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Communiqué

Middle Tennessee Chapter of The Society for Technical Communication **Sept 1997**

New STC Season

Promises Sharing, Knowledge, and Fun

Shannon Thurman—President

It's still hot in Middle Tennessee, and we probably haven't even seen the dog days of summer, but there are some hopeful signs that the fall season is nigh. I've seen neighborhood kids throwing footballs around, my own sons are usually found deep in discussion about which college team will rule, and of course, schools are in session.

Another great sign is that the Middle Tennessee STC board has met and discussed some interesting possibilities for the 1997-98 meeting year. Of course, the best news of all is that we had too many good ideas this year and will have to choose the best ones and save the others for another year.

Our first meeting this year, on Tuesday, Sept. 9, at 6 p.m. is going to be a mixer at the Gerst House. It just seems like a good way to start off the year; it's hard to do much networking at our program meetings since work usually prevents many of us from arriving

early enough to chat with fellow members and guests.

The Gerst House is a Nashville landmark (famed as a hangout for local press and politicians). The officers are looking forward to seeing everyone and we're also looking for volunteers for all the meetings, get-togethers, and competitions we have planned, so please join us and let us know

what your interests are.

The meetings in October and November will feature the Middle Tennessee chapter Web page and

a panel discussion on project management, respectively. Since we haven't officially nailed down topics for several of our spring

meetings, come to the mixer and offer your opinions. (The great thing about STC is that I've never met anybody who didn't have lots of those!)

I'm hoping we'll all learn something from each other this STC season. But if we should fail at that, I have no doubt we're all in for a fun-filled communication year. Join us at the Gerst House for an excellent start toward fulfilling that promise. ■

M E E T I N G I N F O

What: STC Mixer

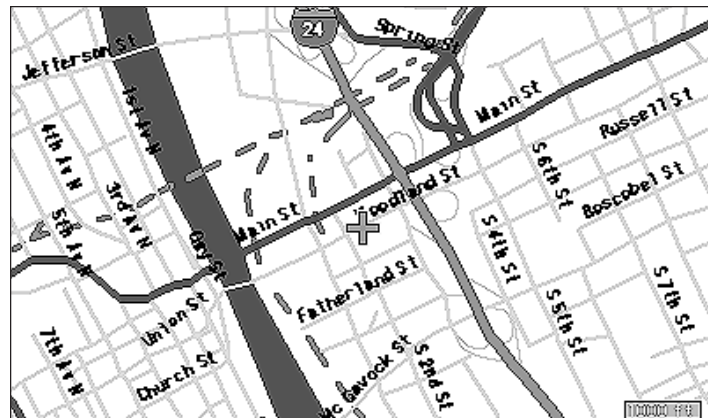
Where: The Gerst House
[directions below]

When: Tues. Sept. 9, 6 pm

Gerst House

228 WOODLAND ST. (256-9760)

Directions From Downtown: North on 2nd Ave. Right on Union St. Cross Woodland St. bridge. Gerst House is 0.1 miles on right. From I-65 Driving North: Exit James Robertson Pkwy (you'll cloverleaf under interstate). Left at 1st stoplight onto Interstate Drive. Right on Woodland St. Gerst House is immediately on left.



1997 Publications Competition

Make Plans to Enter Now!

Kathy Collins

The long, hot days of summer are coming to a close. The cool, crisp days of fall will soon be upon us. What does that bring to mind? The beautiful fall colors in the trees? . . . nice try, but no. Maybe the start of the new school year? . . . nope, wrong again. What about those football games? . . . you're not even close; give up? What *should* have come immediately to mind was **the second annual Middle Tennessee Chapter technical publications competition!**

OK, so maybe it wasn't the first event to pop into your mind. But, now that it has been so casually introduced into the conversation, let me fill in the details.

Last year was the first year that our Middle Tennessee Chapter offered the competition by ourselves. (Prior to that, we shared the task with the Memphis

and Little Rock chapters.) We had a *great* first year, receiving 34 entries and adding about \$1,600 to our chapter's coffer. We also participated in the judging exchange offered by STC, and successfully judged the entries that we received from the Montreal chapter.

For this year's competition, we hope to do even better. We've got our management team (George Cassidy, Margie Myers, and me). We have completed the call for entry form (which will be mailed the first week of September) and have set our time line. The deadline for entries will be October 24. Judges will have about 2-1/2 weeks for their individual review, and the consensus judging will be November 15. We've been matched with a different chapter in this year's judging exchange. This year, we'll swap entries with the Austin, Texas chapter.

So, what does this mean to everyone else in the chapter? Three things come to mind.

- First, we welcome your suggestions for ways we might improve this year's competition. If you participated last year and have ideas we can incorporate, let one of us know.
- Second, we'll be putting the judging team together very soon. Don't be surprised if one of us calls you, asking for your help.
- Third, enter your documents! There are 19 categories this year—surely one of them is perfect for *your* document!

So, as those autumn leaves begin to fall, be thinking of ways you can help us with this year's competition. And start dusting off your entries! We look forward to hearing from you. ■

Communiqué—c/o Shannon Thurman, President, 4022 Sells Drive, Hermitage, TN 37076.

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Submissions are welcome in hard copy or as an e-mail attachment (preferred method). Send to: Jim Giordano, Square D Company, 295 Tech Park Drive, Suite 100, LaVergne, TN 37086. E-mail giordanj@squared.com.

Colophon—This document was designed by Jim Giordano and created using Adobe Pagemaker 6.5 on a Macintosh. Fonts used include Century Gothic for body copy and headlines, and Adobe Garamond for deck heads and the Communiqué nameplate.

Regional News and Views

From the Region 3 Director Sponsor

Michelle Ratcliffe

Hello! I hope your summer went well. Summer can be a time to slow down the pace, relax a bit, and to take time out to enjoy the world around you. Many STC chapters do that same thing by holding fewer meetings, sponsoring a social gathering, or taking time to reflect on goals and objectives and to design a plan for the upcoming year through chapter planning retreats.

My summer went well. One of the highlights was my first chapter visit as director-sponsor. At the end of June, I visited the South Carolina chapter in Columbia, SC. The South Carolina chapter faces the challenge of representing a wide geographic area. Several attendees had to drive for more than two hours to get to the meeting site. To inform and entice members to attend, chapter president Brian Lindgren has devised several creative ways to contact people including an email distribution list, a fax distribution list, and a telephone brigade, in addition to a regular mailing of the meeting notice.

It was a great meeting. It was on a Saturday from 10:00 am to around 2:30 pm. We spent the morning talking as a group about

STC. We discussed the organization, the various activities, and ideas for how to get the most out of your STC membership. This chapter has some great ideas for upcoming meetings and a well defined plan outlining areas for chapter growth.

We enjoyed a delicious barbecue lunch and spent the afternoon discussing ways to pump up the perceived and actual value of work teams. This discussion led to several ideas for improving job performance, job satisfaction, and job security.

To help celebrate the meeting, ForeFront Technologies donated several demonstration copies and one full licensed copy of ForeHelp. ForeHelp is a help authoring tool that sells for \$395. South Carolina chapter member, George Hayhoe, won the software through a drawing. Special thanks to ForeFront Technologies (www.ff.com) for the donation and the support of STC and to the South Carolina chapter for a terrific time!

A Look to the Future

I hope you are all planning to attend one of the fantastic region 3 conferences in October. This region is known throughout STC for its tremendous conference opportunities—and lucky you,

you are already here!

Don't miss out on your chance to participate in Trends, which is expanding to a two day format, in Orlando on October 3-4, or the 21st Practical Conference on Communication (PCOC—pronounced peacock), which is the oldest STC regional conference, in Knoxville on October 23-25.

If you haven't already registered, immediately step away from this newsletter and complete your registration form or check out these web sites for details about these exciting events:

<http://www.stc.org/region3/orl/www/cntrn.html>

<http://www.stc.org/region3/etc/www/pcoc.htm>

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The Web Site Cometh

If you read the listing of chapter officers on page 5, you'll see that we have chapter web site managers. The Middle Tennessee web site will soon have an active link from STC's web site. The site will contain meeting schedules, publications competition information, and more. Watch for updates in future issues of the Active Voice; or better yet, attend the October 14 meeting for a web site demo.

Did You Communicate—eh?

The STC 1997 Annual Conference

Margie Myers

At the 1997 STC Annual Conference in Toronto, the hottest item at the Information booth turned out to be the free "Communicate-eh?" buttons, while the maple cookies ran a close second. These small details reflected the overall excellence of the conference and of the people and city of Toronto.

The Toronto chapter hosted the first international conference and largest one to date. Despite the crowd that swelled to over 3,000, the conference was well organized. All presenters were highly professional, knowledgeable, and covered a variety of topics. Presentations were the slickest yet. Most were pressed onto a CD-rom, which saved us from collecting and transporting a small forest as we scurried between hotels. Standing room only crowds were rare at the conference. Remarkably, each presentation had enough space to accommodate the group. This was due in part to STC's new straw poll, used to determine demand for sessions, and in part to the huge numbers of volunteers from the STC chapters in and around Toronto. They manned the

booths and were full of helpful information. I'm certain they talked to each conference goer personally, which reinforced their claim to being the friendliest people on earth.

Daily fliers, handed out at the centrally located information booth, had more than the mundane changes to the schedule, but also provided entertaining facts about life under the red and white maple leaf flag. Also new this year, vendors were allowed to give presentations. I attended Adobe's demonstration on Framemaker + SGML. While it was great to have the tool demonstrated live, even more insightful were the singular questions that came from experienced users. This exchange was really the heart of the conference.

Region 3 was well represented at the conference, too. At the opening ceremony, our

Although conference attendance reached a record high, standing room only crowds were rare.

chapter member and manager of the International Technical Art Competition, Beth Tanner presented an award; and David Armbruster was presented with an honorary award, making our chapter and region very visible. The Region 3 evening mixer also brought together our outgoing director, Mark Hanigan, and the new director, Michelle Ratcliffe. We hope to have Michelle and her bubbly personality come to Nashville for one of our 1997-1998 meetings.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the shiny, happy people of Toronto. Our fellow STC members were of the friendliest sort, and even "the man on the street" made the conference special. Everywhere in the city, people were very polite and absolutely proud of their clean, safe, and sophisticated city. The backdrop of the conference was Toronto's amazing display of museums, multi-cultural restaurants, shops, and theaters. The host chapter planned one of the best evening welcome receptions so far. They hinted that they would provide a carnival atmosphere, but it was *literally* a carnival, complete with fire eaters and arcade games. We all agreed the Toronto conference will be hard to top. ■

Mark Your Calendar

STC Meetings and Other Important Events That You Won't Want to Miss

The Middle Tennessee Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication normally meets on the second Tuesday of the month. The first few meetings are shown below; plans for additional meetings are underway. Watch this newsletter for meeting locations and times.

Tentative Chapter Meeting Schedule

September 9 Mixer at Gerst House
 October 14 Chapter Web Site Demo

November 11 Project Management

Other Dates to Remember

October 7 Chapter Planning Session, Bosco's at 6:00 pm
 October 24 Deadline for entering Middle Tennessee publications competition
 October 23-25 PCOC Conference (Knoxville)
 October 3-4 Trends Conference (Orlando)
 May 17-20 STC Annual Conference at Anneheim

Regional News...

from page 3

Notable Notes

The fall STC Board of Director's meeting is in Iowa on September 25-27. I have lots of terrific news to share about region 3. If you have something you want to tell or ask the Board please let me know.

In other news, I changed jobs in July. I am now an Education Consultant with the Deloitte & Touche Consulting Group. You can best reach me through voice mail at my work number or email.

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