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Fertile Ground

Local Communicators Win Honors

Nearly two dozen technical communicators came up winners in the chapter's 4th Annual Technical Publications Competition, judged by members of the Austin, Texas, chapter of the Society for Technical Communication.



There were nine awards, ranging from Merit to Best of Show.

Two of the winning projects—the Best of Show recipient from Square D Company and the Distinguished Technical Communication winner from Tanner Corporate Services and Chromalox—are moving on to international competition.

Judging for that competition will be held over the next two months and winners will be announced at the STC Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida, May 21-24.

Square D's Best of Show, in the category of informational materials, was titled "PowerLogic Solutions: Justifying a Power Management System. Kathy Collins of Square D shared writing credit with the company's PQ/EM Services group. Collins was also credited for editing, design, and illustration of the project.

The Tanner/Chromalox project, a product data sheet entered in the category of promotional materi-

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Mark Your Calendars

What: STC Meeting
Where: Union Station Hotel
When: Tuesday
6:30 pm - Networking
7 pm - Presentation
8:15 pm - Door prize drawing

Our guest speaker this month, veteran trainer Paul Neshamkin, will help us understand why so many people are talking about single sourcing.

And the winners are...

Winners of the 4th Annual Technical Publications Contest of the Middle Tennessee Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication are:

Best of Show—PowerLogic Solutions: Justifying a Power Management System; informational materials; Square D, written by Kathy Collins and PQ/EM Services, edited, designed, and illustrated by Kathy Collins.

Distinguished Technical Communication—Product Data Sheet (PDS), Chromalox Partial Load Failure; promotional materials; Tanner Corporate Services and Chromalox, written by Mary Hausman, of Chromalox, edited by Rita Johnson and illustrated by Joey Hayes, both of Tanner Corporate Services.

Excellence—Global INCompass brochures; promotional materials; Deloitte & Touche, written by Matt Moynihan, edited by Shannon Thurman, and edited by Becky Ploeger.

Excellence—POWERLINK Lighting Control System Brochure; promotional materials; Square D, written by Kimberly Wilson and Todd Munyon, edited by Wilson, Munyon, and Graphica, and designed by Graphica.

Merit—Bank of America Image OnSite User Manual; software guides; Tanner Corporate Services, written by Sharon Smith, edited by Sharon Fleming, and designed by Linsey Sieger.

Merit—Circuit Monitor Memory Expansion Kit; noncomputer equipment guides; Square D, written by Jeff Farago and Margie Myers, illustrated by Chris Graff, and with editing, design, and illustration by Margie Myers.

Merit—Emergency Department (ED) Patient Tracker Marketing Sheet; promotional materials; Columbia/HCA, written by Claudia Viken and designed by Janet Bell.

Merit—OASIS Flyer; informational materials; Columbia/HCA, written by Claudia Viken and designed by Janet Bell.

Merit—The Guide; informational materials; Tanner Corporate Services, written by Randy Horick and Dina Rogers, designed by Gregg Bowling.

Two Chapter Members Achieve Senior Member Status

The STC national office named former local chapter officers Kay Mann and Julie Sharp as senior members in recognition of their five-plus years of membership in STC.

Mann, chapter treasurer in 1995-96, is part owner of Educational Media Associates, Inc., in Fairview. She has a master's degree in music from the University of Iowa and 20 years of experience in technical communication, programming, and systems analysis. Her company provides technical communi-

cation services to businesses.

Sharp, Middle Tennessee Chapter president in 1990-91, is associate professor of the Practice of Technical Communication in the Chemical Engineering Department of the Vanderbilt University Engineering School. She designs and instructs combined engineering lab/technical communication courses and a technical communication course for engineering majors.

Sharp has a Ph.D. in English Education from Vanderbilt University and 18 years of experience teaching technical communication there.



Julie Sharp

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Kay Mann

"In my five years as a member, I have admired the efforts of the local chapter to provide a platform with a friendly atmosphere where members can meet and share ideas," Mann said.

Sharp said that STC participation brings networking opportunities that can result in consulting contracts.

Communiqué—c/o Tim Hunter, president, 1010 Airpark Center Drive, Nashville, TN 37217

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Submissions are welcome in hard copy, on disk, or via e-mail. Send hard copy or 3.5" disk submissions to Ed Gregory, c/o Deloitte & Touche LLP, 4022 Sells Drive, Hermitage, TN 37076-2903. Send e-mail submissions to edgregory@dtus.com or p.livingston@home.com.

Colophon—This document was created with Microsoft Word™, Adobe Pagemaker™, and Adobe Photoshop™.

Full slate of activities for our chapter in '00

The new year is moving along and the officers are excited about serving the Middle Tennessee chapter into the new era. We can't make this a successful year unless you help. We need you to join us at the meetings we have planned for the new year.

The volunteer staff has worked hard to book nationally known and highly experienced professionals in our industry to meet with us to discuss the very topics you voted for in last year's poll.

In addition to your attendance, you can help by contributing to the buzz, sharing meeting information with friends and peers in the profession. E-mail them a link to our chapter's Web calendar: <http://www.stc.org/region3/mtc/www/calendar.htm>. Remember that everyone is welcome.

If you were with us February 15 at Goten Japanese Steak House, you might have met some of the winners of our 1999 STC publications competition and participated in the discussion about the "Informational Web Design and Writing Seminar" that we are planning for September.

You don't have to wait that long to hear a top-notch speaker, however. On March 14, Paul Neshamkin—a noted expert on single sourcing—will be our guest speaker at the Union Station Hotel.

Check out Paul's credentials:

- 14 years experience with electronic and online documentation
- Owner of an online consulting and training firm, The Paul Neshamkin Group
- Previously the director of training and technical support at WexTech Systems, the creators of Doc-To-Help and AnswerWorks
- Recently named an HTML Help MVP by Microsoft
- WexTech MVP and Certified Doc-To-

Help Trainer/Consultant

For April, we're trying to bring in Dell Computers to provide us a multi-level presentation, completed with the story of how Dell helped define the standards for electronic product information deliver, e-commerce, and user assistance via the Internet. We'll keep you posted.

In May or June, we plan to have a torch-passing ceremony as this year's officers bid adieu to make room for new, enthusiastic officers. So be thinking about nominees, including yourself or the person in the cubicle next door.

In the meantime, help yourself and your career by learning more about single sourcing. Join us March 14 at Union Station Hotel.

See you there,

Tim



Next Issue...

We'll preview the STC's 47th Annual Conference, scheduled May 21-24 in Orlando, Florida. The conference will feature more than 250 technical sessions covering technical writing, editing, management, Web design, multimedia, and other subjects of interest to technical communicators. Information on the conference is available on the STC office Web site at <http://www.stc-va.org>. A copy of the conference preliminary program, including a registration form, can be obtained by calling (703) 522-4114 ext. 200.

Regional and National News Update

By Michelle Ratcliffe
Region 3 Director

The Phoenix chapter hosted the winter meeting of the STC Board of Directors in Phoenix, AZ on January 13-15, 2000. Here is a summary of the actions taken as well as a few highlights of regional and Society level events.

New Chapters

Approved the formation of:

- The James Madison University student chapter in Harrisonburg, Virginia, providing a \$150.00 USD start up grant.
- The Edison College student chapter in Piqua/Greenville, Ohio, providing a \$150.00 USD start-up grant.
- The Illinois Heartland chapter in Bloomington/Normal, IL. This is concurrent with the dissolution of the Illinois State University Student Chapter. Student members are a major segment of the new IL Heartland chapter and a mentoring program has been developed to match IL State students with professional members of the chapter.

Grants

These grants were approved:

- A merit grant of \$3,000.00 USD for the Boston chapter to serve as seed money for the *Carol Landers Spirit of Volunteerism Fund*. This is a unique program among STC chapters, but one that may be of interest to many. Carol Landers was a consistent, active, and some might say essential member of the Boston Chapter who passed away very suddenly last year at the age of 42. This grant, along with funds raised by the Boston Chapter, will support an annual award to a chapter member, aimed at recognizing outstanding volunteerism. The

awards will be unique to each recipient and may include awards such as the registration fee for a professional conference, training course, or similar program or other appropriate award to recognize experienced members who have contributed their time, effort, and energies to the Boston Chapter.

- A merit grant of \$3,000 USD for the Manitoba chapter for development of its public relations program to increase membership as well as raise the awareness of community businesses of the importance and availability of professional technical communicators in that area.
- A Special Opportunities Grant of \$10,000 USD for *Technological Literacy in America, 1978-2000: A Project to Improve Technical Communication Education in the New Millennium* to Cynthia L. Self and Gail E. Hawisher.
- A Special Opportunities Grant of \$10,000 USD for *Website Materials Development for Careers in Technical Communication* to Stephen Bernhardt.
- A Special Opportunities Grant of \$10,000 USD for *Develop and Direct a Technical Writing Institute for Teachers in China* to Carol M. Barnum.

Other Actions

- Recognition of STC as a cooperating society in the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) *Conference on Universal Usability: Solutions, Systems, and Methods* (to be held 16-17 November 2000 in Washington, D.C.) and designated Dr. Janice C. (Ginny) Redish as STC liaison.
- Approved the STC Intellectual Property Statement.

- Approved \$7,500.00 USD as startup funds for the Journal Editor Fellowship Program. This program is aimed at providing training to people interested in editing scholarly journals.

For more information on the programs mentioned above, please visit the STC website at www.stc-va.org.

Additional News and Highlights

- *Technical Communication*, the STC journal, goes online and searchable at the end of January 2000. Two years of issues, February, 1998-February, 2000 will initially be available, with other issues to follow.
- A public relations firm, Parker LePla, is conducting a “branding” survey for the Society currently. The results of the survey will lead to the development and implementation of an updated “corporate” identity for STC, as well as enable STC to market membership and services with a more consistent “voice.”

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Nashville Technology Council, Meet the STC

**By George Cassidy
Tanner Corporate Services**

The Nashville Technology Council (NTC), formed a few short months ago, bills itself as an inclusive organization devoted to promoting the growth of technology businesses throughout the greater Nashville area. It plans to do this by bringing together leaders in the business, academic, government, and non-profit sectors. This is exciting news to those of us with more than a passing interest in technology.

The NTC held its inaugural meeting at the Sheraton Nashville Downtown. Senator Bill Frist was the keynote speaker, addressing "Nashville's Technology Industry in a National Perspective." A panel of industry leaders then discussed challenges facing the technology community. Over 350 people registered for the event, which had to be moved to the Sheraton at the last minute because of the overwhelming response. Dozens of walk-ins lined the aisles and walls. Clearly, the level of interest in this venture is quite high.

The Council is capitalizing quickly on its initial success. It plans to follow the inaugural meeting with a series of ongoing programs and workshops addressing issues and opportunities facing Nashville's

Every software developer out there...will someday need documentation for his or her product.

technology sector. According to the organization's web site, "[p]articipants will have opportunities to create peer networks, to discuss issues facing their organizations and the larger community, to learn about ways to improve their businesses, and to share their ideas about how the Council can serve our region's technology sector." Recently, the group formed a partnership with the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce and is planning to hire permanent, full-time staff within the next month.

I would encourage all of us at STC to learn more about the Nashville Technology Council and how we might take our place at the table. Currently, membership in the Council, while not

free, is open to all companies, institutions, and organizations involved in the technology industry.

While the emphasis of the Council's programming is clearly on the romance of entrepreneurship, it seems logical for those of us engaged in documentation to lend our ideas and support to the cause. After all, every software developer out there looking for venture capital will someday need documentation for his or her product. These people need our help, and many of them don't even realize it yet!

For more information, call 615.782.2281 or check out the Council's website at <http://www.technologycouncil.com>.

STC Members' Work Reviewed by Austin Chapter Judges

(Continued from page 1)

als, was titled "Chromalox Partial Load Failure." Mary Hayes, of Chromalox, was the writer. Tanner's Rita Johnson was the editor and Joey Hayes, also of Tanner, was credited for illustrating the materials.

Tanner Corporate Services and Columbia/HCA each won three awards, Square D won two, and Deloitte & Touche won one.

Best of Show winner Kathy Collins of Square D Company and Distinguished award winner Rita Johnson of Tanner Corporate Services said they were pleased to receive the awards and even more pleased to receive judges' comments.

"You usually get good input from the judges, which is the real value of these competitions," Collins said.

Johnson said that most businesses are too small to provide for impartial feedback from peers. Often,

those peers work together on multiple projects. This makes objective appraisal of any specific project difficult, if not impossible, she said.

In addition, many businesses are limited to the kinds of documentation they produce. Competitions like this allow participants to see documentation from different kinds of businesses, and to learn about the challenges faced and tools used, Johnson said.

The contest entries represented documentation used in banking, health care, financial consulting, and industrial manufacturing and sales.

—Story by Pam Livingston and Ed Gregory,
Communiqué Co-Editors

Haven't made up your mind yet about Orlando?

Here's a sampling of the workshops you might miss:

The Art of Presenting

Full Day, Thursday, 8:30 AM-5 PM

Script Design for Film, Video, and Multimedia

Full Day, Thursday, 8:30 AM-5 PM

Fundamentals for Flowcharting Processes & Procedures

Full Day, Thursday, 8:30 AM-5 PM

Designing Single-source Materials

Full Day, Thursday, 8:30 AM-5 PM

An Introduction to XML for Technical Writers

Full Day, Thursday, 8:30 AM-5 PM

Creating More Effective Graphs

Full Day, Thursday, 8:30 AM-5 PM

Indexing 101: Basic Indexing Theory and Practice

Full Day, Thursday, 8:30 AM-5 PM

Back to the Drawing Board: Foundations for Effective Visual Communication

Full Day, Thursday, 8:30 AM-5 PM

Technical Writing for Technology-enabled Translation: A Hands-On Approach

Full Day, Thursday, 8:30 AM-5 PM

Conducting Mail, Telephone, and Online Surveys-2000

Full Day, Thursday, 8:30 AM-5 PM

Strategies for Learning How to Develop Proposals

Full Day, Thursday, 8:30 AM-5 PM

Information Design

Full Day, Thursday, 8:30 AM-5 PM

Designing for Interactivity: Role Models, Guides, and Coaches

Half Day, Thursday, 8:30 AM-12 Noon

Technical Writing 101: Polishing Your Writing Skills

Half Day, Thursday, 8:30 AM-12 Noon

Successful Independent Consulting

Half Day, Thursday, 8:30 AM-12 Noon

For information about the STC's 47th Annual Conference, visit the national homepage at <http://www.stc-va.org>



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