Create or convert the content.
- Pick a template and adapt it.
- Test the pages locally.
- Install the pages on your server.
- View the information on the server.
- Test the web page using other browsers and computers.

### Adding multimedia

Laura Parker Roerden is author of the book "Net Lessons: Web-Based Projects For Your Classroom." She offers the following advice when it comes to adding multimedia to your website:

- Keep it simple. While the bells and whistles of multimedia are enchanting, they alone can make your site unmanageable for some visitors.
- Keep high downloading time in mind when choosing what files to include (video, audio, and graphic files can take a long time to download).



*Those damn long downloads...*

Clear language and straightforward navigation all contribute to an effective website. Web page layouts should be kept simple while making it easier to update materials at a later date. Writers are encouraged to learn more about web design principles and writing for the web from the following publications:

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From the *Churchdown Parish Magazine*:

“Would the Congregation please note that the bowl at the back of the Church labeled ‘For The Sick’, is for monetary donations only.”

From *The Gloucester Citizen*.

“A sex line caller complained to Trading Standards. After dialing an 0891 number from an advertisement entitled ‘Hear Me Moan’ the caller was played a tape of a woman nagging her husband for failing to do jobs around the house. Consumer Watchdogs in Dorset refused to look into the complaint, saying, ‘He got what he deserved.’”

From *The Guardian*, concerning a sign seen in a Police canteen in Christchurch, New Zealand:

“Will the person who took a slice of cake from the Commissioner’s Office return it immediately. It is needed as evidence in a poisoning case.”

# Further resources for Web writing

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Bonime, A. & Pohlman, K.C. (1999) *The Grammar of Interactivity*. 1999 *Writer’s Yearbook*. pp.26-27.

McCormick, C. & Jones, D. (1998) *Building a Web-Based Education System*. Toronto: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Roerden, L.P. (1997) *Net Lessons: Web-Based Projects For Your Classroom*. Sebastopol, CA: Songline Studios, Inc. and O’Reilly & Associates, Inc.

Taylor, M.R. (1999) *Write for the Web - and Sell!* 1999 *Writer’s Yearbook*. pp.48-50.

Wilkinson, T. (1998, June). *Defining Content for a Web Site*. *Intercom*. pp.33-34.



## 3rd Annual High School Writing Competition

Winning entries to compete at international level

by Paul Kostiuk

Students in Southwestern Ontario enrolled in grades ten to twelve and SOAC are invited to submit an original report, essay, or expository article on a technical subject. The entry could be written for a course or specifically for the competition.

The prizes are \$200 for first place, \$100 for second, and an award certificate for third. Entries must be received by November 26, 1999. Send entries to: Paul Kostiuk, 133 East Avenue, Kitchener, Ontario, N2H 1Y8. Detailed information, entry forms, and samples of last year’s winners will be available at our STC chapter web site at <http://www.stc.waterloo.on.ca/>

If you’d like to help judge the competition, or if you can recommend teachers in Southwestern Ontario who are interested in helping to promote the competition in their schools, please contact me at [pkostiuk@spicer.com](mailto:pkostiuk@spicer.com), or at (519) 748-4575 x258.



Reports, essays, or expository articles on a technical subject could be written for a course or specifically for the competition

This is the third year our STC chapter has organized a high school competition. The winners of our local competition will be entered in the fourteenth International Student Technical Writing Competition (ISTWC), which will be held in January, 2000.



## Great News!

We are now merging with the Toronto job bank to give you a fuller, more comprehensive resource of job opportunities in the field of technical communication.

To post a job or view the latest available positions, visit our new STC Toronto and Southwestern Ontario Job Bank at <http://www.stctoronto.org/jobs/>





From *The Times*:

“A young girl, who was blown out to sea on a set of inflatable teeth, was rescued by a man on an inflatable lobster. A coast-guard spokesman commented, “This sort of thing is all too common these days.””

From *The Daily Telegraph* in a piece headed “Brussels Pays 200,000 Pounds to Save Prostitutes”:

“... the money will not be going directly into the prostitutes’ pocket, but will be used to encourage them to lead a better life. We will be training them for new positions in hotels.”

From *The Derby Abbey Community News*:

“We apologize for the error in the last edition, in which we stated that ‘Mr. Fred Nicolme is a Defective in the Police Force’. This was a typographical error. We meant of course that Mr. Nicolme is a Detective in the Police Force.”

# Web site identity — the logo tells where you are

## A user interface design update from Human Factors International

by Dr. Bob Bailey

Every month Human Factors International, Inc. (HFI) reviews the most useful developments in UI research from major conferences and publications.

In this issue Dr. Bob Bailey reviews:

WEB SITE IDENTITY — Dimensions affecting Web site identity, Omanson, R. C., Cline, J. A., Kilpatrick, C. E., and Dunkerton, M. C., Proceedings of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society 42nd Annual Meeting, 429-433 (1998).

### The question

What should Web site designers do to help users know when they are still in the same Web site or have moved to a different site after clicking on a link?

This question was studied by Omanson, et.al., 1998. Their research attempted to determine which dimensions were most important when establishing a Web site identity. They had observed that many Web users are often unaware when they have moved to a different site.

### The experiments

In their first experiment, they had 19 adult Web users interact with 42 Web pages from various sites. The participants were shown the Web pages one at a time for about 20 seconds.

They were asked to imagine that these were pages visited while browsing the Web, and to indicate whether they were at the same site or at a different site. The subjects also provided information about which aspects of the site most influenced their judgment.

The participants identified eight within-page dimensions of web pages that they believed were being used to make decisions:

1. Background color and/or background pattern of a page
2. Company or organization logo or symbol
3. Font style used and its characteristics (size, color, bold, italics, etc.)

4. Location of the table of contents on each page (left, right, top or bottom)

5. Organization of text and graphics on a page

6. Style of graphics used in pictures, banners and illustrations

7. Subject matter of the Web page

8. Title or heading at the top of the page

Had they stopped with this first experiment, the resulting behavior of Web site designers would have been wrong for the next few years.

In their second experiment, they had 168 experienced and inexperienced Web users use 23 different Web pages. They evaluated 11 transitions that involved staying on the same site, and 12 transitions that involved going to a different site. Again, each Web page was shown to participants for 20 seconds, and the subjects then indicated whether they were on the same site, or a different site.

After making a judgement, the participants were asked to tell which of the eight dimensions most affected their judgments.

For both experienced and inexperienced users, “logo” was the primary dimension used. Even though the subjects in the first experiment tried to identify why they had made their judgements, seven of their eight within-page dimensions seemed to have little, or no, actual impact on the decisions being made. (Test participants frequently try very hard to satisfy testers with logical, but meaningless, explanations for their performance.)

### Conclusions

There are two major findings in this study.

First, users tend to use the Web site logo to help orient themselves on the Web.

Second, other visual attributes may not be as important as once thought. Many of the website properties that were once believed to have strong “orienting” impact on users, such as background colors, organization of the text and graphics, consistent font style, etc., may be less important.

It is possible that the inability to effectively compare the pages was due primarily to working memory limitations (i.e. many people find it difficult to remember details of the page they were looking at just a few seconds ago).





**Bad Romance Novel  
Metaphors or Similes**

Her petticoats dropped to the ground, rustling like a cockroach in a sugar bowl.

With his broad shoulders and slim waist, he was a yield sign — yet she could NOT!

Sleekly malevolent, driven by a violent hunger, Donovan glided through the chum-filled waters of the singles bar, oblivious to the remora of Annabelle's adoring gaze.

Claire felt swept away by this dark stranger, a helpless dust bunny in the roaring cacophony of his gas-powered leaf blower.

# The 1999/2000 STC Competition FAQ List

Enter your top works of technical publication or online communication

by Leanne Rollins

The Southwestern Ontario and Toronto Chapters invite you to participate in the annual Technical Publication or Online Communication competitions. This competition provides the first level of judging for the international STC competitions. Our chapters send entries that win the highest awards on to compete with entries from all over the world.

and must not have been entered in any previous STC competition

■ online entries must be on PC, Macintosh, or World Wide Web platforms

## What is the deadline?

Entries must be received by Friday, October 8, 1999.

## What are the rules and regulations?

A complete listing of entry categories, rules, and details about how to enter is presented in the Call for Entries. A copy of the Call for Entries and the entry forms were inserted in this issue of the Quill.

## How are entries judged?

A panel of judges rates each online entry or publication on four factors: writing, graphics, copy editing, and overall integration - all in the context of the purpose, content, and organization of the document.

## What are the categories?

In the Technical Publication competition, there are 17 categories, ranging from promotional materials and magazines to user guides and books. The Online competition has 7 categories including help, user support tools, technical marketing, training and reference material. For a complete list, see the Call for Entries included in this issue of the Quill.

## What are the entry fees?

The entry fee depends on two things: whether you are an STC member, non-member, or full-time student, and how many people are listed as contributors on the entry form. You can list up to three contributors on each entry, and the following fee schedule is per contributor:

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## Why enter?

- receive peer reviews and feedback
- be recognized for the excellence of your work
- personally satisfying (validation at last!)
- you can tell everyone you know that you won an award for your work!

## Who can enter?

All technical communicators – students, workers, STC members and non-members – are eligible to enter. You may submit your own work or entries on behalf of your coworkers.



The race is on for another year of intense competition

## What are the Entry Requirements?

- entries in all categories must contain sufficient technical, scientific, medical, or similar information to qualify as technical communication
- entries must have been produced or substantially revised after September 1, 1997,

# More Q and A about the annual competition

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Members	\$40
Non-members	\$60
Full-time students	\$30

When you submit your entry, please enclose a cheque for the full amount.

## Where do I send my entry?

Campana Systems has graciously offered to receive entries this year. Send entries to:

Campana Systems Inc.  
99 Randall Drive  
Waterloo, ON  
N2V 1C5  
(519)747-5222 x 200

## Can I submit and still judge?

You can judge and still submit entries to the competitions - we make sure that you do not judge your own entry. If you want to judge this year's competition, just fill out the I Want to Judge form, found at [http://www.easynet.ca/~lmgerth/Comp\\_web/judge\\_forms.html](http://www.easynet.ca/~lmgerth/Comp_web/judge_forms.html).

## For more information...

A competition web site has been set up to answer all of your questions. Visit [http://www.easynet.ca/~lmgerth/Comp\\_web/](http://www.easynet.ca/~lmgerth/Comp_web/)



# A brief introduction to some new members

## Rock climber and beekeeper join our chapter

by Robin Dube

Our chapter continues to grow! At last count, we had hit 150 members. So, we would like to welcome and introduce some of the members who are new to, or have rejoined, our chapter.

**Kristi Champ** is the Documentation Manager at Inscribe Technology in Waterloo. She spends her free time with her family, especially her daughter Clara. Together they're exploring the Kitchener-Waterloo region, their new home.

**Joseph Bach** works at Bach Consultants in Kitchener. His job focus includes technical writing for anything and everything. He also enjoys skiing and rock climbing.



**Lori Karp** is a technical writer at Clarica in Waterloo. She's currently with Information Technology (moving information from Word into a Lotus Notes database). She's a cookbook collector (over 200!) and has produced a cookbook for a United Way campaign.

**Janice Hlinka** works at Campana Systems in Waterloo. Her job focus includes web publishing, graphic and photo illustration, and online and paper production. She enjoys boating and water sports.



**Yvonne Chypchar** works at Xcellence in Milton. She's a technical writer by day and a beekeeper in her spare time.

**Barbara Allen** works at The Co-Operators in Guelph. She is an Information Developer whose other interests include hiking/nature, music, and crafts.



Remember, October is Membership Month! Stay tuned for some interesting perspectives from members in different areas of technical communication who are in the Southwestern Ontario Chapter.



## Membership

# HELLO

## My Name Is

Welcome new members who joined us over the summer:

Lori A. Karp  
Joseph A. Bach  
Barbara L. Allen  
Janice R. Hlinka  
Elenor J. Robins  
Yvonne Chypchar  
Kristi L. Champ

**Congratulations to Senior Members:**

Douglas J. Varley  
David B. Wilson

According to the society bylaws, the grade of senior member is conferred automatically on each member after five years in the grade of member in the Society.

New senior members will receive certificates from STC.

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Pg Dn



Musings from the peculiar world of comedian Stephen Wright.

I saw a sign at a gas station. It said 'help wanted'. There was another sign below it that said 'self service'. So I hired myself. Then I made myself the boss. I gave myself a raise. I paid myself. Then I quit.

Sponges grow in oceans... that kills me. I wonder how much deeper they'd be if that didn't happen.

When I was crossing the border into Canada, they asked if I had any firearms with me. I said, "Well, what do you need?"

I replaced the headlights on my car with strobe lights. Now it looks like I'm the only one moving.

Right now I'm having amnesia and deja-vu at the same time. I think I've forgotten this before.

# Fall into InterChange '99

## Two-day conference for writers, editors, and others

The 11th Annual InterChange Conference will be held October 19 - 20, 1999 in Boxborough, MA. InterChange is an annual two-day regional conference co-sponsored by the University of Massachusetts Lowell and the Boston and Northern New England Chapters of the Society for Technical Communication.



The conference is designed for technical, marketing, and scientific writers, market researchers, editors, managers, graphic designers, educators, and students. At InterChange, you can learn about some of the most important and most timely developments in the profession, and exchange ideas with practicing professionals.

InterChange features a keynote speaker each morning, immediately after the welcome at 8:30 am. On Tuesday, October 19th, Jared Spool will present "Why Bother? A Look at the Importance of Quality Info Design." On Wednesday, October 20th, Roger Parker will present "Technology, White Space, and Information Density: Are They Mutually Exclusive?"

### Pre-conference seminars

Pre-Conference Seminars (full and half-day seminars) will be offered on Monday, October 18th. Half-day topics include:

- In Search of Elegance
- RoboHelp 7 Tips & Trix
- Scientific Writing from the Reader's Perspective
- Knowledge Management for Technical Communicators
- Modular Documentation Development Process

Full-day topics include:

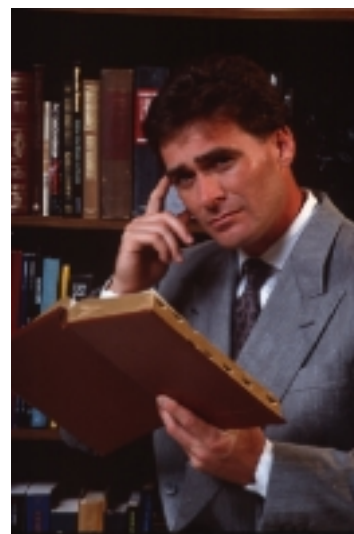
- Indexing in the Online World (Every Web Page is an Index)
- Creating More Effective Graphs

### Conference seminars

Conference Seminars — here's just a sampling of the offerings scheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday, October 19th - 20th:

- WinHelp to JavaHelp — What's New?
- Java: Client Side and Java: Server Side
- Using XML to Deliver Customized Data on the Internet
- Starting a Documentation Department
- Designing Responsive Hypermanuals
- Running a Journal Watch Newsletter at the Massachusetts Medical Society
- Integrating Documentation Design and OJT Usability in Pharmaceutical Manufacture
- Knowledge Management for Technical Communicators

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### Send us a book review!

*This satisfied-looking man has just read a dandy book, and now he wants to tell us all about it. If it's recent and relevant to technical communication, and we print it, he'll get a \$25 gift certificate for The Bookshelf, Chapters, or Wordsworth Books. Isn't that super? E-mail your reviews (500-750 wds) to [sburke@spicer.com](mailto:sburke@spicer.com)*

# Registering for InterChange

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Vendors will exhibit their products in the Parade Room exhibit hall. Professional recruiters will also be present. The Jobs Table will include a Positions Wanted book and a Job Openings book. The Bookstore will be back by popular demand, again brought to InterChange by Solutions, Inc.

The registration fee is \$349 for both days and \$229 for one day. The fee includes conference proceedings, continental breakfast, lunch, and morning and afternoon refreshments. The fee for full-time students is \$99 for two days; \$59 for one day. The registration fees for pre-conference seminars are \$119 for half-day seminars and \$159 for full-day seminars.

Registration deadline is October 4th. There is a \$25 charge for late registration.

You can register now by phone, fax, mail, or online.

To register by phone:

**Call (978) 934-2405**

To register online (Available shortly):

Complete the registration form located on the InterChange website at **www.interchangeconference.com** and submit it online.

For registration information or a brochure, contact Lorraine Lupien, [lorraine\\_lupien@uml.edu](mailto:lorraine_lupien@uml.edu) or 978-934-2405, or visit the InterChange web site at <http://www.interchangeconference.com>. For additional information, please contact Cindy Currie at [Cynthia.Currie@compaq.com](mailto:Cynthia.Currie@compaq.com) or (603) 884-1249 or Carol Landers at [landers@ziplink.net](mailto:landers@ziplink.net) or (508) 880-2248.



## E-mail signatures



We are born naked, wet and hungry. Then things get worse.

Make it idiot proof and someone will make a better idiot.

He who laughs last thinks slowest.

A flashlight is a case for holding dead batteries.

Lottery: A tax on people who are bad at math.

I used to have a handle on life, then it broke.

Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.

## Hey, show us your style guides!

### STC Indexing SIG wants to know how you index

by Barbara E. Cohen, Public Relations Chair, STC Indexing SIG

As part of a session for the 47th Annual Conference in Orlando, the STC Indexing SIG is examining how corporate style guides handle indexes. For this session, the panelists need to review as many in-house style guides as possible. This doesn't have to be a formal document; the committee can use any kind of style sheets or checklists your documentation team uses to improve consistency (as long as it mentions the index).



At this time, our plans are such that the final tabulation won't mention any companies by name, but we will give your company credit in the acknowledgments when we write up the results of this research, and we can mask the company name on any copies or leave it visible, as you prefer. (We will give credit where credit is due, but there shouldn't be any

fear of "exposure" if you feel your style sheet still needs work. We guarantee the confidentiality of all submissions.)

If you can help us, please contact Beth Hamilton at (205) 621-1628 or [k b h a m i l t o n @ s p r y n e t . c o m](mailto:k b h a m i l t o n @ s p r y n e t . c o m). We would like four copies of each style sheet or checklist (one for each committee member), and we thank you for your help.

Results of this analysis (in the form of a proposed style guide for indexing technical documents) will be published after the conference in an issue of "A to Z" (newsletter of the STC Indexing SIG). Participating companies may request a complimentary copy of this issue.



## Quotes



“UNIX is user friendly. It’s just selective about who its friends are.”

— Beth Friedman

If you can remain calm, you obviously don’t have all the facts.

If you are a good leader,  
Who talks little,  
They will say,  
When your work is done,  
And your aim fulfilled,  
“We did it ourselves.”

— Lao-Tse

Those who say it cannot be done should not interrupt the person doing it.

— Chinese proverb

May your glass be ever full.

May the roof over your head be always strong.

And may you be in heaven half an hour before the devil knows you’re dead.

— Irish Quote

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# Upcoming Southwestern Ontario STC events

For updates, visit  
[www.stc.waterloo.on.ca](http://www.stc.waterloo.on.ca)



## SEPTEMBER

**Thursday 17**  
General Meeting  
**Single-Source XML Solutions**  
Richard Lander from watAGE speaks about XML  
7:00 pm  
UW Davis Centre Room 1302

**Thursday 23**  
Council Meeting  
6:30 pm  
Campana

## OCTOBER

**Thursday 7**  
General Meeting  
Sherry McMenemy from Campana Systems will speak about indexing.  
7:00 pm  
UW Davis Centre Room 1302

**Friday October 8**  
Deadline for STC Competition

**Thursday 21**  
Council Meeting  
6:30 pm  
Campana

## NOVEMBER

**Thursday 4**  
General Meeting  
T.B.A.

**Thursday 18**  
Council Meeting  
6:30 pm  
Campana

**Friday 26**  
Deadline for High School Competition

## DECEMBER

**Thursday 2**  
General Meeting  
Randall Helm will speak on Staying Healthy in a Computer-Based Workforce

## Join us on the council

Get involved in the decision-making process while you stuff yourself with pizza. Future discussion topics include scholarships, salary survey, incorporation, special interest groups, and the chapter brochure. And who’s picking up pizza.

### Where we meet



### How to get there

#### From Toronto:

- take Hwy 401 West
- exit North on Hwy 7/8 to Kitchener
- follow Hwy 7 East
- exit north on Hwy 86 to Waterloo
- exit on Northfield Drive, merge right turn right on Kumpf Drive (immediate)
- turn left on Randall Drive
- the entrance to Campana is on the left immediately after crossing railway tracks (behind Focus building)



# STC Outreach: where do you come in?

## Helping high school teachers develop and use functional, practical writing curricula

Wouldn't it be great if more young people coming out of high school had a better grasp of communicating their practical knowledge and ideas in ways that would help them in jobs, at university, and in life? Now here's a program that you can be part of to connect STC to your local schools.

Part of STC's Academic and Research Programs, the Practical Communication Committee's mission is to "Explore, develop, and coordinate programs with schools, agencies, and STC chapters to help high school teachers develop and use functional, practical writing curricula."

### Resources

The Practical Communication committee is now pulling together a program to help chapters reach their local schools and teachers. We're creating a Web site where you'll be able to download presentation materials and handouts to help teachers teach technical communication in their classrooms. Eventually, we hope to have a few sample assignments. Here are some activities you can set up now.

**STC teachers' nights.** Coordinate with the program manager of your chapter to hold meetings about what's happening in technical communication education, and how members can help create more space for technical

### How can you help? Be a school liaison

communication in high school classrooms. You can invite local high school teachers and counselors to chapter meetings so they can learn about what we do for a living, and how that translates to skills that are useful for everyone, no matter the job. Show samples and talk about what might have been good for you to know in your first job (whether it was in technical communication or not) that you had to learn on your own.

**In-service days or career days.** Call your local high school and make sure they know you would like to be a part of teachers' in-service days and career days for students. When we have them, you can use presentations from our committee Web site. These template presentations give educators and students information about what we do every day and why it's important to business and industry, as well as information about skills we have that every student should have when they graduate – and why.

We're looking for information about what is going on in your area high schools. Do you have other ideas about how STC can make a difference in schools?

Contact us by email: [stc\\_prac\\_comm@hotmail.com](mailto:stc_prac_comm@hotmail.com).

## Workday time-waster: *Searchability*

by Carrie Spira

### Words to Find

- alphabetical      linear
- boolean            metatag
- branching         navigational
- category          operator
- consistency      phrase
- database          query
- drilldown         restrict
- fulltext           unstructured
- hierarchical      wildcards
- keyword



Solution next month

## Smiley dictionary



- (-: User is left handed
- %-) User has been staring at a green screen for 15 hours straight
- :\*) User is drunk
- [:] User is a robot
- 8-) User is wearing sunglasses
- B:-) Sunglasses on head
- ::-) User wears normal glasses
- B-) User wears horn-rimmed glasses
- ::-f) User has a mustache
- ::-{} User wears lipstick
- {:-) User wears a toupee
- }-(- (Toupee in an updraft



The Quill is the official newsletter of the Southwestern Ontario chapter of the Society for Technical Communication (STC). The Quill is published in Waterloo, Ontario monthly, except in January, July, and August, and distributed free to all local STC members. Material in this publication may be reprinted, provided the author and the Southwestern Ontario chapter of the STC are acknowledged. All readers are welcome to submit short articles, letters, and other interesting items relevant to technical communication to the editor. Please submit items by one week prior to the date of the general meeting.

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### Advertising

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(\$20 for 3 or more issues)

**1/2 page** \$40  
(\$30 for 3 or more issues)

**Full page** \$80  
(\$60 for 3 or more issues)



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