

Ragged Left

The newsletter for the
Berkeley Chapter of the
Society for Technical
Communication

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Volume 20, Number 1
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Meeting Notes

MadCap Flare & the RoboHelp Saga

Presented by Mike Hamilton, VP of Product Management, MadCap
Berkeley STC November 2006 meeting

Report by Patrick Lufkin

Life doesn't offer many second chances, and in the competitive world of software creation, second chances are rarer still. The team behind MadCap Software got such a second chance, and with their XML-based Flare Help authoring tool they appear to be making the most of it.

In recent months, Mike Hamilton, MadCap's Vice President of Product Management, has been visiting Bay Area STC chapters telling the company's story and demonstrating Flare. He was at the San Francisco chapter in August and at the East Bay and Berkeley chapter meetings in December.

Before co-founding MadCap, Hamilton was product manager for RoboHelp for most of that product's storied life under Blue Sky, eHelp, and finally Macromedia. As product manager, Hamilton worked with the user community and guided the ongoing development of the various RoboHelp products.

As Hamilton tells it, as of 2003 RoboHelp was a very successful, but aging product. Its basic architecture had been laid down pre-Windows '95, before many of the standards and best practices of modern software design were established. Further development had become difficult: new code tended to break old code, and it was clear that the program needed a major overhaul.

In October 2003, RoboHelp's parent company, eHelp, was acquired by Macromedia. Hamilton says the RoboHelp team expected that this would bring an infusion of energy and resources needed to take RoboHelp to the next level. Instead, Hamilton says, it soon became obvious that Macromedia was not particularly interested in RoboHelp, but instead had plans for several of eHelp's other products, a few of which it wanted to keep and many of which it wanted to drop for various reasons. One by one, Macromedia killed off what Hamilton calls the "little Robos:" RoboPresenter, RoboLinker, RoboPdf, RoboScreenCapture, and finally RoboHelp for FrameMaker.

But, at first, RoboHelp was kept and, Hamilton says, the team worked hard to simplify the product lineup and bring it in line with other Macromedia offerings.

Then, in October 2004, Hamilton says, half of the RoboHelp team was unexpectedly let go, and the rest were told to document the existing RoboHelp code for development in India. As this was being done, plans changed again: In February 2005, the remainder of the team was let go and RoboHelp development under Macromedia effectively ended.

This is where the second chance came in. By effectively abandoning the product, and letting go of the entire RoboHelp team over a relatively short period, Macromedia did the team something of a favor.

Finding themselves all in the same boat, Hamilton says, the principal team

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TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION is the bridge between those who create ideas and those who use them. Conveying scientific and technical information clearly, precisely, and accurately is an essential occupation in all sectors of business and government.

THE SOCIETY FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION (STC) has members worldwide. Its members include writers and editors, artists and illustrators, photographers and audiovisual specialists, managers and supervisors, educators and students, employees and consultants.

STC strives to

- Advance the theory and practice of technical communication
- Promote awareness of trends and technology in technical communication
- Aid the educational and professional development of its members

MEMBERSHIP Membership is open to everyone. Classic membership is \$145/year with an additional \$15 enrollment fee. STC also offers Limited, E-Membership, and Student Membership options. To receive additional information and an application form, via mail or email.

- Send email to membership@stc-berkeley.org
- Send mail to Berkeley STC, PO Box 1007, Berkeley CA 94701-1007

INSURANCE Members of STC can apply for health, disability, and other insurance at STC group rates. For more information, contact STC office at stc@stc.org or (703) 522-4114.

WORLDWIDE ACTIVITIES STC's annual conference brings together more than 2,000 technical communicators from around the world for educational programs, seminars, and workshops conducted by experts in the field. Upcoming annual conference: Minneapolis, May 13-16, 2007. In addition the STC sponsors many regional conferences, which feature the same sorts of programs, seminars, and workshops on a more intimate scale. STC sponsors international and regional competitions in all aspects of technical communication. STC Special Interest Groups (SIGs) bring together members with common experiences and interests to share their skills and knowledge. STC SIGs include:

- Academic
- AccessAbility
- Canadian Issues
- Consulting and Independent Contracting
- Emerging Technologies
- Environmental, Safety, and Health Communication
- Illustrators and Visual Designers
- Information Design and Architecture
- Instructional Design & Learning
- International Technical Communication
- Lone Writer
- Management
- Marketing Communication
- Online
- Policies and Procedures
- Quality and Process Improvement
- Scientific Communication
- Single Sourcing
- Technical Editing
- Usability & User Experience

STC sponsors research grants and scholarships in technical communication.

STC publishes the quarterly journal *Technical Communication*, the newsletter *Intercom*, and other periodicals, reference materials, manuals, anthologies, standards, and booklets.

Formed in 1953, STC has today become the largest professional society in the world dedicated to advancing the theory and practice of technical communication.

LOCAL ACTIVITIES The six northern California chapters of STC conduct a variety of individual and joint activities. See page 6 for contacts for these chapters. See page 11 for a list of other local organizations in which STC members may be interested.

SUBSCRIPTIONS This newsletter is free to members of the Berkeley chapter.

ADVERTISING RATES The *Ragged Left* is not accepting advertising at this time.

SUBMISSIONS *Ragged Left* publishes original articles and illustrations. We edit them to meet our needs. You retain copyright but grant every STC publication royalty-free permission to reproduce the article or illustration in print or any other medium. Please talk with the editor for details of how to submit articles and illustrations.

The deadline for unsolicited submissions is the last Friday of the odd months.

Other STC publications are hereby granted permission to reprint articles from *Ragged Left*, provided such reprints credit the author and the specific *Ragged Left* issue, and a copy of any publication containing such a reprint is sent to the *Ragged Left* editor.

members contacted Bjorn Backland, the original designer of RoboHelp—who had been let go in the first round of layoffs. Backland, it turned out, was now working on a visual XML editor. It immediately became apparent that it could serve as a core for a new completely redesigned Help Authoring Tool. The team quickly realized it faced an unprecedented opportunity, a chance to design a new product to meet the known needs of its old RoboHelp customer base, without having to retain a single line of legacy code. It was an opportunity you would have to be crazy to pass up.

The team quickly formed MadCap. MadCap held its first trade show in March, where it announced that it intended to provide the Help community with an upgrade path. The new product would be named Flare after the universal call for help.

Knowing that RoboHelp was not the only product out there with legacy issues, Hamilton says MadCap determined to produce “the best Help authoring tool ever seen.” Flare would be entirely standards compliant. It would be written in C#, use an XML workflow, and run on Microsoft Vista when the new operating system is released. In keeping with its promise to RoboHelp users, Flare would seamlessly import RoboHelp projects and offer a user interface that RoboHelp users would find intuitive.

MadCap released Flare v1 in March 2006 and Flare v2 in October 2006. [Macromedia has since been bought by Adobe, who released a new version of RoboHelp January 2007.]

Hamilton demonstrated the latest product during his recent talk, and it looks very nice indeed.

Using the latest GUI styling, Flare uses a three panel interface. By default, the left panel contains the project design navigator, the center panel contains the actual editor, and the right panel contains various tools. For those who prefer another layout, every window in Flare can be floated and docked wherever the user wants to place it. Moreover, the product remembers its state when closed so you can reopen the program and pick up exactly where you left off.

Here are a few of the features Flare supports:

- Drag and drop editing
- Multiple document interface (unlimited number of topics open at the same time)
- Styles and cascading style sheets
- Unicode (important for internationalization)
- Hyperlinks insert
- Cross references insert
- Easy table management
- Conditional content
- Variables
- Snippets (reusable content)
- Conditional index entries
- Command line compile/batch processes
- Source documents validate against a known schema
- Validating XML editor with structure bar
- Index only mode (you can mark index entries, but can't corrupt text)
- Ranked search, search highlighting

Flare also supports full-circle single-sourcing for Word and FrameMaker.

In the current version, Flare can be used to generate three different kinds of online output (DotNet Help, Microsoft HTML Help, and WebHelp) and two types of printed output (Microsoft Word and FrameMaker). In addition, Flare supports the use of conditions to produce different instances of a given output type to meet different needs.

The product ships with several very well done interactive tutorials—*Touring the Flare Workspace*, *6 Steps to Online Help*, *Flare Compared with RoboHelp*, and *Single-Sourcing in Flare*—and several movies covering aspects of the program.

For those who know that they will never publish in one of the online help formats, MadCap plans to release a companion product, Blaze, which it says will fill the niche between Word and FrameMaker, both of which are showing their age.

Those who are interested can download a thirty-day free trial of Flare from www.Madcapsoftware.com/.

Patrick Lufkin is a writer and editor who often contributes to STC publications. He is chair of the Kenneth M. Gordon Scholarship for technical communication, and recently co-managed the 2006 Northern California Technical Communication Competition.



President's Letter

February 2007

I don't know how it is in other parts of the world, but here on the west coast of the USA we don't have a lot of contact with STC headquarters. I always vote, but I haven't been excited about headquarters affairs since our local petition candidate, Lance Gelein, ran for Second Vice-President against the nominating committee's choices, Larry Kunz and George Hayhoe. That was eleven years ago. Lance won, but nothing changed very much.

Recently, however, headquarters has become interesting again. STC came through the dotcom crash with a strong realization that we had to change or risk fading away. Now, after two years of "the transformation," our organization has a direction and a leader. The leader is Susan Burton, our new Executive Director, who is traveling around the country to explain STC's strategic objectives to all of us.

If strategic objectives make you think of Dilbert, please take a look at www.stc.org/about/strategicObjectives01.asp [a complex chart]. The graphic may still remind you of Dilbert, but the message is clear: STC is essential to our profession and our livelihoods. The concise presentation on the STC website hides years of thought and many detailed plans.

Susan Burton is visiting one northern California chapter—ours. Please come to our February 14th meeting to hear what Susan has to say and to let her know what we have to say.

Susan's visit won't be our only contact with headquarters this year. In September, the STC board will meet in the Bay Area, probably in San Francisco. I am on the planning committee. I want to hear your ideas about what sort of access we should have to the board's proceedings and what sorts of opportunities we should provide for local members to socialize with members of the board. Please send me email with your ideas.

January Party

by Joe Devney

Continuing a tradition begun last year, the January STC Berkeley meeting was a change from the usual format of an educational guest speaker and a modest dinner. This was primarily a social event, and also a chance to acknowledge the chapter volunteers and to announce the winners of the local technical communication competition.

The event was held at the Highland Country Club in the Oakland hills, in a pleasant room with a fireplace and a view toward San Francisco Bay. The organizing committee included **Jean Lundquist**, **Mary Ann Campbell**, and **Patrick Lufkin**, with moral support and advice from **Jessica Livingston**, who handled catering duties at last year's party. Other chapter members—and even a non-member, Melody Brumis's sister—played more informal roles, simply asking "what can I do?" when they arrived. A small team of volunteers led by Hospitality Manager Jean Lundquist set out a buffet dinner that included a lasagna entrée and a variety of desserts. Throughout the evening, **Jim Dexter** played DJ, providing pleasant music from his own large collection.

The crowd included old friends who knew each other from the Berkeley chapter, new STC members, people from other chapters, and winners of the competition. And, as became apparent during the "business" portion of the event, it also included a surprising number of current and former STC chapter presidents. For most of the evening, the room buzzed with conversation, with fluid knots of people drifting from the bartender's station to the buffet table to the display of competition entries.

But there was a bit of chapter business to conduct as well. Midway through the evening, chapter president **Richard Mateosian** got everyone's attention, and began the recognition portion of the event.

For the second year, STC Berkeley had sponsored a technical communication competition to raise money for the Kenneth Gordon Scholarship, with a small portion of the

proceeds staying with the chapter. The entries that won awards were on display all evening in the banquet room, so the attendees could admire and learn from them. Two of the winning entries will go on to STC's international technical communication competition. Patrick Lufkin announced the competition winners, including some who were in attendance.

The chapter's energy really does come from its volunteers. Richard used this opportunity to recognize those people who had contributed to the success of the chapter during 2006. Each volunteer received a certificate and a small gift.

To culminate this year's recognition activities, STC Director **Beau Cain**, representing the STC Board, awarded the Distinguished Chapter Service Award (DCSA) to former chapter president **Kathryn Munn**. The chapter leadership can nominate a volunteer who has made extraordinary contributions. Our chapter, because we have fewer than 200 members, can nominate at most one DCSA per year. The STC Board makes the final decision.

As part of STC's transformation, what used to be called special interest groups (SIGs) are now analogous to chapters. Each is a community. A chapter is a geographical community, and a SIG is a community of interest. As a result, SIGs can now nominate volunteers for an award analogous to the DCSA. **Judith Herr**, the society level advocate for SIGs, former president of the Management SIG, and a member of our chapter, presented awards from the Management SIG to Richard Mateosian and Patrick Lufkin. Richard is treasurer of the Management SIG, and Patrick is the manager. Both are also members of our chapter.

To close the business portion of the event, Richard conducted a raffle, a tradition at STC Berkeley. This time it included some unique prizes. Beau Cain brought tote bags from the 2002 Region 8 conference—the conference that never happened. And chapter member **Paul Sinasohn**, who is appearing in *The Mikado* at a theater in Livermore, donated two tickets to the show, plus some extras to

make for a full evening.

After the raffle, everyone went back to chatting, networking, catching up with old friends and Jean and her team served dessert.

If you enjoyed the event, thought it could be improved, or are sorry you missed it, maybe you would like to volunteer to help with next year's party!

Web Usability: The Basics

by Eric Hughes, Managing Director, *Simplexity, LLC*

In the [November/December *Ragged Left*](#), we reviewed a presentation by usability expert Harris Kravatz from the Oracle User Experience Group. In that article, we defined web usability as: “a means to design and test how easy a website or web application is to use for its visitors.” Harris identified six best practice criteria to consider in a user-centered development philosophy:

1. navigation/organization
2. simplicity
3. consistency
4. readability/visibility
5. feedback
6. tolerance

In this and subsequent columns, I will dissect those criteria and provide a practical process to ensure they are addressed. I will also expand the criteria to include:

- performance/ availability
- relevant/timely content
- appealing design

There has been a battle going on in the web development world that, at times, rivals the Hatfields and the McCoys. It is the battle between graphic designers and usability architects. The former are experts in creating visceral response (form), the latter in dealing with behavior (function). They both design and influence user interface (UI), the means by which visitors interact with a website. Since the mid 1980's, this confluence of form and function has typically been referred to as interaction design. (“Designing Interac-

tions”, Bill Moggridge, 2007, page 14.) There are great designers who totally get usability, just as there are usability experts who totally get design, however finding these folks can be a challenge. Even when you do, the priorities of each discipline are often at odds. Design will always be in the catbird seat. Clients find it much easier to buy something that looks great over something that (might) work well, just as many people will buy a Mercedes SUV, even with overwhelming evidence that it will break down far more often than the Toyota Highlander.

It is worth mentioning that the criteria and processes that are discussed here apply to traditional brochure-ware sites, interactive applications, and “Web2.0” sites. In any of these areas, the utmost respect should be paid to the people who will ultimately make or break development efforts—the audience. There has been much written recently about ‘personas.’ A persona is a description of a fictitious character that helps define any audience segment important to the success of a software application development effort. They can be written for web, desktop or other software applications, and are used to help clients, developers, and product managers focus on making smart, user-centric decisions. Whether you read about personas in Wikipedia, or go straight to the source (read *The Inmates are Running the Asylum* by Alan Cooper), understanding who the audience will be is critical to the success of any application development effort. Every best-practice criteria mentioned in the first paragraph of this column is only useful to the extent it is based on the understanding of how that criterion is going to be perceived by the audience.

So the first thing to research and understand about usability is that it is measured against criteria that are defined in relation to who the audience will be, and how they will perceive and use the website being developed. Defining the audience will also help you understand the business that is paying for the development effort. Many clients are involved in businesses that took years to understand. If you try and understand their business as well as they do, you (and they)

may be disappointed. However, if you try and understand their customers, and through those customers, the business, you will get far less opposition to your process. Should you run into a client that won't help define their customers, perhaps you should re-consider the relationship, because you will have a very difficult time defining and measuring the success of your project.

In the next column, we'll discuss what the navigation/organization criteria is all about, and a process to define it. I'd also like to invite you to send me good and bad examples of interaction design on the web. I'll discuss one example in each future column. Send your ideas to eric@simplexity.net. My examples for discussion next month are www.pottery-barn.com and www.sugar-bowlbakery.com. Take a look and let me know what you think.

Resources mentioned in this column:

- Alan Cooper. *The Inmates are Running the Asylum*, Sams Publishing, Indianapolis, 2004, 2nd edition
- Bill Moggridge. *Designing Interactions*, MIT Press, Cambridge, 2007
- Wikipedia, Online encyclopedia at www.wikipedia.com

Other STC chapters in Northern California

East Bay: www.ebstc.org

North Bay: www.stc-northbay.org

Sacramento: www.stcsacramento.org

San Francisco: www.stc-sf.org

Silicon Valley: www.stc-siliconvalley.org

Green Forecast Looks Rosy

by Gina Gotsill

I'm new to the world of technical communications—just a few weeks shy of six months. Like most newcomers, I arrived with plenty of questions: Mostly, I want to know what the future holds and how to keep up in an industry known for innovation and constant change.

I'm not alone. Seasoned technical communicators also look for ways to stay sharp and relevant. So, I posed some of my questions to experts, and dug around for facts online as well.

Here's my forecast for 2007 and beyond:

Everybody's talking about DITA

Developed by IBM, Darwin Information Typing Architecture (DITA) is a standardized framework used to manage XML documents and document types. The technology has been around for a while, but organizations still find obstacles to adopting XML, such as cost, old standards and lack of compatibility between document types. But there's more to DITA's story than obstacles.

Companies that adopt XML-based tools and techniques often see higher profits, although not always right away, says Anna van Raaphorst, Principal and Content Specialist for VR Communications, Inc. DITA's architecture allows companies to interchange and re-use content-features that save time and money.

"More and more companies are customizing their content," van Raaphorst says. "One example where this is effective is with translation. To translate accurately and quickly, content needs to be in a format that can be easily changed."

Structured authoring tools, such as XMLSpy, Arbortext Editor, and XMetaL help writers produce well-formed and valid DITA, van Raaphorst says. Seasoned technical communicators step outside their comfort zone when they first encounter these tools, mostly

because each section of a document must stand alone rather than flow from one chapter to the next.

Van Raaphorst recommends technical communicators search for projects that lead to proficiency with XML-based tools and techniques and content management. She also recommends attending workshops and conferences, taking XML courses and attending user group meetings. One choice is the Silicon Valley DITA Interest Group, which meets on the second Wednesday of each month [same night as Berkeley STC monthly meetings]. Find out more about the group at svdig.ditamap.com. For resource information on DITA, visit www.ditamap.com.

For an introduction to DITA, visit van Raaphorst's company website, www.vrcommunications.com and click on Resources to view the DITA Open Toolkit User Guide and Reference she wrote with her husband, Richard Johnson.

Job Market 2007

The future of the technical communications industry reads like a Bay Area weather report: Sunny and warm in some areas, with patchy fog in others.

After several years of average growth following the dot bomb, high-tech is active again. Government statistics predict rapid growth in the number of wage and salary jobs in the computer systems design and related services industry. Between 2004 and 2014, the U.S. Department of Labor expects 453,000 jobs will be created in our industry—that's a 35.6 percent increase in technical writing jobs alone.

"Demand is definitely on the increase," says Meryl Natchez, CEO of TechProse. "There are many more opportunities today, and more varied opportunities. The profession is gaining respect and people recognize the importance of corporate communications." TechProse lists current job opportunities on their website, www.techprose.com, but Natchez says that many jobs are filled before they are advertised.

Like most technical communications experts,

Natchez recommends individuals keep their skills up to date. "Whatever the area of expertise, it pays to remain current with new technologies," she says. "At the same time, there is also always room for generalists who are willing to do whatever it takes to meet a specific project need."

Andrew Davis, president of Synergistech, says he foresees strong demand for technical writers and technical trainers who can create content independent of subject matter experts. "Data security, wireless telecom, and certain niche applications are hot right now," Davis says. "But the most valuable skill remains that of being able to create accurate, relevant, developer-oriented content without hand-holding."

Davis predicts weak demand for non-technical technical writers, trainers, course developers, and editors. Companies no longer have the resources to train non-technical workers, nor do they think far enough ahead to bring lower-wage workers up to speed, Davis says.

Davis agrees with a U.S. Department of Labor career guide, which predicts that employment growth won't be as robust as it was in the 1990s due in part to offshore outsourcing to lower-wage foreign countries.

Venture capitalists continue to contribute to Bay Area startups as they did in the 1990s, but most product development is happening offshore.

"It's unlikely that local technical communicators who haven't kept their technical skills current will benefit dramatically (from venture capital)," Davis says. "The market for their services is completely globalized."

The Extra Mile

Natchez has a slightly different view. She believes that to be employable in a competitive market, technical communicators must add value to their employer or contract, and enhance their own careers in the process. To meet this goal, Natchez suggests that technical communicators take time to understand the business problem and find a solution.

"That means not just writing a user manual," Natchez says, "but understanding how the user needs to access information, what they already know, and how to present the information so it really solves the problem."

After 25 years in technical and corporate communications, Natchez says the keys to advancing in the industry include a willingness to volunteer for professional organizations, take on less attractive tasks and do a superb job, and keep an upbeat, can-do attitude.

Van Raaphorst recommends yet another route to success: Collaboration.

Although van Raaphorst admits it's not always easy to collaborate, she says the breadth of skills required to be successful is far greater today than it was in the past. By collaborating, technical communicators produce better, more complete work, she says.

"It really helps if you can learn how subject matter experts and fellow collaborators think," van Raaphorst says, "and how you can rely on each other."

Get Involved

Technical communicators have many volunteer opportunities available to them. Here are a few ideas:

Opportunity Junction (formerly known as OPTIC) - Provides low-income Contra Costa residents with the technology and life skills that enable them to become economically self-sufficient.

www.opportunityjunction.org

The Volunteer Center of the East Bay - This group's website features a database of volunteer opportunities in Contra Costa and Alameda Counties.

www.helpnow.org

And last but not least, **STC**. There are five chapters in and around the Bay Area—find the one you like, and lend a hand.

www.stc.org/membership/chapterSearch01.asp

Gina Gotsill is a proposal writer at TechProse, a Lafayette-based corporate communications consulting firm.

Meetings

Where is STC Going: Six Strategic Objectives

by Susan Burton, STC Executive Director
Wednesday, February 14, 2007, 7:30-9:00pm
 Highlands Country Club
 110 Hiller Drive
 Oakland, CA 94618



The advance-order price for dinner and meeting is \$18 for members, \$15 for student members and \$21 for non-members. For those attending the meeting only, the cost is \$12 for members and non-members, \$10 for students. If you do not reserve in advance, dinner may or may not be available, as we order dinner based on the number of reservations.

Parking

Please do not park in the country club parking lot. It is small and reserved for members. Parking in the street (a fairly steep hill) is free. The earlier you arrive, the nearer you can park.

AC Transit no longer serves Tunnel Road. The nearest you can get is Claremont and Ashby. From there it's about 1.2 miles, all uphill.

Monthly Meetings

Our chapter holds a dinner meeting the second Wednesday of each month at the Shattuck Plaza Hotel, 2086 Allston Way, just west of Shattuck Avenue in Berkeley. The Hotel is across the street from the BART station at Allston and Shattuck.

Upcoming Meetings

FrameMaker-to-Acrobat Advanced Techniques

by Shlomo Perets, MicroType
Wednesday, March 14, 2007, 6-9:30pm
 Shattuck Plaza Hotel
 2086 Allston Way, Berkeley

The advance-order price for dinner and meeting is \$18 for members, \$15 for student members and \$21 for non-members. For those attending the meeting only, the cost is \$12 for members and non-members, \$10 for students. If you do not reserve in advance, dinner may or may not be available, as we order dinner based on the number of reservations.

Meeting Agenda

- 6:00 Check-in, networking, and conversation.
- 6:30 Dinner.
- 7:15 Chapter business and announcements. Anyone can announce jobs that they know about.*
- 7:30 Formal program. Usually we have a speaker or panel of speakers on a topic related to the business or technology of technical communication.
- 8:30 Conversation, offline questions for the speaker, follow-up on job announcements
- 9:00 Clear the room. Move conversations to the sidewalk.

* **Attendees**, please announce open positions, and bring job listings for distribution.

Recruiters are welcome to attend meetings, place literature on a designated table, and talk with attendees one-on-one during the informal parts of the meeting. We ask them not to announce specific jobs during the formal announcement period, but they are free to stand up and identify themselves.

Similarly, we ask anyone else with commercial announcements to confine themselves to calling attention to the availability of literature on the designated table.



Berkeley STC Meeting Location and Directions

Give the following address to your favorite mapping program:
2086 Allston Way, Berkeley, CA 94704

By BART

Get off at the downtown Berkeley station (Richmond line). Emerge from the west side of the Downtown Berkeley BART station. Walk south on Shattuck one block to Allston Way and turn right.

By Car

From north of Berkeley on I-80, take the University Avenue exit (east). Turn right on Shattuck Avenue. Allston Way is three blocks south.

From south of Berkeley, take 880 north from San Jose. Continue through Oakland on 880. Follow the highway as it curves sharply to the right (where traffic merges in) and becomes 980. Continue on 980 to Highway 24 (toward Berkeley and Walnut Creek). Take the first exit from 24 (Martin Luther King Jr./51st). Turn right on 51st and make an immediate left onto Shattuck. Proceed north on Shattuck 2.3 miles to downtown Berkeley. Allston Way is immediately before the BART station.

Parking

The nearest lot is on Oxford, between Kitteredge and Allston. Flat rate of \$4.00 for the evening (subject to change—not under our control).

Street parking is scarce, but free after 6:00 p.m.



*Walking to your car or BART?
We can't guarantee you an escort, but we'll try.*

Chapter News

Annual Festive Event and Award Ceremony

Many, many thanks to everyone who worked so hard to make the party a success! Especially Jean who slaved away in the kitchen while the rest of us were partying and then stayed late to do the dishes.

Membership Update

by Jim Dexter

Total Chapter Membership: 159
(up 7 since December 2006)

STC News

STC 2007 Elections

STC's 2007 election will open in early March. To help members make informed choices, STC has posted brief biographies about each candidate to the STC website. Members can also use the "Ask the Candidate" feature on the website to submit questions directly to the candidates.

Voting instructions and ballots will be sent to all members in March.

Next issue of Ragged Left may include some statements from candidates.

Related Events

Industry News

ComponentOne® Announces Doc-To-Help 2006 v3.1

New Release Offers Support for Windows Vista and the 2007 Microsoft Office System including Seamless Integration with Word 2007. See the ComponentOne website (www.doctohelp.com or www.componentone.co.uk) for more information.



Other Organizations

American Medical Writers Association (AMWA) of Northern California. Meets periodically at various Bay Area locations. www.amwancal.org

American Society for Training and Development, Mount Diablo Chapter. Meets monthly in Danville. <http://mtdiablostd.org>.

American Society of Indexers, Golden Gate Chapter. www.asindexing.org/site/chapters.shtml#golden

Association for Women in Computing, San Francisco Bay Area chapter
www.awc-sf.org

International Association of Business Communicators, San Francisco chapter. A network of professionals committed to improving the effectiveness of organizations through strategic interactive and integrated business communication management
<http://sf.iabc.com>

National Writers Union (UAW). A labor union for freelance writers of all genres.
www.nwu.org

Northern California Science Writers' Association. Quarterly meetings and other events.
www.ncswa.org