

# Newsbrief

The Publication of the Mid-South Chapter, STC

Volume 18, Number 8

August 2000

## Message From the STC National President

by Mark Hanigan

Hello, and Happy STC New Year! We are just coming off of another very successful STC Annual Conference, this 47th edition having taken place in Orlando! If you were there, you would have to agree that it was the best yet in terms of the number and variety of sessions. Also, from my vantage, it appeared that everyone enjoyed all the conference activities from our opening keynote speaker **Thomas Koulopoulos** through our side-splitting closing speaker Bill Herz!



*Thomas Koulopoulos*

If you were not at this year's 47th annual conference,

it is not too soon to start planning to attend next year's edition, which will be in Chicago on May 13-16, 2001. Like nothing else, the STC annual conference provides us with the setting to celebrate our profession, renew and make new professional acquaintances, and expand our technical and professional knowledge.



For me, STC's 47th Annual Conference was most special in that I begin my one-year term at

the "STC helm," a privilege for which I am most appreciative. And now that the conference is over, I look forward to getting to work on this year's agenda.

All of us are going to be very busy, helping to advance this year's objectives, and, of course, preparing for the Fall 2000 meeting of the STC board. This year, the Fall board meeting is to be held on September 14-17, 2000 in Winnipeg, MB, hosted by the Manitoba Chapter. With the exception of an executive session, all STC board of director meetings are open to all members. So, if you are in the area, please stop by. (Location details will be forthcoming!)

The theme of the 2000-2001 STC year is *Providing Value*. Needless to say, all of the efforts to make our organization successful takes the efforts of literally hundreds of individuals – individuals just like you! If there is an area of STC at the Society level that is of interest to you, let me or another member of the board know. Or, if you just want to drop me a line, my e-mail address is [onwritetrk@aol.com](mailto:onwritetrk@aol.com).

My personal philosophy is to "take what you do seriously, but don't take yourself too seriously." Couple this with my belief about STC: Collectively we have all of the knowledge, but individually, none of us do. This means you are the keeper of a piece of this collective knowledge. Let's share the wealth! 🐸

## How to Improve Your Writing Without Writing a Word



by Chandra Beal

Chandra Beal has written and self-published a guidebook to swimming in Central Texas (Splash Across Texas), and has contributed articles to Austin Monthly, Texas Beat, Llewellyn's Magical Almanacs, Animal Watch, and numerous other publications. You can read more about Chandra and sample her writing by visiting her website at:

<http://www.beal-net.com/laluna>.

Writing does not consist merely of creating words; it is the culmination of our life experiences translated through our selves. These experiences come from every corner of life and influence our writing in a myriad of ways. Although writing every day is still the best practice, there are many ways to improve your skills without really writing at all. Here are a few:

### 1. Read

Reading a wide variety of authors and styles is one of the best creative stimuli. Every time I read a new book I grow as a writer. I learn new words; I notice phrasing and construction; I



## CONTENTS

Translations.....	2
Meeting Reminder .....	3

think about what moves me as the reader. Reading someone else's words helps get the writing juices going and often inspires me.

## 2. Walk

Take a walk in the middle of your work day or when you feel yourself getting stuck or losing energy. Exercise will get your circulation going and deliver oxygen to your brain, clearing it of that incessant "mind chatter". Thinking too much is sometimes what kills the writing spark.

As you walk, notice abstract details such as the color of a house, flowers blooming, or the shapes of clouds. You never know when a street sign, a window display, or an overheard conversation will inspire you. Some of my best ideas come when I'm walking, showering or driving. When you stop thinking about writing, ideas seem to pop up everywhere.



## 3. Talk

I used to think that my writing wasn't "real" until it got published. Rubbish! Your writing exists the moment you have an idea. Use every opportunity to talk about your work, including the seeds of new stories, your current projects, your frustrations, your If you have access to a writers' group, utilize it. It is healthy to get your ideas and projects "out there" so your work has some tangible value and you're not creating in isolation. Activating your writing creates momentum. By sharing it, you will create a sense of legitimacy for yourself, and others will respond to your confidence.



## 4. Listen

Practice taking in information. Go to a restaurant and notice the way people communicate with each other. Observe non-verbal clues such as body language and gestures, or

listen to the symphony of sounds all around you (birds chirping, the hum of the refrigerator). Simply notice the world of communication around you.

## 5. Network

Get out of the office and rub elbows with other writers. Not only is this valuable for making contacts and getting job leads, but most likely other writers are struggling with the same issues as you. Attend a writers' group or workshop and allow yourself to be supported by others with the same passion.



## 6. Learn

Good writers never stop trying to improve their work. Take a class, read a how-to book, or interview other writers about subjects that interest you. Immerse yourself in new ideas, or try writing in a different genre, to keep your writing alive and fresh.

## 7. Draw

Drawing forces you to use the right side of your brain and think in a nonlinear fashion. Use crayons, pencils, paint or whatever medium feels good to you. Draw whatever comes to mind. Draw what your characters look like, or scribble color to express emotions. This exercises your creative muscles in a way that doesn't deal in words. The energy will carry over into your writing. Go wild!



## 8. Dance

Put on some music, roll up the rug and dance around the living room. Feel the rhythm and let it evoke whatever feelings come up. Express your own words through your body, or listen to song lyrics and pick out rhymes

and patterns. Music speaks to us in nonverbal ways.

What is it saying to you?



## 9. Fantasize

One of the greatest elements of writing is that imagination is allowed and encouraged. Take ten minutes to close your eyes and fantasize about anything you want. When you find yourself staring out the window, take a moment to let those daydreams go wherever they want. Take a seat in the audience of your own mind and enjoy yourself. Do not judge any feelings or images that come up; this is one time when anything goes.

## 10. Do Nothing

Doing nothing is not the same as procrastinating. It is essential to take a break from your writing to recharge your batteries, get some perspective, and come back renewed. This can be as simple as deep breathing or stretching for five minutes. I often put my first drafts in a file, then let a week lapse before looking at them again. When I come back to them, I see them with new eyes and am ripe to improve my work. 🐸



Copyright © 2000 Chandra Beal

## Translations

by Margaret Carbaugh, originally from *Tech Talk*, the Twin Cities chapter's newsletter (April 2000)



Editor's note:

These funny anecdotes replaced the normally featured article "Writer's Block".



**In a Tokyo hotel:**

“Is forbidden to steal hotel towels please. If you are not a person to do such thing is please not to read notis.”

**In a Bucharest hotel lobby:**

“The lift is being fixed for the next day. During that time we regret that you will be unbearable.”

**In a Leipzig elevator:**

“Do not enter the lift backwards, and only when lit up.”

**In a Belgrade hotel elevator:**

“To more the cabin, push button for wishing floor. If the cabin should enter more persons, each one should press a number of wishing floor. Driving is then going alphabetically by national order.”

**In a hotel in Athens:**



“Visitors are expected to complain at the office between the hours of 9 and 11 a.m. daily.”

**In the lobby of a Moscow hotel across from a Russian Orthodox monastery:**

“You are welcome to visit the cemetery where famous Russian and Soviet composers, artists, and writers are buried except Thursday.”

**In an Austrian hotel catering to skiers:**

“Not to peramublate the corridors in the hours of repose in the boots of ascension.”

**On the menu of a Polish hotel:**

“Salad a firm’s own make; limp red beet soup with cheesy dumplings in the form of a finger; roasted duck let loose; beef rashers beaten up in the country people’s fashion.”



**Outside a Paris dress shop:**

“Dresses for street walking.”

**In a Bangkok dry cleaners:**

“Drop your trousers here for best results.”



**In a Tokyo shop:**

“Our nylons cost more than common, but you’ll find they are best in the long run.”

**On the door of a Moscow hotel room:**

“If this is your first visit to the USSR, you are welcome to it.”

**From a Japanese information booklet about using a hotel air conditioner:**

“Cooler and Heaters: If you want just condition of warm in your room, please control yourself.”

**From a brochure of a car rental firm in Tokyo:**

“When passenger of foot heave in sight, tootle the horn. Trumpet him melodiously at first, but if he still obstacles your passage then tootle him with vigor.”

**In a Zurich hotel:**

“Because of the impopriety of entertaining guests of the opposite sex in the bedroom, it is suggested that the lobby be used for this purpose.”

**A sign posted in Germany’s Black Forest:**

“It is strictly forbidden on our black forest camping site that people of different sex, for instance, men and women, live together in one tent unless they are married with each other for that purpose.”

Let this serve as a lesson to you. The next time you translate English to another language—you just never know **how** it will be translated. 🐷

**Meeting Reminder**

*Amy Hollister, Editor*

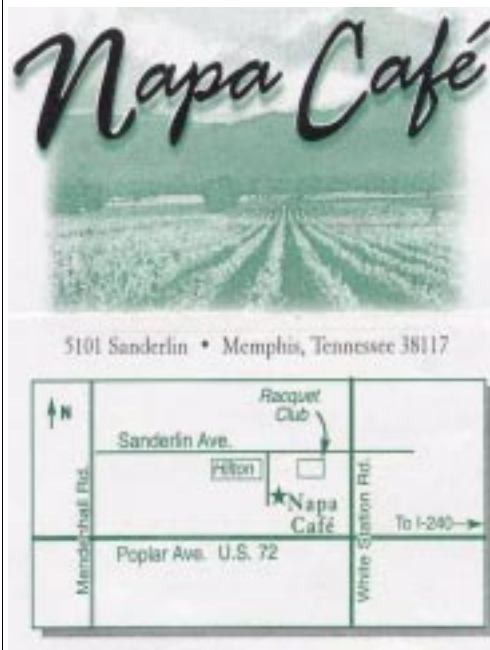
What: September Luncheon Meeting

When: Monday, September 11th

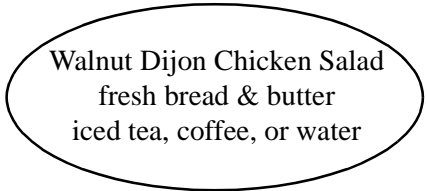
Topic: STC 47th Annual Conference

Speakers: Conference Participants

Where: Napa Cafe (see map below)



The scheduled lunch menu will be:



Total cost should be around \$10.50, which includes tax and gratuity. If you should desire **something else** on the menu (shown on last page), please call in your order **before** attending the meeting.

This will ensure that we keep the meeting within our scheduled time frame. 🐷

SHRIMP BISQUE \$3.50  
 SMOKED TOMATO AND ROASTED SHALLOT \$3.25  
 SOUP OF THE DAY \$2.75

Salads & Sandwiches

<b>WALNUT and PEAR SALAD</b> Fresh pears, candied walnuts, Roquefort cheese, and baby spinach served with a balsamic vinaigrette.	\$5.50
<b>CAESAR SALAD</b> Crisp Romaine lettuce tossed in our Caesar dressing with croutons and Parmesan cheese.	\$4.75
<b>NAPA SALAD</b> Fresh bibb lettuce, Mandarin orange slices, and sliced almonds with a tangy vinaigrette.	\$4.95
<b>WALNUT DIJON CHICKEN SALAD</b> Tender grilled chicken breast tossed with walnuts in Dijon mayonnaise dressing. Served on a bed of lettuce with fresh Roma tomatoes.	\$7.95
<b>GRILLED CHICKEN and AVOCADO SALAD</b> Slices of marinated tender chicken breast, tomato, chopped egg and bacon on a bed of fresh California greens garnished with avocado slices.	\$8.95
<b>SHRIMP SALAD</b> Gulf shrimp tossed in a sour cream and fresh herb dressing layered on crisp phyllo with California mixed greens.	\$9.95
<b>NICOISE SALAD</b> Fresh grilled tuna fillet, Roma tomatoes, Calamata olives, green beans, grilled red onions, and hard boiled egg served over California greens tossed in a tarragon vinaigrette.	\$10.95
<b>NAPA BURGER</b> Grilled tender ground beef served on a poppyseed bun with shoestring french fries. With a slice of cheddar cheese add \$.50.	\$6.95
<b>BARBECUED CATFISH SANDWICH</b> Fresh Mississippi catfish seasoned with Creole spices, grilled and served on a roll with remoulade sauce. Served with shoestring french fries and red cabbage slaw.	\$8.95
<b>PORTABELLO on FOCACCIA</b> Grilled portabella mushroom, sun-dried tomato pesto, mozzarella cheese, and mixed greens on toasted focaccia. Served with chilled couscous.	\$7.50
<b>SMOKED TURKEY</b> Thinly sliced smoked turkey on fresh egg bread with basil mayonnaise, lettuce, and tomato. Served with shoestring french fries.	\$6.95
<b>HAM and APPLE SANDWICH</b> Thinly sliced ham, sautéed Granny Smith apples, caramelized red onion confit, and melted mozzarella cheese on a warm focaccia with honey mustard dressing. Served with housemade sweet potato chips.	\$6.95
<b>ONION and PANCETTA TART</b> Yellow onions, pancetta, goat cheese and herbs baked in a flaky crust.	\$7.95
<b>POPPYSEED CHICKEN</b> Tender chicken baked in a poppyseed cream sauce. Served with fresh green beans.	\$8.95
<b>PORK TENDERLOIN</b> Pan roasted pork tenderloin topped with a mustard cream sauce, served with roasted garlic whipped potatoes and sautéed red cabbage with walnuts.	\$9.95
<b>GRILLED SALMON</b> A fresh fillet grilled and topped with a relish of roasted red and yellow peppers. Served with crisp potato cakes.	\$11.95
<b>ROCK SHRIMP CAKES</b> Rock shrimp cakes sautéed in butter with red pepper aioli and basil oil. Served with corn sautéed with bell pepper, onion, bacon and fresh cilantro.	\$10.95
<b>CHICKEN BREAST with GRILLED CITRUS VINAIGRETTE</b> Grilled chicken breast with a grilled orange, lemon, lime vinaigrette and a fresh tomato.	\$8.95
<b>LINGUINE and BRUSCHETTA</b> Linguine tossed in olive oil and fresh garlic, served with a tapenade and spinach walnut goat cheese pesto topped bruschetta.	\$7.95
<b>ROTINI in ASIAGO CREAM SAUCE</b> Artichokes, sun-dried tomatoes, pancetta and wild mushrooms tossed with rotini in an Asiago cream sauce.	\$8.95



society for technical communication

**2000 Officers  
National Chapter**

Society President ..... **Mark Hanigan**  
 Director Sponsor ..... **Rob Houser**

**Mid-South Chapter**

President ..... **Jackie Walters**  
 Phone: ..... 395-5633  
 E-mail: ..... jlwalters@fedex.com  
 Vice President ..... **Paige Marshall**  
 Phone: ..... 756-4555 ext. 289  
 E-mail: ..... marshall@softwareearnings.com

Secretary &  
 Newsletter Editor ..... **Amy Hollister**

Phone: ..... 395-4088  
 E-mail: ..... abhollister@fedex.com

Treasurer ..... **Ferris Hooshmand**

Phone: ..... 395-4033  
 E-mail: ..... fhooshmand@fedex.com

Jobs Coordinator ..... **Teresa Johnson**

Phone: ..... 365-7774 ext. 366  
 E-mail: ..... tjohnson@eoncc.com

Public Relations ..... **George Grider**

Phone: ..... 360-4002  
 E-mail: ..... ggrider@fedex.com

Publications Competition  
 Coordinator ..... **Steve Gillespie**

Phone: ..... 395-3237  
 E-mail: ..... sgillespie@fedex.com

Web master ..... **Joe Lakey**

Phone: ..... 395-4972  
 E-mail: ..... jhlakey@fedex.com



society for technical communication

Newsbrief

Amy Hollister  
 2710 Nonconnah Boulevard  
 Memphis, TN 38132

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