

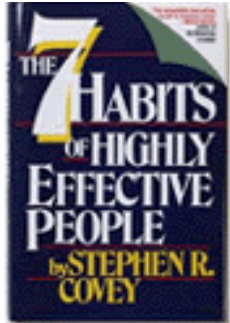


Newsbrief

The Publication of the Mid-South Chapter, STC

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Learn How to Become Highly Effective in October

by Nell Johnson

The October STC meeting will explore the development of some habits of effectiveness that can substantially enhance communication skills, in turn maximizing your effectiveness within the scope of your responsibilities.

Our speaker, Sharon Sirrell, will discuss *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*; based on material developed by Stephen R. Covey. You will discover how these habits can be applied in very practical ways to your role as a Leader and the benefits to be gained within your project teams.

Sharon Sirrell was an employee at FedEx for sixteen years. The first twelve years were spent working in the Data Base Administration/Data Administration area. Sharon made a major career change four years ago, moving into the IT training area. This is where she followed her true passion to help people in bringing about positive change in their lives. Sharon was the Project Leader for all of the Franklin Covey programs that

were being offered to the newly formed FedEx Corporate Services company.

She is a certified facilitator of The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, The 4 Roles of Leadership, and Building Trust. Sharon is married to husband, Stephen, and has two daughters, Karisa (14) and Hayley (4). Her personal interests include travel, photography and scrapbooking.

Tell Us All About Conference!

by Amy Hollister



The September STC meeting was a huge success, with members sharing the conference experience with those 25 in attendance. This was our first meeting back from the "summer break" and it was good to see everyone and get back into the swing of things.

Our Competitions Coordinator, **Steve Gillespie**, reminded everyone present of the upcoming Publications Competition—the deadline for submitting an entry is October 6th, so get yours in today.

Teresa Johnson, our Jobs Coordinator has been diligently placing ads for employment with

local companies on our eGroups Mailing List site.

To access this site, go to:

<http://www.egroups.com/messages/STCmidsouthChapter>.

Thank you, Teresa, for gathering together a wealth of employment information! As Teresa noted, there are plenty of employment experiences to be had for us Technical Communicators out there.

Watch for more opportunities to be listed in the upcoming digests of the **STCmidsouthChapter eGroup**.

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Why I Joined STC

by Rob Houser
Region 3 Director-Sponsor

I became a technical writer and a member of STC almost by mistake. I didn't go to college to study technical communication, but somehow I ended up in a technical writing class at the University of Tennessee (U.T.). I enjoyed the class, but still thought I was destined to teach literature. At the end of the term, Dr. Mike Keene suggested that I enter one of my reports from his class in an STC scholarship competition. I entered my report, and was awarded the J. Paul Blakely Memorial Scholarship from the East Tennessee Chapter.



I went to one of the East Tennessee Chapter's monthly meetings to receive my award, and everyone was friendly and eagerly talking about their work. I met people who encouraged me to get more involved in technical writing and STC. They invited me back to attend their chapter meetings, and seemed to really want me to return.

I took more classes about technical communication, and I continued to attend STC meetings. I joined the Society in 1988 because I felt that the profession was challenging and that the members of STC were friendly and interesting. They won me over with their enthusiasm for their jobs and the personal invitations to visit their chapter again. But, it was their openness to consider a student as a colleague and their warm manner that made me dedicated to STC.

Every time I volunteer for an activity in STC, I meet someone new who makes me glad that I became a technical communicator. Think about the positive influence you can have on others simply by inviting them to join STC, helping them network, and being friendly when they attend monthly meetings. I am excited to be by your Director-Sponsor, and I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible over the next 3 years.

Editor's note:
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New Monthly Article to Spotlight Local Companies

by Teresa Johnson

This month we begin a regular column spotlighting local employers of technical communicators. To have your company or department featured in Newsbrief, contact Teresa Johnson at: tjohnson@eoncc.com.

We want you to tell us as much as you would like about your work, but we are particularly interested in what your company does, who works in your department, what kinds of documents you produce, and what audiences you must address. Please be sure to get the necessary permissions to print information about your company.

In Good Company



by Teresa Johnson
Jobs Coordinator

eOn Communications Corporation is a true product of the technology revolution. From its beginnings in telephony, it has emerged as a provider of communications solutions that integrate voice, web, and E-mail applications to support e-commerce, while continuing to produce telephony products that meet the needs of small businesses, school districts, and government organizations. A multi-site company, eOn has project teams with members in Kennesaw, Georgia; Englewood, Colorado; Guelph, Ontario; and Memphis, Tennessee, and so must also rely on information technology to keep its employees in touch and provide them joint access to project information.

Even the Technical Communications department itself spans three sites. The Director of Training and Documentation, John Nicholson, is based in the Englewood office. Department manager Betty Larkey, who works in the Memphis office, has been with eOn for five years. Working in Memphis are two other full-time technical writers, Teresa Johnson and Tracy Snyder, and one contract writer, Mike Bodary, all graduates of the University of Memphis. Lisa Ellison, another writer who has been with the company for five years, works at the Kennesaw office. A search is currently underway for an additional writer in the Memphis office. As a result of this combination of cutting-edge products aimed at a variety of markets and produced by geographically scattered project teams, eOn's technical writers must constantly adapt to new situations, to

shifting deadlines, and to evolving products. Writing documentation at eOn is a process of continuing education in hardware and software—not only the company's products, but also the tools used to produce the work. The department's publications range from 4-page installation instructions to 1000-page technical manuals; from on-line help files to complex configuration manuals that show how three or more software products are interconnected; and from end-user guides to sales tools such as product reference guides. Some products require both hardware and software documentation; most require only software instructions, but even those may require separate documents for two or more audiences with radically different levels of computer expertise.

Technical writers at eOn enjoy the tangible employee benefits such as health insurance and stock options, as well as the important intangible benefits of excellent management support and the opportunity to work with top-notch engineers who understand the value that documentation adds to the finished product.

About eOn Communications Corporation:

eOn Communications Corporation (tm) (www.eoncc.com) designs, develops and markets next-generation Linux-based communications servers and software that integrate and manage voice, e-mail and Internet communications for customer contact centers and general business applications. The Company also offers the Millennium® digital switching platform for small and medium-sized installations. eOn Communications Corporation helps

enterprises communicate more effectively with customers, convert inquiries into sales, and increase customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Welcome New Members

by Amy Hollister

We have several new members of the Mid-South Chapter. Please join me in welcoming our newest members:



Melissa Young, who is employed at FedEx in their SRS Performance Tech and Communications department.

Leslie Bindbeutel, Sarah Brownd, Charles Nesler and Mark Williams, who are currently students at the University of Memphis.

Linda Lineberry Feathers, of FedEx's AC Maintenance Projects department.

Amanda Currey and Tara Laine Hoffman, who are both employed with Sedgwick Claims Management Services, Inc.

Randy Hutchinson and John Prescott, of the University of Memphis.

Sherri Yeager-Williams, of FedEx's Ground Operations Policy Analysis department, under the management of Ferris Hooshmand.

What's New in Your World?

by Jackie Walters



Please join me and the board in welcoming **Nell Johnson**, of FedEx Services, as our newly appointed Vice President. Nell brings a wealth of experience that will surely benefit the Mid-South chapter.

Loel Kim accepted the nomination to serve as the Mid-South chapter's Academic Liaison. We look forward to her enlightening the student community about the benefits of joining and becoming an integral part of STC.

Congratulations are in order for **Alison Joyner**. After graduating from the University of Tennessee Knoxville, she accepted a position with the University of Memphis as an Electronic Media Coordinator.



Rob Houser, our Director-Sponsor, recently sent me this e-mail message: "Congratulations! The board approved your application for a merit grant of \$3000 to add to your scholarship fund. You guys have done a great job building such a substantial fund. I appreciate your support of students, and wish you the best of luck."



STC Offers Grants for “Special Opportunities” in Technical Communication

by Maurice Martin
Communication Director
STC National Office

The Society for Technical Communication (STC) welcomes applications for Special Opportunities Grants to support projects that develop and communicate new information about the arts and sciences of technical communication. The Society encourages proposals for such educational projects as pilot programs, new high school and college curricula, or innovative teaching methods.



STC’s Special Opportunities Committee awards one-time grant funding for amounts up to \$10,000. Deadlines for applications are October 15, 2000 and February 15, 2001. For Special Opportunities Grants Guidelines, see the STC Web page at: www.stc-va.org (select “Grants & Loans” then scroll down to “Special Opportunities Grant”) or request a copy by calling the STC office at: (703) 522-4114 or by sending an e-mail to: stc@stc-va.org.



To qualify for STC Special Opportunities Grant funding, the project you envision must be a controlled activity that can develop and communicate new and non-proprietary information to the STC membership.

For more information, please contact the Special Opportunities Committee co-chairs:

Deborah Rosenquist
deborah_rosenquist@ccmail.us.dell.com or Katherine Staples
kstaples@bga.com.



The Society for Technical Communication is the world’s largest professional organization serving the technical communication profession. STC has more than 23,000 members and 149 chapters worldwide. For more information, please visit www.stc-va.org.

Director-Sponsor Leadership Update

by Rob Houser,
Region 3 Director-Sponsor

Distinguished Chapter Service Awards

The DCSA is a Society-level award that recognizes a member’s exemplary contributions to the Society through his/her chapter. The qualifications for this award are broad. The official guidelines recommend that you consider length of membership, variety of service, and consistency of service over time. One important restriction is that a nominee cannot be a current member of the executive council (i.e. an elected officer).



To nominate someone for DCSA, send e-mail to your chapter president with the person’s name, include a brief paragraph explaining why the member should be nominated for the award, and provide an inscription to be used on the award. If possible, also include the contact information for the nominee, including the number of years they have been a member of STC and the chapter. Nominations are made by each chapter’s executive council and are

approved by the Society Board of Directors at the Winter board meeting in January. All nominations must be received by the Director-Sponsor before November 30. For details about the DCSA, go to the Society web site: www.stc-va.org, click Honors and Awards, and open the Guidelines for Distinguished Chapter Service Award.

Don’t miss this great opportunity to recognize your strongest contributors!

Chapter Achievement Award Modified

As you know, the Chapter Achievement Award (CAA) program was revised this year. It now offers two levels of earned awards (Merit and Excellence) in addition a “top” Board-selected award (Distinguished). Director-sponsors held a mid-year review of the new program last week, and made a few changes:

1. Corrected activities related to newsletters. In the original revision, we accidentally put a “tougher” task in a lower level. Now, professional chapters have to meet the “Publish 4 or more newsletters” activity at the Merit level and “Enter STC’s newsletter competition” at the Excellence level. Student chapters have to meet the “Publish 4 or more newsletters” at the Excellence level and “Enter STC’s newsletter competition” is part of the Distinguished level.
2. Added a clause that allows a chapter, in discussion with their director-sponsor, to substitute any activity in the Merit and Excellence levels with another similar activity. “Similar” in this context means that the substitute activity will achieve essentially the

same purpose as the substituted activity.



The new versions of the CAA guidelines (and the application form) are posted on www.stc-va.org. I hope you'll go take a look at them, if you have not already!

Please let me know if you have any questions on these changes or the program in general—I hope to see lots of applications this year!

Director-Sponsor Objectives

Here are my official objectives for this year. I actually expect many of them to run into the next year, but I wanted to aim high!



The goals of the Director-Sponsor Region 3 are as follows:

- Facilitate Inter-Regional Communication: Help get chapter presidents in Region 3 to talk to each other to share ideas and solve problems.
- Strengthen Smaller Chapters: Provide additional leadership guidance and support to smaller chapter leaders.
- Increase Society Awareness: Help chapter presidents learn more about the Society to encourage them to become active beyond the chapter in the near future.
- Support Student Chapters: Provide special support and encouragement to student chapters.

The following list describes the 2000-2001 planned activities for the Director-Sponsor Region 3.

Facilitate Inter-Regional Communication

- Set up two conference calls for regional presidents to allow them to share ideas and help each other solve problems.
- Encourage the creation of web sites for the remaining chapters without web sites: Austin Peay, Carolina Foothills, North Central Florida, Tennessee Tech, TransAlpine.
- Create an innovation/achievement award to give on a monthly basis to a chapter in the region that has accomplished an innovative or against-the-odds task.

Strengthen Smaller Chapters

- Establish a speaker database for the region through the Region 3 web site to help smaller chapters come up with program ideas and speakers.
- Present for at least five of the most needy chapters between January and May.
- Provide a free workshop for the South Carolina and Carolina Foothills mini-conference and the Huntsville/North Alabama chapter.

Increase Society Awareness

- Send monthly leadership e-mails to chapter presidents with ideas for chapter leadership and reminders about Society deadlines and resources.
- Send monthly director-sponsor column about Society/Chapter issues for chapter newsletters.

Support Student Chapters

- Investigate starting a Southern Polytechnic State University student chapter.
- Encourage the Atlanta chapter to hold the Region 3 student conference along with Currents again this year.

Board Meeting Summary

The STC Board of Directors met in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, September 14-17 and covered a great deal of ground, including:

- Forming a policy about chapter formation outside the United States and relationships with existing techcomm organizations in other countries
- Branding and corporate identity
- Web site hosting for chapters
- Approving a whole lot of Merit Grants. Congratulations to these many chapters with so many innovative and important programs in the works!

These major issues were addressed along with the “regular” STC business of, among other subjects, chapter affairs and program areas, including research, SIGs, professional development, competitions, conferences, communications, and external affairs. Because this article has to be relatively brief, these subjects cannot be described in detail. Several of them could easily be main topics of articles. It took the board 2.5 long days to deal with them. So, please contact me if you have any questions.

Committee and Program Updates

- The board authorized the STC office to conduct a membership drive using the services of a professional marketing company.
- STC will become an affiliate member of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). The annual fee for this is \$5,000. W3C determines standards for Web-based communication, among other wide-ranging concerns of specific interest to STC.
- The Instructional Design & Learning Special Interest Group (SIG) was approved with an initial budget of \$1,900.
- Denver, Colorado, will be the location of the 52nd STC Annual Conference in 2006.
- Minneapolis, Minnesota, will be the location of the 53rd STC Annual Conference in 2007.

- Freya Winsberg of the Phoenix Chapter was appointed program manager for the 50th STC Annual Conference (Seattle, 2003).
- The Conference registration fee for members for the 48th STC Annual Conference in Chicago in 2001 will be \$420. The discounted rate for speakers will remain \$350.
- Edward Carbrey, Boston Chapter, was appointed manager of the Jay R. Gould Award Committee.
- Dale Erickson, Lone Star Chapter, was appointed manager of the New Media Delivery Systems Committee in the Communications area.
- Jon Baker, Boston Chapter, was named manager of the New Media Publications Committee in the Communications area.
- Jack Molisani, Los Angeles Chapter, was named manager of the Chapter and Regional Conferences Committee in the Chapter Affairs area (2nd Vice President).
- Amy Burdan, Hoosier (Indiana) Chapter, was named manager of the Scientific Communication SIG.
- Roy Hartshorn, Toronto Chapter, was named manager of the Canadian Curricula in Professional Development Committee in the Professional Development area.

Budget

STC follows a system of zero-based budgeting. It cannot operate or begin the fiscal year at a deficit. The board approved a budget for FY 2001 of income = \$4,725,250; expenses = \$4,711,849; and a net surplus of \$13,401.



Branding and Corporate Identity

The board approved a new logo and stationery program for the Society. Chapter presidents should receive specific and detailed corporate identity information, i.e., how to use the new logo and various design

elements in chapter stationery and hard and electronic copy materials, before the end of the year.

As most of you know, Past President Mary Wise announced the new STC mission statement, *Designing the Future of Technical Communication*, at Leadership Day at the Orlando conference. Another external brand tool is the organization's "story," a brief explanation of what the organization stands for, who its members are, and how it views its future. The STC board approved the STC story—our consistent "face" we present to the rest of the world. While it is not meant to replace the more extensive literature we provide to prospective members and others, the story is the "elevator message" we can use to briefly explain who and what we are.



Through information sharing and industry leadership, STC helps professionals design effective communication for a technical world. Because technology touches everyone, STC promotes public welfare by encouraging the development of better-educated professionals whose jobs are to make complicated information usable by many.

The organization's growth has mirrored our growing dependence on technology. Initially, STC was primarily made up of engineers who, among other activities, wrote instructions and descriptions of how electrical and mechanical products worked. A profound change took place as the pervasiveness of technology and the need to understand it became an integral part of our everyday lives. With the emergence of the Internet and online communication, our members now focus on supporting all aspects of the

rapidly evolving world of technology.

The organization began because those working in the field recognized themselves as professionals with unique training and career issues. Today, STC is nearly 50 years old, with 150 chapters and 25,000 members worldwide. It is the largest organization for technical communicators. STC offers industry leadership and the education, networking, and information required in a world where change is "the way it is."

I'll be talking more about the branding process, brand tools, and how they can be used by chapters as both creative "springboards" and templates to make decision making easier at the Region 4 Leadership Workshop in Columbus, OH, October 7, 2000 (sponsored by the Central Ohio Chapter).

Web site Hosting for Chapters

For the past several years, the board has been dealing with a number of difficult issues related to decentralized versus centralized hosting of chapter Web sites. Recent problems and service difficulties as STC.org's bandwidth needs have exceeded what our current ISP can provide makes this issue urgent as well as extremely important. Over the next few months, committees in the Communications area, managed by Lory Hawkes, AP for Communications, will be developing and implementing a transition plan that will enable chapters to select their own ISPs and maintain their own Web sites in a decentralized system. Such a system means that, within some general guidelines (we do have to present a fairly consistent "face" to the world; see Branding above), chapters will have greater creative latitude and

capabilities to develop and change their Web sites. ISP and other costs associated with Web sites have decreased considerably over the years, so most chapters will be able to maintain their sites with their chapter funds. Small and new chapters, which may not have enough funds, are eligible for grants for Web site startup under the existing Merit Grant program. Contact your Director-Sponsor for more details. Again, moving chapter Web sites from the volunteer-run STC.org site to ISPs selected by individual chapters will occur according to a careful transition plan, and chapter presidents will be contacted.

Again, the issues mentioned in this summary are far-reaching and important, but the discussions here are necessarily brief. Please contact me with your questions.

Future Programs — Mark Your Calendars!

by Amy Hollister

Lunch meetings typically begin at 11:30 A.M. Members and visitors are welcomed and encouraged to sign the roster, write their name and company on a name tag, and complete a slip for the door prize drawing. A pre-selected menu is served before and during the program. However, it is not necessary to order food to attend the meeting. As always, if you should prefer a meal selection other than the pre-selected menu (listed in the newsletter), please inform the restaurant before attending the meeting. The pre-selected menu ensures that we keep to our allotted time schedule for those of us returning to work.

Dinner meetings typically begin at 6:00 P.M., with the same proceedings of the lunch meetings. There is also a pre-set menu for dinner; however, you may also select from the menu, if you would prefer something different.

<i>Month/ Meal Type</i>	<i>Program/Speaker</i>
October (dinner)	Sharon Sirrell The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People
November (lunch)	Dr. Battle
December (dinner)	Christmas Party Jackie Walters' home
January (lunch)	David Armbruster Publications History
February (dinner)	Sharon Sirrell
March (lunch)	TBD
April (dinner)	Elections and Writer's Night
May (dinner)	Installation of Board Members and Rob Houser (Director-Sponsor)

Treasurer's Report

by Ferris Hooshmand



This chapter financial report reflects the end of August, 2000.

Cash balance \$982.69

Income:

Donation \$100.00
Interest on savings \$ 6.05

Total Income \$106.05

Expenses:

Newsletter \$ 33.00
Competition \$116.66
Prizes \$ 54.12
New checks \$ 14.50

Total Expenses \$218.28

Surplus or (deficit) (\$112.23)

(income less expenses)

Cash balance \$870.46

Currents 2001: The Odyssey Continues

by Gene Larson

Manager, Public Relations

Atlanta Chapter, STC

(770) 304-5637

The STC Atlanta Chapter is proud to announce its annual conference, Currents, on March 16 and 17, 2001, at the Atlanta campus of Mercer University.

Our theme for Currents 2001, "The Odyssey Continues," embraces the ongoing evolution of our profession and implies the need to keep abreast of changes. A feature of Currents 2001 is the inclusion of the Region 3 Student Conference.

Currents begins with a full-day workshop on Friday, March 16. At the conference on Saturday, March 17, you can choose sessions from our topic stems focusing on learning new skills and tools, contracting, expanding your roles, satisfying users, education/professional development, and management.

Currents 2001 is the premier way for technical communicators to interact with colleagues, and learn the theories, technologies and tools of the profession.

For conference information, contact conference manager Cheri Pullar at: pullarcc@cs.com or access our website at: www.pobox.com/~stc-atlanta.

Meeting Reminder

Amy Hollister, Editor

What: October (Dinner) Meeting
When: Monday, October 2nd
Topic: The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People
Speaker: Sharon Sirrell
Where: Napa Cafe
5101 Sanderlin
(901) 683-0441



The planned menu items and prices (including tea, tax, and gratuity) are:

- Pork Tenderloin \$14.50**
Pan roasted pork tenderloin topped with a mustard cream sauce, served with roasted garlic whipped potatoes and sauteed red cabbage with walnuts.
- Grilled Salmon \$16.50**
A fresh fillet grilled and topped with a relish of roasted red and yellow peppers; served with crisp potato cakes.
- Chicken Breast with Grilled Citrus Vinaigrette \$13.50**
Grilled chicken breast with a grilled orange, lemon, lime vinaigrette and a fresh tamale.



Newsbrief

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The mission of the Society for Technical Communication is to improve the quality and effectiveness of technical communication for audiences worldwide. 🌐



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