



Have a great summer! See you next year!

Future meeting notices to be announced later.

**In this issue**

Same faces, different roles ..... 1  
 From the President ..... 2  
 From the Editor ..... 3  
 Sights and sounds from the AGM ..... 3  
 And the winners are..... 4  
 Where are they now? ..... 5  
 May dinner meeting summary .. 6

**New executive committee**

**Same faces, different roles ...**

During the usual annual general meeting, a slate of nominees for positions is announced before nominations from the floor are opened. At this year’s meeting, Andrew Quarry, the nominating committee chair, announced that he had been unable to recruit anybody for the voting positions. Although there had been some encouraging words and some expressions of interest in volunteering for specific projects, in the absence, in particular, of a volunteer for the position of President, he had not been able to obtain commitments.

Susan Haire chaired the nomination and elections portion of the meeting.

**Introducing your familiar executive committee**

The following persons agreed to serve in voting positions:

- Andrew Quarry, President
- Kevin Longfield, Secretary
- Ben Davies, Program Chair and Past President (automatic succession)
- Donald Nordman, Treasurer

The following persons volunteered to serve in the key non-voting positions:

- Sean Lenehan, Web master
- Allison Machovec and Danica Dimaray, Newsletter co-editors

The next AGM is scheduled for May 3, 2011.

**Chapter meeting structure**

The look of the chapter program will change dramatically in the upcoming year. No dinner meetings will be held and to meet the needs of chapter members, a suggestion was made of holding a couple of workshops throughout the year. More detailed information is provided in the *Letter from the President* (page 2).

## 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.

Allison Machovec  
Danica Dimaray  
Newsletter co-editors

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For more information about STC Manitoba, please visit our Web site at [www.stcmanitoba.org](http://www.stcmanitoba.org).



President, Andrew Quarry  
Past President, Ben Davies  
Secretary, Kevin Longfield  
Treasurer, Donald Nordman  
Membership, Vacant  
Public relations, Vacant  
Program, Vacant

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

### New approach to program—workshops

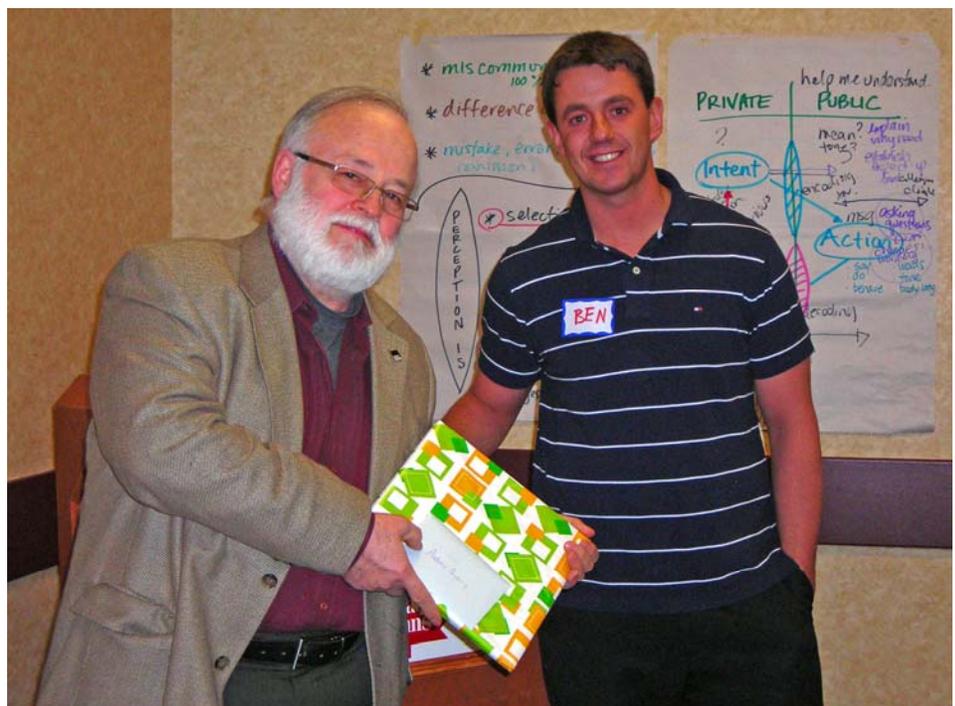
We (your chapter executive) have decided to make a radical change in our approach to monthly chapter meetings—in effect, eliminating all but the Annual General Meeting [AGM]. We recognized that the previous approach to chapter programming wasn't working, either to attract people to meetings or to build membership. Instead, it was just adding to the risk of volunteer burnout. Our hope is that the much less frequent but longer events in workshop format that are proposed for the new program will attract more participation than we were experiencing with monthly, evening sessions. The longer sessions will allow deeper exploration of topics.

We briefly considered retaining a couple of meetings in addition to the AGM, but ultimately we adopted the KISS [Keep It Simple, Stupid] principle. I've noticed that applying the KISS principle to chapter management requires constant vigilance. The temptation to tweak, and hence complicate, the approach is ever present.

Ben Davies, who is carrying on with the duties of Program Chair in addition to his inherited office of Immediate Past President, has started discussions with potential workshop leaders. Our current thinking is that there will be an autumn and a spring workshop, each several hours long. The autumn conference will likely be in November and the timing of the spring workshop will likely be coordinated with the "capstone" presentations that Red River College certificate program students make for their independent projects.

I look forward to seeing you at both of these events.

Andrew



Trading places ... Newly elected President Andrew Quarry (left) accepts the President's award from outgoing President Ben Davies (right).

## From the Editor

Well here it is, the final issue of the year and my final issue as newsletter editor. It's been a great three years, but I am happy to say that I'm ready to step down and try other things.

Over the past three years, I have tried to anticipate the needs of our chapter members and provide information that I think they would be interested in. Whether it was looking at a new technology or sharing information or methods that might be of interest, I have done my best to keep the readers informed.

I could not, however, do this alone. I would like to thank the following people for their contributions and helping make my job a little easier.

The Past Presidents:

- Ben Davies
- Andrew Quarry
- Brad Friesen

I'd like to thank each of you for duly providing your monthly letter, even when you felt that you had nothing left to say. In your role as President you have always kept the membership informed and used your unique sense of wisdom to guide us.

The contributors:

- Kevin Longfield
- Susan Haire
- Leslie McKendry-Smith
- Dorothy Davidson
- Nirdosh Ganske
- Alexa Campbell
- Holly Steele
- Lauren Bailey

Over the years, I wasn't always able to attend meetings and conferences, nor was I always able to come up with great ideas myself. I'd like to thank my contributors, some more regular than others, for the information they shared and their great contributions to the newsletter. Without all of you, the membership might not know what happened at the meetings or stay up-to-date on the latest happenings in technical communication.

The eyes and ears:

- Alexa Campbell
- Heather Dzwonek

Thank you both for your assistance proofreading the newsletter in the first few years. Your sharp eyes were greatly appreciated and always helped me look good.

### The newsletter of the future

Although my time as editor is done, the newsletter will continue. In my place will be Allison Machiovec and Danica Dimaray, students in the technical communication diploma program entering their second year. I've had the opportunity to teach both these young women and I know the newsletter they produce will be great and will continue to maintain the standards chapter members have been accustomed to.

So if you have something you would like to share, contact either Allison ([arm82@yahoo.com](mailto:arm82@yahoo.com)) or Danica ([danicadimaray@gmail.com](mailto:danicadimaray@gmail.com)). I'm sure they're looking forward to hearing from you right now. Please join me in welcoming both of them and continue to support them in producing the chapter's newsletter.

Best wishes,  
Rachel

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## Sights and sounds from the AGM

The AGM was not only a time to welcome in the new executive, but also to say goodbye and thank you to executive and support members. Outgoing President Ben Davies acknowledged a number of committee members and thanked them for their contributions over the past year or more.

Susan Haire (left) passes the official documentation for the winners of the STC Manitoba student scholarship to Dorothy Davidson (right)

*"Sights and sounds" continued on page 4*



## STC Manitoba student awards

### And the winners are ...

By Rachel Ines

For the 2009–2010 year, the executive committee decided to bring back the student scholarship awards. A \$250 scholarship was awarded to one student studying in each of the first and second years of the technical communication diploma program.

To be eligible for the scholarship, students were required to be enrolled full-time in the technical communication diploma program; submit a school assignment that best reflected their work as a technical communicator, completed between September 2009 and January 2010; and submit a 500 word essay describing their assignment.

Two submissions were evaluated by STC members Cheri Frazier and Kathy Davis. Our thanks to both Cheri and Kathy for their time and assistance.

The winners of the scholarship:

- Allison Machovec, first-year student
- Sarah Brannan, second-year student

Former Vice-President Susan Haire visited Red

River College to announce the winners. Both students were presented with their “official award” at the chapter’s annual general meeting on May 2, 2010 by former publicity chair Dorothy Davidson.



Picture taken by Kelly Stifora

Left to right, Sarah, Susan (centre), and Allison are announced as the recipients of the 2009–2010 student scholarships.

*“Sights and sounds” continued from page 3*



Above: Recently retiring Webmaster Brad Friesen talks about new changes to the Web site.

Top right: Donald Nordman (left) receives a special thank you from Ben Davies (right)

Bottom right: STC Manitoba scholarship winners (left to right) Allison and Sarah receive their award from Dorothy.



## STC Manitoba chapter members

# The first 15—Where are they now?

By Susan Haire

Editor's note: This is the final article in "The first 15—Where are they now?" series. A special thank you to Susan Haire for all the work she's done to contact the original 15 members and write this series throughout the year.

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. Unfortunately, we were unable to interview the last three 'originals' on our list: Ron Legere, Denise Laporte-Dawes, and Jack Lee.

That just leaves me.

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

SH: I began freelancing as a technical writer back in 1987. At that time, one of my more successful marketing ploys was to join the Manitoba Software Association. Tony Rhodes-Marriott and his wife spoke at one meeting on the merits of technical communication. When the STC Manitoba chapter was proposed a few months later, Tony remembered me and invited me to the initial planning session around Alexa's dining room table.

### Q. What was your role at that time?

SH: Chronic shyness prevented me from volunteering for the executive at that time, but I

became a member of STC and attended every meeting for many years.

### 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?

SH: Involvement in the chapter provided me with a friendly, safe place to finally overcome my shyness, and five years later I became chapter president (1993/94). I remained on the executive as Secretary for 5-6 more years before taking a break, but continued to support the chapter by making occasional presentations and participating in various projects, including assisting and presenting at the RRC/STC annual conference, and am now back on the executive as 2009-2010 Vice President.

### Q. How do you see the chapter moving forward in the next few years?

SH: I see the chapter evolving to meet the challenge of these economic times. While our membership numbers have fluctuated, we have always maintained a strong core, and I am convinced we will weather this storm as we have many others.

### Q. Any other comments or words of wisdom you would like to share with the chapter?

SH: I don't have any words of wisdom, but I have learned a few things about myself over the years. In particular, I learned that I have found my dream career. I am a technical communicator—it's not what I do; it's who I am. And I wouldn't have it any other way.



The last of the original 15 members, Susan Haire shares her experiences

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).

## May chapter meeting

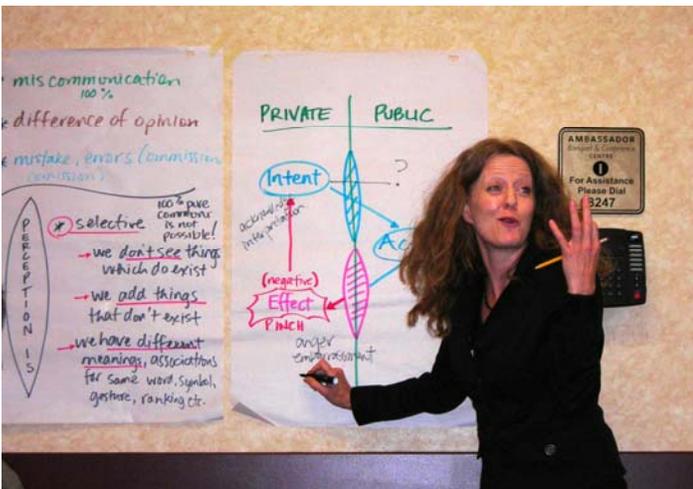
# What's your communication style?

By Rachel Ines

Our final chapter meeting focused on understanding different communication styles. Sue Hemphill led the discussion by identifying how people deal with conflict. No one is immune to conflict, either in the workplace or in our personal life. How we manage conflict is the key to maintaining strong and functioning relationships with others.

Conflict occurs through

- Miscommunication
- Difference of opinion
- Mistakes, errors, and omissions



Sue Hemphill discusses how people find themselves in conflict

Sue pointed out that miscommunication and difference of opinion are NOT the same thing. A difference of opinion occurs when people stop talking to each other and instead, start talking *at* each other. Differences requires a resolution. Mistakes occur when we take stress from elsewhere and apply it to the current situation.

To demonstrate miscommunication, Sue showed an amusing commercial involving a Bluetooth headset and small business owners who were privy to a conversation that unfortunately, mirrored some unfortunate situations in real life.

Conflict occurs when individuals aren't saying or doing something, which often gets misinterpreted

as something else. While the intent may be to help, there is a tendency on the part of others to assume it as negative. Sue noted "We tend to judge ourselves by our intentions."

How can we as technical communicators find ourselves in conflict? Suggestions included asking the "dumb questions" where we risk looking stupid. Sue's suggestions for dealing with this potential conflict head on is through a gentle reminder of why we are asking the questions, use warmth and humour when appropriate, or build and keep a rapport with your subject matter expert.

Conflict occurs when we don't let someone know that what he or she is doing is hurting us.

UCLA researchers found that breakdowns of communication are revealed through body language (55%), followed by tone (38%), and words (7%). When we're under stress, it shows in our tone and body language towards others.

So what can we do if we're feeling conflicted? In some cases, it may be worthwhile to let the situation go. However, if you've tried to let it go and your view of the other person is becoming affected, Sue suggests talking to the person and being authentic. As she noted "two out of three times, that's as far as you need to go."

Sue's suggestions for when you feel you've been "pinched" follow:

- Get grounded
- Check in
- Name action non judgmentally
- Ask about their intent
- Describe the effect on you or others, naming feelings if appropriate

While conflict cannot be avoided, we can use our skills as technical communicators by communicating effectively with others. If we feel uncomfortable in our current situation, we need to step back and reassess the situation. By letting things go unsaid, we run the risk of creating conflict where it could have easily been resolved simply by talking things out.

Rachel Ines is overjoyed about completing her final newsletter and successive newsletter articles after three years. She is also a graduate of Red River College's Technical Communication Diploma Program and has worked as a technical communicator for five years.