

Ragged Left



March 2002

Vol. 16, No. 3

THE SOCIETY FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION

BERKELEY CHAPTER



What's in a Name? Let Us Know

The Executive Committee recently had a discussion about the name of the STC Berkeley Chapter. Members who present at conferences or regional and national events report frequent confusion about the name, such as assuming Berkeley is a student chapter due to the association with the UC Berkeley name. Other questions that came to mind during our discussion: Since our membership comes from a wider geographic area, does the name Berkeley adequately represent the membership of the chapter? Are persons seeking membership with the organization confused by the Berkeley name? How do new members decide between the East Bay and Berkeley chapters for membership? Is there a tag line we could associate with the Berkeley chapter name to bring clarification to the geographic area represented? Should we rename the Berkeley Chapter to something more geographically representative of our membership? What are the possible names we could use? Are there other ways we could use to communicate our geographic representation?

The Committee decided we needed to hear from our membership on this issue. To support an online conversation we set up an email address for the discussion topic. Write to appellation@stc-berkeley.org with your ideas and comments. To subscribe to the discussion group, that is receive notice of comments when they are sent to the discussion group, send an email message with the word subscribe in the message pane of the email. Let's get chatting!

When Good Projects Go Bad

Sometimes it just doesn't work—the due dates are missed, data is nowhere to be found, milestones become roadblocks, and a project fights tooth and nail to stay alive. What can you do? There are about a half-dozen common reasons why projects that seem to be running smoothly start to get bogged down, ranging from unreal expectations to changes in personnel.

Meryl Natchez, an accomplished project manager, will provide you with insight into avoiding these problems and dealing with them if they crop up.

Meryl Natchez has been active in the information technology community since 1978. She founded and is the CEO of TechProse, with the objective of providing a business that offered integrity, value and continuous improvement to both clients and employees.

An alumna of Harvard University, Natchez attended executive business training at the Tuck Business School of Dartmouth College, and has been a visiting lecturer at S.F. State University.

Join us on March 13th for this informative program. Meeting registration details can be found on page two.

Inside this issue

- Valentine's Active Voice 3
- Recognition is Key 3
- President's Message 4
- Chapter Welcomes New Senior Members 4
- Meetings Around the Bay Area 5

Ragged Left

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About the STC

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.



STC has more than 20,000 members and 155 chapters worldwide. Its members include writers, editors, artists, illustrators, photographers, audiovisual specialists, managers, supervisors, educators, 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. Regular membership is \$110/year, with an additional \$15 enrollment fee the first year. Student membership is \$45/year.

To receive additional information and an application form, via mail or email:

- Send email to bkymbrs@stc.org.
- Send mail to STC-Berkeley, PO Box 1007, Berkeley CA 94701-1007.

Advertising Rates

Page \$70, 2/3 page \$50, 1/2 page \$40, 1/3 page \$30, 1/6 page \$20, business card \$10. STC members receive 20% off. Ad deadline is the fifteenth of the month prior to publication.

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 contact the editor for details of how to submit articles and illustrations.

Deadline for unsolicited submissions is the 20th of the month preceding publication.

Other STC publications are hereby granted permission to reprint articles from *Ragged Left*, provided such reprints credit the author and a copy of any publication containing such a reprint is sent to the *Ragged Left* editor.

STC-Berkeley Chapter Meeting Details

Next meeting: Wednesday, March 13.

Vo's Restaurant in downtown Oakland, is within easy walking distance to BART, is wheelchair accessible, and has both street and nearby garage parking.

Networking and conversation start at 6:00 P.M., and dinner at 6:30 P.M. If you want to eat dinner, reservations are required and *must* be received no later than 12:00 NOON the Monday before the meeting (March 11). Reservations are necessary so that we can order the right amount of food. Do *not* contact the restaurant.

Send checks to Berkeley STC, P.O. Box 1007, Berkeley, 94701.



RSVP online: Use your credit card to order meeting reservations via the chapter Web site, www.stc-berkeley.org.

The meeting fee with dinner is \$18 for members, \$15 for student members, and \$21 for nonmembers. If you come for the program only, starting at 7:30 P.M., the fee is \$12 for members and non-members, and \$10 for students. If you are not eating, payments may be made at the door.

Résumé or Portfolio Review

Does your résumé or portfolio present your qualifications in the best light? If you're new to the field, or just concerned that your résumé or portfolio may not be up to snuff, sign up for a free 30-minute review. We have a cadre of seasoned tech writers with hiring experience who can review your material and give you expert feedback.

To sign up for a review, email employment@stc-berkeley.org by the Thursday before the monthly meeting.

State your name and the meeting at which you're hoping to have the review.

Be sure to write *resume review* or *portfolio review* in the subject heading of the email message. If it's for a résumé, paste your résumé into the body of the message. If it's a portfolio review, bring your portfolio to the appointment.

After you've sent the email, look for a reply from the Employment Manager, confirming that you are booked for a review. The message will also specify your review time (6 or 6:30) and who your reviewer will be.

Reviews are booked on a first-come, first-served basis. Since our reviewers are volunteers, the number of slots available varies for each meeting.

A Recap of the February Meeting:

Valentine's Active Voice

BY ANNE O'BRIEN

Kate O'Neill, Activist and President of Lexicom, Inc., was an invigorating voice for the STC Berkeley Chapter meeting on February 13th at Vo's Vietnamese Restaurant (our new venue in Oakland). Her presentation, *Give Back: How to Use Your Technical Communications Skills to Make the World a Better Place*, revitalized the room full of underemployed and ragged leftists. Here's Kate's Valentine message—volunteer!

Hope and idealism are not just for the young. As a technical communicator, you have the write stuff to really make a difference in this world. You can see the "big picture." Organize and plan. Manage projects. Identify with your target audience and their needs. Write well. Edit. Follow up. Revise. And, you know what makes a good story.

So, find your passion. If it's worthwhile to you, then it's worth doing! Choose an issue. Human rights. Animal rights. Gay rights. Politics. The environment. Next, decide how far you're going to go. You can write letters, newsletters, PR releases, feature articles, opinion editorials, ballot measures, emails, website content—just about anything. Remember that you can showcase this material in your resume and portfolio.

Write now. You can easily join forces with an existing community group (Chamber of Commerce), professional association (STC*), political organization (Green Party), environmental group (Sierra Club), or worldwide organization (Amnesty International). In addition to new contacts and potential references, you just might find job opportunities—or a novel segue in your writing career.

*Tip: Volunteer for the 2002 Region 8 conference (hosted by STC Berkeley Chapter). Contribute to the Ragged Left. Get your name in print!

For more information about how to give back, visit Kate O'Neill on her website, <http://www.kathleen.net>, or email her, kate@kathleen.net.

Region 8 Director-Sponsor Guest Column Recognition is Key

BY ANDREA L. AMES

One of the most important jobs of an STC leader at any level—Society, regional, or chapter—is recognition. At the Society level, we take that responsibility very seriously, and we recognize not only volunteers, but members of the outstanding technical communication community, as well.

We strive to develop Society-level recognition programs that are prestigious and significant in meaning, such as: STC professional competitions, competitions and awards for STC projects and service, newsletter competition, and the newest recognition program, the Distinguished SIG Service Award, recognizing sustained and outstanding contributions of a volunteer to a SIG. The first recipients of this award will be announced at the 2002 STC Annual Conference in Nashville, in May.

Recognize—and Be Recognized!

If you are a chapter, regional, or event (conference, competition, etc.) leader, take some time this year to review your recognition program(s). Ensure that you keep track of those who help you, and reward them for a job well done at the end of the event or STC year (May/June).

If you are a member, consider volunteering or submitting entries to a competition. It's a great way to network, to gain visibility in the Society and the industry, and to be recognized and appreciated for your work in furthering the efforts of your professional society and industry.

If you have any questions about STC's Society-level recognition programs, please contact me at aames@pobox.com.

Andrea L. Ames is an STC Associate Fellow, Silicon Valley Chapter; Assistant to the STC President for Recognition; and Manager, STC Recognition Advisory Committee.

Writers Sought in Berkeley

Following up on the volunteer theme of the February meeting, Amnesty International is in need of writers and activists for the new community group starting in Berkeley. This worldwide, Nobel Prize winning organization holds an impressive track record for human rights work; much of it done by volunteers in local community groups.

If you have time and inclination, your writing skills could help release a political prisoner or effect legislative change. They are in need writers for letters, press releases, Web content, Op-ed pieces, as well as activists with Web skills. It's a good opportunity to enhance your portfolio while making the world a better place. For more information on how you can get involved, contact Govind at aiusa64@yahoo.com.

President's Message

BY KATHRYN MUNN

Over the coming months we have a series of excellent presentations planned for our meetings. On March 13, 2002, Meryl Natchez of TechProse will be presenting on a topic with which we are all familiar, "When Good Projects Go Bad." On April 10, 2002, join us for a presentation by Linda Stoneall who will be discussing the interesting topic of writing for training programs. And on May 8, 2002, Charlene Alexander joins us to talk about the world of creating documentation for distribution on CD-ROM. Mark your calendars and come to a meeting at our new location in Oakland, Vo's Restaurant.

Please remember to renew your membership in STC before the end of the month, February 28, 2002. Renewing members will be eligible to participate in the STC spring elections. Statements prepared by the candidates will be available in your March STC Intercom journal.

The Executive Committee is continuing to work toward the goal of delivering the Ragged Left newsletter electronically by July 1, 2002. We plan to have an overlap of a month when both a print and online version will be available to members. Any thoughts you may have about how to prepare for this transition would be appreciated. As always we want to hear about what the Chapter can do to support you in your professional goals as a technical communicator. Email president@stc-berkeley.org with your ideas, suggestions, and especially any ways you might be willing to contribute your own talent and time.

See you soon at one of our meetings.

STC Database Offers Membership Information

Did you know that STC provides contact information for most members through a searchable online database? Visit www.stc.org and select Member Directory from the For Members drop-down list. Search for a member using a first or last name to find contact information including chapter and membership grade. It is recommended that you check you own listing to make sure that your personal information is correct and displayed as you prefer. Any changes can be made conveniently online.

Forum 2003 Goes to Milan

Meeting the Cross-Cultural Challenge is the theme of Forum 2003, the INTECOM conference for technical communicators, to be held from June 30 to July 2, 2003 at the Hotel Palazzo Delle Stelline in central Milan, Italy. This will be the seventh in the series of Forum conferences. STC is a member of INTECOM.

As in previous Forum conferences, *Idea Markets* will be a cornerstone of Forum 2003. Rather than have delegates sitting in docile rows listening to a speaker deliver information in a one-way setting, Idea Markets encourage everyone to participate in an interactive exchange of ideas.

Milan is easily accessible by air or by rail, has a great climate, and offers a significant range of attractions, such as the Cathedral (Il Duomo), the La Scala Theatre, and St. Maria delle Grazie Church, which has Leonardo da Vinci's famous painting of The Last Supper on a wall of the Dominican monastery. Your conference committee will be booking visits for conference delegates. For more information, contact conference chair Michael Fritz at m.fritz@tekom.de.

Chapter Welcomes New Senior Members

The STC National office has advised the Berkeley Chapter that the grade of senior member has been conferred upon several members of our chapter. A senior member has held the grade of member in STC for five years. We extend our congratulations to the following new senior members of our chapter:

Andrew Bearman
Christine Buck
Kristine Hahn
Carol Mann
James Stork
Cedar Wyatt

Writer in the Workplace Conference Returns to Sacramento

Sacramento Chapter is hosting the Writer in the Workplace Conference on Saturday, April 6, 2002 at American River College. This year's conference, entitled *Communication: The Vital Link*, is a multifaceted look at the technical communication profession, professional development, and career management. Speakers will include leading visionaries from industry, academia, and government. For more information visit this year's Writer in the Workplace Web site at <http://www.stcsacramento.org/WIW2002/index.htm>.

STC Sacramento Chapter

FIRST WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH
HILTON SACRAMENTO ARDEN WEST, FOLSOM ROOM
6:15-6:45 P.M. NETWORKING
7:00-8:00 P.M. PROGRAM
DETAILS: WWW.STCSACRAMENTO.ORG

Wednesday, March 6, 2002

Program: *Marketing Services* with Charlotte O'Hara

April 3: *How to Interview SMEs*

May 1: *New Technologies*

STC East Bay Chapter

FIRST THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH
CROW CANYON COUNTRY CLUB IN DANVILLE
5:30 P.M. - NETWORKING
6:30 P.M. - DINNER
7:30 P.M. - CHAPTER BUSINESS/PROGRAM
RSVP IN WRITING, TWO DAYS IN ADVANCE
DETAILS: [HTTP://WWW.EBSTC.ORG/](http://WWW.EBSTC.ORG/)

Thursday, March 7, 2002

Program: *Cross-Cultural Issues in Business Communications* with Elaine Winters

STC San Francisco Chapter

THIRD WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH
LONDON WINE BAR, SAN FRANCISCO
6:00 P.M.: NETWORKING AND SELF-SERVE HORS D'OEUVRES
7:00 P.M.: PROGRAM
NO ADVANCE RESERVATION REQUIRED
DETAILS: [HTTP://WWW.STC-SF.ORG](http://WWW.STC-SF.ORG)

Wednesday, March 20, 2002

Program: *Creating a Portfolio That Sells* with Victoria Maki

STC North Bay Chapter

THIRD THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH
GOLDEN GATE UNIVERSITY, 150 E PROFESSIONAL DR., ROHNERT PARK
5:30 P.M. - NETWORKING
6:30 P.M. - INTRODUCTIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS
6:45 P.M. - PROGRAM
8:00 P.M. - CONVERSATION, IDEA SWAPPING
NO RSVP NEEDED
DETAILS: [HTTP://WWW.STC-NORTHBAY.ORG/](http://WWW.STC-NORTHBAY.ORG/)

Check Website for latest details

STC Silicon Valley Chapter

FOURTH THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH 7:00
FOUR POINTS SHERATON, SUNNYVALE
6:00 P.M. - NETWORKING, JOBS CORNER, AND DINNER
7:00 P.M. - ANNOUNCEMENTS
7:15 P.M. - PROGRAM
RSVP BY MAIL, ONE WEEK IN ADVANCE
DETAILS: [HTTP://WWW.STC-SILICONVALLEY.ORG/](http://WWW.STC-SILICONVALLEY.ORG/)

Thursday, March 21, 2002

Program: *Getting Good PDF* with Sharon Burton-Hardin

April 25: *Making Feedback Meaningful* with Paul Sinasohn

May 30: *Indexing with a Vengeance* with Bonni Graham

East Bay Editors Guild

ROCKRIDGE LIBRARY
5366 COLLEGE AVENUE (AT MANILA),
OAKLAND
7:00 P.M. - PROGRAM
UPCOMING MEETING DATES:
Monday, March 18th, 2002

The meetings are held in the Rockridge Library's community room. Enter through the front door and come up the stairs. The front door may appear closed, but should not be locked; slide it open by hand.

Optionally, some members meet in front of the library at 5:40 for a no-host dinner at a nearby restaurant before the meeting. Check the door for a note naming the location.

Editors Guild welcomes everyone interested; there are no dues, fees, or membership required. To be added to the Editors Guild listserv, email jyl@dolby.com.

STC Berkeley Chapter

MARCH 13, 2002

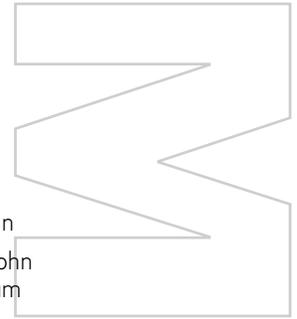
When Good Projects Go Bad, a Seminar on How to Recognize and Manage Problem Projects, with Meryl Natchez, CEO and founder of TechProse Consulting

APRIL 10, 2002

Writing for Training Programs with Linda Stoneall

MAY 8, 2002

Creating Documentation for Distribution on CD-ROM with Charlene Alexander



WWW.STC-BERKELEY.ORG

Ragged Left

Next Meeting: Wednesday

March 13:

When Good Projects Go Bad: a Seminar on How to
Recognize and Manage Problem Projects

WITH MERYL NATCHEZ

Meal reservations deadline: Monday, March 11.

See page 2 for costs and meeting details.

RSVP online: Credit cards accepted at
www.stc-berkeley.org.

Vo's Vietnamese Restaurant:
59 Grand Avenue in Oakland

Dinner 6:30 - 7:30
Announcements and Program 7:30 - 9:00

Please do *not* call the restaurant!

P.O. Box 1007
Berkeley, CA
94701

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STC-BERKELEY MEETING DIRECTIONS

From north of Oakland: Take the I-80 West/I-580 East. Merge onto the I-580 East ramp towards downtown Oakland. Merge onto I-980 W. Take the 27th street exit towards West Grand Avenue. Merge onto Northgate Avenue. Turn left onto West Grand Avenue.

From south of Oakland: Take I-880 north from San Jose through Oakland. Take the Broadway exit towards downtown. Keep right at the fork in the ramp and merge onto Broadway. Turn right onto Grand Avenue.

From San Francisco: Take the Bay Bridge towards Oakland (I-80 East). At the end of the bridge, take the I-580 East ramp towards downtown Oakland (CA-24)/Hayward-Stockton. Merge onto I-580 E. Take I-980 West ramp towards downtown Oakland. Merge onto I-980 W. Take the 27th street exit towards West Grand Avenue. Merge onto Northgate Avenue. Turn left onto West Grand Avenue.

From far East Bay: Take Highway 24 west through Caldecott Tunnel. Highway 24 west becomes I-980 west. Take the 27th street exit towards West Grand Avenue. Merge onto Northgate Avenue. Turn left onto West Grand Avenue.

By BART: Exit the 19th Street Oakland station. Walk NE for four blocks, to Grand Avenue.

