



SOCIETY FOR
TECHNICAL
COMMUNICATION

Newsbrief

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University of Memphis Professor Wins International Teaching Award

by Teresa Johnson

Dr. Mary Sue MacNealy, Professor of English at the University of Memphis, was chosen to receive the Jay R. Gould teaching award for 2002. Presented by the STC, the Gould award "honors excellence in teaching that becomes true academic mentorship." Winners of this award consistently provide mentorship that maximizes students' educational experience and that "continues past graduation as former students grow throughout their professional careers." Anyone who has had the privilege of taking one of Dr. MacNealy's courses will testify that she is indeed worthy of this honor.



Dr. MacNealy has been a member of the English faculty at the University of Memphis since 1988, and in the fall of 2001, she was named Coordinator of the Professional Writing Program. A graduate of Carnegie-Mellon, Dr. MacNealy's research interests include cognitive aspects of reading and writing, the teaching of writing, research methodology, and document design. Her second book, *Strategies for Empirical Research in Writing* (Allyn & Bacon, 1999), is used in professional writing programs nationwide.

Throughout her tenure at the University of Memphis, Dr. MacNealy has consistently striven to foster excellence in the profession of technical communication. Her fair but rigorous courses prepare students well for success in the workforce because she teaches not only writing and editing skills, but also the theories and principles that enable communicators to apply those skills intelligently. More than a few members of the Mid-South chapter of the STC owe some measure of their success to her able guidance.

For over ten years, Dr. MacNealy has been a positive influence in the STC, serving several terms as treasurer of the Mid-South chapter and as a constant source of ideas to help STC members grow in their knowledge of the profession. She has been

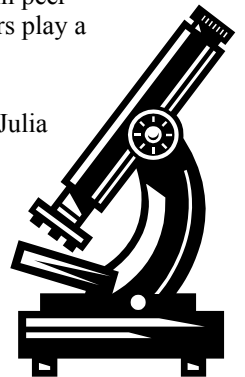
actively involved in fundraising efforts for a professional writing scholarship, a dream that has recently been realized. She has previously been honored by the STC with awards for three of her journal articles and with two Distinguished Chapter Service Awards, one in 1995 and one in 2000.

Dr. MacNealy will receive the Gould award in May at the 49th annual international STC conference to be held in Nashville, TN.

Scientific Editing

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital is a unique institution — it is both a pediatric hospital dedicated to the care of children with catastrophic diseases and a research institution whose faculty members are engaged in the scientific investigation of such diseases. Scientific research is a multi-step process, a key component of which is the dissemination of findings to other scientists around the world. Because scientific findings are usually communicated through publication in peer-reviewed scientific journals, scientific editors play a crucial role in the research process.

Join the Mid-South chapter as we welcome Julia Cay Jones, Ph.D., ELS (Editor in the Life Sciences), on Monday, April 1st, at the Pig-N-Whistle Barbecue Restaurant on Winchester Road. During our meeting, Dr. Cay Jones will discuss how the Department of Scientific Editing at St. Jude assists investigators in effectively reporting their research findings.



Dr. Julia Cay Jones has been an editor at St. Jude since 1998, and has served as interim director of the Scientific Editing Department since March 2001. Before coming to St. Jude, she received her Ph.D. in microbiology from the University of

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Mississippi Medical Center, where she subsequently completed a postdoctoral fellowship in the Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior.

[Editor's note: If you would like to learn more about the ELS certification, visit <http://www.bels.org>.]

Meeting Notes

by Alison Joyner Masilak

For our March meeting, Memphis writer Betty Larkey shared tips on freelance writing success with the 41 attendees. Using personal experience as an outline, Larkey provided some great freelancing dos and don'ts, starting with the difference between freelance writing and contract writing.

Once you have found a freelance project, negotiating is key, according to Larkey. She stressed the importance of negotiating, especially when it comes to expenses and edit approval. Expenses, she explained, can grow out of proportion to income unless you negotiate. For example, a piece that requires long-distance phone interviews may not be worth the time unless the publication agrees to pay for those charges. Edit approval, which is not always granted, allows the writer to approve the edited copy of your piece. To illustrate the importance of edit approval, Larkey told us of a piece she had written (without edit approval) about exploring scenic routes around the area. Her suggested title for the piece was "Wandering the Byways." It ended up running as "The Beauty Around Us."

Freelancing

- On your time
- Flexibility with content
- On your own (home office, tools)
- Negotiable rights

Contracting

- Regular business hours
- Pre-determined content
- Employers' premises (their office, their tools)
- Employer owns rights

To break into freelancing, Larkey suggested starting out by writing for trade magazines. She recommended going to the library to get an idea of what is out there by using reference materials like *Writer's Market*, and looking for publications that cover topics already familiar or of interest to you. As an example, Larkey had previous work experience with the cotton industry and was able to write an article for a cotton trade magazine.

Larkey reminded us that when you choose freelancing as a career, you are running a business, which is a huge time commitment. You must always consider how to increase billable hours, you have to be on a schedule, and you have to have the proper tools, which may mean buying software to be compatible with a client. You also need to think about tax considerations for a home office, and you need to market yourself.

The Society for Technical Communication (STC) is an individual membership organization dedicated to advancing the arts and sciences of technical communication. It is the largest organization of its type in the world. The Society's 25,000 members include technical writers, editors, graphic designers, videographers, multimedia artists, Web and Intranet page information designers, translators, and others whose work involves making technical information available to those who need it.

Membership in STC offers opportunities to learn new job skills, network with other technical communicators, and broaden your professional horizons. To learn more about what the STC has to offer, visit:

<http://www.stc.org/>



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Designing the future of technical communication

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A sharing community creating opportunity

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Betty Larkey's freelancing tips:

- Get your foot in the door by writing for trade magazines.
- Write about what you already know about and/or what interests you.
- Remember to negotiate expenses and ask for edit approval.
- Provide photos or other graphics with unsolicited articles.
- Keep financial records.
- Keep records of jobs (Remember, every deal is different).
- Get a clear understanding of expectations.
- Meet your deadlines.

Region 3 Director-Sponsor Update

by Rob Houser

The Society's board of directors held their third meeting for the 2001-2002 year on January 25 and 26 in Las Vegas, Nevada. Here are some of the items that affect the members of Region 3.



Awards and Recognition

Chip Jones, Atlanta chapter, was elected Associate Fellow of the Society.

Dr. Marjorie Davis, Mercer student chapter, was chosen to receive the Jay R. Gould award for excellence in teaching.

Dr. Mary Sue MacNealy, Mid-South chapter, was chosen to receive the Jay R. Gould award for excellence in teaching (See related article on page 1).

Grants and Loans

A Special Opportunities Grant was approved for Dan Jones and Dan Voss for a study entitled, "Marketing Technical Communication to High School Audiences: Creating a Tutorial for Teachers and Promoting a Writing Contest for Students." The grant will build on the great work that the Orlando

chapter has done educating students about the field of technical communication. When the study is complete, a report will be published in *Technical Communication*.

Name Changes

The South Carolina chapter changed its name to the South Carolina Midlands chapter. This helps distinguish the three South Carolina chapters by region: Carolina Foothills, South Carolina Midlands chapter, and South Carolina Lowcountry chapter.

Chapter Realignment

The Transalpine chapter was moved to Region 2 to consolidate international chapters into fewer regions. Region 3 now includes only chapters from the Southeastern United States.

New Award Program

A new Society-level award program was approved to recognize Special Interest Group (SIG) members for their outstanding work and dedication. This new program will be known as the Distinguished SIG Service Award (DSSA). The first awards will be selected by the board of directors and awarded next May at the annual conference in Nashville.

Standards Organizations

The board of directors strongly supports a greater role for the standards organizations that STC participates in, such as IEEE, ISO, and W3C. As a result, they approved membership and will support delegate participation in the U.S. Technical Advisory Group (an organization that plays a supportive advisory role for the creation of ISO standards). The board also approved delegate participation in the W3C (The STC is already a member of that group).

Additional Information

If you have any questions or want additional information about what is going in the STC, feel free to contact me (rob@userfirst.net). I look forward to continuing as your director-sponsor for the next year and a half.

Newsbrief

Newsbrief is the monthly publication of the Mid-South chapter of the Society for Technical Communication, a nonprofit organization. Nine issues of *Newsbrief* are published each year (September through May). 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 and professionals within local industry.
- Promote the benefits of chapter membership to attract new members.

Submissions

If you would like to contribute an article to *Newsbrief*, submit:

- The text portion of the article as a text (TXT) or Microsoft Word (DOC) file, or as text incorporated within the body of an e-mail;
- Photos as Joint Photographer's Interest Group (JPG) files; and
- Line art as Graphics Interchange Format (GIF) or Windows Meta-File (WMF) files.

Of course, we are more than willing to accept images (photos and line art alike) as Tagged Image File Format (TIFF) files, since these files are ideal for print. If you choose to submit a TIFF, however, please set the file resolution to 150 dots per inch (dpi) or higher.

To ensure that we publish articles in a timely fashion, we ask that you submit your articles by the tenth of each month for the coming month's issue. Send all submissions to the editor of *Newsbrief*.

Copyright

Newsbrief invites writers to submit articles that they wish to be considered for publication. Please note, however, that, by submitting an article, you implicitly grant a license to *Newsbrief* to run your article and for other STC publications to reprint it without permission. You as the writer nonetheless hold the copyright. When you submit an article, please let the editor know if this article has run elsewhere, and if it has been submitted for consideration to other publications.

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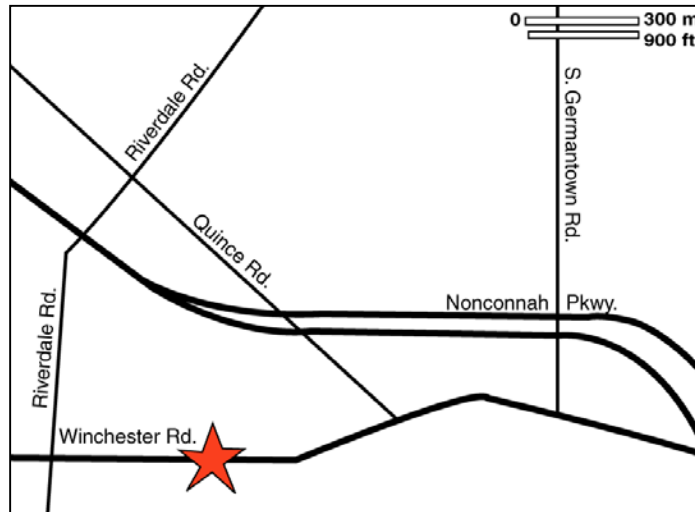
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Meeting Reminder

What: April (dinner) meeting
When: Monday, April 1st, 6:00 p.m.
Program: Dr. Julia Cay Jones,
"Scientific Editing"
Where: Pig-N-Whistle
7144 Winchester Road
(901) 754-4400
Menu: Barbecue buffet (not just
barbecue!), dessert, and drink
(tea and water)
Cost: \$10.00, including tax and
gratuity



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