

LAKE SHORE CONNECTION

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 4, APRIL 2001

From the Editor

As many of you are aware, your Board is looking into the possibility of publishing the newsletter online rather than in paper format. I received a few responses to my informal inquiry in the last issue of the newsletter, generally in favor of the move. At this point, the Board decided it is time to make a formal survey of our members.

Included with this issue is a survey containing our questions about an online newsletter and programming.

Please take a few moments to answer the questions, fold the survey with my name and address on the outside, add a stamp, and mail it. Or, to save postage, write an e-mail message to:

edit4stc@hotmail.com. List the

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subject line as “Survey Response” and write the number of the questions and your response to each in the body of the e-mail message.

We thank you in advance for taking the time to help this Board and your future Chapter leaders in making plans for our Chapter.

Note: This is my last issue as Editor. The last two years have provided many interesting experiences. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to serve the Chapter.

Ann M. Greenseth, Editor ♦

From the President

by *Catie Lukas-TerHorst*

Elections

Now's the time to start thinking about our future Wisconsin Chapter leaders! Election time is right around the corner and we're starting to recruit people interested in serving as members of our Board.

We are posting the elected positions on the Chapter web site. I have also included descriptions of the elected positions at the end of this column. All positions posted here are available.

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Chapter and Society Events

Tuesday, April 10, 2001

Topic: “Essentials of Editing”

Speaker: Dick Gage

(See “April Chapter Meeting: About the Speaker” on page 4 for more information)

Time: 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Networking/Buffer

6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Presentation

Place: MSOE Alumni Partnership Center (APC), located at 1120 North Broadway (just south of the intersection of Juneau and Broadway Sts.).

Free parking is available in the lot adjacent to the building.

Hors d'oeuvres will be available throughout the evening (including vegetarian selections).

Cost: \$15 members, \$10 students, \$18 non-members (includes buffet).

May 13-16, 2001

STC Annual Conference in Chicago

Wednesday, June 13, 2001

Celebration of our Chapter's 40th Anniversary

MSOE Alumnae Center

More information will be available on the Chapter web site in the near future. ♦

If you or someone you know is interested in serving as an elected officer for our Chapter, please feel free to contact Catie Lukas-TerHorst at **catherine.lukas-terhorst@na.manpower.com** or at (414) 906-6261 for more information.

Board Actions

As many of you know, my term in office is coming to a close. It also means that election time is right around the corner. Now is the time to think about your future STC leaders. A few weeks ago, the Board met to discuss how we can better structure our chapter to make our programs more successful, and make our commitment to the chapter more effective. Besides selecting our elected and appointed positions, we decided to implement the following changes:

- Hold chapter meetings every other month starting this September. This will enable us to plan and coordinate meetings that better fit your busy schedules.
- Move our meeting location to MSOE’s Alumnae Center. Starting in April, we’ll be holding our chapter meetings at MSOE instead of the ICC. After extensive research in catering and facilities costs, we concluded that MSOE will provide us with another opportunity to better serve you. (Free parking is still available for our meetings.)
- Potentially, eliminate mailing postcards to announce upcoming meetings. In an effort to become more web-enabled, we’ve decided to post our meeting announcements on our Web site and distribute meetings via our ListServ.

- Survey our members about an online newsletter and program ideas. (This survey is included in this issue of the newsletter.) Tell us if you prefer to receive a paper copy, an e-mailed copy, or access our Web site for an online copy of our newsletter. Let us also know what programs you’d like us to coordinate for you.
- Elect the following positions to our Board: President, Vice President-President Elect, Vice President - Programs, Vice President - Membership, Treasurer, and Secretary. Look for job descriptions in this issue. Watch for upcoming information on elections in April.
- Appoint the following positions to assist the Board in facilitating and promoting programs and initiatives: Newsletter Editor, Web site Chair, Mentoring Chair, Historian, Public Relations Chair, Nominating Chair, and SIG managers.

Please feel free to contact me at **catherine.lukas-terhorst@na.manpower.com** or at (414) 906-6261, if you have any questions or would like more information regarding our decisions.

Descriptions of Elected Positions

President

Approximate time commitment: 10-20 hours per month

- Conducts regular meetings of the administrative council/board.
- Appoints and assigns duties to other officers.
- Suggests schedules for ongoing chapter programs and explores topics for the coming year’s meet-

ings with the program committee manager and other officers.

- Applies and maintains control for budgets, expenditures, and other fiscal activities and, with the treasurer, signs chapter checks.
- Writes articles and monthly columns for the chapter newsletter.
- Contacts committee managers periodically to obtain status/activity reports.
- Submits a report describing chapter activities to the director-sponsor prior to each STC Board of Directors meeting.
- Submits informal reports frequently to keep the director-sponsor informed about the general condition of the chapter.
- Submits chapter’s list of accomplishments to the Society for the Chapter Achievement award.

Vice President - (President Elect)

Approximate time commitment: 5-10 hours per month

- Maintains a special awareness of all chapter operations and confers frequently with the chapter president, not only to advise and assist, but also to gain knowledge that could prove useful if the vice president becomes president.
- Helps formulate policy and establish the chapter’s long-term and short-term goals.
- Monitors the chapter’s finances on a continuing basis.
- Assumes the duties of chapter president when the president is unavailable.
- Performs other duties as defined by the president:

<Continued on page 3.>

- Writes chapter bylaws.
- Develops chapter special interest groups.

Treasurer

Approximate time commitment:
10 hours per month

At the beginning of the chapter year:

- Prepares a budget.
- Establishes and maintains a checking account for current operations. Arranges for signature cards and other documents required by the bank and signed by the treasurer, president or vice president.
- Establishes and monitors a savings account and/or certificates of deposit when chapter funds exceed those needed for current operations.

Monthly:

- Collects money, makes change, and signs receipts at chapter meetings.
- Deposits chapter funds and pays invoices promptly.
- Transfers funds from the operating account to the savings account when appropriate, with the concurrence of the chapter president.
- Prepares a monthly report of chapter income and expenditures for review by the chapter president.
- Prepares reports of income and expenditures on chapter projects, making comparisons with the budget every sixty days for current projects and at the close of each project.

At the end of the year:

- Develops a detailed year-end report (as of June 30) of all finan-

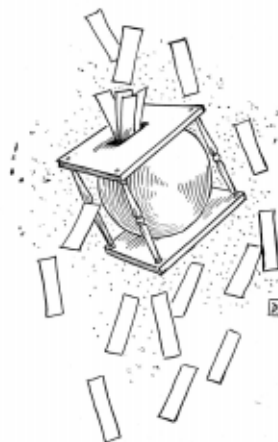
cial transactions; grouping income and expenses for each major activity such as publications competition, science writing competition, and so forth.

- Completes and signs a year-end report for the STC treasurer on a form provided by the STC office.
- Mails the year-end chapter financial report to the STC treasurer as soon as possible, but no later than September 30, to ensure a prompt dues rebate to the chapter.
- Cooperates with officers to complete the end of the fiscal year audit.

Membership Vice President

Approximate time commitment:
5-6 hours per month

- Maintains membership database and send an updated database to board members.
- Sends membership information to prospective members.
- Publishes a recruitment brochure or chapter fact sheet.
- Sends welcome packages to new members.
- Sends list of new and transferring members to the Newsletter Editor, as requested.



- Stays in contact with the Society STC office to maintain up-to-date membership status.
- Provides membership information for prospective members at regular STC meetings.
- Encourages members who drop out to re-enlist.
- Communicates with the chapter President and board, as required.
- Directs the production of the membership directory.

Programs Vice President

Approximate time commitment:
5-10 hours per meeting

- Works with the rest of the Board to develop programs topics for bi-monthly chapter meetings (five total meetings).
- Works with the Facilities Chair to arrange for speakers and coordinate equipment, meeting, catering, etc. for each meeting
- Provides details to the newsletter editor and Public Relations Chair to communicate program information.
- Coordinates and presents appreciation gifts to the speakers.

Secretary

Approximate time commitment:
3 hours per meeting

- Takes minutes at board and chapter meetings (or arranges for a substitute).
- Prepares and distributes copies of meeting minutes to officers within ten days.
- Prepares correspondence related to chapter business at the direction of the president. ♦

April Chapter Meeting: About the Speaker

Richard Gage

Dick Gage has been a professor at Gateway Technical College for the past eighteen years. He was originally hired by the college to design an Associate Degree program in Technical Communication. This program, which is the only one currently in the state Technical College system, was approved and implemented fourteen years ago. Since that time, the technical communication program has evolved every year in order to maintain the relevancy of the program to the needs of technical communication employers. Effective the fall of 2000, all technical Communication courses are now available through the Internet as well as on the Gateway Racine campus. Dick also runs his own consulting business, Creative Communication Consultants, specializing in high tech writing for sev-



eral major contractors within the U.S.

Before coming to Gateway, Dick was the Marketing Communication Manager for McGraw-Edison in South Milwaukee. His department was responsible for all the technical, promotional, journalistic and training literature for electrical power system products. Before that, he was the senior technical writer at Snap-on Tools Corporation in Kenosha for three years, and the department chairperson of the Communications Department at Saint Catherine's High School in Racine for nine years. Prior to that, he was assigned for three years to computer operations at the Pentagon while stationed with the U. S. Army's Adjunct General's Office in Washington, D.C.

Dick's academic training from UW-Madison and UW-Whitewater is in electrical engineering, business and secondary education in English and Composition. He also has many post graduate courses in adult education and computer software/hardware.

He is married to Jan who is an English and Spanish teacher at Saint Catherine's High School. He has four children, three who have graduated from college and became teachers and one who is a sophomore at

SIG News

C&IC SIG

submitted by Louis Costanzo

The C&IC SIG will meet on May 24th and July 19th at Heinemann's Restaurant. For more information, contact Eric McAttee at emcattee@execpc.com or call (414) 258-8663.

IA SIG

submitted by Brian Molstad

The next STC Information Architecture SIG meeting will be:

At: Johnson Controls Interactive
507 E. Michigan Ave, Milwaukee, WI

When: Tuesday evening, April 10th
(exact time to be confirmed soon)

What About: Internet Flowcharting Standards and Methods

Flowcharting has been around within the IT industry for years. With the advent of the web however, a need for effective ways to graphically represent a website has been recognized, yet there has been little to no standardization. This will be a round table discussion. I invite all attendees to bring examples of web flowcharting work they've done to compare with others. Hopefully, we'll all leave having picked up a few handy methods to employ on our next project.

Please RSVP to brianm@wirestone.com or call 262-790-5220.

Hope to see you there!

Note:

The IA SIG has formed an ecircle group. Join the STC IA SIG ecircle's ring to get the skinny on what's happening with the group. For more information, contact Brian Molstad at brianm@wirestone.com or call his work number: (262) 790-9327. ♦



To Be A Technical Communicator

This is the fifth in a series of articles exploring who we are as technical communicators and what we do.

Spotlight on Michele Berkes

by Ann M. Greenseth

As technical communicators in today's business world, we are inundated with information about the World Wide Web and are involved in a variety of web-related activities. For some of us, these activities are confined to surfing the web during our off-work hours to pursue information about our vocations and avocations. Some of us spend time building web sites for ourselves, and for family and friends. Still others perform research for our jobs or current assignments. For yet others, our entire occupation and its everyday tasks are entrenched in the web and its many facets.

Such is the case for Michele Berkes. Michele, who has been in the technical communication field for 15 years, has been involved in web-related jobs, tasks, and assignments since 1994. Through a progression of growth opportunities within several organizations, she finds herself now working almost exclusively in the world of the web.

During her early years in the profession, Michele worked for an educational publishing house, a large aluminum manufacturer, and a Department of Energy facility. Her positions within these organizations provided her with a number of opportunities, such as performing

photo research, proofreading and later editing textbooks and related educational materials, editing technical training materials and manuals, and managing several publications.

Then, seven years ago, an opportunity arose for Michele to take part in helping to develop the first web site for the Department of Energy. She was working in the Publications group when it was decided that the Department needed to create a presence on the web. A team consisting of a project manager and programmer was developed. The project manager recognized the need for a communicator on the team and contacted the Publications group. At the time, Michele was the most technical savvy individual in her group, and had studied SGML, which provided a foundation for learning HTML.

So, as is often the case, a number of circumstances and factors converged to provide an opportunity. Michele credits her independent SGML studies, being in the right place at the right time, and meeting up with this visionary (who understood early on that the web required clear communication as well as programming) as providing her with this opportunity to transition into web-related work.

In 1998, she moved to the Milwaukee area and began working at Compuware Corporation. Since then, she



has worked as a consultant on a number of web-related projects, such as a major supplier of automotive products, a manufacturer of electronic controls, and a major insurance company. In addition to her work with her clients, Michele serves as a web resource for other consultants at Compuware, answering questions and developing and delivering web-related training.

For her current assignment, she has been working as a web design expert in her client's IS department. In this role, she works with a number of departments and project teams within the company. As a web design expert, she concentrates on web design and information architecture for web sites and web-enabled applications and is involved with usability studies. Michele also helps her client define their best practices and serves as a web site accessibility expert.

As an information architect, Michele concentrates on organization, navigation, and interaction issues. She works with internal clients to help them determine what the communication and business goals of the site are and what content already exists and what needs to be created. Once the organization and structure of the site are agreed upon, she creates templates and documents the overall site design. Then, the development of the actual web pages and building of the site are usually turned over to the department with which she is working.

What does a "typical" week look like for Michele?

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- Serves as a member of a team to develop a high-level strategy for branding the company's intranet and its component sites.
- Meets with an IS project manager about a new project, to help the project manager understand the web process.
- Meets with representatives from another organization within the company who want to develop internet, intranet, and extranet sites about their organization.
- Researches and provides recommendations on accessibility and other best practices issues.
- Meets with a department's representatives (content owners and communications specialists) to discuss the department's new site for the intranet.
- Provides continuing support to a project team that is building a site based on Michele's information architecture.
- Consults with a project team on user interface issues for a web-enabled application.
- Develops prototypes of a web site for review by the content owners
- Develops templates for various web sites

Still, with all the tasks she performs, Michele believes her primary work is information architecture—identifying and defining the audiences and their user purposes, identifying communication goals, bringing together people from various disciplines to work together on a common goal, and organizing and structuring the information for the best use of the audiences involved. It is these “traditional” technical

communication skills that she brings to bear on all her assignments, whether web-related or not. While what she does today differs in many respects from 10 to 15 years ago, in general these same fundamental principles and skills apply, and serve her well in the work she performs today.

“Information architecture,” she states, “is what we do. We organize a manual, we decide the information that has to be part of the online help, or in a quick reference card, and so forth. We know if a user interface needs reworking.” As technical communicators, we pull together many threads and work with diverse groups of people to make information coherent and useful.

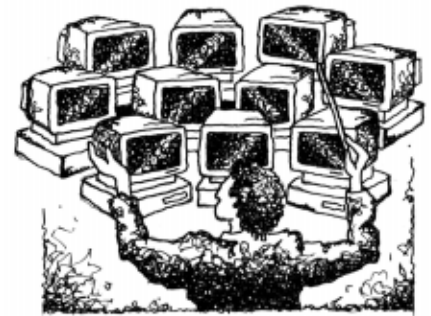
Michele has been actively interested in our profession for many years. She has been a member of STC for ten years, and has been a member of the Wisconsin Chapter since 1998.

Michele has served in a variety of roles for STC. She has served as Vice President (East Tennessee Chapter), Treasurer (Wisconsin Chapter), membership manager, technical publications competition judge, and acting programs manager. In addition,

she has done a great deal of work with regional conferences, including serving as general manager, facilities manager, program manager, and publications/public relations manager. She received the Distinguished Chapter Service Award in 1998 while a member of the East Tennessee Chapter.

In addition, as you know from our recent STC ballot, she is currently running for Director-Sponsor for Region 6.

Editor's Note: We wish her all the best in this endeavor! ♦



Region 6 Conference Announcement

Mollye Barrett (Wisconsin Chapter) has graciously agreed to serve as General Manager of the 2001 Region 6 Conference. The Twin Cities Chapter will host the conference, probably at a conference site outside of the metropolitan area.

The conference will be in late September or October. More details will be available soon.

If you or someone you know is interested in working on this conference, please contact: Mollye Barrett at:

mbarrett@execpc.com

New Members!

submitted by Verla R. Gatchell

We recognize the following Chapter members who joined or transferred to our Chapter since the last issue of the newsletter:

New Members

- Eileen C. Allen
- Larry G. Barnett
- Anne C. Brookhouser
- Anne G. Fisher
- Juliette M. Francis
- Jackie G. Fudge
- Brenda Gromiuk

2000-2001 Chapter Officers

President, Catie Lukas-TerHorst
email: catherine.lukas-terhorst@na.manpower.com

Vice President and Acting Treasurer, Louis Costanzo
email: lccostanzo@juno.com

Secretary, Open

Job Exchange, Open

Membership, Verla R. Gatchell
email: verla_r_gatchell@efunds.com

Programs, Jan Wefler
email: jan.wefler@compuware.com

Public Relations, Linda Verwey
email: linda.verwey@metavante.com

Newsletter, Ann M. Greenseth
email: edit4stc@hotmail.com

Mentoring, Mollye Barrett
email: mbarrett@execpc.com

Web Chair, Open

- Scott C. Latus
- Emily M. Roeh
- Sara E. Santiago
- Jenny K. Strangeway
- Michail Takach
- Kate Watling
- Alfred H. Weil

Reinstated Members

- Katherine H. Wikoff

Transferred Members:

- Jennifer M Michaelis
- Kathy E. Steeb
- Madelaine Yafet

We welcome you to the Wisconsin Chapter of STC! ♦

Board Bio

Linda Verwey

Linda knows that the best way to learn to swim is to just jump in fast, with both feet. Sometimes you sink; most times you swim. As an Alverno graduate with Professional Communication and Business Management degrees, she knew the key to staying afloat was talking to the people who had done this before and in relying on past experience. While there has been a lot of sink or swim in diving into the role of Public Relations Chair for 2000-2001, someone has always been around to toss out a life-raft!

Linda became a member of STC four years ago after joining Metavante Corporation (formerly known as M&I Data Services) as a technical writer. This was quite a change from her previous writing experience at Golden Books. Beginning as an edi-

torial assistant, she worked with the creative staff writing, developing, and proofing copy for a variety of print media. She wrote speeches and created storyboards for sales and marketing presentations, and developed product content for licensed customers such as OshKoshB'Gosh and Wendy's. Later, as an associate editor in the children's educational products division, she assisted with new product research and development, including software development and usability testing-or "kid-testing," as it was affectionately referred to then.

Just after the new electronic encyclopedia she helped develop was successfully delivered to the consumer market, Golden Books was sold. The new owner relocated the creative division to New York. Fortunately, Linda anticipated the rough seas ahead, and was prepared to jump ship when the time came.

At Metavante, learning new genre techniques for technical writing proved to be challenging. New opportunities are emerging everyday for technical writers willing to learn new skills, and STC provides many connections helpful for riding the wave of change.

As Public Relations chairperson, Linda feels she has been treading water. She has been balancing her commitment to STC, her commitment to WORDS (she's also the programming chairperson for the Wisconsin Organization for Documentation Specialists), her new position at Metavante as technical writer and supervisor (with responsibilities to six technical writers), and to her family of four.

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Why is she running Noah's Ark by taking on so many things at once? "I wanted to be involved with other professionals writers and grow quickly in my new field, so I volunteered to help out. I believe the new job assignment came up in part because of my crazy enthusiasm, but it happened at the same time I was taking on the two new volunteer positions, and when my daughter (18) was moving out for her first semester of college and my youngest daughter (15) began experiencing Freshmanitis."

Volunteering is a great way to meet people with similar interests and to feel more like a part of things. Linda's goal for the rest of this year is to separate the Membership Relations part of her job-creating and distributing information to mem-

bers-from the Public Relations part. The board could use one more person to work on marketing for new members. There is a need for someone with great relationship-building skills for contacting colleges, soliciting companies for free printing/ mailing, consistently placing our meeting and mentoring program notices in the business sections of several newspapers, writing press releases, and such. These truly are two different audiences and need to be treated that way.

Linda is sure she can keep her head above the water for the rest of this year. She is grateful for all of her new friendships and for the beacon of light they have provided her. It looks like smooth-sailing from here on out! ♦

April 2001 Newsletter Contributors

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Please contact the Editor at **edit4stc@hotmail.com** if you would like to contribute to future issues. ♦



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