

# Stimulus

May 2005



Election  
Results and  
STC Award  
Winners  
issue!

## Programs & events

*Report from the Vice-President  
/Program Manager*  
by Barbara Jordan

We have had an active 2004/2005 season. There was an event each month, September through April, including a Wine & Cheese event, a social event in December, the Awards Evening, the Town Hall in April, and many informational events.

The events are all listed at  
<<http://www.stceo.org/program.htm>>

The Town Hall on April 4th was a success with ten members attending to work on our rechartering submission. (See page 3)

The election nomination period is over and we have acclaimed a President, Secretary, and Treasurer, and volunteers for webmaster and Stimulus editor.

### **We still need a Vice-President and volunteers for the positions of:**

- \* Program Manager
- \* Membership Manager and Volunteer Co-ordinator
- \* Public Relations Manager
- \* Competition Manager
- \* Education Manager
- \* Newsletter staff (assisting the current newsletter editor)

Please get involved! It is a good opportunity to meet people in the industry and get experience that will look good on your résumé.

**The Annual General Meeting is at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, upstairs at the Westboro Loblaws (Richmond Road at Kirkwood). Please come and meet the new exec and volunteers! ☺**

## *A "busy and successful year"*

*President's Message*  
by Ken Kicksee

I find it surprising that almost a year has passed since I decided to take on the role of President of the STCEO. It has been a busy and successful year for the Eastern Ontario chapter.

Our executive members and volunteers worked tirelessly to provide several learning and networking opportunities for STCEO members. We hosted an impressive array of program meetings that featured such topics as structured writing, defining requirements, and freelance writing. We attracted a standing-room-only crowd for Mark Baker's presentation titled, "More Content in Less Time: Applying the Secrets of Lean Thinking and Agile Programming to the Creation of Content".

In addition to our regular program meetings, we held a number of successful social events such as our annual Wine & Cheese party and our festive December event, which included a delicious meal prepared before our eyes by a professional chef.

I was pleased to represent our chapter by visiting students enrolled in the Technical Writer program at Algonquin College. Peter Sturgeon, David Hitchcock, and I enjoyed an interactive discussion about the challenges and opportunities of being technical communicators, and we presented the STC as a valuable career-building tool.

I was also very pleased to organize and judge our annual Technical Communication Competition, which attracted over thirty-five entries from a variety of industries. Our Annual Awards Banquet was well-attended and enjoyed by all.

In addition to our public events, our executive members and volunteers participated in monthly executive meetings to manage the affairs of the chapter. We planned program events, managed our budget, planned the elections, and discussed the STC's transformation efforts. Everything we did was intended to guide the chapter in its mission, which is to work together in a spirit of community to promote and develop professional technical communication.

I'd like to thank the entire executive and all our volunteers for their hard work, dedication and enthusiasm. I enjoyed this opportunity to serve the chapter and to learn more about running a volunteer service organization. If you've ever considered getting involved, I encourage you to do so. Working with the support of a great team has been both educational and personally rewarding. I have great confidence that our incoming executive will work hard to make our STC chapter even better in 2005/2006. Most of all, I'd like to thank our members for the ideas and encouragement they provided throughout the year.

**Be sure to join us at our Annual General Meeting on May 5th as we celebrate our success and congratulate our incoming executive members! ☺**

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# STCEO election 2005

## "The Scoop"

by Penny Lange

*Election Officer's report*  
by Brian Williamson

The nomination period for the STCEO election 2005 closed on April 18, 2005, with nominees being acclaimed for three of the four positions.

The nominees are:

- **Barbara Jordan, for the position of President**
- **Margaret (Peggy) Vice, for the position of Treasurer**
- **Kathleen Jette, for the position of Secretary**

These nominees will be acclaimed to the positions at the STCEO Annual General Meeting. They will take office on July 1, 2005, for a one year term. Ken Kicksee (the current president) will bow out of the STCEO executive gradually, fulfilling the role of Past President.

The position of Vice President remains empty. Any member wishing to support STCEO by filling this role should indicate their interest to Barbara. The new executive may appoint a member to this position after they take office in July.

The following volunteer positions have also been filled:

- Webmaster: Deborah Sooley
- Newsletter Editor: Ted Slavin

Other positions in need of a volunteer are:

- Program Manager
- Membership Manager and Volunteer Co-ordinator
- Public Relations Manager
- Competition Manager
- Education Manager
- Newsletter staff (assisting the current newsletter Editor)
- Employment Manager


Members interested in serving in any of these positions should indicate their interest to one of the executive-elect.

*...continued on page 4, "Three acclaimed"*

In late March, **Marie Grant** attended a training course in Calgary for a single-source content management tool called AuthorIT. Marie returned with a head full of knowledge and two new contacts who use the product for technical and marketing writing. For anyone interested in AuthorIT training closer to home, Ron Stone of Content House will be offering an **Introduction to AuthorIT** training session in Ottawa on June 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Greg Owens**, a long-time instructor with the Algonquin College Technical Writing Program (1999-2003), recently visited Ottawa. Greg has been on assignment in Antwerp, Belgium for Alcatel since July 2004. Over lunch, Greg regaled colleagues with tales of good beer, no closets and his biggest deliverable in 2005, daughter Claire (born December 28). Greg can be reached at [greg.owens@alcatel.com](mailto:greg.owens@alcatel.com).

**Chris Hallgren** recently started a full time job with Startek in Kingston. Startek is an international company and the Kingston branch is one of the top five employers in the city, specializing in service activation of cell phones and other accounts via inbound calls.

If you have an item you'd like to share in this column about a new job or contract, a conference you've attended, or other newsworthy events, please send an email to [stimulus@stceo.org](mailto:stimulus@stceo.org). 

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*Those who write clearly have readers, those who write obscurely have commentators.*

- **Albert Camus**

## 2004 Awards Banquet

by Ken Kicksee

Our Annual Awards Banquet, a premiere social event in the STCEO calendar, was a resounding success. We enjoyed a great meal and an entertaining keynote address as we congratulated the winners of our Technical Communication Competition.

The evening began with a relaxed mix-and-mingle session during which attendees browsed through the winning entries, caught up with old friends, and made some new ones. After a few brief opening remarks we sat down to a delicious buffet dinner that included chicken, beef, and a variety of vegetable dishes.

After dinner our keynote speaker, Louis Beaugard, entertained us with his presentation titled, "Usability: A Dimension of the Human Habitat". Mr. Beaugard discussed the ubiquitous nature of poorly designed architecture

*...continued on page 5, "Banquet honours"*



Ken Kicksee presents Stela Kostova with an Award of Excellence

# Final rechartering results

Barbara Jordan, Vice-President and Program Director for STCEO, led a small but diligent group of members through a chapter rechartering exercise at the STCEO Town Hall on April 4, 2005. The following paper was the result of their efforts and was submitted to the STC's *Communities Transformation Committee* by the due date of April 15, 2005.

## 1. What is the current name of your chapter (geographic community) or SIG (community of interest)?

Society for Technical Communication, Eastern Ontario (STCEO) chapter.

## 2. Do you want to change the name of your community? If so, please enter the new name.

The name will remain the same.

## 3. What is the mission statement of your community?

To work together in a spirit of community to promote and develop technical communication in Eastern Ontario and Western Quebec by providing professional development, networking, and leadership opportunities while promoting excellence in technical communication.

## 4a. What are the goals of your community? (List at least three but no more than seven.)

## 4b. What strategies will your community strive to implement to achieve your goals? (List one to three for each goal).

## 4c. What programs and activities will your community offer to implement your strategies? (List at least one for each strategy.)

The goals, strategies and plans of STCEO are:

### GOAL - Develop a strong, sustainable community of members in the Eastern Ontario and Western Quebec region:

- Survey members at meetings and through the website to identify their professional requirements and concerns. Fulfill those requirements by providing seminars and monthly program meetings in the areas identified.
- Visit the classrooms of the Technical Writer Program at Algonquin College to promote STCEO and recruit a student member to the executive. We will continue to provide an annual STCEO scholarship and ensure the Cooperative Education departments of the local universities have information kits about STCEO to provide to any students who may be interested in Technical Communications.
- Provide a discussion-group forum via our website.

### GOAL - Promote education and professional development activities:

- Continue to provide high-quality monthly program meeting and host seminars to expand on the program areas of interest to the membership.
- Liaise with the Director of the local college's

Technical Writer Program to enhance the existing Program. Acquaint the Director with the concerns and needs of the STCEO membership, particularly the portion of the membership providing employment or cooperative-education opportunities to these students.

- Lobby for one of the three local universities to provide an interdisciplinary degree in Technical Writing from existing course offerings. Promote our programs and seminars at the universities for their students currently enrolled in the related courses.

### GOAL - Provide employment opportunities:

- Post a jobs' page on our website that is free of charge to employers, ensuring that employers are aware of this service.
- Ensure interested members are aware of any job opportunities by emailing information on jobs as they are submitted to the website and using the discussion-group forum on the website.

### GOAL - Promote networking among community members:

- Each monthly program meeting will be an opportunity to network; prior to the actual program portion a meal will be served and free time for mingling provided. We will encourage the formation of a hospitality committee to greet new members and ensure they are introduced to fellow members.
- Encourage members at meetings to visit the discussion-group forum on the website.
- Provide a section of the newsletter for updates, new information and interesting items about members.

### GOAL - Provide access to an evaluation process through the annual competition:

- Ensure an unbiased, open competition by continuing to field a high-caliber panel of judges. We will continue to host an informative and fun awards dinner as the culmination of the competition.

## 5. What has been your average annual cost of operating your community over the last three years?

Canadian \$19,911.09 per year.

## 6. Describe the members you hope to attract to your new community.

Writers starting out in their career, students from the Algonquin College programs and related programs at the local universities, former members lost during the high-tech downturn and writers at the various local high-tech companies.

...continued on Page 4, "Rechartering results"

# 2004-2005 STCEO financial report

*Treasurer's Report* The STCEO's financial status for this fiscal year is quite healthy. The projected annual income for June 30, 2005 is expected to be about \$8,840 with expenses of about \$7,000.  
by Margaret Vice

The executive has allocated the probable surplus of \$1,800 to purchasing a projector and screen. While it is not the chapter's intention to accumulate capital equipment, it has become more difficult in recent years to rely on companies to lend projectors and screens. A projector and screen are essential to our program events and expensive to lease. As we are finished with program events until October, the purchase will be delayed until early fall, with the hope of price reductions in the interim. Maybe we can catch a back-to-school sale!

Once the purchase is made, we will have approximately \$4,000 left to begin the next fiscal year, a similar amount to our carry-forward balance for this year. A carry-forward amount in the \$3,000 to \$4,000 range is ideal for a chapter of our size and activity level. Ⓢ

## *Rechartering results*

*continued from page 3*

### **7. How will your community provide value to the larger STC community and further the overall goals of the Society?**

We will continue to support the members who are contributors to Intercom and are speakers at the STC annual convention. We will continue our recruiting efforts at the local college and carry on with our scholarship program. We are committed to holding an annual competition and forwarding our best of show to the international level.

### **8. List names of community members who took part in this re-chartering process.**

Emily Adams, Chuck Bain, Melanie Curtis, Kathleen Jette, Barbara Jordan, Barry Millman, Jackie Quinn, Margaret Vice, Brian Williamson, Roderick Young Ⓢ

## **Le Mot Juste**

Two trucks loaded with a thousand copies of Roget's Thesaurus collided as they left a New York publishing house last Thursday, according to the Associated Press.

Witnesses were stunned, startled, aghast, taken aback, stupefied....

## *Three acclaimed, one vacant position on STCEO executive*

*continued from page 2*

Thanks to Barbara, Peggy, Kathleen, Ted, and Deborah for stepping forward to serve STCEO, and best wishes for them in 2005-2006. The new executive bring the following experience and interest to STCEO:

### **Barbara Jordan, President-elect (by acclamation)**

Barbara has a degree in Electrical Engineering from the University of Waterloo. She has worked as a technical writer for many years and is currently employed at Curtiss-Wright (formerly Dy 4 Systems). Barbara has been a member of the STCEO for 7 years and has earned many awards in the annual competitions. Barbara has served as Program Manager for the chapter during the last two years and as VP this year. Barbara is looking forward to a successful year featuring interesting program events, a well-run competition, and a balanced budget.

### **Margaret (Peggy) Vice, Treasurer-elect (by acclamation)**

Margaret migrated from a twenty-year career in Medical Laboratory Technology to freelance technical and marketing writing. A member of STCEO for the past three years, she has been the Treasurer for this past year and anticipates a balanced budget. Peggy has held numerous volunteer positions with a variety of community and professional groups, many of these positions involving financial responsibility. Peggy looks forward to an exciting year ahead, predicting another balanced budget.

### **Kathleen Jette, Secretary-elect (by acclamation)**

Kathleen worked in the financial sector in Montreal for several years before making the switch to technical writing. She started as a member of the Montreal STC chapter in 1998 and then became a member of the STCEO in 2001 when she moved to Ottawa. Kathleen was an active member of several committees in Montreal. She was the president of Park Players, an amateur theatrical company in Montreal, and was the secretary for the Dawson College Alumni Association for several years. Currently she is the president of the Gatineau Social Committee at PCI Geomatics where she works as a senior technical writer. Kathleen is eager to offer her ideas and skills to the STCEO executive and make the coming year a productive and successful one. Ⓢ

# Banquet honours excellence

...continued from page 2

and badly planned urban areas. I found his presentation to be enlightening and thought provoking as he showed us images of harsh urban landscapes that are only marginally usable and that utterly fail to satisfy our basic human desire for visual appeal. He encouraged us to strive for designs that go beyond basic usability and aspire to achieve elegant functional simplicity.

After his address, I was pleased to present Mr. Beauregard with a very special gift, a book titled, "The Forests of Canada". This book was our chapter's Best of Show winner last year, and it went on to win the Best of Show Award in the International Competition. Author Ken Farr attended our Awards Banquet and received a hearty round of applause for his work.



Louis Beauregard spoke on "Usability: A Dimension of the Human Habitat"

Next, we awarded our annual student scholarship to Brenda Fawcett, the top student in the Technical Writer program at Algonquin College. The scholarship included a handsome plaque and a cash award.

We continued our presentation by recognizing the winners of Merit and Excellence awards from our Technical Communication Competition. Award certificates were presented to technical communicators from several local companies, including Alcatel, Cognimax, Cognos, Corel, and Curtiss-Wright Controls.

Finally, we presented the Best of Show Award, which included the Best of Show trophy and individual plaques for

each contributor. This year's Best of Show Award went to Tanya Pollard, Darryl Swerbrick, and Anne Waters of Cognos for their entry titled, "Cognos Planning 7.2 - QuickStart for Business Users CBT".

The judges in this year's competition faced a daunting challenge. They reviewed over 35 entries in a wide variety of categories and from a various industries to determine which ones were deserving of special honours. Our judges tackled this challenge with enthusiasm, editorial skill, and a keen eye for detail.

As a first-time judge and rookie organizer of the STCEO Technical Communication Competition, I would like to thank the judges and the entrants for making this an interesting and rewarding experience. I would also like to thank Sarah Anderson, who helped me group the entries and form the judging teams, Barbara Jordan, who took care of all the banquet arrangements, Peggy Vice, who helped with the plaques and transportation, and especially Theresa St.Denis, who freely shared her experience, wisdom, encouragement, and common sense throughout the year. ☺

See page 6 for a complete list of award winners



Left to right - Peter Sturgeon, Rick Lorenz, and Ken Kicksee present Tanya Pollard and Anne Waters with well-deserved plaques and a trophy for Cognos Planning 7.2 - QuickStart for Business Users CBT

## Tech writer hell

A tech writer dies and arrives in Hell, where Satan growls, "I gotta escort these other sinners into the pit, lady. Take a seat and wait a minute!"

Terrified, the tech writer peeks behind a door and sees a tech writer agonizingly formatting 12 million lines of documentation on a flaming computer. Aghast, she peeks behind a second door and sees a tech writer writing 23 million manuals on a mountain of screen captures written by a shrill, egomaniacal programmer who shrieks at every line.

In despair, she looks behind a third door and sees another tech writer like herself, chairing a never-ending meeting, munching bonbons, surrounded by fresh-faced admiring engineers sucking up to her with gifts of flowers, fresh fruit and fine wines and telling her she's a documentation genius.

Satan returns and asks, "Well, which door, 1 or 2?" The tech writer says, "I'd like Door 3, please." "You can't have Door 3," Satan says. "That's Engineer Hell."

Contribute to

Stimulus

Articles,

Opinions,

Photographs!

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# *STCEO award winners for 2004*

Entry title	Contributors	Award
Cognos Planning 7.2 - QuickStart for Business Users CBT	Anne Waters, Darryl Swerbrick, Tanya Pollard	Best of Show
Corel Painter IX Reviewer's Guide	Jody Johnstone, Stela Kostova, Suzanne Dunas-Skinner	Excellence
CorelDRAW Graphics Suite 12 User Guide	Ottawa Documentation Team	Excellence
Training Design Basics	Saul Carliner	Excellence
An Overview of Online Learning (Second Edition)	Saul Carliner	Excellence
Information Technology Research Center Annual Report 2003/2004	Brad Lawless, Wendy Taylor	Excellence
NetWorker 7.x Advanced Administration	EMC Global Education: Legato Technical Education	Excellence
Alcatel 7750 Service Router General Information	Christy Paddick, Chris Bridgen, Nuala Murray	Excellence
A-dec 2004 Authorized Dealer Equipment Catalog	A-dec Technical Communications Team	Excellence
A-dec Owner's Guide Self-Contained Water Systems	A-dec Technical Communications Team	Excellence
GEMS Survey Help	Jerome Ryckborst, Kathy Kroeker	Excellence
Gemcom Style Guide	Jerome Ryckborst, Kathy Kroeker	Excellence
GEMS Ore-Control demo movie	Jerome Ryckborst, Kathy Kroeker	Excellence
Cognimax Accessible Interactive Simulator eLearning	Martha Ralph, Susan Pearce	Excellence
WordPerfect Office 12 - Home Edition Reviewer's Guide	Ottawa Documentation Team, Mark Rathwell, Suzanne Dunas-Skinner	Merit
WordPerfect Office 12 - Home Edition User Guide	Carmen Humplik, Jody Johnstone, Nadezda Vladimirova	Merit
Corel Painter IX User Guide	Gordon Roberts, Berit Erickson, Lori Kerfoot	Merit
Corel Painter IX Handbook	Erma Petrova, Creative Design Team Program/Product Managers	Merit
WordPerfect Office 12 User Guide	Carmen Humplik, Nadezda Vladimirova, Catherine Haza	Merit
Corel PHOTO-PAINT Help	Nadia Vladimirova, Vanessa Gorham, Ludmila Minkova	Merit
GEMS PlotMaker Help	Jerome Ryckborst	Merit
Cognos ReportNet Architecture and Planning Guide	Cognos Documentation Services, Rick Blackwell	Merit
PMC-106 Processor PMC User's Manual	Barbara Jordan	Merit
Cognos ReportNet 1.1 - Metadata Modeling Part 1	Tony Young, Neil Farquhar	Merit

*Congratulations!*