



the Quill

the Newsletter for the Southwestern Ontario Chapter STC



JULY/AUGUST 2006 (Volume 18 Number 1) [About the Quill](#)

In This Issue

President's Message

In the immortal words of rock god David Bowie, and in her own unique style, Debbie Kerr, Chapter President, talks about the *ch-ch-changes* afoot in our chapter this year. Read all about it! ♦

Director's Message

Cindy Currie, Director for Region 1, is gearing up for another activity-filled STC year. Read about the impending not-to-be-missed conferences and second annual World Usability Day (um, can I get these people to talk to the manufacturers of my cell phone please?) ♦

Annual Summer Barbecue: Cool Happenings Make for Warm Feelings

The results are in — it was a raging success! Next one is at Paul's house. Why? Well, you will just have to read about it for yourself. ♦

Highlights of Your Council's Planning Session

The council for the STC Southwestern Ontario chapter convened in August to plan the next exciting year, and yeah, there was pizza. Besides our summer vacations, find out what else we talked about! ♦

The Editor's Message

Welcome to The Quill "Lite"!



to it. ;))

We are publishing this special edition of The Quill (waking me from my summer nap) to let you know about a few changes in our chapter activities over the coming year. This was a last minute council decision, which is why I am a little tardy in the publication. That is my story, and I am sticking

And, despite much stamping of sandalled feet, I must admit I am *excited* about the road ahead, even if it involves a coat and boots.

September Chapter Meeting

First of all, we have moved the first general meeting of the year to the **THIRD** week of September, so mark your calendars for **Tuesday, September 19th**.

Next, just for this meeting, we have moved from our usual location at the William G. Davis building on the University of Waterloo campus to the Fishbowl room down the hall (DC 1301). Same time (7pm start), but the format is a progression on ***Employment Avenues for Technical Communicators*** so come with your sneakers on and lots of questions for our knowledgeable speakers.

The progression format is a fun one 'cause you get to move around to a different table every 10 to 15 minutes and start a whole new conversation. You won't want to miss this!

In other news...

As Debbie talks about in [her article](#), we are scaling down our chapter meetings and The Quill to a bi-monthly format. See you in October!

Questions? Comments? Email Margie at 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 bi-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 bi-monthly, with the exception of January, so there are five issues published from September 2006 to August 2007.

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/October	September 26
November/December	November 21
February/March	February 20
April/May	April 24
July/August	August 21

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

Margie Yundt,
The Quill Editor, 52 Thompson Dr, Guelph, Ontario, Canada N1E 7A2

The Quill Staff

Editor: [Margie Yundt](#)

Copy Editors: Debbie Kerr & Laura Zinn

Technical and Layout Advisor: Opal Gamble

Illustrator: Martin Eisenloeffel

Chapter Officers

President: [Debbie Kerr](#)

Treasurer: [Lori Jankowski](#)

Recorder: [Carol Lawless](#)

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's Message](#) | [Director's Message](#) | [Barbecue](#) | [Council](#)



President's Message: It's the most wonderful time of the year!



by [Debbie Kerr](#), President

The commercials say it's the most wonderful time of the year, and I couldn't agree more. The kids are back in school (even if they are not yours), you've got some new reading material (The Quill), and an STC meeting is just around the corner. What more could you want?

I met with your council recently to plan the coming year, and I want you to know that you have some great people working on your behalf. They have a lot of enthusiasm and a lot of great ideas! I'd like to share just a few of our ideas with you.

Employment Progression

To start the year off with something that is of interest to everyone, we decided to have an Employment progression. Since no one but the independently wealthy can truly say that they are not interested in employment, the topic should interest everyone. As for a progression, it certainly sounds good when you put the terms progression and employment together. If you don't know what a progression is, it will sound even better when you know what it is.

A progression involves a series of speakers, in this case that relate to the topic of employment. They are located at various tables throughout a room and those who attend the meeting have set intervals to hear each speaker and ask questions. After a set time, attendees are asked to go (progress) to the next speaker they want to hear. This is a great format for people to gather a variety of information from a variety of sources, in a relatively short time, while managing to network with a lot of people.

Could there be a better way to start the new STC year?

Changes to Our Format

With fewer members on our council, we decided to try a few changes to our schedule of activities. We decided to have fewer general meetings and fewer issues of our newsletter, but we would alternate them so that we would always be in touch with you—even during the summer. You are getting this special issue to welcome you back and to let you know about our changes. We didn't want you to come running to our first general meeting, especially when we decided to move it to the THIRD Tuesday of the month, September 19. We also

moved this special event to what is lovingly referred to as the “fishbowl” at the University of Waterloo, because the walls are glass and people can see in. While it may not sound attractive, it is actually a selling feature, because we want people to wonder what we are doing and want to come inside to join us.

Open Communication

We want to generate excitement about our profession, about our chapter, and about our council. We will be introducing ourselves at each general meeting so that you know who we are. Make sure you come and talk to us if you have any questions, or if you cannot attend a meeting, contact us by email; our email addresses are posted on the About page of our website at www.stc-soc.org.

If you have a suggestion, or you don't like something, please let us know. We can't give you what you want if we don't know what that is. Even better, you could show us what you want, by joining us on the council.

Practical Experience

If you have been trying to get a job, but you don't have enough experience, then think about volunteering as a great way to improve your portfolio. We have opportunities within our organization that could give you practical experience that you could add to your résumé. We have large and small positions left to fill, as well as various tasks that need doing. Tell us what skills you have, and we will find something that can be a win-win situation for both us.

Let's make this “wonderful time of the year” feeling last for the whole year. Excitement doesn't have to fade with time; you just have to keep ideas fresh and new. We welcome your ideas and your participation. ♦

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. For the second year in a row, Debbie has bravely taken on the role of Chapter President.

In this issue:

[Contents](#) | [President's Message](#) | [Director's Message](#) | [Barbecue](#) | [Council](#)





Director's Message: Gearing Up for a Great Year!

by [Cindy Currie](#), STC Region 1 Director



Have some fun, grow your skills, and expand your network

Welcome to a brand new STC year! Many communities have their planning for this year well underway and are in need of fresh faces to bring some of these plans to fruition. If you have received a call for volunteers from your community leaders, please seriously consider moving into an active role in your community.

Many communities are looking for program managers, competition managers, newsletter editors and / or webmasters, and to fill other positions. Role sharing might be possible if you're interested in a role, but you may have some constraints that make it unrealistic for you to assume 100% responsibility for it. Ask your community leaders how you can participate in a way that meets both your needs and those of the community.

Sure, I know, volunteering means you need to make a (sometimes big) commitment, but with the benefits available to you by doing so — new skills, new contacts, new friends, great sense of accomplishment, and valuable experience to add to your résumé or CV — how can you afford not to? Truthfully, very often the more you put into something, the more you get out of it. So, now is the time to go for it and send that "I want to volunteer!" email to your chapter leaders!

New monthly email message from STC President

Have you seen News and Notes from the STC President, the new email publication from STC President *Paula Berger*? To keep you current on STC happenings, Paula began sending a monthly email communiqué to all STC members over the summer. These messages go out at the end of each month (shortly after the monthly Board of Directors teleconferences — also new this STC year!) to ensure that you are always in the know. There's a lot happening in STC these days!

To review recent messages, visit <http://www.stc.org/stcmembers/presNewsAug06.asp>. (Note: The August issue is current as of this writing, but you should be able to access all recent issues — July, August, and beyond — from this page.) And, be sure to watch your inbox for Paula's next message.

Two not-to-be-missed conference/educational opportunities this fall

- **Region 2** will host **Making Cents of Making Sense: Technical Communication and Business** (www.stcuk.org/R2conf) in London, England, October 13-14, 2006. This conference is aimed at companies in need of technical communication and the people who produce it. The program includes top-notch speakers who can show the business value of quality technical communication.
- **Region 5** will host **50 Facets of Technical Communication** (www.region5conf.com/) in Addison, Texas, November 2-4, 2006. This conference is the perfect place to polish every facet of your technical communication portfolio! In addition, the Lone Star chapter will be celebrating its 50th anniversary at this conference.

It's time to honor deserving members

This is the time of year to think about who you would like to nominate for the honorary rank of STC

Associate Fellow and get this process underway. Any member or community in STC can submit a nomination packet. For more information, visit www.stc.org/recog/honors01.asp.

Completed nomination forms must be email to the STC Office (peg@stc.org) no later that October 21, 2006. For questions or concerns, contact Associate Fellow Committee Chair, *Mark Hanigan*, at onwritetrk@aol.com.

Making life easy!

Mark your calendars for the second annual **World Usability Day (WUD)**, November 14, 2006. World Usability Day 2006 promotes the value of usability engineering and user-centered design and the belief that every user has the responsibility to ask for things that work better. The Usability Professionals' Association (UPA) (www.usabilityprofessionals.org) is doing that by encouraging, organizing, and sponsoring 36 hours of activities at the local level around the globe, all occurring on this day. The UPA, UPA chapters, and allied organizations (of which STC is one!) will all hold events revolving around the common theme — "Making life easy!" The focus this year is on accessibility and inclusion.

Organizing STC's participation in this event are Rahel Bailie and Jerome Ryckborst. As we get closer to the day, look for more information about how STC is participating and for events in your area. For more information about WUD in general, visit www.worldusabilityday.org.

Seeking new organizational partnerships

Forming partnerships with other professional organizations (both profit and non-profit) is a strategic priority this year. STC has recently rejoined **INTECOM** (International Council for Technical Communication, www.intecom.org) and has entered into a formal agreement with LISA (Localization Industry Standards Association, www.lisa.org) that provides a framework for the exchange of membership privileges and project collaboration. If any of you have thoughts about organizations that STC should have as partners, please email *Mark Clifford* at 2vp@stc.org or *Andrea Ames* at aames@pobox.com.

Out and About

My chapter visit plans for this year are beginning to take shape and look like this at the moment:

- **Connecticut** Chapter Strategic Planning (Recharting) Workshop, November (date TBD)
- **Tech Valley** Chapter, November (date TBD)
- **Northern New England** Chapter, January (date TBD)
- **Eastern Ontario** Chapter, March (date TBD)

Please let me know what your program plans and events are for this STC year and if you'd like to me to visit your chapter or attend a special event. I will continue my visits as your interest and my finances and schedule permit. ♦



About Cindy Currie

Cindy is currently the Director of STC Region 1. She is an STC Fellow and a member of the Northern New England and United Kingdom chapters, and well as numerous SIGs. She is a senior project manager at Hewlett-Packard Company.

In this issue:

[Contents](#) | [President's Message](#) | [Director's Message](#) | [Barbecue](#) | [Council](#)



Annual Summer Barbecue: Cool Happenings Make for Warm Feelings



by [Debbie Kerr](#), President and [Pauline Horn](#), Student Awards Manager

Friday, June 9th was a chilly day outside, but inside the Wellington Brewery, there was a lot of warmth being generated. Was it from the camaraderie of the STC members and friends that came for the annual barbecue? Was it the brewery tour or the drinks available for us? Maybe it was the delicious barbecue that was being served.

Whatever it was, the generosity of the attendees was much appreciated by the **Food Bank**. Besides the 36 pounds of food collected, cash donations totalling \$40.00 were made to this worthy cause. To top this off, the left over desserts were taken to a youth shelter at the end of the evening.

In addition to helping others, and helping ourselves to good food, there were prizes and an award that were given during the course of the evening.

Prizes

Like all our regular general meetings, there were draws for two door prizes. Everyone who came to the barbecue was eligible for this prize. One was awarded to **Carol Lawless** (last year's Treasurer/this year's Recorder) and one was awarded to **Ursula McCloy** (last year's Employment Manager/this year's Hospitality Manager).

All attendees who donated food for the Food Bank also had their names entered into a draw for a special prize that the Wellington Brewery donated. This beer-oriented prize went to **Paul Kostiuk** (last year's and this year's Email List Manager). Surprisingly, the party he promised to help use the prize has not happened.

Company Recognition Award

Every year, the council recognizes a company that has shown its support of the STC. This year we gave the award to the [PEER Group](#) for:

- allowing us to host our Web seminars at their office
- hosting our council meetings
- paying for STC memberships and chapter education days for their employees

- donating door prizes for our general meetings
- having three staff members who were on the 2005-2006 council (Marisa Latin, Kim Creed, Ursula McCloy)

Congratulations to a company that really deserved the recognition!



Many people helped to make this annual event a success: the program manager who arranged the location and logistics, the behind-the-scene person who organized all the volunteers, the shoppers who brought the things that were needed, the guest barbecuers, and the people who helped to keep the evening flowing smoothly. Thanks to everyone, including those who took the time to attend our event.

This was a great way to wind up another successful year for our STC Chapter! ♦

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. For the second year in a row, Debbie has bravely taken on the role of Chapter President.

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.

In this issue:

[Contents](#) | [President's Message](#) | [Director's Message](#) | [Barbecue](#) | [Council](#)



Highlights of Your Council's Planning Session



by [Debbie Kerr](#), President

On Tuesday, August 22, the new council for 2006-2007 met for the first time to plan the new STC year. To even have a planning meeting, we needed a location. Fortunately, Leanne Rollins was able to get permission for us to use a meeting room at Equitrac for this and future council meetings. Thank you Leanne and Equitrac!

The meeting began at 6:30 and ended at 8:30 pm.

Attendees: *Laura Zinn (Newsletter Copy Editor), Margie Yundt (Newsletter Editor), Ruth Haworth (Competition Manager), Leanne Rollins (Competition Committee), Lori Jankowski (Treasurer), Debbie Kerr (President), Sarah-Beth Doner (UW Student Liaison), Pauline Horn (Student Awards Manager), Karen Pogue (Membership Manager).*

Regrets: *Carol Lawless (Recorder), Fei Min Lorente (Volunteer Manager), Marisa Latin (Employment Manager), Paul Kostiuk (Email Manager), Stephanie Knoke (Webmaster).*

Chapter-level Goals

Transformation, rechartering

The words "transformation" and "rechartering" keep showing up in emails from the STC. Speaking as the president (yes, this is Debbie writing), I don't know if it just me getting those emails, but I thought I'd better do something about them to see if they would stop. I am looking for more information, and once I find it, will work with the council to start documenting processes and procedures that the council performs. This will formalize our processes, and ensure everyone understands what we do and why we are doing it, which can't be a bad thing. Can it? Time will tell.

Reaching Distance Audiences

While our meetings are usually in Waterloo or Guelph, we do recognize that we are the Southwestern Ontario Chapter STC, and so discussed possible ways of making meetings available to audiences who are further away. We wondered if we could connect with other universities and colleges like Western, Windsor, Brock, McMaster, and the community colleges. We wondered if we could set up a pod cast of some kind so that we could communicate with a wider range of

people. We are still doing research, but your feedback would be appreciated. Is this something that interests you? [Let us know!](#)

Portfolio-level goals for portfolios without managers

Program

The plan is to have general meetings in September, November, February, April, and June. This will complement when the newsletter is issued so that we will have contact with our members each month.

In September, we are having a progression meeting about Employment (for details, see the [Editor's column](#)). April will be our annual Wine and Cheese networking event, and June will be our year-end barbecue.

We are still working out the details for our other meetings. If you have any ideas about topics that you would like covered or you know of a great speaker, we would love to hear from you.

Education

Web Seminars

These will continue, and will be selected based on speaker and topic — not just on having one each month. We will make an effort to have them in the months when there is no general meeting, but it really depends on the topics available. Assistance with [hosting and managing these events](#) is always welcome.

Education Seminars

We plan to have education seminars again this year. We are looking for very special speakers this year — one or more speakers who are outside the usual names that come up. If you have suggestions on topics or speakers that you would like to see, send them to education@stc-soc.org. If you want to help in way with the organization of this event, then we would like to hear from you.

Public Relations

To help increase the visibility of our chapter, and the STC in general, we would like to get involved in career and job fairs. If you know of upcoming events or events where you think we could "get the word out" about the STC, then send [me](#) an email, and we will add to the agenda for our next council meeting. If you have some time yourself to help with our public relation efforts, we would like to hear from you too.

Portfolio-level goals for portfolios with managers in attendance

Competition

The general information about the competition has been submitted to Head Office so that it will appear on www.stc.org. Plans are being discussed as to how the training day for judges can be done more effectively. Why wait for an invitation, why not email competition@stc-soc.org now if you are interested in being a judge?

Student Awards

In an effort to attract more submissions for our student awards competition, we are opening the competition to the University of Western Ontario. We are also looking into ways to simplify and clarify the submission process, for example:

- automate the process with online forms
- post samples from some previous winners to give students an idea of what we are looking for as "technical communication"
- provide a list of what is "acceptable" communication, and maybe expand that to include multimedia
- provide instructions on how to obtain transcripts of marks
- expand on what is required in the cover letter.

The Quill

The number of issues of the newsletter will be fewer this year, with issues going out in October, December, March, May and August. This issue is a sort of "lite" version, which we pulled together to let you know about the change in the number of meetings and newsletters. We also needed this issue to let you know about the change to **our first general meeting, which is on the third Tuesday of September, September 19.**

Other Portfolios

Other portfolio managers were either not at the meeting or had nothing to report at this time. That doesn't mean that they have nothing to do. I know for a fact that things change quickly.

For example, since the planning session, Ursula McCloy has agreed to be the Hospitality Manager, Marisa Latin, our Employment Manager, has been emailing me with various requests, so I know she is active. Stephanie Knoke, our [webmaster](#), is on vacation, and sending me messages from her BlackBerry, asking me what needs to be done on the [website](#).

I don't know if this is some kind of curse for not attending the planning session,

but don't let the absence of notes about a portfolio make you think that nothing is happening. It just means that nothing was reported; it does not mean there is no activity.

Anyway, Margie was at the meeting, and she is getting a lot of activity out of me. (Look at how many articles have my name on it). I am writing this after midnight, because Margie said she wanted it Friday night, so technically I am a little late. Hopefully being president carries some weight, and Margie is asleep and won't notice that this email came in after midnight.

Editor's Note: *What? And risk my volunteer job ;)*

Next meeting:

Want to get more involved? Join us at our next council meeting on Tuesday, September 12th at Equitrac (450 Philip St in Waterloo). Pizza is served at 6:30pm sharp! ♦

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. For the second year in a row, Debbie has bravely taken on the role of Chapter President.

In this issue:

[Contents](#) | [President's Message](#) | [Director's Message](#) | [Barbecue](#) | [Council](#)

