



Society for  
Technical  
Communication

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# Ragged Left

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

September/October 2010  
Volume 23, Number 5

## Editor's Notes

by Jennie Abbingsole

I am pleased to introduce our assistant editor, Alex Lee! Alex did initial edits and prepared the content for me to put in RoboHelp which is my current method for providing both PDF and HTML format of the same newsletter (single source). If you have other ideas for single-sourcing PDF and HTML (other than FrameMaker), please [let us know!](#) We're particularly interested in free or affordable software so Adobe Technical Communication Suite is not a requirement for helping with the *Ragged Left*.

## Submission Deadlines

The regular schedule is to post the PDF the first week of every even-numbered month (it's a bi-monthly newsletter), so I need content the last week of January, March, May, July, September, and November to publish the first week of February, April, June, August, October, and December.

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## President's Notes

by Richard Mateosian

October marks the beginning of membership renewal season. I won't bore you with all the contests and gimmicks, but I'd like to mention some changes. These are changes back to the way we used to do things.

In recent years the STC Board has experimented with ways to fund chapter activities. Because of the financial crisis, they felt compelled to make changes that had predictable bad side effects. Having come through the crisis, they have backed out of the least desirable changes.

Basic STC dues remain at \$250.00, but this year that amount will by default include a charge of \$25 for membership in a chapter. Furthermore, STC will spend the entire \$25 on chapter support. They will send \$15 directly to us to support our local activities, and they will spend the remainder on services they provide to us, such as liability insurance, mailing lists, a social networking site, and staff support. You can find details about STC's initiatives to support chapters at <http://notebook.stc.org/>.

Another revived practice is that if you join or rejoin in October through December, your 2011 membership dues also pay for the remainder of 2010, so you can get up to three extra months of membership free.

The STC Annual Summit is in Sacramento in May 2011 -- with registration significantly discounted for STC members! I hope all California members will make an effort to attend. And I hope we will have a thriving chapter to show off to STC members from around the world. It all begins with your renewal.

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## June 2010 Meeting Notes

### The Management Perspective: A Panel of Tech Pubs Managers From Around the Bay Area

Presentation by Pat Yoshihiro, Stewart Florsheim, Kim Shain

Notes by Romy Sinha

The June 2010 chapter meeting hosted a panel of managers and directors of technical communication groups from around the bay area. The panelists

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*Ragged Left*

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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, email [membership@stc-berkeley.org](mailto:membership@stc-berkeley.org)

**Insurance**

Members of STC can apply for health, disability, and other insurance at STC group rates. For more information, contact

included Pat Yoshihiro, Director of Technical Communications at EFI in Foster City, Stewart Florsheim, Director of Learning Products at Advent Software in San Francisco, and Kim Shain, Content and Community Manager at Adobe in San Francisco. The purpose of this meeting was to learn from the panelists about the challenges they faced, and what skills and abilities they valued most in the people they manage. Linda Urban, Berkeley STC's VP for Programs, was the moderator of the meeting.

The meeting was a discussion in the form of questions and answers. Linda, and the audience, asked the questions, and the panelists answered them. I will present the meeting notes in the form of questions and answers; the headings are Linda's questions to the panel.

**What are the anxiety points for you as managers?**

**Stewart:** Increasing demand on existing resources. Resources are the same, or even fewer sometimes, but there is more work to be done. So I am always looking for tools to be more productive.

**Pat:** Managing budget.

**Kim:** Doing more with less, dealing with a shrinking team, and a changing environment keeps me up at night. The definition of productivity has changed over time. It is no longer getting ten pages of documents done; it is more about reading comments, writing blogs, and forums.

**What equates to a successful department?**

**Stewart:** What clients say about our work is my measure of success.

**Pat:** Meeting schedules and shipping documentation when it is expected is how I measure the success of my department.

**Kim:** Customer satisfaction is what I look for. Was the user able to get through the tasks and accomplish what was intended? If yes, then I think my department has been successful.

**What do you value most in a member of your team?**

**Pat:** I value a person's ability to integrate into the Engineering team. Also I value when people understand that they need to change with the times.

By that, Pat meant that she valued a person who has the willingness to learn new tools and new technology.

**Kim:** A certain comfort level with the social media, with blogging and tweeting.

Kim, like Pat, said that she values a person who realizes the need for change with the changing world.

**Stewart:** When someone can synthesize what users want and become information designers, they become very valuable to me.

**What more skills do we need to stay on top of things?**

**Pat:** Do not keep yourself in the 'writer' box. Always be an user advocate. Try to get involved in product development and try to increase the relevance of technical communication within the organization.

**Stewart:** Think of yourself as an information designer. Try to understand the pros and cons of different media, teach yourself more tools, and continue to increase your soft skills.

**Kim:** The skill of paring down information, or streamlining information, is very important.

**Where will you be five years from now?**

**Pat:** Cross-functional responsibility will become very important. We have to learn things about the broader picture.

**Stewart:** Everything will come closer to the product and we have to very cognizant of what clients really need, and how to deploy the information.

**What do you think about titles of technical writers? Do you think it will change and evolve?**

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. **Annual conference: Dallas, Texas, May 2-5, 2010.** 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
- Lone Writer
- AccessAbility
- Management
- Canadian Issues
- Marketing Communication
- Consulting and Independent Contracting
- Online
- Emerging Technologies
- Policies and Procedures
- Environmental, Safety, and Health Communication
- Quality and Process Improvement
- Illustrators and Visual Designers
- Scientific Communication
- Information Design and Architecture
- Single Sourcing
- Instructional Design & Learning
- Technical Editing
- International Technical Communication
- 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,

**The Panel** came up with User Advocate, Information Designer, Information Developer, and Web Content Developer. So, clearly, the panel thought that as the role of technical writers evolves, our titles too will evolve over time.

**Richard Mateosian** asked about metrics. In the light of the evening's discussion where it seemed like we are moving away from measuring our work in page counts, he asked how we are to measure productivity.

**The Panel** said that we measure productivity by quality, by the feedback from clients, webpage hits, and usage of content in the web. It was a lively and insightful discussion, one looking to the future, and I think all the participants took away a lot from this evening's meeting.

*Romy Sinha is an Information Developer at eMeter Corporation, where she leverages her software expertise and experience of the last nine years as a software developer and technical writer. She is an active participant in the STC meetings, with a deep interest in the future of technical communication.*

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## August 2010 Meeting Notes

### DITA in the trenches

*Presentation by Mysti Berry of Salesforce.com, Ben Colborn of Citrix, and Tom Idleman of FICO*

*Notes by Greg Urban*

At the August 11th meeting of the Berkeley STC, Mysti Berry of Salesforce.com, Ben Colborn of Citrix, and Tom Idleman of FICO provided a look at how it is to work with DITA on a daily basis.

The discussion was free-ranging and skipped around, so I have focused here on some of the high points in my notes.

### What is the current state of DITA adoption?

The switch from a linear, book-based model of authoring to an XML- topic-based model like DITA seems to be inevitable, although it has been taking its time.

Two of the main reasons for the slowness of adoption are that XML authoring tools could use some improvements in usability and Content Management Systems (CMS) are quite expensive, in the neighborhood of \$250,000.

This means that early adopters, like our speakers, may have to improvise to make DITA work in their companies.

- Mysti Berry's company (Salesforce.com) does not have a CMS and depends on Perforce and an exceptional code guru, Steve Anderson, who is kept busy fixing problems that can crop up with the code or with the compiled output of the DITA files. He is also kept busy handling the requests for new functionality from more than two dozen writers and adding new delivery types such as eBook.
- At first, Ben Colborn's company (Citrix) did not have a CMS and had to improvise ways of managing all of the files generated under DITA. Files were stored in Subversion, a version control application. Scripts and improvised coding solutions were used to keep things moving.

Recently, though, they moved to DocZone CMS, which is XML/DITA compliant.

- Tom Idleman's company (FICO) uses TriSoft CMS, which is XML/DITA compliant.

### How DITA started at their companies

At Ben Colburn's company, Citrix, the move to DITA was 'bottoms-up', first being initiated by one person in the Education department who was interested in it. Interest then gradually moved up to upper management levels where it was approved and funded.

At Salesforce.com the decision to use DITA was made by the director of technical of technical publications along with the writing team.

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 the *Ragged Left*.

### 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 odd-numbered 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.

At FICO, the decision to use DITA was made by management, but that doesn't mean management completely understands it.

Tom Idleman cautions:

**"Never call it 'converting to DITA', call it 'rewriting for DITA'."**

Otherwise, you may find that management may think that a script can be applied to all of your documentation to perform the conversion.

### What is it like to work in DITA as a writer?

**"We exchanged an existing set of problems for new ones that are more fun." - Ben**

**"Don't take the architectural mismatch of your information with DITA personally. In other words, you haven't done anything wrong, if the way you have been writing doesn't match up to the 'topic-based' requirements of DITA." - Tom**

**"Let go of the book metaphor. You are not writing a book anymore." - Mysti**

When Mysti first started writing in DITA she realized that she was writing paragraphs based on where they would be in a book. This surprised her, as she thought she wrote in a topic-based manner even before the switch.

Writing is different in an XML editor -- you focus on the content and not on the formatting of the content.

Also, you have to surrender any hope of influencing the look of the end content.

Instead, the formatting will depend upon the mode in which it is presented. You don't know if it is going to be viewed in a mobile device, like an iPad or phone, a monitor, .pdf, online Help, or as plain text. Also, the default DITA output is very basic and doesn't allow the writer to set page breaks!

On the other hand, your writing team can start banging out topics almost immediately at the start of a project.

One downside of the switch to XML is that other departments, who do not write in XML, will not be able to directly update documents.

Mysti's team at her company listed what they love and hate about DITA and have provided them here:

[http://www.stc-berkeley.org/Presentations/includes/handout\\_for\\_dita\\_Mysti\\_Berry.pdf](http://www.stc-berkeley.org/Presentations/includes/handout_for_dita_Mysti_Berry.pdf)

**"When you switch to DITA you all become information architects." - Mysti**

When creating content, writers using DITA must make decisions about the phrasing and organization of their writing based not only as to how the material will be used in the document being written, but in other documents as well.

**"When you use DITA you can make the machine do so much more than you realize." - Mysti**

Since all information in an XML file is in plain text, scripts that search for word strings become very useful in finding missing tags. For example, Mysti's company has a little script that goes through the book and checks for missing images.

Citrix also has a Quality Assurance script that checks for wrong phrasing and tagging.

### New skills that writers will need to work in DITA

- The writer must switch to writing in topics, and stop thinking in a 'linear' book-based model of presentation.
- When writing, the writer will have to think of where content will be used in multiple documents
- The writer must learn XML and write content in an XML editor.
- The writer will likely learn some scripting utilities and some coding skills.

### Changes to the writing process

- Writing in DITA seems to be much more team-based and less individual-writer-based.
- A file system must be created. The amount of organization can vary, but, once the project starts, the writers need to follow the file structure set up at the beginning 100%.

For example, at Ben Colborn's company, they create a very detailed outline before doing any writing. The reason for this is that his company creates training materials and must define the learning objectives to insure that they are covered in the final presentations.

- At the beginning of a project, existing documentation will need to be surveyed for possible reuse.
- As the writing progresses, it is a good idea to tag the content with metadata, to make searching easier for subsequent projects.
- There will be a new task -- checking that DITA tags are applied correctly.

Tom's teams at FICO now include Editorial, Style, and DITA coding review.

- There is a lot less copying and pasting.

## Business case for DITA

### More control

**"Documentation is a business asset and should not be held hostage by a vendor." - Ben**

XML is open-source and can be transformed into any type of presentation media through use of XSLT or scripting macros. It therefore avoids the problems and costs of your documentation being tied to the proprietary formats of a vendor.

### Ability to present information in many different outputs

The ability of DITA to create multi-mode output from one XML source is crucial to Ben's company. His company has many different outputs, including Flash packaged with HTML in SCORM for eLearning, Instructor Led Training (ILT), and even PowerPoint.

### Cost savings

The ROI from savings in translation (localization) costs can justify the cost of a switch to DITA on its own.

#### How DITA saves on translation costs:

Without DITA an entire book (of perhaps 15 files) will be handed to the translation vendor after being updated. It may be that only 20 % of the book has been changed from the previous version, but the vendor will charge for the entire book, as he has to 'touch' 100% of the book, even if he only has to translate 20% of the text.

With DITA, the same book will be much more granular. There may be 800 topic files in the book. By doing a 'diff' comparison to the previous version of the book, the 500-600 topics that remain unchanged can be left out of the files that are sent to the translation vendor. This can mean savings of up to 80% of the cost of the previous translation.

And if the book is being translated into nine languages, the cost savings multiply tremendously.

Another change is that translators do not have to charge for 'desktop publishing' aspects of translated output as they are translating XML files. The formatting of output is handled by scripts under the control of the techpubs department, or more precisely, the code guru of the techpubs department.

*Greg Urban is presently working as a senior technical writer at Life Technologies, where he writes documentation for DNA sequencers. Over the years he has contributed to print documentation, online help, and single-sourced solutions for print and online.*

*Greg enjoys the graphical aspects of technical documentation. As an Instructor, he teaches Visual Design for Technical Communicators at the University of*

California Berkeley Extension.

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## Web usability column

*This column will return next issue.*

**Eric Hughes** has been an STC member since 2004. Things that don't work the way they should drive him crazy. You can reach him at [hughese@earthur@gmail.com](mailto:hughese@earthur@gmail.com) or <http://www.twitter.com/hughese>

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## Between the covers column

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# The wealthy freelancer: 12 Secrets to a Great Income and an Enviably Lifestyle

Review by Melody Brumis

**Book:** *The wealthy freelancer: 12 Secrets to a Great Income and an Enviably Lifestyle* by Steve Slaunwhite, Pete Savage and Ed Gandia, ©2010

Who would have ever thought of a wealthy freelancer? I never did. Sometime ago I called myself a freelance writer. Then, I wrote everything from term papers for college students to brochures for an in-and-out plastic surgery center. While I did fine, I never made a bundle, and never thought I would. Reading this book made me think differently.

What is a freelancer? The World Book Dictionary © 1990 defines free lance as follows:

1. a writer, artist, or other independent craftsman, who sells his work to anyone who will buy it.
2. a mercenary, especially a knight in the Middle Ages who fought for any person or state that would pay him; free companion; condottiere.
3. *Figurative.* a person who fights or works for any cause that he chooses, as in politics.

While the definition doesn't specifically say it, I like the idea of the mercenary carrying around his own weapon, his free lance. As a freelance writer, I often show up with my laptop and even, of late, my Blackberry, as my weapons ready for a day of work (battle).

*The Wealthy Freelancer* provides "secrets" for building a successful freelance business. While the subtitle says 12 secrets, the book actually provides "more than 50 great ideas and dozens of plans for putting them in action."

The book begins by suggesting you create standards for your freelance business. As Pete Savage, one of the authors says: "Without standards, you end up accepting any morsel of paying work that comes your way, like a hungry mouse devours a crumb."

A sample set of standards for a freelance copywriting business includes such gems as:

- I do not provide free or "spec" work for any reason.
- I don't do work that requires me to sacrifice my weekends.
- I only accept projects where my average hourly earnings will equate to \$150/hour or higher.

If I had had business standards, I probably wouldn't have accepted my current project. What I now view as a learning experience would have been disqualified by my standards.

Once you have your standards down, you can begin to play with some of the book's secrets for success. One I'm going to try is **Secret 3: Create Your Amazing Buzz Piece**. A buzz piece is an article that promotes your most profitable specialty. In *The Wealthy Freelancer*, Steve Slaunwhite, another one of the authors, talks about Michael Stelzner. He was in trouble. As Michael says, "I quickly went from being very busy to having no project work."

Since Michael's most profitable specialty was writing white papers, he wrote about that. His buzz piece was called appropriately [A White Paper on White Papers](#). More than 400 people downloaded it for free from his website, giving him some 400 likely prospects.

What could we do? How about a buzz piece on SmartMeters™? My business, [Write on Time Solutions](#), has been doing training for PG&E's SmartMeters™ for the last year. All we have to do is write a buzz piece that will let everyone know about our new specialty. We haven't done it yet, but I'll let you know in the next newsletter how it goes.

Einstein is quoted in *The Wealthy Freelancer*: "Nothing happens until something moves." And, the book encourages readers to pick a few ideas and get moving (try them out)!

My favorite section in *The Wealthy Freelancer* was the Appendix, *Opportunities and Obstacles to Becoming a Wealthy Freelancer*. I especially enjoyed the article called When the Client Says "Your Work Sucks." It provided a 6-step recovery strategy.

1. Don't be defensive.
2. Explain your approach.
3. Ask for specifics.
4. Confirm the requested changes.
5. Set a deadline.
6. Complete the revisions exactly as directed.

The Don't Be Defensive step goes on to say:

"You want feedback, not combat. Listen carefully to the client and try to determine what went wrong. Be open to criticism, suggestions, and new ideas. Don't act angry or defensive, even if you disagree. Be the consummate professional."

I could have used these kind words earlier this summer. Instead, I hemmed and hawed and stumbled through a "Your Work Sucks" experience.

In conclusion, I'd say buy the book -- it's worth it. The authors suggest you flip through, reading the secrets that interest you. I, on the other hand, read the book straight through. I'll now go back and try out some of the secrets (ideas). And, if "50 great ideas and dozens of plans" isn't enough, there's always the website at [thewealthyfreelancer.com](http://thewealthyfreelancer.com).

**Melody Brumis** is a Senior Member of the Society for Technical Communication (STC). She has recently started a small business, *Write on Time Solutions*. Her column, *Write on Time: Small Business Success*, appears in the East Bay STC Chapter's *Devil Mountain View*. If you have comments on this book review, please write Melody at [mbrumis@writeontimesolutions.com](mailto:mbrumis@writeontimesolutions.com).

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## Meetings

Our chapter holds a dinner meeting the second Wednesday of each month. In addition to listing upcoming meetings, this section includes:

- [Meeting/Dinner prices](#)
- [Meeting Agenda](#)
- [Location and Directions](#)

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## Upcoming Meetings

### The Power of ePubs: Easily Creating Cross-device Online and Offline Content without Programming

Presentation by Silke Fleischer and Eric Converse

**Wednesday, October 13, 2010, 6-9:30pm**

Highlands Country Club  
110 Hiller Drive, Oakland, California

## Program

With the explosion of smart phones, Technical Communicators now have the challenge and opportunity to provide documentation and technical content on these small screen devices. The option to simply use the built-in web browsers is not always a solution when, for example, a user is trying to follow online step-by-step instructions in remote areas with bad reception. So how do you create offline content with rapid access for current smartphones without a programming team?

Session participants will learn how the publishing industry has paved the way with a simple answer: eBooks. Thanks to the ePub format, an open standard which nearly all major publishers now support, reader software is available on major smartphones. ePub offers offline/online access and reflowable content, and technical communicators can choose from many authoring tools that already support the format. Participants will find out more about the ePub format, available readers for different devices, how to create ePub files easily, and current limitations of ePub readers.

In this session, you will learn:

- Under the hood: The ePub format and structure
- How to create ePub files using simple authoring tools
- Current possibilities for interactivity and multimedia integration
- Which readers are available for the current device platforms
- Differences and limitations of readers

## Speakers



**Silke Fleischer** is a co-founder of ATIV Software, a service provider for custom mobile applications, mLearning solutions, and publisher of EventPilot, a customizable mobile conference program app. Silke has ten years of experience in the performance support and e-Learning field. Before founding ATIV Software, she managed product and marketing strategy for Adobe Captivate. A member of The eLearning Guild, Silke has been a featured speaker at several national and international conferences, including Adobe MAX, eLearning Guild, STC, SALT, ASTD, and Tekom.

**Eric Converse** is co-founder of ATIV Software, a service provider for custom-built mobile applications, mLearning solutions, and publisher of EventPilot, an interactive mobile event program app. With more than a decade of software engineering experience, Eric directs the technical strategy, architecture, and development for ATIV. His extensive experience in software engineering includes video file format and cross-platform SDK development for DivX, as well as multimedia transmission development for Motorola, where he also conducted internal technology training.



For more about where Silke and Eric work, see the [ATIV Software website](#).

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## Surviving a Behavioral Interview

Presentation by Mysti Berry

**Wednesday, November 10, 2010, 6-9:30pm**

Highlands Country Club  
110 Hiller Drive, Oakland, California

## Program



Many software companies use behavioral interview techniques instead of the traditional interview.

If you are a hiring manager, come find out why behavioral interviews reveal things that straightforward interviewing techniques don't.

If you are a job seeker, come find out what these kinds of interviews are really looking for--and leave with some ideas about how to ace your next interview. This talk will also briefly review the top 5 candidate Dos and Don'ts--some of which may surprise you. If time permits, we'll even do a little role-playing.

### Speakers



**Mysti Berry** is a lead technical writer for Salesforce.com. She has been a software technical writer for 20 years and worked in the enterprise cloud for five years. She has taught technical writing classes for UC Berkeley Extension, and given presentations at numerous STC chapter meetings. She has been trained in behavioral interview techniques and applied them rigorously in all her interviews for the last three years.

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## Meeting/Dinner Prices

### Advance Reservations

Reserved on the [Chapter's website](#) by the day prior to meeting.

#### Meeting and dinner

- Members: \$10
- Non-members: \$18
- Student members: \$10

#### Program only

- Members: \$5
- Non-STC-Members: \$15
- Students: \$5

### At the door (no reservation)

#### Meeting and dinner

- Members: \$15
- Non-members: \$21
- Student members: \$15

Note: If you do not reserve dinner in advance, dinner may or may not be available on a walk-in basis. We order dinner for the number of reservations plus a few walk-ins.

#### Program only

- Members: \$10
- Non-STC-Members: \$15
- Students: \$10

### Special cost notes

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

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## Meeting Agenda

6:00-7:00pm      Check-in, networking, conversation, and dinner.

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 7:00 - 7:15pm | Chapter business, announcements, and introductions. Anyone can announce jobs that they know about.*   |
| 7:15 - 8:30pm | 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 - 9pm    | 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.

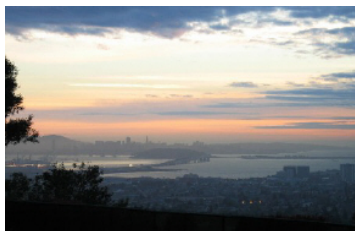
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## Berkeley STC Meeting Location and Directions

**Highlands Country Club**  
**110 Hiller Drive**  
**Oakland, California**

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

**Note:** If you need a ride from BART, contact Richard Mateosian (President@stc-berkeley.org) at least one day prior to the meeting.



View from the Highlands Country Club  
*Photo courtesy of Rhonda Bracey*

## STC News

Increase your network and net worth—join STC today!

The Society for Technical Communication (STC) advances the theory and practice of technical communication across all user abilities and all media. For more information about STC, send an e-mail to [stc@stc.org](mailto:stc@stc.org) or visit [www.stc.org](http://www.stc.org).

## 2010 Gordon Scholarship Winners Announced

*By Patrick Lufkin*

The Dr. Kenneth M. Gordon Memorial Scholarship has announced that John Conley and Meghan Weimer have been each awarded a Gordon Scholarship for the coming year. Both are enrolled in San Francisco State University's Technical and Professional Writing Program.

To qualify for a scholarship, applicants must be currently enrolled in a technical communication program at an accredited college or university, and have completed enough work to demonstrate their potential for success in the field.

The Gordon scholarship is sponsored by the combined STC chapters of Northern California. Candidates apply in June, and awards are made in August in time for the beginning of the academic year. Award recipients are also offered a complimentary basic student membership in STC.

The scholarship is named for Dr. Kenneth M. Gordon. Dr. Gordon worked as a technical editor at the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory and was a popular, long-time member of the East Bay chapter of STC. He was president of the chapter from 1985–88, and also its newsletter editor. He is remembered as an early advocate for the Northern California Technical Communication Competition, and for having contributed greatly to the success of STC in Northern California in the early years.

The scholarship was created in 1992 when the East Bay chapter discovered that it had money left over from having run a very successful 1990–91 technical communication competition. Dr. Gordon had recently died, and those involved decided to set aside \$10,000 of the proceeds to establish a scholarship in his name.

Since that time, the Gordon Scholarship has been funded with proceeds from Touchstone, the Northern California Technical Communication Competition. This year's Touchstone is currently ramping up. If you would like to enter or help, contact the competition director, Richard Mateosian at [xrm@pacbell.net](mailto:xrm@pacbell.net).

For more information on the scholarship, contact the scholarship chair, Patrick Lufkin, [lufkin@ix.netcom.com](mailto:lufkin@ix.netcom.com).

*Patrick Lufkin is an Associate Fellow of STC and Chair of the Dr. Kenneth M. Gordon Scholarship.*

## Chapter News

### Leadership Positions Available

We are looking to fill several leadership positions! Contact Richard Mateosian if you are interested. See <http://www.stc-berkeley.org/VolunteerOpportunities/volunteer.shtml> for a list of open positions.

### Regional STC News

T. R. Girill gave a talk to our chapter in December 2009 (see write-up in the Jan/Feb 2010 *Ragged Left*) on some literacy outreach activities.

A year-long usage analysis of the underlying (web-based) material for that work is now up on the East Bay STC site at [http://www.ebstc.org/newsletter/0310/Article\\_4.htm](http://www.ebstc.org/newsletter/0310/Article_4.htm).

T. R. Girill  
STC Fellow  
[trg@llnl.gov](mailto:trg@llnl.gov)  
[trgirill@acm.org](mailto:trgirill@acm.org)

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## Other STC chapters in Northern California

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)

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## 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. [www.asindexing.org/site/chapters.shtml#golden](http://www.asindexing.org/site/chapters.shtml#golden)

Association for Women in Computing, San Francisco Bay Area chapter — [www.awc-sf.org/](http://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](http://www.nwu.org)

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

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## Events

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### **WritersUA: Call for speakers and peer showcase presenters**

#### **The Conference for Software User Assistance March 13-16, 2011, Long Beach, CA**

In preparation for the 2011 Conference, WritersUA is looking for user assistance professionals interested in sharing their expertise. There are opportunities to present a session and also to demonstrate your work in the Peer Showcase. This is a great chance for you to share the stage with some of the brightest lights in technical communication and software development. Thank you for participating in the 2010 event in Seattle. We hope to see you in Long Beach!

Call for Speakers: <http://www.writersua.com/conference/callspkr.htm>

Call for Peer Showcase Presenters: <http://www.writersua.com/conference/callpeer.htm>

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The Ragged Left is published six times a year (every other month).

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