



# the Quill

the Newsletter for the Southwestern Ontario Chapter STC



MAY 2006 (Volume 17 Number 8) [About the Quill](#)

## In This Issue

### President's Message

Debbie talks about her fears, your fears, and what can hold us back from achieving our greatness. Go ahead, read it. I dare you. ♦

### Looking Forward — The Communicators of Tomorrow

Donald fills us in on David Goodwin's insights into the future of technical communication in a digital world, and provides us with a tour of his state-of-the-art program at the University of Waterloo, where students prepare for this brave new world. ♦

### Freelance 101: Chronicles for the Self-Employed

Leanne is back, and talking about how to sell your services. You'd be surprised just how many hats a technical writer can wear in an organization, and, as a freelancer, you should have your own "hat" collection. ♦

### June Barbecue: Come Celebrate Summer with Us

Our annual chapter barbecue is just around the corner, so come and join us at Wellington Brewery for grilled treats, a refreshing beverage, and sparkling conversation. The price is right: free! Bring an item for the Food Bank and win a fabulous prize. Very cool. ♦

### Volunteering the STC Way

Yes, yes, it's another plea for you to help STC-SOC shine next year. Join the council! ♦

### Council Meeting Minutes

Emily fills us in on the fun and frolic in last month's council meeting. There was pizza. There were beverages. There were lots of ideas. You have to read it to believe

### **The Editor's Message**

I have my troll dolls (you know, the naked ones with the wild pink and blue hair?) and spandex packed. Vegas here I come.

It is almost STC conference time. There are a couple other council members making the trip too, so I won't be alone. (Though after they see me in neon spandex, who knows? Consider yourself warned people.)

### **So what's the Big Deal?**

If you have not been to an STC conference before, it is more than just getting away from the children for a few days (unless you are very brave like our prez Debbie and actually taking them with you — now that is even CRAZIER than neon spandex). It is about meeting other technical communicators from around the world — and believe me, they come from afar.

You meet new friends, old friends, and people you never thought about in the tech comm sense, such as translators and graphic artists. It provides a whole new perspective on the possibilities in our profession, and just what we can do within it. You don't have to rub a troll doll to win the jackpot; just talk to other like-minded professionals who care about what you (and they) do. Simple as that.

### **The Strategy**

I am bringing my husband (only fair that he have the chance to get away from the children as well; besides, there is nothing MORE FUN than dinner with a bunch of technical communicators, like his wife, who are just as passionate about punctuation as she is. Oh boy!) and my colleague too. Did I mention I would not be alone? Okay, so essentially I am travelling with my own network, but that means we can divide and conquer—and share our experiences.

it. ♦

### **Membership Update**

Leanne talks about our growing membership. We are strong, but surprisingly silent. ♦

### **Upcoming Chapter Meetings**

You are almost out of time to attend a meeting. Why not join us for Ralph Robinson's spiel on standards and why we need 'em at the May general meeting and/or the June barbecue. ♦

Move over Lady Luck, mama needs some new coins for the corporate slot machine.



As always, I welcome your articles, suggestions, and comments. Email me, Margie, at [quill@stc-soc.org](mailto:quill@stc-soc.org).



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



## About The Quill

by [Margie Yundt](#), 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. In **2004**, we won Most Distinguished, Most Improved, and STC Best of Show.

### Publication Policies and Frequency

The Quill is published monthly, with the exception of January, so there are nine issues published from September 2005 to June 2006.

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 19
November	October 17
December	November 21
January	No Quill
February	January 23
March	February 20

April	March 20
May	April 17
June	May 22
July or August	No Quill

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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.

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## 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](mailto:quill@stc-soc.org) OR mail two paper copies to the mailing address below.

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## 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](http://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](mailto:stc@stc.org) ♦

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# President's Message: Is Fear Keeping You from Greatness?



by [Debbie Kerr](#), President

I saw someone on TV the other day who said that great people are just people who faced their fears instead of letting them control their lives. How many times have we missed an opportunity because we weren't sure how something was going to turn out?

## **Fear of Flying**

While I am not exactly afraid of flying, it is not one of my top 10 things to do. I haven't flown in about 22 years, and I have to get on a plane to go to the STC annual conference in Las Vegas. I have not been making a conscious effort not to fly. It just has not come up before. Any vacations that I have gone on with my family have always been within driving distance, and I haven't been sent anywhere through work.

In fact, someone called me to do a telephone survey and asked me how important vacation was to me. I answered a series of questions, and then near the end of the survey the person asked me when I last flew in a plane. When I answered 1984, the person hung up on me. Here I was doing them a favour by completing their survey, and they hung up on me, because the question that was the most important to them was left to the end of the survey. Fortunately, they gave me the opportunity to get even. Several months later someone called my house and asked me how important vacation was to me. I answered that it was very important to me, but I hadn't been on a plane since 1984, and then I hung up on them. I know it wasn't the same person, and some innocent telemarketer had no idea what just happened, but I felt some satisfaction.

The point is, I am taking a deep breath and going outside my comfort zone to make sure that I go and see new things and meet new people. The pros to going to this conference far outweigh any cons to flying. I have even turned it into a family vacation so that my children can experience flying for the first time. This also forces me to deal with my fears and make flying a fun experience for them. It may not make me a great person, but I am hoping that I will at least be a great role model.

## **Fear of the Unknown / Fear of Not Being in Control**

For my husband, not being in control is part of the fear of flying. When he is

driving, he is in control, but when he has to trust someone else, then that is another story. For medical reasons, I don't get to drive a car, so letting someone fly a plane is not a problem for me. My problem is that I need to know what is going to happen from the moment I arrive at the airport to the moment I get off the plane. Since I haven't been in an airport in such a long time, things have changed a bit, making me feel a bit out of control. Although flying on a plane and being somewhere I have never been before is exciting, it conflicts with my preference to manage and take control of situations. To step out of my comfort zone, I have to weigh the pros of seeing new places and meeting new people against the con of being out of control.

## **Fear of Volunteering**

Those of you who have flown many times are laughing at my words. In this day and age, who hasn't flown to all kinds of other countries? Everyone has gone on big vacations. For someone to be in her forties and not have flown in over twenty years is very strange. It's so easy to fly: what is the big deal?

For someone who has been on the council for a long time, I might say the same thing to you. What's the big deal? Why don't you just volunteer? What are you afraid of? It certainly isn't as dangerous as flying. It doesn't cost you as much as travelling.

**Are you afraid of the unknown?** If you have questions about a particular position, ask questions. Don't just say no. Find out more.

**Are you afraid of the time commitment?** While some portfolios do require as much planning time as a vacation, the sense of satisfaction you feel can be the same as when a vacation comes together. Granted, you may not have the tan to go with it, but there are other rewards. There are also portfolios that require different amounts of time.

**Are you afraid that you don't know enough?** No one knows everything; so don't wait until you think you know enough to be on the council. Everyone learns something during the year on council, from the seasoned to the newest members. That's one of the benefits.

Like any other fear, you have to weigh the pros and cons and see how they balance out. Remember, you have to look for those pros. When fear is involved, it's not easy to see the pros, because the fear gets in the way. If you want to achieve greatness, you have to overcome that fear, and do those things that you may not normally do.

## What is greatness?

The answer to that question is an entirely different article, because it is entirely subjective. Look at who was on the list of great Canadians: some were people you expected to be there, and others were a complete surprise. It just goes to show you that you don't have to lead the country or discover something to be great. There are the standard things that people believe are great like writing the perfect piece of documentation, and then there are the personal achievements where people overcome their fears and do something that they would not normally do.

So every success, big or small, is a step towards greatness when it is forces you to face your fears. Think about volunteering to be on council next year. Once you do this, your quest for greatness is even closer.

To volunteer, contact Opal at [nominations@stc-soc.org](mailto:nominations@stc-soc.org). ♦

### **About Debbie Kerr**

*In the 20 years that Debbie has been writing documentation, she has worked in a variety of industries: government, retail, software, and insurance. She is currently employed at The Economical Insurance Group in Waterloo, where she has stepped out of her traditional role of writing user guides and help files, and now writes a variety of specifications.*

*Debbie has been a member of the STC since 1994 and has been a council member for many years. Most recently she was The Quill editor for two years.*

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## Looking Forward — The Communicators of Tomorrow



by [Donald Johnstone](#), Program Manager

At the April General Meeting, Dave Goodwin—Associate Professor and the Director of the Digital Arts Communication (DAC) Specialization at the University of Waterloo—gave a brief presentation about the work being done at the university, which was followed by a question-and-answer period with a panel of students. The student panel was comprised of Ben Zhu, Julie Palmer, Peter Coo, and Majid Mirza.

### So what is the DAC all about?

Dave began by giving us an overview of the DAC specialization, in which “students learn how to design with digital images, hypertext, sound, and video. And most importantly, they learn to design, develop, and test media for a wide variety of businesses and professions, ranging from the high-tech sector, to corporate communications, to the creative industries.” (<http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/dac.html> April 2006).



Dave then moved on to tell us about the University of Waterloo Canadian Centre of Arts and Technology (CCAT), which “combines practical and theoretical analysis of human-digital interaction in an environment that unites artistic, cultural, and technological literacy.” ([http://campaign.uwaterloo.ca/project\\_sheets/ccat.pdf](http://campaign.uwaterloo.ca/project_sheets/ccat.pdf) April 2006)

The studios and workshops in which the students and researchers work is funded

by grants—a portion of which came from the STC—and contracts with such companies as StatsCan, Torstar, RIM, and Quarry Integrated Communications.

## **On the horizon**

Dave described upcoming trends in the field. He sees people using:

- rich media, such as **Ebooks** and screen capture animation
- software such as *Click to Meet*—which allows voice and video telephony, streaming media, and data collaboration—to facilitate testing communication in online environments.
- software that allows the user to interact with, rather than press and display, rich media; for example *Machinima*, which is filmmaking within a real-time, 3D virtual environment, often using 3D video-game technologies.

## **The debate begins: what's in it for me?**

The focus of the meeting then turned to the student panel. While each of the four panelists had interesting and astute questions and observations about what students and the STC have to offer each other, I will try to distill the student input in the following list:

- The students would like to see more focus groups or discussions with the student body concerning the interests of students (and future communicators) and the direction of the field of technical communications.
- There should be more focus on the opportunities for students graduating from school.
- The STC should consider approaching the student body about volunteer work that has a concrete goal; for example, working on the Awards committee, or on The Quill.
- The STC should offer a clearer message of who we are and what we can offer a student.

## **Hmmm, good questions!**

During the course of the panel discussion, there were questions asked of the audience, and audience observations.

- Many people with little knowledge of the STC assume it is an organization

for technical writers only, while in fact the STC membership has job descriptions of many hues. The question is, how do we communicate this to the community at large?

- How do we get students to attend our meetings? What are the three constants with a student? They are hungry, busy, and need a job; therefore, events with free food that are career-oriented could draw students out.
- Could the STC sponsor a bulletin board—such as the Math students have—with business cards of members and alumni?
- The student question of “What does the STC offer us?”, was answered by a number of people. Students could avail themselves of general meetings, seminars, WebEx meetings, and our website.

The meeting was truly interactive, in that most of the participants—speaker, panelists, and audience—had their voices heard. It was an interesting perspective and one that our organization should never forget. The voices of the panelists are indeed the voices of the future of technical communications.

*The chapter would like to thank [Sun Life Financial](#) for donating the door prizes for April. Congratulations to our lucky door prize winners, Ben Zhu and Chris Reardon Smith! ♦*

### **About Donald Johnstone**

*Donald is our chapter's Program Manager, and he's travelled all over the world (even Africa!) to book the talent for the monthly STC meetings. He would like to do some more travelling, but our limited budget, and supporting his teenage son, currently prevents him from touring.*

*Donald's background in programming and system analysis have provided him with a solid foundation in his career as technical writer...so far. He loves science fiction, history, photography, and his wife—not necessarily in that order.*

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# Freelance 101: Chronicles for the Self-Employed



by [Leanne Rollins](#), Membership Manager

## **Selling your skills**

Getting back to the basics of just plain old writing has been cathartic for me. Throughout the past year and a half, I've buried myself in the foundations of technical writing. After managing a team for years, I truly forgot how much I love to write.

Strangely enough, this sole focus on writing recently made me realize just how much Technical Writers have to offer an organization. Our skills extend far beyond good grammar and sentence structure. But I'm sure you know that. However, your current or even prospective client may not know that. How then, do you truly build an awareness of your skill set? If you're a freelancer, you have the opportunity to provide a whole lot more than your writing skills to a client: project management, information-gathering, usability analysis, task analysis, workflow assessment, process improvement, and the list goes on.

For many people, playing up their skill set and 'bragging' about themselves is a very difficult thing to do. We're taught as kids to be humble (well, most of us anyway), and it's really hard to break from that mold and take a good look at all we have to offer, then SELL IT.

## **What are your 'value-added' services?**

But if you freelance, you absolutely must take stock of the 'value-added' skills you can offer your clients. Your clients know you can write—that's the primary reason to hire you. But like any business, money is made in the 'extras'. Look at a video store, for example. Their primary business is renting and selling movies, but they also offer an unholy horde of junk food—and the markup on those goods is where they easily make extra money. The same is true of many software companies. They not only sell the software itself, the companies also sell service contracts and peripheral products that pad their margins very nicely.

There's absolutely no reason freelance writers can't do the same. You want to make more money, don't you? I thought so. Me too. When a client approaches me to do some work, I try to think beyond the basic writing that they are asking for. When I prepare a proposal, I pull out my menu of additional services, and create a separate section of the proposal that lists other services that I could

provide to the client.

## **You may not see the benefit immediately**

Not all clients take me up on the 'other services', at least not right away. Sometimes it's due to budget, and sometimes it's because the client just isn't sold on the value of those services. But a few times, I've had a client come back to me and say, "Didn't I read somewhere that you also have experience in *training, editing, workflow assessment?*" In fact, that happened just this week. Last year I prepared an Administration Guide for a client, and that client just came back to me looking for some software usability assessment. In reality, he read about my experience performing usability assessment in my original proposal.

Some clients may not know precisely what they need. In fact, the majority of my clients have an idea of what they are looking for, but the door is wide open for me to make suggestions based on my experience. I take stock of the client's situation, the current problems (related to the documentation usually), and pull together a proposal that can solve those problems. The core problems are rarely solved simply through good writing.

Take another current client, for example. This client was receiving feedback on their documentation that wasn't exactly complimentary. Despite this, I was initially hired only to prepare an update to the existing documentation for an upcoming interim release. After getting my hands dirty, I quickly realized that the problem could not be solved through writing alone. I put together a proposal that required my project management and process management skills—and it was immediately accepted.

For another client, I prepared a User Guide last summer, but included a section in the proposal detailing my editing skills. At the time, the client accepted only the writing proposal. But in January, I got a call asking about my availability to do some intermittent editing for them. I accepted!

## **What services can you sell?**

The first step is to make a list of your services. The hard part is to assign a rate to each service. Your rate will depend entirely upon your level of experience, so take some time to really think about billing for these services.

Here's a brief list to get you started:

- **Editing** (grammatical)
- **Proofing** (style, substantial, technical)

- **Process management** (how to improve the flow of information throughout the company to ultimately appear in the product or service documentation)
- **Training** (materials to accompany instructor-led training or online training)
- **Usability analysis** (Can users accomplish their goals just by using the product documentation? If not, why not?)
- **Task analysis** (What tasks does a user need to perform to accomplish their goals? In what order? What is their expected outcome?)
- **Project management** (For a large documentation suite, establish the list of tasks that are required to complete the project, then manage the day-to-day activity of writers involved in the project. This usually works well for clients who subcontract many portions of a project to off-site contract writers)

I'm certain that you possess many more unique skills that you could offer to a client. It's up to you figure out the best way to sell your writing and your 'value-added' skills to your clients. It may be verbally or within your proposals. Make sure the client realizes that your services extend beyond writing, and just watch your bottom line soar! ♦

### **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 running and soccer.*

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# Annual Year-end Barbecue: Networking Event and Summer Celebration



by [Donald Johnstone](#), Program Manager and [Pauline Horn](#), Student Awards Manager



After working hard for a year, the volunteers want to have fun at the end of the STC year, even if it means volunteering one more time in a fun setting. Members and non-members have always enjoyed kicking off their summer with a great, networking event that caps off another great year for our chapter. You don't want to miss this popular event!

## The Details

**Date:** Friday, June 9, 2006

**Time:** Brewery Tour begins at 6:30pm; Main Event: 7:00-9:00 pm.

**Location:** [Wellington Brewery](#)—Iron Duke House, 950 Woodlawn Road West, Guelph

**Invitees:** The barbecue is open to members and non-members (including friends and family).

**Cost:** LOTS FOR FREE—one drink, an optional brewery tour, door prizes, and great barbecued food and fixings. Additional beer and wine are available at \$1.50 per drink!

**RSVP:** To plan for the brewery tour, and to ensure that we prepare a sufficient amount of food, we request that you RSVP by May 31 to Donald Johnstone at [program@stc-soc.org](mailto:program@stc-soc.org) with the following information:

- your name
- the number of any guests you are bringing
- the total number attending the meal
- the total number, if any, attending the brewery tour.

**Food Bank:** Bring a non-perishable food item for donation to the food bank, and you will be entered into a separate DONATION DOOR PRIZE draw. Wow! ... you contribute to the community and you get the opportunity to win a prize ... can't beat that!



## The Adventure

Do you like to shop, cook or help with serving a meal? Would you like an opportunity to meet new people and develop new skills?

We have just the opportunity for you. You just read about the annual barbecue and we know you're looking forward to it.

Now, it's your turn. Maybe you've been thinking about getting to know some of your Council members better or even some of the other STC members.

We can use your help with the June barbecue. There's shopping to be done, food to be prepared, burgers to be grilled, and supplies to be kept organized.

So don't be shy. Just send an email to Pauline Horn at [studentawards@stc-soc.org](mailto:studentawards@stc-soc.org) and tell her you'd like to help. Join other members of the council who have already offered their support. If you have a particular job you'd like to do, include that in your email.

Let's have as much fun with this as we did last year. ♦

### **About Donald Johnstone**

*Donald is our chapter's Program Manager, and he's travelled all over the world (even Africa!) to book the talent for the monthly STC meetings. He would like to do some more travelling, but our limited budget, and supporting his teenage son, currently prevents him from touring.*

*Donald's background in programming and system analysis have provided him with a solid foundation in his career as technical writer...so far. He loves science fiction, history, photography, and his wife—not necessarily in that order.*

### **About Pauline Horn**

*Six years ago, after a career as a developer/analyst, Pauline decide to take on technical writing. It's been a great change and she still uses most of her technical skills to create documentation. Right now, she is taking a sabbatical (which includes volunteering on the STC council) and plans to start her own consulting company next year.*

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## Volunteering the STC-SOC Way



by [Opal Gamble](#), Past President

As you know, our council began our annual campaign to recruit a month ago. We have many new volunteers who stepped up to join the council, and we're still looking for more!

Contrary to popular opinion, volunteering does not take much time from your busy schedule. Many of the jobs up for grabs take only a few hours a month, or a burst of energy for a few months!

Finally, portfolios and manager positions are absolutely share-able! Consider splitting the work between yourself and a colleague!

### **Our chapter has the following positions available**

#### **Vice-President**

Supports the President in administrative duties, maintains a special awareness of all chapter operations and confers frequently with the President. The Vice-President assumes the duties of the President when the President is unavailable. The preferred candidate has served on other Council positions and has a good understanding of the chapters operations.

The Vice-President represents the chapter at general meetings, social events and program events, leads special projects, volunteers on committees, and supports and mentors other portfolio managers, when necessary. (Approx. 10-15 hrs/month)

#### **Education Manager**

Manages the chapters annual workshop(s) or seminar(s). The preferred candidate possesses excellent organizational skills and has a flexible schedule during the event. The Education Manager conducts surveys or uses previous member feedback to determine an appropriate topic, speaker, venue and date. As chapter host for the speaker, the Education Manager schedules the speaker, gathers speaker biographical data, develops an agenda and publicizes the event. He/she also maintains a workshop budget, manages registrations and books a venue and services.

The Education Manager works with the Public Relations Manager to publicize the event. (Approx. 20 hrs/month, over a 3-month period)

#### **Public Relations Manager**

Increases public awareness of our profession, our chapter and the Society. The preferred candidate has a marketing or public relations background.

The Public Relations Manager produces and distributes general meeting posters, press releases and announcements to advertise general meetings, cultivates new public relations media channels, fields new member inquiries, establishes liaisons with chapters and branches of other communication organizations, provides promotional material for special events and publishes information on the web. (Approx. 5-10 hrs/month)

### **Program Manager**

Plans, schedules and coordinates general chapter meetings and special events. The preferred candidate has a proven aptitude for public speaking and is well organized.

The Program Manager contacts all potential speakers and secures biographical data, maintains future speaker and topic lists, surveys members for topic preferences, presents evaluation feedback to the Council, liaises with the Toronto chapter Program Manager and publishes program information on the website and in the Quill. Some of the general meeting responsibilities include arranging speaker gifts and door prizes, and booking meeting rooms. There are FOUR general meetings planned for next year.

The Program Manager works closely with the President and Public Relations Manager. (Approx. 10 hrs/month)

### **Management SIG Coordinator**

Maintains SIG membership information, arranges and chairs meetings, chats or discussion groups. He/she maintains SIG membership information and moderates chats or discussion groups. (Approx. 2 hrs/month)

### **Committee Members**

And, of course, we need committee members! If you would like to assist a portfolio or initiative, but don't have the time to be the person in charge, a committee is just the thing!

### **Step right up!**

To volunteer, email [nominations@stc-soc.org](mailto:nominations@stc-soc.org) or use the [handy-dandy web form](#).





## **About Opal Gamble**

*Technical writer, web monkey, and general geek, Opal became a STC-SOC council member in 1997. She is a UW Rhetoric and Professional Writing graduate, a Technical Writer at [Campana](#), and a [contractor](#).*

*When she's not fixing a website, Opal [drives](#), climbs, and generally lives on the edge.*

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## Council Meeting Minutes: April, 2006



by [emily layng](#), Recorder

It's been a while, but we're baaa-aaa-aaak! We haven't had a meeting (at least face to face) for a couple of months, so this April meeting was very chatty. We met upstairs at the Peer Group in one of the conference rooms, and it was really nice to see daylight, and get a view of the downtown. We usually meet downstairs, where latecomers can bang on the window, and we will come and let them in.

There were quite a few of us in attendance: *Debbie Kerr, Ursula McCloy, Carol Lawless, Margie Yundt, emily layng, Ruth Haworth, Opal Gamble, Pauline Horn, and Kim Creed.*

### Education Seminar

Kim presented an update about the two-days of seminars. The feedback forms that she gave to attendees enabled Kim to assess the success of the seminar. The most serious complaint was that the room was a bit chilly.

### Nominations

Opal led the next topic, which was about nominations for next year's council. We have a few positions still available, so let us know if you would like to be involved. So far we have the following positions filled:

- Marisa Latin, **Employment Manager**
- Lori Jankowski, **Treasurer**
- Margie Yundt, **Quill Editor**
- Ruth Haworth, **Competition Manager**

As people volunteer, this information is constantly changing, so check our chapter's job bank for the most up-to-date list of available positions.

### Barbecue Update

The barbeque is going to be at the Wellington Brewery again this year, on June 9th. Pauline has volunteers from the council to help with the festivities, but anyone who wants to pitch in is more than welcome. There will be tours of the brewery for those who are interested. We decided this year to have an additional

door prize for anyone who brings in a Food Bank donation.

## Company Recognition

The council unanimously decided on a winner of the Company Recognition award. In case they have not been informed that they have won, I don't want to announce it here. Watch for details in the next issue of the newsletter.

## STC Survey

If you have not already done so, complete the STC survey that is email to you about having your work edited. It only takes 18 minutes to complete!

The meeting was adjourned exactly at 8 o'clock, and it was still daylight. Awesome. ♦

## 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.*

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## Membership News

by [Leanne Rollins](#), Membership Manager



**170.**

Is this:

- The estimated price of gas by summer's end?
- Our current membership count?
- The number of times I've asked for member profiles?
- All of the above!

Unbelievably, our chapter membership rose to 170 members this month. At the beginning of the year, I stated that my goal was to increase membership by 5%. At the time, our membership count was 151, so I needed to get another 8 people to join. Well, we certainly blew that number away! With 19 new members since September, we must have broken some kind of record. Unfortunately, I really can't take the credit for it. It's really because of our chapter's stellar reputation, excellent publications, and the quality and frequency of our meetings.

And yet, despite having 19 new members, my pleas for membership profiles have fallen on deaf ears. I'll just have to be satisfied with meeting new members at our monthly meetings and learning a little bit more about members through private email conversations. Our membership clearly prefers its privacy. I can respect that.

Welcome this month to new STC members *January Ford* and *Bob Steele*. Also welcome to transferring members *Norm Steinhauser*, *Rob Hanna*, *Maggie Lichty*, and *Brian Patrick Shaw*. Transfer members are those who are already STC members, but who have recently chosen to affiliate their membership with our chapter. In some cases this means that they were previously associated with another chapter, and in other cases it means that they have chosen to be affiliated with two chapters — our chapter and another one. This second scenario is the case with new members Norm Steinhauser and Rob Hanna, who are also members of the Toronto Chapter.

Welcome to you all, and I look forward to meeting you in person. ♦



## **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 running and soccer.*

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## Upcoming Chapter Meetings



### May 2nd, 2006 Championing Standards in Technical Documentation



Ralph Robinson will discuss why standards are needed; how they are created; and what role the STC plays.

The STC has been actively involved with the development of international standards on many fronts. Through the STC Standards Committee, the Society is currently represented at both the W3C Consortium for WWW Standards and the ISO working group for Software and Systems Documentation standards. Ralph Robinson is one of two official delegates representing the STC on the ISO standards committee. The ISO committee has embarked on a major overhaul effort of current standards and guidelines to structure them in a more user-centered way and update them to account for new technologies in the field of technical communication.

**Join us @ the University of Waterloo Davis Centre, Room DC 1304 7:00 PM (doors open at 6:30 PM)**

**Ralph Robinson** is an active senior member of the STC Toronto chapter and a member of ASQ (American Society for Quality). He has been in the technical communication field for over 18 years, dealing exclusively with ISO matters for the last 13 years. He is an independent consultant and author of Documenting ISO 9000: Guidelines for Compliant Documentation. ♦

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### June 9th, 2006 Annual Year-end Barbecue Networking Event and Summer Celebration



Come out to our **annual chapter barbecue** and enjoy some great food and a refreshing beverage on us!

**Join us @ the Wellington Brewery 950 Woodlawn Road West, Guelph 7:00 PM (Brewery tour at 6:30pm for those interested)**

See [our article](#) in The Quill for the details! ♦

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# the Quill

the Newsletter for the Southwestern Ontario Chapter STC



MAY 2006 (Volume 17 Number 8) [About the Quill](#)

## In This Issue

### President's Message

Debbie talks about her fears, your fears, and what can hold us back from achieving our greatness. Go ahead, read it. I dare you. ♦

### Looking Forward — The Communicators of Tomorrow

Donald fills us in on David Goodwin's insights into the future of technical communication in a digital world, and provides us with a tour of his state-of-the-art program at the University of Waterloo, where students prepare for this brave new world. ♦

### Freelance 101: Chronicles for the Self-Employed

Leanne is back, and talking about how to sell your services. You'd be surprised just how many hats a technical writer can wear in an organization, and, as a freelancer, you should have your own "hat" collection. ♦

### June Barbecue: Come Celebrate Summer with Us

Our annual chapter barbecue is just around the corner, so come and join us at Wellington Brewery for grilled treats, a refreshing beverage, and sparkling conversation. The price is right: free! Bring an item for the Food Bank and win a fabulous prize. Very cool. ♦

### Council Meeting Minutes

Emily fills us in on the fun and frolic in last month's council meeting. There was pizza. There were beverages. There were lots of ideas. You have to read it to believe it. ♦

### Membership Update

Leanne talks about our growing membership. We are strong, but surprisingly silent. ♦

### **The Editor's Message**

I have my troll dolls (you know, the naked ones with the wild pink and blue hair?) and spandex packed. Vegas here I come.

It is almost STC conference time. There are a couple other council members making the trip too, so I won't be alone. (Though after they see me in neon spandex, who knows? Consider yourself warned people.)

### **So what's the Big Deal?**

If you have not been to an STC conference before, it is more than just getting away from the children for a few days (unless you are very brave like our prez Debbie and actually taking them with you — now that is even CRAZIER than neon spandex). It is about meeting other technical communicators from around the world — and believe me, they come from afar.

You meet new friends, old friends, and people you never thought about in the tech comm sense, such as translators and graphic artists. It provides a whole new perspective on the possibilities in our profession, and just what we can do within it. You don't have to rub a troll doll to win the jackpot; just talk to other like-minded professionals who care about what you (and they) do. Simple as that.

### **The Strategy**

I am bringing my husband (only fair that he have the chance to get away from the children as well; besides, there is nothing MORE FUN than dinner with a bunch of technical communicators, like his wife, who are just as passionate about punctuation as she is. Oh boy!) and my colleague too. Did I mention I

## Upcoming Chapter Meetings

You are almost out of time to attend a meeting. Why not join us for Ralph Robinson's spiel on standards and why we need 'em at the May general meeting and/or the June barbecue. ♦



would not be alone? Okay, so essentially I am travelling with my own network, but that means we can divide and conquer—and share our experiences.

Move over Lady Luck, mama needs some new coins for the corporate slot machine.

As always, I welcome your articles, suggestions, and comments. Email me, Margie, at [quill@stc-soc.org](mailto:quill@stc-soc.org).



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



## About The Quill

by [Margie Yundt](#), 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. In **2004**, we won Most Distinguished, Most Improved, and STC Best of Show.

### Publication Policies and Frequency

The Quill is published monthly, with the exception of January, so there are nine issues published from September 2005 to June 2006.

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 19
November	October 17
December	November 21
January	No Quill
February	January 23
March	February 20

April	March 20
May	April 17
June	May 22
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.

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## 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](mailto:quill@stc-soc.org) OR mail two paper copies to the mailing address below.

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Illustrator: Martin Eisenloeffel

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Past President: [Opal Gamble](#)

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](http://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](http://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](mailto:stc@stc.org) ♦

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## President's Message: Is Fear Keeping You from Greatness?



by [Debbie Kerr](#), President

I saw someone on TV the other day who said that great people are just people who faced their fears instead of letting them control their lives. How many times have we missed an opportunity because we weren't sure how something was going to turn out?

### **Fear of Flying**

While I am not exactly afraid of flying, it is not one of my top 10 things to do. I haven't flown in about 22 years, and I have to get on a plane to go to the STC annual conference in Las Vegas. I have not been making a conscious effort not to fly. It just has not come up before. Any vacations that I have gone on with my family have always been within driving distance, and I haven't been sent anywhere through work.

In fact, someone called me to do a telephone survey and asked me how important vacation was to me. I answered a series of questions, and then near the end of the survey the person asked me when I last flew in a plane. When I answered 1984, the person hung up on me. Here I was doing them a favour by completing their survey, and they hung up on me, because the question that was the most important to them was left to the end of the survey. Fortunately, they gave me the opportunity to get even. Several months later someone called my house and asked me how important vacation was to me. I answered that it was very important to me, but I hadn't been on a plane since 1984, and then I hung up on them. I know it wasn't the same person, and some innocent telemarketer had no idea what just happened, but I felt some satisfaction.

The point is, I am taking a deep breath and going outside my comfort zone to make sure that I go and see new things and meet new people. The pros to going to this conference far outweigh any cons to flying. I have even turned it into a family vacation so that my children can experience flying for the first time. This also forces me to deal with my fears and make flying a fun experience for them. It may not make me a great person, but I am hoping that I will at least be a great role model.

### **Fear of the Unknown / Fear of Not Being in Control**

For my husband, not being in control is part of the fear of flying. When he is

driving, he is in control, but when he has to trust someone else, then that is another story. For medical reasons, I don't get to drive a car, so letting someone fly a plane is not a problem for me. My problem is that I need to know what is going to happen from the moment I arrive at the airport to the moment I get off the plane. Since I haven't been in an airport in such a long time, things have changed a bit, making me feel a bit out of control. Although flying on a plane and being somewhere I have never been before is exciting, it conflicts with my preference to manage and take control of situations. To step out of my comfort zone, I have to weigh the pros of seeing new places and meeting new people against the con of being out of control.

## **Fear of Volunteering**

Those of you who have flown many times are laughing at my words. In this day and age, who hasn't flown to all kinds of other countries? Everyone has gone on big vacations. For someone to be in her forties and not have flown in over twenty years is very strange. It's so easy to fly: what is the big deal?

For someone who has been on the council for a long time, I might say the same thing to you. What's the big deal? Why don't you just volunteer? What are you afraid of? It certainly isn't as dangerous as flying. It doesn't cost you as much as travelling.

**Are you afraid of the unknown?** If you have questions about a particular position, ask questions. Don't just say no. Find out more.

**Are you afraid of the time commitment?** While some portfolios do require as much planning time as a vacation, the sense of satisfaction you feel can be the same as when a vacation comes together. Granted, you may not have the tan to go with it, but there are other rewards. There are also portfolios that require different amounts of time.

**Are you afraid that you don't know enough?** No one knows everything; so don't wait until you think you know enough to be on the council. Everyone learns something during the year on council, from the seasoned to the newest members. That's one of the benefits.

Like any other fear, you have to weigh the pros and cons and see how they balance out. Remember, you have to look for those pros. When fear is involved, it's not easy to see the pros, because the fear gets in the way. If you want to achieve greatness, you have to overcome that fear, and do those things that you may not normally do.

## What is greatness?

The answer to that question is an entirely different article, because it is entirely subjective. Look at who was on the list of great Canadians: some were people you expected to be there, and others were a complete surprise. It just goes to show you that you don't have to lead the country or discover something to be great. There are the standard things that people believe are great like writing the perfect piece of documentation, and then there are the personal achievements where people overcome their fears and do something that they would not normally do.

So every success, big or small, is a step towards greatness when it is forces you to face your fears. Think about volunteering to be on council next year. Once you do this, your quest for greatness is even closer.

To volunteer, contact Opal at [nominations@stc-soc.org](mailto:nominations@stc-soc.org). ♦

### **About Debbie Kerr (President)**

*In the 20 years that Debbie has been writing documentation, she has worked in a variety of industries: government, retail, software, and insurance. She is currently employed at The Economical Insurance Group in Waterloo, where she has stepped out of her traditional role of writing user guides and help files, and now writes a variety of specifications.*

*Debbie has been a member of the STC since 1994 and has been a council member for many years. Most recently she was The Quill editor for two years.*

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## Looking Forward — The Communicators of Tomorrow



by [Donald Johnstone](#), Program Manager

At the April General Meeting, Dave Goodwin—Associate Professor and the Director of the Digital Arts Communication (DAC) Specialization at the University of Waterloo—gave a brief presentation about the work being done at the university, which was followed by a question-and-answer period with a panel of students. The student panel was comprised of Ben Zhu, Julie Palmer, Peter Coo, and Majid Mirza.

### So what is the DAC all about?

Dave began by giving us an overview of the DAC specialization, in which “students learn how to design with digital images, hypertext, sound, and video. And most importantly, they learn to design, develop, and test media for a wide variety of businesses and professions, ranging from the high-tech sector, to corporate communications, to the creative industries.” (<http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/dac.html> April 2006).



Dave then moved on to tell us about the University of Waterloo Canadian Centre of Arts and Technology (CCAT), which “combines practical and theoretical analysis of human-digital interaction in an environment that unites artistic, cultural, and technological literacy.” ([http://campaign.uwaterloo.ca/project\\_sheets/ccat.pdf](http://campaign.uwaterloo.ca/project_sheets/ccat.pdf) April 2006)

The studios and workshops in which the students and researchers work is funded

by grants—a portion of which came from the STC—and contracts with such companies as StatsCan, Torstar, RIM, and Quarry Integrated Communications.

## **On the horizon**

Dave described upcoming trends in the field. He sees people using:

- rich media, such as **Ebooks** and screen capture animation
- software such as *Click to Meet*—which allows voice and video telephony, streaming media, and data collaboration—to facilitate testing communication in online environments.
- software that allows the user to interact with, rather than press and display, rich media; for example *Machinima*, which is filmmaking within a real-time, 3D virtual environment, often using 3D video-game technologies.

## **The debate begins: what's in it for me?**

The focus of the meeting then turned to the student panel. While each of the four panelists had interesting and astute questions and observations about what students and the STC have to offer each other, I will try to distill the student input in the following list:

- The students would like to see more focus groups or discussions with the student body concerning the interests of students (and future communicators) and the direction of the field of technical communications.
- There should be more focus on the opportunities for students graduating from school.
- The STC should consider approaching the student body about volunteer work that has a concrete goal; for example, working on the Awards committee, or on The Quill.
- The STC should offer a clearer message of who we are and what we can offer a student.

## **Hmmm, good questions!**

During the course of the panel discussion, there were questions asked of the audience, and audience observations.

- Many people with little knowledge of the STC assume it is an organization

for technical writers only, while in fact the STC membership has job descriptions of many hues. The question is, how do we communicate this to the community at large?

- How do we get students to attend our meetings? What are the three constants with a student? They are hungry, busy, and need a job; therefore, events with free food that are career-oriented could draw students out.
- Could the STC sponsor a bulletin board—such as the Math students have—with business cards of members and alumni?
- The student question of “What does the STC offer us?”, was answered by a number of people. Students could avail themselves of general meetings, seminars, WebEx meetings, and our website.

The meeting was truly interactive, in that most of the participants—speaker, panelists, and audience—had their voices heard. It was an interesting perspective and one that our organization should never forget. The voices of the panelists are indeed the voices of the future of technical communications.

*The chapter would like to thank [Sun Life Financial](#) for donating the door prizes for April. Congratulations to our lucky door prize winners, Ben Zhu and Chris Reardon Smith! ♦*

### **About Donald Johnstone**

*Donald is our chapter's Program Manager, and he's travelled all over the world (even Africa!) to book the talent for the monthly STC meetings. He would like to do some more travelling, but our limited budget, and supporting his teenage son, currently prevents him from touring.*

*Donald's background in programming and system analysis have provided him with a solid foundation in his career as technical writer...so far. He loves science fiction, history, photography, and his wife—not necessarily in that order.*

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# Freelance 101: Chronicles for the Self-Employed



by [Leanne Rollins](#), Membership Manager

## **Selling your skills**

Getting back to the basics of just plain old writing has been cathartic for me. Throughout the past year and a half, I've buried myself in the foundations of technical writing. After managing a team for years, I truly forgot how much I love to write.

Strangely enough, this sole focus on writing recently made me realize just how much Technical Writers have to offer an organization. Our skills extend far beyond good grammar and sentence structure. But I'm sure you know that. However, your current or even prospective client may not know that. How then, do you truly build an awareness of your skill set? If you're a freelancer, you have the opportunity to provide a whole lot more than your writing skills to a client: project management, information-gathering, usability analysis, task analysis, workflow assessment, process improvement, and the list goes on.

For many people, playing up their skill set and 'bragging' about themselves is a very difficult thing to do. We're taught as kids to be humble (well, most of us anyway), and it's really hard to break from that mold and take a good look at all we have to offer, then SELL IT.

## **What are your 'value-added' services?**

But if you freelance, you absolutely must take stock of the 'value-added' skills you can offer your clients. Your clients know you can write—that's the primary reason to hire you. But like any business, money is made in the 'extras'. Look at a video store, for example. Their primary business is renting and selling movies, but they also offer an unholy horde of junk food—and the markup on those goods is where they easily make extra money. The same is true of many software companies. They not only sell the software itself, the companies also sell service contracts and peripheral products that pad their margins very nicely.

There's absolutely no reason freelance writers can't do the same. You want to make more money, don't you? I thought so. Me too. When a client approaches me to do some work, I try to think beyond the basic writing that they are asking for. When I prepare a proposal, I pull out my menu of additional services, and create a separate section of the proposal that lists other services that I could

provide to the client.

## **You may not see the benefit immediately**

Not all clients take me up on the 'other services', at least not right away. Sometimes it's due to budget, and sometimes it's because the client just isn't sold on the value of those services. But a few times, I've had a client come back to me and say, "Didn't I read somewhere that you also have experience in *training, editing, workflow assessment?*" In fact, that happened just this week. Last year I prepared an Administration Guide for a client, and that client just came back to me looking for some software usability assessment. In reality, he read about my experience performing usability assessment in my original proposal.

Some clients may not know precisely what they need. In fact, the majority of my clients have an idea of what they are looking for, but the door is wide open for me to make suggestions based on my experience. I take stock of the client's situation, the current problems (related to the documentation usually), and pull together a proposal that can solve those problems. The core problems are rarely solved simply through good writing.

Take another current client, for example. This client was receiving feedback on their documentation that wasn't exactly complimentary. Despite this, I was initially hired only to prepare an update to the existing documentation for an upcoming interim release. After getting my hands dirty, I quickly realized that the problem could not be solved through writing alone. I put together a proposal that required my project management and process management skills—and it was immediately accepted.

For another client, I prepared a User Guide last summer, but included a section in the proposal detailing my editing skills. At the time, the client accepted only the writing proposal. But in January, I got a call asking about my availability to do some intermittent editing for them. I accepted!

## **What services can you sell?**

The first step is to make a list of your services. The hard part is to assign a rate to each service. Your rate will depend entirely upon your level of experience, so take some time to really think about billing for these services.

Here's a brief list to get you started:

- **Editing** (grammatical)
- **Proofing** (style, substantial, technical)

- **Process management** (how to improve the flow of information throughout the company to ultimately appear in the product or service documentation)
- **Training** (materials to accompany instructor-led training or online training)
- **Usability analysis** (Can users accomplish their goals just by using the product documentation? If not, why not?)
- **Task analysis** (What tasks does a user need to perform to accomplish their goals? In what order? What is their expected outcome?)
- **Project management** (For a large documentation suite, establish the list of tasks that are required to complete the project, then manage the day-to-day activity of writers involved in the project. This usually works well for clients who subcontract many portions of a project to off-site contract writers)

I'm certain that you possess many more unique skills that you could offer to a client. It's up to you figure out the best way to sell your writing and your 'value-added' skills to your clients. It may be verbally or within your proposals. Make sure the client realizes that your services extend beyond writing, and just watch your bottom line soar! ♦

### **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 running and soccer.*

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# Annual Year-end Barbecue: Networking Event and Summer Celebration



by [Donald Johnstone](#), Program Manager and [Pauline Horn](#), Student Awards Manager



After working hard for a year, the volunteers want to have fun at the end of the STC year, even if it means volunteering one more time in a fun setting. Members and non-members have always enjoyed kicking off their summer with a great, networking event that caps off another great year for our chapter. You don't want to miss this popular event!

## The Details

**Date:** Friday, June 9, 2006

**Time:** Brewery Tour begins at 6:30pm; Main Event: 7:00-9:00 pm.

**Location:** [Wellington Brewery](#)—Iron Duke House, 950 Woodlawn Road West, Guelph

**Invitees:** The barbecue is open to members and non-members (including friends and family).

**Cost:** LOTS FOR FREE—one drink, an optional brewery tour, door prizes, and great barbecued food and fixings. Additional beer and wine are available at \$1.50 per drink!

**RSVP:** To plan for the brewery tour, and to ensure that we prepare a sufficient amount of food, we request that you RSVP by May 31 to Donald Johnstone at [program@stc-soc.org](mailto:program@stc-soc.org) with the following information:

- your name
- the number of any guests you are bringing
- the total number attending the meal
- the total number, if any, attending the brewery tour.

**Food Bank:** Bring a non-perishable food item for donation to the food bank, and you will be entered into a separate DONATION DOOR PRIZE draw. Wow! ... you contribute to the community and you get the opportunity to win a prize ... can't beat that!



## The Adventure

Do you like to shop, cook or help with serving a meal? Would you like an opportunity to meet new people and develop new skills?

We have just the opportunity for you. You just read about the annual barbecue and we know you're looking forward to it.

Now, it's your turn. Maybe you've been thinking about getting to know some of your Council members better or even some of the other STC members.

We can use your help with the June barbecue. There's shopping to be done, food to be prepared, burgers to be grilled, and supplies to be kept organized.

So don't be shy. Just send an email to Pauline Horn at [studentawards@stc-soc.org](mailto:studentawards@stc-soc.org) and tell her you'd like to help. Join other members of the council who have already offered their support. If you have a particular job you'd like to do, include that in your email.

Let's have as much fun with this as we did last year. ♦

### **About Donald Johnstone**

*Donald is our chapter's Program Manager, and he's travelled all over the world (even Africa!) to book the talent for the monthly STC meetings. He would like to do some more travelling, but our limited budget, and supporting his teenage son, currently prevents him from touring.*

*Donald's background in programming and system analysis have provided him with a solid foundation in his career as technical writer...so far. He loves science fiction, history, photography, and his wife—not necessarily in that order.*

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## Council Meeting Minutes: April, 2006



by [emily layng](#), Recorder

It's been a while, but we're baaa-aaa-aaak! We haven't had a meeting (at least face to face) for a couple of months, so this April meeting was very chatty. We met upstairs at the Peer Group in one of the conference rooms, and it was really nice to see daylight, and get a view of the downtown. We usually meet downstairs, where latecomers can bang on the window, and we will come and let them in.

There were quite a few of us in attendance: *Debbie Kerr, Ursula McCloy, Carol Lawless, Margie Yundt, emily layng, Ruth Haworth, Opal Gamble, Pauline Horn, and Kim Creed.*

### Education Seminar

Kim presented an update about the two-days of seminars. The feedback forms that she gave to attendees enabled Kim to assess the success of the seminar. The most serious complaint was that the room was a bit chilly.

### Nominations

Opal led the next topic, which was about nominations for next year's council. We have a few positions still available, so let us know if you would like to be involved. So far we have the following positions filled:

- Marisa Latin, **Employment Manager**
- Lori Jankowski, **Treasurer**
- Margie Yundt, **Quill Editor**
- Ruth Haworth, **Competition Manager**

As people volunteer, this information is constantly changing, so check our chapter's job bank for the most up-to-date list of available positions.

### Barbecue Update

The barbeque is going to be at the Wellington Brewery again this year, on June 9th. Pauline has volunteers from the council to help with the festivities, but anyone who wants to pitch in is more than welcome. There will be tours of the brewery for those who are interested. We decided this year to have an

additional door prize for anyone who brings in a Food Bank donation.

## Company Recognition

The council unanimously decided on a winner of the Company Recognition award. In case they have not been informed that they have won, I don't want to announce it here. Watch for details in the next issue of the newsletter.

## STC Survey

If you have not already done so, complete the STC survey that is email to you about having your work edited. It only takes 18 minutes to complete!

The meeting was adjourned exactly at 8 o'clock, and it was still daylight. Awesome. ♦

### **About emily layng (Recorder)**

*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.*

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## Membership News

by [Leanne Rollins](#), Membership Manager



**170.**

Is this:

- The estimated price of gas by summer's end?
- Our current membership count?
- The number of times I've asked for member profiles?
- All of the above!

Unbelievably, our chapter membership rose to 170 members this month. At the beginning of the year, I stated that my goal was to increase membership by 5%. At the time, our membership count was 151, so I needed to get another 8 people to join. Well, we certainly blew that number away! With 19 new members since September, we must have broken some kind of record. Unfortunately, I really can't take the credit for it. It's really because of our chapter's stellar reputation, excellent publications, and the quality and frequency of our meetings.

And yet, despite having 19 new members, my pleas for membership profiles have fallen on deaf ears. I'll just have to be satisfied with meeting new members at our monthly meetings and learning a little bit more about members through private email conversations. Our membership clearly prefers its privacy. I can respect that.

Welcome this month to new STC members *January Ford* and *Bob Steele*. Also welcome to transferring members *Norm Steinhauser*, *Rob Hanna*, *Maggie Lichty*, and *Brian Patrick Shaw*. Transfer members are those who are already STC members, but who have recently chosen to affiliate their membership with our chapter. In some cases this means that they were previously associated with another chapter, and in other cases it means that they have chosen to be affiliated with two chapters — our chapter and another one. This second scenario is the case with new members Norm Steinhauser and Rob Hanna, who are also members of the Toronto Chapter.

Welcome to you all, and I look forward to meeting you in person. ♦



## **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 running and soccer.*

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## Upcoming Chapter Meetings



### May 2nd, 2006 Championing Standards in Technical Documentation



Ralph Robinson will discuss why standards are needed; how they are created; and what role the STC plays.

The STC has been actively involved with the development of international standards on many fronts. Through the STC Standards Committee, the Society is currently represented at both the W3C Consortium for WWW Standards and the ISO working group for Software and Systems Documentation standards. Ralph Robinson is one of two official delegates representing the STC on the ISO standards committee. The ISO committee has embarked on a major overhaul effort of current standards and guidelines to structure them in a more user-centered way and update them to account for new technologies in the field of technical communication.

**Join us @ the University of Waterloo Davis Centre, Room DC 1304 7:00 PM (doors open at 6:30 PM)**

**Ralph Robinson** is an active senior member of the STC Toronto chapter and a member of ASQ (American Society for Quality). He has been in the technical communication field for over 18 years, dealing exclusively with ISO matters for the last 13 years. He is an independent consultant and author of Documenting ISO 9000: Guidelines for Compliant Documentation. ♦

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### June 9th, 2006 Annual Year-end Barbecue Networking Event and Summer Celebration



Come out to our **annual chapter barbecue** and enjoy some great food and a refreshing beverage on us!

**Join us @ the Wellington Brewery 950 Woodlawn Road West, Guelph 7:00 PM (Brewery tour at 6:30pm for those interested)**

See [our article](#) in The Quill for the details! ♦

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