



May 2010, Volume 22, Number 9

**May chapter meeting
Annual General Meeting**

6:00 p.m. (5:45 registration and networking)

Note: different location

May 4, 2010

Canad Inns Polo Park, Room 1
1405 St. Matthews Avenue

**Conflict resolution
Sue Hemphill**

Please confirm your attendance by noon, Friday, April 30, with Joanne Kusiak at

meetingcoordinator@stcmanitoba.org

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**May chapter meeting
Annual General Meeting**

By now, many of our chapter members should have received an e-mail outlining the current state of STC Manitoba. Our chapter is in serious trouble as the nominating chair has been unable to find volunteers for the 2010–2011 executive committee. Our chapter is missing nominees for the key committee positions—President, Secretary, and Treasurer—that it needs to continue to function.

Currently, some chapter members have volunteered to step up to complete short one off tasks; volunteers who can greatly assist any incoming executive. The schedule for the AGM is as follows:

5:45–6:00	Registration
6:00–6:45	Presentation
6:45–7:00	Buffet dinner (Turkey)—\$10 for members and students; \$20 for non-members
	Note: No charge for members who are not eating
7:00–8:00	Business meeting, including nominations and elections

We need as many chapter members as possible to come to the meeting to discuss our future and determine next steps. Never has chapter member involvement been so crucial to guiding the future of STC Manitoba. **We need your ideas and input to move forward.** The outgoing executive committee has been working tirelessly to try and avoid the current situation, but time has finally run out.

The outgoing executive looks forward to seeing chapter members at the AGM and hearing your suggestions.



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

About *Manuscript*

Manuscript and its shorter sibling *Micro Manuscript* are the official newsletters of STC Manitoba. Together, they are published 10 times annually between September and June. The opinions expressed are those of the authors. Submissions, news, reviews, and other items of interest are welcome. Contributions may be edited for length. Deadline is the fifteenth of every month. For example, the deadline for the November issue is October 15.

Please make arrangements in advance with the editor. By submitting an article, you agree to its publication in *Manuscript* and for other STC publications to reprint it without permission. The writer holds copyright. When submitting an article, please let the editor know if it has been published or submitted elsewhere.

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susan_haire@hotmail.com

Past President, Andrew Quarry

Secretary, Vacant

Treasurer, Donald Nordman

Membership, Vacant

Public relations, Dorothy Davidson

Program, Vacant

Meeting coordinator, Joanne Kusiak

Members of Manitoba's STC chapter gather at the Annual General Meeting in May and elect members to the STC Chapter. Each member on the executive is elected for a term of one year.

From the President

And now for something completely different.

For those who know me on a more personal level than President of STC Manitoba, you probably know that I seem to have a black cloud following me around lately.

I think global warming is making the cloud worse.

At the end of 2008, I was laid off from my job at Vansco Electronics, where I worked since graduating from the Technical Communication Diploma Program at Red River College in 2004. Luckily I heard it was coming and was able to get a couple resumes out before the hammer dropped. About a month later, I was called into my first interview with a company called IMRIS—a young, Winnipeg based medical technology company on the “up and up”.

The day before my first interview I had a hockey game—should have stayed home. I got high-sticked in the face in the third period, leaving me with a brutal black eye and cuts all over my forehead.

What do they say about first impressions again? You only get one chance?

Nothing makes a great first impression like showing up for your first job interview with a black eye and bloody forehead. All I can say is thank god IMRIS is filled with knowledgeable hockey people who had sympathy for what happened, otherwise, I don't think I would have been hired.

I hate to say this, but they should have seen this as a sign for things to come.

A couple months after starting at IMRIS I broke my finger playing football. Not a huge deal, but it did hamper my ability to type, and I had to miss a half day of work waiting at the Pan Am clinic for treatment. A couple months after that I was taking out the garbage, and decided to roll my ankle down the back porch stairs instead of walking down them like a normal person. I tore all the major ligaments in my left ankle and spent an entire day at the Pan Am clinic. Lucky for me, I paid \$500 for hockey registration two days earlier. Easy come, easy go I guess—I was out of hockey and on crutches for the next two months.

After my ankle healed, I managed to play one hockey game. My team won in overtime, which ended a nine game losing streak, and I finally felt like I had my life back. Or so I thought ...

The very next day IMRIS had a company ball hockey tournament, and after the first game it felt like I pulled my right groin muscle a little. I was out of shape from being on crutches, so I wasn't too surprised that something felt tight. But like a true Canadian hockey player (see “idiot”), I kept playing. We ended up losing to the engineers in the semi-finals in what I would call the roughest ball hockey game I've ever played in my life. People were being body checked into snow banks, and I was tackled on the concrete on more

(“From the President” continued on page 3)

From the Editor

Well, the time has finally come! Rest ... here I come and I welcome you with open arms!

After a hectic semester as both a very part-time instructor and student, I am finally glad to see the end of term. This year, I was given the opportunity to teach the Technical Illustration 2 course, in the Technical Communication Diploma Program at Red River College. I really enjoyed the opportunity to teach once a week. It was a very interesting experience and as a former student, I was curious to see how the diploma program has evolved from when I was a student in the program. Although some courses have changed, what hasn't is how students approach homework. That attitude seems to remain a "classic."

For the most part, I had a really good group of students. At the same time, I felt their pain but in a different way. In addition to teaching and working full time, I too, was taking courses twice a week. It makes for a lot of creative multi-tasking and planning. Although my homework tasks were a little different. I can honestly say, I have found a program that frustrates me more than the elusive FrameMaker, which I eventually conquered (somewhat)—JavaScript. If I ever find work designing Web sites, I'll be sure to find a

SME in this department! JavaScript, as I have discovered is more on a need to know basis ... as I really don't need to know this.

Somehow, there never seems to be enough time to finish homework, even though you try to organize your time well. I often found myself underestimating the time I would need to complete the JavaScript as I was trying to figure the program out. After two courses, I'm finally free! At least XML I could understand a little better ... but I digress.

I remember my convocation, when I completed my undergraduate degree at University. A professor walking by the arts graduates jokingly said, "Oh the liberal arts students, the mathematically challenged!" All I could think was, "yup, that's me!"

Math has never been my strong point, hence my struggle with JavaScript. Homework, I have realized is something that is part of my life as a student.

Until next month,
Rachel

("From the President" continued from page 2)

than one occasion. By the end of the game I realized my "groin pull" was hurting a lot more than it was earlier, and I knew something was really wrong when I felt an extreme sharp stabbing pain when I coughed. Turns out it wasn't a groin pull. It was a hernia!

Can you hear the thunder clouds crackling in the background?

So in the last 16 months, I went to a job interview with a black eye, broke my finger, tore ligaments in my ankle, paid \$500 to play 4 hockey games, and got a hernia.

The nurses at the Pan Am Clinic are getting to know me on a first name basis, and IMRIS is looking into getting me a bubble. I think the best solution is for me to develop a serious case of incurable agoraphobia and find a job that allows me to work from the safety of my own home. That is, until the garbage needs to be taken out again...

Dun Dun Dunnnnnnn
Ben

STC Technical Summit, Dallas 2010

May 2–5, 2010
Dallas, Texas
visit www.stc.org for more details



HTML fun for technical communicators

Some helpful sites that you may find useful:

<http://hyperboleandahalf.blogspot.com/2010/04/alot-is-better-than-you-at-everything.html>

<http://www.copypastetecharacter.com/>

<http://inspirationlab.wordpress.com/2010/04/16/so-you-need-a-typeface/>

April chapter meeting summary

IMRIS tour

By Andrew Quarry

For the April chapter meeting, a dozen members and friends of STC Manitoba had the privilege of an IMRIS plant tour. Ben Davies, our chapter president, arranged a tour of his work place.

Two of Ben's coworkers recounted the firm's history, outlined the technology involved, and walked us through the offices and the assembly plant.

IMRIS describes itself as a "global leader in the supply of fully integrated, intraoperative imaging systems." The dominant feature of these systems is the massive hi-tech donut-shaped device for magnetic resonance imaging [MRI]. These devices with their very high voltages and magnetism and their super cold refrigerants used to be relegated to hospital basements—locations dangerously inconvenient for patients undergoing brain surgery. IMRIS' genius is in its integration of the

MRI into suites of x-ray and other operating room devices. Their MRI is mobile. Using an overhead rail transport system on the ceiling, the MRI can be rolled into position as required. The latest designs allow the same MRI device to be used in three rooms: for example, an operating room, a diagnostic imaging room, and a cardiovascular suite.

IMRIS must integrate several highly specialized technologies and work with a variety of subcontractors to ensure that the devices are properly installed and housed.

From its low-profile but pleasant quarters in Fort Garry, IMRIS appears to be very well established in the American market, especially with regard to high-profile teaching hospitals, and it is starting to establish footholds throughout the world.

May chapter meeting

Communication Styles: Unravelling the Mystery

Have you ever expressed an idea and realized immediately that what you said was not what you intended? Has a miscommunication (oral or written) ever caused you a major problem? At some point, we all fall prey to miscommunication and misunderstanding. Some would argue that this is a natural aspect of the human condition.

We often think of good communication as an art, which it is. Clear communication is not easy; it demands work and creativity. It can also be considered a science, the elements of which can be broken down and analyzed.

In this presentation, participants will review different communication styles and learn a framework for identifying and improving upon miscommunication. They will reflect on their own style and on the styles of those around them, while learning how to avoid getting into that unconscious and unproductive trap of making assumptions and judgments.

Interested in improving your communication skills? Please join us for an evening of reflection and self-assessment.

About the speaker

Sue Hemphill is an associate trainer with the Resolution Skills Centre and is also the owner of her own business, Healthy Hive Consulting. She has been in the business of mediating diverse conflicts, mentoring local mediators, and teaching conflict resolution for over 20 years.



STC Manitoba chapter members

The first 15—Where are they now?

By Susan Haire

STC Manitoba became a chapter in January, 1989, after 15 people joined STC. But even though we were not officially a chapter, we had an executive and several meetings leading up to that momentous occasion. To mark our twentieth year as a chapter, *Manuscript* is running a series of articles about these first 15 members.

As this year's chapter Vice-President (and one of those first 15 members myself), I was asked to track down my fellow pioneers and find out what they're all doing now. I asked everyone the same five questions. This month we are interviewing Caroline Ben-Ari.

Q. How did you get involved with STC Manitoba back in 1988?

CBA: I was job-hunting in August 1988, just after I arrived in Canada. I began by phoning companies that might have technical publications departments, and early on phoned Bristol Aerospace (yes, I was going alphabetically!), where I was put through to the Publications Manager, Tony Rhodes-Marriott. Tony didn't have a job for me, but he did ask me whether I'd be interested in going to a planning meeting to restart the Manitoba chapter of STC. And that's how I ended up as one of the people around Alexa's dining room table in the fall of 1988.

Q. What was your role at that time?

CBA: I hadn't planned on being on the executive—after all, I'd only arrived in the country a couple of months earlier and was rather busy finding my feet and learning my new job and taking care of my little children—but Alexa played me like a violin. She told me she only needed me to be on the executive for a few months, until the chapter was formed officially and we had elections. Of course, by the time elections came along I was

hooked, and I was on the executive for several years. I started out as co-chair of Membership/Public Relations (with Joanne Blackwood), and I did some variant of that for quite a while. At various other times I was Program Chair, President, and Immediate Past President.

Q. What have you been doing over the past 20 years? Are you still involved with STC Manitoba and/or technical communication? Did your membership in the chapter help you in any way?

CBA: Over the last 20 years I worked in the Publications Department of Standard Aero, then as a technical communications consultant with Jamie

Conklin's company IDT, and, since 2001, have been an independent contractor providing technical communication and related services. I have always maintained my STC membership, but am not currently as involved with the chapter as I was 20 years ago. In the past I've made presentations to STC meetings and conferences and had an article published in *Intercom*, and this past May I went to the STC conference in Atlanta.



One of the original 15, Caroline Ben-Ari

Being involved with STC Manitoba brought me many

benefits, including introducing me to people who are my friends to this day. I also have been referred to clients by people who know me from the chapter, and I would never have had my job with Jamie if not for STC Manitoba; he knew my capabilities from the time we worked together on the executive, and when he wanted to expand from being a lone freelancer, he asked me if I would be interested in joining his company. I said I most certainly would, and the rest is history!

Susan Haire has been a technical communicator and member of STC for over 20 years. She was one of the 'first fifteen', and has served the chapter as President, Secretary, and Vice-President (this year).

STC Manitoba Web site changes

New in cyberspace ...

By Rachel Ines

If you haven't visited the STC Manitoba Web site lately, you might notice something a little different. Web site master Brad Friesen has been working on giving the chapter Webmaster a new look: www.stcmanitoba.org

With the transition to the new Web site, some changes will be made. Brad has deleted the STC Manitoba Forums, which didn't meet their objective of stimulating discussion among technical communicators.

On the new Web site, you will be able to register for meetings via a registration form located at the bottom of each monthly meeting post, sign up for accounts, and leave messages.

New to the Web site will be RSS feeds from STC and Techwr-I to the right sidebar. Members should feel free to write and submit content for the new Web site/blog.

More changes are still under development, so be sure to check the Web site—and check often for

the latest information affecting technical communicators locally, nationally, and beyond.



A new look to the chapter Web site. Brad will tell us more about the changes at the May annual general meeting.

Professional development

Course	Date (2010)	Location
MS Excel 2007 1	May 12–May 19	Red River College
MS PowerPoint 2007 1	May 18–May 25	
MS Word 2007 1	May 4–May 11	
Manitoba Business Start Program	May 4–6	Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre
Your Business Plan—Getting Started	May 6	

For more information on the courses listed, visit the institution's Web site:

Red River College: www.rrc.mb.ca/continuinged

Canada/Manitoba Business Centre: <http://events.ebsc.ca/Default.aspx>