

## On the Inside

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## Slate of officers ready to begin service

**Tim Hunter**, a senior technical writer at Square D Schneider Electric, is poised to begin his second year as president of the Middle Tennessee Chapter. He brings three years of experience to his position, having previously served one year as vice president of publicity and two years as membership manager.

Hunter's main objective for the coming year is to continue the chapter's initiative to hold meetings relevant to members' needs.

Hunter is working with chapter leadership and members of the Nashville business community to organize a one-day Web site development seminar, to be held in September of this year. (See page 3 for details.)

Hunter has been an employee of Square D Schneider Electric for five years. He previously worked as a news writer and advertising manager for a Nashville-based magazine and book publisher. He graduated in 1991 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Lipscomb University.

**Margie Myers**, manager of PMO Technical Publications for Square D/Schneider Electric in LaVergne, begins her first year as chapter vice president. The recently created position is a training ground for the chapter presidency.



Myers joined STC Suncoast Chapter in 1988, and since that time has served as a judge in several Technical Publications Competitions. She has been competitions co-

manager of the local chapter for the past two years.

Myers said her plans for her new position are to follow the president's lead. "I want to be part of the excitement under Tim's enthusiastic leadership and the dedication of other members. We're seeing many new faces and more participation than ever this year. Hopefully it will continue into the next," she said.

Myers manages the production of a variety of hardware and software documentation and online help for the products manufactured at Square D's LaVergne facility.

**Karen Fardella**, a senior documentation developer at Equinox Information Systems and senior member of STC, begins her first year as membership officer for the local chapter. Fardella said her main objective in her new role is to prepare a directory of Middle Tennessee members, if resources permit, including members' skills and areas of expertise.



Previously employed as documentation manager for Research, Analysis, and Maintenance, Inc. in San Antonio, Texas, Fardella has more than 11 years of experience creating software user and operator documentation, both printed and online. She graduated Summa Cum Laude from the University of Texas at San Antonio in 1994 with a BBA in Accounting/Information Systems.

**Amanda R. Sanders**, technical writer with Square D Schneider Electric, begins her second year as events coordinator (program committee manager).



Sanders has been a Square D employee for one and a half years. She previously worked at Deloitte & Touche as a content publisher. She earned her master's degree in English, with emphasis in business and technical communication, at Iowa State University in 1997.

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### Mark Your Calendars

What: STC Meeting  
Dutch treat meet and greet  
Where: La Paz, Green Hills  
When: Tuesday, May 16  
6:30 p.m.—Networking  
7:00 p.m.—Dinner

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# New officers have varied backgrounds...

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**Virginia Pryor**, who is moving from Tanner Corporate Services to Square D later this month, begins her first year as editor of *Communiqué*, the chapter newsletter. Pryor said that her goals for the newsletter are to continue its high standard of quality and to solicit a variety of perspectives and articles from other chapter members.



An employee of Tanner Corporate Services since 1998, Pryor earned her bachelor's degree in English Literature, with emphasis in Gender and Cultural Studies, at Oberlin College earlier that year. At Oberlin, she worked as a writing tutor and as an arts writer for the college newspaper. She also wrote an essay titled, "Writing in Academia: The Politics of Style," later published in *Working with Student Writers: Essays on Tutoring and Teaching*, a college textbook for writing tutors.

**Christina Dunn**, senior technical publications analyst at Columbia/HCA, begins her first year as publicity officer. A member of the Cleveland, Ohio, chapter for six years, Dunn said she plans to incorporate ideas from that chapter's publicity campaign into this chapter's publicity efforts. She said she also plans to keep STC members informed of upcoming meetings with timely and descriptive meeting notices.



Dunn is married to fellow STC member and employment officer David Dunn, whom she met at STC's 1998 annual conference in Anaheim. In addition to her technical

writing activities, Dunn also serves as president of the new Columbia/HCA Toastmasters club, a speaking and leadership organization.

**Rita Johnson**, project management team leader at Tanner Corporate Services, Inc., begins her first year as a publications competition manager. Johnson previously served as a competition judge for both the East Tennessee and Middle Tennessee chapters.



Johnson said she hopes to increase the number of entries in this year's competitions.

Johnson has 15 years of experience in the field of technical communications. Her expertise includes project management, software and hardware documentation, manufacturing documentation, help file development, needs assessment, and product design. She was previously employed as a technical writer by Zellweger Uster, Inc. and as a consultant for *Digital News*, *Que*, and *PC Week*. She was also owner and manager of Microproducts & Systems.

**Jennifer Lambe**, a technical writer at Tanner Corporate Services, begins her first year as a publications competition manager. Lambe said her objective is to increase awareness about the competition among chapter membership.



Lambe is a graduate of Auburn University. She has four and a half years' experience with Tanner and nine years of experience in the field of techni-

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**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

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## ...but service goals are quite similar

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cal writing. Past projects include ISO 9000 documentation, multimedia training programs, online help applications, and software user documentation. She is also a writer of fiction and nonfiction, and in March of this year had an article published in *Intercom* magazine.

**Margret Buxkamper**, a senior technical analyst at Columbia/HCA Healthcare Corporation, begins her first year as a publications competition manager. Buxkamper has 10 years of experience as a technical writer. She is a senior STC member, a past vice president of publicity, and a former competition judge. She said her objectives are to increase awareness about the competition and strengthen the participation in the competition by drawing a greater number of entries and a more diverse group of applicants.



**Camille Jernigan**, senior technical writer at Square D Power Products, begins her first year as treasurer for the local chapter. Jernigan has also worked for Intergraph (electronic software, mechanical hardware) and for NASA subcontractors.



**David Dunn**, a technical writer at Square D and the chapter's membership officer for the past year, will become the chapter's employment officer for the coming year. Dunn said he plans to stay informed of the latest job offerings in the technical communication field and to keep STC members posted via contributions to the chapter's Web site and newsletter.



Dunn has been an employee of Square D Company since 1993. He earned his bachelor's degree in technical communication from Tennessee Tech University, where he was an STC student chapter member. He is married to Christina Dunn, the chapter's new publicity officer.

**Ed Gregory**, a technical writer at Deloitte & Touche and co-editor of *Communiqué* for the past year, moves into the position of Webmaster for the chapter's Web site, located at <http://stc.org/region3/mtc/www/>. Gregory spent nearly 20 years in journalism, most of that at *The Tennessean*, and has written for *USA Today*, *Datamation*, *Southern Banker*, and *MISWeek*.



"I will be calling on my news background and my more recent experience at Deloitte & Touche," Gregory said. "I'll also be calling on chapter officers and members for fresh ideas and current content."

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## WebWorks 2000, A Web Development Seminar

Mark your calendars! Talk to your bosses! Plan a day to learn all about website development, from design and information architecture, to writing for the web!

BellSouth is the premiere sponsor for the conference, which is being hosted by the Middle Tennessee Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication.

Design experts from an Atlanta-based web design firm will teach the design segment. We are planning to have an expert from The Writing Company and UCLA to teach the web writing segment.

The seminar is slated for Friday, September 16, from 8

a.m. until 4:30 p.m. in the BellSouth Tower downtown. The cost is \$150 for non-members, \$99 for students and for members of STC and the Creative Forum.

A vendor fair will run length of the seminar, with giveaways, tips and tricks, and valuable contact information. Lunch will be served as part of the package. Roundtable discussions will run all day, which will include a room with six live PCs for website critique. This will give you an opportunity to have an expert review your site and provide valuable, professional feedback.

A seminar website will be launched soon. Keep your eyes posted for mailings regarding the seminar.

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# Speaker offers seven-step plan to promote Internet site success

**By Virginia Pryor**  
**Member, Middle Tennessee Chapter**

To compete successfully and spur business growth in today's Information Age, companies must carefully plan, implement, and maintain their web sites, a successful developer told an audience of some 25 members and guests at the April chapter meeting.

"Your Internet success or failure is three seconds and one mouse-click away," said Brad Towle, executive producer and co-founder of SageLion Inc.

SageLion, based in Nashville, integrates existing business systems with intranet and Internet technology and specializes in designing, building, hosting, marketing, and maintaining client sites.

Towle stressed the importance of attractive design to quickly communicate a business message and encourage the target audience to delve further into the site.

Without these basic components, he said, visitors will quickly move to another site, possibly a competitor's.

Towle outlined seven key phases of successful web site design, all of which are necessary to effectively deliver communication, conduct commerce, and provide service over the web. The phases and their component tasks include:

1. Strategic Compass
  - Define your target audience and ideal user experience
  - Develop positioning and brand strategies
  - Determine project goals, objectives, budget, and timeline
2. Creative Concept
  - Determine the theme, design interface, colors, format, and layout for an ideal user experience
  - Develop an overall creative strategy to develop these features
  - Prepare a flowchart and storyboard to implement the strategy
3. Design Creation
  - Establish design and navigation
  - Build a prototype for review
4. Production
  - Build the actual site
  - Integrate photos, multimedia components, programming, company data, and content

5. Editing/Testing
  - Test hyperlinks
  - Perform copy edits
  - Reassess overall strategy
  - Integrate hidden marketing tools, such as "cookies," that track statistical and demographic information about site visitors
6. Launch Day
  - Implement marketing initiatives
  - Distribute the URL for your site to clients and other target audience groups
7. Growth/Integration
  - Promote the integrated web site, using such tools as advertising, business cards, search engines, and links to and from related sites
  - Closely monitor web site statistics
  - Provide ongoing updates and performance reviews

Towle cited additional resources for developing and maintaining company web sites, and members of the audience volunteered others. Resources included URLs (web site addresses) for domain name registration, software packages that track web site traffic, and businesses that design and maintain web sites for clients.

MKStats and NetTracker are among the most effective software packages for generating reports identifying the number, frequency, and times a site is visited, as well as profiling a typical visit. These and similar packages can be found on the Internet, or through the Internet Service Provider (ISP) you select to host your web site.

Choosing a domain name that is memorable and reflects the nature of your business and web site is vital, Towle said. However, would-be site builders might quickly discover that the name they'd like to use has been taken. Web site developers should visit a site such as <http://www.networksolutions.com> to determine whether the name they want is already in use. In addition, they can register their domain name online, or have their ISP register the name for them.

Towle added that the BellSouth business group, which hosted the April meeting, is one of several local businesses that provide web-hosting services, and SageLion is one of several that designs and maintains web sites. Anyone planning to establish a web site should first carefully research his or her options in these two areas. The final key to web site success is finding resources that best fit your needs.

# You don't have to be from Krypton to be a super mentor

This month marks my five-year anniversary as a technical writer for Square D Schneider Electric. When I was hired, I had experience as a newswriter and editor, but I had never written a page of technical documentation. A trusting supervisor, knowledgeable coworkers, and one especially helpful senior writer all proved to be patient and willing to teach me. Collectively, they gave me a good foundation upon which I continue to build my skills to this day.

Think back to the day you got your first break into technical writing. Someone probably gave you a chance when you had little or nothing in your portfolio. You probably got advice from another writer who knew how difficult it was to find work. A friend may have spent time after hours showing you how to use a page layout tool, or helping you memorize and understand html code.

Now you're an expert in information design. You never use dangling participles (unless you're yelling at your cat). You can perform usability testing on high voltage switchgear in your sleep. You can leap tall buildings in a single-sourcing bound. You have the credentials of being a Super Mentor.

Many of us rely on STC for skill development, industry news, and networking. Although STC provides varying levels of support for the technical writer, nothing compares to the training that a patient, caring mentor can provide. Whether you give an open ear to someone who is contemplating techwriting as a career, or spend time with a new writer at the office, you are the expert who has valuable information and experience to impart. It's your duty. It's your repayment to the patient person or people who helped you get started.

Furthermore, the new writer won't be the only person to benefit from your guidance. You possibly have more to gain than the new writer. Helping out will boost your confidence as a writer, reminding you just how much you know. It will also give you an opportunity to brush up on the rules and styles you have forgotten, and it will give you a chance to learn new skills. You may form a valuable new friendship, and you may even learn some tips offered by the new writer.

Here are some tips for helping out aspiring or new technical writers:

This one is a given: make sure he or she becomes a member of STC.

Share resources with new writers. Save your old copies of *Intercom* and *TechnicalCOMMUNICATION*. Give them to new writers.

Point new writers toward helpful websites and handbooks.

Volunteer to speak as a technical communication expert at local colleges and universities. Pass out your business card to all the students and invite them to call you if they have any questions. Take samples of your work and be ready to talk about it.

When your company hires a new staffer, volunteer to show him or her the ropes. Be careful not to overwhelm the new writer with huge jobs. Pick a one- or two-page document to work on together. And be patient!

If someone calls you to discuss technical writing careers, invite him or her to lunch to discuss the field. Have another experienced writer (or writers) join you to discuss their points of view.

Invite the new writer to an STC meeting.

The key to helping a new writer is patience. If you maintain a healthy level of it, both the trainer and trainee will be greatly rewarded, and you will start a trend that will hopefully continue from generation to generation of new writers.

Now go out there and lend a hand.

Tim



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## STC Regional Conferences

### Region 3

August 11-12, 2000

STC's Carolina chapter holds its 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Summer Conference at the University of North Carolina's Friday Center in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

For more information, visit [www.stc-carolina.org/www.conference](http://www.stc-carolina.org/www.conference).

Contact information: Ann-Marie Grissino at (919) 562-2464 or [keypoint@mindspring.com](mailto:keypoint@mindspring.com).

### Region 5

October 13-14, 2000

The New Mexico Kachina Chapter will host the 2000 Regional Five Conference, with the theme "Navigating the New Century".

For more information, visit [www.stc.org/region5/nkc](http://www.stc.org/region5/nkc)

Contact information: Teri L. Wilkins at (505) 881-9228, Ext. 103 or [tlwilkins@ees.com](mailto:tlwilkins@ees.com).



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