



M A N U S C R I P T

June 2007, Volume 19, Number 10

September dinner meeting

5:45 p.m.
Tuesday, September 11, 2007
Place Louis Riel
190 Smith Street

Nirdosh Ganske: *Ten ways to improve document readability*



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Film Industry at the STC AGM 2006/07

by Lydia Klassen

Wow, time has flown! On May 1, 2007 it was already time for the Manitoba STC Chapter's Annual General Meeting (AGM). Slowly the room in the Canad Inn, Polo Park filled with elated STC members who came to enjoy the last STC meeting of the 2006/07 year.

Starting with the formal part

Nirdosh Ganske greeted the audience and called everybody to order. The business part of the AGM was very formal and included

- presenting the 2006-2007 annual report (see a copy at http://www.stcmanitoba.org/Minutes/2007/STC_annual_report_2006-07.pdf)
- handing out awards and thanking STC members
- electing new officers

The winners of the 2006-2007 President's Award were Leslie McKendry-Smith and Rachel Ines.

Brad Friesen was elected to be the new president of the Manitoba STC Chapter and he is looking forward to another exciting year.

Enjoying a delicious meal

Did someone mention a buffet dinner? After finishing the formal part of the AGM, everybody was happy to get to the buffet. Since most STC members made their way to the meeting right after work, they were eager to get some food. The buffet offered many delicious salads, main dishes, and desserts.



Continued on page 2

Manuscript

Manuscript and its shorter sibling Micro Manuscript are the official newsletters of STC Manitoba Chapter. 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.

Submissions and ideas are welcome. 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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Mission: Creating and supporting a forum for communities of practice in the profession of technical communication.

For more information about STC-Manitoba, please visit our Web site at <http://www.stc-manitoba.org/>.

Executive Committee 2007-2008



President, Brad Friesen, brad.friesen@gmail.com
Vice-President, Rachel Ines, rachines@hotmail.com
Past President, Nirdosh Ganske
Secretary, Holly Steele
Treasurer, Nirdosh Ganske
Membership, Andrew Quarry
Public Relations, Kevin Longfield
Program, Autumn Robbie-Draward
Job bank, Bev Shafirka

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

Film industry at the STC AGM 2006/07 continued from page 1

Finishing with an interesting presentation

After the meal, Andrew Forbes and Caroline Evans, two active members of the Manitoba Film Industry, joined us. Did you know that in the film industry one ...

- works from contract to contract?
- is only as good as the last job?
- is hired for a specific job?
- gets constant training?
- lives closely together with the other people, like in a small town?
- has to work long hours (usually 14 hours a day, if not more)?
- deals with a high turnover rate?

About these and many more 'secrets' Andrew and Caroline talked in their *From unknown to reknown: Marketing the Manitoba film industry* presentation.

Although Manitoba's film industry is playing catch up with film industries in other provinces, the people involved in this industry are proud of how well business is going. Even outside of Canada, Manitoba's film industry is recognized and appreciated for its hard work and great team spirit.

Working in the film industry is quite exhausting, and drug and alcohol abuse are some of the more common issues the industry faces and addresses.

On the other hand, many movie producers, who worked with members of Manitoba's film industry, were impressed with the team and have enjoyed working with the team members. Word also spread that Winnipeg is a "film-friendly city" and film producers have less hassle shooting movies in the city. Watch out, Manitoba is becoming famous!



At the end of the presentation we were treated to a short but fascinating movie clip displaying the variety that Manitoba offers to the film industry. Andrew and Caroline both love their jobs with Manitoba's film industry, and think it is a great industry to work in and for.

Greetings from the President

by Brad Friesen



Greetings from your new STC Manitoba chapter president.

I am really looking forward to serving as your president for 2007-2008. It is an honour to be the first

graduate of the Technical Communication diploma program to be elected president and I am excited about our first executive meeting in June.

As I prepare for the new year, I am looking forward to working with the incoming

executive committee as we have quite the team once again. Thanks to Nirdosh Ganske and Rachel Ines for continuing with the executive for an additional year. I'd also like to thank the incoming executive, which is a mixture of new and experienced past executive members: Autumn Robbie-Draward, Kevin Longfield, Holly Steele, and Andrew Quarry.

I look forward to seeing you at our next chapter meeting in September. If you have any thoughts or suggestions while you are enjoying your summer, feel free to send me an email at Brad.L.Friesen@gmail.com.

From the Editor

by Steve Bagel

This is my last column, so I'd better get it right. I must thank some people without whom I could never have succeeded in this position: Nirdosh Ganske and Rachel Ines, for their invaluable contribution of ideas and material; Lydia Klassen, for writing the articles about the monthly meetings—she also produced this month's newsletter; the first year RRC students, for producing the March newsletter; and numerous people, for contributing articles.

Looking back, my fondest memory of editing *Manuscript* was working closely with Nirdosh. My proudest accomplishment was getting Nirdosh to do most of the work while I took credit for it, an accomplishment made easier because of Nirdosh's brutal reign over me during two years at RRC.

As the late great Canadian comedy duo Wayne and Schuster sang, "Adieu mon vieux. A la prochaine. Goodbye 'til when we meet again!"



Grand prize winner!

The winner of the grand prize in the "Bring a guest" contest is Cheri Frazer. Congratulations to Cheri, who brought out three guests during the 2006-2007 season. *Thank you, Cheri!*

Fourth Manitoba annual technical communication conference: Technology and Teamwork

by Lydia Klassen, photos by Stephen McKendry-Smith

Early in the morning on April 12, 2007, Ron Blicq at the registration desk cheerfully greeted and welcomed the conference attendees.

The two-day conference took place at the Red River College Princess Street campus, and anyone interested in learning more about technology and teamwork in the field of technical communication was invited and welcomed.



Ron Blicq at the registration desk



The conference has started. Brad and Leslie are greeting and welcoming the audience

After Steve McKendry-Smith welcomed the audience and introduced the program, Leslie McKendry-Smith and Brad Friesen, conference chair and co-chair, also greeted everyone in the room. Leslie and Brad's enthusiasm about the planned program caught fire and excitement filled the room. Numerous sessions had been prepared by various speakers to inform, enlighten, and entertain the attendees.

Before the first session started, we had the wonderful opportunity to listen to Frank Franczyk, this year's keynote speaker and President of Persentech. Frank made an impact with the message "Better is the enemy of good enough". His engaging and informative presentation taught us that "good enough" is often all that is required. Frank shared how he learned the hard way that always striving for "better" can slow down the work flow, hold off success, and cost the organization money. During the presentation, he also gave us a very good insight into what 'Otto' is. Frank is the developer of 'Otto'. 'Otto' is a portable road-safety device using GPS technology to provide real-time information about your driving environment.



Frank Franczyk sharing some of his wisdom



Brad Friesen congratulating Susan Haire as the winner of the portfolio competition

Shortly after Frank's presentation ended, the first three sessions started and attendees followed the signage, carefully prepared and hung out by Susan Haire, to find the rooms.

New at this conference was the portfolio competition. Every registered conference attendant was encouraged to participate. Over the two days, attendees evaluated the portfolios, and at the end of the conference, Brad Friesen congratulated Susan Haire as the winner of the portfolio competition.

Thanks to the conference committee (Leslie McKendry-Smith, Brad Friesen, Kevin Longfield, Stephen McKendry-Smith, Ben Davies, Susan Haire, Alexa Campbell, Nirdosh Ganske), every speaker, and all attendees, the conference has been an enriching success.

What STC Manitoba can learn from Shakespeare in the Ruins

by Nirdosh Ganske, photos by Stephen McKendry-Smith



“There's blood on thy face”—“Tis Banquo's then” (*Macbeth*, Act 3, Scene 4) probably doesn't look like a recipe for better organizational performance, but Térésa Lee, General Manager of Shakespeare in the Ruins theatre

company (SIR) and two actors of the company showed us that they could “walk the talk” on April 13. They quickly had us practicing the two lines from *Macbeth* with different **intentions**, demonstrating a number of precepts that form the foundation of SIR's success.

The closing session at the April conference, delivered by three high-energy members of SIR, confirmed some precepts that we of STC Manitoba already know and gave us more that we can use. The following list summarizes those precepts.

1. **Make the effort to reach out to a larger audience.** Often, we find ourselves “preaching to the choir”—those who are already “sold” on our product. We can't stop there!
2. **Beware of the common false assumption**—that everyone likes, needs, or wants our product.
3. **For long-term success, start with the young people.** We need to ensure that our product speaks to young people—if it isn't hip, it won't sell.
4. **Everything in the mission, vision, and values statements drives what we do.**
5. Positive **first impressions** take us a long way.
6. Create an atmosphere of **intimacy** and **accessibility**. We need to develop a relationship with our audience.

7. **Give the audience the opportunity to be involved** and to have experiences. Enduring memories are accompanied by an experienced emotion, and the most effective learning is experiential. We should strive to include people in the creative process.
8. Communication **content** is still based on the “what, where, when, why, and how” formula.
9. **Be prepared.** We need to be sure of what we are going to do—NO winging it!
10. Use “hooks” to **engage** the audience. What will they connect with?
11. **Share the dream; share the passion.** People like to hang out where there's life and energy.
12. Ensure **congruity** of communication. Actions, gestures, and tone of voice must match the words, text, or other content.
13. **Intention** drives the initiating action (gestures, tone, body language) and the response. We need to be clear about what we intend for ourselves, our organization, and our audience.
14. **“The show must go on.”** No matter how we feel about our day, we need to remember that this is our audience's first time.

The SIR team, consisting of Térésa Lee, Kevin



Klassen, and Charlene Van Beukenhout, then led us through a hilarious “re-

scripting” of a passage from *Romeo and Juliet*, giving us a novel experience of theatre and the opportunity to interact with the actors before they enacted our revised scripts. Lest any were unmoved, SIR won their stony hearts with a draw as a grand finale.

STC Manitoba has a lot to learn from SIR!

The 54th annual STC conference

by Perry Kohli

This was my second STC conference and although I enjoyed the one in Baltimore (2004), there was definitely more to offer this year in Minneapolis. I believe the organizers successfully provided more in quantity and quality to a well attended event. New was a “Certificate Program” that added an educational component. Also new was a specialized group of sessions or “Institutes” that provided detailed information from well-known industry experts. These new features contributed to a widely varied program of sessions, panels and workshops that made it challenging to choose a session to attend.

From the sessions I attended, the presenters were well prepared and very knowledgeable. Questions and statements were welcomed and discussed where time allowed. The most memorable presentation was “Vanilla Sky:

Deculturation as an Internationalization Approach.” Presenter Nancy Locke gave an interesting insight into the side effects of localization of Web pages. Many Web pages that were designed to appear as local creations carry cues to English or western culture and are merely clones of their original Web pages. She expanded on the ramifications of this circumstance with interesting examples of the effects on culture and company.



Anyone planning to attend next year’s should be sure to include networking lunches on the registration. I can’t say that the food was great this year but the conversation and exchange of ideas were worth every penny. Maybe I’ll meet one of you there in Philly.

Notes from Minneapolis

by Nirdosh Ganske

Imagine that you have just been gifted with the opportunity to spend time with a leader in your field, whose work you really admire. If you could ask only one question of such a person, what would it be?

Sessions

I was very excited about the opportunity to hear Jean Luc Doumont speak in person at the STC Summit, the 54th Technical Communication conference in Minneapolis, May 14 to 16.

Awed by his first presentation, *Effective layout for the nonartist*, I quickly sought out his second presentation, *Road signs: Finding your way in the visual world*. Unfortunately, I couldn’t think of a single question to ask Doumont—a missed opportunity—and I may never again be satisfied with how I teach document layout



and design! This man even designs his email messages to be visually elegant!

Inspired but not yet sated, I trundled off to see Patrick Hoffman’s *Polishing your pictures: Creating and evaluating usable visuals for global audiences*. Hoffman asserted that we build meaningful words but not meaningful pictures and recommended that we use templates to build our pictures, just as we use templates to build our documents.

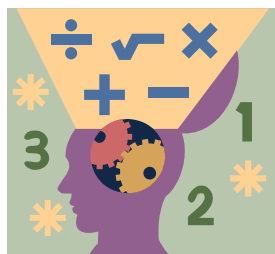
I eagerly took in Ginny Redish’s presentation, *Don’t leave me out! Designing usable and accessible Web sites*. Redish’s presentation, packed with research data, demonstrated that whatever helps Web sites be more accessible for people with special needs also improves accessibility for everyone else.

As if that were not enough, I took in Charles Kostelnick's *From graph paper to screen: Assessing new techniques for visualizing data*. Kostelnick is one of the authors of *Designing visual languages: Strategies for professional communicators*, a practical introductory text about the use of graphics in print-based work. Kostelnick's presentation ended with a fascinating example of a mosaic plot using MANET (Missings Are Now Equally Treated). His example drew on data from the Titanic, organized by class (crew, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd), sex, age (child, adult) and survivor status. Kostelnick concluded that technology can both constrain and enable effective data design, and encouraged us to exploit the technology and to demand more from those responsible for creating it.

You can download all the presentations referenced above, except for the last, from the STC home page link. Just click on the large button that reads "Session Materials" and "Technical Communication Summit," and you'll find 144 resources from the May STC Summit.

Keynote address

Another presentation that you won't find on the STC Web site is the keynote address by Simon Singh, author of *Fermat's Enigma* and producer of the documentary *Fermat's Last Theorem*. According to Singh, Fermat, a seventeenth century judge who devoted his evening hours to mathematics, has been ranked as "one of the top ten greatest mathematicians." Fermat apparently enjoyed teasing his fellow mathematicians with statements such as "I have discovered a truly marvelous proof, which this margin is too narrow to contain..."; "I can prove such and such but I have to feed the cat"; or



"I can solve a particular equation but I have to wash my hair". Fermat's tendency to this sort of mischief led scores of mathematicians to pursue the proof of

many of his theorems, solving all but one within a century of his death. This intractable theorem became known as Fermat's Last Theorem. Singh's book can be summarized best by his own words:

Over three hundred and fifty years were to pass before a mild-mannered Englishman finally cracked the mystery in 1995. Fermat by then was far more than a theorem. Whole lives had been devoted to the quest for a solution. There was Sophie Germain, who had to take on the identity of a man to conduct research in a field forbidden to females. The dashing Evariste Galois scribbled down the results of his research deep into the night before sauntering out to die in a duel. The Japanese genius Yutaka Taniyama killed himself in despair, while the German industrialist Paul Wolfskehl claimed Fermat had saved him from suicide (http://www.simonsingh.net/Fermats_Last-Theorem_The_Book.html).

After giving us a jolly overview of his work, Singh was available to autograph copies of his work at the STC Bookstore, where I parted with a good deal of my May budget on Singh's and others' works.

Awards, SIGs, and membership

The opening ceremonies on Monday included STC awards. Two awards that stand out for me were the one given to Saul Carliner, another of my technical communication "heroes," and another given to Al Gore and his film *An inconvenient truth*. Needless to say, I was able to obtain the book by the same name.

Later, I was able to meet Carliner as well as Geoffrey Hart at the Canadian Issues SIG breakfast meeting. Hart writes regularly for *intercom*.

I did have a question for Carliner, who was able to give me some statistics about average attendance to membership ratios. I also did some informal information

gathering and found my results matched Carliner's statistics. As a small chapter, we are doing very well.

The lunch tables on Monday and Tuesday were organized by SIG. I found the Canadian Issues SIG on Monday and the Instructional Design and Learning SIG on Tuesday and had some fantastic



discussions with STC members from all over the continent.

Looking forward

I strongly recommend that you attend a STC international conference. Nothing can quite compare to hearing in person a top-notch presentation by a top-notch professional whose work you've admired, quoted, or even relied upon for your own success. Try it—you'll like it! And you'll get an opportunity to ask that one question you've always wanted to ask!

STC Manitoba wins Merit Award

by Nirdosh Ganske

In the fall of 2006, a small committee of three intrepid newsletter editor-wannabees and a seasoned newsletter producer met to review the rules for applying to the STC Newsletter Competition.

The task was indeed formidable. Because our chapter posts a PDF version of our newsletter online, we had to cover 12 out of 14 topics every month, or lose marks. That translated into 12 articles every month! (No, we couldn't cover two topics with one article!)

Our newly-recruited newsletter editor didn't flinch, though, and bravely (or naively) rose to the challenge.

Thanks to Steve's unshakeable calm, we managed to produce three newsletters that we proudly emailed off to the competition, along with the paperwork that had to accompany every issue.

Then we waited, and waited. Not having received any acknowledgment of our submissions, we had no idea if we had even been accepted.

Then, on May 7, we received the following email message from Elizabeth Bailey, Manager of STC's 2006 – 2007 Newsletter Competition:

“Congratulations! Manitoba earned an award of **Merit** in the 2006–2007 STC

Newsletter Competition for its outstanding newsletter, *Manuscript*. You should be very proud of this honor because it recognizes your dedication to publishing an exceptional STC newsletter.”

“Twenty-five communities entered this year's competition! Please see the enclosed table of results that lists the three levels of awards—*Distinguished*, *Excellence*, and *Merit*. *Most Improved* awards are noted within the table and were awarded according to the community size entrant categories.”

“Individual scores and comments for the newsletter issues you entered will be sent separately. A team of up to five judges—one or two statistical judges and up to three qualitative judges—evaluated newsletters in each category. The judges spent many hours of their “free” time evaluating the newsletters.”

“The Best of Show newsletter will be on display in the STC Newsletter Competition traveling exhibit.”

Out of the 25 entries, 18 received awards, including STC Manitoba. No one received the *Distinguished* award. The Best of Show received the *Excellence* award.



2006–2007
STC Newsletter Competition
Winners



Best of Show
Lone Star
Technically Write

Community Name	Newsletter Name	Awards
Chicago	<i>Byline</i>	Merit
East Bay	<i>Devil Mountain Views</i>	Merit
Eastern Ontario	<i>Stimulus</i>	Merit
IDL SIG	<i>Ideal: Design for Learning</i>	Merit
		Merit
James Madison University	<i>Bytes and Pieces</i>	Most Improved in < 41 member category
Lone Star	<i>Technically Write</i>	Excellence
Manitoba	<i>Manuscript</i>	Merit
North Carolina State University	<i>Technical Speaking</i>	Excellence
Northeast Ohio	<i>Lines and Letters</i>	Merit
Oklahoma	<i>The Dialog!</i>	Merit
Orange County	<i>TechniScribe</i>	Merit
		Excellence
Orlando	<i>Memo to Members91</i>	Most Improved in 76 - 150 member category
		Excellence
Phoenix	<i>Rough Draft</i>	Most Improved in 151 - 300 member category
Pittsburgh	<i>Blue Pencil</i>	Merit
Palm Beaches	<i>The Wave</i>	Merit
Puget Sound	<i>SoundOff!</i>	Merit
Rocky Mountain	<i>Technicalities</i>	Excellence
		Excellence
Willamette Valley	<i>The Willamette Valley</i>	Most Improved in 301 - 600 member category

We need **you** to attend a
brainstorming session
to plan
the 2007 – 2008 activities
of STC Manitoba

Wednesday
June 20, 2007
6:30 pm
Room P405
Red River College
Princess Street Campus
160 Princess Street

Feel free to bring along a snack for yourself.
Tim Horton's will **not** be open.