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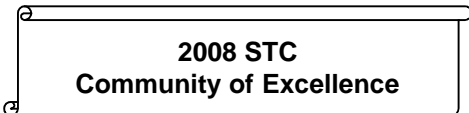
April dinner meeting

There will be no April dinner meeting.

STC Manitoba AGM
Tuesday, May 5, 2009
Dinner meeting speaker TBA

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STC Manitoba is a chapter of



Society for Technical Communication

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

STC March dinner meeting summary

Making it work in today's job market

By Lauren Bailey

On Tuesday, March 3, 2009, Frank Hanel spoke to STC Manitoba and guests regarding resumes, applications and finding jobs in a downturn job market.

As an employment counselor with Horizons Job Action Centre, Frank Hanel works with the unemployed and underemployed in their search for work, as well as providing interview and motivational techniques.

Mr. Hanel's advice was simple: be brilliant in the basics—a set of solid fundamentals is always better than gimmicks while searching and applying for jobs.

Your first contact with a company will always be your cover letter, and it is the most important part of your application. Mr. Hanel suggests keeping it to one page and tailoring the text to match your skills to the skill requests in the application. Updating your resume from the chronological format to a skills-based format is also a good idea. Today's employers really do not care where you worked six years ago, provided you have the skills and abilities that they are looking for. Also, a skills-based resume removes the need to explain away any gaps in employment—a handy save in a time where even the most talented professionals may find themselves out of work.

In a round table session of questions and answers, the participants found that nearly 80 per cent of jobs available are in the hidden job market—no advertised to the public. How can we find these positions?

The main answer is networking. Use the people you know and the people they know. Bring your resume, portfolio and contact cards with you wherever you go. Become a walking bill-board for your skills and abilities. Think of every encounter as a potential interview and treat it accordingly.

Also, put out requests for informational interviews with companies. These interviews are short, no-pressure situations where you can

("Making it work ..." continued on 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.

Rachel Ines
Newsletter Editor
rachines@hotmail.com

Andrew Quarry
Editorial Assistant
andrewquarry@gmail.com
Printed copies of documents can be mailed to the address below:

STC Manitoba

c/o Andrew Quarry
135 Lawndale Avenue
Winnipeg MB R2H 1T2

For more information about STC Manitoba, please visit our Web site at www.stcmanitoba.org.



Executive Committee
2008–2009

President, Andrew Quarry [Interim]
andrewquarry@gmail.com

Vice-President, Margaret LeSage
margaretl@caamanitoba.com

Past President, Brad Friesen
Secretary, Holly Steele
Treasurer, Donald Nordman
Membership, Vacant

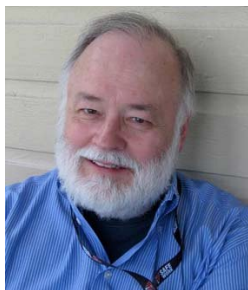
Public relations, Dorothy Davidson

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

Life without a delete key



Do you ever wonder what it would be like to have to compose your thoughts before committing them to paper? I think that I would find it very stressful.

The question comes to mind because I've been coping (just barely) with a classic Macintosh keyboard of the type that has only one "delete" key and that key is a backspace key. In fact, on an IBM PC compatible keyboard, it would be labelled as "Backspace" or a leftward pointing arrow, for wiping out characters to the left of the cursor. On a PC keyboard I would have another key labelled "Delete" or "Del" for consigning characters to the right of the cursor to oblivion. I change my mind so often that I need to be able to delete in both directions.

I have largely succeeded in repressing my memories of life before the delete key(s). I vaguely recall some rather messy workbooks from grade II or III, but then all details before the computer era are gone.

Note about membership renewals

Be kind to your STC chapter

When renewing your STC membership, please take care to select STC Manitoba as one of your communities of interest. Some of the money paid toward your membership is passed through to the communities you select. We depend on this money to operate the chapter. It appears that some persons failed to recognize that failure to select our chapter would reduce our funding.

Chapter communications style guide

At the last chapter meeting, I promised to let you know how to look up our style guide. Here's the URL:
www.stcmanitoba.org/styles/Chapter%20Communications%20Guide.pdf

("Making it work ... " continued from page 1)

meet with company representatives to discuss the company's needs and what you may be able to provide them. These may not pan out in the short term, but when that company is looking for someone in the future, you will be at the front of their minds.

Finally, the personal touches are always best – when you contact a company with a resume or a request for an informational interview, always explain your requests. Never send a resume without an accompanying cover letter or letter of introduction.

Mr. Hanel's presentation was well-received by both new-comers to the job market and those who have been slogging through it for a while. A refresher course on the correct actions in a downturn job market is always welcome.

From the Editor

Well in case you missed it, March was quite an eventful month for two reasons:

- National grammar day (March 4, 2009)
- The 20th anniversary of the World Wide Web (March 13, 2009)

National grammar day

As technical communicators, we can all appreciate national grammar day. Grammar plays a major role in our writing process and without it, who else would notice the improper usage of hyphens, en dashes, and em dashes in reports? National grammar day was designated by the Society for the Promotion of Good Grammar and MSN Encarta. In honour of this day, a bad grammar Hall of Fame playlist was compiled that identifies grammatically incorrect songs such as “Lay lady lie” by Bob Dylan, “What goes around” by Justin Timberlake, “Satisfaction” by the Rolling Stones, and “Every little thing she does is magic” by the Police to name a few. A full listing is found here <http://nationalgrammarday.com>.

If you missed national grammar day and would still like to proclaim your love for good grammar, they do have t-shirts available.

The Web turns 20!

On March 13, the Web turned the big two-oh, can you believe it? Twenty years ago, Tim Berners-Lee wrote a paper outlining his vision for the Web, which now plays a major role not only in our daily lives, but in our work lives as well. I remember typing out my papers in University on a typewriter—I was a major resister of the computer age and now ... I can't imagine my life without a computer or access to the Internet!

Often when I travel, one of the first things I search for is an Internet café. It's my primary means of keeping in touch with friends and family back home and around the world. In fact, I've still been able to maintain friendships with people around the world simply because of the Internet. I met my Australian friend ten years ago and we've managed to maintain our friendship through e-mail.

As the Internet continues to evolve, it has brought an enormous change to our daily lives for the better and, sometimes, for worse. I can only wonder how the Web will evolve over the next 20 years.

Until next month,
Rachel

STC [international] elections

Making change happen—your vote counts

If you haven't voted yet, there's still time! The STC elections are held in March and April. In March, voting instructions and ballots were mailed to members who selected this option on their 2008 applications and renewal forms. Other members were e-mailed instructions for accessing the online ballot. Please consider voting online instead. By doing so you will save time and postage, and ensure that your vote is received immediately. The last day for elections is April 9, 2009 at Noon EDT.

To access the secure online ballot, please go to <https://eballot.votenet.com/stc> and log in by entering the STC member number and random password listed below. Information about the candidates is included on the electronic ballot.

If you have any questions, please contact Chief Operating Officer and Director of Community Relations, Diana Buttram, at diana.buttram@stc.org, or reply to stc_election@stc.org.



Goodbye STC Manitoba executive ...

By Rachel Ines

As STC Manitoba's year comes to a close ... the executive committee in bidding farewell to one of our most active chapter members. Brad Friesen has provided the chapter with great leadership and has moved STC Manitoba forward with his ideas and innovations. Over the past three years, Brad has completed a rare full set of top executive positions—Vice-President (2007), President (2008), and currently as Past President (2009). As we bid farewell and thank Brad for his enormous contributions, I thought I would speak to Brad about his experiences serving on the STC Manitoba executive committee.

Manuscript: First off Brad, speaking as both a colleague and a friend, I have to say you've done a tremendous amount of work to move the chapter forward. How would you describe your three years serving on the executive committee?

Brad Friesen: The past three years have gone by really fast. I felt honoured to have the opportunity to receive the chapter service award at the STC conference in Philadelphia last year. I've enjoyed my time serving on the executive committee and have learned a lot. Over the past few years, all the executive committee members have worked so well together, which is probably the main reason for winning the award.

M: You began attending chapter meetings as a student while attending Red River College. Where did you first learn about the Technical Communication Diploma program?

BF: Well, like many others, I didn't grow up dreaming about becoming a technical communicator. I first heard about the Technical Communication program from one of the counsellors at Red River College. I made the decision to go back to school full time; so I went down to the college to pick-up a copy of the program handbook. I ended up talking to one of the counsellors, and she pointed out several interesting courses to me. In the end, I decided to

take the Technical Communication program and the rest is history.

M: For the past three years, you've been working as a technical communicator. What does your job involve?

BF: I'm currently working for a software development company where we develop financial planning software. I work on a lot of the Help systems for our software applications, as well as various training materials and user guides.

M: What do you enjoy most about being a technical communicator?

BF: The glamour and the fame. I also find the work challenging and rewarding. Another cool aspect of my job is that I get to work with the latest and greatest tools. I work a lot with MadCap Flare for developing Help systems and lately for printed documentation. For those of you who haven't used Flare, you should definitely try it out some time. Flare rocks!

M: Now that your term is coming to a close, what are your plans post executive committee?

BF: Besides going to Peru, I haven't really put much thought into what I will do next. I'll probably take a course in the fall. I'm really enjoying my Spanish class; so perhaps I'll continue taking Spanish.

M: One of the more interesting things you're doing is raising money for charity doing a crazy stunt. Can you tell us more about that?

BF: Sure, in August I will be rappelling down the side of the 17th story Royal Bank Building in downtown Winnipeg as part of the 2009 Easter Seals Drop Zone. The money raised is used to support services and programs for Manitobans with disabilities. My goal is to raise \$2000.

(“Goodbye STC Manitoba” continued on page 6)



Our past president enjoying some time on the open waters.

Saving the earth, one responsible deed at a time

By Rachel Ines

Earth Day is celebrated annually on April 22 and dates back to 1970 when Gaylord Nelson, a United States senator, called for an environmental teach in or “earth day” to be held on April 22, 1970 (Wikipedia citation). Since then, the movement towards celebrating Earth Day has increased and spread to 175 countries worldwide.

The purpose of Earth Day is to raise the social consciousness of citizens by making people aware



of the environment and acknowledging the global citizen’s direct effects on the environment. While the social consciousness has been raised and many cities worldwide have taken the steps to give back to Mother Earth, there are still many things we can do not only as global citizens, but in our every day

life as technical communicators to help heal the earth.

Reduce your garbage

While many offices are exploring or implementing the “paperless office”, we can extend that to our home office as well. We can reduce the amount of paper we print simply by choosing to read online and print only when necessary.

You can reduce the amount of ink you use when printing. Many printers have the option of printing documents in “draft format” simply by selecting the option in the Properties option when printing. Not only are you using less ink, you can extend the life of your ink cartridge.

Reuse products when possible

The latest trend in ink cartridges is popping up in shopping malls across the country. Refill ink cartridge companies allow customers to bring in their used ink cartridges and refill the cartridge at a cheaper price than purchasing a new one. Not only are you reducing the number of cartridges thrown out, but you’re being environmentally responsible as well.

If you do print at home, reuse the paper that you print on. Whether you’re using photocopied papers printed on one side, flyers in the mail, or your own printed material, by printing on the backside of the unused paper not only are you saving yourself money, but you’re reducing your garbage output as well.

Recycle, recycle, recycle

Many of the products and packaging we use everyday are recyclable, it just requires a little more effort and checking the items we use.

If you’ve taken any classes (listen up former technical communication students!) and you’ve got used textbooks lying around—why not donate them instead of selling them? Many of the post secondary institutions in the city have drop off boxes available for a non-profit organization, Better World Books (www.betterworldbooks.com), that donates gently and newer textbooks (within five years of copyright) to needy students in Africa. Not only will you be saving the earth, but you’ll be helping out your fellow global citizens as well.

If you’re like me and you have old electronic items lying around—old monitors, laptops, cellphones—you can recycle these items in an environmentally friendly way. You can donate your equipment to schools and certain stores that recycle your old cellphones (Mountain Equipment Co-op is one of those stores), or the City of Winnipeg has a list of companies you can contact to recycle items the city won’t pick up in the regular recycling collection (www.winnipeg.ca/waterandwaste/recycle/howToRecycle.stm).

(“Saving the earth” continued on page 6)

(“Saving the earth” continued from page 5)

Ink cartridges are recyclable at many retail stores such as Staples or Mountain Equipment Co-op. Additionally some businesses have a recycling program in-house for small batteries used in everyday appliances.

While a lot of this information is not new, we all need a gentle nudge every now and then to become more environmentally responsible. As Earth Day approaches, we should make it a point not to celebrate once a year, but to make sure we're celebrating everyday by being better global citizens.

Rachel Ines is actively involved in the Manitoba chapter and has been an STC member for over two years. Rachel graduated from the Technical Communication Diploma program at Red River College.

(“Goodbye STC Manitoba” continued from page 5)

If anyone would like to make a donation, please visit my Web site, <http://peru.bradfriesen.com/?p=125>. Donations can be made online or you can always make a donation in person. I plan on attending the next few STC monthly dinner meetings so you can always find me there.

M: Well thank you for your time, Brad. Best of luck to you in your future endeavours.

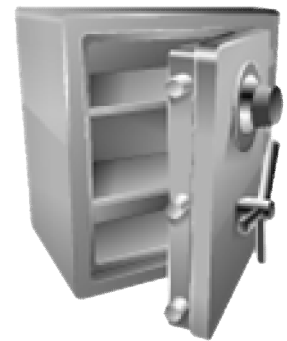
BF: Thank you.

Where the jobs are—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.

Be sure to check the job forum regularly to see what new jobs are available. Some of the recent job postings include Manager, Operational Information Services, Technical Writer, and Standards Writer (Policy writer).

Remember, if you haven't registered on the forums yet, please do so first! You must register for the forums to be certain that you are viewing the most recent job postings. Don't be the last to know!



Around the STC

STC Manitoba AGM

Mark your calendars! The STC Manitoba AGM is scheduled for Tuesday, May 5, 2009. Chapter members are encouraged to come out and vote for the incoming executive.

STC Conference

The Technical Communication Summit, the 56th annual conference of the Society for Technical Communication, will be held May 3–6, 2009 in Atlanta, Georgia. For more conference information, visit <http://conference.stc.org>.

Live Web seminars

Wednesday, April 8, 2009

1:00 – 2:30 pm EDT

[Developing an Information Model Using DITA](#)

Presented by Scott Wolff

Wednesday, April 15, 2009

1:00 – 2:30 pm EDT

[Choosing a Software Package](#)

Presented by John Hedtke

CHANGE YOU CAN BELIEVE IN. YES YOU CAN.

Most of us were captivated by the American Presidential race. A historic moment indeed with the election of the first African-American president in United States history.

Change you can believe in—yes you can.

Last month, the executive conducted a poll asking what would it take to encourage you to come out to STC dinner meetings. While some chapter members were supportive of the current state of the chapter dinner meetings, others had suggestions.

So I pose this question to you—what are you willing to do to improve the state of the chapter? Change has to come from somewhere, why not give your input as a member of the executive committee?

- Do you have ideas for people or topics for the dinner meetings?
- Do you think dinner meetings should be held on different nights?
- Do you feel you can contribute something to the chapter?
- Do you feel you have the leadership or collaborative skills to work from within to make change?

If so, we need you! We encourage all chapter members whether students, experienced practitioners, or new members alike to bring your ideas to the table and join the executive. If you are interested please e-mail Brad Friesen at executive@stcmanitoba.org.

President

A leader with the vision to guide the chapter into the next 20 years. Are you someone who seeks a change from the old ways and wants to start anew? Someone who is willing to work with others and share his or her knowledge and experience?

As President, some of your duties will include

- coordinating and chairing executive meetings
- coordinating and chairing chapter meetings
- handling correspondence with STC head office, the Region Director-Sponsor, local members and other chapters
- overseeing all chapter activities (Note: The President is a member ex-officio of all committees.)
- reminding people of deadlines for competitions
- nominating worthy chapter members for awards

Vice-President

Do you have the vision to be a chapter leader but also enjoy playing the role as a collaborator? Why not sit as Vice-President?

As Vice-President, some of your duties will include

- acting as a support for the President, taking care of the President's responsibilities for the chapter should it become necessary
- On an as-needed basis:
 - coordinating special projects
 - acting as the executive contact for project suggestions from non-voting chapter members
- establishing or maintaining regular communication with the President and Past President.

Public relations coordinator

Do you think that the chapter's image needs a make over? Do you have ideas on how to raise the profile of the chapter and attract new members? If so, we need you and your ideas.

Some of the duties the public relations coordinator is responsible for include the following:

- advertising regular STC events such as monthly chapter meetings by placing notices and ads in local newspapers and other locations
- making promotional and display materials available to those who need them
- building contacts with businesses and other organizations to increase awareness

Secretary

Are you an individual who is able to listen, detail oriented, and a succinct writer? While the positions isn't quite Secretary of the State, the responsibilities are just as important. Some of the duties include the following:

- preparing and circulating all documents as needed;
- writing minutes for executive meetings and the business portion of the monthly general meetings
- Corresponding on behalf of the chapter
- compiling and frequently updating executive contact list information

Professional development courses

Looking to try something new for the spring? Courses are available to help you improve your skill set. Why not take a course and meet some new friends! You're never too young to stop (or start) learning. Consult the organization's Web site for more detailed course information.



Course	Date (2009)	Offered through
Effective Oral Communication	April 6-Jun 22 April 8 – June 17	University of Winnipeg
Effective Written Communication	April 7-Jun 16	
Web Marketing Communications	April 8-Jun 17	
Introductory to Creative Writing	April 15 – May 7	
MS Word—Tips for Small Business	April 16	Canada/Manitoba Business Centre
MS Excel—Tips for Small Business	April 16	
Knowledge Building Cluster, Marketing part 1 Marketing Basics	April 20	
Preparing a Winning Business Plan	April 23	
Graphic Design 1	April 6 – June 15	Red River College
Graphic Communications: Intro	April 7 – June 9	
Website Development: Intro	April 6 – June 22	
	April 9 – June 11	
Oral and Written Communication	April 8 – June 10	
Technical Communication: Intro	April 8 – June 10	
Word 2007	April 9 – June 11	

For more information about the courses listed, consult the organization's Web site.

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

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

Canada/Manitoba Business Centre: www.cbosc.org/manitoba

Local conferences

Manitoba Magazine Publishers' Association (MMPA) presents the Manitoba Magazine Weekend, May 8–9, 2009 at the Fairmont Winnipeg.

For more information, visit the MMPA website at www.manitobamagazines.ca.