



Lakeshore Connection

Wisconsin Chapter, Society for Technical Communication Volume 5, Issue 3 June 2004

Results of Spring 2004 Chapter Election

All members of our chapter's current administrative council will be back for another term.

Current elected and non-elected office-holders had previously indicated that they would stay on for another term. As there were no new nominees for any of the positions, the



entire administrative council (elected and non-elected positions) will be returning.

The administrative council for the 2004-2005 season will be:

- President:
Kathie Gorski
- Vice President and Public Relations Manager:
Mollye Barret
- Treasurer:
Mike Witas
- Secretary and Newsletter Editor:
Jim Green
- Membership Manager:
Diane Newbury
- Program Manager:
Amy Carlson
- Mentoring:
David Clark ♦

May meeting recap: "Proposal Writing"

Dr. Patrick J. Jung, professor at MSOE, spoke to us about "The Essentials of Proposal Writing." The meeting was held at the MSOE Alumnae Center on Tuesday, May 4.

Proposal writing is a good field for writers, Dr. Jung stated. Most non-profit organizations employ writers (for good salaries) who write proposals. These proposals solicit funds from private and corporate foundations, and from government agencies.

"A proposal is not a document. First and foremost, a proposal is an idea," he said. "When you have a proposal, focus on the idea."

"Organizations have a very focused way of how they want to spend their money," he said. The key to selecting funders for a project is this: your project must match the funding organization's interests exactly.

You need to get three or four funders for every project, he said, otherwise "it probably isn't going to fly." Most funders do not want to be the sole funder for a project.

And be candid. Ask for the amount you need. ♦

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April meeting

The topic of our April 13 meeting was "What makes a good technical publication?" This was a joint meeting with WORDS (Wisconsin Organization of Documentation Specialists). Presenters were employees of the Ken Cook Company.

Laura Landergott, sales and marketing manager, gave an overview of the Ken Cook Company, which is a provider of product information, technical communication and training programs for manufacturers and businesses.

Julie Jorgenson, account representative, talked about Content:

- The content of any project must meet the three C's: clear, concise, and complete.
- Safety statements are one of the most important parts of content.
- Include troubleshooting information and procedures and explain special terms and special terminology.

Dave Duecker, senior graphic designer, spoke about Design:

- Good publication design encompasses three aspects: visual impact, readability, and it sends the correct message.
- Before starting a project, ask yourself, "What is the purpose of the document

that I'm going to prepare? Who will use it?"

- The four ingredients of every effective design are: text, the design itself, graphics and color.

Wayne Czerwinski, senior graphic designer, talked about Software:

- Define your final output (print, the Web, CD or DVD). Multiple software applications are available for each type. Text can be prepared with Microsoft Word or Excel. Page layout programs include Adobe FrameMaker, QuarkXPress and Adobe InDesign. Website development software includes Dreamweaver, Adobe GoLive and FrontPage.
- Color increases readership and usability. The color model for print publishing is the standard CMYK model (cyan, magenta, yellow, black).
- A screen display (the Web) uses a different color model (RGB — red, green, blue) to accomplish the same thing. ♦

SIG news

by Ron Kurtus

Nancy Cavanaugh of Cavanaugh Interactive spoke to the STC-WI Independent Contractors & Consultants SIG on Wednesday, April 7 concerning "The Type of Services to Offer in a Changing Business Market".

Ms. Cavanaugh related how she started 20 years ago in word processing and her business evolved into desktop publishing and then interactive web design. Since desktop publishing seemed to become passé several years ago, she essentially abandoned that part of her business. But then many old clients said they needed someone to do their newsletters again, and her previous core business is booming once more.

The lesson learned is that despite the changing business market where many technical writers are getting more into web development and even programming, writers should not abandon their core skills of writing good documentation. ♦

Member news

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

New members:

- Mary Chambers
- Laurie Deblitz-Fagan
- Annie B. Di Frances
- Mark Parnell
- Christine M. White

Members achieving senior member status:

- Douglas Barron
- Meg Hamilton-Elman
- Melissa B. Johnson
- Ann A. Trumble
- Paul J. Valentine
- Linda M. Verwey

Congratulations! ♦

Letter from our Chapter President

by *Kathie Gorski*

President, WI STC Chapter

The 2003-2004 term is winding down, and this will be our last newsletter until August.

Looking back over the past season, I am reminded of the many excellent programs we have offered, with great speakers, fine meals, and plenty of networking. From the September kickoff meeting, a pleasant cruise on the *Edelweiss*, through to the more informative and instructive monthly meetings, we have had good turnout and good times.



Along with numerous local experts who shared their expertise with us, we were fortunate to have an STC luminary, Whitney Quesenbery, speak to us, and to sponsor a very enjoyable STC@50 birthday celebration.

Along with these and other excellent programs, we also saw the regular appearance of this newsletter. The newsletter has provided

great recaps of meetings, announcements about upcoming events, informative articles from the society, and witty editorials. Thanks to Amy Carlson, program chair, and Jim Green, newsletter editor (also chapter secretary), for their efforts.

Less visible than programs and the newsletter but nonetheless critical to our health as a strong chapter, our treasurer, Mike Witas, and membership chair, Diane Newbury, have helped keep us growing in the right direction; also, our PR manager, Mollye Barrett, has worked hard to bring the chapter more visibility. Thanks for your efforts, all.

Over the summer, the board will be planning how to make the upcoming 2004-2005 season even better.

We will keep you posted of our efforts, and look forward to seeing you in September. ♦

Editor's column

by *James Green*

There used to be an advertisement for a product (I can't remember which one) that promised "no fuss, no muss" when using the product.

I've always liked that. "No fuss, no muss" seems like a good description of the way we should do our jobs.

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Editor's column, continued from page 3

I think that an unwritten part of any job description is the requirement to be a grown-up. By that, I mean the need to be able to control your impulses, to be able to get along with a wide variety of people, to be able to compromise, and to not insist on getting your way all the time.

And part of being a grown-up is the ability to challenge your own assumptions. After all, you're not always right, are you?

My experience has been that managers and supervisors appreciate and reward employees who have a "no fuss, no muss" attitude. Maybe "low-maintenance" employees is a better description. These are employees who ignore external distractions (as well as they can) and concentrate on the job at hand.

If you're regularly running into your supervisor's office, complaining about so-and-so, or how so-and-so is a real so-and-so, and expecting your supervisor to do something about it — well, that's not going to make you very popular. Or respected. No matter how good a writer you may be.

You may quickly find yourself being labeled as a malcontent, as a whiner, or hard to get along with, or some other un-desirable label. Simply being labeled as "negative" can be a real career-stopper, as well.

Something to think about.



Second annual newsletter readership survey!

Yes, time sure flies when you're having fun — here we are again with the results our annual newsletter readership survey!

Three (3) members were randomly surveyed about the chapter newsletter. This is a 50% increase (3 vs. 2) over the number of members who were surveyed last year.

When asked, "How much time do you spend reading a typical issue of the chapter newsletter?" responses were:

- "I sort of glance at it when I'm at work, and my supervisor isn't watching."
- "I don't really read it, I just look at the pictures."
- "The chapter has a newsletter?"

When asked, "How could the newsletter be improved?" responses were:

- "Get rid of the 'Editor's Column.'"
- "Get rid of the editor."
- "How come you never have any articles about WordPerfect?" 😊 ♦

The topic for our June 9 meeting will be ...



"Protect Your PC 101: as seen through the eyes of a self-taught PC paranoiac (noun: person afflicted with paranoia)." As the big bad world of computing has gotten bigger and, well, um, "badder," Diane Newbury has taught herself how to protect her computer and its contents. At our June meeting she will share what she has learned and hopes that you will share what you have learned, as well. We'll talk about firewalls, anti-virus software, spam filters, and more. We'll try to do it in as relaxed a manner as is possible while still being just a touch paranoid! The meeting will be at MSOE. Watch for additional information in an upcoming e-mail. ♦