



Ascent

Winter 2008 / Volume 4: Issue 1

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President's message Chapter Elections

Greetings! This month we are holding elections for the Intermountain Chapter administrative council. Elected positions include President, Vice-president, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Serving on the council is a wonderful way for members to maximize their STC membership. Working on the council gives you a chance to develop new skills, new friends, and a strong network of associates interested in technical communication. Our chapter leaders (both council members and committee managers) are chapter members who are willing to contribute a few hours a month to serve the chapter's needs. You don't need special skills or experience, just a willingness to learn and serve.

All you need to know about our election is available on our website, <http://www.intermountain-stc.org>. Those members interested in serving just need to download and complete a candidate questionnaire and e-mail it to elections@intermountain-stc.org.
Note: All applications are due by March 14.

We look forward to hearing from those who are interested in running for one of the elected positions. Make the most of your STC membership!

Election winners will be announced at the March 2008 competitions award event on March 21st and new council members will take office June 1, 2008.

Please take the time to vote for your administrative council members!

Thank you for being a member of our chapter. We look forward to an exciting, energetic year!

— Ann Gordon, STC-Intermountain President & So. Utah Rep

Chapter Events Competitions Award Night

Come join us for our competition awards event!

When: March 21, 2008, 7:00 pm

Where: SLCC South City Campus, 1575 S. State St., Salt Lake City, Utah.

RSVP to Marj Hermansen-Eldard (marjheldard@comcast.net) or Ann Gordon (gordoncomputer@yahoo.com) by Monday, March 17, 2008.

For information about Salt Lake Community College and the South City campus, including a campus map, visit <http://www.slcc.edu/locations/southcity.asp>.

Chapter Elections

Don't forget to vote! It's time to elect our 2008-09 board members! To learn more, go to <http://www.intermountain-stc.org/election.html>.

Candidate selection: March 1-14

Polling: March 16 – 20

Results Validation: March 21

Technical Branding and Messaging

Join us for our April Intermountain STC meeting!

When: April 24, 2008, 7:00 pm

Where: SLCC South City Campus, 1575 S. State St., Salt Lake City, Utah, Room W111 E.

Karl Davis, our new VP, will be speaking on technical branding and messaging.

Content Reuse in MadCap Flare and MadPak Suite

Join us for our May Intermountain STC meeting!

When: May 22, 2008, 7:00 pm

Where: SLCC South City Campus, 1575 S. State St., Salt Lake City, Utah, Room W111 E.

Paul Pehrson shares his expertise with MadCap Flare and MadPak Suite. Come and see snippets, variables, and conditional text in action, and learn how these can be used across different projects, and even across multiple products in the suite.

A Celebratory Moment... 2008 Chapter Competition Winners

STC's technical communication competitions offer opportunities to make new industry contacts and receive recognition for your work. Our four teams of expert judges have completed their review of this year's entries. As the competitions committee, we are pleased to announce the winners of the local 2007-2008 Technical Publications, Online, and Art competitions.

Publications competition

DTC	UCAR Highlights 2007
DTC	Staff Notes Monthly
DTC-Best of Show	Proposal Guide for Business and Technical Professionals
Excellence	Setting Up Your Dell M1730
Excellence	Gateway FX-530 Reference Guide
Excellence	Gateway One Reference Guide
Excellence	Gateway Profile 6 Service Guide
Excellence	Gateway Notebook Service Guide
Excellence	UCAR Quarterly
Excellence	Environmental Assessment of Base Realignment and Closure
Excellence	Gateway 30" Monitor User Guide and Setup Poster
Merit	Daniels Fund Scholars Booklet Series
Merit	CUSA 2006 Year-end Instructions
Merit	The Official Guide to Family Tree Maker 2008
Merit	Gateway TPM Security Setup Guide
Merit	Gateway 24" LCD Monitor User Guide
Merit	Gateway Notebook Documentation Set
Achievement	Converge Pro Installation and Operation Manual

Online competition

Excellence	TroughNet: Parabolic Trough Solar Power Network
Excellence	ARUP Consult
Excellence	Daniels Fund Scholars Topic Sites
Merit	LoanDesk Online Help System
Merit	Converge Console Help System
Achievement	Specialized Loan Servicing Validation Processing Guide
Achievement	SparkEngine MTP User/Admin Guide
Achievement	Dell XPS M1330 Service Manual
Achievement	Dell OptiPlex 755 Systems User's Guide

Art competition

DTC	Enabling Clean Energy Display
DTC – Best of Show	INL Executive Suite Time Line
Excellence	Setting Up Your Gateway One Gateway 30" Monitor
Excellence	Gateway One
Excellence	UCAR Highlights 2007
Excellence	Woody Biomass Usage
Excellence	CAES Poster
Excellence	INL Facilities and Site Services
Excellence	INL Impacts Brochure, 2006
Excellence	FX Setup Guide

We had a number of new judges who worked on the competitions this year. Overall, the consensus is that they enjoy their "learning by looking" glance at what others in the field are doing.

Though small, our competitions prove to be increasingly popular each year. We had entries from Dell Computers, Gateway, UCAR, and a number of other "outside" organizations—outside the Intermountain Chapter, I mean. These submitters know that submitting to the Intermountain Chapter will get them excellent judges feedback. They all realize that these competitions are an excellent (and very cost-effective!) way to receive professional and in-depth feedback about the quality of their technical documentation.

Comments and criticisms from the 3-judge panels that examine each entry are always constructive and the whole competition offers a great learning experience for everyone involved. Don't miss the opportunity to view all the award winning entries at our awards event. Also, start thinking now about participating in next year's competition.

I would personally like to take this opportunity to thank our expert judges for their dedicated attention

to detail and their helpful comments to each of our submitters.

All the award winners and each of our judges will be honored at the Awards and Judges Recognition Reception on Friday, March 21st, from 7:00 to 9:00 pm at the Salt Lake Community College, South City Campus, 1575 South State Street.

RSVPs for the Awards Event are due by Monday, March 17 to Marj Hermansen-Eldard (marjheldard@comcast.net).

Hope you'll plan to join us!

— *Marj Hermansen-Eldard, Competitions and Programs Committee Manager*

Education

Patent Careers For Technical Writers

After working more than fifteen years as a freelance technical writer, Steven Oppenheimer discovered another career option that draws heavily on his technical writing background and potentially offers significantly better money: Becoming a patent agent.

Patent agents are licensed to draft, file, and prosecute patents on behalf of inventors. Drafting a patent application entails gathering necessary information from the inventors and writing up the patent application. Prosecution entails a kind of legal dance between the patent applicant and the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO). A patent agent is licensed to represent an inventor in all respects before the USPTO.

Additional legal skills may need to be acquired by a technical writer interested in this field, but a law degree is not one of them. In the US, you must have significant technical training in a field such as electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, chemistry, biology, physics, or medicine in order to qualify to take the exam to become a patent agent.

In order to find out more about this potential career direction, please check out all the details in Steven's paper "Patent Careers for Technical Writers and Scientific, Engineering, and Medical Specialists" at <http://www.oppenheimercommunications.com/Patent/PatentAgentCareers.shtml>.

We thank Steven for introducing this new possible career direction and being willing to share his information.

A starting position as a licensed patent agent can easily afford you the same kind of earnings usually seen by senior level technical writers. – Steven Oppenheimer

Connections

55th Annual STC Conference in June

The annual STC conference will be held June 1-4 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In addition to demonstrations, mini-workshops, discussions, and progressions, the Technical Communication Summit includes a summit certificate program.

For more details, visit the STC website at <http://www.stc.org/55thConf/index.asp>

Networking Resources

The Content Wrangler

The Content Wrangler Community is a new social network dedicated to people who value content as a business asset. Technical communicators, medical and science writers, marketing pros, content management gurus, indexers, online community managers, document engineers, information architects, localization and translation pros, e-learning pros, taxonomists, bloggers, documentation and training managers and content creators all hang out here.

To find out more about the Content Wrangler Community, go to <http://www.thecontentwrangler.ning.com>.

Member News

Our Newsletter Editor

Joining us as our new newsletter editor is Susan McLain, owner of The Writing Way. Susan has been a technical and marketing writer for over 12 years, working for companies like GE Healthcare, Arlington Scientific, Inc. and Helius, Inc. She would be glad to receive any news of interest or information you feel would be valuable to share. Please contact her at susan@thewritingway.com to share anything you feel would be helpful for the newsletter.

Contacts

2008 Executive Board and Advisory Council

STC-Intermountain Chapter 2008 Executive Board and Advisory Council		
Position	Name	Email
President	D. Ann Gordon	gordoncomputer@yahoo.com
Vice-president	Karl Davis	karl@focus4creative.com
Acting treasurer	Marj Hermannsen-Eldard	marjheldard@comcast.net
Acting secretary	D. Ann Gordon	gordoncomputer@yahoo.com
Education committee manager	OPEN	
Employment committee manager	OPEN	
Competitions committee manager	Marj Hermannsen-Eldard	marjheldard@comcast.net
Membership committee manager	Melissa Jessop	melsam04@msn.com
PR committee manager	OPEN	
Newsletter editor	Susan McLain	susan@thewritingway.com
Programs committee manager	Marj Hermansen-Eldard	marjheldard@comcast.net
Website committee manager	Darren Bell	webmaster@intermountain-stc.org
Northern regional rep	Craig Walker	wal@inel.gov
Southern regional rep	D. Ann Gordon	gordoncomputer@yahoo.com