



Lakeshore Connection

Wisconsin Chapter, Society for Technical Communication Volume 5, Issue 4 August 2004

Cruisin' to our September kick-off meeting

Your chapter's program committee has been hard at work coming up with meeting topics, ideas for workshops, and planning get-togethers that will interest and educate our membership.

Our annual Fall kick-off meeting will start the new program year. And what could be better than an evening cruise?

Won't you please join us, then, on Wednesday, September 15, for a cruise on the pontoon boat *Brew City Queen*.

The focus of the evening is to mingle, enjoy ourselves, meet one another, discuss our upcoming programs, and find ways that we can make our chapter more valuable to you.

This will be a two-hour cruise. An assortment of hors d'oeuvres will be available, along with wine and other drinks.

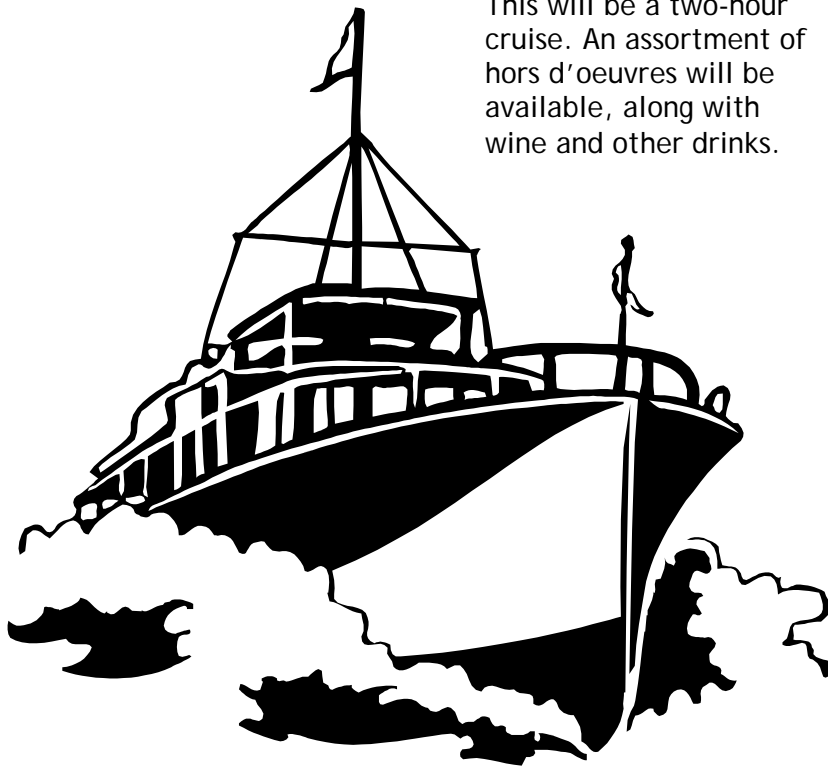
Boarding time: 5:15 p.m.

Departure time: 5:30 p.m.

Cost: \$10 for STC members, \$7.50 for student members, \$20 for non-members, \$10 for non-member students.

Watch your e-mail for additional reservation information.

Directions: The boat departs from Pere Marquette Park, on Old World Third Street, between State and Kilbourn. Walk past the white gazebo and you'll see the dock. The boat has a turquoise top. Street parking is usually available, plus there are several parking structures in the vicinity. Make sure you allow time to park and get to the dock by 5:15 for the 5:30 departure. ♦



In this issue:

September meeting	1
June meeting recap	2
Member news	2
Transformations	3
Chapter contacts	3
President's report	4

June Meeting Recap: "Protect Your PC 101"

by Jesse Kieck

Milwaukee Electric Tool Corp.

Diane Newbury, Membership Manager for the chapter and owner of Newbury Consulting, gave a poignant presentation at our June 14th meeting on how to protect your PC from increasingly hostile threats on the Web. The meeting was attended by about twenty-five people at the MSOE Alumni Center.

Diane, a self-described PC paranoiac- one who is afflicted with paranoia about protecting her PC, stressed that several layers of defense are critical for ensuring information privacy. Firewalls, software patches, anti-virus programs, anti-spyware, anti-spam filters, and most importantly, your brain, are all essential parts to any comprehensive defense system.

Firewalls combine hardware and software to help prevent unauthorized access from outside to an internal network or intranet. "Firewalls are the traffic cops," Diane pointed out, "they stop unauthorized traffic from entering or moving within your PC."

Software patches are updates Microsoft and other hosts offer to fix glitches in their systems. These often appear as "prompt windows" on your screen. A good rule of thumb – say "Yes" to these updates. This will ensure your system stays current against new threats.

Anti-virus programs actively look for malign software on your PC. Not using an anti-virus program "is simply irresponsible," stressed Diane. "You don't want to be responsible for infecting family, friends and peers."



Anti-spyware and anti-spam filters are small programs that remove unwanted monitoring and advertising bugs hidden and left behind on your PC. These programs can often be downloaded for free. Some popular programs include Spybot-Search and Destroy and Add-aware.

Using your brain still remains the best defense against threats, asserted Diane. Ultimately, only you can spot scams, spam, and other annoyances, and take the appropriate actions.

We were left with two (2) Golden Rules for PC Security:

1. Computer security is not only about protecting ourselves, but about protecting others in our global community.
2. Trust nothing. ♦

Member news



Diane Newbury, our Chapter membership manager, reports these new, promoted, reinstated and transferred members:

New members:

Michelle Czarny

Reinstated members:

Steven P. Iverson

Members achieving senior member status:

Marcia L. Morrison

Congratulations! ♦

Transformation: Whys and Wherefores

Editor's note:

Transformation of the STC is a "hot" topic right now. Many changes are in the works for our organization. This is the first of a series of articles about it, posted on the headquarters web site.

Technical communication is often defined as any effort that makes it possible for people to get the most from the technology in their lives. Under that broad umbrella come all the activities technical communicators have found themselves in: instructional design, information architecture, marketing communications, documentation development, usability, management, training, writing and editing – whatever is necessary to make our companies' and clients' products and services acceptable, understandable, and accessible to customers and users.

As technical communicators, we are all aware that change is a basic parameter of our profession. By definition, we try to make technical information understandable and accessible to audiences who are not knowledgeable about the related field.

Therefore, because technical information is ever changing, we accept the fact that our work will be continually various, constantly in flux. It's just the nature of the beast.

So, it really should come as no surprise that as time goes on, different requirements are demanded of us. It seems that just as soon as we feel comfortable with a particular workflow, software package, or job description, it is "folded, spindled, and mutilated," i.e., transformed into something new that we must adapt to, learn, and use.

If we agree that change is a guaranteed, albeit sometimes unwelcome, component of our profession, then it follows that the associations, organizations, activities, and avocations that we turn to for support, assistance, relationships, and education – among other things – must also change so they can continue to meet our needs and the needs of the technical communicators who are currently in training.

This is the essence of the purpose of the STC transformation initiative: basically, it's to keep up with you. So with that in mind, the overall goals of the Transformation effort have been defined as follows:

Continued, page 4

Wisconsin Chapter Officers and Contacts

Web site:
www.stcmilwaukee.org

President:
Kathie Gorski
262-628-1672
kgorski@execpc.com

Vice President and Public Relations Manager:
Mollye Barrett
414-331-1378
mollye@clearpath.cc

Treasurer:
Mike Witas
414-224-1661
mwitas@execpc.com

Secretary and newsletter editor:
Jim Green
262-879-5148
jim.green@fiserv.com

Membership Manager:
Diane Newbury
414-228-8416
dnewbury@execpc.com

Program Manager:
Amy Carlson
Amy.L.Carlson@jci.com

Mentoring:
Dave Clark
dclark@uwm.edu

Webmaster:
open



Transformation: Whys and Wherefores, continued from page 3

- Increase the breadth, relevance and value of services delivered to members.
- Create a long term platform for financial stability
- Promote membership growth
- Enable STC to be a leader and advocate for the Technical Communication professions and their practitioners.

In defining the goals for transformation, it is equally important to be clear about what this transformation effort is NOT trying to do.

- It is not focused on solving our short-term financial pain (though that certainly is being addressed separately). It is about evolving to a more stable business model for the future.
- It is not about dismantling, strangling or in other ways undermining the Chapters.
- It is not a secret agenda to eliminate the publications.

Obviously, this transformation effort is not something we have just suddenly undertaken. The board's work on governance in 2000-2001 first identified the need for the Society to change how it operated in order to assure its future.

One major change that resulted from that governance work was an increased reliance on the professional staff in the STC office for our burgeoning operations, with the board moving toward a policy-setting orientation. Although we're not completely there yet, we know this is the correct and inevitable path for an organization of our size and aspirations.

This transformation effort will not be completed by June of 2004; indeed, no recommendations have yet been made to the board. And while we anticipate quick adoption of some recommendations, implementation of some of the programs or operation changes may be several years away.

Transformation is a process and while change is rarely any fun, the STC as we currently know it must change-because our membership is changing. So please remember that all this focus and effort is directed at one thing only: to make things better for you, the STC's members. ♦

President's Report

by Kathie Gorski

President, Wisconsin Chapter STC

Welcome to the 2004-2005 season for the Wisconsin chapter of STC. Our chapter officers and committee managers will be meeting for our summer planning session in mid-August, and at that time we will finalize our goals for the new term. I'll have more to say on the topic in our next newsletter. One goal we discussed at our wrap-up meeting last term was to complete the steps to make us eligible for a Chapter Achievement Award. To receive this award, a chapter must accomplish a list of specific activities, such as holding a membership drive.

The upcoming term will be exciting as the transformation process unfolds. We plan to stay informed and involved in the process, to assure that the value STC offers us at the chapter level is maintained and expanded.

On behalf of the board and committee managers, I extend a warm invitation to you to attend a meeting or two (or three or four, or more) this season, starting with the September kick-off meeting (see article on page 1). ♦