

Middle Tennessee STC Chapter



## Middle Tennessee Chapter Member Awarded DCSA *By Amy Oldham*

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STC's members provide the energy, enthusiasm, and commitment that make the Society for Technical Communication the largest, most effective, and most prestigious organization of technical communicators in the world. To publicly acknowledge the repeated hard work of individual chapter members, STC offers a formal recognition program in the form of the Distinguished Chapter Service Award (DCSA). According to the STC web site, this award acknowledges "the work of chapter members who provide exemplary service to the Society through their dedication to the chapter and its activities." To be eligible for the award, chapter members must have a consistent service record with the chapter over time, as well as a varied service record, such as holding multiple chapter offices, editing the newsletter, and/or running the publications competition. DCSA nominees must be approved by the entire

chapter's advisory council, region director, and the STC board.

This year, I am pleased to announce that Rita Johnson's commitment and dedication to the Middle Tennessee chapter has been acknowledged in the form of a Distinguished Chapter Service Award. In her tenure with the Middle Tennessee STC Chapter, Rita has served our chapter in a number of administrative council positions including that of chapter president and publications competition manager. During her tenure as president (chapter years 2001–2002 and 2002–2003) Rita provided leadership founded on her 15+ years of experience in the technical communication field. Under her guidance, our chapter successfully hosted a national STC convention. In addition to her official capacity duties, Rita has been a supportive mentor to chapter members and has willingly shared her wisdom and insight through numerous chapter presentations—both through facilitation

and commentary—and newsletter articles. In addition to chapter activities, Rita also sat on the STC Nominating Committee, which identifies potential candidates for Society offices.

Rita has continually contributed her time and energy to serve STC and advance the field of technical communication. It's only fitting that she be honored with a Distinguished Chapter Service Award. The DCSA program was inaugurated in 1988, with the first awards given in 1989. Rita is the third Middle Tennessee Chapter member that has been recognized for exemplary service to the chapter. Rita will receive a DCSA certificate later this year, and her name—along with all other chapter award recipients—will be listed in the July/August issue of *Intercom*.

Thanks, Rita, for your exceptional leadership as Middle Tennessee Chapter president and your encouragement and support as a mentor in our profession!



*"Remember, non-members may post their resumes or email addresses on the Middle Tennessee STC website..."*

## Doc-to-Help Lunch 'n Learn

Our second lunch 'n learn of the year took place on February 9, 2006 with Dan Beall from ComponentOne introducing us to Doc-to-Help and its one-click RoboHelp Project Converter. With the news that Macromedia will not continue to update or support RoboHelp and the fact that so many of us are currently using RoboHelp, it was no surprise that there was much interest in what Dan had to say.

Doc-To-Help allows you to author your content and configure your Help systems in Word or any HTML editor you like and then import it into Doc-to-Help where it is converted to your choice of HTML Help, Cross-Platform HTML-based Help, JavaHelp, WinHelp, Help 2.0, or printed documentation.

If you have an editor you really like and don't want to learn a new

tool to produce your content, Doc-to-Help may be the tool for you.

If you would like to learn more, contact our chapter president, Amy Oldham. Dan has provided her with hard copies of his presentation and trial versions of Doc-to-Help on CD.

## Non-Members Employment Listing

Looking for a job? Remember, non-members can post their resumes or email addresses on the Middle Tennessee STC website employment page for a fee of \$9.00 per quarter. Non-members may also post web site links on the Middle Tennessee STC website employment page for a fee of \$12.00 per quarter. The submission will remain posted for 3 months from the submission date unless a request is sent to

the webmaster to have it removed. Fees are not refunded and are not prorated if the resume is removed prior to expiration.

Postings may be extended by purchasing additional 3 month increments at a cost of \$9.00 for resumes or email links and \$12.00 for web site links.

Renewal fees are assessed to the submitter every 3 months, 15 days prior to

expiration. Submissions will be removed 15 days after the expiration date if renewal fees are not paid in full.

Contact the director of employment, Joel Butts, for more information.

## Middle TN Chapter Handbook

### Attention Officers!

As a means of making the transition easier for future officers, we are putting together a handbook of officer duties. We hope to have the handbook complete by chapter year's end, so if you have not yet submitted your list of responsibilities and any tips and tricks you have found useful as an officer to Amy Oldham, please do so as soon as possible.

## STC Atlanta's 2006 Currents Conference

The STC Atlanta Chapter is proud to announce Currents 2006, the 17th annual technical communications conference, on March 24 and 25, 2006 at the Atlanta campus of Mercer University. Currents 2006 includes a full-day workshop on Friday, March 24 and a full-day conference on Saturday, March 25. BreakPoint Books will be present on Saturday with technical communication-related books for sale.

Currents 2006 is open to any technical communication professional regardless of skill level or position. We also invite other professionals who are interested in the technical communication field. Join us to expand your skills, network with other professionals, and have fun with friends.

Register now at

<http://www.stcatlanta.org/currents06/06register.htm>.

### Pre-conference Workshop

The 2006 Currents conference offers a pre-conference workshop on Friday March 24 from well-known STC senior member and speaker, Rob Houser of User First Services.

### Writing for Small Spaces

**Workshop Speaker: Rob Houser, User First Services, Inc.**

User assistance is moving into software applications; however, space is a precious commodity in a user interface. We must justify every word we write, showing how our words help to ensure a successful user experience. In this workshop, we will practice the art of

saying more with fewer words. This workshop discusses what type of information goes in embedded user assistance, and you will practice writing embedded help, on-screen text, error messages, and context-sensitive help that answers user questions with as few words as possible.

### Keynote Speaker

Our conference keynote speaker is current STC International First Vice President, Paula Berger.

### Conference sessions

We have also assembled a great line up of conference session presenters and topics. Topic stems include:

- Tools and Technology
- Writing and Editing
- Career Development
- Knowledge Management
- Single Sourcing

For a complete list of sessions, point your browser to <http://www.stcatlanta.org/currents06/06sessions.htm>.

Visit the Currents Web site for information, such as conference pricing, hotels, directions, and registration materials -- <http://www.stcatlanta.org/currents.htm>. If you or your company would like to be a sponsor or provide raffle gifts for Currents 2006, we have various levels of contribution categories.

## Toronto 2006 Spring Conference

### Are you ready?

The worlds in which technical communicators work are fast reaching the point where content is becoming unmanageable. IT groups are recognizing that little is being solved by adding more disk space or setting up new servers. The increasing rates at which new information is generated, consumed, and then lost is becoming unsustainable. Technical communicators have a role to play if they are prepared to step up to the challenge.

A number of factors are converging that promise to change the landscape for good. The technology and tools are maturing. A set of best practices is emerging that will enable us to effectively manage the increasing demands on our resources. We are already seeing a swing in the adoption of structured authoring in many tech pub environments. It won't be long before we're adopting formalized content management solutions. We believe that content management is about to "tip". *Will you be ready?*

This year's Toronto STC conference features a series of advanced, half-day workshops in information design and

content management lead by several of our industry's revered luminaries from across North America. Join us in Mississauga, Ontario for three days in March and see Ann Rockley, Jim Purdy, Michael Priestley, Saul Carliner, and Scott Abel - The Content Wrangler. We are also pleased to be working with the Content Management Professionals to host the first ever Toronto Summit at the conference.

### Register Now

Register by March 10 to take advantage of the Early Bird discount. [Register Online with PayPal](#) or Register by phone [Mon-Fri] +1 (416) 941-8383 x 13826 *VISA/Cheque/Money Order.*

### 2006 Spring Conference

Features half-day interactive workshops with:

- Ann Rockley
- Jim Purdy
- Michael Priestley
- Saul Carliner
- Scott Abel

*March 27-29 - 0900-1700 hrs*

## Calendar Preview

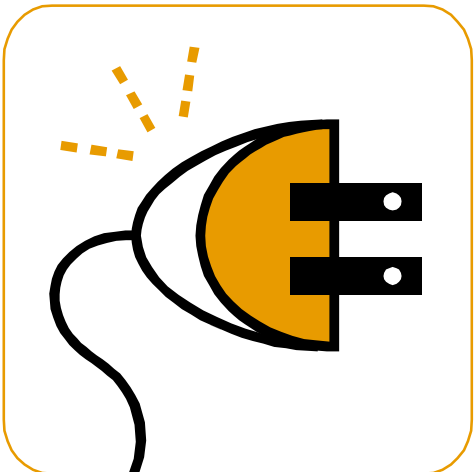
**Wednesday, March 8**, 12:00-1:30: Web-Telephone Seminar at Square D/Schneider Electric in the Altivar Conference Room. Topic: Instructions for Writing Instructions: Guidelines for Organization and Content. Presented by Caroline Stern. For more details about the topic and presenter, or to RSVP for this event, visit our chapter web site.

**Tuesday, March 21**, 6 PM: March Monthly Meeting at Cummins Station, Joe Craft Conference Center. The topic Choosing and Using Digital Cameras will be presented by Mark Wallis. Mark will discuss the basic concepts of digital photography and show numerous ways to use a digital camera at home, at work, and to enhance your documents. He will demonstrate two representative digital cameras — a convenient point-and-shoot model and a more sophisticated semi-pro model. For further topic details, as well as presenter's bio and RSVP form, visit our chapter's web site.

**April.** The Annual Technical Publications Awards Banquet will occur in April. Watch for more details coming soon!

**May 7 – 10:** STC's 53<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference in Las Vegas, NV. For details and to RSVP, visit the national STC site at <http://www.stc.org/53rdConf/>.

**Tuesday, May 16**, 5:30 PM: The May monthly meeting will be a combined STC/ASTD Meeting at HCA in the Cumberland Room. Topic: The Art of Constructive Confrontation. Presented by: Dr. John Hoover. Confrontation is a tool—not a weapon. Dr. John will teach constructive confrontation as a guiding philosophy *and* a systematic process to eliminate confusion, chaos, inconsistent messages, and double standards. This presentation is aimed at helping you learn and apply the concepts of constructive confrontation, internal and external communications strategies, and how to form and sustain internal and external strategic relationships. This approach is not a new business fad—it's a disciplined, proven tool that increases results through accountability and less conflict.



## Officers Wanted

Can you believe it? This chapter year is almost over, and it's time to start thinking ahead to next year and what you can do to help yourself, your career, and your local STC chapter. One thing that fits the bill for all three of these is becoming a STC officer.

The benefits include:

- Being instrumental in what is presented and/or discussed at chapter meetings
- Networking
- Gaining leadership skills

- Beefing up your resume
- Being involved in shaping the future of you local chapter
- Fulfilling your volunteer obligations (remember, this is the "Volunteer" state)

If any of these benefits appeal to you, contact Amy Oldham or any of the current chapter officers before the final monthly meeting (May 16<sup>th</sup>) of this chapter year.

## STC Spotlight

This month, the *STC Spotlight* shines on Caterpillar Financial Services consultant Rita Johnson, Rita, a longtime member of the international Society for Technical Communication ([www.stc.org](http://www.stc.org)) was recently awarded STC's Distinguished Chapter Service Award (DCSA). Rita's award is no small feat, as she is one of only three Middle TN Chapter members ever to have received this award since 1989. In fact, we are so

proud of Rita that we thought her award deserved a front page story in this newsletter, as well as a "spot" in the *STC Spotlight*. Way to go, Rita!

If you have (or know of someone who has) an unusual hobby or extracurricular interest beyond STC work, you could be featured in the next *STC Spotlight*. Send your name, or nominate a fellow STC member for inclusion, by contacting Jennifer.Nunley@cat.com.



### Get the latest scoop!

Middle Tennessee Chapter  
[www.midtenstc.org](http://www.midtenstc.org)

International STC  
[www.stc.org](http://www.stc.org)