

# VIEWPOINT

Newsletter of the San Fernando Valley Chapter



Doug Klein

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## Calendar

- November 8 – Administrative Council Meeting at Weiler's West Hills Deli, 22323 Sherman Way, Canoga Park, 6:30 p.m.
- November 13 – Dinner Meeting – Andrea Ames, Member, STC International Board of Directors. More details on page 3.
- December 4 - Administrative Council Meeting - TBD
- No Dinner Meeting in December
- January Dinner Meeting - TBD

## October Meeting Review

# Web ROI 101

by Dennis Wilson, Secretary-Treasurer  
San Fernando Valley Chapter

How to measure and improve the Return on Investment (ROI) of your company website was the topic for the STCSFV initial dinner meeting of the year, held at 94th Aero Squadron Restaurant on October 23. Doug Klein, Web Marketing Director for Centric, Inc. presented an insightful and information-packed overview of the current state of web marketing, focusing on how to measure your website's effectiveness at reaching its goals and how to improve that ROI.

## Typical Scenario

Doug described the typical "ROI Scenario" as a combination of these three factors: 1) unknown metrics — not knowing who is visiting your website, where they come from, what their behavior is once they arrive, etc.; 2) political factions within the company — competing interests of the webmaster, the marketing manager, the bean counters; and 3) improper financial analysis — not accurately assessing the costs and benefits of the web marketing effort.

## Conversion Rates

These problems need to be resolved, with the common goal of improving the "conversion rate" of the website, that is, the rate at which visitors behave the way you want them to, whether it's purchasing a product, subscribing to a newsletter, or other action. Currently the industry average conversion rate is 1 to 2%, meaning that only that many visitors will follow through to complete the desired activity. Amazon.com achieves a very high conversion rate of 9.1%. Chipshot.com, a niche website for golfers, attains 28.7%, which is astounding.

## The Four Elements

The four elements that go into any website and largely determine its success are the site design, the speed of presentation of the site to the visitor's browser, the ease of functionality within the site, and the value of the content. For analyzing your site's performance in these areas, Doug advises "Think like the person coming to your website." In other words, put yourself in the user's shoes, a concept very familiar to technical writers.

Continued on page 2

## Web ROI 101 (Continued from page 1)

by Dennis Wilson

### Drive Targeted Traffic

Doug identified five steps to resolve the problem of poor ROI. First, Drive Targeted Traffic. That means to design your website for the search engines, so that they will easily handle and index your site. It means defining a web marketing plan that will work with your target audiences. And it involves measuring performance and reshaping your website to optimize its performance, as an ongoing effort. You want to attract those people who are specifically interested in your products and likely to buy.

### Give 'em What They Want

Second, give your visitors what they came for. This involves thinking like your target audience. Study your online conversions; what activities result in sales? Are potential customers finding what they were looking for? Easily?

### Get the Fingerprints

Third, gather information about your visitors and their experience on your website. Offer them free information or some other bribe to get an "opt-in" (a voluntary subscription to receive further e-mail or other material from you). Ask for feedback from your customers and visitors — a simple exit pop-up is a popular technique to solicit a visitor's opinion about his experience on your website. Catch your visitors as they enter or leave the website, with a simple, straightforward question or two about their experience. Try to get them to subscribe to your e-newsletter. Newsletter pop-ups have been increasing newsletter subscription rates by about 60%, according to Doug. You want them to stay in contact, to return to your site and become a customer.

### Convert Visitors to Sales

The fourth step is to make the sales process easy and obvious. Put your best selling items on the home page, so visitors don't have to search for them. Provide help along the way — give easy access to pop-up explanations, 800 numbers, or online customer care services so that the visitor will get what they want in spite of any problems they may encounter. Increase the stakes for your visitors by offering promotions or "taking hostages" — giving them something of value in return for filling out a short profiling form.

### Re-Market your Visitors

Finally, when you've collected information about each visitor, you'll want to personalize the website experience, to "build a community" where the repeat visitor is recognized and where material is customized for him. Follow up with online promotions. Offer targeted news and information. The e-newsletter is an ideal way to stay in touch with your community and to market your products.

### Website Redesign

Doug gave several pointers for designing your site for a high return. It's important to "look professional," to the visitor. The number one reason given in a recent survey about why people did not buy things from a website was, it didn't look professional. The information needs to be presented cleanly and quickly — you have less than 2 minutes to make your pitch or sale. Design your site for the search engines, so that they can handle it easily and index it well. Ask for information from your visitors through various means — subscriptions, profiles, pay-offs, exit polls. And offer customized content to the extent possible, based on the visitor's profile or choices.

### The ROI Formula

How do you calculate the ROI for a website? This is the formula:

Number of Visitors x Conversion Rate x Average Sale Amount

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In summary, Doug identified the two web marketing techniques that every company needs to be doing at present: the pay-for-placement networks, also known as "goto buys" or "keyword buys" such as those provided by [overture.com](http://overture.com); and the e-newsletter. Two ongoing directives that successful web marketers must adhere to: measure the performance, and optimize the website based on the measurement results.

*See the blue box on page 3 for important web marketing resources*



## November Chapter Meeting Location

San Fernando Valley Chapter's November meeting will be held **November 13, 2001** in the Terrace Room of the **Sportsmen's Lodge Restaurant**, 12833 Ventura Boulevard (at Coldwater Canyon), Studio City. **Telephone:** (818) 755-5000. **Time:** From 6:30 p.m. until about 9:00 p.m.

**Topic:** Usability on a Shoestring by **Andrea Ames**, Member, STC International Board of Directors. This topic was postponed from September 18. Please refer to the September newsletter for details.

**Menu Choices:** Grilled Breast of Chicken with Champagne Mushroom Sauce, or New York Steak, or Vegetable Lasagna. These entrees are served with: mixed green salad with assorted dressings, garlic mashed potatoes, fresh seasonal vegetables, cheesecake with strawberry topping, rolls and butter, coffee or tea. **Cost:** \$20 for members and \$23 for non-members.

**RSVP** with your menu choice to Janie McKinney by November 8 at [janiemckinney@earthlink.net](mailto:janiemckinney@earthlink.net) or (818) 707-1003. As always, if you make a reservation, you are responsible for the cost, whether or not you attend. Please also keep your own record of what you ordered.



## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

This summer we experimented with an online-only newsletter with mixed results. As usual it was created in PageMaker and distilled to PDF, made compatible with Acrobat 3.0 (for the benefit of those who still haven't upgraded), saved as optimized, and so forth.

In September's issue, I added links to all urls and e-mail addresses listed in the newsletter, but I'm not sure it was worth it. On some systems, the links all work in Netscape and in IE. On other systems, the newsletters hang completely in either browser, when folks try to open them on the website. On still other systems, trying to use IE freezes everything at page 1, while Netscape works fine. Finally, the links on page 2 of the September newsletter (to Ron Brown's PDF) don't work at all in a few instances. Right clicking and doing a Save Link As didn't seem to make any difference for those we knew were having trouble. This has been extremely frustrating for the newsletter/webmaster team, since we are unable to determine why this happens. It may have something to do with individual browser or browser plug-in configurations or other system software incompatibilities.

While we think the resulting online newsletters look really great with lots of good color and additional graphics (for those who can view them), there was no savings in time for the newsletter/webmaster team. In fact, the time spent producing each issue and fussing unsuccessfully to make it accessible to all was considerably more. We also tried a test e-mail of the June newsletter as an attachment, but many of you are forced to live behind firewalls for protection and cannot receive attachments.

My experience with HTML e-newsletters is that they're just as time-consuming if you want a nice first page and "TOC" to display in recipients' mailboxes. A plain text e-mail with links to the website may be a possibility, but the newsletter would still have to be created with a slippery tool, since currently all we would have available for that is FrontPage 2000. A future editor may be able to afford more tools for the toolbox.

This November issue of our online newsletter has a minimal number of hyperlinks to see if "less is more". We had also intended to mail it as a hard copy but the new format isn't really appropriate for that and no one has time to put out two versions each month! Stay tuned for our next experiment!

*Shirley A. Parker*

### Some important resources noted by Doug Klein, our October speaker:

**cyberatlas.com**, providing internet statistics and market research for web marketers;  
**moreover.com**, which offers syndicated content plug-ins to add to your website, providing up-to-the-minute news keyed to your product line or your customers' interests;  
**overture.com** (formerly goto.com), a premier pay-for-placement network;  
**postmasterdirect.com**, the only company offering double opt-in qualified e-mail lists;  
**cauce.com**, the Coalition Against Unsolicited Commercial E-Mail, an organization you can join to fight SPAM!;  
**www.xcentric.com**, Doug Klein's company website

# President's Message

from

*Cathy N. Mills*



Hi Everyone,

I sincerely hope that you are all happy and well, given the recent tragic events in our country. It's really hard to get on with our lives and get back to normal, but we're all trying.

Following are a few quick reminders and memos. First, I hope many of you were able to attend the Region 8 Conference in Irvine. There were many last-minute incentives to help boost morale and attendance, so I hope you were able to take advantage of the opportunity to network and to learn.

Second, I'm being asked to encourage each of you to renew your STC membership online. Apparently, by renewing online and early, we can help conserve STC funds.

Third, Janie McKinney's chapter survey will be in the December newsletter. Janie allowed members extra time to respond.

Finally, I would like to congratulate Shirley Parker for hanging in there and achieving Senior member status. Please congratulate Shirley when you see her!

*Cathy Neel Mills*

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## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

*by Tom Berryman, Membership Vice President*



Please join me in extending a warm welcome to the following technical communicators who have recently transferred to San Fernando Valley Chapter:

**Julie A. Woodcock** from Los Angeles  
**Jonathan W. Bagg** from San Gabriel Valley

# Celebrate the Past, Create the Future

by Shirley Parker



This report on the California Governor's Conference for Women may seem off-topic for a technical writers' newsletter, but somewhere I've seen studies indicating that the majority of technical writers are women. Without refreshing my memory on that, I decided to include this account, even if those statistics might be starting to change. And perhaps our male colleagues in the chapter can pass this on to the women in their lives, or slide it under the appropriate office doors.

The annual theme of Celebrate the Past, Create the Future was central to the presentations at the California Governor's Conference for Women held October 11, 2001 at the Long Beach Convention Center. The conference is a non-partisan, state-sponsored forum for California women to share and discuss important issues that challenge their everyday lives. It is the largest non-profit conference of its kind in the nation. The generosity of many corporate sponsors makes attendance costs quite reasonable, except for those who need to stay overnight at the official conference hotels. For the wrong reasons, however, that may change before next year, depending on the state of the California economy as a whole.

The Exhibit Hall had many booths reflecting the wide range of women's interests and concerns. Health, technology, science and education issues come to mind. And if anyone still young enough (read "under 40") is thinking about adding a career in law enforcement, it seemed that at least six different California agencies were represented by their female officers in uniform.

The California Governor's Conference for Women sells out every year and, in spite of the terrorist threats, this year was no exception. More than ten thousand corporate executives, small business owners, professional and community leaders, authors and other successful women, along with, I think, three men attended the conference. (Men are not encouraged to attend this particular conference and I heard women around me saying that their employers had told male employees "No, this one's for the ladies" and similar statements.) The count does not include the mostly plainclothes security officers who were also in attendance.

Five hundred high school age young women had been extended special invitations to attend, so they could catch the vision of what women can achieve in an enlightened society. Some high school students were brave enough to step to an open microphone when permitted. It was a real morale booster to hear some of the big corporation executives (women) instruct an aide to give the young women a business card and invite them to call for help and advice.

## Governor Gray Davis

Governor Gray Davis put in words what all of us were thinking, when he said that our attendance at the conference was a statement of defiance to terrorists everywhere. Terrorists fear three things: freedom, democracy, and strong-willed women. As might be expected, the declaration was met with great applause. Ten thousand women talking quietly is a roar; ten thousand women applauding wildly is downright frightening. Make sure you're on the right side, gentlemen!

Given his critical load of responsibilities these days, Governor Davis's main purpose in being in attendance at the conference, at least this year, seemed to be the presentation of \$5,000 scholarship awards to six very deserving California women chosen from many who had applied for the scholarships. These women now have the financial help they need to push forward with their continuing education in order to pull themselves up and to contribute greatly to society in these fields: business, education, health and human services, nursing, public service and law enforcement, science and technology. (The money is sent directly to their educational institutions.) Most of us have heard the expression "poor white trash" and some of these women had been told they were nothing but a burden on society because they had been born poor. Hyundai Motor Corporation then astounded the scholarship recipients by having a key drawing for a brand new car, while State Farm Insurance paid the first year's insurance coverage on it, for the lucky winner.

## First Lady Sharon Davis

California's First Lady Sharon Davis mentioned the conference having the same theme each year, but this time it had added meaning for we face an extraordinarily changed world. The strength of this country is that we are not easily taken down. Women hold strong leadership positions in all fields. We are not strong because of our might; we are strong because of our compassion. The First Lady gave an emotional plea and encouragement for women to get involved: volunteer at a church, synagogue or charity; mentor a child; help a single life be better than it would have been if you had not stepped forward.

As with any large conference, the quality of the speakers was a little uneven, but personal preferences come into play there, too. Almost everyone I heard was uplifting, but I'll quote two who were outstanding.

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### **Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Ph.D.**

World-renowned business leader and author, Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Ph.D. from the Harvard School of Business was the first keynoter. She spoke powerfully about managing change around technology and dealing with all kinds of change. She delineated the differences between the corporate laggards and the corporate successes. Corporate laggards share one or all of the following attitudes:

1. Being in denial, which leads to paralysis – or the denial comes out of smug arrogance that they know it all. They don't take new ideas seriously.
2. Showing anger and blame – in business this isn't effective. For example, at first Barnes & Noble sued Amazon.com – not a productive route to take.
3. Putting lipstick on the bulldog, meaning they are making cosmetic changes only.

On the other hand, corporate successes have a large dose of the following attributes:

1. Curiosity – they are willing to learn.
2. Challenge of their own beliefs and customs – you can't do quality work with minimum wage workers. Where is their training, their motivation?
3. Deep systemic changes or lifestyle makeovers – leaders set goals and allow teams to improvise and be creative.
4. Partners and networks of partners – a source of learning, a source of strength.
5. Collaboration – building on the values of the community.

In regard to that last item, Dr. Kanter related that many California companies haven't laid off people in this shaky economy. Instead, they've deployed them to do volunteer work in the community while keeping them on the payroll. I wish I could have got to her to ask for a list of names! Theirs was a much more humane reaction than what many of us have been suffering through in the high tech industry.

Dr. Kanter is a dynamic speaker and it was hard to take notes on everything she said, but one of her questions to us was "Does your passion match your aspiration?" She said that anything can look like a failure in the middle. We must find ways around the obstacles!

### **Bertice Berry, Ph.D.**

Bertice Berry, Ph.D., author, lecturer and humorist, spoke on two occasions and I have a long list of quotes from her, also. She has an amazing gospel voice and always begins her talks with a song. Dr. Berry rose from poverty in Wilmington, Delaware, the sixth of 7 children. She had been told she wasn't college material. (I could really relate to how that made her feel!) So if anyone knows about using obstacles to change yourself, she does. Changing yourself will change everyone who comes behind you.

Dr. Berry reminded us we are the product of everyone we come in contact with. Everyone we meet leaves a part of themselves with us and changes us. She said, too, that we need to use humor to keep from killing other people when they profoundly insult us or do something incredibly stupid or dangerous around us or to our loved ones. We also need to teach ourselves and our children that "you put off what you want while you work on what you need." A few of her other success in life statements that I was able to write down include these:

1. Networking is important but quiltworking is better. Nets have holes in them; with quilts, every piece belongs.
2. See the end from the beginning because none of us are born where we want to be.
3. Get there early – no matter where you are going. The window of opportunity opens early – and closes early, too.
4. Speak to everyone – speak first! Speak in love, not hatred.
5. Exercise daily, eat properly, and eliminate noise and clutter from your life.
6. Success is what you can show someone else how to do.
7. Pray without ceasing – the way you worry without ceasing.
8. Keep a journal of all the things that happen to tick you off. Get them out of your system.
9. Tap into the gifts within you. You've spent your life doing what everyone else expected you to do. Let your own gifts flow.
10. Allow yourself to be transplanted to where you need to be.

If you are interested in buying one or an entire set of audio tapes of the conference, visit [www.cgcw.org](http://www.cgcw.org). There is a very visible link that will take you to ordering information.



## SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Each year, STC offers scholarships to full-time graduate and undergraduate students pursuing careers in technical communication.

Fourteen awards of \$2,000 each will be granted for academic year 2002-2003.

**Application deadline is February 15, 2002.**

Application forms and instructions are available from the STC office:

901 N. Stuart Street, Suite 904  
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[www.stc.org](http://www.stc.org)

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## New Canadian Issues SIG Signing Up New Members

*by Alexa Campbell, SIG Manager*

Would you like to join a group of Canadians? Now who wouldn't want that opportunity? The new Canadian Issues SIG is now signing up new members and you can be a part of this new group. You'll find it's a great way to network with other STC members in Canada and elsewhere, focusing on issues pertinent to Canadians.

In May 2001, STC formed a new SIG devoted to improving communication among its Canadian members. I am Alexa Campbell, a long-time member of STC who is serving as SIG manager. I'm inviting Canadian STC members, and others who are interested in Canadian issues, to join this new group.

Right now, STC members can sign up for the Canadian Issues SIG for free until the end of the year. SIG membership dues will be billed in the 2002 STC dues notices scheduled to be sent out in November. To sign up for SIG membership, email your request to the STC membership department ([membership@stc.org](mailto:membership@stc.org)).

Keys to the success of any organization are the enthusiasm and support of its members. I hope many of you will step forward to help make this one of the most effective SIGs in STC. We can use volunteers to fill important positions of newsletter editor, webmaster, listserv coordinator and membership coordinator. The tasks are not hard nor take a lot of time; however, they will take your commitment.

We already have established a listserv that will be a good source for exchanging information and ideas. To subscribe to the list, go to <http://lists.stc.org/cgi-bin/lyris.pl?enter=stc-ca-l> and click the "Join stc-ca-l" button. Complete the information and you're there. (Note that the l is a lower case L.)

If you have any questions about the Canadian Issues SIG, please contact me, Alexa Campbell, at (204) 632-2345 or email [acampbell@rrc.mb.ca](mailto:acampbell@rrc.mb.ca)

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Here is some information about the Canadian Issues SIG, its mission, its name, and its goals:

**Mission statement**

The Canadian Issues SIG fosters communication among Canadian members of STC to allow them to exchange information and to discuss issues within STC that

- \* Are of a particular concern to Canadian members
- \* Arise by reason of political, socioeconomic, and geographical constraints because the members reside in Canada

**Rationale for name**

The name reflects the membership of the SIG, and carries on the title of the Canadian Issues Committee, which was formed in 1990. In the ten years of its operation, this committee helped identify and resolve many issues of concern to Canadian members of STC. Membership in the SIG is not necessarily restricted to Canadian members but is open to anyone with an interest in the special needs and concerns of Canadian STC members.

**Areas of interest**

The Canadian Issues SIG explores the following areas of interest:

- \* Increasing the technical communications profile and reputation across Canada
- \* Monitoring, helping shape, and publicizing technical communication education in Canada
- \* Helping evolve standards to encourage a consistency in the technical communications courses offered across Canada
- \* Communicating the value of technical communication to business, industry and academe
- \* Enabling educational institutions, industry and practitioners to share ideas about technical communication
- \* Promoting a professional development program for Canadian technical communicators, by making it easier to advertise such programs

**Goals**

The following are the goals of the Canadian Issues SIG:

- \* To link Canadian chapters, which are spread out geographically, and which lack a unified voice in STC internationally
- \* To provide opportunities for Canadian members to communicate about needs, concerns and issues that are unique to Canada by virtue of geography, economics or politics
- \* To provide a venue for promoting professional development activities for Canadian members

Alexa Campbell, Canadian Issues SIG manager

Tel (204) 632-2345

Fax (204) 633-6075

email [acampbell@rrc.mb.ca](mailto:acampbell@rrc.mb.ca)

## **SURFER'S ADVISORY** by Shirley Parker

Have you updated your anti-virus software lately? It goes without saying that everyone needs anti-virus software on their computers and that it needs to be scheduled to sweep regularly. But we all need to download the almost-daily updates to the dat files, as well as purchase each new version of whatever program we're using. Your sys admin probably sends e-mails about the latest upgrade availability or in some corporations forces the upgrades on you to save his or her own sanity. But do you upgrade your home or home business computer? Daily is not too often! Or do you think it doesn't matter because "they" won't get you at home?

In STC we're essentially technical people in one way or another, even those of us who do something besides document software. But what about the probable relatives, hobby club friends and other computer-challenged individuals who probably don't have a clue what an anti-virus program is? Many don't even know how to file or delete messages from an Inbox. Do you think they won't inadvertently infect your e-mail system, or worse? Do you then think you won't feel bad because you didn't want to hurt their feelings by telling them to install / upgrade the anti-virus software on their systems or stop e-mailing you? Just be aware that e-mail apparently isn't the only way to get a computer virus any more, especially the variations of nimda.

Even people like us can get clobbered because the never-gonna-grow up dolts and malevolent creatures of the world have nothing better to do than try to wreck international commerce and cooperation any way they can. Whether it's a virus, worm, Trojan horse

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Bonni Graham



Image courtesy of Art Center College of Design &lt;www.artcenter.edu&gt;

## Director-Sponsor Message from Bonni Graham, 2001-2002 Director-Sponsor, Region 8

bgraham@manuallabour.com

(From the **September 2001** Board Meeting. Bonni is indebted to Chris Benz, Region 2 Director-Sponsor for this report.)

Following the terrorist acts of 11 September, the September 2001 STC Board of Directors meeting was held by teleconference—instead of face-to-face in Atlanta, Georgia, as originally planned—on 21 September 2001.

As a little background, like all board meetings, this one consisted of three passes:

- **An action pass**, during which motions are brought forth to the board. For each motion, the board either approves it (with or without modifications), rejects it or requests that the motion be restated and brought forth at a later date. Also during this pass, actions taken by the Executive Council since the last board meeting are announced.
- **A discussion pass**, during which various topics are brought forth for board consideration and discussion. Many discussion items results in action items for board and/or committee members, generally with the expectation that a motion or further information will be brought forth at an upcoming board meeting.
- **An information pass**, during which board members provide information not otherwise covered in the reports they provided to the rest of the board prior to the meeting. This is also the time for board members to ask for clarification on information presented in other members' reports.

This article reports on results of the action pass. During that pass, the board approved:

- **The final budget** for Fiscal Year 2002.
- **The dues structure** effective January 1, 2002.
- **The following new mission statement for the Society-level Technical Editing Special Interest Group (SIG):** "The Technical Editing SIG provides opportunities for members to expand their editing and proofreading expertise by serving as a forum for information exchange, professional support, and interaction among the SIG, STC, and the editing community at large."
- **The dissolution of the following chapters:**
  - o Fitchburg State student
  - o Eagle (Denton, Texas) student
  - o Saskatchewan
- **The following merit grants:**
  - o US\$3,000 to the Northern New England chapter for a scholarship program at the University of Massachusetts. This scholarship is in honor of Millie McGuire, founder of the chapter.
  - o US\$2,000 to the Atlanta chapter to create a new résumé database.
  - o US\$1,235 to the Central Ohio chapter to support its new High School Learning Program.
- **The following loans:**
  - o US\$3,000 to the Southeastern Michigan chapter for the Region 4 conference.
  - o US\$3,000 to the Canada West Coast chapter to host the Region 7 Conference in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, in November 2002, subject to formal approval of the conference budget.

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- **A financial recovery/special need grant** of US\$715 to the Netherlands chapter to cover past-due costs incurred for the March 2001 membership meeting and ensure the future of the chapter.
- **An increase of the stipend** for the Industry Fellowship for Faculty and for the Teaching Fellowship for Practicing Professionals to US\$4,000 each.
- **Julie Bommarito as the Program Manager** for the 2004 STC Annual Conference to be held in Baltimore, Maryland.
- **Rhonda Stanton for a Journal Editor Fellowship.**

The Executive Council approved the following since the May 2001 board meeting:

- **Pacesetter Awards** for the Orlando chapter and the Mercer University student chapter. (This was a pro forma vote to acknowledge awards granted at the STC Annual Conference in Chicago in May 2001.)
- **Formation of the University of Wisconsin-Stout student chapter** with a US\$150 start-up grant.
- **Formation of the Single Sourcing SIG** with a proposed first-year budget of US\$1,400.

If you would like to learn more about decisions made during this or any other board meeting, or if you would like to have a motion or discussion item brought forward, please contact your Director-Sponsor. For items you want addressed at the January 2002 meeting, please alert your Director-Sponsor by early December.

**Note:** For Chris' previous Director-Sponsor articles, please visit <http://www.stcregion.org/region2/chair.shtml>. You can reach Chris by e-mail at [cjbenz@unforgettable.com](mailto:cjbenz@unforgettable.com) or by telephone at 919.479.4891.

For Bonni Graham's articles, please visit [http://www.stcregion.org/region8/director\\_sponsor/bonni\\_articles.htm](http://www.stcregion.org/region8/director_sponsor/bonni_articles.htm)

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or bacterium, it can sneak up on you, often through backdoors or sunroofs left open by the folks at Microsoft Corporation. Even so, Microsoft has security patches and Service Pack upgrades available for download that close those windows and doors! Please, do yourself and everyone else a favor. Get them! And help your non-techie loved ones to install them on their computers, too. Just make sure you're qualified to help on their system or you'll make things worse. You may have to point other people to a computer retailer with experts on call. To fix your own setup, go to <http://www.microsoft.com/technet/security/topics>, where you'll find a lot of information. If you're specifically looking for nimda patches, just add `/Nimda.asp` to that url.

While you're in that area of the Microsoft website, sign up to receive their security bulletins via e-mail. They're worth it, in spite of the increased sense of helplessness you may feel, that is, that there's no end to this nasty stuff that can wreck your computer system for a day or longer. It's a war, in more ways than one. There'll never be an end to the patches you need to retrieve and install, and the anti-virus folks will never sit twiddling their thumbs, wondering what to work on today.

If you're interested in viruses spreading in the wild (ItW), check out [www.wildlist.org](http://www.wildlist.org) for relevant information.

**FYI Only** - These are "one-time mentions" and not an endorsement, since we are unfamiliar with either company.

<http://www.online-learning.com> specializes in courses ranging from technical writing to XML authoring. Members of STC reportedly are eligible for a 20% discount upon registration in any of the courses.

**Impact Information** | Plain Language Services. Plain language is language that everyone in your audience can understand. It reduces costs and improves the satisfaction of customers and clients. <http://www.impact-information.com>



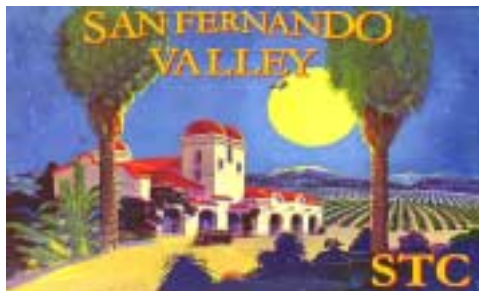
## STC Mission Statement

Designing the Future of Technical Communication.

## About STC

The Society for Technical Communication (STC) is the world's largest organization for technical communicators. Its current membership of 25,000 includes writers, editors, illustrators, printers, publishers, photographers, educators, and students.

Dues for 2002 are \$125 per year, plus a one-time enrollment fee of \$15 for new members. Student members pay \$45 per year, with no enrollment fee. **Please** check the website: <http://www.stc.org> for more details. Membership is open to anyone engaged in some phase of technical communication, interested in the arts and sciences of technical communication, and in allied arts and sciences. See next page for address and telephone numbers.



## San Fernando Valley

### Chapter Contacts

**President** – Cathy Mills  
(818) 701-7356  
cmills@socal.rr.com

**VP Programs** – Janie McKinney  
(818) 707-1003  
janiemckinney@earthlink.net

**VP Membership** – Tom Berryman  
(818) 348-0639  
tomberryman1@excite.com

**Secretary/Treasurer/PR** – Dennis Wilson  
(818) 379-8400  
dwpwrite@pacbell.net

**Employment Liaison** – Noel Thorp  
(805) 484-0620  
noel.thorp@worldnet.att.net

**Education Liaison** – Art Ringwalt  
(818) 840-9592  
arthur122@earthlink.net

**Newsletter** – Shirley Parker  
(818) 716-7153  
saparker@pacbell.net

**Hospitality/Greeter** – Judy Eisikowitz  
(818) 228-3112  
judy.eisikowitz@blueshieldca.com

**Webmaster** – Al Needell  
aneedell@nortelnetworks.com

**Our Website** – <http://www.stcsfv.org>

**Region 8 Website information** –  
<http://www.stcregion.org/region8>

**Society for Technical Communication**  
901 N. Stuart St., Suite 904  
Arlington, VA 22203-1822  
(703) 522-4114 / (703) 522-2075(fax)  
<http://www.stc.org>

## Our STC Neighbors (In alphabetical order)

**Inland Empire** chapter — Brigitte Ohlig  
— ohlig@bohdotech.com

**Los Angeles** chapter — Betsy Suttle,  
President (310) 478-5478  
bsuttle615@aol.com  
<http://www.lastc.org>

**Orange County** chapter — Elaine  
Randolph (949) 380-6128  
elaine.randolph@unisys.com  
<http://www.ocstc.org/main.htm>

**San Diego** chapter — Kris Oden,  
President koden@invitrogen.com  
<http://www.stc-sd.org>

**San Gabriel Valley** chapter — Kathy  
Broman, President (818) 951-7301,  
kabroman@aol.com — <http://www.stcsgv.org>

**San Luis Obispo** chapter — Regina  
Brown, President (805) 546-8671  
castano@fix.net, or Jan Grammer,  
Secretary jkdaley@thegrid.net

**Santa Barbara** chapter — LeeAnne  
Kryder, President  
kryder@humanitas.ucsb.edu  
<http://www.sbstc.org>

WYSIOP = What You See Is One Possibility

## Viewpoint

Viewpoint is published bimonthly September through June by the San Fernando Valley chapter of the Society for Technical Communication (STC-SFV). Viewpoint invites writers to submit articles that they wish to be considered for publication. Note that by submitting an article, you implicitly grant a license to this newsletter to run the article and for other STC publications to reprint it without permission. **Unless otherwise noted, copyright to individual articles is held by the writer.** The newsletter itself is © 2001, STC.

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**Shirley Parker, Editor**  
22909 Ingomar Street  
West Hills CA 91304-4513  
tel (818) 716-7153  
fax (818) 716-7958  
email: [saparker@pacbell.net](mailto:saparker@pacbell.net)

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