



# Lakeshore Connection

Wisconsin Chapter, Society for Technical Communication    Volume 4, Issue 4    July 2003

## Letter from your Chapter President

As our 2002-2003 season comes to an end, I'd like to pass on a few closing notes. We had a good year of meetings and other activities, starting with the entertaining meeting at ComedySportz and continuing with some great topics and speakers each month.

I want to thank our Programs Manager Kathie Gorski and her team for organizing the meetings and providing us with such interesting programs. Kathie also organized our participation in the STC telephone seminars.

Our Treasurer Adam Qualler did a great job in keeping our financial records straight and making sure we remained fiscally healthy. Adam also collected money and greeted everyone when they checked in at the meetings.

Amanda Kralj-Hill worked hard as Membership Manager, keeping track of membership changes, as well as updating our

database, which is essential in emailing messages to you.

Thanks to Mike Anello for his work as Secretary and to Kim Donabar for heading up our Public Relations committee. Also, hats off to Mike Starr, who is the Webmaster and manages our Employment Listserv.

Mollye Barrett did a great job in getting our Mentoring Program back up to speed, as well as organizing several workshops this year. We're also glad that Jim Green was able to take over from Chris Moreau as Newsletter Editor. Thanks to both for the good job in keeping us informed.

Last, but not least, I want to thank Eric McAttee for continuing chairing the Consultants and Independent Contractors SIG and to Brian Molstad for starting up our new Usability SIG.

And of course, I can't forget to thank all of you who attended the meetings and were involved in our various activities. You are what it is all about.

*Ron Kurtus*  
President, STC-WI ♦

## Ballot enclosed for 2003 general election of Wisconsin Chapter STC

Enclosed with this issue of the newsletter is your ballot for the 2003 general election of the Wisconsin Chapter STC.

The nominees for our chapter offices are:

**President:** Kathie Gorski

**1st Vice President and Programs Manager:** Mike Starr

**2nd Vice President and Public Relations Manager:** Mollye Barrett

**Treasurer:** Mike Witas

**Secretary:** Jim Green

You may also write in the name of any other member whom you feel is qualified for the office.

Instructions for voting in the election are printed on the ballot. When your ballot is complete, just mail it in.

**Ballots must be returned no later than Monday, July 7. ♦**

## May meeting delivers on several counts

by *Kathie Gorski*

A capacity crowd participated in the joint meeting STC had last month with ASTD (American Society for Training and Development) and PMI (Project Management Institute). The program managers for the three organizations worked together to produce both great networking opportunities and an informative program. The meeting was held on May 13 at the Harley-Davidson corporate headquarters.

The evening began with an hour of "networking bingo" in which each attendee had the opportunity to gather the initials of others on a bingo grid that included such squares as "title is project manager," "has a long commute to work," "is a member of STC," etc. Completed bingo sheets

were entered in a drawing, for which there were close to 30 door prizes, including 25 from Harley. Aside from being a fun way to learn about others, the game also provided a bit more visibility for STC. Before starting the game, many players from the other organizations had no idea what STC is and what it offers its members.

Following the game, we enjoyed a nice dinner catered by Harley's staff, and then sat back to listen to our invited speaker, Dr. Michael Tobis, an efficiency consultant based in Madison, discuss "Managing Multiple Responsibilities." The main topics Dr. Tobis touched upon included reliability, tracking commitments, avoiding overload, and scaling up. He discussed several traps to be avoided when managing your time. They include:

- the collaboration trap (solution: ask for a delivery date, and track commitments carefully);

- the throughput trap (solution: keep your critical resource busy, have a background task for all, and reallocate tasks);
- the priority trap (solution: treat all commitment as such, rotate your attention, adjust but don't retreat);
- the communication trap (solution: formalize and clarify agreements, avoid implicit promises);
- the execution trap (solution: practice and habituate, measure and refine, observe and debug).

It was asking a lot for a speaker who could address our three groups and meet most everyone's expectations, but Dr. Tobis managed to do so. His talk was very well-received, and participants left the meeting having listened to some great advice, learned about other organizations, and enjoyed the benefits of networking. ♦

### Please check your e-mail address

Kathie Gorski, our Programs Manager, reports that her last e-mail to all chapter members resulted in 20 e-mails that were bounced back to her as invalid. Also, we don't have e-mail addresses for some members.

If you haven't been receiving notices of upcoming meetings, we either have an incorrect e-mail address or no e-mail address for you. You're missing out on some good information!

The best way to have your information updated is to go to [www.stc.org](http://www.stc.org) and update your information online. That way, it's updated there and for our chapter. ♦

## Program retrospective

by Program Manager  
Kathie Gorski

It has been a rewarding season for the Program Committee (Mike Anello, Verla Gatchell, Kathie Gorski, and Mike Starr) and we hope for you too. At the start of the season, our committee's goal was to find out what sort of topics chapter members were interested in hearing about, and then to deliver top-notch speakers on those topics. We prepared a questionnaire, sent it out, tabulated the results (10% of our membership responded), and went looking for speakers on the top-rated topics. We wanted a good mix of local experts and experts from elsewhere. Four of our eight topic-related meetings were presented by speakers from Madison (two speakers), Chicago, and Fort Wayne; the others were "local talent." All were excellent.

The committee also supported many of the national STC telephone seminars, by underwriting a large portion of their expense and coordinating the events at local host

companies. By underwriting these seminars, we were able to expand opportunities for chapter members to hone a multitude of skills, at a price affordable to all.

Of the nine chapter meetings this past season, eight were either at MSOE or elsewhere in downtown Milwaukee. We realize that a trip downtown can be inconvenient for a portion of our membership, and next season we plan to arrange half of the meetings further west. If you have any suggestions on a good facility, please email Kathie Gorski at [kgorski@execpc.com](mailto:kgorski@execpc.com).

Being on the Program Committee is a great way to get involved and contribute to the success of our local STC chapter. We encourage you to volunteer to participate. If interested, e-mail Kathie. ♦

## A Web site to check out

by Mollye Barrett

I found a page on Monster.com that I thought may be of interest. You can find it at:

<http://technology.monster.com/articles/profstc/Index.asp>

## Wisconsin Chapter Officers and Contacts

**Chapter web site:**  
[www.stcmilwaukee.org](http://www.stcmilwaukee.org)

**President**  
Ron Kurtus  
262-821-9290  
[ron@RonKurtus.com](mailto:ron@RonKurtus.com)

**Programs Manager**  
Kathie Gorski  
262-628-1672  
[kgorski@execpc.com](mailto:kgorski@execpc.com)

**Membership Manager**  
Amanda Kralj Hill  
[amanda@dsimail.com](mailto:amanda@dsimail.com)

**Secretary**  
Mike Anello  
414-766-9566  
[mike@anellomedicalwriting.com](mailto:mike@anellomedicalwriting.com)

**Treasurer**  
Adam Qualler  
[aqualler@execpc.com](mailto:aqualler@execpc.com)

**Mentoring**  
Mollye Barrett  
414-271-1144  
[mollye@iversonlang.com](mailto:mollye@iversonlang.com)

**Public Relations**  
Kim Donabar  
414-975-5223  
[ksbollmann@yahoo.com](mailto:ksbollmann@yahoo.com)

**Newsletter**  
Jim Green  
262-879-5148  
[jim.green@fiserv.com](mailto:jim.green@fiserv.com)

**Job Exchange and Web Chair**  
Mike Starr  
262-694-1028  
[mike@writestarr.com](mailto:mike@writestarr.com)

## Eight tips for networking

by Victoria Koster-Lenhardt, Senior Member, TransAlpine Chapter

(Reprinted from *Tieline*, Volume XVI, Number 3, March 2003)

The TransAlpine Chapter STC (TAC) will celebrate its fifth anniversary in October. As I reflect on this milestone, I think about all the events over the past five years that have brought our chapter members together.

We had eight, two-day conferences in four countries, which drew an average of forty attendees. Members in Italy, Slovenia, and Austria informally met for lunch and dinner to discuss country-specific technical communication topics. Chapter leaders gave up weekends to plan strategies for continuing the chapter's development.

Our membership has grown steadily from fifteen members to about 120, and I believe that the reason for our chapter's success has been the amount of networking our chapter fosters.

Several director-sponsors and chapter presidents have told me that the great deal of networking TAC members do is unusual. Networking is one of the key benefits a chapter can provide its members.

If you're looking for ways to perk up your chapter networking activities this year, try one (or more) of the following ideas.

1. Do something fun. TAC members go dancing and wine-tasting together. (Some even practice Tai Chi together.) Find out what your chapter members enjoy doing and combine the event with a meeting.

2. Plan activities where people can eat together. At TAC meetings, members arrange dinners that show off the dishes and wines of their cultures.

3. Find ways for your members to share something about themselves. The TAC has a chocolate raffle at every chapter meeting. Not only has this turned out to be a great fundraiser, but all members get involved (by donating chocolate from their country, buying a raffle ticket, or both). Find out what makes your chapter unique and build on that.

4. Celebrate together. All TAC meetings end with a champagne reception. Everyone likes to celebrate and be congratulated for work they've done. And a celebration after the final presentation encourages people to stay till the end of the meeting.

5. Plan activities where people can stay overnight, if possible. Ideas seem to flow better when people

aren't checking their watches, wondering what the traffic will be like, or thinking about what they have to do when they get home.

6. Involve new members immediately. The TAC asks at least one new member at every meeting to write a story about his or her experiences as a newbie. This project gets new which benefits both the chapter and the new members.

7. Network with other chapters. Send a member from your chapter to present at another chapter's meeting.

8. If chapter members are far apart, encourage informal meetings (with or without a speaker) among members who live near one another. The TAC started the concept of local interest groups. Italian, Slovenian, and Austrian members get together in their own countries to talk about technical communication topics in their native languages. These events occur between chapter meetings and have been very successful.

Help your chapter members have more contact with their professional peers while making new friends and having fun. With the current employment situation in Europe and the United States, networking is more important than ever. ♦