



SOCIETY FOR  
TECHNICAL  
COMMUNICATION

# Newsbrief

Monthly Publication of the Mid-South Chapter

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## January Meeting Program: Practical Editing Tips

by April Cox

All technical communicators edit documents, whether created by themselves or someone else. At the January meeting, you can learn practical tips on several aspects of editing from 4 panelists.

David Twombly received his M.A. in professional writing from the University of Memphis (U of M) in 1998. He was employed by Physicians Postgraduate Press, Inc. as an editor for *The Journal of Clinical Psychiatry* for 6.5 years. He currently works at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center, where he edits manuscripts for faculty and residents in the ophthalmology department. During the January meeting, he will speak about what he has discovered to be the differences (and similarities) between working as an author's editor and working as a publisher's editor.

Sarah Brown has a B.A. in creative writing and an M.A. in professional writing from U of M. She has been an editor with Physicians

Postgraduate Press, Inc. for 3.5 years, where she edits articles for *The Journal of Clinical Psychiatry* and the *Primary Care Companion to The Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*. Sarah will draw on her writing and editing expertise to present tips for doing a final self-edit on an article (or other document) that one has written.

Glenn Sanders, Mid-South chapter vice-president, earned a B.A. in English from Western Kentucky University and an M.A. in professional writing from U of M. He worked for 4 years at U of M, teaching writing, editing, and English conversation and serving as technical editor for the Tennessee Outcomes for Alcohol and Drug Services. Since the summer of 2002, he has been a writer/editor in a group in FedEx Services that supports FedEx Sales by creating proposals and presentations for large customers. Glenn has also worked as a freelance editor and is currently copyediting a book on

the relationship between genetics and psychiatry. Glenn will demonstrate the editing features of Microsoft Word and Adobe Acrobat.

Elizabeth Webb, M.A., worked as an editorial coordinator and managing editor of the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* while it was based in Memphis. She is currently the coordinator of the Department of Preventive Medicine at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center. Her duties include administering graduate academic programs, writing and editing material such as grant proposals and brochures, coordinating research conferences, and maintaining the department's website. During her presentation, Elizabeth will demonstrate the benefits of SCIPROOF, a software that works with Microsoft Word to check scientific terminology, notation, and style in manuscripts.

For more details and directions to the January 5 meeting, which begins at 6:00 p.m., see page 5. ♦

### Do you like your job? Then talk about it!

Do you remember when you were in school and had ideas about what you wanted to do but didn't know where you could put your talents to work? To help students learn about careers in technical communication, the Mid-South chapter is organizing a jobs fair to be held at the University of Memphis in conjunction with an exhibit of winning publications from the 2003 STC international competition. Bring a colleague and talk about your company and job for a couple of hours on a Monday night. You don't have to be hiring, just willing to provide valuable information to future technical communicators. If you are interested in hosting a booth, please contact Elizabeth Boone at [eboone@psychiatrist.com](mailto:eboone@psychiatrist.com).

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## From the Editor: New Year's Wishes

by Apryl Cox

Each new year, I avoid making resolutions because I think the term makes my goals sound like chores that are too big to accomplish. Although I don't make resolutions, I find myself thinking of wishes that I have for myself and for other people. Here's some wishes that I have for the chapter.

I wish that every member of the chapter will be able to attend at least one of the monthly chapter meetings this year and that at least 2 visitors will attend each meeting.

I hope that all of us current members remember to pay our dues by February 27 so that we can vote in chapter and society-level elections.

I wish that the next year will bring everyone challenges and enjoyable learning experiences in technical communication.

I hope that all the readers of this newsletter who work or would like to will find themselves in jobs that they find both intellectually and financially rewarding.

I wish that members will feel free to give officers and board members feedback on and suggestions for chapter activities.

And of course, I hope to see you at the chapter meeting on Monday, January 5, either at 6:00 p.m. for networking or 6:30 p.m. for the presentations. ♦

**Corrections:** In the December issue, Steve Gillespie was incorrectly listed as the first webmaster of the Mid-South chapter in Table 1 of "November Meeting Notes." Joe Lakey served as the chapter's first webmaster. In Table 3, Paul Allen was left off the list of chapter members who have been published in *Technical Communication*.

### Did you get any presents you didn't need during the holidays?

Then consider donating them as door prizes for monthly chapter meetings. The Mid-South chapter's supply of door prizes consists of donated items, and our stock is getting low. If you received one too many desk calendars, a houseplant you won't remember to water, or too many books to fit on your bookshelves, give one of these items to our hospitality and membership manager, Tracy Hughes, at the next meeting. Remember that any gifts you got this holiday season that aren't right for you may be perfect for one of your colleagues in STC.

## From the President

by Mary Sue MacNealy

As all of you know who attended the wonderful anniversary party in November, our chapter is blessed with many talented and dedicated people. It has been my good fortune as president that every time a hard-working member has to step down from one of the board positions, another talented person steps right up to take over.

In this case, we owe a big thanks to Joe Lakey who has worked so hard for us as webmaster. Fortunately, just when Joe's responsibilities at work (H & R Training and Safety at Fedex) have become so time-consuming, Rachelle Sanders volunteered to pitch in. This

*From the President* continued on p. 3



*Creating and supporting a forum for communities of practice in the profession of technical communication*

Society President.....Thea Teich

Region 3

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*A sharing community creating opportunity*

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## Newsbrief

*Newsbrief* is the monthly publication of the Mid-South chapter of the Society for Technical Communication, a nonprofit organization.

Twelve issues of *Newsbrief* are published each year. We create the publication to

- Involve members and visitors more fully in professional development and service.
- Foster a sense of community among chapter members and visitors.
- Provide a link between professors and students at local universities.
- Promote the benefits of chapter membership to attract new members.

### Submissions

If you would like to contribute an article on any aspect of technical communication to *Newsbrief*, submit

- The text portion of the article as a text (TXT), rich text (RTF), or Microsoft Word (DOC) file or as text incorporated within the body of an email.
- Photos as JPG or TIFF. If you choose to use a TIFF, please set the file resolution to 150 dots per inch (dpi) or higher.

Please submit your article by the 10th of the month to be considered for the coming month's issue. Send all submissions to the editor of *Newsbrief*.

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### Subscription

To receive *Newsbrief* (for free) every month, give your email address to the editor.

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*From the President* continued from p. 2

is also an opportune time to consider which company might offer the best service and best rates for carrying our site. If you have any suggestions, let Rachelle know at rsanders@lanone.net.

We also owe big thanks to Leanne Logan who so ably chairs our program committee. I know you'll all want to let Leanne know how sorry you are to hear that her home was broken into, her front door wrecked, and her computers stolen several weeks ago. This on top of having her car squashed in last July's windstorm! Typical of Leanne, though, she has an upbeat attitude about living in Memphis. Leanne's company is based in Canada, so she makes frequent trips back and forth, but somehow she manages to attend almost every chapter meeting and board meeting.

Other news of chapter members: Gail Spake successfully defended

her master's thesis on December 12. In her research Gail discovered that some scientific articles have over 200 authors listed in their byline; so Gail asks: what does the word "author" mean today?

Tracy Hughes is planning her June 2004 wedding as well as working on her thesis and serving as our Hospitality Manager.

Nell Johnson has arrived in Portland, Oregon, after wending her way across the country with stops in the Appalachian Mountains, Arizona, and Colorado.

And I was off to San Diego on Christmas Day to attend the annual conference of the Modern Language Association where I interviewed candidates for a position as assistant professor in composition at the University of Memphis.

To one and all: I look forward to seeing you in the new year! ♦

## December Meeting Notes

by Elizabeth Boone

At the December chapter meeting, Mid-South chapter member Jackie Walters led an interactive workshop on project management. Everyone, explained Walters to the 18 in attendance, has been a project manager at some time. A project is simply something that has a beginning and an end, so it could be a document or a home decorating project. Every project, no matter how technical, has a life cycle, as Walters demonstrated by having the group decorate gingerbread person cookies. As people worked on their cookies, they documented their processes during each cycle: initiation, planning, execution, control, and close-out. According to Walters, documentation is essential in project management.

Walters also mentioned the 9 knowledge areas of project management that have been established by the Project Management Institute. These areas are communication, cost, risk, time, human resources, scope, procurement,



Speaker Jackie Walters watches as David Armbruster shows off his completed project, a decorated gingerbread man.

*Meeting Notes* continued on p. 4

quality, and integration. During her presentation, Walters also offered

information about Project Management Professional certification and

becoming a Certified Associate in Project Management. ♦

David Armbruster, Elizabeth Boone, Donald Samulack, and Jill Greenman discover how fun planning a project can be.



Glenn Sanders, Leanne Logan, and Alison Masilak intently execute the plans they made for decorating their gingerbread person cookies.



Susan Popham closes out her project while Mary Sue MacNealy, Michael Fisher, and Angela Fullerton put the final touches on their cookies.

(above) Tracy Hughes, Diana Fedinec, Apryl Cox, and Michael Huggins debate the best plans for their cookies.

## For the Students

by Tracy Hughes

I would like to advocate student involvement in STC. STC is a great bridge that connects school and work. However, I feel that most students know little about STC or do not realize how helpful the organization may be for them.

Recently, Dr. Barbara Beckis at the University of Memphis referred an undergraduate student with questions about professional writing to me. The student had many questions, but her main concern was finding out how to get a job because she is graduating soon. My first response was to come to the next STC meeting because it helped me find a job. Dr. Mary Sue MacNealy, Mid-South STC chapter president, had told me about a position at Physicians Postgraduate Press, Inc. and said that many of the company's employees are

involved in STC. So I took Dr. MacNealy's advice and went to the next meeting. I can't say that going to the meeting was how I got the job, but I was able to meet one of the people who was going to interview me the next week.

Now that my school life is almost over, I have decided to get more involved in STC by volunteering for the position of hospitality manager, and I would like to help other students network with possible employers so that they can benefit as I did. I told the undergraduate student I spoke with a couple of weeks ago that networking before she graduated would give her more possibilities afterwards.

The student also wanted to know what local companies hire technical writers and what kind of job descriptions and salary ranges she

can expect. Because these questions are common among students, the Mid-South chapter is hosting a jobs fair at either the March or the April meeting.

The "Back to Basics" theme of the chapter's program year is a also great way for students to start learning about the technical communication field.

I realize that getting students involved in STC has sometimes been a losing battle for the Mid-South chapter, but if anyone has any other suggestions on how we can gain student attendance, please let me know.

Also, if you have questions about STC or the technical communication field, please email me at [thughes@psychiatrist.com](mailto:thughes@psychiatrist.com). I will try to answer your questions or direct you to someone who can. ♦

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## Upcoming Meetings

Please plan to attend the following upcoming events of the Mid-South chapter.

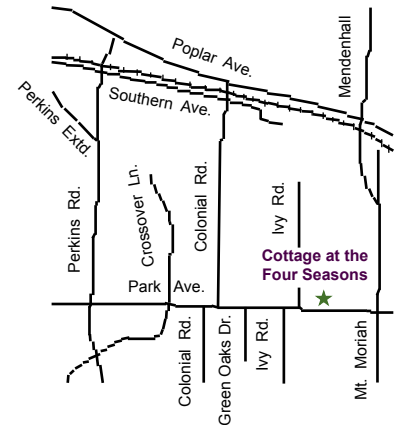
Unless otherwise noted, meetings cost \$10 (\$5 for students with a valid ID), and cash is requested.

### Monday, January 5, 6:00–8:00

*Topic:* Panel discussion on editing tips and tricks

*Speakers:* Sarah Brownd, Glenn Sanders, David Twombly, and Elizabeth Webb

*Location:* The Cottage at the Four Seasons, located at 4932 Park Ave. (the north side of the street) between Perkins Rd. and Mt. Moriah/Mendenhall (see map). The Four Seasons is next door to (west of) the Buntyn Cafe and across Park Ave. from Marquette Park. A free parking lot and the entrance are behind the Cottage.



### Monday, February 2, 6:00–8:00

*Topic:* The story of an early technical communicator

*Speaker:* Pat Connors O'Bryant

*Location:* The Cottage at the Four Seasons

### Monday, March 1 or April 5, 6:00–8:00

*Topic:* Traveling exhibit of the winners of the 2003 STC international publications competition and jobs fair

*Location:* The University of Memphis

*More information:* If you would like to host a booth at the jobs fair or help with this program, contact Elizabeth Boone at [eboone@psychiatrist.com](mailto:eboone@psychiatrist.com).

Contact Leanne Logan for additional details ([llogan@quarry.com](mailto:llogan@quarry.com) or 901.489.6473). ◆



## Newsbrief

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