



# Ascent

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## President's message

Hello and Happy New Year! As announced in the last issue of *Ascent*, we are going to hold chapter elections for the 2006-2007 chapter administrative council. The council members will take office June 1, 2006. The Society bylaws require that we elect chapter officers, so this is an exciting and necessary step for our chapter.

### Elected Positions

Elected positions include: president, vice-president, and secretary/treasurer. We will also elect two nominating committee members. (The nominating committee oversees chapter elections.) Remaining members of the board, as well as additional nominating committee members, will be appointed once the elections are complete. Winners will be announced at the March 2006 competitions award banquet.

For more information on a specific position, do one of the following: 1) click the "chapter council and committees page" link on the "Officers" page on the chapter website, 2) access the STC handbook via the society website ([www.stc.org](http://www.stc.org)), or 3) contact one of the current officers (see contact information under "Contacts" below).

Current chapter members are eligible to vote, and ballots may be submitted electronically (excepting those who do not have an email address on file with the Society). In order to vote, you will need to input your name and STC member number.

### Election Information

A chapter election information page, including election procedures and candidate information, will soon be available on the chapter website – <http://www.intermountain-stc.org>. Voting will begin at midnight on February 28 and will remain open until midnight March 10, 2006.

If you have questions, please contact any of the current officers. This is a wonderful opportunity to be involved. Your STC membership is your investment. Maximize it. Make the most of it. Make it count.

If you are interested in running for one of the elected positions, please contact me by email at: [mel\\_n\\_sam@yahoo.com](mailto:mel_n_sam@yahoo.com). Note that candidates will be asked to provide an electronic photo (if desired) and a short bio, which will be made available to voters on the chapter website. We look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your participation!

—Melissa Jessop, STC-IC President

## Interim President's message

Greetings! I am your southern Utah regional representative and newsletter editor. Starting this month, Melissa Jessop will be transitioning the chapter president duties to me so that I may serve as the interim chapter president until the elections. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at [gordoncomputer@yahoo.com](mailto:gordoncomputer@yahoo.com). Thank you!

—Ann Gordon, STC-IC Interim President

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## STC Conference

### 53<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference in Las Vegas

Mark your calendars now for the annual STC conference, to be held May 7-10, 2006, in Las Vegas, Nevada. As you may know, Las Vegas is in the same STC region as our chapter. We won't see another annual conference in our region for many years. What a great opportunity to attend an STC Annual Conference so close to home.

STC Annual Conferences boast the world's largest gathering of technical communicators. At the conference, you can learn new job skills, watch product demonstrations, and network with other professionals. A showcase will display the winning entries from STC competitions. Over 200 technical sessions will be offered this year.

Conference registration costs are now posted online. The printed Preliminary Program will be mailed in January along with the February issue of *Intercom*. The online program will be posted in February.

This year, STC has a new Exhibition Management Company. Exhibition space is on a first-come, first-served basis, but if your company is interested in exhibiting at STC's annual conference, please contact: AHI Meeting Management, PO Box 519, Selbyville, DE 19975. Their email address is: [Convene@aol.com](mailto:Convene@aol.com).

For more information about the conference, visit <http://www.stc.org/53rdConf/>. For specific questions, you may also contact Buffy Bennett at [buffy@stc.org](mailto:buffy@stc.org).

We hope to see you there!

—Buffy M. Bennett, Special Projects Director

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## Chapter Events

### Competition Reports Due in January

Judges need to submit their competition material reports in January. For information, contact Ann Gordon or Marj Hermansen-Eldard.

## Upcoming Chapter Events

**January** – This Development Meeting features a Technical Recruiters Panel discussion, to be held at the SLC Library, Rm 4189, 7:00 pm, on January 18<sup>th</sup>. Topics discussed will include: high-tech stability in Utah, current job market, marketing skill sets to recruiters, and salary levels.

**February** – Time for many of you to renew membership, and time for us to participate in chapter elections. Stay tuned for voting details.

**March** – The Competition Awards banquet – date, place and time to be announced.

**April** – The Development Meeting includes a presentation at Weber State by Shelly Thomas. She will explore the connection between engineering and technical writing – date and time to be announced.

**May** – STC Annual Conference in Las Vegas, NV – for more information about the conference, visit <http://www.stc.org/53rdConf/>.

## A Few Other Events of Interest to Technical Communicators

### PowerPoint User's Group

You may be interested in the new Utah PowerPoint User's Group, which will meet in Salt Lake City on the third Tuesday of each month. Meetings will be held at the University of Utah, Milton Bennion Hall, Room/Lab 202, from 6:15 to 8:15 p.m.

For more information, contact Anne Maxwell at: [amaxwell@wnlaw.com](mailto:amaxwell@wnlaw.com).

### E-Learning DevCon Conference in SLC

E-learning DevCon 2006 will be held locally at the University of Utah August 7-9, 2006. The conference organizers are offering a significant discount to people who register by January 31.

You can learn more about the conference at: [www.elearndevcon.com](http://www.elearndevcon.com).

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## Education

### Technical Writing at Weber State U

In 1997, Weber offered Professional and Technical Writing (P&TW) as a minor for science and engineering students. Now, the Weber State P&TW Program has developed into a minor that attracts majors from all over the university. This minor is especially appealing to Communication majors, who can select a technical writing track for their major.

Since 1997, the demand for these courses has increased, and since 2000, the WSU English Department has added two new faculty members for these technical writing courses.

The 18-credit hour minor requires these six courses.

- ENGL 3100 Professional and Technical Writing
- ENGL 3140 Professional and Technical Editing
- ENGL 3190 Document Design
- ENGL 4100 Issues in P&TW
- ENGL 4110 Content Management
- ENGL 4120 Seminar and Practicum in P&TW

For detailed information about P&TW requirements, course descriptions, and class schedules, contact Becky Jo McShane at [bmcsbane@weber.edu](mailto:bmcsbane@weber.edu) or visit <http://departments.weber.edu/ptw>.

—Becky Jo McShane, PR Committee Manager

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## Tools of the Trade

### Time to Update Your Resume?

The motto “Be prepared,” isn’t just great advice for Boy Scouts; it’s also great career advice. You never know when the perfect career opportunity will present itself. If a recruiter called you today with your dream job, would you be prepared to send out an up-to-date resume right away?

There are four critical times to update your resume:

- At least once a year
- Any time your career focus changes
- When you anticipate layoffs with your company
- When you begin to feel dissatisfied with your current position

#### 1. Update your resume every year.

This is where many people fall short. When that recruiter calls with the perfect job, you may suddenly

find your resume is out of date, and you have to scramble to catch up.

Keep your resume current by including your best accomplishments each year. Don’t count on your memory to recall everything you achieved in years past! You are likely to overlook critical achievements and contributions. If you need assistance, a resume coach may be able to help you through the process with some targeted questions on your most recent jobs.

#### 2. Update your resume when your career focus changes.

If you want to change your career path, then you need to change your resume. There are several ways to shift the focus away from your current job and toward your new career.

By focusing on those skills that will be useful in your new career, you can position yourself as a stronger candidate. Highlight the transferable skills in your new resume, bringing them front and center.

In addition to highlighting your transferable skills, shift your list of accomplishments to support those skills. Accomplishment statements give credibility to transferable skills and prove your ability to cross industry or occupational lines.

Well-crafted accomplishments make a big difference in whether you win the interview or are passed over.

Finally, be sure you understand your audience. As you shift career focus, it is critical to understand the hiring motives of your target market. Use your resume as an effective selling tool by correctly anticipating the recruiter’s “wish list” for great job candidates.

#### 3. Update your resume when you anticipate layoffs within your company.

A harsh reality of today’s economy is the need for corporate downsizing. Layoffs and losses are becoming more and more common. But you can prepare for any worst-case scenario by keeping your resume up-to-date.

Don’t make the mistake of being overly optimistic. It’s safer to assume that you are on the “out” list. Most people who get caught unexpectedly in a layoff thought they were indispensable to their employers.

You might be important or well liked, but remember that the bottom line always has a louder voice than you do. Get your resume ready as soon as you see any indications that downsizing is on the way.

Don't mistake company loyalty for a fear of change. Often employees would rather take their chances with a potential layoff than make proactive steps toward finding a new job. Once they're laid off, it's already too late. Remember, as a candidate, you are always more marketable while still employed. Avoid this trap and start your job search early with self-marketing tools (resume and cover letter) that are up-to-date and top quality.

#### **4. Update your resume when you are dissatisfied with your current position.**

Job dissatisfaction leads to feelings of frustration, worthlessness, and often hopelessness. But there is no reason to stay in a job you hate. Being prepared with an updated resume can help you feel better in your current job. When you have a really terrible day at work, you can respond to job opportunities that same evening with confidence in your up-to-the-minute resume. Taking proactive steps toward a new career will give you back your optimism and self worth.

When it's time for you to update your resume, decide whether your resume requires a simple update or a complete rewrite. If you have been using the same resume format throughout your career, it's possible that you have outgrown the old look. What your resume promoted ten years ago may not be appropriate or significant for your current career choices. And if you have been simply "tacking on" to your old resume, it may resemble a house with too many additions.

A professional resume critique can help you decide exactly what you need in order to move forward. A well-written resume makes a difference in:

- The length of time it takes to make a career move
- The quality of your next position
- The income potential of your next position

Your resume is your best sales tool in finding a new job, and it deserves the investment of your time and commitment. With a little extra effort now, you'll be prepared for anything that comes your way—and you'll be well on the path to your next great job.

You will find some job-search tips and resume samples at: <http://www.alphaadvantage.com/>.

—Deborah Walker, CCMC  
Career Coach ~ Resume Writer

### **Create an Online Resume**

When I left teaching for a career in technical writing and instructional design, my resume changed a lot. But the biggest change involved the translation of my resume and a folder of writing examples into an online resume and online portfolio.

Because these tools have served me well, I suggest that other technical communicators create an online resume and portfolio, if you don't already have one.

Whether you use frames, cascading style sheets, or tables, an online resume website affords you the opportunity to showcase your work to a recruiter or department manager anywhere in the country – all this without having to mail a thick packet of samples or a CD.

If you want, you can check out my online resume at: <http://www.dagordon.com/>.

— Ann Gordon, STC-IC Regional Rep and Interim President

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## **Connections**

### **2006 – 2007 Scholarships**

Each year, STC offers scholarships to full-time graduate and undergraduate students pursuing careers in technical communication. Four awards of \$1,500 each will be granted for academic year 2006-2007.

#### **Application deadline is February 15, 2006.**

Application forms and instructions are available from the STC office. You can access information and forms at: <http://www.stc.org/>

Click the Education link and select:  
Grants & Loans > Scholarship Info

Completed application forms must reach the following address by February 15:

Scott DeLoach  
834 C Dekalb Ave NE  
Atlanta, GA 30307

## Membership renewal

We invite all of you to renew your membership for another year to ensure your continued access to the benefits provided by the STC organization.

STC is committed to bringing you the best speakers, writers, scholars, and practitioners in the technical communication field, whether at development meetings or conferences or through the pages of *Intercom* and *Technical Communication*.

Benefits of membership include:

- Networking
- Forums
- Development Meetings
- Job Announcements
- Newsletters
- Mentoring
- Technical Publications
- Full access to STC.org website

We anticipate that 2006 will be a memorable and exciting year for us all. We value your membership in STC.

It is easy to renew online, just go to <https://www.stc.org/duesrenewal/>

Thank you for your continued participation in the Intermountain Chapter of STC!

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## Acknowledgments

### Newsletter Editor

Donna Ann Gordon is the current editor for the Intermountain Chapter newsletter. If you have any submissions or suggestions, please contact Ann at [gordoncomputer@yahoo.com](mailto:gordoncomputer@yahoo.com).

### PR Committee Manager

Becky Jo McShane is our new PR committee manager. She is an associate professor at Weber State University, where she teaches technical writing. You can contact Becky Jo at [bmcshane@weber.edu](mailto:bmcshane@weber.edu).

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## Contacts

### 2005 Executive Board and Advisory Council

STC-Intermountain Chapter 2005 Executive Board		
Position	Name	Email
President	Melissa Jessop	<a href="mailto:mel_n_sam@yahoo.com">mel_n_sam@yahoo.com</a>
President-elect	Donna Ann Gordon	<a href="mailto:gordoncomputer@yahoo.com">gordoncomputer@yahoo.com</a>
Education committee manager		
Membership committee manager		
PR committee manager	Becky Jo McShane	<a href="mailto:mbmcshane@weber.edu">mbmcshane@weber.edu</a>
Newsletter editor	Donna Ann Gordon	<a href="mailto:gordoncomputer@yahoo.com">gordoncomputer@yahoo.com</a>
Programs committee manager	Marj Hermannsen-Eldard	<a href="mailto:marjheldard@comcast.net">marjheldard@comcast.net</a>
Website committee manager	Darren Bell	<a href="mailto:webmaster@intermountain-stc.org">webmaster@intermountain-stc.org</a>
Northern regional rep	Craig Walker	<a href="mailto:wal@inel.gov">wal@inel.gov</a>
Southern regional rep	Donna Ann Gordon	<a href="mailto:gordoncomputer@yahoo.com">gordoncomputer@yahoo.com</a>