



Society for  
Technical  
Communication

STC Headquarters  
9401 Lee Highway, Suite 300  
Fairfax VA 22031  
(703) 522-4114  
Fax 703-522-2075  
[stc@stc.org](mailto:stc@stc.org)

**Chief Executive Director:**  
Kathryn Burton  
[kathryn.burton@stc.org](mailto:kathryn.burton@stc.org)

**Membership Manager:**  
Julia O'Connor  
[julia.oconnor@stc.org](mailto:julia.oconnor@stc.org)

**STC President:** Dr. Hillary  
Hart [hart@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:hart@mail.utexas.edu)

#### **Chapter Officers & Volunteers**

**President:** Richard  
Mateosian  
[president@stc-berkeley.org](mailto:president@stc-berkeley.org)

**VP Programs:** Linda Urban  
[programs@stc-berkeley.org](mailto:programs@stc-berkeley.org)

**VP Membership:** Patrick  
Lufkin [membership@stc-berkeley.org](mailto:membership@stc-berkeley.org)

**Secretary:** Susan Jaeger  
[secretary@stc-berkeley.org](mailto:secretary@stc-berkeley.org)

**Treasurer:** Nicolette Davis  
[treasurer@stc.berkeley.org](mailto:treasurer@stc.berkeley.org)

**Public Relations:** Carole  
Baden [publicrelations@stc-berkeley.org](mailto:publicrelations@stc-berkeley.org)

**Employment:** Jeannie  
Egbert  
[employment@stc-berkeley.org](mailto:employment@stc-berkeley.org)

**Acting Webmaster:** Linda  
Urban  
[internet@stc-berkeley.org](mailto:internet@stc-berkeley.org)

**Member-at-large:** Patrick

# Ragged Left

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

July 2011  
Volume 24, Number 2

---

## In this issue

- [Editor's Notes](#) page 1
- [President's Notes](#) page 2
- [Program Notes](#) page 3
  - [May 2011 program notes](#): Turning Content Into Gold: A Presentation and Work Session
  - [June 2011 program notes](#): Optimizing your Portfolio: Are you ready for a bidding war for your services?
  - [July 2011 program notes](#): Managing Multiple Information Channels: Strategies for Effective Presentations
- [Upcoming Programs](#) page 11
- [Student Corner](#) page 12
- [Meeting Logistics](#) page 13
- [Other Local STC Chapters](#) page 16
- [Other Organizations](#) page 16

---

## Editor's Notes

by Gwendolynne Barr

Dear readers, we have turned over the editor position at *Ragged Left* as Jennie Abbingsole gave birth to a beautiful boy. I want to thank her for her hard work and for helping me make a smooth transition.

I intend to publish *Ragged Left* bimonthly, at the end of each odd-numbered month. Please submit unsolicited materials at least two weeks prior, by the 15th. I also hope to add new features: take a look at [Student Corner](#) and keep an eye out for a section on employment and training.

### Volunteering

As always, we welcome volunteers--in fact, we *need* volunteers. The quality of this newsletter will be low if the editor does all the writing. Please [email me](#) if you would be willing to write an article on one of our monthly presentations. To cover 2011, we need writers for:

Ragged Left - July 2011

Lufkin

[memberatlarge@stc-berkeley.org](mailto:memberatlarge@stc-berkeley.org)

**Past-President:** Joe Devney  
[past-president@stc-berkeley.org](mailto:past-president@stc-berkeley.org)

**Meeting Coordinator:**  
Tonie Flores

**Newsletter:** Gwendolynne Barr  
[newsletter@stc-berkeley.org](mailto:newsletter@stc-berkeley.org)

**Education:** Need volunteer!  
[education@stc-berkeley.org](mailto:education@stc-berkeley.org)

**Elections:** Need volunteer!  
[elections@stc-berkeley.org](mailto:elections@stc-berkeley.org)

**Recognition:** Need volunteer!  
[recognition@stc-berkeley.org](mailto:recognition@stc-berkeley.org)

**Volunteers:** Need volunteer!  
[volunteers@stc-berkeley.org](mailto:volunteers@stc-berkeley.org)

#### Other contacts

**Chapter Job List:**  
[employment@stc-berkeley.org](mailto:employment@stc-berkeley.org)

**Address, phone, or email changes:**  
[membership@stc-berkeley.org](mailto:membership@stc-berkeley.org)

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

- August
- October
- December

There is no obligation to write *War and Peace*. A short summary of the program is enough. Thanks to those who have written in the past.

### Assistant Editor

I would also like to announce that I am looking for an assistant editor. Specifically, I am looking for someone who helps me gather content so that we can add new features and write articles on something other than the monthly program. Please [send me an email](#) if you are interested.

I look forward to being your editor and am always open to your [feedback](#).

---

## President's Notes

*by Richard Mateosian*

When I ran for president in 2006, I had already served two terms ten years earlier, but I felt that we were entering troubled times. I wanted to use my connections with STC headquarters, my understanding of the forces affecting our industry, and my experience of earlier troubled times in our area to help our chapter survive and thrive. We now have half the membership we had then, but we are thriving. Our chapter is financially healthy, and our meetings are lively and well attended. Even more important, in addition to our long-serving leadership, we have a crew of enthusiastic new volunteers to help carry the chapter into the future.

As I announced last issue, I will not run for re-election this year, so someone else will have to step up to do the job. If you're that person, let me know, and I'll be happy to show you how I do it. You can do it your own way, but it helps to know what you're changing. I've even written it down, mostly.

Nicki Davis, our treasurer, is also hoping to train a replacement. Thanks to her, the job of treasurer is well defined and manageable.

There are many other volunteer positions, large and small. Just ask any of our volunteers at a chapter meeting or send them email. We all have aliases that you can find on the chapter website.

Abruptly changing the subject, STC has gone to great lengths to provide a facility for networking within STC. If you have not yet used MySTC, log in to [stc.org](http://stc.org) and check it out. There are many groups there, including one for our chapter and another for STC NorCal. That group is for anyone interested in activities of the six northern California chapters. We will soon be starting this year's Touchstone competition, and the STC NorCal group is one of the places we will use to coordinate our activities.

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

[STC Membership](#) is open to everyone. Classic membership is \$215 per year with an additional \$25 per chapter and \$10 per SIG. STC also offers Limited, E-Membership, and Student Membership options. To receive additional information and an application form:

- Email [membership@stc-berkeley.org](mailto:membership@stc-berkeley.org)
- Send snail-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](mailto:stc@stc.org) or (703) 522-4114.

# Program Notes

## May 2011 Program Notes

### Turning Content Into Gold: A Presentation and Work Session

*Presentation by Paula Toth*

*Article by Susan Vance*

Managing and exploiting assets is a key to business success. Content is a major asset for many organizations, and by improving content quality, technical communicators can play an important role in the organization's success.

### Content is a Business Asset, not a Liability

Corporations traditionally view product content as a necessary evil and provide it begrudgingly to users. They cannot, after all, generate revenue from content; it doesn't even generate goodwill.

That said, corporate decision-makers do buy into the concept of content as a business asset when convinced that quality documentation costs less to produce, reduces support costs, and builds customer loyalty. For instance, a well-planned and well-implemented single-source content system boosts content quality as well as writer productivity, an argument backed by a solid body of industry metrics. Similar numbers bear out the business gains associated with improving the user experience by, for example, employing a "right for me" content approach.

### Keys to Quality Content

High-quality, low-cost content results when content is designed for reuse, the publication team is highly productive, and the focus is on the user. These are the five strategies critical to achieving such an environment:

- **O**ptimize content
- **S**eparate authoring and publishing
- **S**treamline processes
- **M**anage team resources
- **S**ocialize content

They are referred to as the OSSMS strategies (from the first letter of each).

Implementing these strategies successfully requires significant resource commitment, effective leadership, and change management, typically requiring a phased approach over one or two years.

Each strategy represents a specific set of elements:

## 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. [The 2012 STC Summit will be held in Chicago, May 20-23, 2011.](#) 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 sponsors research grants and scholarships in technical communication.

STC publishes the 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. These and a list of other local organizations in which STC members may be interested are included in *Ragged Left*.

## Strategy 1: Optimize Content

Work from a single-source, topic-based content structure. Conduct a detailed user analysis and chunk content into topics that you can modularize and reuse according to user information needs. Author topics once. Modularize by subject. Remove redundancy and excess. Apply a task-driven information architecture. Store content in a unified repository of topics and graphics, and assign someone to curate it (maintain file versioning and integrity).

## Strategy 2: Separate Authoring and Publishing

The writer responsible for each stage of a deliverable's life-cycle is virtually assured of substandard results. Authoring or publishing, or both, suffers. If your publications group is large, create a simplified authoring environment so authors can focus on the content. Provide editors, production staff, and illustrators. If your group is small, adopt the "write first, publish second" model. Set aside separate times for authoring and publishing and protect those times.

## Strategy 3: Streamline Processes

Usually carried out piecemeal on an ad hoc basis, process improvement is much more effective when teams invest the time and resources to approach it systematically:

- Review the workflows, procedures, and tools with an eye toward simplifying them.
- Automate any repetitive tasks, content development (templates, macros, project workflows), and output generation (such as PDF and HTML).
- Standardize terms, style and formatting templates, and document structures (such as introductions, lists, and notes).
- Train the team. Communicate with authors, editors, publishers, reviewers, subject matter experts, and others as appropriate about the rationale and use of the changes you make.

## Strategy 4: Manage Team Resources

Utilize the skills that team members bring to a project more effectively. Create a core team of individuals with mixed skill levels in specific specialties, for example, graphics creation, product knowledge, and tool use. Partner high-level skills with low-level skills to build expertise; consider using consultants as mentors. Use experts sparingly to monitor a low-level partner's effort and to spice up the result. Identify reviewers and subject matter experts by subject area and expertise. Avoid information silos by collaborating and sharing resources across business units.

## Strategy 5: Socialize Content

Social media is encouraging companies toward more one-to-one user interaction as they recognize its potential for cost savings and increased customer satisfaction. As providers of critical product

## Subscriptions

This newsletter is free to the public.

## Advertising rates

*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 15th of every odd-numbered month.

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.

Contact *Ragged Left* at [newsletter@stc-berkeley.org](mailto:newsletter@stc-berkeley.org).

information, technical communicators are uniquely positioned to influence these two aspects of business success by applying social media to engage users concerning content.

If you publish online content, there are a number of social media tools at your disposal. For instance, content ratings and comment fields greatly simplify and encourage user feedback. Wikis, forums, and blogs enable users to contribute content, and they offer a window into user terminology, contexts, and information needs. Web analytics provide insight into navigation and search patterns, unused content, and more. User profiling can help you deliver customized, "right for me" content.

## Applying the Strategies at Work

Most publication infrastructures already incorporate many of the elements of the five OSSMS strategies. To help bridge the gap between abstract strategies and real-world application, Paula provides the OSSMS Score Card to rate, element by element, how an existing system applies the strategies. Low scores indicate specific areas to address; high scores identify strengths. Simple but very effective, the score card gives teams an accurate assessment of their current tools and processes upon which to base subsequent decision-making and planning.

*Paula Toth is the TechProse team's in-house subject matter expert on DITA and single-source solutions. With nearly 20 years of experience in technical communications, she is passionate about helping organizations streamline and reuse their content. She has worked with TechProse since 1990 and has managed single sourcing projects for small firms and large corporations. For the last nine years, her focus has been single-source analysis, development, and information architecture.*

*Susan Vance has over 15 years' experience in technical content development and instructional design for enterprise software applications and platforms*

## June 2011 Program Notes

### Optimizing your Portfolio: Are you ready for a bidding war for your services?

*Presentation by Andrew Davis*

*Article by Jane Olivera*

Andrew's focus in recruiting is technical writing positions in writing developer documentation, or dev-docs. The job market in this area has lately become more active again, and companies are hiring writers.

One aspect of the current job market is that the companies hiring have often not been allowed to hire locally until the situation is "broken," and this means they need more than simple writing, they need rescuing. The hiring managers are looking for what Andrew

referred to as a "set-and-forget" writer, someone who they feel can eliminate their risk and who can get the job done for them without extra effort on their part. Andrew gives us a roadmap for just how to optimize your portfolio so it demonstrates that you are the writer they should hire.

Andrew's goals for the presentation were four-fold:

- Keep you sane
- Let you secure work reliably and efficiently
- Give you ideas, and give you hope
- Anticipate and address issues

## Your Portfolio's Job

The contents of a technical communicator's portfolio should prove the following:

- Your resume's claims
- That you understand your audience
- That you know the tools the job requires
- That you can organize, write, and deliver

## Portfolio Content: Prove You Can Organize, Write, and Deliver

The focus of the presentation was on portfolios for software documentation jobs. For this kind of work, the kinds of samples (3-5 pages) that demonstrate that you can organize, write, and deliver include:

- Document plan
- Table of Contents
- Conceptual content
- Procedural material
- Reference material
- Glossary
- Index

There are three audiences you may be writing for: end users, developers, and admins. For end users, the kind of writing that sells best is clear, crisp, and friendly prose. For developers, you should include code in context (though you don't need to write the code). Both developers and admins need detailed, complete instructions. All three audiences benefit from appropriate screen shots, illustrations and scenario-based tutorials.

## Presenting Your Portfolio

Andrew describes three keys to effective portfolio presentations: accessibility, relevance, and context.

**Accessibility.** The days of walking into an interview with a pile of writing samples for the hiring manager to look at (for the first time) have been replaced by the requirement to provide them with online access to your portfolio before the interview. There are several ways to put your portfolio online, such as your LinkedIn profile, a Website you control access to, email, or even a guided tour using tools such as [join.me](http://join.me) or [gotomeeting.com](http://gotomeeting.com).

**Relevance.** Based on the hiring manager's requirements, explain how you approached similar challenges and what you delivered and why. Discuss what you learned during the process, and identify how you succeeded. Keep in mind that you not make the hiring manager think! Your portfolio should make it clear to the hiring manager why he or she should hire you.

**Context.** Identify your role in content development, and describe the circumstances of the job (accessibility of SMEs, product stability, authoring tools, schedule, etc.) The circumstances you dealt with show them that you can handle challenges. Explain what you might do differently next time.

### **What If Your Content Is Proprietary?**

If your content is proprietary, you need to find ways to achieve your mutual goals. Andrew had several good suggestions for ways to make proprietary content available, including:

- Neuter the proprietary content in the document (such as substituting Disney character names for proprietary information)
- Redact, or black out, proprietary portions
- Obtain permission from your ex-boss, or from the Legal Department for the owner of the intellectual property, to show the document.

### **Building a Dev-Doc Portfolio**

Even if you do not have previous work in this kind of writing to show, you can still build a dev-doc portfolio. For example, you can create your own rewrites of public domain documentation. You can create before-and-after samples using a chapter from poorly written commercial documentation. The portfolio you create should demonstrate your familiarity with technical subject material, understanding of the audience's needs, and a working knowledge of authoring tools. Creating this kind of portfolio will also demonstrate your motivation and initiative. For more information and sources of "before" dev-docs, go to [www.synergistech.com/dev-doc-portfolio.shtml](http://www.synergistech.com/dev-doc-portfolio.shtml).

### **If You're New to This (Dev-Doc) Business**

Andrew had some suggestions for those who are new to the business, who want to get into this area of technical writing. A good start is to read Andrew's article "Catch-22" at [www.synergistech.com/catch22.shtml](http://www.synergistech.com/catch22.shtml). The article is a rich source of good information and advice, and it also links to additional helpful information. He also suggests that you find ways to show the important qualities of initiative, motivation, capacity to learn fast, and value ("I'm a good investment, not a liability").

### **What Not To Do**

Don't say, "I can learn anything; just teach me." Training is a rarity

now; hiring managers need a set-and-forget writer.

Don't say, "I can't show you my samples." Find a way to show your writing, and find a way to put your portfolio online.

Don't make your inexperience (with their product, technology, tools, culture, development environment) their problem.

And be sure not to lead with your weaknesses instead of your strengths.

In conclusion, there are jobs in writing dev-docs, and it is the work that a company is the least likely to outsource. However, the hiring managers need someone who can be productive immediately--formal training is pretty much a thing of the past. You need to learn the technology, tools, etc. on your own. Remember, the bottom line is you need to reduce their risk and don't make them think!

***Andrew Davis** has recruited technical communicators in Silicon Valley since 1995, first for Synergistech Communications and now for Content Rules (formerly Oak Hill Corporation). He is a former software industry Tech Writer and is well-known for both understanding and championing the role of content development. At Content Rules he recruits all kinds of technical and marketing communicators as well as training and globalization professionals. Andrew enjoys helping those who communicate complex information get ahead by recognizing and refining their value to technology companies. He's candid and connected and, more importantly, he cares.*

***Jane Olivera** is a freelance writer who helps people communicate, from presentations to explaining how things work..*

## July 2011 Program Notes

### Managing Multiple Information Channels: Strategies for Effective Presentations

*Presentation by Joe Devney*

*Article by Gwendolynne Barr*

#### Introduction

In July 2011, Joe Devney delivered an engaging talk on how to give effective presentations. The emphasis was on the use of information channels which include, voice, slides, handouts, video and audio clips, pass-arounds, and even hand gestures.

Joe began his talk by explaining why it is important to be able to give effective presentations:

- For your professional reputation
- To influence people and events
- To get a particular message out.

Sometimes the stakes can be high. Consider how Al Gore's PowerPoint presentation on climate change (which became the film, "An

Inconvenient Truth") changed the international discourse on that subject. In his book, [Visual Explanations](#), Edward Tufte claims that a bad presentation--13 ineffective charts--was the "proximate cause" of the Challenger Space Shuttle explosion on 28 January 1986. These charts were not able to convince NASA officials that the cold January temperatures would cause the O-rings to lose resiliency and fail. As a result, seven people died and the space shuttle program went on hold for over two years.

For his talk, Joe explained that he was focusing on a narrow definition of a presentation. He was not talking about a panel with multiple speakers, a classroom lecture that repeats over a semester, or an unaccompanied speech. Rather, he was focusing on a presentation that:

- Uses multiple information channels
- Is delivered by a single speaker
- Has the speaker and audience in the same room
- Is time-limited
- Is a stand-alone event.

### **Attributes of Information Channels**

Information channels have many qualities but Joe focused on three: ephemerality, flexibility, density.

Voice is ephemeral; a handout is not. Voice is also flexible whereas PowerPoint slides are not. You cannot stray too far from the topic when using slides. Handouts can be information dense--you can print the entire U.S. Constitution and its 27 amendments on two pieces of letter-sized paper. You cannot effectively do this with PowerPoint.

Richard chimed in from the audience with another possible attribute "processability" (my word, not his). That is, some information is processed serially and some in parallel. When you read text, you process one piece of information after the next. When you view a graphic, you may process multiple items at once, or in parallel.

Knowing these attributes allows you to better design your presentation. If you want to ensure that your audience remembers salient points, consider adding a less ephemeral medium such as a handout. On the other hand, if you want your audience to listen well, avoid giving a handout until the end. If you want to go over the entire Constitution, consider an information-dense handout; if you want to zoom in and discuss the use of the last comma in the [second amendment](#), consider PowerPoint. If you are the sort of person who tends to go off on tangents, consider using PowerPoint to rein you in. If you prefer to exploit the richness of the spoken word, and allow yourself tangents, avoid PowerPoint.

### **Presenting Numbers**

In 1956, George A. Miller published, "[The Magical Number 7+- 2.](#)" He argued that our short-term memory can only retain seven chunks of unrelated information, give or take two. Joe pointed out that sometimes imprecision is a useful memory aid. One of Joe's clients edited a sentence of his as follows: "The California Endowment donated \$261,581 to help build the studio." After about two minutes,

Joe asked us to recall the number and no one could. He pointed out that his original sentence was, "The California Endowment donated over a quarter of a million dollars to help build the studio." Everyone was able to remember that.

To further his point, Joe played us a clip from the radio show, *Forum*, hosted by Michael Krasny. The guest said, "From what we've found, there's been about 42,000 citations given out so far in the state..." Seven minutes later, Krasny repeated this as, "You said there have been over four thousand citations..." In addition to remembering only a limited number of items, we tend to remember the significant digit but not the order of magnitude.

How you present numbers depends on your purpose and audience. If you are trying to explain the effect of temperature on the resiliency of an O-ring to NASA officials, be precise. If you want your audience to understand the impact of Twitter in today's world, it might be better to say that Lady Gaga has over 10 million followers than 11,629,791.

### Final Tips

There are many ways to present information to an audience. The key is to understand each medium so that you can make your audience remember what you have to say. In closing, Joe left us with more useful tips on giving effective presentations.

- Open with an anecdote
- Maintain eye contact
- Include some surprise or novelty
- Ask and answer questions
- Include group activities.

For one of his surprises, Joe told us about his brother's brain aneurism surgery. He used lively hand gestures to explain how a surgeon drilled a hole in his brother's skull and clipped the wayward blood vessel. Not easy to forget. By the way, how much did the California Endowment donate?

*Joe Devney has delivered a number of presentations through STC and other organizations, and has sat through over a hundred presentations by others, analyzing what works and what doesn't. He also has a Master's degree in Language and Communication, as well as formal training in public speaking and fifteen years' experience in technical communication. Devney is Immediate Past President of STC Berkeley and an STC Associate Fellow. He will be giving this talk again at [Silicon Valley STC](#) on 22 September.*

*Gwendolynne Barr is a technical writer at Thomson Reuters in San Francisco.*

---

## Upcoming Programs

### Rules of thumb for using color in your content

Speaker: Presentation by Greg Urban

Date: Wednesday, August 10, 2011, 7:00-8:30pm

Location: Highlands Country Club, 110 Hiller Drive, Oakland, California

#### Program

Have you ever tried to pick colors for a document, website, or blog and found that what you thought would be fairly straightforward is somehow much harder than you expected? Or discovered that the colors you saw in one context and loved somehow just doesn't look right, when you use them on your page? If so, you are not alone! There's a knack to getting the right color combination, and sometimes it can seem to be an elusive one. You don't need to know color theory and have a graphics degree. But it's also not enough to say "I know what I like when I see it." You need a method. This talk will provide practical advice and guidelines for selecting colors to use in your documents and online content.

#### Speaker



In a previous professional life, **Greg Urban** was a color consultant for house colors. He is also an artist, specializing in water color portraits. He has found that the same strategies he uses for selecting colors for houses and portraits can be used to select color in documents and on the web.

### Proposal and Grant Writing 101

Speaker: Presentation by Judith Herr

Date: Wednesday, September 14, 2011, 7:00-8:30pm

Location: Highlands Country Club, 110 Hiller Drive, Oakland, California

#### Program

Technical communicators have the right mix of talent and skills to manage or provide support for proposals and grants. However, marketing our value to clients who are seeking to win contracts or grant funding requires that we understand proposal processes and "speak the language."

In this session for both new and seasoned proposal specialists, Judy Herr will cover some of the essentials you need to know to work as a proposal team manager or contributor, and plans on sharing hints for winning contracts.

This talk will include:

- How to talk the talk and gain credibility as valuable contributors
  - Know common proposal expressions
  - Understand key differences between proposals and grants
- Some of the challenges and obstacles you may face, and how to
  - Build alliances and partnerships
  - Set up a good proposal team organization
  - Manage & communicate as virtual teams
- Judy's "top 10 lessons learned" that help create winning proposals and grants.

### Speaker



**Judith (Judy) Herr** has thirty years of experience in technical communication. She has done extensive work managing teams as they prepared highly complex proposals and oral presentations that have won government contracts. She has worked in a broad range of disciplines, including information technology, public health, environmental services, occupational safety, manufacturing,

and scientific research.

Judith holds a BA in Sociology and Communication from the University of Texas and a Masters in Public Health from Tulane University. After working in a number of different jobs in both non-profit and for-profit arenas, Judy started her own consulting business, Well Chosen Words.

Having raising her hand to volunteer at her first STC meeting 20 years ago, Judith Herr became an STC Fellow in 2006 and received the STC President's Award in 2011. She has served in every chapter leadership position, directed the STC technical communication competition Touchstone, and was STC's SIG Advocate, helping the STC SIGs gain recognition as viable virtual communities. Judith served from 2008-2011 on the STC the Board of Directors for the Society.

---

## Student Corner

Students! Keep your eye on this section for ways to save money and get your career off the ground.

### Get Free Registration for the 2012 STC Summit in Chicago

One great way to get your career going is to volunteer at the annual [STC summit](#). The benefits of student volunteering are:

- Registration is free
- You will be able to attend many great talks even while working (and if you show up early, you could get an entire day off)
- You will build a network even if you are painfully shy (you can't help it when you are volunteering for so many cool people).

The [2012 STC Summit](#) is in Chicago, May 20-23. Calls for volunteers should come next spring--look here for updates!

Only STC student members are allowed to volunteer. [STC student memberships](#) are \$75 and include 1 chapter, 1 student chapter, 1 special interest group (SIG), and the online publications. Keep in mind that not all technical communication programs allow you to register as a student. From the [STC Bylaws](#):

*To be eligible for student membership, an applicant must be (1) enrolled in an accredited university, college, community college, or technical school; (2) taking at least two courses or their equivalent each term; and (3) preparing for a career in technical communication.*

### Attend an STC Meeting for \$3

Students who are non-members are welcome to attend our meetings at the student-member rate. In August, Greg Urban is talking about using color; in September, Judy Herr is talking about proposal and grant writing.

### Build Your Portfolio

Even if you are not yet working in the technical communication field, you can start building a portfolio by writing for *Ragged Left*. We need writers for articles and columns. If you are curious, email *Ragged Left* at [newsletter@berkeley-stc.org](mailto:newsletter@berkeley-stc.org).

---

## Meeting Logistics

The Berkeley STC meets the second Wednesday of every month. Each meeting consists of an optional dinner, short business discussion, and an hour-long program on a topic of interest to technical communicators. All are welcome.

### Pricing

We use three-tiered pricing:

- **Lowest prices:** Anyone for whom the higher prices are a hardship--students, unemployed, underemployed. This appears on our website as "student/low income." Anyone can choose to pay this price. We trust that nobody will abuse the privilege.
- **Discounted prices:** STC members.
- **Regular prices:** Non-members (except those who choose the student/low income price).

Former STC members who intend to renew when their finances improve can choose whichever of the three rates they feel most comfortable paying. We do not want anyone to feel shut out of the STC Berkeley community.

[Reservations](#) must be made at least one day prior to the meeting.

Walk-ins also welcome, however, dinner may or may not be available. We order dinner for the number of reservations plus a few for walk-ins.

### **Program and Dinner (Reservation / Walk-in)**

- Students/Low Income: \$6/\$10
- Members: \$12/\$16
- Non-members: \$20/\$24

### **Program Only (Reservation / Walk-in)**

- Students/Low Income: \$3/\$10
- Members: \$6/\$10
- Non-STC-Members: \$10/\$14

### **Special cost notes**

Non-members are always welcome to STC meetings at non-member rates.

Non-member students are welcome at the *member* student rates.

All members of the San Francisco Chapter of the IABC are welcome to register for Berkeley STC General Meetings at the member price by midnight on the day before the meeting.

### **Location and Directions**

**Highlands Country Club 110 Hiller Drive Oakland, California.** [[Google Maps](#)]

Information at <http://www.stc-berkeley.org/MonthlyMeeting/directions.shtml>

If you need a ride from BART, email [rides@stc-berkeley.org](mailto:rides@stc-berkeley.org) at least one day prior to the meeting.



*View from the Highlands Country Club*

*Photo courtesy of Rhonda Bracey*

## Driving Directions

### From San Francisco

Cross the Bay Bridge to I-580 Eastbound. Remain in the right lane, until Highway 24 Eastbound (toward Berkeley and Walnut Creek). Continue eastbound until the Tunnel Road off-ramp. Exit will loop around to the west, crossing back over Highway 24. Turn left at the stop sign. Follow Tunnel Road/Caldecott Lane to traffic signal. Veer to the right, and follow Hiller Drive halfway up the hill. Highlands Country Club will be on the right-hand side of the street.

### From Walnut Creek

Take Highway 24 Westbound through the Caldecott Tunnel. Stay in the right-hand lane, taking the first exit after the tunnel ends, the Tunnel Road exit, going towards Berkeley. Follow Tunnel Road to the complex intersection and stop light, at Tunnel Drive, Hiller Drive, and Highway 13. Veer to the right, and continue halfway up the hill on Hiller Drive. Highlands Country Club is on the right-hand side of the street.

### From I-80 and Berkeley

Take Ashby Avenue to the Highway 13 exit. Ashby becomes Tunnel Road at the Claremont Hotel. Continue on Tunnel Road (through the split-level section) to the stoplight just before the Highway 24 over-crossing. Remain in the left lane and make a sharp left U-turn around the Firestorm Memorial Garden, on to Hiller Drive. Continue halfway up the hill. Highlands Country Club will be on the right-hand side of the street.

### From Hayward

Take I-580 Westbound to Highway 13 north. Continue on Highway 13 past the over-crossing of Highway 24. At the stoplight, turn right, then left, onto Hiller Drive. Continue halfway up the hill. Highlands Country Club will be on the right-hand side of the street.

## Parking

Please park on the street. The club's parking lot is for members only.

## Public Transit

Prefer to take BART? The Rockridge station is closest. Send email to [rides@stc-berkeley.org](mailto:rides@stc-berkeley.org) to ask about transportation from BART to the meeting.

AC Transit bus E from SF via MacArthur then Rockridge takes you as far as Tunnel Road & Roble Road, with a half mile walk uphill on Hiller Drive to the Hillside Country Club.

---

## Other Local STC Chapters

East Bay: [www.ebstc.org](http://www.ebstc.org)

North Bay: [www.stc-northbay.org](http://www.stc-northbay.org)

Sacramento: [www.stcsacramento.org](http://www.stcsacramento.org)

San Francisco: [www.stc-sf.org](http://www.stc-sf.org)

Silicon Valley: [www.stc-siliconvalley.org](http://www.stc-siliconvalley.org)

---

## Other Organizations

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

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

American Society of Indexers, Golden Gate Chapter. <http://www.asindexing.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3616#golden>

Association for Computing Machinery. <http://www.acm.org>

Association for Women in Computing. <http://www.awc-hq.org>

International Association of Business Communicators, San Francisco chapter. <http://sf.iabc.com>

National Writers Union (UAW). A labor union for freelance writers of all genres. [www.nwu.org](http://www.nwu.org)

Northern California Science Writers' Association. Quarterly meetings & other events. [www.ncswa.org](http://www.ncswa.org)

Writer's UA. <http://www.writersua.com>

*Ragged Left* is published six times a year at the end of every odd-numbered month.