



tecolote

March/April 2006
e-Volume 1, Issue 03

In this Issue

From the President's Pen.....	1
Kachina Chapter Officers.....	2
Member Profile:	
Jonathon Price.....	3
Why Join STC?.....	5
New Members.....	5
STC Websites from	
Surrounding States.....	6
Our Annual Conference -	
Just Around the Corner.....	7
Election 2006.....	8
Tecolote Back Pages.....	10
Kachina Calendar.....	11



© New Mexico Kachina Chapter of the
Society for Technical Communication.
All rights reserved.
www.stc-nm-kachina.org

Tecolote is the official newsletter of the New Mexico Kachina Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication. Our mission is to advance the profession of technical communication across New Mexico by increasing networking among professionals, creating opportunities for members to improve skills, and recognizing technical communication excellence.

From the President's Pen

by Bob Johnson

Why Volunteer?

This question popped into my head as I was thinking of what to write about in this issue's column. The thought was most likely prompted by the nearness of April 15th - the date when STC chapters try to have their new slate of officers elected or selected (or maybe just detected) for the coming STC fiscal year (July through June).

The good news is that, as of this writing, volunteers or nominees have offered to fill most of our chapter's positions. The other good news is that there is room for you to become active in our chapter's leadership.

So why volunteer? A few reasons may include the following: 1) you'd like to get to know other local *tech comm* professionals (fellow Kachina Chapter members); 2) you have come to realize the benefits of being an STC member and now have some free time to *give back* to our Society; and 3) you have some ideas for activities our chapter could embark on and you are willing to help make it/them a reality.

My reason for *raising my hand* about two years ago to be your Chapter President was two-fold. One, I was simply willing to be of service, however I could, to the best of my then-current skills and abilities. Second (and possibly more importantly) was the willingness to step up to an opportunity to learn how to be a leader in what appeared to be a relatively low-risk and supportive environment.

It may be too early for a farewell speech from me, but how about a short *I'll-give-it-a-try* speech from you? I can give you some assurances that may help you decide to jump in. First, you will team with a great group of folks who are committed to your success as a chapter officer or committee chair, because your success is our success, and vice versa. Second, you will have opportunities to meet other STC leaders at the regional and society level and in other states. Third, you will feel a sense of accomplishment in giving back - making a difference through a well-respected, international organization.

I have run out of reasons to volunteer. The only ones remaining are those that your mind or heart may speak to you. I look forward to meeting you in June at our *changing-of-the-guard* meeting!

Bob Johnson
President, NM Kachina Chapter

505-249-9292
ziagrants@msn.com

**SOCIETY FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION
NEW MEXICO KACHINA CHAPTER**

Kachina Chapter Officers

President — Bob Johnson
249-9292, ziagrants@msn.com

Past President — Judy Prono
665-8383, jprono@lanl.gov

Vice President for Programs — Jonathan Price
898-5402, jprice@swcp.com

Vice President for Public Relations — Ellen Cline
247-3155, ecline@swcp.com

Secretary — Elsa Bumstead
284-8862, ecbumst@sandia.gov

Treasurer — Konnie Andrews
797-7683, konniewandrews@comcast.net

Education Chair/Job Bank Chair — Scott Sanders
277-0754, ssanders@unm.edu

Membership Chair — Maryjane Long
266-6271, mlong@swcp.com

Newsletter Editor — Kathy Pallis
466-1721, palliskc@comcast.net

Webmaster — Jean Gabriel
254-4167, jean@gabe.org

Southwest Region Director — Sherry Michaels
(619) 546-7772, sherry.michaels@docntrain.com

tecolote

March / April 2006 issue
e-Volume I, Issue 03

Tecolote is the newsletter of the
New Mexico Kachina Chapter of the
Society for Technical Communication.

Managing Editor
Kathy Pallis, palliskc@comcast.net

Associate Editor
Ellen Cline, ecline@swcp.com

Contributing Editors
Bob Johnson, ziagrants@msn.com
Konnie Andrews,
konniewandrews@comcast.net

Submissions

We welcome submissions from Kachina
members for publication. Submit articles in
plain text format to palliskc@comcast.net.

Reprints

You are welcome to reprint original
Tecolote articles provided you
acknowledge the source and send a
reprint copy to the Managing Editor.

© STC New Mexico Kachina Chapter,
Society for Technical Communication.
All rights reserved.

STC New Mexico Kachina Chapter
PO Box 25291
Albuquerque, NM 87125-5291
www.stc-nm-kachina.org

Member Profile: Jonathan Price

Jonathan Price started his writing career very early. In the second grade, a local newspaper published his short report on a 2-½ mile train ride that his class took. This thrilling event made him decide that writing was what he wanted to do. Years later, Jonathan was a Latin major at Harvard when his father suggested that his only career path may be ambassador to the Vatican. So, Jonathan switched to the practical major of English.

Jonathan applied for graduate school and was accepted at several places. He wanted to write, but in the 1960s, the draft board didn't recognize the Iowa School of Writing or Columbia School of Journalism as bona fide educational institutions. That's how he ended up at the Yale School of Drama writing plays and concrete poetry.

Although Jonathan still didn't know that a career in technical writing lay ahead, he began using technology very early. At Yale in 1968, he used a prototype word processing system IBM had given the writer John Hersey. Jonathan collected information from signs around the country as a kind of found poem. The new word processing software let him use different fonts and sizes to indicate relationships and mood, giving a sense of the neighborhoods' verbal environment.

After graduating with his Doctor of Fine Arts, Jonathan took a job at NYU. Besides teaching drama, he was writing for magazines, and making video art by animating text onscreen, blending pictures and text. He was also creating concrete poetry and conceptual art, and helping to organize cooperative art galleries.

Eventually Jonathan quit teaching and became a full-time artist and writer. His work appeared in *Esquire*, *Harper's*, *TV Guide*, and other publications. His art often was text-oriented—large sprawling poems too big to be printed in magazines so they were displayed in galleries. Eventually writing became his main occupation. By then Jonathan was writing journalistic books.

When he moved to California at the end of the 1970s he got his first technical writing job for the grocery chain, Lucky Stores. They needed someone to document the Lucky Item Movement Evaluation System, an automated warehouse. Engineers had written a manual but nobody could understand it, so they took a chance on hiring a journalist.

In 1982, Jonathan started working for Apple Computers. They were designing a computer and easy-to-read manual for ordinary people. Writers spent about a year trying to get the documentation for the first Mac down to a single poster, but only managed to edit it to 132 pages. This effort was revolutionary at a time when IBM computers came with boxed sets of heavy binders. However, Steve Jobs pushed the writers to cut the MacPaint manual to 24 pages. This effort was so successful that the lightweight manuals were featured in a TV commercial.

Next, Jonathan championed the online Help revolution at Apple, creating templates for the first Help system using HyperCard. He began crusading for Help by giving workshops and talks for the STC. Working at Apple was fun, but long hours were becoming a problem for the father of two. He quit Apple but stayed with them as a freelancer and also helped other companies to create Help systems. As information moved from print to screen, he began to see how an online style needed to be developed. What worked for hard copy suddenly became too much verbiage onscreen.

In 1991, Jonathan and his family came to New Mexico for a semester where he had a gig as a guest professor at UNM. His wife and he liked New Mexico so much they stayed. He kept producing Help systems and manuals, and wrote more books, including one he and his wife Lisa authored: *Hot Text: Web Writing that Works*.

Jonathan has continued giving workshops for the STC locally and nationally on web writing, information architecture, XML, and other topics. Last year Jonathan was named an STC Fellow for his many contributions. He has served our chapter as Program Chair and in numerous other capacities over the years.

Currently Jonathan is working at Ktech, writing and managing information architecture and user interface projects, and is still teaching online classes for UC Santa Cruz and UNM.

For more information on Jonathan's accomplishments, adventures, achievements, and other interesting stuff, go to www.webwritingthatworks.com and www.theprices.com.

Why Join STC?

(Modified from STC website)

STC seeks to advance the arts and sciences of technical communication, promote awareness of the latest trends and technology in the field, and provide innovative services for the education and professional development of its members. The benefits of STC membership include:

- Award-winning publications, keeping you up-to-date on current trends, tools, and practices vital to the industry.
- Networking opportunities through STC's 140 local chapters.
- Educational conferences and seminars at reduced member rates.
- The opportunity to join STC's two dozen Special Interest Groups (SIGs).
- Forums for sharing your expertise, expressing your professional opinion, and building a reputation within the industry.
- Full access to STC's Technical Communication Career Center, which contains current job openings specifically geared toward the technical communication field.
- STC's Annual Salary Survey, which provides vital statistics on pay and benefits for technical communicators in the U.S. and Canada.
- Mailings from local chapters, meeting announcements, and newsletters.
- Unrestricted access to STC's award-winning website.
- A range of insurance options, including health insurance implemented in cooperation with Marsh Affinity Group Services, a leader in insurance program management, and discounts on other types of insurance from Mutual of Omaha such as disability coverage, critical illness insurance, life insurance, long-term care insurance, and pension plans.

Your membership dues also help fund programs that are available to the community-at-large, including non-STC members:

- Competitions that celebrate the very best examples of technical communication, including technical publications, art, and online communication.
- Scholarships for students of technical communication.
- Fellowships that help bridge the gap between technical communication practitioners and teachers.

New Members

Noel Fletcher
Sandia National Laboratories
P.O. Box 5800
MS 1037
Albuquerque, NM 87185
505-284-6312
nfletch@sandia.gov

Esther A. Lombardi
Ultramain
7500 Jefferson St. NE
Courtyard 11, Suite 212
Albuquerque, NM 87109
505-796-3756

John L. Orman
9125 Copper Ave NE, Apt. 609
Albuquerque, NM 87123
505-294-5772
john.orman@att.net

Danielle M. Stevens
P.O. Box 21814
Albuquerque, NM 87154-1814
505-720-9641
dstevens4966@msn.com

STC Websites

from Surrounding States

by John Stikar

Which local chapter has a sister chapter “across the pond”? Where were technical writers earning over \$100K last year? For answers to these and many other questions, check out the chapters in surrounding states. To help you get started, here’s a short list of chapter websites.

The Phoenix Chapter website displays the monthly meeting topic. This month’s topic is “Introduction to Flare, Or, The RoboHelp Saga, What Actually Happened?” Also, learn about Phoenix’s sister chapter in the UK.

<http://www.stc-phoenix.com/>

The Southern Arizona Chapter website opens to a night at the round table, the chapter’s monthly discussion meeting. March’s topic is on independent contracting and consulting.

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

The Oklahoma Chapter lists basic chapter information, such as current meeting information and newsletters.

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

For those of you who may be thinking of leaving the Land of Enchantment, but don’t want to go too far away, the Austin Chapter website has an encouraging salary survey. The median salary for writers in 2005 was \$69.6K, with one lucky writer earning \$105K.

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

The Intermountain Chapter based in Salt Lake City, Utah, has about 150 members from Utah and Southern Idaho. The next meeting will discuss “The Engineering-Technical Writing Connection: A Rubric for Effective Communication.”

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

The Southern Colorado Chapter is the Kachina Chapter’s closest neighbor, supporting writers in the Colorado Springs area. Their jobs listing process appears to be in a state of uncertainty, but they do provide a comprehensive listing of employment-related websites.

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

The Rocky Mountain Chapter is based in the Denver area, but members live as far away as Grand Junction and Steamboat Springs (about 240 miles and 150 miles, respectively). The chapter website contains newsletter archives dating back to 1998.

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

Remember that information on the annual STC conference can be found by accessing the Annual Conference website:

<http://www.stc.org/53rdConf/>

Our Annual Conference – Just around the Corner

May 7th through 10th are the dates and Las Vegas, Nevada is the place.

STC's 53rd Annual Conference is shaping up to be another great networking and learning event. Here is a quick overview of what is in store for you if you are attending and what you will be missing if you don't.

The main Conference website is <http://www.stc.org/53rdConf/index.asp>.

The Conference kicks off with Leadership Day on Sunday. It is a high-energy, informative, and fun session — a “must attend” for those of us in any leadership position with STC: <http://www.stc.org/53rdConf/schedule/leadership.day.asp>.

The Opening Session Monday morning will feature presentations by Vincent Cerf and Robert Kahn: <http://www.stc.org/53rdConf/schedule/opening.session.asp>.

An outstanding line-up of technical sessions will begin after the Opening Session on Monday and will run through Wednesday. The conference's website allows you to search for a particular topic or view sessions by day (select the weekday from the list in the upper left hand corner of this page: <http://www.stc.org/53rdConf/sessions/session.search.asp>).

If you have never been to our Annual Conference, I can recommend it highly, having attended the last two. In addition to the learning opportunities, it is fun to run into and chat with the members whom you know only by name — STC regional and national officers, members who write articles for our magazines, those who present our webinars. Who knows what could come of those connections? But if you aren't there . . .

Hope to see you in Vegas next month!

Election 2006

By Bob Johnson

Spring is election season for STC. Our Society installs and elects a new slate of officers every two years, while our local chapter appoints or elects new officers and committee chairs (i.e., Administrative Council) annually. Here are some details about each election (with links to bios of the Society-level candidates).

At the Society Level

Officers installed in accordance with our Society's procedure of "automatic progression" include the President and First Vice President. On July 1, Paula Berger will become our President and Linda Oestreich will become our First Vice President. Linda, as you may know, is the immediate past Director of the STC Southwest Region. Many of our chapter members were privileged during the three-years she was Director to get to know Linda and to benefit from her vast experience in our Society and profession, her strong leadership skills, and her wonderful personality. I have every confidence that Linda will do an awesome job as our new First Vice President.

The Second Vice President position is the entry point for STC's leadership progression. We have two candidates for Second Vice President this year: Jonathan Baker and Mark Clifford.

Our Society is also seeking to fill the critical Executive Director's position. We are fortunate to have four candidates to choose from, all of whom are current STC members: Russel Hirst, Mike Murray, Jeff Staples, and Daniel Wise.

There are also two candidates for STC Secretary: Thomas Barnett and Char James-Tanny.

And now, the most important part — VOTE! This link will take you to the 2006 Elections login web page:
[VOTE HERE](#)

At the Chapter Level

The first step in the process within our Chapter is to ask current Admin Council members if they want to continue in their current position or stand for a different position. We also ask them to nominate worthy candidates. The next step is to seek to fill open positions with any member in our chapter. Members should feel free to volunteer for any position, even if there is already a volunteer or nominee for a position (in which case we will simply hold an election for that position). Or if you're not ready to take on full responsibility for a position, volunteer to be an assistant — most officers would welcome the help!

Here is where our 2006-07 slate of officers stands as of this writing (bios of many of the continuing officers are available at http://www.stc-nm-kachina.org/NewSite/Contact_Us/officers.htm):

Position	Volunteer/Nominee
President	Jonathan Price
Past President (de facto)	Bob Johnson
Vice President - Programs	<i>Open</i>
Vice President - Public Relations	Ellen Cline (continuing) Ellen Torgrimson, Asst. VP (continuing)
Secretary	<i>Open</i>
Treasurer	Konnie Andrews (Continuing)
Education Chair	Scott Sanders
Membership Chair	Maryjane Long (Continuing)
Newsletter Editor	Kathy Pallis (Continuing)
Job Bank	Scott Sanders
Webmaster	Jean Gabriel (Continuing)
Historian	<i>Open</i>

Our goal is to have a full slate identified by April 15th. Please contact one of the two below council members if you are willing to serve in one of the above positions. Election results will be posted on the [Kachina Chapter website](#).

- Judy Prono (jprono@lanl.gov or 505-665-8383)
- Bob Johnson (ziagrants@msn.com or 505-266-0064)

Tecolote Back Pages

Reprinted from the May 1990 Issue of the *Tecolote* Newsletter

President's Message

Excellence – that's what it was all about! At our honors and awards luncheon, we recognized chapter members and other technical communicators from our region who have distinguished themselves and our profession with their striving for excellence.

When schedules and deadlines push us to hurry and we struggle against limitations of time and resources, excellence is a precious commodity. So what does excellence mean to the technical communicator?

Excellence means a personal commitment to our daily tasks, not just working 8 to 5 to collect a paycheck. For the most part, our role as technical communicator is to sell a product, whether it is a new widget or a new technology. The content and appearance of our written description of that product convey to the public an image of our employer and of ourselves as professional communicators.

Excellence means giving that product something extra—a touch of creativity, thoughtfulness about audience requirements, caring about the end product.

Often the drive to achieve excellence and the reward for achieving it must come from within us. Knowing that we applied our best effort, that a reader will not be interrupted with irritating and obvious errors, that illustrations will be easy to understand, that the table of contents is accurate and the index is thorough, that the development of an idea is logical and complete, and that the software or hardware will be easier to understand and use—that is the reward we reap.

Personally, to me excellence means that when I trade my terminal keyboard for a rocking chair on the porch, I can look back on my career with the satisfaction of knowing that I did more than just run the course—that I ran the best race I could run every time and that I carried the torch for my profession my share of the way.

Helen Lindberg

Kachina Chapter President

Chapter Activities

Workshop on Estimating Documentation and Training Projects

Saturday, April 22*, 12 noon to 1:30 pm, Fiesta's Restaurant (<http://irmweb.irb-systems.com/irm-web/wc.dil/nmalbcvb?id=nmalbcvd&doc=rol/roll/listing&kn=12733>). In this interactive workshop, Region 5 Director Sherry Michaels, a project manager of technical software, training, and documentation projects with more than 20 years' experience, will walk you through the estimating process, taking into account numerous criteria such as client requirements, industry norms, research material availability, and technical availability and cooperation.

This workshop will be preceded by an 11:00 am meeting with Sherry in her Regional Director role.

* Note change in date from the one listing in the previous newsletter.

STC Webinars

All webinars take place on Wednesdays from 11:00 am to 12:30 pm. These remote seminars are presented free of charge, but you must RSVP. Please contact Jonathan Price in advance at jprice@ktech.com or 254-4148. We must have a minimum of five members signed up to purchase these presentations.

April 12, 2006 — Software Simulations: Tips, Tricks, and Best Practices

May 24, 2006 — Live after RoboHelp - How We Got Here and Where To Next

June 14 2006 — Introduction to DITA (Darwin Information Typing Architecture)

Additional information about these webinar topics is provided at: <http://www.stc.org/seminarsList.asp>.

Upcoming Admin Council Meetings

April 22 — Preceding the Sherry Michaels workshop

May 20

June 17

Calendar events are listed at the time of printing and cover the next few months of activities. Some events may change. Please check the STC Kachina Chapter website for updates at www.stc-nm-kachina.org. STC Kachina Chapter members will receive periodic email updates with locations and sign up information. If you would like to list an event in the next Tecolote issue, email jprice@ktech.com with event information.



New Mexico Kachina Chapter
Society for Technical Communication
PO Box 25291
Albuquerque, NM 87125-5291

© New Mexico Kachina Chapter, Society for Technical Communication. All rights reserved. www.stc-nm-kachina.org