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The Monthly Newsletter for the Berkeley Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication



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**February 2003**  
**Volume 17 No. 1**

**In this issue**

**Next Meeting**

Saul Carliner recently wrote that the future of Web development will be *Weblications*, dynamic, web-based applications. Our February 2003 speaker, Jeff Randolph, will introduce you to one method, Active Server Pages (ASP). [Join us](#) on February 12.

**Finding Work in a Really Bad Economy**

In these trying times, finding a job is harder than ever before. At the January meeting, Susan Harland, President-Elect of the East Bay chapter, lead a panel of members who explained how they transferred their skills to other arenas in order to earn a living. Rob Peterson authors a recap of the meeting in the [Monthly Wrap](#).

**News & Reviews**

Save March 12 on your [calendar](#)! It's the Berkeley Chapter's Chapter Service Award Party at the Berkeley Yacht Club. Who are the deserving recipients this year? Well that is our best kept secret. So stay tuned and sign up.

On Saturday, December 7, members from all Northern California STC Chapters converged in Oakland for [Leadership Day](#), the first in a series of sessions aimed at helping volunteer leadership enhance their skills and services for the chapters. To find out what you missed, visit Ben Lukas' recap.

The Region 8 conference in Las Vegas has been postponed. Keep up with the latest news and trends in the Chapter, Society and Industry with our [News](#) section.

**Networking**

Time to get started on those New Years resolutions. A great way to get noticed in this tepid job market is to get out and about to other meetings. Visit our [networking links](#) to locate other opportunities.



**Next Meeting: Wednesday February 12, 2003**

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**Introduction to Active Server Pages**  
**Jeff Randolph, Senior Member, Orange County STC**

Saul Carliner recently wrote that the future of Web development will be *Weblications*, dynamic, web-based applications. Our February 2003 speaker, Jeff Randolph, will introduce you to one method, Active Server Pages (ASP).

Topics to be covered will include:

- What is ASP?
- How ASP differs from standard HTML
- Compare ASP to scripting languages
- Explore the relationship of ASP and XML
- Identify how ASP fits into the Microsoft language scheme
- Tools you need to create ASP applications
- Major sites using ASP technology
- Myths of ASP
- Sample ASP and ASP/XML applications in action

Not one line of code will be spoken (hopefully).

Jeff Randolph has been Webmaster for the OCSTC Web site since 1997 and Employment Manager since 1998. The Web site uses ASP. Jeff is a Senior Web Applications developer at Beckman Coulter, in Fullerton CA, specializing in web-based information delivery and e-Commerce using the Microsoft technologies.

**STC-Berkeley Chapter Meeting Details**

Vo's Restaurant in downtown Oakland, is within easy walking distance to BART, is wheelchair accessible, and has both street and nearby garage parking.

Networking and conversation start at 6:00 p.m., and dinner at 6:30 p.m. If you want to eat dinner, reservations are required and must be received no later than 12:00 noon the Monday before the meeting. Reservations are necessary so that we can order the right amount of food. Do not contact the restaurant.

**RSVP Online**

Use your credit card to order meeting reservations via the chapter [Website](#). The meeting fee with dinner is \$18 for members, \$15 for student members, and \$21 for nonmembers. If you come for the program only, starting at 7:30 p.m., the fee is \$12 for members and nonmembers, and \$10 for students. If you are not eating, payments may be made at the door.

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**February 2003 Monthly Columns**

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**Notes from the Editor**

Learn the Latest News about the Ragged Left, STC-Berkeley's Monthly Newsletter, from Editor Jessica Livingston.

**President's Message**

A Few words on the state of the Chapter from President Kathryn Munn.

**Director Sponsor Message**

Region 8's Director-Sponsor Bonni Graham has handed over this month's column to guest writer Linda Oestreich.

**Monthly Recap**

Each month a guest writer writes a recap of the previous meeting. Great way to refresh, or find out what you missed.



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**February 2003**

Welcome to the first issue of 2003. Hope you renewed your membership dues so you won't miss any of those exciting publications from National. We were all a little sluggish getting back to work after the holidays, but we're looking forward to an exciting year for the Berkeley Chapter. There are lots of great volunteer opportunities within the chapter; both writing and coordinating activities. Feel free to contact me, or anyone on the board for more information.

As always, I'm in search of articles for our monthly columns, so review the list below to see if any of our needs match your skills. In the new year we'd like to expand the *Ragged Left* staff with more volunteers. If you're interested in contributing to our industry, while expanding your portfolio, contact [me](#).

See you at Vo's,

Jessica Livingston  
*Ragged Left* Editor

**Ragged Left Topic Needs**

Below is a list of the articles we are most often searching for.

**Monthly Recap**

Each month we look for a volunteer to write a recap of the speaker's presentation at our monthly meeting. The length of that article should be around 350 words, although if it was a particularly engaging topic we can run a longer article. Attendance at the meeting would be necessary.

**Resource Column**

Every month we run a monthly resource column. Suggested topics include a review of software; new, new version, or related: a Website or other online resource related to our industry: books or other tools you found useful: a process, language, or class that was beneficial. To insure that your topic has not been recently covered, please clear the topic in advance with the [editor](#). Suggested length: 375-750 words

**Introduce New Members**

Periodically we write a paragraph or two about new members in our chapter. This involves contacting the names we provide, interviewing them about their interests and involvement in the industry, and meshing it all into a cohesive article. It will take a bit longer to get the responses back, so this feature takes more lead-time than most.

**Feature Articles**

We're open to articles on unsolicited topics.

Please send articles as an attached document, preferably in MS Word, with no formatting.

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## President's Message

February 2003

Greetings STC-Berkeley chapter members and friends! Welcome to 2003! We started out the year with an excellent meeting in January featuring a panel of technical communicators surviving the slow economy in creative and inspiring ways. Read about it in the Monthly Wrap section of the *Ragged Left*.

On February 12, 2003, Jeff Randolph will be presenting on Java Server Pages (JSP), a technology that mixes regular, static HTML with dynamically generated HTML. Jeff has a great teaching style so join us at Vo's in Oakland on Wednesday, February 12, 2003.

Be sure to mark your calendar for March 12, 2003 when the chapter will be celebrating volunteer service to the chapter with a party at the Berkeley Yacht Club, Berkeley Marina. Plenty of free parking, and 3 bridge water view. We have arranged for great meal catered by the Great American Barbeque in Alameda, that will include vegetarian options.

We are pleased to announce that we have a new VP of Membership, Rob Peterson. Rob brings enthusiasm and experience from his participation in the STC chapter in Phoenix. Introduce yourself to Rob and the next meeting and make him welcome. As always we want to hear about what the Chapter can do to support you in your professional goals as a technical communicator. Email [me](#) with your ideas, suggestions, and especially any ways you might be willing to contribute your own talent and time. See you at the February 12, 2003 meeting!

Kathryn Munn

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**Director-Sponsor Column**  
**February 2003**

**How Do You Spell Success?**  
**Linda Oestreich, Guest**

Fellow STCers,  
 I just returned from a delightful visit to the Texas A&M campus to speak to the College Station Student Chapter. As students, the chapter members are at the beginning of their careers. They might join the field of technical communication or follow one of a thousand other career paths. How will they determine whether they have succeeded? I don't know, but I believe they most likely will succeed.

Success is something we feel about ourselves. Some people equate success with money, some with power, some with fame. Some people define success as being content in who they are and what they do. The criteria for success can differ, depending on the context in which you consider them and the focus you bring to them. Although we can define success from many different viewpoints, I have chosen three to consider here:

**Time of Life**

When I was first on my own, my priority was to have fun. Later I changed my outlook to do things that would support my family and enhance my professional development. Still later I began to do things that would help me gain a connection with the world and would in some way help others around me. Can you see how each phase of my life has reflected very different success factors?

**Making Money**

This success factor incorporates the trappings of our lives: the neighborhood we live in, the car we drive, and the impression we make on others by the things we have collected. Somewhat incongruously, family obligations show up again. Making money to support a family is success of a different kind than making money to drive an expensive status car.

**Feeling Fulfilled**

Various things feed our personal, introspective selves. The things that fulfill me on a spiritual level also make me feel successful. Interestingly, strong family connections again show up as an important aspect of that sense of fulfillment. Although family shows up for me in each area, career (and thus STC) doesn't show up at all! As I think about this fact, I realize that career is there but it's there indirectly. I need a career to have professional development. I need a career to make money. I need a career to feel fulfilled. It turns out that I need a career to help me have the means to do other things, but the career itself is not the actual thing that shows up when I think of success.

I believe success is what we want it to be. And we usually want it to be something different than we did last year-or 10 years ago. I also believe we can be successful in some areas of our lives but not so in others, and it is up to us to figure out if that's OK. Some of us have challenging, difficult work lives but have fulfilling relationships, a strong bond with family members, and a good sense of self. To me, such a person is more of a success than the person who makes millions of dollars but has no friends, no feeling of contentment, and weak (or no) bonds with family.

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**Monthly Wrap**

Each month rotating guest writers offer resources that benefit the technical writing industry. This month Rob Peterson, our newest member and a recent transplant from the Phoenix Chapter, offers a recap on the January presentation.

**Finding Work in a Really Bad Economy**  
**Susan Harland at the January Berkeley chapter meeting**  
**by Rob Peterson**

Susan Harlan has seen companies come and go. She is back in the Bay Area after a six year stint in Texas where, among other employers, she worked for Enron and WorldCom.

To find a new job, if recently laid off, Susan urges you to "keep up the momentum and think outside the box." One example of outside-the-box thinking that Susan offers is joining professional groups that do not directly relate to your profession.

An STC member and friend of Susan's recently joined the BAYLISA (Bay Area Large Installation System Administrators) group. As the only technical communicator in a group of network administrators, she hopes to be first in line for writing and communications opportunities.

In addition to networking ideas, the meeting's two panelists, Jonnie Pekelny and Dave Gardner, answer the question, "So, what else can we do with our technical writing skills besides technical writing?"

Jonnie has found great success with turning volunteer work with nonprofit organizations into money-making opportunities. "Nonprofits," says Jonnie, "are not always so affected by the economy."

Through volunteer jobs (e.g., brochures and newsletters) and relatively low-pay nonprofit work, Jonnie makes a living, but she has had to adjust her way of life. Nonetheless, she has had the chance to get involved in supporting important causes. When I am passionate about my work, she says, "I am that much better and jump right in."

Dave, a biology major and highly skilled and successful technical writer, sells cars. When he first set foot on a car lot to look for a job, the manager said, "You know, we have never had a rocket scientist on our lot before." Dave is proof that rocket scientist (and Biology majors) can sell too.

According to Dave, "We are all tech writers selling out services, and we are all selling something with our resumes. We are selling ourselves."

In fact, not only does Dave sell cars, he has found a way to apply his writing and design skills. He makes colorful business post cards for himself and sells custom cards to his colleagues at the dealership. He is also marketing a car-buying column to various newspapers and hopes to be syndicated. On Saturdays, he teaches English as a second language.

When asked how he keeps up the energy to be an outgoing entrepreneur, he replies, "Vitamins and Starbucks."

**The Book of Lists**

During his presentation, Dave also mentioned the Book of Lists, a publication put out by the Business Journal, or depending on the city, the Business Times. Since the books range in price from \$40 to \$90 and the online version is \$150, I recommend making

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**Networking**

Visiting other STC chapters and other writers' groups is a great way to expand your knowledge and networking circle.

**Employment**

It's a tight job market out there, so make sure that your resume gives you the competitive edge. Each month we offer free resume reviews before the monthly meeting. Book your appointment with our [Employment Manager](#). STC Berkeley also operates a free job list, which you can [sign up](#) for.



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## News

### February 2003

Catch up on the latest news from the Chapter, Society, and Industry

### Chapter News

Save March 12, 2003 for our Chapter Achievement Award party. It's a special event at the Berkeley Yacht Club.

### Society News

#### Region 8 Conference *Rescheduled*

The conference will still be held in Las Vegas but the date has been postponed to July 20-22, 2003. Despite the best efforts of an incredible team of volunteers, the conference did not attract a sufficient number of registrants for the original January dates. Stay tuned for more information and opportunities to present and volunteer at the conference.

### Volunteers Needed

The planning effort for the STC Region 8 Conference has been infused with new energy and vision with the appointment of Patrick Morrissey from San Diego as Conference Manager. Patrick is recruiting a team and looking for volunteers to create a great program in a fun setting. Sound interesting? This is a great opportunity to get involved with STC members throughout Region 8 and make a contribution to your profession. Volunteers are needed for big and little jobs including:

- Publications and Publicity Committee Managers
- Conference Stem Managers
- Newsletter and Advertising Coordinators
- Webmaster and Web Committee members
- Conference Shopper
- Forms Designer and Database Coordinator
- Room Monitors and Table Hosts

For a complete list and description of each job, please contact Volunteer Committee Chair, [Kathryn Munn](#).

### STC Phone Seminar Series

STC's continuing series of phone seminars for 2003 continues through March. Two seminars will be offered each month through. Telephone seminars have been very successful in bringing cost-effective training to STC members and others seeking to improve their skills and knowledge. This year, STC is offering [online registration](#).

For details, including an explanation of how telephone seminars work, please visit the [STC site](#).

Future seminars scheduled are:

February 5, 2003, *Creating Persuasive Executive Summaries*. The seminar leader will be Stacia D. Kelly.

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### February

[Monthly Meeting](#), Wednesday, February 12  
Vo's in Oakland

### March

Chapter Service Award Party, Wednesday, March 12  
Berkeley Yacht Club, Berkeley Marina

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