

Houston is Brimming with Ingenuity!

by Donna Marcotte, Project Manager, BindView Corporation

The theme *ingenuity* is ever present these days for STC Houston. First, ingenuity is a major component of the theme for the Region 5 conference we will host this year—"Invention, Innovation, Ingenuity." It is also an ever-present theme for this month's guest speaker, John H. Lienhard, M.D. Anderson Professor of Mechanical Engineering and History at the University of Houston.

Dr. Lienhard created and hosts "The Engines of Our Ingenuity," a radio broadcast that "tells the story of how our culture is formed by human creativity. The program uses the record of history to reveal the way that art, technology, and ideas have shaped us."¹ The broadcast is aired on public radio stations nationally but originates on KUHF-FM, the public radio station of the University of Houston.

The show first aired on January 4, 1988, in Houston. Three months later it was made available nationally and is now heard on Public Radio nationwide. Since the first national broadcast, 1,600 unique episodes have aired on subjects ranging from "cable

cars to Civil War submarines, from the connection between Romantic poets and Victorian science to the invention of the bar code." And now "Engines" also has a Web site: www.uh.edu/engines/

In 1805, a French textile engineer invented a scheme for using cards punched with a series of holes to allow machines to weave patterns into fabrics without a human operator. What does this have to do with computers?

The Web site contains transcripts of all 1,600 episodes. Each broadcast is typically just a couple of minutes long, so the transcripts are two to three pages each. Each episode is numbered according to the order in which it was

originally presented and is named with short and deceptively simple titles such as "Writing" (No. 390), "Words" (No. 1064) or "Alphabet" (No. 1065). Just a few of the titles that I thought STC members might find interesting.

continued on page 4

In This Issue

From the Editor.....	2
From the President.....	3
Nominating Committee at Work	4
Technical Communications Institute 4	
Dr. David T. Suzuki to Accept Honorary Fellow	5
Contractor's Corner	6
March Volunteer of the Month.....	7
New Member News.....	8
Competitions Awards Banquet Pictures	9
Director-Sponsor Report.....	10
Calendar.....	11
March Meeting Details	12

Dateline Houston

Dateline Houston is the newsletter of the Houston Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication, a nonprofit organization. Ten issues are published each year (September through June).

Newsletter Staff

Managing Editor: Rhonda Hector
Layout Editor: Erika Frensley
Coordinating
Editor: Lisa Muenchow
Features Editor: Donna Marcotte
Story Editors: Melanie Boston, Jamie Diamandopoulos, Jim Hunt
Staff Writers: Heather Shelly
Lisetta Lavy

Submissions

Submit newsletter contributions by the 25th of each month. Submissions in Microsoft Word or FrameMaker 5.x format are appreciated. Send submissions to Rhonda Hector:

e-mail: rhonda@newmc.cc

phone: 832-200-9000, ext. 107

All submissions are subject to editing.

Reprints

Articles published by *Dateline Houston* may be reprinted in other STC publications provided credit is given and a copy is sent to the managing editor for *Dateline Houston*.

Address Changes

Send address changes to the database and directory manager:

John Reynolds
P.O. Box 130873
Houston, Texas 77219-0873
jreynold@compassnet.com

Production

Dateline Houston is produced with FrameMaker 6.0 on a PC, using clip art from CorelDraw 4.0, Microsoft Word 97, and other sources.

Printing

Some of the costs associated with printing *Dateline Houston* are donated by IKON Office Solutions.

Cover

The cover is based on an original photograph by Catherine Bendig. The graphic design is by Ruth Metcalf.

The membership directory password is homer+wagner.

From the Editor . . .

Region 5 Conference Activities in Full Swing

by Rhonda Hector, President, New Millennium Communications



As you know, STC Houston will host the Region 5 Conference this October. As planning for the conference intensifies, things are starting to fall into place. Here are the latest developments:

Keynote speaker

Dr. John Lienhard, host of the popular “The Engines of Our Ingenuity” program, will be keynote speaker at the conference. As noted on page 12, Dr. Lienhard is also our March program meeting speaker. We’re happy to have him address the program meeting and the conference, as he is an outstanding speaker and always draws a big audience.

Conference Proceedings on CD

The conference proceedings will be offered on CD—thanks to Houston-based Interactive Documentation Corporation (InterDoc). “STC does a tremendous job in promoting quality technical communications,” says Gerald Gau, InterDoc president. “InterDoc is very interested in supporting their efforts. CDs are an excellent way to disseminate a large amount of data quickly and inexpensively.”

InterDoc is the first Houston-area company to become a STC Region 5 Conference sponsor. InterDoc specializes in the design, packaging, and distribution of technical information. Founded in 1995 as a technical communications company, InterDoc has evolved into an electronic publishing company involved with creating and duplicating CDs, CD-ROMs, and business card CDs.

New Conference Corporate Sponsor Manager

Jeff Staples is the new Region 5 Conference corporate sponsor manager. Jeff has long been active with STC at the chapter and Society levels. He is a former STC Houston president, among other chapter-level roles. Jeff is also a nominee for the STC Nominating committee.

Sponsorship helps your company stand out in front of STC Houston and all the other chapters in Region 5, from Nevada to Louisiana. For more information, contact Jeff at Jeff_Staples@bmc.com.

Call for Papers

The Region 5 Conference is the ideal opportunity to make contacts and develop your expertise, especially for new members. You can also share your ideas by presenting a paper of your own! For more information, contact Linda Oestreich, Region 5 Conference programs co-manager, at lloriter@ev1.net, or see the Call for Papers at <http://www.stc-houston.org/r5conference/r5papers.htm>.

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer opportunities are still available. Don’t miss your chance to get involved with what promises to be the best STC regional conference ever! For more information, contact Nicole Smart-Wycislo, our Region 5 Conference coordinator, at nicole@verb1.com, or visit our Web page at <http://www.stc-houston.org/r5conference>.

From the President . . .

“In Sync” Teamwork

by Deborah Long, Strategic Communications, Enron Net Works

To my knowledge, this is the first time that an STC Houston volunteer committee consisted entirely of individuals who are all members of the same team at work. Jeanne O’Meara (2000-2001 Competitions general manager and manager of the Technical Communication group at Dynegy, Inc.) showed us how a well-oiled machine that functions “in sync” can produce powerful results—bringing us one of the most successful competition seasons in our chapter’s history.



Deborah Long

Already gathered at the same location every day, accustomed to working together as a team, and reporting to the same manager—this seems like the natural formula for achieving success on any project. With geographic obstacles removed and a built-in commitment from management, the team has virtually no boundaries. They can meet informally as needed and communicate in real time as issues come up. While e-mail is the popular communication mode of the day, there is still nothing like live interaction! (And, by the way, e-mail is transmitted much faster intracompany than intercompany as network traffic increases.)

Certainly, there is no perfect situation; but, on the whole, this approach makes a lot of sense and is worthy of consideration as new leadership starts to take shape for the coming year. Directors will need to select committee managers and, in turn, these managers will need to find willing souls to serve as committee members. Not an easy task, as I found out this year.

But what if more of us thought like Jeanne O’Meara and leveraged our existing work teams as an ideal opportunity to volunteer together? We might find that the recruitment issue is easier than originally thought.

During my presidency, I have been fortunate to work side by side at Enron with Zach Moring, our chapter treasurer, and Trinh Abrell, who has been in charge of our monthly meeting arrangements. I cannot tell you how much this convenience worked in favor of not only STC business, but workplace camaraderie, as well.

So, when running for office or if asked to join a committee, remember to look in your own backyard for other participants. And, above all, remember to have fun!

Deborah

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

Chapter Contacts

Administrative Council

President, Deborah Long
713-853-7087 deborah.long@enron.com

Vice President, Jocelyn Williams
713-918-2489 jocelyn_williams@bmc.com

Treasurer, Zach Moring
281-856-0315 zmoring@hotmail.com

Secretary, Carolyn Kelly
713-963-1774 ccksam@juno.com

Past President, Janette Sexton-Shahout
281-479-0934 jsexton19@aol.com

Director of Satellites, Pat Bishop
713-260-1718 patbish@earthlink.net

Director of Programs, Dorothy Murray
713-688-1890 dorothea_murray@msn.com

Director of Planning, Jim Hunt
713-918-4640 jim_hunt@bmc.com

Director of Memberhip, Lisetta Lavy
281-584-1852 lisetta.lavy@aspen.com

Director of Volunteer Resources,
John Reynolds
713-861-3334 jreynold@compassnet.com

Director of Communications,
George Slaughter
713-830-0000 gslaughter@flex.net

Director of Competitions, Heather Shelly
713-918-5216 heather_shelly@bmc.com

Chapter Resources

Employment, Chris G. Smith
713-907-8823 chrissmi@ix.netcom.com

Membership, Ron Hartberger
713-784-9286 ronhmath@pdq.net

Information line: 713-796-3303
Web site: www.stc-houston.org

Special Interest Groups

Consultants/Independent Contractors
Gaynell Doehne
713-524-5401 gdoehne@words-work.com

Kim Shaw
281-367-1202 kim@twowriters.com

Information Mapping
Helen Shoup
713-728-4316 shoup@flash.net

Online Documentation
Larry Dybala
713-215-4259 lwd@hal-pc.org

Satellite Group

Louisiana/Gulf Coast
Jim Brown jim@xentech.com

Twenty-First Annual Institute of Technical Communication

The Twenty-First Annual Institute of Technical Communication will be held on 17–22 June 2001 at Horry-Georgetown Technical College Grand Strand Campus, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. For information and an application, see our website: www.msnhomepages.talkcity.com/librarylawn/tyca-se/

This unique institute brings together experts and practitioners for six days of intensive, interactive instruction. Participants leave with a wealth of ideas they can apply immediately to their classroom teaching, plus an armful of books, handouts, and extensive teaching notes. Graduate credit from East Carolina University is available.

“A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to work with and learn from truly dedicated professionals from all parts of the country,” writes a previous participant. “I wish this type of Institute were the norm rather than the exception.”

Session topics include:

- Capturing Student Interest
- Resumes and Letters of Application
- Computers in the Technical Classroom
- Teaching Audience Analysis
- Teaching the Formal Report
- Collaboration and Teamwork
- Developing Case Studies
- Document Design and Visuals

For more information, contact the Institute Directors:

Andrew Halford
Paducah Community College
PO Box 7380
Paducah, KY 42002-7380

E-mail: andrew.halford@kctcs.net
Phone: 270-554-9200 ext. 6198

or

Mike Williams
Horry-Georgetown Tech. College
PO Box 261966
Conway, SC 29528-6066

E-mail: williams@hor.tec.sc.us
Phone: 843-349-5259

Nominating Committee At Work Seeking Admin Council Candidates

The Nominating Committee has narrowed the list of names for the election of officers and directors in April 2001. Conversations with potential candidates have been powerful and productive, with an exchange of ideas for the chapter and its members.

If you have a vision for the future of the Houston chapter, you should run

for a position. Most former officers and directors agree that their time was well spent. All positions require a time commitment of one to two hours each week.

If you or someone you know is interested in this opportunity to expand his or her leadership skills, ask them to contact Deborah Silvi at Deborah_Silvi@bmc.com.

Houston Ingenuity!

by Donna Marcotte
continued from page 1

Episode 2, “The Computer,” caught my attention because it is such an important tool for communication. Dr. Lienhard starts this episode off not with bits and bytes, but with weaving cloth.

In 1805, a French textile engineer invented a scheme for using cards punched with a series of holes to allow machines to weave patterns into fabrics without a human operator. What does this have to do with computers?

In 1834, Charles Babbage, a Cambridge University student of mathematics and mechanics, used the Jacquard-style punch cards as a way to convey commands to his “analytical engine,” a precursor to modern computers. Until the late 1970s, punch cards remained a common way to provide instructions to computers.

This is just one example of the gems of ingenuity that are available to you on the “Engines” Web site. You can hear “Engines of Our Ingenuity,” twice daily on KUHF 88.7 FM at 7:35 a.m. and 3:55 p.m.

And make sure you attend this month’s meeting to meet and hear Dr. Lienhard in person.

References:

Lienhard, John H., et al. Engines of Our Ingenuity Web site at <http://www.uh.edu/engines>

Newsletter Change

Please note that all newsletter submissions are now due by the 25th of the month. (i.e. articles are due on March 25 for the May newsletter.)

Thank you for your cooperation!



Dr. David T. Suzuki To Accept Honorary Fellow

by Linda Oestreich, Senior Technical Editor, BMC Software Inc., and STC Fellow

The STC Honorary Fellow for 2001 is Dr. David T. Suzuki.

David is chairman of the David Suzuki Foundation and is an award-winning scientist, geneticist, environmentalist, and broadcaster.

His television appearances and programs, where he explains complexities of the natural sciences in a compelling and easily understood way, have received high acclaim for more than 30 years.

Millions of people know him as the host of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's popular science television series, *The Nature of Things*.

He has written more than 30 books, including 15 books for children, and more than 300 popular articles which have been published in the Toronto Star (in a weekly column), *MacLean's* magazine, *Science Magazine*, and other publications.

David will receive his award in May at the opening session of the Annual Conference in Chicago.

David was born in Vancouver, British Columbia in 1936. At age six he was interned at a camp in British Columbia, where he spent World War II.

David graduated from Amherst College in 1958 with an honors B.A. in biology, and in 1961 he received a Ph.D. in zoology from the University of Chicago.

After postdoctoral work with the National Institutes of Health at the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory in Colorado, David became a research associate at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee.

When David completed his work in Oak Ridge, he returned to Canada to become an assistant professor in genetics at the University of Alberta.

In 1963 David moved to the University of British Columbia, where he joined the zoology department as an assistant professor. David became a full professor in 1969. In 1993 he joined the Sustainable Development Research Institute at UBC as an associate.

But it was largely through David's broadcasting work that he came to the attention of the STC Honorary Fellows nominating committee.

His CBC series *A Planet for the Taking* won an award from the United Nations. His PBS series *The Secret of Life* was praised internationally, as was his series for the Discovery Channel, *The Brain*.

For CBC Radio he founded and hosted the long-running radio series, *Quirks and Quarks*, and presented two influential documentary series on the environment, *From Naked Ape to SuperSpecies* and *It's a Matter of Survival*.

David has received many awards for his work, including a UNESCO prize for science and a United Nations Environment Program medal. He has 15 honorary doctorates from universities in Canada, the U.S., and Australia.

For his support of Canada's First Nations peoples, David has received many tributes and has been honored with five names and formal adoption by two tribes.

David is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and the American Associa-

tion for the Advancement of Science, and a recipient of the Order of Canada.

David lives with his wife and children in Vancouver, British Columbia. To learn more about David, visit <http://www.davidsuzuki.org>.

STC Houston New Member Luncheon

Date:
Saturday, March 24

Time:
10:00 a.m.

Location:
*Logan Farms Honey
Glazed Hams
10560 Westheimer
(west of the Sam Houston Tollway)*

Contact:
*Ron Hartberger
ronhmath@PDQ.net*

Contractor's Corner: Thriving (Instead of Surviving) Between Contracts

by Nicole Smart-Wycislo, President, Verb Consulting, Inc.

Clients, full-timer colleagues, and newbie contractors have often wondered aloud in conversations with me, “How do you survive between contracts? I mean, how do you deal with the anxiety of not knowing the source of your next check?”

I tell them that I thrive—not survive—by keeping myself on track with the following philosophy:

Know that there is no job security

Job security is an oxymoron. A full-time employee may have as much “job security” as a contractor. Wherever you work, it’s You, Inc. on the job—regardless of your status.

You must be willing to continuously enroll clients and employers in the value you provide—and to prove that value. You are your own security.

Live beneath your means

This is wisdom of the ages. When you’re in financial dire straits, you’ll be tempted to take on clients and projects that are not aligned with your business and personal goals. Debts

breed desperation. Use money as a strategic tool to support your goals.

Rejuvenate yourself

Do whatever recharges your batteries—such as hanging out on the beach all day with your favorite book (with cell phone in tow so you can stay connected with potential clients).

Unlike vacation, this is unscheduled time off. Take advantage of the opportunity. Do things that you’ve always wanted to do but never made time to do.

Plan, strategize, and activate

Review and revise your business and personal goals. Put structures in place that will support you in fulfilling your goals, then get in action.

Learn a new skill that enhances your business, or design and develop a new line of business. Now is the time to learn Java in seven days, to investigate the possibilities of graduate school, or to develop an editing practice for your business.

Work with multiple clients

Working with multiple clients concurrently can allay anxieties about cash flow. If you work as a 1099 contractor and you aren’t incorporated, working with multiple clients is the most important way to validate your tax status.

If you aspire to grow your business, working with multiple clients is a great training ground. It alone can help you decide whether growing your business will work for you.

Count your blessings and check your perspective

I’m grateful to have the opportunity to do what I do. I love the fun I have with my clients. In our play, we co-create information tools that support their employees and clients in being productive.

To keep my viewpoint fresh and fluid, I remember the words of Shakespeare in *Hamlet*, Act II, Scene 2:

“There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.”

New Web Pages for Online SIG and Louisiana Satellite

by George Slaughter, Information Developer, BMC Software, Inc.

STC Houston has now created Web pages for its Online SIG and its Louisiana satellite!

The Online SIG page, <http://www.stc-houston.org/~onlinesig>, features information on the SIG and its meetings. This page also has a link to *Hyperviews*, the

Online SIG newsletter produced through STC.

The Louisiana satellite page, <http://www.stc-houston.org/~stcla>, features information on events, *In-the-Kneaux* newsletters, articles, and employment information for technical writers in Louisiana.

Thanks to Larry Dybala (Online SIG), Erik Schroeder (Louisiana satellite), and April Cooper and her colleagues on the STC Houston Web team for creating these pages for your benefit!

Call for Papers: International Technical Communication

by Dr. Michael Gos, Lee College

The 5th Congreso Internacional de las Americas will be held on October 18–20, 2001 at the Universidad de las Americas in Cholula/Puebla, Mexico.

Once again this year, the Latin American Congress of the Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association is seeking proposals for presentations on International Issues in Technical Communication. We are especially interested in papers on issues that affect technical communication and trade between the US and Mexico or other Western Hemisphere countries, but any international issue will be considered. Presentations can be in either English or Spanish. Technical Communication is just one strand in this large gathering of scholars from across the Western Hemisphere. Areas of discussion also include politics and cultural issues of international importance.

The Universidad de las Americas (UDLA) is in a beautiful, smog-free

mountain valley near Puebla, Mexico, the third largest city and one of the wealthiest areas in the country. Cholula, the “sacred city,” has a long history of occupation beginning in 1400 B.C., and was one of the most important regional centers in Meso-America. UDLA is Mexico's finest private university. The students and faculty generally speak English and are most cooperative and gracious to visitors. The locals in Puebla, the site of Mexico's Volkswagen plant, are also most welcoming. The food, especially the “comida tipica,” is something you will long remember. There are many interesting tourist sights both in Puebla and within a short drive of the city. Previous years' tours included trips to museums, pyramids, small villages, cathedrals and Baroque-era churches. New tours are planned for this year.

Conference participants generally stay in one of three of Puebla's finest hotels. Rates for hotels, meals and transportation are exceptionally low in this area. Further information on the

conference can be found on our website:

<http://www.nedemex.com/cgi-bin/congress/showpage.pl?p=intro.txt>

To submit a presentation, send a proposal of not more than 500 words, and a one-hundred-word abstract to:

Dr. Michael Gos

Department of English and Communications

Lee College
PO Box 818
Baytown, TX 77522

Or send it electronically to:

Mgos@lee.edu

Proposal deadline is May 15, 2001.

The Congreso Internacional de las Americas is sponsored by the following organizations:

The Hoover Institution (Stanford University)

The American Culture Association

The Popular Culture Association

The United States Embassy

The Embassy of Canada

March Volunteer of the Month

by Peggy Head, Technical Writer, Kitba Consulting

The Houston chapter's March Volunteer of the Month, Erika Frensley, has been described by her peers as *helpful, friendly, technically literate, creative, patient, supportive, thorough, responsible, well organized, analytical, and positive*. With these characteristics, Erika is well prepared for the volunteer efforts she graciously shares with us.

Erika graduated from the University of Houston with a B.A. in History and has smoothly transitioned to a career in technical writing. As a Lead Information Developer at BMC Software, Erika writes documents for

the PATROL product line. She uses her vast knowledge of Oracle databases to write documents about BMC Software database management products.

One of Erika's contributions to STC is her volunteering to be a competition judge for the past two years. She was pressed into service for the judging consensus party and performed her “last minute” commitment with her usual high standard of professionalism.

Erika's major contribution to STC is her dedicated work on *Dateline Houston*. Using her analytical talent to organize and improve work processes,

Erika has helped transition the newsletter duties from one Managing Editor to a teamwork approach. As the layout editor, Erika collects the photos and edited articles and arranges them to create a professionally sharp, aesthetically pleasing newsletter.

Erika, thank you for donating your talent and time to STC. All STC members are fortunate to have your shining example of active involvement to follow.

(Thanks to Deborah Long, Heather Shelly, and George Slaughter for contributing to this article.)

New Member News

by Lisetta Lavy, Manager, Documentation, Aspen Technology

Margaret Clark

For ten years Margaret has been on the faculty of the English department at the University of Houston–Downtown. She reports that many of her students have become successful professional writers, quite a few with the support of STC.

Margaret is now nearing retirement from teaching and looking at options for employment that she hasn't had time to pursue. Those options include editing, which she loves, and working with non-native speakers of English, a talent that she honed to a fine edge during the four years she worked in China, Malaysia, and Japan.

Margaret is also taking a course in indexing, which she finds fascinating, and hopes one day to pursue indexing work.

In addition, she has literally decades of experience in developing curriculum and programs for training.

Margaret adds "I'm excited about the possibilities for my future and glad, after all these years, to be a part of STC."

Melinda Mayers

Melinda is a recent graduate of the University of Houston–Downtown with a degree in Professional Writing.

She works as a technical writer at FutureSoft, Inc., where she is training to write online help systems, using RoboHELP.

Melinda is also interested in developing her web design skills in addition to learning about other aspects of software documentation.

Rachel Parker

Rachel was born and raised in New Orleans and spent several years working in Munich, Germany. Rachel moved to Houston in 1998, shortly before she got married.

Rachel is relatively new to the communications field, having just recently figured out that (a) it was what she really wanted to do and (b) she could actually make money doing it.

In January, Rachel started her first "real" writing job in the Marketing department at Owen Healthcare, and she reports that so far it's been great.

In her spare time Rachel is an opera singer—she doesn't get much chance to perform in actual operas, but she has fun working on and performing in recitals.

Alana Lemay-Gibson

Alana is originally from Providence, Rhode Island. She studied anthropology at the University of Texas at Austin. Alana relocated to Houston in 1996, when her husband accepted a teaching position at Rice University. Alana then completed a masters degree in Educational Anthropology at the University of Houston.

Alana became a technical writer somewhat by accident. After completing her degree, Alana accepted a position as an entry-level software developer. She realized that she had a greater facility for writing than most of her colleagues.

Alana now works for BMC Software in Houston as an information developer.

Rosie Walker

After many years working in consumer publishing, Rosie joined the Harris County Tax Office in 1999, where she was charged with documenting procedures for an institution that had maintained a verbal culture for half a century.

Rosie's mission is to help standardize and document the complex tax office functions: motor-vehicle titling and registration, property-tax collection, and voter registration in fifteen locations.

Rosie was editor and publisher of *Houston Downtown* magazine for fourteen years, and worked for Ziff-Davis in the 1970s.

Monika McKay

Monika edits data definitions at Enron, under the direction of STC Houston president Deborah Long.

Monika particularly enjoys the opportunity to be creative in her communications. Monika is looking forward to attending more STC events where she can experience the broad field of technical communications.

Steve Bonario

Steve, director of documentation for Scalable Software, has been in the technical communication field for six years.

His interests include document design, software documentation, user interface design, and the organization of information systems.

Steve holds a Master of Information and Library Studies degree from the University of Michigan. A U.S. citizen raised in Canada, Steve has called Houston home since 1984.

Images from the STC Houston Competitions Awards Banquet

Photos taken by George Slaughter, Information Developer, BMC Software, Inc.

Below: Donald Potthoff, left, and Bonnie Hopkins talk about one of the winning entries.



Above: Melanie G. Flanders served as master of ceremonies .

Below: Melanie Walker, left, and Robin Jackson look over some of the winning entries.



Left: Kyle Willis from Kitba (dot) Media accepts the award for *Best of Show* for Technical Art.



Left: Leila Merritt, winner of *Best of Show* for Technical Publications, and Heather Shelly, Competition Chairman.



Right: Linda Cedero looks over a winning online-help entry.



Region 5 Director-Sponsor Report: Leaders Light the Way From Your Director-Sponsor

by Suzanna Laurent, Region 5 Director-Sponsor

The winter STC Board of Directors meeting was held in San

Diego, California, on January 18–20.

Actions Taken at the Meeting

- Formation of three new chapters was approved, bringing the total number of chapters worldwide to 153 (120 regular chapters and 33 student chapters):
 - Australia chapter, \$350 start-up grant (Region 5).
 - Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute student chapter (Troy, New York), \$150 start-up grant (Region 1).
 - Hill Country student chapter (San Marcos, Texas), \$150 start-up grant (Region 5).
- The following appointments to Society-level committees were approved: Kathryn M. Poe (manager, STC Public Relations Competition committee) and Paula Stanzoni (manager, Education & Research special interest group).
- Fiscal year 2001 income and expenses as of October 31, 2000 were reviewed and approved. Income and expenses are well within budget. STC will be returning about two-thirds of a million dollars to chapters to support their fiscal year 2001 programs and activities.
- A merit grant of \$3,000 was awarded to the Mercer University student chapter to build its scholarship fund.
- A research grant of \$10,000 was awarded to Eva R. Brumberger for a study entitled *The Rhetoric of*

Typography: A Study Investigating Typeface Personality and Its Impact on the Reading Process.

Other Items of Interest

New STC logo. A graphic toolkit and templates for STC materials will be made available to chapters (presidents, newsletter editors, and web masters), Society-level committees, and Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and placed on the STC Web site in March. These tools will help guide groups in implementing the new look. Work is underway to redesign the STC Web site. Watch for the first official use of the new logo in the *Preliminary Annual Conference Program*—out soon!

Elections. This year, the balloting process will include an option to vote online. The 2001 election material will contain information necessary to ensure secure online voting. Voting online will be optional—members may still choose to vote by mail.

Membership. STC continues to grow at a steady rate, and membership now stands at 23,553. Total membership is projected to reach 26,000 by the end of March. Current distribution of membership: U.S. 87.2%, Canada 8.6%, other countries 4.1%. STC’s annualized 10-year growth rate is 4.6%, with area growth rates as follows: U.S. 3.9%, Canada 10.8%, other countries 11.7%.

Membership directory. The STC membership directory has been placed online. It allows members to search on members’ first and last names. The results display a member’s name, address, phone, fax, e-mail, chapter, grade, and date joined.

Annual Conference. Preparations for the 48th Annual Conference in

Chicago, Illinois, USA, in May 2001 are well underway. The conference program committee reviewed nearly 400 proposals and selected about 440 speakers for 256 sessions. Over 40 booths have already been contracted for the vendor exhibit.

Technical Communication journal. Abstracts and PDFs of the 1996 and 1997 issues have now been posted on the Technical Communication Online Web site. Recommendations from usability studies performed by graduate students at Mercer University have been incorporated in the Web site. Check it out!

STC governance. This year, the STC board of directors is conducting a series of workshops at its regular meetings to evaluate governance. This activity is an outgrowth of STC’s new mission statement: “Designing the future of technical communication.”

What model of governance would be most effective in leading STC into that future? Aspects being evaluated include the structure of representation, the way that decisions are made, the balance of volunteer and office staff workloads, and communication patterns.

A clear picture of leadership has dominated the workshops: one that focuses on trends, vision, strategy, and best practices; that embraces outside influences; and that concentrates on setting policy rather than on operational details.

A concluding workshop in May will set short-term and long-term goals for meeting those objectives.



Calendar of Upcoming Events

Date	Time	Event/Topic	Location	Contact
Mar. 13	6:30 p.m.	General Meeting	Westchase Hilton 9999 Westheimer	Dorothy Murray dorothy_murray@msn.com
Mar. 13	8:00 p.m.	STC Houston admin council meeting	Westchase Hilton 9999 Westheimer	Deborah Long deborah.long@enron.com.
Mar. 19	6:30 p.m.– 7:30 p.m.	Online Documentation SIG meeting	HAL-PC Headquarters 4543 Post Oak Place Drive, Suite 200	Larry Dybala lwd@hal-pc.org
Mar. 25	EBD*	deadline for May newsletter		Rhonda Hector rhonda@newmc.cc
Apr. 10	6:30 p.m.	General Meeting	Westchase Hilton 9999 Westheimer	Dorothy Murray dorothy_murray@msn.com
Apr. 10	8:00 p.m.	STC Houston admin council meeting	Westchase Hilton 9999 Westheimer	Deborah Long deborah.long@enron.com.
Apr. 16	6:30 p.m.	Online Documentation SIG meeting	HAL-PC Headquarters 4543 Post Oak Place Drive, Suite 200	Larry Dybala lwd@hal-pc.org

*End of business day

March 13, 2001 Program

Jane Marcet

presented by

John Lienhard

Dr. John Lienhard, host of Houston Public Radio's popular program, "The Engines of Our Ingenuity," will be our speaker at the STC Houston March program meeting. Dr. Lienhard will be talking about Jane Marcet, a remarkable writer of early 19th-century technical textbooks and the center of a group of important women scientists. Jane may have done more to shape today's science education for men and women than any other person.

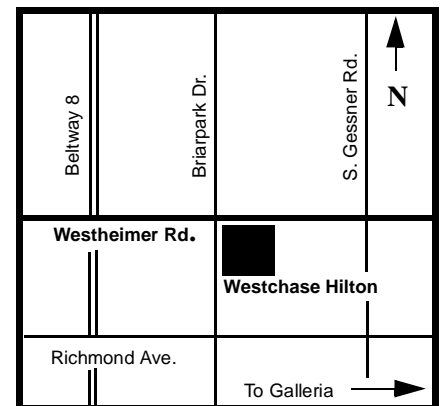
Dr. Lienhard is the author of the recently released book *The Engines of Our Ingenuity: An Engineer Looks at Technology and Culture*, released last year by Oxford University Press.

Dr. Lienhard will be signing his book during the networking period, starting at 5:30 p.m.

Meeting Basics

Place:

Westchase Hilton Hotel
9999 Westheimer Road
(at Briarpark, between
S. Gessner and Beltway 8)



Date:

Tuesday, March 13, 2001

Time:

5:30 p.m. networking (hors d'oeuvres)

6:20 p.m. announcements

6:30 p.m. program

Cost:

\$10 (members)

\$13 (non-members)

\$3 (student and unemployed members)

\$6 (student non-members)

Monthly Drawing

A drawing for various prizes is held at the end of each general meeting.

Tickets for the drawing can be purchased at the registration desk.

Proceeds benefit the Marx Isaacs Student Scholarship Fund.