



SOCIETY FOR
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Newsbrief

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December Meeting Program: Workshop on Project Management

by Jackie Walters and Apryl Cox

Many technical communicators find themselves responsible for developing not only the design and content of a document but also budgets and production time lines. If you come to the December meeting of the Mid-South chapter, you will have a unique opportunity to acquire and practice basic project management skills.

Jackie Walters, a certified Project Management Professional, will teach attendees how to identify the project processes, determine the life cycle of a project, and document each phase. Participants will actually work on a project that will provide hands-on training in the nine knowledge areas of project management.

Jackie currently works at the FedEx DGO Project Management

Office and is responsible for DGO Portfolio Management. Her job is to align projects with the corporate goals and objectives.

Prior to joining FedEx, Jackie organized and managed the Change Management Department at International Paper. The department was responsible for documentation, testing, training and web development.

Before moving to the Memphis area in 1997, she was employed by Computer Science Corporation and detailed to NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center where she managed the information systems for the Flight Projects Office.

Jackie had previously been employed by NASA at Marshall Space Flight Center as a technical writer. She traveled all over the

world to document processes for the MIR/ALPHA Space Station.

Jackie is currently the education manager and a past president of the Mid-South chapter. She is the VP of Education and Certification for the Memphis, Tennessee, Chapter of the Project Management Institute (PMI). She is a Competent Toastmaster with Toastmasters International and a part time instructor at the University of Memphis.

Jackie's education includes an M.B.A. from Florida Tech and a B.S. in Technical Business and a Microcomputer Certification from the University of Alabama.

Come learn from Jackie's expertise on project management on Monday, December 1. For directions to and more details about the meeting, see page 8. ♦

In Search of...

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 have one too many desk calendars, an extra houseplant, 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 get this holiday season that aren't right for you may be perfect for one of your colleagues in STC.

Bring in used cell phones!

The Mid-South chapter continues to collect used cell phones, batteries, and chargers at our monthly chapter meetings. Also, please ask coworkers, family members, and people you know from other professional and social organizations if they have any of these items. Once we have 100 phones, they will be distributed to individuals at family violence shelters. Your old phone may help to save someone else's life.

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From the Editor: Thank You for Your Response

by Apryl Cox

I would like to thank the former and current Mid-South chapter members who have recently given me a better understanding of who comprises our chapter membership and the audience for *Newsbrief*.

One former member responded directly to my inquiry on who some of the around 300 readers of *Newsbrief* are, especially in light of the fact that I regularly see about the same 20 people at chapter meetings. The former member noted that spending time with her young children takes up much of her free time after a day of working at FedEx, so she is unable to make the monthly meetings.

During the November chapter meeting, other people unwittingly answered my question about why I don't know many of the readers of *Newsbrief*. Some past presidents who spoke at the celebration of STC and the Mid-South chapter said that they are no longer actively involved because they have shifted to careers outside of technical communication. Other speakers and former chapter members told me about how the Monday night meetings conflict with their schedules because of their families or involvement in other organizations. I, and probably many of the other current chapter members who currently have the free time to actively participate in the chapter,

appreciate hearing from less active and former members occasionally. Even though you may not be able to attend meetings, we're working to keep the chapter and its meetings interesting and beneficial to technical communicators for ourselves and for you if you're once again able to be more involved. Therefore, we like to know whether you're satisfied with our efforts.

I was also heartened to hear a statement made by past chapter president Roger Easson. He noted that when speaking with leaders of other organizations during his tenure as president, he learned that having at least 10% of an organization's members show up at meetings is considered a good turnout. By this standard and the positive feedback from current and former members, the Mid-South chapter is doing okay.

Of course, if you'd like to help us do better, we'd love to see you at the December chapter meeting. You can give one of the chapter officers or managers suggestions on meeting topics or speakers, submit or enquire about job listings, and learn more about your fellow chapter members and the profession of technical communication (this month: a workshop on project management).

Thanks again for the feedback, and enjoy the holidays! ♦

Another Test of Your Skills

Because of time constraints on the schedules of the proofreaders of *Newsbrief* and me, this month's issue (like last month's) is being published without being proofread. Our volunteering time was cut back by traveling, work, and the holidays. So I ask you to think of any mistakes you find as a test of your editing skills. Have fun practicing, and thanks for the understanding!

Apryl



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

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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 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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Reprints

Articles published by *Newsbrief* may be reprinted in other STC publications if credit is given to the author as well as the Mid-South chapter and a copy of the reprint is sent to the *Newsbrief* editor.

Subscription

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

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November Meeting Notes

by Elizabeth Boone

At its November meeting, the Mid-South chapter celebrated the 50th anniversary of the founding of the STC with a party held at the Pink Palace Museum. The event, which was emceed by chapter historian David Armbruster and drew a crowd of 37, featured the reminiscences of several past presidents and highlighted notable achievements by the chapter and its members.

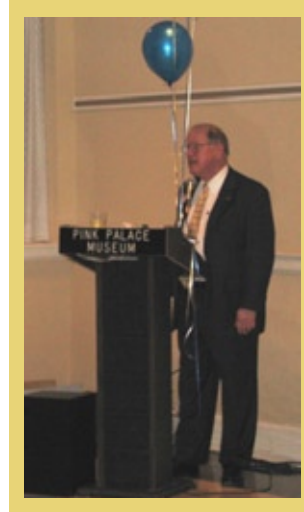
David kicked off the party by giving the history of STC. In 1953, two organizations, the Society of Technical Writers and the Association of Technical Writers and Editors, were established on the east coast with the aim to improve the practice of technical communication. A year later on the west coast, the Technical Publishing Society was organized. By 1957, the east coast groups has joined to form the Society of Technical Writers and Editors, and this group merged with the west coast group 3 years later to become the Society for Technical Writers and Publishers (STWP). STWP changed its name to the Society for Technical Communication in 1971.

Among the speakers at the party was Mary Ellen Pitts, who convened the first meeting on technical communication in Memphis in 1981 through the help of friends

like David Armbruster, whom she met while at Oak Ridge National Laboratory in east Tennessee (Table 1). She praised the chair of the English department at what was known then as Memphis State University, Joseph K. Davis, for supporting technical communication by starting the technical writing program at the university and by being instrumental in establishing the Mid-South chapter. Later in the program, current chapter president Mary

Sue MacNealy spoke about the benefits of the ongoing relationship between the chapter and the

university. Each year, the chapter provides a scholarship to technical writing students and in recent years helped the technical writing program add a Ph.D. to its degree offerings. Meanwhile, the univer-



David Armbruster, chapter historian and former Society president, emceed the anniversary party.



Chapter treasurer, Alison Joyner Masilak, and chapter hospitality manager, Tracy Hughes, wait to welcome attendees while they listen to a presenter.

Meeting Notes continued on p. 4

Table 1. Milestones in the Mid-South Chapter

Year	President	Highlights
1981	None	Mary Ellen Pitts convenes a meeting at which David Armbruster and Carolyn Srite from East Tennessee present a program on the benefits of STC and starting a chapter in Memphis
1981–83	Frank Weightman	David Armbruster and Barbara Lyons from East Tennessee present a program on goals and chapter planning in May 1982
1983–85	Shirley Hancock	
1985–86	Pat Connors	
1986–87	Melissa Peacock	Chapter begins meeting regularly in a restaurant; the chapter newsletter, <i>Newsbrief</i> , is created with desktop publishing equipment for the first time
1987–88	Janas Jackson	
1988–89	David Tankersley	<i>Newsbrief</i> wins and Award of Merit in the Chapter Newsletter Competition
1989–90	Michael Huggins	
1990–91	Diane Matthews and Roger Easson	Reggie Martin presents the workshop “Resume Writing and Interview Techniques” and Mary Sue MacNealy presents “Newsletter Design”; <i>Newsbrief</i> wins an Award of Achievement in the Chapter Newsletter Competition
1991–92	Jan Wardle	
1992–93	Bruce Speck	
1993–94	Charlton (Mickie) Ryan	Mary Sue MacNealy and Bruce Speck present first chapter seminar to support a scholarship
1994–95	Steve Gillespie	David Armbruster serves as Publications Competition Coordinator
1995–96	Margaret Carbaugh	The chapter wins the following STC awards: Award of Achievement in Promotion Communications, Award of Excellence in Chapter Public Relations Program, Award of Outstanding Performance for a Specific Event (workshop on usability)
1996–97	Mickie Ryan	
1997–98	Janice Richie	Steve Gillespie serves as the first chapter webmaster; <i>Newsbrief</i> wins an STC Award of Achievement
1998–99	Beth Hoople	
1999–2000	Rebecca Mabry	After many years of work and with assistance from STC, the Mid-South chapter donates \$15,000 to establish a scholarship at the University of Memphis
2000–01	Jackie Walters	
2001–02	Nell Johnson	Mary Sue MacNealy wins STC’s Jay Gould Award for Teaching
2002–03	Amy Hollister	
2003–04	Mary Sue MacNealy	

sity’s success in preparing students for the technical communication field is proven by the jobs that graduates get at local companies like FedEx, Physicians Postgraduate Press, Inc., and International Paper, all of which employ Mid-South chapter members.

Many of the other presidents told of the friendships they had made

in the chapter and emphasized how important those relationships were for finding jobs. Several people, like Jackie Walters, cited the welcoming nature of the chapter as a reason for their joining.

Others, like Michael Huggins, shared anecdotes from their tenure as president. During Huggins’ presidency, Memphis Mayor Wil-

lie Herenton, who at the time was superintendent of Memphis City Schools, was invited to speak at a meeting. Herenton got up to give his prepared speech only to discover that his note has mysteriously disappeared. The speech thief: David Armbruster, who acciden-

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tally picked the notes up after introducing Herenton.

Throughout the program, members shared chapter milestones (Table 1), like winning STC awards of excellence and achievement and starting a website, as well as the accomplishments of individual members such as becoming Society Fellows and Assistant Fellows (Table 2) and publishing in the STC journal, *Technical Communication* (Table 3).

Table 2. Fellows, Associate Fellows, and Those Serving on the Society Committees and Board from the Mid-South Chapter

Accomplishment	Former and Current Mid-South Chapter Members
Fellow	David Armbruster, Shirley Hancock, Jimmie Killingsworth, and Ken Rainey
Associate Fellow	Leanne Logan and Mary Sue MacNealy
Society committee or board member	David Armbruster, Shirley Hancock, Pat Connors O'Bryant, and Jan Wardle

Chapter convener Mary Ellen Pitts (far left) and past presidents (clockwise from top left) Rebecca Mabry, Beth Hoople, Jackie Walters, Michael Huggins, Jan Wardle, and Roger Eason reflect on the events during their years in the Mid-South chapter of STC.



After the presentations were over, former and current Mid-South chapter members, prospective members, as well as family and friends lingered to eat more and continue to talk about technical communication and the feats of the chapter.

Table 3. Former and Current Mid-South Chapter Members Who Have Been Published in *Technical Communication*

Michael Albers	Mary Sue MacNealy
David Armbruster	Diane Matthews
Mary Battle	Pat Connors O'Bryant
Noel Clements	Ken Pachmayr
Jim Connelly	Gene Plunka
Shirley Andersen Hancock	Ken Rainey
Jimmie Killingsworth	Charlie Ryan
Loel Kim	Bruce Speck

Author's Note: Thanks to David Armbruster and Apryl Cox for sharing material for this column and to Glenn Sanders and Jackie Walters for taking photos during the party. ♦

The Celebration Continues

by Leanne Logan

It's not every day that the Society for Technical Communication turns 50, that the Mid-South chapter turns 21, and that the folks in Memphis put on a grand party to celebrate these events in style at the Pink Palace Museum. And yet that's exactly what happened on November 3.

See the November Meeting Notes (page 3) to find out how much fun we had listening to many of our local past presidents share their stories of this community and its evolution, eating and drinking the great food and wine that were provided, and engaging in the wonderful conversations that ensued.

I want to thank publicly all those people who had an active hand in making the celebration such a resounding success. Thanks to the many speakers who came out to add to the richness of this chapter's

history. Thanks to the many active people on the program committee and the Mid-South chapter council for working through the logistical details over the previous 6 months. These individuals volunteered their time and financial support to ensure the party's success. And thanks to the many people who came out to participate in this special evening.

I would also like to extend a special thanks to the primary producer of the evening, without whom it would not have happened: David Armbruster. David initiated the idea for the celebration with zeal a year ago and participated in the 50th anniversary session at the STC annual conference in 2003. He spearheaded the hunt for all past Mid-South chapter members so that everyone could be invited, provided the leadership and vision

for the event, arm-twisted no end of past presidents to participate, chose some yummy wine and scrumptious food, and facilitated the event, making it fun for all. David, I thank you, the program committee thanks you, and the Mid-South chapter membership thanks you.

At the end of the evening, I took home a bundle of balloons. They all looked perky that night, but one by one lost their steam. I'm pleased to share, however, that the last survivor was the star 50th anniversary balloon. I'll take this as a sign that technical communication is here to stay. It's long lasting and enduring throughout changing circumstances and times. This is just the beginning of increasing opportunities and an optimistic outlook on what the future will bring for us technical communicators. ♦

Job Listings

The following job openings in technical communication have been submitted to the Mid-South chapter. For more information about this or other job offerings, contact Dennis Plafcan at dplafcan@chall.com.

Assistant Editor

Company: Physicians Postgraduate Press, Inc., a medical publishing company in Memphis, TN

Status: Permanent, full-time

Duties: Editing physician-authored manuscripts to meet the highest standards of scholarly scientific publishing, e.g., copyediting for style and accuracy, substantive editing for clarity and content, and formatting of text and graphics for readability and emphasis

Requirements: Mastery of the English language, proofreading acumen, and the ability to understand technical medical concepts; minimum education requirement of a master's degree in English or technical communications or a 4-year college degree with experience in editing/writing

Desired assets: Knowledge of AMA style and IMRAD conventions, proficiency in Microsoft Word (track changes/redlining features) and Adobe PageMaker

Notes: Candidates will undergo on-site testing and a 3-month probation period. Before composing your cover let-

ter, please visit www.psychiatrist.com to assess how your skills match the publication demands.

Contact: Meg M. Waters, Director of Editorial Services (mwaters@psychiatrist.com)

Senior Sales Specialist

Company: FedEx Services in Memphis, TN

Status: Permanent, full-time

Duties: Writing and editing responses to customer requests for proposals and creating presentations, which encompasses developing the selling points and theme of the bid

Requirements: Extensive professional, full-time technical writing and/or editing experience (minimum of three years) as well as excellent teamwork, writing, editing, and Microsoft Word skills

Notes: To read a full description online (and apply), go to fedex.com and click on Careers. Be sure to select FedEx Services, Sales, and TN-MEMPHIS where prompted. Job ID is 5201510.

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, December 1, 6:00–8:00

Topic: An interactive presentation on project management

Speaker: Jackie Walters

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, January 5, 6:00–8:00

Topic: Panel discussion on editing tips and tricks

Speakers: Sarah Brown, Glenn Sanders, David Twombly, and Elizabeth Webb

Location: The Cottage at the Four Seasons

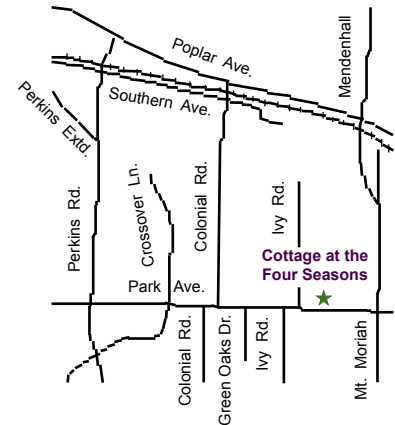
Monday, February 2, 6:00–8:00

Topic: The story of an early technical communicator

Speaker: Pat Connors O'Bryant

Location: The Cottage at the Four Seasons

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



Newsbrief

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