



the Quill

the Newsletter for the Southwestern Ontario Chapter STC



April 2005 (Volume 16 Number 7) [About the Quill](#)

In This Issue

President's Message: April Showers Bring May Flowers...

In addition to flowers, May also brings the STC's 52 Annual Conference. President Opal Gamble attended last year's conference and has some words of wisdom about why you should try to attend this event. ♦

Upcoming Events

There's a lot happening in April: a general meeting in Guelph, a council meeting, and two Webinars. Get all the details; you don't want to miss out on the chance to learn and network. ♦

Advertising

Whether you have an event to promote or you are promoting your services, you have the option of advertising in the newsletter. Read this article to find out how. ♦

The Rockley Group Content Management Workshop Series Is Coming to Toronto

Content Management is a hot topic and learning about it is close at hand. Find out what The Rockley Group has to offer. ♦

De-mystifying the Peer Review Process: My Experiences as a Peer Reviewer

As technical communicators, we may have informally reviewed each other's work. Find out about the formal peer review process at the IEEE PCS. ♦

Tech Writers Defy Winter's Worst at Annual Wine and Cheese Event

Our wine and cheese general meeting is always a great success. This year was no exception for those braved the weather to take the opportunity to network with other technical communicators. ♦

The Editor's Message

Spring is in the air, and many of this month's contributors have obviously noticed. The articles contain references to birds, melting snow, greenery, and flowers. Spring helps us to wake up from what feels like a type of winter slumber. It's a time to try and find opportunities to learn so that we can continue to grow in our profession. There are lots of opportunities to learn in the pages of this newsletter.

Being a Volunteer

Having worked on this newsletter for nearly two years, I can definitely say that I have learned a lot—from the topics covered in the newsletter, to finding resources for topics, to learning the fine art of HTML.

The great benefit of our chapter is the great mixture of people who have a range of skills to match. No volunteer is alone, because there is always someone you can contact for assistance. I could never have done this newsletter without my team of experts. Think about volunteering, because the person you help could be you.

American vs. British

There is so much conflict in the world that it would be hard not to let a little conflict into our newsletter. Every month Nancy Halverson shares stories with us about what life is like for her in England. A little closer to home, Diane Russell shares her stories about life in

[Presenting the Heidi Thiessen Memorial Awards](#)

While everyone is a winner for taking part in this competition, there are only a select few who actually win the awards. Read about the individuals who were the top three participants. ♦

[Taming the Toddlers on Your Team](#)

Most of us have experienced the "joy" of working with someone who seemed a little "childish". Elaine Garnet, our CIC-SIG Co-ordinator, got permission from Lois Raats to reprint her article that appeared in The Record. ♦

[Council Meeting Recap](#)

Take a quick look at what was discussed and decided at March's council meeting. ♦

[Council Nominations in Full Swing for Spring](#)

It's that time of year to celebrate the change in seasons and to think about the new council year. Learn what opportunities are available to you. ♦

[View from the Other Side...the other side of birds, Manchester, and language](#)

Although England is small in size compared to Canada, there is still lots to learn about this country from one of our former members who is living in Sheffield. ♦

[South of the Border](#)

A Canadian technical writer provides her insight into living in the United States on topics such as Vermont, knowledge about Canada, and the separation of church and state. ♦

[A Brief Introduction to Technical Communication in Healthcare](#)

There are technical components to everything and healthcare is at the forefront of technology. One of our members writes about documenting the technology in this field. ♦

[Certification in Editing](#)

If you have ever thought your editing skills are great and you would like to get certified, then this is the article for you. ♦

[Membership News](#)

the United States. Add a question about spelling to this mixture (American, British, or a combination of the two), and you have the ingredients for hours of discussion...especially when you are technical communicators.

Since we can't all be together to enter into the spelling debate. Consider answering the poll on the home page of our Web site. In the mean time, remember to read Nancy's and Diane's articles for some background information.

Be Careful What You Wish For

After a slow start to the number of articles for this month's issue, word of mouth (and my e-mails) identified the need for articles, and my inbox "runneth" over (I don't know the past tense of runneth). You have to love the people in our group; they spring into action with the click of a mouse button. I used all the articles in this issue, so I will be looking for new ideas for the next issue.

I don't want to max out the same people, so I would love to hear from you too. Remember, if you have visited a good Web site or read a good book that relates to what we do, then I want to hear from you. If you would like information about something that you haven't seen in the newsletter, I am always open to new ideas.

Send your articles, suggestions, and comments to me, Debbie, at quill@stc-soc.org.



Find out what's old and new in membership news. ◆

Letter from 2005 Nominating Committee Candidate, Lori Klepfer

With the elections close at hand, read one candidate's letter that is requesting your vote. ◆

Creating and supporting a forum for communities of practice in the profession of technical communication



About The Quill

by [Debbie Kerr](#), The Quill Editor



The Quill is the monthly newsletter of the Southwestern Ontario Chapter STC, which is a Canadian chapter in Region 1. Our chapter spans from Windsor to Mississauga and Georgian Bay to Lake Ontario. This area is home to the technology triangle, which is home to many high-tech industries.

The Quill History

In October 1989, the first edition of the The Goose was launched by editor Rick Martin, who immediately announced a contest for a new name. The winning entry was, of course, The Quill. Within two years, The Quill earned an Achievement Award for small chapter newsletters, followed by back-to-back Merit Awards in **1993** and **1994**. **1992** and **2001** saw Awards of Excellence. In **1996**, we were awarded not only the Distinguished Award, but the Best of Show for all chapter newsletters. In **2003**, our first year in an online format, we won a Merit Award.

Publication Policies and Frequency

The Quill is published monthly, with the exception of January, so there are nine issues published from September 2004 to June 2005.

The following is a summary of when articles must be submitted so that they can be included in a particular issue. To help the Quill Editor to plan the content of each issue, contributors are encouraged to submit their story ideas one week before submitting their articles.

Issue	Article Deadline
September	August 23
October	September 20
November	October 18
December	November 22
January	No Quill
February	January 18
March	February 14
April	March 21

May	April 18
June	May 23
July or August	No Quill

Copyright Statement

This newsletter invites writers to submit articles that they wish to be considered for publication within the submission deadlines stated earlier. By submitting an article, you implicitly grant a license to the newsletter to run the article and to other STC publications to reprint it without permission. Copyright is held by the writer. When you submit an article, please let the editor know if this article has run elsewhere, and if it has been submitted for consideration to other publications.

When you submit an article, you give the editor and the newsletter staff the right to edit your article for clarity and to ensure that it adheres to the newsletter's style and standards. All articles are edited, copy edited, and proofed prior to publication.

The design and layout of this newsletter are copyright STC, 2004-2005.

Reprint Policy

Articles contained in this newsletter may be reprinted if credit is given to The Quill and the author of the article. You must also submit an electronic copy of the article to The Quill Editor at quill@stc-soc.org OR mail two paper copies to the mailing address below.

Mailing Address

Debbie Kerr,
The Quill Editor, 373 Imperial Rd. S., Guelph, Ontario, Canada N1K 1L3

The Quill Staff

Editor: [Debbie Kerr](#)

Copy Editor: Margie Yundt

Technical and Layout Advisor: Opal Gamble

Illustrator: Martin Eisenloeffel

Chapter Officers

President: [Opal Gamble](#)

Past President: [Heidi Marr](#)

Treasurer: [Carol Lawless](#)

Recorder: [Emily Layng](#)

For a complete list of contacts, go to the site of the Southwestern Ontario Chapter STC at www.stc-soc.org.

STC Head Office

Mission Statement:

Creating and supporting a forum for communities of practice in the profession of technical communication

You can find out more about the STC using any of the following methods.

Web site: www.stc.org.

Address: 901 N. Stuart Street, Suite 904, Arlington, Virginia 222203-1822

Voice: (703) 522-4114

Fax: (703) 522-2075

Email: stc@stc.org 

In this issue:

[Contents](#) | [President](#) | [Events](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Content Management](#) | [Peer Reviews](#) | [Wine and Cheese](#) | [Student Awards](#) | [Toddlers](#) | [Council Recap](#) | [Nominations](#) | [England](#) | [USA](#) | [Healthcare](#) | [Editing](#) | [Membership](#) | [Lori Klepfer](#) |



April Showers Bring May Flowers...



by [Opal Gamble](#), President

Spring is here. I can feel it. Okay, so we might get a few more snow squalls yet, but you can't change the fact that the robins are out, the lawn is nearly visible again, and the light mist of leaves spouting on trees is only a few weeks away.

On to more relevant topics—at least until the tulips sprout...

Conference time

With spring here, it's time to start pondering the [annual STC Conference](#).

As many of you know, I attended the 51st Conference last year in Baltimore.

Though the trip started and ended with a bumpy ride on a tiny AirCanada plane and Airways Transit vehicle, it was smooth sailing from beginning to end. Baltimore was great, and the conference was an all-around amazing experience.

Three reasons you should go

There are many, many reasons you should consider attending this year's conference. However, for the sake of brevity, I'll keep it to three. You're welcome!

1. Learn, learn, learn

I couldn't believe the number of seminars the conference offered. So many choices, so little time!

It really was difficult to select just one seminar for some of the time slots. I started to wish I had a clone I could send to take notes at some of the other ones!

Seriously, though, my favourite sessions of all were the Bleeding Edge, part 1, 2, and 3. These sessions each featured 3 different speakers, talking about their new-tech discoveries or specialties. It was geek alphabet soup with all of the short form terminology flying around.

2. More bang for your buck

While you're off learning (and maybe touring Seattle—we won't tell), you can rest assured that you're spending your education dollars well.

As discussed in the [December 2004](#) issue of our newsletter, the STC Conference is very reasonably priced (as is the membership cost: hint-hint, if you haven't renewed yet!).

The cost is even more reasonable when you consider that each day you're getting up to four seminars, as well as entertainment, exhibitor booths, and a tech-comm-poolooza. Even better, this goes on for three days—four if you attend [Leadership Day](#).

3. Meet some people!

Yes, I know, I keep harping on the networking thing, but really, at the conference it's hard not to do it. People are so eager to exchange ideas that the sessions you attend just naturally set you up to talk to your peers about ideas and opinions.

Sometimes you learn the most from the people in the audience, because a really good speaker facilitates discussion.

Now, that said, the STC does a really great job of organizing social activities in the evenings, so you don't have to talk shop for three days straight. Rumour has it that the annual Jam Session is quite the event.

A few parting shots

Back on firm ground, in Toronto, I sat in the uncomfortable terminal chairs waiting for the Airways Transit van. The people around me had all gotten off the same commuter flight as me, and many of them had little STC items that identified them as having done the same travels in the previous few days.

The man next to me told me that he'd gone to STC conferences nearly every year for 15 years!

What he said next really struck me: "We go because once a year; it's a family reunion. These people aren't just my peers, they're my friends."

Sounds a little corny, doesn't it?

But at the same time, I think he's onto something. ♦

About Opal Gamble

Technical writer, web monkey, and general geek, Opal's wanted to be a tech writer since high school; she became a STC-SOC council member in 1997. A graduate of UW's co-op Rhetoric and Professional Writing program, Opal is a contract Technical Writer at [Campana](#). She also runs her own freelance business, [SiO2](#).

When she's not doing STC business, Opal participates in autocross events (with a hybrid car, no less!) and tries to cultivate a green thumb in her garden.



In this issue:

[Contents](#) | [President](#) | [Events](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Content Management](#) | [Peer Reviews](#) | [Wine and Cheese](#) | [Student Awards](#) | [Toddlers](#) | [Council Recap](#) | [Nominations](#) | [England](#) | [USA](#) | [Healthcare](#) | [Editing](#) | [Membership](#) | [Lori Klepfer](#) |



Upcoming Events

by [Peter Szabo](#), Program Manager



Spring has sprung and the snow seems to be melting away just in time for a trip to Guelph for another General Meeting. This one has its very own corporate sponsor, Blount Canada, and should prove to be very interesting as Ben McCarl tells us how he has created a documentation Intranet at Blount.

In case you haven't considered it, why not come out to one of our STC chapter council meetings, and learn what goes on behind the scene, where your chapter council members donate their time and efforts to bring value to each member? Who knows? You may even be inspired to contribute your talents to this team of technical communicators, while learning even more skills that you can apply in your communication career. You can find details about the next council meeting below.

And we have two Webinars in April that are each free to all STC members. In one, Robert Barlow-Busch will discuss what the people who design, document, and build software applications or Web sites need to know about brand, while in the second seminar, Jean-luc Doumont will explore the magical number seven, plus or minus two, and how it relates to organizing your technical documentation to improve reader retention and usability.

Tuesday, April 5, 2005: General Meeting in GUELPH

Topic: Intranet Documentation - A Case Study

Time: 7:00 p.m., doors open 6:30 p.m.

Cost: FREE for all.

Location: Blount Canada Ltd. 505 Edinburgh Rd., N. Guelph, ON

Wednesday, April 6, 2005: STC Remote Seminar

Topic: Building Brand into Your Product or Web Site

Host: Robert Barlow-Busch

Discover how brand can complement our work and help us to be more successful--both at delivering great products and at getting our voices heard in the organization.

Time: 1:00-2:30 p.m. (Doors open at 12:30)

Location: CheckFree i-Solutions, 455 Phillip Street, Waterloo [[455 Phillip Street, Waterloo](#)].

Cost: FREE for members and \$35 for non-members.

Tuesday, April 19, 2005: Council Meeting

Time: 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Location: CheckFree i-Solutions, 455 Phillip Street, Waterloo

All members welcome — help your chapter by becoming a volunteer!

RSVP to [Opal Gamble](#).

Wednesday, April 20, 2005: STC Remote Seminar

Topic: Magical Numbers

Host: Jean-luc Doumont

The magical number seven, plus or minus two, was made famous when George Miller, in his 1956 article, denoted it as the number of information chunks a person could hold in short-term memory. The seminar first exposes the seven-plus-or-minus-two myth by interpreting the number correctly as an asymptotical limit, per Miller's paper. It then proposes other rules of thumb that prove more useful in practice, based on the numbers zero through six, and illustrates these concepts with numerous examples.

Time: 1:00-2:30 p.m. (Doors open at 12:30)

Location: CheckFree i-Solutions, 455 Phillip Street, Waterloo [[455 Phillip Street, Waterloo](#)].

Cost: FREE for members and \$35 for non-members.

Tuesday, May 3, 2005: General Meeting

Topic: Cooking the Books—A Practical Guide to Documentation Design

Tim Grantham draws on two decades experience designing, writing, editing, and publishing just about every kind of technical document there is, to get you up to speed on the kinds of information you need to provide for almost any product. He defines the six basic classes of products and their associated documentation sets—what information those document sets include, how they are structured, and who has to use them—and drills down to take a closer look at designs for

two types of document: the software developer's guide and the hardware service manual.

Time: 7:00 p.m., doors open 6:30 p.m.

Cost: FREE for all.

Location: University of Waterloo (U of W), Davis Centre, Room TBD

If you have any questions about upcoming chapter events, or if you have a suggestion for a meeting topic, feel free to e-mail [Peter Szabo](#) (Program Manager).

For details about our chapter's events for the rest of the year, as well as last minute updates or additions to the schedule, be sure to check our local [STC chapter calendar](#). ♦

About Peter Szabo

Peter has been a technical writer in one form or another for ten years. For the past five years, Peter has worked for CheckFree i-Solutions, a software firm in Waterloo, and is currently the Manager of Technical Publications.

Born and raised in Toronto, Ontario, Peter moved to Guelph in 1997, where he currently lives with his wife, Irene, and six-year-old son, Taylor. He is working on his first feature-length screenplay.



In this issue:

[Contents](#) | [President](#) | [Events](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Content Management](#) | [Peer Reviews](#) | [Wine and Cheese](#) | [Student Awards](#) | [Toddlers](#) | [Council Recap](#) | [Nominations](#) | [England](#) | [USA](#) | [Healthcare](#) | [Editing](#) | [Membership](#) | [Lori Klepfer](#) |



Cheaper by the Bundle!

by [emily layng](#), Secretary/Recorder



Now that I've got your attention, our chapter is offering advertising space at low, low prices. You can post your resume, advertise your business, the list goes on.

Possible Venues

The venues that are available to you for advertising are:

- our chapter's Web site,
- our newsletter, The Quill, or
- direct e-mail to chapter members.

If you're a freelance writer, or own a business, this is an excellent way to market yourself.

Pricing Information

Decide what you want to spend and how you want to spend it.

Our Chapter's Web site

Ad on www.stc-soc.org homepage (600x150 banner or text blurb that leads to a full article): \$100

The Quill

- Full article: \$100
- 250x250, right hand floater ad: (1 month - \$20, 3 months - \$50)
- 600x350, full width, mid-article banner: (1 month - \$30, 3 months - \$75).

E-mail

- Direct e-mail to our membership: \$100

Package Deals

- Homepage, e-mail, and Quill full article: \$250
- Homepage, e-mail, and Quill mid-article banner: \$200

Location and Approval

You can choose where you want to place your ad, or you can leave it at our

discretion. We can provide you with Web statistics to help you choose a location. All ads are subject to approval by the Chapter Council for relevance to our membership, especially for e-mail advertisements.

Requirements

Banner advertisements may be text, images, or a combination. All images must be jpg or gif. ♦



About emily layng

Emily is currently working at ATS, in Cambridge, and has recently been promoted to Team Leader of Systems 1. As part of a busy group, long days and short weekends are the norm. She has been a technical writer since 1996, and has created documentation for both hardware and software companies. Outside of ATS, she is involved with a local Astrology group that is putting together correspondence courses for learning Astrology.

In this issue:

[Contents](#) | [President](#) | [Events](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Content Management](#) | [Peer Reviews](#) | [Wine and Cheese](#) | [Student Awards](#) | [Toddlers](#) | [Council Recap](#) | [Nominations](#) | [England](#) | [USA](#) | [Healthcare](#) | [Editing](#) | [Membership](#) | [Lori Klepfer](#) |



The Rockley Group Content Management Workshop Series Is Coming to Toronto



Learn more: <http://www.rockley.com/workshops.htm>

Presented in conjunction with the e-Content Institute, The Rockley Group Content Management Workshop Series is coming to Toronto. The workshops are designed to provide you with a comprehensive understanding of the concepts and techniques required to develop and implement effective content management. Take all four workshops and receive a certificate in content management.

The Toronto series includes:

- Content Management Jumpstart
- Information Architecture for Content Management
- Content Modeling and Structured Writing
- Content Management Implementation Strategies

Content Management JumpStart — April 28, 2005

Content Management JumpStart introduces the concepts, strategies, guidelines, processes, and technological options required for a successful content management implementation. This workshop helps content managers and authors understand how to meet the increasing demands of creating, managing, and distributing content through a content management strategy. It covers the value of content management, how to analyze your content lifecycle, how to develop an ROI. It introduces you to the information architecture of content management, and provides guidelines for selecting tools and technology. It also covers the changing roles and processes that content management brings about, and provides strategies for managing that change.

<http://www.rockley.com/Content%20Management%20Jumpstart.htm>

Information Architecture for Content Management — June 7-8, 2005

Information Architecture for Content Management introduces you to concepts required to develop the information architecture for your content management strategy. Information architecture is a key component of a successful content management strategy. It is the backbone of your strategy and formalizes the structure of your content, helping you to determine rules for identifying,

managing, retrieving, and delivering your content. In this workshop you will learn how to design your information architecture to support the user experience. It covers the concepts of content modeling, metadata, content management business rules, repository structure, and workflow.

<http://www.rockley.com/Information%20Architecture%20for%20Content%20Management.htm>

Content Modeling and Structured Writing — September 7-8, 2005

Content Modeling and Structured Writing teaches you how to create content models and the content supported by those models. Content models define how information products are structured to support reuse and consistency, they identify where information products will share reusable content, and indicate what metadata applies to each element. Structured writing provides the standards for how to structure and write each element identified in your models. In this workshop, you will learn techniques for creating XML-ready content models that support content reuse in a structured authoring environment and how to create writing guidelines to support these models. Existing content models such as DocBook, DITA, SPL, and PIMS will also be reviewed.

<http://www.rockley.com/Content%20Modeling%20and%20Structured%20Writing.htm>

Content Management Implementation Strategies — November 15-16, 2005

Implementing an effective unified content strategy is a balance between what is desired and what is possible from both an authoring and a technical perspective. An optimum implementation strategy is based on your analysis of your content, the potential for reuse, and the end user content requirements, as well as on your understanding of the technical capabilities/implementation of the content management system. This workshop provides you with an understanding of the factors affecting implementation, enabling you to make the right decisions about implementing your unified content strategy and your content management system. Note that it is not intended to be a technical "how-to" session; rather, it focuses on helping you to understand implementation issues.

<http://www.rockley.com/Implementation%20Strategies%20for%20Content%20Management.htm>

Who should attend?

- Writers and editors

- Publishers
- Information Architects
- Software Developers
- Business and IT Managers
- Business Analysts
- Information Technology Consultants
- Educators

Can't make it to Toronto?

Don't fret. The Rockley Group Content Management Workshop Series is also traveling to Vancouver, Seattle, Chicago, Atlanta, Washington DC, and Research Triangle Park.

Learn more

<http://www.rockley.com/workshops.htm>

Private, on-site workshops also available. If your organization would like to bring The Rockley Group Content Management Workshop Series on-site, let us know. We're happy to discuss the many training options we have available.

Contact us

The Rockley Group Inc.
445 Apple Creek Blvd., Suite 120

Markham, ON L3R 9X7

Phone: 905-415-1885

Fax: 905-415-3413

moreinfo@rockley.com

www.rockley.com 

In this issue:

[Contents](#) | [President](#) | [Events](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Content Management](#) | [Peer Reviews](#) | [Wine and Cheese](#) | [Student Awards](#) | [Toddlers](#) | [Council Recap](#) | [Nominations](#) | [England](#) | [USA](#) | [Healthcare](#) | [Editing](#) | [Membership](#) | [Lori Klepfer](#) |



De-mystifying the Peer Review Process: My Experiences as a Peer Reviewer



by [Debbie Davy](#), Quill Contributor

About the IEEE PCS

The IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Inc) PCS (Professional Communication Society) organization fosters a community dedicated to understanding and promoting effective communication in engineering, scientific, and other technical environments.

To this end, the IEEE Professional Communication Society endeavours to:

- Advance technical and scientific communication as an essential element of engineering;
- Help engineers, scientists, and other technically-oriented professionals to communicate better in the workplace—both verbally and nonverbally;
- Promote and disseminate best practices and research results on the development, maintenance, delivery, and management of technical content; and,
- Promote and facilitate leading-edge education and training of engineers, scientists, and other technically-oriented professionals in communication theory and practice.

The Peer Review Deliverable

In a review, I submit answers to the following questions to the Editor:

- What is the significance of the topic to IEEE PCS Transactions' readers?
- What is the connection to previously published research in this area?
- Who else has written about this topic? When? Where? What were their conclusions?
- What is the quality of the research approach or methodology?
- What is the quality of the research conclusions?
- What is the quality of the presentation?
- What are the implications for the practice of professional communicators?
- What is the recommendation?

On Becoming a Peer Reviewer

Many years ago, I experienced an epiphany. I discovered that the work I had been doing, writing technical manuals and procedures (and sometimes even business-to-business documentation), was a recognized field of study called "technical communication"—and that I was not alone. Not only were there many other writers like me, but organizations such as the [IEEE PCS](#) (the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Inc. Professional Communication Society) and the [STC](#) (Society for Technical Communication) published journals with interesting articles on the latest developments in technical communication by both practitioners and academics.

Since then, I have tried to learn as much about the field of technical communication as I can. I attend conferences and seminars, enter technical communication writing competitions (as a humbling reality check to see if I really am as good a writer as I think I am), and read any publications on technical communication (particularly the [STC's Technical Communication Journal](#) and the [IEEE PCS's Transactions Journal](#)). Three years ago, I volunteered to join the peer review team at the IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication. Since that time, I have had the opportunity to review not just Transactions papers, but also conference papers and competition entries.

Purpose of the Peer Review Process

The peer review process is designed to assess the technical merit of the article, specifically addressing the strength and logical structure of the arguments, and the significance of the topic to the reader. It ensures the quality of the journal, and that topics of the greatest interest to readers are discussed.

How the Peer Review Process Works

Here are some of the 'how's and why's' of the peer review process:

- Peer reviewers, although they evaluate articles in a 'silo' environment, are always part of a team of at least two reviewers. However, the peer reviewer does not know who the other team members are, nor can the peer reviewer contact them. This is to ensure confidentiality of the review and eliminate any collusion in the recommendation to publish—or not.
- Articles to be reviewed are stripped of any identifying information about the author(s) to ensure un-biased (called "blind") recommendations.

- Articles are recommended for publication 'as is', with 'minor revisions', or with 're-submission after major revision'. In extreme cases, I may recommend that the article be rejected for publication.
- When the recommendations of the peer reviewers differ, the Editor makes the final determination.
- I am encouraged to conduct substantive editing (recommending high-level revisions to the content and organization), and I do not edit for grammar, spelling, or style.

The Peer Review Process

The Peer Review process typically takes from three to four hours, and most reviewers follow a common methodology similar to these steps:

1. Read the article from start to finish, forming a general impression.
 - Is the article exciting?
 - Does the content flow well from one section to another?
 - Does the article reach its intended audience?
2. Re-read the article again:
 - What is the main theme? Is this easily identifiable? Does the text support the main idea?
 - Are there words, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs that do not provide useful information? Which ones do?
 - Is there a plausible counter-argument that the writer has neglected to address?
 - Are there significant problems in spelling, grammar, or syntax?
 - How effective is the conclusion?
3. Complete review questions (see The Peer Review Deliverable in the side panel).
4. Make a recommendation.

My First Review

My first review was the most difficult—not just because I was new to the process, but also because I thought I stumbled across plagiarized material. Researching the topic, I found an almost identical paper to the one I was reviewing that was not cited in the references. My assumption was that the information had been

plagiarized, and I made my recommendation to reject for publication on this basis. Later, I learned that the author was the also the author of the article that was not cited—and that it had been an oversight on their part not to list their own paper in the references. Subsequent reviews have been smoother, and I learn a great deal from each one I do—and I am not as quick to make assumptions.

Benefits of Being a Peer Reviewer

Although peer review is not paid, it offers many benefits that are invaluable. As a peer reviewer, I have a great opportunity to read the newest applied research papers in many technical communication disciplines before they are published. And, because I need to check the citations and technical content of the submissions, my knowledge of best practices and standards has increased—knowledge that I apply to my day-to-day work.

How to Become a Peer Reviewer

Some technical communication journals (e.g., IEEE's Transactions and STC's Technical Communication) have Peer Review teams that consist of both academics and practitioners, a key balance that ensures relevance to the practitioner and the academic. I became a Peer Reviewer by responding to the IEEE PCS Journal's call for volunteers—I submitted my CV to the Editor, and was subsequently asked to review an article.

As technical communicators, we can make a positive contribution to our field through volunteering to assist the editorial staff in our professional journals. George Hayhoe writes in his editorial in the February 2005 issue of Technical Communication (Vol. 52, Number 1) that 'every peer review team evaluating manuscripts for potential publication in these pages includes at least one practitioner as well as one academic...' George goes on to list 'five outstanding peer-reviewed journals' that 'together publish about 120 articles each year'.

These are:

- [Technical Communication](#), published by the STC since 1954;
- [IEEE Transactions of Professional Communication](#), published by the IEEE PCS since 1958;
- [Journal of Technical Writing and Communication](#), first published by Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1971 and currently by Baywood Publishing Company;
- [Journal of Business and Technical Communication](#), published by Sage Publications since 1987;

- [Technical Communication Quarterly](#), published by the Association of Teachers of Technical Writing since 1992. ♦



About Debbie Davy

Debbie has been a Peer Reviewer for the IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication since 2002 and a technical communicator since the mid-1980's. She is currently working at Capgemini Canada Ltd. on documentation for an Ontario Laboratories Information System. Debbie lives in Brampton with her husband (a mature University of Toronto Canadian history student), two teenage children (one of each), assorted cats, and an iguana.

In this issue:

[Contents](#) | [President](#) | [Events](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Content Management](#) | [Peer Reviews](#) | [Wine and Cheese](#) | [Student Awards](#) | [Toddlers](#) | [Council Recap](#) | [Nominations](#) | [England](#) | [USA](#) | [Healthcare](#) | [Editing](#) | [Membership](#) | [Lori Klepfer](#) |



Tech Writers Defy Winter's Worst at Annual Wine and Cheese Event



by [Peter Szabo](#), Program Manager

After two days of snow, sleet, icy roads, and subfreezing temperatures, about 20 technical communicators braved the elements to gather for the STC Southwestern Ontario chapter's annual Wine and Cheese social. You'd think that by planning the event for March 1 we would be able to avoid the worst of winter and welcome spring with a networking event. But, this is Canada, right? In any case, we nestled within the cozy yet elegant architecture of the University of Waterloo's University Club and enjoyed an evening of fun, conversation, and celebration.

Student Awards

Christy Simard, our chapter's Student Awards Manager, kicked off the brief presentations by announcing the winners of the Heidi Thiessen Memorial Award. Third and fourth year students of the University of Waterloo (U of W), Wilfrid Laurier University (WLU), and the University of Guelph (U of G) are eligible to compete. Second place winner, Vikram Aggarwal from the U of W, and third place winner, Kim Waalderbos, from U of G were on hand to accept their awards in person. First place winner, Alex Perel, of the University of Waterloo, was unable to attend the event. For more details about each of the winners, see the [awards article](#) in this issue of the newsletter.

Technical Publications Competition and a Surprise Award

Our Competition Manager, Lori Shantz, announced the list of 2004-2005 STC Publications Competition winners for the best in technical writing. Next, our chapter President, Opal Gamble, presented the Distinguished Chapter Service Award to a very surprised Robin Dube.

To see a complete list of winning names for any of these awards, visit our Web site and click on [Awards](#) or [Competitions](#).

Candidate for Region One Director

Our final speaker earned the award hands down for "Attendee who traveled the farthest."

Rich Maggiani took a train from his home in Vermont (as in Vermont, U.S.A.) to Montreal and then to Toronto (where Opal picked him up and drove him into

Waterloo). Rich is running for STC Region One Director, which if he wins, would make him the elected sponsor for the STC geographic region that includes our chapter.

Rich made the long sojourn to visit our part of Canada so that he could talk to us about his vision as a director and, more importantly, get a sense of what kind of support we, as STC members, were looking for from the higher levels of the STC organization. Personally, I felt honoured that Rich took the time and effort to care about what we thought, and I also welcomed a chance to learn more about the inner workings of the nebulous organization that makes decisions and plans events outside of our Southwestern Ontario cocoon.

Food and Alcohol / Alcohol and Food

The presentations lasted about a half an hour, which left plenty of time for us to warm our insides with wine, beer, lots of cheese, crackers, and veggies, and some very tasty dessert treats. I noticed that Rich was particularly keen on sampling as many of our local brews as the University Club offered, and I hope he returned home to Vermont with grand tales of the Brick Brewery's finest ales.

International Competition Technical Publications

While we mingled and created new friendships, we perused the over 30 books, brochures, pamphlets, and newsletters that made up the winners of the 2004 STC International Technical Publications Competition. Of particular note were the gorgeously presented "Forests of Canada" coffee-table book, published by our Ministry of Natural Resources, and the fascinating NASA Investigation Report from the space shuttle Columbia accident.

Nothing but the Best

By 9:30 p.m., as the service staff began shutting down the bar and reception area, the final half-dozen stragglers had to pry themselves away from their engaging conversations and debates to face the bone-chilling winds outside. As one attendee so eloquently described it, "It was a lovely evening. The quantity of attendees wasn't high, but the quality sure was." Maybe next year, Old Man Winter will give us a break and create more comfortable weather conditions for us to seek out friendship and camaraderie. And if not, there's always the Barbecue Event in June. ♦



About Peter Szabo

Peter has been a technical writer in one form or another for ten years. For the past five years, Peter has worked for CheckFree i-Solutions, a software firm in Waterloo, and is currently the Manager of Technical Publications.

Born and raised in Toronto, Ontario, Peter moved to Guelph in 1997, where he currently lives with his wife, Irene, and six-year-old son, Taylor. He is working on his first feature-length screenplay.

In this issue:

[Contents](#) | [President](#) | [Events](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Content Management](#) | [Peer Reviews](#) | [Wine and Cheese](#) | [Student Awards](#) | [Toddlers](#) | [Council Recap](#) | [Nominations](#) | [England](#) | [USA](#) | [Healthcare](#) | [Editing](#) | [Membership](#) | [Lori Klepfer](#) |



Presenting the Heidi Thiessen Memorial Awards



by [Christy Simard](#), Student Awards Manager

Allow me to introduce this year's winners of the Heidi Thiessen Memorial Award for student technical writing:

- **Third Place:** Kim Waalderbos
- **Second Place:** Vikram Aggarwal
- **First Place:** Alex Perel

I met Kim and Vikram at the March wine & cheese. They were gracious recipients and really, REALLY impressive people!

Kim Waalderbos

Kim is pursuing a science degree at the University of Guelph. She is more than a fine student—she works a research beat for SPARK (Students Promoting Awareness of Research Knowledge). With SPARK, Kim writes smartly crafted articles about R&D activities in the cattle biz. Her writing is so clear that reading her work is to immediately understand her.

Vikram Aggarwal

Vikram is a fourth year engineering student at the University of Waterloo. This is not his first recognition for excellence in technical communications. In addition to being a talented writer, Vikram has done well in technical speaking competitions. Vikram's writing talent reflects a solid technical foundation and a seemingly natural persuasion.

Alex Perel

Alex will finish his third co-op term soon and he will then return to the University of Waterloo. He's working on a math degree with a business and finance focus. Alex's entries dissected the complex financial systems behind managing credit for profit. Sounds painful, right? Not from the pen of Alex Perel! He leads you through his subject matter so gently and precisely that you take each step with confidence, always knowing where you've been, and where you are going next.

It was an honour to contact these winners and recognize their talent and hard work! I hope they will find a place within the STC community.

The Volunteers

It is also an honour for me to work with the volunteers who make this award possible. Deb Maskins and Murray Tong provided vital contact with students at the University of Guelph. Our very own PR volunteer, Andrea Braniff did a great poster and kept me moving with publicity. Outstanding volunteer and student, Sarah-Beth Doner, ensured Waterloo students knew about the award. And finally, I thank the judges, all of whom are heavy-weights in their divisions and long-time volunteers within our chapter.

I hope you'll all join me at the June BBQ so we can enjoy the evening together and applaud some great volunteers! ♦

About Christy Simard

Christy manages a team of information developers in Kitchener-Waterloo, where she supports traditional writing jobs, user interface design work, and marketing writing assignments. Her expertise combines an educational background in technical writing with eight years of industry experience.

Christy became a member of the STC in 1998; this is her third year as a volunteer on council.



In this issue:

[Contents](#) | [President](#) | [Events](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Content Management](#) | [Peer Reviews](#) | [Wine and Cheese](#) | [Student Awards](#) | [Toddlers](#) | [Council Recap](#) | [Nominations](#) | [England](#) | [USA](#) | [Healthcare](#) | [Editing](#) | [Membership](#) | [Lori Klepfer](#) |



Taming the Toddlers on Your Team



by [Lois Raats](#), Quill Contributor

The following article originally was published in The Kitchener Record and is being reprinted with the permission of Lois Raats.

Ever been standing in line at the grocery store next to a toddler who's kicking and screaming? If you're like most people, you want to tell that mother what to do with her kid, and it wouldn't be a pretty sight!

Now it's one thing to be standing next to a toddler in the grocery store. At least you can leave the store if things don't settle down...

But what about working with a toddler? We're not talking about the kind of toddler who looks 2 years old, we're talking about the kind who acts 2 years old. Adult "Toddlers" can evoke pretty much the same feelings in their colleagues, employees, and co-workers as did that cantankerous kid in the grocery store: irritation, frustration, outrage, and, over the long term, anxiety and depression.

Adult Toddlers are basically people who have never really grown up emotionally. Co-workers say they're "immature", relatives say they're "impossible", mental health professionals call them "character disordered", to teachers, they're "bullies". Basically, Toddlers tend to comprise the 20% of the workforce that creates 80% of the problems.

Unfortunately, since Toddlers have often become highly skilled at manipulating people to get things done, workplaces often promote them...so you're just as likely to be working under a Toddler as working beside one.

Okay, so you find yourself in close, long-term proximity to an adult Toddler. You can't "leave the grocery store" easily. Maybe there's a lot at stake, like your income, your professional standing – or your sanity!

The first thing you need to do is understand with whom you're dealing. Toddlers have a number of unique characteristics that make them different from regular people.

First of all, both big and little Toddlers are highly self-absorbed. They have difficulty seeing things from any perspective but their own. This can be improved through coaching – but only if the Toddler wants to change.

Toddlers are grandiose - they have an inflated sense of what is possible for them, and an inflated sense of their own worth. Adults might take on impossible projects and then bully people to get them done. Or they might delude themselves that everyone loves them, when no one can stand them.

Toddlers have poor impulse control. They do what pleases them at the moment, with no thought for the consequences. This gets them into no end of trouble. Poor impulse control in a meeting usually comes across as a tantrum of the yelling, swearing, name-calling variety.

Toddlers have a poor sense of self, often feeling helpless or powerless inside. Studies have shown that internally, bullies often feel as weak as their prey, and victimize others out of this sense of oppression. Feeling powerless to relate at an equal level, they are always testing and manipulating others to see what they can get away with.

So here are a few pointers to help you deal with the Toddlers on your team...

1. Understand their emotional age – generally about 2 years old – and modify your own behaviour accordingly. Treat them firmly and fairly, and don't allow them to manipulate or bully you. Toddlers will understand limits, as long as they're enforced consistently and with confidence.
2. Use "I-statements" when communicating with Toddlers. "You-statements" invariably cause insecure people to feel attacked or blamed, and they will defend themselves by attacking back. For example, it is more productive to say to a Toddler, "I am feeling annoyed that this happened", rather than "You idiot, how could you let this happen!"
3. Don't take their craziness personally – they are more often the problem than you are. Don't spend your life allowing immature people to make you miserable.
4. Mirror them. Mirroring simply means noticing the person and reflecting back what you are seeing or hearing. Both child and adult Toddlers deeply fear feeling unloved and abandoned. When you notice them, their anxiety goes down, and it is more often possible to reason with them. You can do this whether they're behaving well or poorly. Sentences beginning with "I'm noticing...", or "I'm hearing you say...", set you up to begin mirroring.
5. Affirm them. Affirmation is a logical extension of mirroring. Once you have let the other person know that you have noticed or heard them, focus on their positive characteristics – even Toddlers have them. Toddlers have an amazing way of attracting and generating negative attention, unconsciously sensing that negative attention is better than none at all. Don't fall for this ploy. Keep your focus on the positive.

On the bright side...there can be many pluses to interacting with Toddlers. Some of life's most interesting lessons are learned through seeking to understand and relate to these people. The rules that Toddlers break often needed to be

challenged by someone anyway. Toddlers can learn with practice. And when understood and accepted, and properly managed and coached, they can eventually come become valuable players on any team.

© 2004 Lois Raats

MEd Meta Team Solutions ♦

About Lois Raats

Over the last eighteen years, Lois Raats MED has helped over 2500 individuals and teams in both profit- and non-profit organizations to achieve results by leveraging their strengths and abilities. Lois combines deep insights with pragmatic tools and techniques to help people move forward in achievable and sustainable ways. She very quickly and incisively cuts through layers to get to the heart of the critical issues at hand.

In her spare time, Lois hangs out with friends, putters in the garden, reads novels, and works out at the gym.

In this issue:

[Contents](#) | [President](#) | [Events](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Content Management](#) | [Peer Reviews](#) | [Wine and Cheese](#) | [Student Awards](#) | [Toddlers](#) | [Council Recap](#) | [Nominations](#) | [England](#) | [USA](#) | [Healthcare](#) | [Editing](#) | [Membership](#) | [Lori Klepfer](#) |



Council Meeting Recap



by [emily layng](#), Secretary/Recorder

Beware the ides of March...very brave of us to hold the meeting on such a fateful day (March 15).

Eight of us were in attendance, once again at CheckFree in Waterloo. (And no, they're still not hiring). The really big news is that we have a new Membership manager, Leanne Rollins.

We're starting to advertise advertising (tee-hee). Pricing is listed on the Web site, I believe, and there is also an [article](#) about advertising in this edition of The Quill.

Since we are nearing the end of our STC year, the nominations process is about to begin. Think about volunteering to be on our council or nominate someone else. Look for an [article](#) about nominations in this edition of The Quill.

The June barbeque is a "back-to-basics" event—more like the barbeques that you have with your family and friends. And, like a family event, especially since it will be on larger scale, we do need volunteers!

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m. and there was tons of pizza left over too. How very odd. ♦

About emily layng

Emily is currently working at ATS, in Cambridge, and has recently been promoted to Team Leader of Systems 1. As part of a busy group, long days and short weekends are the norm. She has been a technical writer since 1996, and has created documentation for both hardware and software companies. Outside of ATS, she is involved with a local Astrology group that is putting together correspondence courses for learning Astrology.



In this issue:

[Contents](#) | [President](#) | [Events](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Content Management](#) | [Peer Reviews](#) | [Wine and Cheese](#) | [Student Awards](#) | [Toddlers](#) | [Council Recap](#) | [Nominations](#) | [England](#) | [USA](#) | [Healthcare](#) | [Editing](#) | [Membership](#) | [Lori Klepfer](#) |



Council Nominations in Full Swing for Spring



by [Heidi Marr](#), Past President and Nominations Manager

Pop Quiz

- Do you value the excellent programming and information that the STC Southwestern Ontario chapter provides and do you want to join the team that makes it happen?
- Are you interested in expanding your network of technical communicators?
- Do you want to add respectable line items to your resume about your facilitation and leadership skills?
- Are you committed to becoming a volunteer in your community this year?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, the STC council wants to hear from you.

Council Positions up for Grabs

We are in the process of filling the 2005-2006 chapter council and hope to bring many new faces — with fresh perspectives and ideas — on board.

Several of the current council members have held their positions for a number of years and need a change of pace, which provides a great opportunity for you to join! The available positions include:

- President (see incentive information below)
- Treasurer
- Competition Manager
- Program Manager
- PR Manager
- Quill Editor
- Student Awards Manager

Additionally, we need new SIG Managers as well as faculty and student liaisons for the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University. And, we can always use help on various committees, like the one that organizes our popular education day(s).

Incentive to Become the Next President

If you are interested in becoming chapter president, we now offer some financial incentive. The chapter will pay \$1000 to send you to the STC's 52nd annual conference in Seattle, Washington (May 8-11, 2005). This covers roughly half your conference costs. For details go to: <http://www.stc.org/52ndConf/>.

The conference Leadership Day is an excellent opportunity for our incoming president to liaise with other chapter leaders, pick up great ideas, and come back feeling energized for the coming year. Outgoing president, Opal Gamble, attended the conference last year in Baltimore. She says:

"I couldn't believe the advice and ideas other chapters shared. There are some really innovative chapters in our organization."

At Leadership Day, Opal learned the ins and outs of running a chapter council and also shared this praise for the conference:

"Not knowing the ropes as a Chapter President, I found the information shared at Leadership Day invaluable. It made the upcoming year much less daunting: I couldn't wait to come back and get started! Leadership Day allows you to figure out new strategies for maintaining and growing a chapter and there are lots of people who are willing to help you to do that."

We will introduce the new council at the June BBQ, but we want to elect the president earlier, so he or she can attend the conference and enjoy the benefits that Leadership Day offers.

Next Steps

1. Read the council position descriptions on our chapter Web site (<http://www.stc-soc.org/chapterinfo/positiondescriptions.php>) and determine which one is the right fit for you. They vary in responsibility and participation level, so there is something for everyone.
2. Email me ([Heidi Marr](mailto:Heidi.Marr)) if you have any questions or would like more information.
3. Consult with your colleagues and friends in the field to see if any of them would also like to join the council.
4. Complete the online Nomination form (<http://www.stc-soc.org/surveys/nominationform.php>) for yourself or a friend and submit it by **Tuesday, April 19th**.

It's that easy! I hope to see my in-box full of nomination forms in the next two weeks. And, I hope to see your name on the council list for next year. ♦



About Heidi Marr

Heidi is a Senior Information Developer at The PEER Group Inc. in Kitchener, where she writes user and developer-focussed documentation and training materials for custom software applications. For fun, she enjoys travelling, camping, long lunches with friends, and beverages on sunny pub patios. And, at home, she takes advantage of a water-access property by kayaking and canoeing on Puslinch Lake whenever weather and time permit.

In this issue:

[Contents](#) | [President](#) | [Events](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Content Management](#) | [Peer Reviews](#) | [Wine and Cheese](#) | [Student Awards](#) | [Toddlers](#) | [Council Recap](#) | [Nominations](#) | [England](#) | [USA](#) | [Healthcare](#) | [Editing](#) | [Membership](#) | [Lori Klepfer](#) |



View from the Other Side...the other side of birds, Manchester, and language



by [Nancy Halverson](#), Feature Writer

Well, it's time again for another installment. You'll be happy to hear that the flowers are blooming — we're fully into daffodil season, the crocus season has ended, and the trees are starting to show that wonderful green film that means their leaves are coming out soon.

For the Birds

I don't think there are as many birds in Canada as there are here — or at least not in the early spring (well, that makes sense actually). As the sun appears earlier each morning, the birds wake us all up. It's actually a bit of a problem; nearly everyone I talk to is tired this time of year, and most are saying that the birds are waking them — or their children — up at 5 a.m. It's just one of those modern man conflicts with the predictable nature — can't do anything about it, but at the same time, we can't bring ourselves to say it's actually enjoyable either. There just aren't that many morning people I guess (me included).

My daughter, the animal encyclopedia, loves the variety of birds around. She happily names each bird she spots and tells us all about its habitat, and can give us a blow by blow of the various rituals they perform. She's still only 10, but she knows a mating dance of the bird variety when she sees one!

One-Day Seminar

We had a fabulous meeting earlier in March of the STC-UK "Northern" group. My input was minimal, but Nick Rosenthal organized one of the best one-day events I've been to. He runs a translation/localization company in Manchester, and brought speakers out to discuss various aspects of technical writing for a global audience. We heard:

- one writer's experiences creating a single-source process for his company.
- Simplified Technical English — used mainly in the Aerospace industry to control the usage of English so non-English-as-a-first language speakers have a clear understanding of airplanes. This was full of good practices for using consistent English to cut down on translation costs.
- Nick's excellent talk on getting graphics into documents that are being translated (he'll be giving this talk at the May STC conference in Seattle as well).

- A mind-expanding talk about the use of XML in the localization process.

The day never lagged, and the thirty of us who were in the audience all left with heads buzzing. I'm just at the stage of developing my company's localization plan, and I was so grateful to have had this chance to hear these experiences. There was a good variety of people in the room as well — translators, writers, managers, user-interface people.

Translation

Since the entire day was spent on the idea of global writing, it wasn't as broad an audience as a more general meeting may have attracted, but I felt that the value was there for the people who were interested. In Europe, of course, the idea of translation is often tied closely to our work anyway. As my company's market expands, more attention needs to be paid to creating easily localized documents — not just in European languages, but into Asian languages, as well as Russian and Arabic. Luckily, I'll have developed a documentation process that should allow easy translation and formatting. This conference gave me so many ideas and good information; I could hardly wait to get into work on Monday to get started. (Okay, sad I know, but you've got to find fun wherever you can!)

All in the Family

Oh, and a little bit of travelogue. The conference was in Manchester, in a newly revitalized area that had been at the forefront of the Industrial Revolution. I decided to take the family, since the only parts of Manchester that we'd seen were the routes to the airport. Ryan and the girls spent the day in the Museum of Science and Industry — which was right across the street from the conference venue. They had a blast learning about how the children of the 18th century had to work and die in the cotton mills and other factories of the area. Kids love to hear about children's lives, even when they were miserable ones.

I wanted to spend more time doing some sight-seeing around town, so we'll probably take at least another weekend there. Ryan and I are often jaded about big cities — you've seen one, you've seen 'em all attitude. But Manchester surprised me — from what I've seen of it, there's a good balance between old and new, and they seem to be restoring buildings for modern uses in ways that complement their planning, rather than taking some old relic of a building and creating something that no one can use (as often seems to happen).

One Language, Two Meanings

I've been promising some English verbiage for your interest. I'm staying away from the obvious like boot for trunk and bonnet for hood (of a car) 'cause I figure that most people know those.

English	North American
Tail back	Traffic back up
Junction	Exit
Motorway	Highway (controlled-exit like 401)
Gennel	Short-cut
Footpath	Public walk
Pavement	Sidewalk
Pants	Underwear
Bank holiday	Statutory holiday
Blizzard	White out
Learnt	Learned
Whilst	While
School leaver	Recent graduate (age 16 or so)
Gap year	Deferred entry to university — take a year off before studies begin
Snicket	Short-cut
Leg it	Run away quickly
Y'alright? (South Yorkshire greeting)	How are you?
To let	To rent (a house)
To hire	To rent (a car)
Bollocks	(very very rude) balls
Garden	Back yard
Surgery (not an operation)	Office hours
Double hotel room	One double bed for 2 people
PP/PN (hotel speak)	Per person, per night

Bin (used to be Dust bin)	Garbage bin
Lolli-pop lady	School crossing guard
Infant school (first 3 years)	Primary school
Reception	Kindergarten
Public school (or Independent school now)	Private school
Net curtains	Sheers (drapes)
Conservation area	Neighbourhood to be preserved because of architectural significance — not often related to a natural preserve
Listed	Building — Registered for historic significance — cannot be altered
Carriage-way (often Dual-carriage-way)	Two-way road, Dual has two lanes each side
Pudding	Any kind of desert
Sweets	Candies
Pong	Bad odour
Cockerel	Rooster
Assault course (for exercise or training)	Obstacle course
Punter	Customer, "joe public"
Kerb-walkers	Hookers
Sleeping policeman	Speed bump
People carrier	Mini-van
Fizzy drink	Pop

That's it for now. this isn't a complete list of all the different words that have either meant something else to me, or new words that I've never encountered before. There's lots out there — like I say, any country that uses the English language develops its own usages. I'm just trying to collect them out of interest. Enjoy! ♦



About Nancy Halverson

Nancy grew up in Toronto, but has lived in Ottawa, Melbourne, Waterloo, and now Sheffield. She has travelled through the South Pacific, Australia and Indonesia, which is where she met her husband, Ryan Wilson (another Canadian), along the way.

A career switch introduced her to the STC in 1997. Her writing experience has included several contract positions and a position at Inscriber for several years. She has two daughters and has been living in England for two years.

In this issue:

[Contents](#) | [President](#) | [Events](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Content Management](#) | [Peer Reviews](#) | [Wine and Cheese](#) | [Student Awards](#) | [Toddlers](#) | [Council Recap](#) | [Nominations](#) | [England](#) | [USA](#) | [Healthcare](#) | [Editing](#) | [Membership](#) | [Lori Klepfer](#) |



South of the Border

by [Diane Russell](#), Feature Writer



"Americanized". What images come to mind when you read that word? Better yet, what reaction does it evoke? Based on conversations with my Canadian acquaintances, the word carries negative undertones. As countries, we're neighbours. As populations, are we really that different?

Vermont

I've been in and out of Vermont for 8 months now, which hardly qualifies me as an expert. Note that Vermont, as well, is, well, an exceptional state. It's environmentally conscious. It boasts a social safety net almost as comprehensive as Ontario, with taxes to match. In some ways, it reminds me of the Ontario I knew 30 years ago. Perhaps it's a state of mind.

Canada?

There are some subtle differences. It's true that most of the Americans we've crossed paths with know very little about Canada. Mention BC, for example, and it's a rare individual who connects this with something other than "Before Christ". To date, we've only met one person who is aware of Alberta's oil reserves, and most cannot envision anything that exists west of Toronto. However, I don't see this as an example of American arrogance. Instead, I like to believe that this ignorance exists because their educational system does not place a priority on learning about other countries and focuses mainly on the USA.

Church and State

It has been said that capitalism reigns supreme in the USA. To debate this would require much research, and it is not a subject I feel competent or compelled to tackle. That said, Easter (American-style) has just come and gone—and what a difference. In Canada, schools, shops, and most non-essential services were closed. In America? Business as usual. Even our small local library kept its regular hours; and it was here that I protested "but it's Good Friday, everything should be closed". The librarian explained the rationale: separation of the Church and the State. Were it not for a proliferation of decorated egg and cute bunny icons in the shops, one would not even know it was Easter.

The polls tell us that, percentage-wise, more Americans claim to attend church services than do Canadians. By extension, Americans may consider themselves

to be more "religious" than their neighbours to the North. Personally, I do not consider myself to be religious. And yet, I found the whole "non-observation" of Good Friday very sad. It felt as if yet another traditional value was being eroded in the name of progress.

Advancements?

"Advancements" in Canada often follow similar occurrences in the USA. Food for thought: is it really necessary to have the corporate machine running 24/7? ♦

About Diane Russell

Diane Russell is dividing her time between Canada and Quechee, Vermont. She welcomes questions and comments.

In this issue:

[Contents](#) | [President](#) | [Events](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Content Management](#) | [Peer Reviews](#) | [Wine and Cheese](#) | [Student Awards](#) | [Toddlers](#) | [Council Recap](#) | [Nominations](#) | [England](#) | [USA](#) | [Healthcare](#) | [Editing](#) | [Membership](#) | [Lori Klepfer](#) |



A Brief Introduction to Technical Communication in Healthcare



by [Debbie Davy](#), Quill Contributor

Definitions

The following are definitions of the common terms used in this article:

Healthcare

Healthcare, or health care, is one of the world's largest and fastest growing industries. It refers to the delivery of medical services by specialist providers (e.g. doctors, nurses, etc.) According to wikipedia.com, prior to the popularization of the holistic neologism "Healthcare", English-speakers referred to medicine or to the health sector and spoke of the treatment and prevention of illness and disease.

Medical Informatics

Medical Informatics refers to a broad range of disciplines, and is generally used to describe medical computing.

Dr. Edward Shortliffe, from Stanford's Medical Informatics Program and editor of the textbook, *Medical Informatics: Computer Applications in Healthcare and Biomedicine*, provides a definition for Medical Informatics: "Medical informatics is the scientific field that deals with biomedical information, data and knowledge — their storage, retrieval and optimal use for problems solving and decision making."

In addition to dealing with the biomedical information, data and knowledge, Medical Informatics can also refer to an automated system for diagnosis and the communication of medical data.

Laboratory Information Systems

Laboratory information systems are electronic information systems that enable secure ordering, processing, and reporting of diagnostic laboratory tests. These systems facilitate the exchange of information between the authorized health practitioners who order tests and use their results and the community, hospital, and public laboratories that perform the tests.

Synopsis of Today's Healthcare industry

Today's Healthcare organizations are increasingly leveraging information technology to support data-driven clinical care and increasing their investment in Information Technology (IT) for efficient service delivery.

This is good news for technical communicators, as more opportunities emerge that require our unique skill sets. The following is a brief, high-level synopsis of the main needs of today's Healthcare industry, and how technical communicators can help:

- **Quality reporting:** Healthcare organizations are focusing on quality reporting to deliver better quality services. To ensure quality, more process-related staff training is required (e.g., [Six Sigma](#)), as well as business tools that help organizations integrate existing information systems to capture, store, retrieve, and report quality information. Opportunities exist for technical communicators to design training materials and assist in the development of these new tools.
- **Technology implementation:** Because applications are more complex, it takes Healthcare organizations more time to implement them. As a result, long-term contracts are becoming the standard for technical communicators.
- **[Electronic health records:](#)** An Electronic Health Record (EHR) is a health record of an individual that is accessible online from many separate, interoperable automated systems within an electronic network.

Through Infoway Inc., an independent, not-for-profit corporation, the development and implementation of effective, interoperable Electronic Health Record solution in Canada is an immediate priority. [Infoway](#) is working with the private sector to help better leverage its investment dollars, and better align their IT industry's business directions with its goals.

According to the [Infoway](#) Web site, their \$1.1 billion investment is straining the IT industry's current capacity and capability, and it is anticipated that there will be an additional 1,500 to 2,000 technology, health informatics, and change management personnel required by 2010. Technical communication skills will certainly be in demand for this initiative.

- **Using the Web:** Increasingly, Healthcare organizations are turning to the Web to deliver information and empower patients. Partly in response to patients' desires to be more involved in their care, Web portals are being developed that enable users to perform administrative functions (enrollment, eligibility, registration, claims, etc.) to improve efficiency and lower costs. Technical communicators can help facilitate the development of these Web portals and administrative systems, as well as develop useful Web sites that

patients can access for more information.

Opportunities for Technical Communicators

The Healthcare field offers many opportunities for technical writers. Most often, technical communicators work in one of these system fields: pharmaceutical and biotechnology, medical informatics, and laboratory information.

Here are some general examples of the work that technical communicators produce for these industries:

- **Pharmaceutical and biotechnology** - Technical communicators produce regulatory documents, clinical study protocols, investigative drug procedures, and white papers.
- **Medical informatics** - Technical communicators write user manuals and IT system documentation. For example, they help develop and define information process flows, conceptual architecture, and user interfaces.
- **Laboratory systems** - Technical communicators write (or edit) research papers and patient information handbooks. They help develop information architecture, write user manuals, and perform structured writing tasks to support electronic or on-line systems.

Technical communicators can also produce articles and develop Healthcare-related marketing materials for magazines, newspapers, and the Web.

Requires an Enhanced Perspective

Technical writing for Healthcare requires an enhanced perspective over technical writing for other fields. Although certainly not exclusive to technical communication for Healthcare, the following elements are very important:

- **Technical expertise** - It is helpful to have an educational background or the equivalent in-depth knowledge of a medical or scientific discipline to better understand medical and scientific terminology and measurement. This is also helpful when extracting information from subject matter experts for communication initiatives.
- **Attention to detail** - While most technical communicators do focus on details, in Healthcare, details are impactful. Minor errors in sentence structure or document composition could impact meaning and be detrimental to patient health, so greater care must be taken when writing. Additional layers of editing are standard practice.
- **Ethics and balanced writing** - Care must be taken when structuring and

developing Healthcare information so that the distinction between objective information, advertising, and/or promotional content is clear, and business ties are disclosed.

- **Regulatory focus** - Often, Healthcare writing deals with documents that offer prescribed information to meet regulatory requirements. For example, to market a medical device in the United States, device manufacturers submit an application known as a [510\(k\)](#) to notify the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), in advance, of their intent to market a medical device. In Canada, an application is made to the [Therapeutic Products Directorate \(TPD\)](#) — the TPD applies the Food and Drug Regulations and the Medical Devices Regulations to ensure that the pharmaceutical drugs and medical devices offered for sale in Canada are safe, effective, and of high quality.
- **Understanding of specialized terminology** - Healthcare industry jargon is often Latin-based, and it helps to have knowledge of the spelling of the common terms and an understanding of their Latin roots.

My Personal Experience

To provide a unique, personal perspective to the trends discussed in this article, the following describes my progression through different technical communication roles in the Healthcare field:

- **Medical Informatics:** My first exposure to Healthcare-specific technical communication was in 1998 at a Toronto software engineering firm that provides applications and IT services in the medical informatics field. I helped them develop user manuals for a medical laboratory operation and management software product line, a large-scale population-based Healthcare program, and a centralized provincial medical record system.

I was fortunate to have as my mentor a man who was both a medical doctor and a medical informatics pioneer. One of the most important and humbling lessons he taught me was to abandon any marketing hubris in documentation. Because my prior writing experience had involved marketing writing as well as scientific writing, with a somewhat greater emphasis on marketing writing, I had developed bad habits.

- **Neurodiagnostic Devices:** At a manufacturer of neuromuscular and neurophysiological instruments (EEG, EMG, ECG), I learned to write user manuals by hands-on experimentation with the instruments. Using the lessons learned from my first Healthcare assignments, and tinkering with the actual device, I learned how to structure manuals to reduce the volume of calls to technical support staff, and give users the information they needed in an

easily-accessible format.

This company enabled me to gain experience in another very important part of Healthcare technical communication — writing documentation for regulatory bodies. I wrote applications to obtain approvals and pre-market certifications for medical device products. Additionally, I wrote documentation that helped the company maintain its International Standards Organization (ISO) status and the technical portion of research and development tax credit claims ([SR&ED](#)) claims.

- **Laboratory Information System:** Currently, I am working as part of the delivery team on an integrated, province-wide system for the electronic exchange of laboratory information between practitioners, laboratories, and the provincial government's health ministry. I write documentation that describes proprietary IT infrastructure, and I help manage the documentation set. ♦



About Debbie Davy

Debbie has written documentation for neuromuscular medical devices and medical informatics applications, and is currently working at Capgemini Canada Ltd. documenting an Ontario Laboratories Information System.

In this issue:

[Contents](#) | [President](#) | [Events](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Content Management](#) | [Peer Reviews](#) | [Wine and Cheese](#) | [Student Awards](#) | [Toddlers](#) | [Council Recap](#) | [Nominations](#) | [England](#) | [USA](#) | [Healthcare](#) | [Editing](#) | [Membership](#) | [Lori Klepfer](#) |



Certification in Editing



by [Kathy Garnsworthy](#), EAC Certification Steering Committee Member
(Edmonton, AB)

The Editors' Association of Canada (EAC) is planning to offer a program for professional certification, starting in the fall of 2006.

Primarily for editors with at least two years' experience, the certification tests will cover the four core editing areas outlined in [EAC's Professional Editorial Standards](#):

1. Structural and stylistic editing
2. Copy editing
3. Proofreading
4. Elementary knowledge of the publishing process

Candidates can become certified in one or more of the four core editing areas. The candidates who write and pass all four tests will obtain the full credential of Certified Professional Editor. The tests will be open to EAC members and non-members (although non-members will pay a higher fee).

EAC will publish a certification study guide this year. This guide will include more details about the tests as well as sample tests and markers' comments. Order forms will soon be available on EAC's Web site.

Local EAC branches are already holding information sessions about certification. Some branches are also planning study groups to prepare editors for the certification tests. To find the branch nearest you, visit www.editors.ca/welcome.htm.

For more information, please see "[Looking Ahead to Certification](#)," which answers many Frequently Asked Questions about certification. You can also visit the [Certification section](#) of EAC's Web site.

Editors' Association of Canada Certification Steering Committee (Editors' Association of Canada Web site: www.editors.ca) ♦

In this issue:

[Contents](#) | [President](#) | [Events](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Content Management](#) | [Peer Reviews](#) | [Wine and Cheese](#) | [Student Awards](#) | [Toddlers](#) | [Council Recap](#) | [Nominations](#) | [England](#) | [USA](#) | [Healthcare](#) | [Editing](#) | [Membership](#) | [Lori Klepfer](#) |



Membership News



by [Leanne Rollins](#), Membership Manager

Editor's Note: *Leanne Rollins has agreed to be the new Membership Manager, because Sarah-Beth Doner could not continue in that capacity due to other time commitments. Thank you to Sarah-Beth for a job well done and our hats off to Leanne for stepping in and taking on this role.*

Senior Members

- Tina A. Chonko
- Barbara A. Forrest
- Cindy L. Gladu
- Mark Ladouceur
- Laura Q. Nevin
- Rosemary Pilling Parks

Potential Members

With council members adding to their families, we are indirectly adding to our list of potential new members.

Andrea Braniff, our Public Relations Manager, had a baby girl on March 31, 2005 at 10 p.m. Evelyn Rose weighed in at 5 pounds and was 4 weeks early. Mom and baby are doing well.

Mark Ladouceur, our Webmaster, became the father of a baby girl, Monique, on October 31, 2004. She weighed in at 9 pounds 4 ounces.

Congratulations on the new additions! ◆

About Leanne Rollins

Leanne recently became a self-employed contractor, escaping management roles for the first time in years. This newfound freedom has allowed Leanne to take on extra-curricular activities such as a more active role in the STC. When not writing or playing with her kids, Leanne enjoys sewing and soccer.



In this issue:

[Contents](#) | [President](#) | [Events](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Content Management](#) | [Peer Reviews](#) | [Wine and Cheese](#) | [Student Awards](#) | [Toddlers](#) | [Council Recap](#) | [Nominations](#) | [England](#) | [USA](#) | [Healthcare](#) | [Editing](#) | [Membership](#) | [Lori Klepfer](#) |



Letter from 2005 Nominating Committee Candidate, Lori Klepfer



by Lori Klepfer

Greetings STC members! I'm Lori Klepfer, and I'm a candidate for the STC Nominating Committee.

STC is on a momentous, exciting journey — akin to 50 plus years ago when two professional societies merged to form STC. Years from now, our members will look upon us pioneers in the organization. STC has and always will adapt to the changes in the industry. That's why I joined STC 15 years ago. We led the taming of the desktop publishing bonanza, defined online help and Web site design, and now are pioneering usability and information architecture.

As a senior member and the Immediate Past President of NEO STC, I believe I can represent you at the national level by helping to identify our future leaders from among our very talented global membership. Over the years, I've held various positions at the local level, including leading NEO STC's re-chartering committee. Under my leadership last year, NEO STC won both a Chapter of Excellence and a Chapter Pacesetter award. You can read more in my candidate bio in Intercom and on the STC Web site.

My only career has been the various aspects of technical communication, and for the last four years, I have built and run my own technical communication company. I've been fortunate enough have assigned projects to other technical communicators. With this experience, I believe I know what it takes to succeed in this profession and the qualities that our future STC leaders should possess to help lead us into our shared future.

You'll be electing two nominating committee members. I humbly ask for your vote.

Lori Klepfer
STC Nominating Committee Candidate
Immediate Past President, NEO STC
Principal, LJK Consulting ♦

In this issue:

[Contents](#) | [President](#) | [Events](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Content Management](#) | [Peer Reviews](#) | [Wine and Cheese](#) | [Student Awards](#) | [Toddlers](#) | [Council Recap](#) | [Nominations](#) | [England](#) | [USA](#) | [Healthcare](#) | [Editing](#) | [Membership](#) | [Lori Klepfer](#) |