Ragged Left

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

About STC   Home

STC

**Next
Berkeley
STC Meeting**

Columns

Resources

News

**Chapter
Activities**

Back Issues

**Editorial
Information**

**Contact
Editor**

April-May 2003
Volume 17 No. 2

In this issue

Next Meeting
If you're feeling stressed out these days, mark your calendar for May 14, when John Nieters, a licensed Acupuncturist and Chinese Herbal Therapist teaches stress management techniques.

Volunteer
Been missing the *Ragged Left?* We need content. Find out how you can help, while padding your portfolio with current publications to impress potential employers.

Interested in a leadership position? STC members from chapters all over Northern California gathered recently for a leadership day. Find out what it's all about and how you may get invited to the next one, in Viki Maki's report.

Resources
It really is all about who you know. Networking is important tool in our industry. Fortunately, conferences and workshops abound this month. Visit our networking links to locate the opportunities.

Debating what web authoring tool to choose? Read in Rob Peterson's To GoLive or Not to GoLive.

News & Reviews
Did you miss the Berkeley Chapter's Chapter Service Award Party in March? Check out Patrick McKenna's detailed account of the festivities.

The April meeting focused on Single Sourcing with XML in FrameMaker 7, which Joe Devney fills us in on in the Monthly Wrap.

New SIG, new senior members, upcoming elections, and the postponed conference! To keep up with the latest news and trends in the Chapter, Society and Industry with our News section.

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

About STC   Home

STC

Next Meeting: Wednesday May 14, 2003

- **Next Berkeley STC Meeting**
- **Columns**
- **Resources**
- **News**
- **Chapter Activities**
- **Back Issues**
- **Editorial Information**
- **Contact Editor**

Managing Stress
John Nieters, L.Ac., MS

Stress has long been the subject of much research and speculation. It is common knowledge that certain stressful events affect how we feel physiologically. Change, be it good or bad, causes stress to a human being, leaving him or her more susceptible to disease.

Chinese Medicine is one of the most effective methods for treating stress-related problems. The Chinese Medical view of stress is that excessive emotional stimulation or suppression sets up an imbalance of the basic life force energy called *Chi*, thereby injuring the body and producing disease. The emotions involved in stress to which Chinese medical theory gives special attention include anger, depression, over-excitement, sorrow, fear, shock, brooding and anxiety.

In Chinese medical theory, anger and depression affect the liver. Over-excitement affects the heart. Sorrow and grief affect the lung, while fear and shock affect the kidney. Brooding and worry and excessive thinking affect the spleen. So relaxing and avoiding stress can keep you alive!

Every person's response to stress is in some ways unique. You can proactively change the physiological imbalance that the stress creates, so your psychological reaction to stress changes, restoring both the body and mind to a proper homeostatic balance. You will be able to cope with problems and feel empowered to make changes in your lifestyle that decreases the stress in your life.

Please join us Wednesday, May 14, 2003, at the Vo's Restaurant in Oakland for a presentation on ways to avoid stress, where John Nieters will educate us on the little things we can do to express emotions without being overwhelmed, while feeling calmer and focused enough to deal with day-to-day problems.

John Nieters, L.Ac., MS, is a licensed Acupuncturist and Chinese Herbal Therapist practicing in Alameda. He is a professor of Herbology at the Academy of Chinese Culture and Health Sciences and at the Bodhisattva Healing Arts Center. He is a Diplomate in Acupuncture, Acupuncture Orthopedics, and Chinese Herbology.

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,

Ragged Left

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

About STC   Home

STC

April-May 2003 Monthly Columns

Next Berkeley STC Meeting

Columns

Resources

News

Chapter Activities

Back Issues

Editorial Information

Contact Editor

Notes from the Editor
Learn the latest news about the *Ragged Left*, STC-Berkeley's award-winning monthly newsletter, from Editor Jessica Livingston.

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

Monthly Recap
Each month a guest writer writes a recap of the previous meeting. Great way to refresh or find out what you missed. This month, we've got two! Joe Devney reports on the April program, *Single-Source Authoring with FrameMaker 7, XML and You!* And Patrick McKenna delivers the details of the Chapter's annual Celebration of Service party in March.

Resources
Every month we look for guest writers to keep us updated on books, software and other resources for our industry. This month Rob Peterson weighs in on web authoring tools in To GoLive or Not to GoLive.

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

About STC   Home

STC

Next Berkeley STC Meeting

Columns

Resources

News

Chapter Activities

Back Issues

Editorial Information

Contact Editor

Editor's Column
April-May 2003

Been missing the *Ragged Left?* A shortage of material has left me unable to produce a monthly publication. Just not enough articles to fill the pages. I hope this means everyone is just too busy being employed to volunteer, because if you're not working, it's a great way to keep your portfolio fresh while you search.

As always, I'm in need of articles for our monthly columns, so review the list below to see if any of our needs match your skills. We'd like to expand the *Ragged Left* staff with more volunteers. If you're interested in contributing to our industry while beefing up your credentials, 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.

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

About STC   Home

STC

Next Berkeley STC Meeting
Columns
Resources
News
Chapter Activities
Back Issues
Editorial Information
Contact Editor

President's Message
April-May 2003

Greetings STC-Berkeley chapter members and friends! Been missing the *Ragged Left*? The RL needs writers. Get electronically published on the web and impress potential employers in addition to your Mom. Contact Jessica Livingston, newsletter editor and find out how easy and fun it can be to contribute to the Chapter.

If you weren't there you missed a fun party on March 12, 2003 at the Rose Garden Inn in Berkeley. We acknowledged and celebrated the volunteer service of chapter members serving as chapter officers and managers and Touchstone competition volunteers. A 2003 Distinguished Chapter Service Award from International STC was presented to chapter member Viki Maki for her tireless and continuing service to the chapter and the profession. Great food, excellent music by the David Alt Trio, and an entertaining reading by a Victorian phrenologist rounded out the evening.

Coming up on May 14, 2003 is a presentation on stress reduction by John Nietres, Alameda acupuncturist. Whether you are the overworked employed or the under worked unemployed, his stress reduction tips can help. Also in the coming meeting lineup is a visit from STC 2nd Vice President, Andrea Ames, tentatively scheduled for June 11. Andrea will be on hand to present another 2003 Distinguished Chapter Service Award to an undisclosed chapter member. Mark your calendars now. An election for the 2003-2004 chapter officers is being held this month. Look for candidate statements, a ballot, and voting instructions on the Berkeley-STC website. The new slate of officers will need to fill all the manager jobs on the Executive Committee so consider helping out this year with the chapter program.

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 May 14, 2003 meeting!

Kathryn Munn

Ragged Left

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

About STC   Home

STC

- **Next Berkeley STC Meeting**
- **Columns**
- **Resources**
- **News**
- **Chapter Activities**
- **Back Issues**
- **Editorial Information**
- **Contact Editor**

Monthly Wrap

Each month rotating guest writers offer a review of the monthly meeting program. This month Joe Devney, a senior member of the Berkeley Chapter, and current candidate for Chapter President, offers a recap of the April meeting.

FrameMaker 7 and XML with Karl Matthews
by Joe Devney, Senior Member, Berkeley Chapter

FrameMaker, a publishing application from Adobe Systems, Inc., is an important tool for many technical communicators. Karl Matthews from Adobe came to the Berkeley chapter's April meeting to talk about the newest version of the application, FrameMaker 7, which was introduced last year. Matthews knows the application well: he is Adobe's Product Manager for FrameMaker.

Matthews' presentation was titled *FrameMaker 7.0 and XML: Responding to New Trends in Electronic Publishing*. He quoted statistics to illustrate the trends. Though most FrameMaker documents are printed or converted to PDF, publishing to CD-ROM and HTML is gaining in popularity. He also pointed out that, according to Adobe's surveys, writers, rather than graphic specialists, are responsible for technical illustrations 40 percent of the time. Finally, single-sourcing—publishing the same content to several channels—is also becoming more common.

One big change in version 7 is that Adobe has done away with its two-tier pricing model. Now the standard version of FrameMaker includes XML authoring and other features that formerly were restricted to the pricier FrameMaker + SGML product, which has been discontinued. FrameMaker 7 can publish a single document in PDF, HTML, XML, and SGML formats.

The application also can reside on a server, a feature that can be used to produce customized documents. For example, a website can allow a visitor to request certain information, and FrameMaker will create a book with just the necessary sections. This is possible because FrameMaker 7 has a programmer interface, with the development kit available as a free download.

Using a laptop and a projector, Matthews demonstrated several FrameMaker features. Some of them will help technical communicators who need to comply with Section 508 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act, which requires making the document available to people with disabilities. For example, one on-screen button changes the document to a single column with no background. This is easier for people with poor vision to read, and also works better with screen readers—devices that turn words on screen into speech output.

A number of file conversions are available in FrameMaker, some of them automatic. The application will change print PDF to web format and back again. It can produce HTML directly from a FrameMaker file using WebWorks publisher, a third-party product included with FrameMaker 7. Graphics are converted automatically to JPG and GIF from other formats when content is formatted for the web.

FrameMaker files can also be formatted for handheld devices, both Palm and PocketPC. Hyperlinks, bookmarks, and graphics still work. But the quality of any graphic is limited by the device displaying it, as Matthews illustrated by showing a slide of a monochrome, bar chart with somewhat jagged lines, the same chart that had shown up smooth and colorful on a web page earlier in the demonstration.

Matthews explained FrameMaker's XML capabilities at some length. The application keeps track of the XML hierarchy and warns the user if any element is out of place. It allows for conditional formatting: a warning in one part of his document had rules

Ragged Left

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

About STC   Home

STC

Next Berkeley STC Meeting
Columns
Resources
News
Chapter Activities
Back Issues
Editorial Information
Contact Editor

Resources

Each month rotating guest writers offer resources that benefit the technical writing industry. This month Rob Peterson, the Berkeley Chapter's VP of Membership, offers an analysis of web authoring tools.

To GoLive or Not to GoLive
Is Adobe's Web Authoring Tool Your Best Choice?
By Robert Peterson, STC Member

Adobe GoLive version 5.0, released in 2000, made a good run at the market served by Macromedia's Dreamweaver, but GoLive version 6 (February 2002) is better than Dreamweaver 4.0 in many ways.

Though Dreamweaver MX may take certain WYSIWYG HTML editor features a step further than GoLive 6.0, GoLive remains a safe choice for clean coding and total website management.

According to Kim Wimpsett, a writer for CNET.com's software reviews, "With Adobe GoLive 6.0, Adobe has produced one stellar development tool. Its HTML editing tools and WYSIWYG interface are accessible and powerful enough to build even the most complex sites, and if you use other Adobe applications, you'll appreciate GoLive's solid integration with those apps. In addition, GoLive's fantastic site management tool (Web Workgroup Server) makes this program ideal for professional developers working on medium-sized to large corporate sites."-Adobe GoLive 6.0, CNET.com, March 14, 2002

CNET also honored GoLive 6.0 with an Editors' Choice award, which it gives to high-quality computing products after careful evaluation by a panel of experts.

GoLive vs. Dreamweaver

At Arizona State University, an evaluation of GoLive 6.0 also took place. The department of Academic and Administrative Documents (AAD) evaluated GoLive 6.0 and Dreamweaver 4.0 for potential use with ASU's policies and procedures manuals website, www.asu.edu/aad/ manuals.

During the evaluation, it became clear that the two WYSIWYG editors, in general, are comparable. For educational institutions, however, multiple licenses of GoLive can be purchased at a significantly lower cost than licenses of Dreamweaver. In addition, GoLive 6.0's Web Workgroup Server and Adobe's LiveMotion 2.0, bundled with GoLive 6.0, made GoLive the obvious choice for AAD.

For private organizations, the choice is not so clear. Both GoLive and Dreamweaver offer virtually the same benefits, are in the same price range, and received comparable third party software reviews. The main advantage of GoLive 6.0 over Dreamweaver 4.0 is Adobe's WebDAV-enabled Web Workgroup Server, but this may not be a deciding factor for companies using Visual SourceSafe or other WebDAV-related programs.

WebDAV, or Web-based Distributed Authoring and Versioning, is a set of extensions to the HTTP protocol that allows users to collaboratively edit and manage files on remote web servers. With Adobe's Web Workgroup Server, users can centralize site management on one computer or file server, run a check-in/check-out library filing

Ragged Left

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

About STC　　Home

STC

Next Berkeley STC Meeting

Columns

Resources

News

Chapter Activities

Back Issues

Editorial Information

Contact Editor

Resources

Opportunities and articles to enhance your skills and job search.

Networking

Visiting other STC chapters and other writers' groups is a great way to expand your knowledge and networking circle. This month there is a lot of conferences and activites to check out around the Bay.

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.

Resources

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Ragged Left

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

About STC   Home

STC

Next Berkeley STC Meeting

Columns

Resources

News

Chapter Activities

Back Issues

Editorial Information

Contact Editor

News
April-May 2003
Catch up on the latest news from the Chapter, Society, and Industry

Chapter News
STC Berkeley Congratulates New Senior Members
The grade of senior member is conferred upon STC members who had held the grade of member in STC for five years. This year's additions are:

Naomi D. Black-Bilodeau
Kevin E. Griffin
Mary Anne Lee
Holly A. Zimmerman
Ted H. Fleischman
Janet Isadore
Moshoula A. Simonidis
Mary M. Goodell
Stephanie Krieger
Jessie Wood

Chapter Elections in May
Don't forget to vote! Check the Berkeley STC Chapter website for updates on the pending election.

Society News
Special Needs SIG
Taking the 'Dis' out of 'Disabilities': Special Needs SIG is looking for new members to support the twin missions of assisting technical communicators with disabilities in the practice of our profession and providing all technical communicators with information that will help them make communication products more accessible to users with disabilities.

A detailed mission statement, online newsletter and publication of Guidelines for Persons with Special Needs are available online. There is still much to accomplish, The Special Needs SIG needs both for active members to join SIG initiatives and patrons whose affiliation will help the SIG secure the budget it needs to fulfill its objectives.

To support the Special Needs SIG, you can check theSNSIG box when you renew your membership. If you have already submitted your STC membership renewal, download the SIG sign-up form and submit it directly to the Society Office. In either case, to be added to the SNSIG's newsletter distribution, email list or both, contact Daniel Voss.

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.

Ragged Left

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

About STC   Home

STC

Next Berkeley STC Meeting

Columns

Resources

News

Chapter Activities

Back Issues

Editorial Information

Contact Editor

Chapter Activities

May
Monthly Meeting, Elections, Wednesday, May 14
Vo's in Oakland

June
Monthly Meeting, Presentation of another Distinguished Service Award, Wednesday, June 11
Vo's in Oakland

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

About STC   Home

STC

Back Issues

| Next Berkeley STC Meeting |
| Columns |
| Resources |
| News |
| Chapter Activities |
| Back Issues |
| Editorial Information |
| Contact Editor |

Back issues of the Ragged Left are conveniently available online. Issues prior to July 2002 are in .pdf form.