



From the President's Pen

Welcome to the first issue of our e-newsletter. The move from print to electronic news was one of necessity and practicality. A hearty thank you and well done to Ellen Cline and Konnie Andrews for putting this first issue together. We plan to publish and distribute this e-newsletter in even numbered months.

I imagine that many of you had a reaction similar to mine when I looked at the calendar—December already? Where did 2005 go? I believe it has been a good year for STC as a whole as well as for our Kachina Chapter. A short recap:

- Some of us participated in two great conferences this year—the annual conference in Seattle (May) and our regional in Mesa (October).
- The new Interim Executive Director, Robert Moran, is doing a great job.
- Our previous Regional Director-Sponsor, Linda Oestreich, was selected to serve as STC's Second Vice President. Our new director, Sherry Michaels, is the immediate Past President of the Phoenix Chapter and is doing a super job for our region.
- The Kachina chapter has sponsored several excellent programs and “webinars” this year.
- Dr. Jonathan Price, our Vice President for Programs, attained STC Fellow status.

December is a good time to examine our personal aspirations in relation to the organizations we are part of. Most of us on the Kachina Chapter Admin Council are serving a second term and will be stepping down next year. At a minimum, next April we will need to elect a new president and vice president for programs, as well as new chairs for membership and education.

Please think about your goals over the holidays and whether you can help to attain them by serving more actively in the Kachina Chapter. Feel free to call the current chair or chat with one of us at the annual awards banquet in January if you have questions or are interested in serving.

Have a wonderful Holiday season, and don't eat more than you want to. I look forward to seeing you in '06.

Bob Johnson
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Upcoming Events

Please e-mail Jonathan Price at jprice@swcp.com if you would like to attend any of these events.

So You Want to Write a Book

Panel discussion

Saturday, December 17th, 11:00 – 12:30

Location: TransCore, 8600 Jefferson, just south of Alameda Blvd. (park in back)

Do you have a book in you, waiting to get published? Hear experienced authors talk about how to write a proposal, how to get an agent, and how to self-publish. Ryan DeMares, who has worked at Sandia and LANL, has self-published, and Jonathan Price has authored books for many regular publishers, as well as publishing e-books through Amazon. Both will offer detailed instructions, practical advice, and insider tips. Come and find out how to get your name on the cover.

The panel discussion will be followed by an STC administrative meeting.

Awards Banquet

January 21, 11:30 – 1:00

Join other members of the Kachina chapter, as well as artists, writers, editors, and technical communication managers from throughout New Mexico, to swap gossip, trade ideas, and applaud the work of the winners of the Southwest Regional Publications, Art, and Online Competition.

Careers in Technical and Scientific Writing

February 18, 11:30 – 1:00

Panel discussion for students

A panel of experienced technical writers, editors, and managers will field questions from local college students about building a resume, developing a portfolio, and getting jobs in technical communication. Awards will be given to the best students of technical and scientific writing at UNM, New Mexico Tech, and NMSU.

—Jonathan Price

STC Job Board

Have you visited the Kachina Job Board lately? We receive and post job announcements on a regular basis and also have a list of local employers that hire Technical Communicators. You might direct your Human Resources Manager to this site as a recruiting tool. For more information about the Kachina Chapter Job Board, contact Scott Sanders at 277-6437 or ssanders@unm.edu.

—Scott Sanders

Useful Web Sites for Writers and Editors

If you'd like to expand your current repertoire of useful web sites, a good place to start is the Kachina web site resources page (www.stc-nm-kachina.org/NewSite/Resources/resources.htm). Here are a few other sites I've found useful.

General editing

For gee-whiz editing trivia or the answer to an esoteric grammar problem, check out the Chicago Manual of Style's Q&A forum (www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/mosfaq.html). You can also register for non-subscription search services and discounts at this site.

Problems with Microsoft Word

Next time you'd like to put out a contract on Bill Gates, navigate to www.ShaunaKelly.com instead. Beginner and intermediate Word users might also download Jean Weber's e-book, "Taming Microsoft Word," from www.jeanweber.com/books/tamewd2k.htm. You can examine it first and pay later if you find it useful.

Conversions

My favorite conversion tool is a database I downloaded years ago from www.joshmadison.com/software/. It's still available, still free, and still worth downloading. One feature I particularly like is that you can customize it to include your own formulas. For water-related conversions such as those pesky acre-feet, I like www.western-water.com/WaterCalculations.htm. Another site, particularly useful for metric units, is www.wsdot.wa.gov/metrics/.

—Konnie Andrews

Member Profile: Jean Gabriel

Although she's new to the Kachina Chapter, Jean Gabriel has been involved with the STC for many years. This highly experienced technical writer and editor is an Associate Fellow, who, after serving as Treasurer and VP of Membership for the Orange County Chapter, went on to serve as a member of the STC Board of Directors and Society Secretary. Being in STC has been a big part of her life. Through the organization she's made lifelong friends, traveled, learned, and been able to meet leaders in the field.

Like many technical communicators, Jean started her professional life in another career—education. She'd been an assistant director of admissions in Wisconsin, and then worked at Cal State Fullerton when Proposition 13 was passed. With inflation soaring and no pay raises for California state employees in sight, Jean got a job at Hughes Aircraft. The company needed people with education backgrounds who could write well and explain manufacturing systems to its workers.

Jean took some college courses in computer science, and started working as a business and systems analyst. She felt that she was a mediocre programmer though, and that her people skills were being wasted. So it was back to technical writing and editing for a variety of companies in fields ranging from law to manufacturing. Jean's been able to use her education background developing training materials and teaching writing classes, and her computer experience writing online Help and User's Guides.

After many years in Southern California, Jean was ready for a change of scenery. She traveled to a number of potential destinations to look around. Then she visited New Mexico. It not only offered a beautiful location perfect for the camping and outdoor activities she and her husband enjoy, but also technical jobs. Jean realized she and Bill, a network admin-

istrator, could move now and keep working rather than wait for retirement to improve their lifestyle.

Jean contacted Jonathan Price, who she had met at an STC annual conference, about her idea of relocating to New Mexico. She thanks Jonathan for helping her to quickly find a new job at Ktech, where she is writing and editing Environment, Safety & Health documents for Sandia Tech Areas 1 and 3. Just another example of how networking opportunities are a benefit of STC membership.

Happy to leave the giant parking lot that the greater Los Angeles area has become, Jean is embracing life in the Land of Enchantment. We are glad that this long-time STC member has joined our chapter, and hope to learn from her experience and new ideas. She's already volunteered to help with our chapter's website maintenance. Thank you Jean!

–Ellen Cline

Local Internship Program

Did you know that UNM has an Internship program for undergraduate and graduate students studying professional writing? UNM interns work as writers, editors, and document designers at a variety of professional venues across the UNM campus and the community. For example, during the 2005 fall term interns worked at the UNM Development Office and the Office of Research Administration; the City of Albuquerque Human Rights Office and the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Public Library System; the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation and the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society; Albuquerque, The Magazine; and PNM and Sandia National Labs, among others.

To learn more about our program and view profiles of some current interns, visit the program's website at www.unm.edu/~english/Undergrad/Internships/Index.htm.

–Scott Sanders

Always Worthwhile—the STC Annual Conference

Las Vegas, Nevada, is the place to be from May 7 to 10, 2006, for the 53rd Annual Conference of the Society for Technical Communication. This year's conference theme is "Technical Communicators: A Winning Community."

Why Attend?

The annual conference features more than 200 excellent technical sessions, lots of exhibits, and plenty of networking opportunities for technical communicators. Usually, 2,000 to 3,000 professionals from the U.S., Canada, and many other countries attend. Once you've been to an annual conference, it's hard to resist the desire to attend every year.

All conference activities will occur in Bally's Las Vegas and Paris Las Vegas. These hotels, located on the Strip, are joined by an indoor walkway. The room rate for the hotels is \$139 per night (single or double) and your stay will help the Society's bottom line.

Registration Rates

Full-conference registration rates are as follows (lower one-day rates are also available):

	April 21, 2006	
Registration Type	Before	After
Member	\$545	\$620
Nonmember	\$705	\$780
Student Member	\$120	\$175
Retired Member	\$170	\$225

For More Information

Look for the *Preliminary Program* with the February, 2006 issue of *Intercom* or check the conference web site at www.stc.org/53rdConf/. Online registration and program listings will be available on the conference web site in February. For general information about the Las Vegas area, browse the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority web site at

www.lvcva.com/ and the Visit Las Vegas site at www.visitlasvegas.com.

Can't attend this year? Future STC annual conferences will be held in Minneapolis (2007), Philadelphia (2008), and Atlanta (2009). Start planning now!

—Jean Gabriel

New Perspectives from the Regional Conference

Conferences are a perfect way for a hidebound editor focused on printed media to broaden her narrowed perspectives. With this in mind, I decided to attend "Motion-Media Script Design for Technical Communicators," at the recent Region 5 Conference in Mesa, Arizona.

Presented by now-retired film director S. Marty Shelton, this session covered some general best practices for communicators (keep it simple and get rid of unnecessary noise!). Marty's emphasis, however, was on filmic design—the integration of the psychological, artistic, and technical aspects of a production. Good filmic design ensures that visuals and scenes are the core of the presentation, while audio script is used only to communicate ideas that cannot be shown through images. According to Marty, a good ratio to aim for is about 75 percent visual and 25 percent audio.

Concepts were illustrated with examples of advertisements and informational video clips. More information about the fundamental elements of motion-media can be found in Marty's book, *Communicating Ideas with Film, Video, and Multimedia: A Practical Guide to Information Motion-Media*.

I urge you to attend STC workshops and seminars, even if they seem only tangentially related to your normal job functions. Like me, you may come away with fresh ideas and a more creative approach to your work.

—Konnie Andrews

The Tecolote is meant to serve you! We welcome any contributions, constructive criticism, or offers to serve as newsletter editor (the post is currently vacant). Please send your thoughts or ideas to Bob Johnson at bjohnson@ktech.com.