

# Stimulus

Newsletter of the  
Eastern Ontario  
Chapter of the Society  
for Technical  
Communication

Volume 33, Issue 1 - September/October 2006

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SOCIETY FOR  
TECHNICAL  
COMMUNICATION

## September Meet and Greet

### *Tapas Bar and Sangria at Cube Gallery*

This year, in a twist on our usual "Wine and Cheese" at Dow's Lake Pavilion and in celebration of our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a chapter, we are holding our annual season kick-off celebration at Cube Gallery on September 20, 2006, from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. It will feature a tapas bar and sangria fountain catered by Lolly Simoes of The House Pub and Restaurant.



Come on out, meet the members of the executive, mingle with other technical communicators in the area, and help us answer the age-old question, "What's in a Name?"

To RSVP for this event or learn more about it, please visit [stceo.org/program.htm](http://stceo.org/program.htm).

#### About the location

Cube Gallery, located at 7 Hamilton Avenue North in Ottawa (just behind the Parkdale Market), is a contemporary art gallery that hosts a new group show every few weeks.

The exhibit during our kick-off event will be Candela, 2006 Ottawa Light Art Show. Candela is being held to increase the general awareness and interest in light and lighting design. Light commands the way we perceive our

visual world. Bending light alters the way in which the world is seen. Candela is an exhibition of installations by professional and emerging artists exploring electric light as artistic medium. The exhibit is being shown September 21 to September 24.

Check out Cube Gallery's Web site at [www.cubegallery.ca](http://www.cubegallery.ca). You can get more information about the Candela exhibit at [www.candelaart.com](http://www.candelaart.com). ☺

## *2005/2006 STCEO "Best of Show" Recipient Wins International Award*

Congratulations to Kari Lynn-Philipp, Denise Eisner, and Steve Palmer of Natural Resources Canada, Best of Show winners in our 2005/2006 competition for their entry, the One-Tonne Challenge Employee Awareness Kit. Their entry was forwarded to the international competition and has come away with the Distinguished award in the User Support Tools category.

In recent years, entries from the Eastern Ontario chapter have won many awards at the international level, including the Best of Show award in 2004 and now a Distinguished award in 2006.

For more information about the STC's 2006 international technical communication competitions, check out the July/August 2006 issue of Intercom at [stc.org/intercom](http://stc.org/intercom). ☺

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#### Submissions

This newsletter invites writers to submit articles that they wish to have considered for publication. Note: By submitting an article, you implicitly grant a license to this newsletter to run the article and for other STC publications to reprint it without permission. Copyright is held by the writer.

Please e-mail articles to [stimulus@stceo.org](mailto:stimulus@stceo.org). Most major electronic formats are supported for both Mac and PC but our preference is for Microsoft Word, plain text, or HTML formats. In your cover letter, please let the editor know if this article has run elsewhere, and if it has been submitted for consideration to other publications. We reserve the right to edit articles for length, clarity, and suitability.

Writers' guidelines and the current year's publishing calendar are available at [stceo.org/stimulus.htm](http://stceo.org/stimulus.htm).

#### Submission Deadlines

All materials are due one month prior to publication. The submission deadline for the October/November issue is September 30, 2006.

#### Reprint Policy

All material herein is copyright of STC, Eastern Ontario Chapter. Other STC chapters are welcome to reprint articles from *Stimulus*. In return, we ask that you credit the author and *Stimulus* and send us a copy (in print or electronic format) of the publication containing the article.

#### Advertising

Advertising space is available on an issue-by-issue basis. Rates vary depending on the size of the ad – please e-mail the editor for more details. We reserve the right to refuse any advertising request.

## President's Message

### *The State of the Union*

By Mimi Richard-Golding, STCEO President

Welcome to a new year of programming with the STCEO.

My name is Mimi Richard-Golding. I've been in, around, and through information and information management for over 10 years, evolving through multiple disciplines as a Librarian, Technical Writer, and Business Analyst.

I chose to stand as President of the STCEO this year because there was a need for volunteers. I'd approached the position with a plan for the year that I quickly realized was quite aggressive for our Chapter. I have since scaled back and have committed to support three elements of the original proposal pitched at the May 2006 AGM.

These services will be maintained and delivered for the term:

- Increased Web visibility
- Creation and publication of six printed newsletters
- Delivery of six events

The Chapter's health is reflected in the number of volunteers we have to run the various programs.

Additional activities cannot be supported without new resources. For instance, at the time of writing this article, the Chapter competition is at risk of not running because we do not have someone who is willing to manage this activity. It is regrettable that this event may be cancelled.

The history of low volunteer support for the Chapter has caused me to muse on the future of the Chapter. We are in our 50th year as a Chapter. Is it time we look at early retirement?

I would like to pose to you the following question: Is the Chapter an asset and a necessity, or a *nice to have* but not a necessary component for our community?

I would like to hear your opinion on this topic: Please e-mail me at [president@stceo.org](mailto:president@stceo.org). ☺

## Competition Update

### *Needed: One Competition Manager...*

By Kitty MacAlpine, STCEO Vice President

This is the time of year when we would usually be gearing up for our technical publications and online communication competitions. The Web site would feature information about how to enter and we'd already be fielding entries.

Unfortunately, we have had no volunteers to take on the role of Competition Manager this year. In the past, a member of the existing Executive has been able to step into the breach and take on these duties but this year, we are already stretched thin providing the programming, newsletter, Web, and other core Chapter services.

The Competition Manager solicits and organizes entries, recruits judges, manages the judging process, submits local winning entries to the STC International competition, and helps to organize an awards event. In recent years, there has been a single manager but the duties could also be split among two or more people.

It is crucial that we find a volunteer within the next few weeks or we will not be able to hold the competition this year. If you're interested in volunteering or would just like some more information, please contact me at [vice-president@stceo.org](mailto:vice-president@stceo.org). ☺

## Treasurer's Report

# 2005/2006 Year-end Statement

By Peggy Vice, STCEO Treasurer

## Upcoming STC Webinars

The STCEO has once again ended the year with a surplus budget, while managing to purchase the projector and screen needed for our monthly meetings. The outgoing executive has earmarked the surplus funds toward the celebration of our 50th anniversary this September.

After an audit with Past President Barbara Jordan, President Mimi Richard-Golding, and Treasurer Peggy Vice, the following statement will be submitted to STC International:

STCEO hosts STC Web-telephone seminars at Mosaid in Kanata. You can attend one of these educational seminars with your colleagues in the Ottawa area at a very reasonable price -- \$20 (including GST) for STCEO members, \$30 (including GST) for non-members. Upcoming webinars include:

**September 27, 2006**  
**Creating Interactive CBTs with Captivate-in Half the Time**  
Presenter(s): Kevin Siegel

**October 11, 2006**  
**Designing Business Forms: A No Nonsense Approach**  
Presenter(s): Nathaniel Lim

**October 25, 2006**  
**Ten Ways to Increase Your Value as a Technical Communicator**  
Presenter(s): Holly Harkness

**November 8, 2006**  
**Choosing the Right Usability Technique (to answer the right question)**  
Presenter(s): Whitney Quesenbery

For information about start times and how to sign up, visit [stceo.org/education.htm](http://stceo.org/education.htm) ☺

## 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary *Haiku*

By Elizabeth Mercer

many words ago  
when writing was not an art  
STC began

1956  
a year of many events  
STC is born

50 years later  
help us to communicate  
need STC still ☺

Starting Cash Balance (July 1, 2005)	\$6,596.24
Income:	
Dues refund from society	\$4,909.68
Meetings (7)	\$415.89
Newsletter Advertising	\$0.00
Seminars	\$944.14
Publications and art competitions	\$1,616.82
Interest on savings	\$0.00
Loans	\$0.00
Grants	\$0.00
Sponsorships: speaking fees	\$109.81
GST rebate	\$88.13
Membership directory advertising	\$0.00
TOTAL INCOME	<u>\$8,084.47</u>
Expenses:	
Competition	\$1,690.18
Loan Repayment	\$0.00
Meetings	\$2,148.10
Newsletter	\$0.00
Other awards, prizes, or gifts	\$179.06
Post box	\$140.00
PR	\$0.00
Scholarship	\$250.00
Seminars	\$927.04
STC Conference	\$0.00
Supplies	\$27.54
Web site	\$239.29
Admin	\$5.87
Projector and screen	\$1,346.24
GST Paid	\$0.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>\$6,953.32</u>
 SURPLUS or (deficit)	 \$1,131.15
 CASH BALANCE at end of fiscal year (June 30, 2006)	 \$7,727.39

## September/October 2006 Region 1 Director's Report

### *Gearing Up for a Great Year!*

By Cindy Currie, STC Fellow and Region 1 Director

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#### **Have some fun, grow your skills, and expand your network**

Welcome to a brand new STC year! Many communities have their planning for this year well underway and are in need of fresh faces to bring some of these plans to fruition. If you have received a call for volunteers from your community leaders, please seriously consider moving into an active role in your community.

Many communities are looking for program managers, competition managers, newsletter editors and / or webmasters, and to fill other positions. Role sharing might be possible if you're interested in a role, but you may have some constraints that make it unrealistic for you to assume 100% responsibility for it. Ask your community leaders how you can participate in a way that meets both your needs and those of the community.

Sure, I know, volunteering means you need to make a (sometimes big) commitment, but with the benefits available to you by doing so – new skills, new contacts, new friends, great sense of accomplishment, and valuable experience to add to your résumé or CV – how can you afford not to? Truthfully, very often the more you put into something, the more you get out of it. So, now is the time to go for it and send that "I want to volunteer!" email to your chapter leaders!

#### **New monthly email message from STC President**

Have you seen **News and Notes from the STC President**, the new email publication from STC President Paula Berger? To keep you current on STC happenings, Paula began sending a monthly email communiqué to all STC

members over the summer. These messages go out at the end of each month (shortly after the monthly Board of Directors teleconferences – also new this STC year!) to ensure that you are always in the know. There's a lot happening in STC these days!

To review recent messages, visit [www.stc.org/stcmembers/presNewsAug06.asp](http://www.stc.org/stcmembers/presNewsAug06.asp). (Note: The August issue is current as of this writing, but you should be able to access all recent issues – July, August, and beyond – from this page.) And, be sure to watch your inbox for Paula's next message.

#### **Two not-to-be-missed conference / educational opportunities this fall**

\* Region 2 will host ***Making Cents of Making Sense: Technical Communication and Business*** ([www.stcuk.org/R2conf](http://www.stcuk.org/R2conf)) in London, England, 13-14 October 2006. This conference is aimed at companies in need of technical communication and the people who produce it. The program includes top-notch speakers who can show the business value of quality technical communication.

\* Region 5 will host ***50 Facets of Technical Communication*** ([www.region5conf.com](http://www.region5conf.com)) in Addison, Texas, 02-04 November 2006. This conference is the perfect place to polish every facet of your technical communication portfolio! In addition, the Lone Star chapter will be celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary at this conference.

#### **It's time to honor deserving members**

This is the time of year to think about who you would like to nominate for the honorary rank of STC Associate Fellow and get this process underway. Any member or community in STC can submit a

nomination packet. For more information, visit [www.stc.org/recog/honors01asp](http://www.stc.org/recog/honors01asp).

Completed nomination forms must be email to the STC Office ([peg@stc.org](mailto:peg@stc.org)) no later than 21 October 2006. For questions or concerns, contact Associate Fellow Committee Chair, Mark Hanigan, at [onwritetrk@aol.com](mailto:onwritetrk@aol.com).

#### **Making life easy!**

Mark your calendars for the second annual World Usability Day (WUD), 14 November 2006. World Usability Day 2006 promotes the value of usability engineering and user-centered design and the belief that every user has the responsibility to ask for things that work better. The Usability Professionals' Association (UPA) ([usabilityprofessionals.org](http://usabilityprofessionals.org)) is doing that by encouraging, organizing, and sponsoring 36 hours of activities at the local level around the globe, all occurring on this day. The UPA, UPA chapters, and allied organizations (of which STC is one!) will all hold events revolving around the common theme – "Making life easy!" The focus this year is on accessibility and inclusion.

Organizing STC's participation in this event are Rahel Bailie and Jerome Ryckborst. As we get closer to the day, look for more information about how STC is participating and for events in your area. For more information about WUD in general, visit [www.worldusabilityday.org](http://www.worldusabilityday.org).

#### **Seeking new organizational partnerships**

Forming partnerships with other professional organizations (both profit and non-profit) is a strategic priority this year. STC has recently rejoined INTECOM (International

*(Continued on next page)*

Council for Technical Communication, [www.intecom.org](http://www.intecom.org)) and has entered into a formal agreement with LISA (Localization Industry Standards Association, [www.lisa.org](http://www.lisa.org)) that provides a framework for the exchange of membership privileges and project collaboration. If any of you have thoughts about organizations that STC should have as partners, please email Mark Clifford at [2vp@stc.org](mailto:2vp@stc.org) or Andrea Ames at [aames@pobox.com](mailto:aames@pobox.com).

### Out and about

My chapter visit plans for this year are beginning to take shape and look like this at the moment:

- Connecticut Chapter Strategic Planning (Rechartering) Workshop, November (date TBD)
- Tech Valley Chapter, November (date TBD)
- Northern New England Chapter, January (date TBD)
- Eastern Ontario Chapter, March (date TBD)

Please let me know what your program plans and events are for this STC year and if you'd like me to visit your chapter or attend a special event. I will continue my visits as your interest and my finances and schedule permit. ☺

*Cindy Currie is an STC Fellow and the Region 1 Director. She can be reached by e-mail at [dir1@stc.org](mailto:dir1@stc.org) and by phone at 603-488-5027.*

### Employment update

We've reinstated the job announcement mailing list for STCEO members. Job postings are sent to the mailing list several hours before the postings are added to the Web site. If you'd like to sign up, send an e-mail message to [webmaster@stceo.org](mailto:webmaster@stceo.org) with your name, STC member number, and preferred e-mail address.

## From the Editor's Desk

Welcome to the first issue of Stimulus for 2006/2007. It's also my first issue as the managing editor.

Before I write anything else, I'd like to thank our outgoing editor, Ted Slavin, for all of the hard work he's put into publishing the newsletter over the last 16 months. He's leaving us to spend more time with his wife and new daughter. Good luck with everything, Ted, and I hope you'll check back with us every now and then.

One of my mandates as Vice President (and now as newsletter editor) this year is to support the production of the newsletter so that we can publish it on a regular schedule. We will be publishing a new issue every two months, and members can expect to receive those via regular mail during the first ten days of September, November, January, March, May, and July.

## The Scoop

By Penny Lange

### Members' Corner

In June, **Peter Sturgeon** started a new contract with the National Land and Water Information Service at Agriculture Canada. Peter is writing the Technical Environments (IT infrastructure) System Configuration and the Systems Operations guides. The contract lasts at least until the end of September, with a strong possibility of renewal. (The whole project officially wraps up in 2009.)

**Penny Lange** spent two days at a client site in Stuttgart in August. In addition to very informative meetings with my clients, I was treated to the wonderful hospitality that Europeans are famous for. And I highly recommend Stuttgart to anyone interested in history: the sites and architecture are lovely.

As you can see, the newsletter has also been redesigned for this season. While the print version is being produced in black and white, a full-colour version of each newsletter will be available on the Web site approximately a month after the print version is mailed. If you are an STCEO member and would like an early copy of the full-colour PDF file, please e-mail me.

Future issues of the newsletter will include feature articles, puzzles, and reviews. If you'd like to write an article or review for a future issue or if you've seen an article in another STC chapter newsletter that you think would be of interest to Eastern Ontario technical writers, please let me know. Writers' guidelines and a publishing schedule are available on the site.

Enjoy!



[stimulus@stceo.org](mailto:stimulus@stceo.org)

### Upcoming Events

**Ottawa Independent Writers**  
September 27, *Judging a book by its cover. How to put your book together*, Virginia West.  
For more information about this and other upcoming events, go to [www.oiw.ca](http://www.oiw.ca)

### Editors' Association of Canada (EAC), National Capital Region: Seminar

Monthly meeting, September 20, Dows Lake Pavilion  
For more information about this and other local EAC events, go to [www.editors.ca/branches/ncr](http://www.editors.ca/branches/ncr).

*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).* ☺

## STC Eastern Ontario 2006-2007 Executive

### President

Mimi Richard-Golding  
president@stceo.org

### Vice President

Kitty MacAlpine  
vice-president@stceo.org

### Past President

Barbara Jordan  
past-president@stceo.org

### Treasurer

Peggy Vice  
treasurer@stceo.org

### Secretary

David Hitchcock  
secretary@stceo.org

### Program Manager

Barbara Long  
program@stceo.org

### Membership Manager and Volunteer Coordinator

Barbara Jordan  
membership@stceo.org

### Public Relations Manager

<vacant>

### Competition Manager

<vacant>

### Education Manager

<vacant>

### Newsletter Editor, Webmaster, and Employment Manager

Kitty MacAlpine  
webmaster@stceo.org

If you're interested in any of the vacant positions, please e-mail the chapter's President at president@stceo.org.

## Membership Update

By Barbara Jordan, STCEO Membership Manager

At the end of July, we had 156 members including 2 sustaining members, 73 senior members, 78 regular members, and 5 student members. In contrast, we had 173 members this time last year, 199 in 2004, and 234 in 2003.

There are 136 chapters and 20 SIGs in STC, consisting of 12,463 members worldwide.

Welcome to the following new members:

**May:** Karen Atkins, Rachel Ines, Tim Penner

**June:** Kate Armitage, Peter Roumeliotis

**July:** Victoria Lemon, Kevin Wall ☺

## Want a Free Book?

STCEO is now a member of both the O'Reilly User Groups and Peachpit User Groups programs.

In addition to offering members a 30% discount on books purchased through their sites, both publishers also make books available for free in return for reviews.

If you are interested in reviewing a book, please send an e-mail to vice-president@stceo.org with the title and ISBN of the book you would like to review.

You'll have 90 days to write the review for us to use on the Web site or in the newsletter after which the book is yours to keep.



### O'Reilly Media, Inc.

<http://www.oreilly.com>

*Publishers of the iconic "animal books" for software and technology including Adobe Photoshop, Adobe InDesign, and other programs*

Discount Coupon Code: DSUG



### Pearson Education, Peachpit Press

<http://www.peachpit.com>

*Publishers of the Visual QuickStart, Hands-On Training, and Wow! Books series for programs such as Adobe InDesign and Adobe Photoshop*

Discount Coupon Code: UE-23AA-PEUF



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### Mission Statement

The STC's mission is creating and supporting a forum for communities of practice in the profession of technical communication. Our chapter's mission is to work together in a spirit of community to promote and develop professional technical communication.

### Address

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