



February 2009, Volume 21, Number 6

February dinner meeting

5:45 p.m.
Tuesday, February 3, 2009
Place Louis Riel
190 Smith Street

How to get what you want in today's job market
Frank Hanel

Please confirm your attendance by noon, Friday, January 30, with Brad Friesen at
E-mail: meetingcoordinator@stcmanitoba.org

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STC January dinner meeting

Celebrating 20 years of technical communication

By Rachel Ines, Andrew Quarry and Holly Steele

It was twenty years ago today ... we hope you will enjoy the show.

—Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Heart Club Band, The Beatles

Well, it's not quite twenty years today, but on January 13, chapter members came out to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of STC Manitoba. To commemorate this momentous occasion, an archival display of key events in the chapter's history highlighted the occasion. The display included a mix of photographs, chapter awards, early issues of the newsletter, chapter publications, and various materials reflecting the rich history and activities of our chapter.

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2008 STC
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is a chapter of



Society for
Technical
Communication

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



A retrospective collection of the chapter's activities over the past 20 years.

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. 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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2008–2009

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Vice-President, Margaret LeSage
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Past President, Brad Friesen
Secretary, Holly Steele
Treasurer, Donald Nordman
Membership, Vacant
Public relations, Dorothy Davidson
Program, Lauren Bailey

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 (interim) president



I believe it was Alexa Campbell who first promoted the idea of adopting a “progressions” format for one of the chapter meetings in our annual cycle—it has proven to be a very good idea. For those who may be unfamiliar with the idea, let me explain that, while three or more presenters stay at their designated tables, the audience moves [or progresses] to participate in three presentations during the course of the meeting.

I don't remember whose wisdom was at work when the decision was made to hold the progressions meeting in the dead of winter. As I cringed while walking from my car to the meeting room through cold severe enough to change the molecular attributes of steel, I questioned that decision. I was, however, reminded of the lyrics of the Rodney Atkins song, “If you're going through hell, keep on movin'.”

As soon as I arrived, my spirits recovered even before I thawed out. Movin' is, after all, the basic principle of our progressions meetings. The whole spirit of participation seems elevated compared to our regular meetings. This meeting seemed to be particularly action filled and a great antidote to the dead-of-winter blues. Doesn't that seem like a great idea?

[By the way, that last character “?” isn't a smudge on your screen or page. It is an interrobang—a question mark combined with an exclamation mark. Mignon Fogarty promotes its use in her book, *Grammar Girl's Quick and Dirty Tips for Better Writing*, which Rachel reviewed in a recent issue of this newsletter. I've been looking for an excuse to use it. Will you be able to say you saw it here first?

Wanted: A few good technical communicators

It's getting to be that time of year again. In May, the chapter will hold its annual general meeting and changing of the guard. The executive committee will be approaching chapter members to sit on the 2009–2010 executive committee. If you feel that you have the skills and leadership abilities to help lead the chapter, please contact Andrew Quarry or Brad Friesen. If you're a regular fixture at chapter meetings and enjoy meeting new people, then the executive committee needs you!

STC Manitoba job bank

Looking for a technical communication job but unsure where to look? Are you wondering why you haven't been getting those notices in your e-mail box? Visit the STC Manitoba job bank online: www.stcmanitoba.org/forums to find the most recent jobs posted. STC members who have registered for the forums are able to view new postings for 10 days before the postings are made available to the general public.

From the editor

As we slowly ease into the new year and resolutions are made and broken, one trend that seems to be on the rise is becoming more environmentally conscious and changing the way we live and do business.

I recently came across an article about a new font designed by a Dutch company called Spranq, which is said to reduce the amount of ink used by 20 percent.

ecofont

Ecofont, designed by Spranq, is designed to reduce the amount of ink you use by 20 percent.

(“Celebrating 20 years” continued from page 1)

Not only did the dinner meeting celebrate the chapter’s promotion of technical communication in Winnipeg, but chapter members also celebrated their history and the hard work of chapter members. In recognition of their past contributions as President of STC Manitoba, Brad, Nirdosh and Stephen received their presidential pins from current (Interim) President, Andrew Quarry as a special thank you for all the work they accomplished during their terms as chapter leaders.



A meeting of past presidents: (left to right) Brad Friesen (2007–2008), Nirdosh Ganske (2006–2007), Stephen McKendry-Smith (2005–2006), and Andrew Quarry (current, 1998–1999).

A special thank you to all those who came out to celebrate this special day in the chapter’s history and to chapter members for providing their mementoes for the archival display.

Spranq was inspired to name the “holey font” after a Dutch variety of cheese known as “holey cheese.” The sans serif font is legible at 9 or 10 points.

Will it really reduce the amount of ink used? That remains to be seen and you can test it out for yourself as it’s free to download: www.ecofont.eu/downloads_en.html. The Ecofont is an open source font and the creators are working on further developing it.

I’ve downloaded the font and I’m willing to give it a try if it helps out the environment.

Until next month,
Rachel

January dinner meeting summary

3 in 30 ...

The program for the anniversary meeting was in the format of a progression during which the audience moved from table to table to hear three presenters: Lauren Bailey, Brad Friesen, and Holly Steele.

Writing 50,000

Lauren Bailey’s presentation on “Writing 50,000 in 30 days—for fun” covered basic features of the National Novel Writing Month [NaNoWriMo] event and her experience trying to reach the 50,000 word target.



Lauren (standing) discusses her 50,000 word writing experience to an attentive audience.

NaNoWriMo started in San Francisco a decade ago with 21 local participants. The event now attracts

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("3 in 30" continued from page 3)

over 100,000 participants from all over the world. In Manitoba alone, there were over 40 participants last year.

The objective is simply to write 50,000 words for a novel during the month of November. The authors police themselves: in effect, competing against themselves. At this pace of writing, according to Lauren, you "end up with an unedited pile"—in her case a pile of 45,000 words.

Lauren says that her own motivation for participating is to exercise a different part of her brain—to get away from the short declarative sentences that are a requirement for technical writing and revel in more complex sentence structures.

Google Goes Chrome

Brad Friesen's presentation on "Google Goes Chrome" demonstrated the operation and features of Google's new Web browser. This browser competes with Microsoft's Internet Explorer and Mozilla's Firefox on PCs—Mac and Linux versions are not yet available.

Internet Explorer and Firefox look much more alike than either looks like Chrome. Two aspects of Chrome dominate its appearance—its tabs are more prominent than their equivalents in Internet Explorer and Firefox and its initial tab page displays large thumbnails of up to nine most frequently visited sites.



Brad discusses the features of Google Chrome

Brad demonstrated how much more quickly Chrome boots up compared to its main competitors. The general impression was that this product supports more rapid use than its competitors.

The address field in Chrome is more flexible and powerful than its equivalent in the competitors' browsers: it has built-in search capability and it accommodates conversion calculations.

One feature that Brad particularly likes is a device similar to the Microsoft Windows Task Manager for shutting down a locked up Web page without having to entirely shut down the browser.

You can download and get more information on Chrome using the following links:

www.google.com/googlebooks/chrome/index.html and www.google.com/chrome.

Creating conditional text in Word 2003

Holly Steele's presentation on using conditional text using hidden styles and templates in Word 2003 explained the process and of how to create hidden styles and apply templates to those styles.

The details for the process are described in an article that she wrote in the December and January issues of Manuscript. The articles are available at http://stcmanitoba.org/newsletters/news_archives.htm.



Holly (centre) discusses the process of creating conditional text in MS Word.

Editor's note:

In Holly Steele's article *Creating conditional text and images in Word 2003* (December 2008, January 2009), one step was inadvertently omitted from the template saving procedure. Once you have hidden one set of conditional styles and saved the document as a template file (.dot), you need to delete all the text from within the template.

How to get what you want in today's job market

Have you ever had to look for work when the economy was failing, companies are downsizing, and hiring is on the back burner? Those who have know just how tough that can be. In this presentation, Frank Hanel will work with meeting participants on how to get noticed by employers and how to translate skill sets to job specifics. Some areas he will cover include:

- What are the realities of resumes, cover letters, and so-called "superstars"?
- What separates job applicants from job getters?
- How do you get that dream job?

If you are interested in some up-to-date and useful information on job searching, please join us for a serious and lively discussion of what works, what's hot, and what's not.

About the speaker

As an employment counsellor with Horizons Job Action Centre, Frank Hanel works with the unemployed and underemployed to assist in their search for work. He helps clients develop job-related resumes, cover letters, networking abilities, and internet strategies. He also provides interview, self-confidence, and motivational techniques. His previous experience includes work with developmentally delayed individuals, resort operation in Falcon Lake, and managing StressBlasters, a career and personal development company.

Professional development courses

Course	Date (2009)	Offered through
Technical Communication—Introduction	Feb 7 to June 7	Red River College
MS 2007 Word Level 2	Feb 10 to 17	
Project Communication Management	Feb 7 to May 7	
Writing for the Web	Feb 4 to 25	University of Winnipeg 2007
Intro to programming and software development	Feb 7 to 28	
Presenting to challenging audiences	Feb 21	

For additional information about the courses listed or future programs available, consult the school's Web site.

Red River College Continuing and Distance Education: www.rrc.mb.ca

University of Winnipeg Continuing Education: www.dce.uwinnipeg.ca

University of Manitoba Continuing Education: www.umanitoba.ca/coned

Mystery guest colourful

By Alexa Campbell

Editor's note: This article was originally published in January 2001, Volume 13, Issue 5. In honour of the chapter's 20th anniversary, *Manuscript* is republishing this article.

Our mystery guest, Myra Thimblebottom, warmed us all on a cold December's night, imbuing our drab winter lives with her own colourful aura.

Myra's identity had been a closely guarded secret because she wanted to surprise a certain person in the audience. She has admired our president, Andrew Quarry, from afar for some time. She first encountered him at a local bookstore. They evidently do not share a passion for reading. She had mistaken him for Santa Claus, but she soon realized her mistake. Santa Claus doesn't read.

Myra set a new standard for female assertiveness in her efforts to charm the object of her affections.



Mystery guest Myra Thimblebottom shows an interest in STC President, Andrew Quarry.

First, of course, she showed an interest in his work. She asked many questions about technical writing (although she expressed, several times, her disinterest in computers). However, her breathtaking delivery style did not allow Andrew a chance to respond. (The fact that he was mesmerized by Myra's beauty undoubtedly was a factor in his silence.)

She raved over his sartorial splendor. Andrew had, in unwitting irony, donned a fool's hat in honour of the evening. Myra quickly exchanged that for a fire chief's hat. Myra revealed that Andrew once won a limbo contest. (She admires athleticism.) However, he is tight-lipped about the details and declined a demonstration. We also found out that Andrew has a passion for things that come in small jars—Nutella, jams, sauces, and other spreadable things. (She invited him to share in

gustatory adventures while they watched Buffy the Vampire Slayer in the Muskoka. There were suggestive references to chicken korma.) She was charmed by Andrew's nickname, Gutter Gus, the result of an unfortunate incident in a bowling alley. (Never has such a nickname been spoken with such seductiveness and frequency.)

Myra sprinkled Andrew with presents. After the fire chief's hat, there was a small cake and candle. She serenaded him as he meditated upon the flame. Finally, she presented him with a small gorilla, which in no small measure resembled its new owner, as all good pets should.



Myra had dressed with exquisite care for this event and was seasonally attired in shades of red and green. As she elaborated on the different elements of her ensemble, she emphasized that she had selected parts of two favourite outfits to impress her secret love. Her eclectic costume included a

striking striped red-and-white jacket over a print dress in colours reminiscent of the psychedelic sixties. To complete her ensemble she wore toe socks and a red hat.

Although both Myra and Andrew have no comment on the subject, there were hints of a second rendezvous.



The ceremonial lighting of what appears to be the chapter's missing time capsule. Assumed to be lost in both time and space.