

SAN FRANCISCO
February 2002

ActiveVOICE

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIETY FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION, SAN FRANCISCO CHAPTER

February 20th Meeting

The art of reviewing documents and judging technical competitions

Presenter: Paul Sinasohn

What should you do as a reviewer? How should you approach a peer review? How is reviewing printed material different from reviewing art, online items, or Web sites? Are there special considerations to be aware of when you look at marketing documents or training materials? At this presentation, you'll learn by doing. Sinasohn will have examples of feedback to discuss and critique as we learn how to present polite and productive feedback.

Sinasohn is a Senior Technical Course Developer and Instructor for Sendmail, Inc., and VP, Programs for the Berkeley Chapter STC. Previously, he worked in technical training for CommerceRoute, Siebel Systems, and Scopus Technology, where he was also on the technical writing team. Before he changed careers to technical communications, he spent 13 years in corporate financial analysis, merger & acquisition planning, and financial management. He has an M.B.A. from Golden Gate University and a B.A. from UCB. When not at work, the San Francisco native can be found building models out of Lego and/or singing small-group acappella or vaudeville. He reads historical mysteries, science fiction, and fantasy novels in order to escape the humdrum of existence.

March 20th Meeting

Creating a portfolio that sells

Presenter: Victoria Maki

A portfolio can both enhance your résumé and serve as a visual aid in a job interview. Judicious use of the portfolio can increase your control of the job interview, help you give substance to your claim that you are a good candidate for the position, and increase your confidence. If you are an experienced technical communicator, you want a portfolio that conveys your breadth of experience and mastery. If you are a novice, you want to show that you have the skills, drive, and potential to be an asset to the company.

Victoria Maki is president of Bitzone LLC. With over a decade of experience as a trainer and technical writer, she has written and designed software manuals of all kinds, marketing materials, online help systems, Web sites, white papers, and training materials. Her clients include Chevron, Visa, Oracle, Pacific Bell, and other enterprises, both large and small. She has an M.B.A. from JFK University and B.A. degrees in Psychology and English from Sonoma State University.

SEE INSIDE FOR MEETING TIMES, LOCATION, & MORE DETAILS!



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Holiday Party Brought Fun and Prizes

by Jennifer Crawford

At our December 19th meeting, we gathered to celebrate the season and enjoy each other's company. After mixing, munching, and chatting, we had a friendly competition for prizes. Past President Lu Rehling coordinated as we tried to find the attendees with the most interesting answers to some STC- and career-related questions.

Unlikely degrees and jobs

Prizes for most unlikely degree/major went to Lindasusan Ulrich, who majored in Nuclear Fusion Engineering, and Jim Bisso, who studied Historical Comparative Linguistics. Michele Molitor, Possibilitarian, took the prize for most striking job title, while Dana Chisnell, former house cleaner, and Susan Becker, former UPS driver, took prizes for most unlikely prior job.

Networking and interviewing

We learned that Carol Seajay endured the longest job interview, once interviewing for three days. Diane Amses earned a prize for meeting with the most interviewers for a job. Her interview involved meeting with 10 people.

A few of our attendees got prizes for the best STC networking experience. Paul Sinasohn met Andrew Davis of Synergistech at a meeting, and Davis counseled him that business writing in

corporate finance could lead to a technical writing career. Susan Becker came to a chapter meeting at the London Wine Bar, announced her job availability, met someone from a company next door, and got a job there.

The long and the short

We were delighted (and some of use amazed) to learn that Dana Chisnell has been a member since 1983. Chisnell got a prize for the longest membership. Prizes for the shortest membership went to Joseph Fong, with a membership of a month and a half, and to Andria Strickley, who signed up that same night! Larry Mesple, who came all the way from Napa for the party, got a prize for the longest commute. The prize for the highest number of transit options went to Carol Seajay, who took three forms of transit to get to the party.

At the end of the evening, we all knew more about each other. It was a festive and informative meeting.

Prizes

Publishers and recruiters donated prizes for our mixer. Peachpit Press, Addison-Wesley, and Digital Press each donated five books. Osborne-McGraw-Hill donated 12. TechWriters.com donated two stylish baseball caps.

Jennifer Crawford is Newsletter Editor for the San Francisco Chapter STC.

Writer in the Workplace Conference

The Sacramento Chapter STC is hosting the Writer in the Workplace Conference on April 6, 2002. This year's conference is entitled "Communication: The Vital Link."

Four conference stems will discuss information of importance to technical communicators:

- Vital Links: Core competencies in technical communication

- Polished Links: Promoting excellence on the job

- Career Links: Getting a job in a tight economy

- Missing Links: Featuring out-of-the-box topics

For further information, visit
<http://www.stcsacramento.org/WIW2002/index.htm>.

Chapter Elections: Candidate Statements

In April, our chapter will conduct elections. Chapter members will receive their ballots via the members-only listserv. (Note that chapter members are subscribed to the listserv automatically, so all members who have not unsubscribed from the listserv will receive a ballot.)

For the 2002–2003 year, we are filling the offices of President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. We are splitting into two offices the position of Secretary-Treasurer, which is a single office in the current year.

If you have any questions about the election process, feel free to contact our President, Marc Smircich, at info@stc-sf.org, or our Past President, Lu Rehling, at rehlingl@sfsu.edu.

President

Candidate: Marc Smircich, incumbent (uncontested)

I am a Senior Technical Writer at Quintessential School Systems in San Mateo with over a dozen years experience documenting financial and human resources applications. As a senior member of the STC, my involvement with the STC includes judging in the last six Touchstone competitions, serving as Membership Manager for the chapter in the 1999–2000 year, and serving as President of the chapter for this year. My goals for the 2002–2003 year include providing varied and interesting speakers for the monthly meetings, supporting the educational mission of the chapter, and strengthening the chapter's organizational framework to ensure its ongoing success.

Vice President

Candidate: Susan C. Becker, incumbent (uncontested)

A contract technical communicator and online help developer with 15 years experience, I am past Secretary-

Treasurer and current Vice President of the chapter. In 1997, I directed Touchstone, and I am a past award-winner in the competition.

In my second term as Vice President, I plan to work with our continuing and new officers and with you, the members, to make our monthly chapter meetings even more informative and fun. In these uncertain economic times, we need a place where we can learn and relax together.

Treasurer

Candidate: Ben Johnson, incumbent (uncontested)

As the current Secretary-Treasurer, I have enjoyed working with the other volunteers to help our chapter continue to be rewarding for all those who come in contact with it. I have met many great people and learned many valuable things that I will carry with me throughout my career. Should I be elected to the position of Treasurer again, I will appreciate the opportunity to continue to contribute to our chapter and to build upon everything I have learned this year.

Secretary

Candidate: Matt Ness, currently Announcements Manager

I'm a technical communicator with seven years of experience as a writer and project manager, and I've been volunteering my time as the Announcements Manager since July of last year. I've been having a great time so far. I've worked closely with the other members of the STC leadership committee and have developed a pretty good idea of how we work and what our challenges are going forward. As Secretary, I'd bring all of this experience to bear, and do my best to continue helping our chapter serve its members as best as it can.

Our Meetings

When

Third Wednesday of every month.
6 pm: Networking and hors d'oeuvres; 7 pm: Program.

Where

Downstairs at the London Wine Bar: 415 Sansome between Sacramento & Clay.

Reservations

Make advance reservations at <http://www.acteva.com> (search for "stc").

Admission at the door is on a space-available basis.

Cost

With advance reservations:
\$10 STC members; \$15 non-members; \$8 students.

At the door:

\$13 STC members; \$18 non-members; \$11 students;
first-timers free with coupon (from our Web site).

Directions

From BART

Get off at the Montgomery BART Station. Leave by the "Sansome Sutter" exit and walk straight ahead.

From the East Bay

Take the Bay Bridge (Hwy 80). Take the first exit, Fremont. Follow Fremont across Market, where it becomes Front. Go 1 block. Turn left onto Pine. Go 2 blocks. Turn right onto Sansome. Go 2 blocks.

From the Peninsula

Take Hwy 101 heading N. Continue on Interstate 80 heading NE. Take the 4th St./Embarcadero exit. Continue straight on Bryant for 1 block. Turn left on 3rd. Turn right on Folsom. Turn left on Fremont. Follow Fremont across Market, where it becomes Front. Bear right on Front. Turn left on Pine. Go 2 blocks. Turn right on Sansome.

From the North Bay

Take Hwy 101 heading S. Turn left on Broadway heading E. Go down Columbus heading SE. Bear right on Montgomery. Turn left on California. Turn left on Sansome.

Parking

The closest parking garage is at One Embarcadero Center. The entrance is located on Battery between Sacramento and Clay.

President's Notes and News

by Marc Smircich

Marc Smircich is a Senior Technical Writer for Quintessential School Systems in San Mateo, California. He has 14 years of experience documenting financial and human resources applications. Email: info@stc-sf.org.

Welcome to Our Chapter!

New STC Members

Diane C. Amses
Silvia M. Bresani
Melvin R. Clark
Patty L. Culver
Terry G. Davidson
Kari S. Gaudette
Christan B. Honeck
Krystyna R. Maliniak
Chris W. Moore
Steven W. Smith
Leslie A. Tilling

Transfer and Reinstated Members

James M. Birkinshaw
Ramna Brandt
Joan E. Carter
Tony Cullen
William J. Keyworth
Michelle Page
Martin E. Rosse
James H.J. Warner

Congratulations to scholarship winners

Each year, the San Francisco Chapter STC sponsors a scholarship for students in the Technical and Professional Writing (TPW) Program at San Francisco State University. This year's recipients are Kathleen Perry and Trudie Folsom. We will be honoring them at the February chapter meeting.

Are you receiving meeting reminders via e-mail?

If your e-mail address has changed, you can send a message to lists@stc-sf.org with your old and new e-mail addresses. Also, please be sure the STC has your current e-mail address. In April, this chapter will be re-subscribing all its members to the members-only listserv with the e-mail addresses from the STC's membership database. To verify your contact information, go to www.stc.org, click on [For Members], look up your membership record, and inform the STC of any needed changes.

San Francisco Chapter Information

Web site: <http://www.stc-sf.org> **Phone:** (415) 820-1566 **Email:** info@stc-sf.org

Regional STC Chapter Meetings

San Francisco chapter meets the 3rd Wednesday of each month.

For details: www.stc-sf.org

Silicon Valley chapter meets the 4th Thursday of each month.

For details: www.stc-siliconvalley.org

Berkeley chapter meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month.

For details: www.stc-berkeley.org

East Bay chapter meets the 2nd Thursday of each month.

For details: www.ebstc.org

North Bay chapter meets the 3rd Thursday of each month.

For details: www.stc-northbay.org

Sacramento chapter meets the 1st Wednesday of each month.

For details: www.stcsacramento.org

SAN FRANCISCO CHAPTER

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First Class Mail