

CAPITAL LETTER

Washington, DC Chapter

Volume 32 / Number 1 / September 2000

2000-2001 Events and Programs

by Carolyn Kelley Klinger, 1st VP and Program Committee Manager

The Washington, DC Chapter's Programs Committee is embarking on a number of new initiatives this year. Adopting the lofty goal of the Society's new president, Mark Hanigan, we hope to add value to your membership. Your support of these initiatives is vital to their success as we strive to better the chapter in the following ways:

- by improving the chapter's communication with you, our members
- by improving your communication with each other
- by better serving our community
- by communicating our value more accurately to our current and future employers

Improving Chapter-to-Member Communication: E-mail Program Notification

Starting in September, we will begin communicating program information via e-mail. While we will continue to send postcards to promote selected events, we hope this monthly informational e-mail message will be convenient. If your e-mail address has changed since you gave it to the Society when renewing your membership earlier this year, please update it online by accessing <http://www.stc-va.org>, clicking Membership, and then clicking Address Changes.

In exchange for this service, your chapter promises not to 1) use e-mail to advertise events offered by related organizations, 2) use e-mail to advertise chapter events other than monthly programs, or 3) share your e-mail address with any advertiser or organization. To avoid group replies and spam, we will insert your address on the Blind Carbon Copy (BCC) line of the e-mail application. If you would like to receive information on other items of interest, such as events offered by other communication organizations in the DC area, please subscribe to the PR Listserv (see subscription instructions at the front of this issue).

Improving Member-to-Member Communication: Capitol Tips and Tricks Handout

Borrowing an idea from the Inland Empire chapter, we encourage members to share their knowledge via a monthly "Capitol Tips and Tricks" table topic handout. The topic should be a tip or trick that solves a problem in

On the Agenda Branding in September

Date: Wednesday, September 20, 2000

Topic: "Branding: More than a hot iron! Mary Wise discusses the STC Brand Project" (1999-2000 STC Technical Communication Competition Traveling Exhibit also on display)

Place: Johns Hopkins University/Applied Physics Laboratory, 11100 Johns Hopkins Road, Laurel, MD 20723; 240-228-7580 or 240-228-5000.

About the Meeting: When you hear "The Real Thing," what do you think of? Coke, of course! What about STC? What qualities do you associate with your professional organization? Mary Wise, STC's immediate past president, tells us all about the results of the STC Brand Study recently conducted by Parker LePla, and the implications this brand has on the direction of the Society and the value of our STC membership. Before and after Mary's presentation, inspire yourself with the traveling exhibit of winning entries from the 1999-2000 International Technical Publications, Technical Art, Public Relations, and Newsletter Competitions. This program is co-sponsored by the STC Metro Baltimore Chapter. Don't forget your business cards!

Speakers: Mary Wise

Schedule: registration and networking, 6:45 p.m.; dinner, 7:00-8:00 p.m.; program, 8:00-9:00 p.m.

Menu: Chicken Fiesta or Vegetable Lasagna, mixed green salad with balsamic vinaigrette, oven-roasted red-skinned potatoes, fresh mixed vegetables, rolls, dessert, beverage

Cost: \$16 for STC members; \$20 for non-members (cost includes meal)

Reservations: Reservations required by September 14.

To reserve: Send reservation (either using the online form or postal mail) with check payable to STC Washington, DC Chapter to: Carolyn Kelley Klinger, 18221 Paladin Drive, Olney, MD 20832.

Directions: Detailed directions are available at http://stc.org/region2/wdc/www/thismonth_sept20_00.shtml.

From the Beltway: APL is south of Columbia. Take the Beltway (I-495) North to I-95 North. Take the second exit (Route 198 West, Laurel) to Route 29 North (Colesville Road). Turn left on Johns Hopkins Road. Turn right off Johns Hopkins Road about 1/4 mile, at the second



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Washington, DC Chapter **Capital Letter**

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The Capital Letter is published ten times per year by the Washington, DC Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication. Its purpose is to inform chapter members about special functions and regular activities of the chapter and society, as well as to provide articles and essays in the field of technical communication.

Material for publication should be submitted to

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Materials published in the Capital Letter may be reprinted in other publications provided credit is given and copies of the reprint are sent to the Editor.

Deadline for October 2000 Issue:

Wednesday, September 13

Deadline for November 2000 Issue:

Friday, October 13

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Chapter Web Site <http://www.stc.org/region2/wdc/www>

Looking for a Job?

If you need job listings, you may

- Visit our website at http://www.stc.org/region2/wdc/www/jobs_1.shtml. If you don't have access to the web, try your local library for web access. More and more libraries are providing some type of Internet access.
- You can download a text file of the job announcement lists or get a textfile by e-mail from http://www.stc.org/region2/wdc/www/jobs_listings.shtml.

To request a list by e-mail, send mail as follows:

To: lockley@lockley.net Subject: WDC jobs list1

To: lockley@lockley.net Subject: WDC jobs list2

To: lockley@lockley.net Subject: WDC jobs list3

- Call Ann Ray at 301-384-1425 x342 and ask her to send you a hard copy. ✉

Public Relations (PR) Mailing List (listserv)

The Public Relations (PR) Mailing List (listserv) is for notifying chapter members about chapter meetings, events, and related information. We use this mailing list to improve communications to our members about chapter events and also reduce the cost for mailing announcements and reminders to the nearly 700 members in our chapter. The name of the mailing list is stcwdc-pr. Commands may be sent by e-mail or by using the Web page at

<http://lists.stc.org/cgi-bin/lyris.pl?enter=stcwdc-pr>.

To subscribe by e-mail, send an e-mail message to lyris@stc.org. Put nothing or a dummy word in the subject line, and only the following words in the body of the message (anything else will confuse the program):

subscribe stcwdc-pr your name

To unsubscribe by e-mail, send an e-mail message to lyris@stc.org. Put nothing or a dummy word in the subject line, and only the following words in the body of the message (anything else will confuse the program):

unsubscribe stcwdc-pr youruserid@youraddress

To post a message: Send an e-mail message to stcwdc-pr@stc.org. (Do Not include graphic or document attachments—these are binary items and they get converted to unreadable code.)

More details are provided for the listserv at

<http://www.stc.org/region2/wdc/www/listserv.shtml>. ✉

Where Are You?

If you change your address or phone number, please let STC headquarters know by sending an e-mail message to membership@stc-va.org. Keeping this information up to date helps keep down our mailing costs. ✉

Branding in September, continued from page 1

entrance to JHU/APL (tree-lined drive). Visitor parking is on the left. The program is in the main building with the circular drive in front. Follow STC signs inside. ✍



2000-2001 Events and Programs, continued from page 1

a tool or application used for developing and delivering the materials we produce. The information must fit on one sheet of paper (can be double-sided) and should have specific procedures, if applicable. Some ideas for topics are: using the RD field in Word, converting Frame files to HTML, editing screen captures, searching the web effectively, and shortcuts in Windows. Reflect on the stumbling blocks you've had in your own learning process, and have pity on those that may still be stumbling. If you would like to contribute a topic for the September 20 program, please e-mail Carolyn as soon as possible at carolyn.klinger@mindspring.com (or call 1-301-795-0132 on weekdays).

Serving Those Less Fortunate: Book Drive

Some of you may not realize that STC is a Section 501(c)(3) not-for-profit educational, scientific, and charitable organization. While we provide educational services on a regular basis, and the Society's *Journal of Technical Communication* explores the scientific side of our profession, we as a chapter seek a new way of reaching out to those less fortunate in our community. Lynda Balthrop, our chapter's Community Service Committee manager, will kick off a book drive at the September 20 program, to continue until the end of the program year (June 2001). Just bring your used books to Lynda at each monthly program, and she will distribute them to a needy cause. If you have suggestions for organizations that would appreciate these donations, please contact Lynda at lbalthrop@loudoun.com.

Improving Communication with the Business Community

Over the summer, a group of chapter members gathered to draft a salary survey for the Washington, DC area that will be posted on our chapter website. While we receive national and Canadian salary data from the Society each

year, we wondered if the data would be different if restricted to the Washington, DC metropolitan area, so we restricted our survey to our service area. This fall, look for an e-mail announcing the URL of this site. We hope that our analysis of the resulting data will help us all better understand the technical communication market in the Washington, DC area and assist in job searches and salary evaluations. We hope to repeat this survey annually. If you have any questions or concerns about the salary survey, please e-mail one of the following members of the Salary Survey Committee: Ann Ray (ann_ray@g1.com), Randee Markowitz (randee@storm.com), Alyssa Slotkin (aslotkin@docucorp.com), Lissa Roberts (techwriter@home.com), or Carolyn Kelley Klinger (carolyn.klinger@mindspring.com).

Program Preview

We have an excellent slate of programs to offer you this year, and even more details are falling into place. Refer to <http://www.stc.org/region2/wdc/www/calendar.shtml> for the latest program information. The following is a quick preview of the learning and networking opportunities you can expect from the Washington, DC chapter this year.

Wednesday, September 20: "Branding: More than a hot iron! Mary Wise discusses the STC Brand Project" (1999-2000 STC Technical Communication Competition Traveling Exhibit also on display) at JHU/APL in Laurel, MD.

Thursday, October 19: "Dilbert™ Goes Corporate...or How to Navigate the Thorny Thickets of Corporate America without Selling Your Soul (an Ethics Game for Technical Communicators)" at the Kemper-Ware Masonic Lodge in Falls Church, VA.

Wednesday, November 15: Whitney Quesenbury presents "User-Centered Design 101: Bringing Usability to a Product Near You" (location TBD).

Early February: Janice (Ginny) Redish, PhD presents "Understanding Single Sourcing" (location TBD).

Saturday, March 24: Technical Communication Progression with the JMU Student Chapter at Cisco Systems in Herndon, VA.

Hope to see you there! ✍

Hot lead can be almost as effective coming from a linotype as from a firearm.

—John O'Hara, journalist (1905-1970)

Calendar of Events

September 14-16, 2000

American Copy Editors Society Annual Conference
Omni Inner Harbor Hotel, Baltimore, MD
Event URL: www.copydesk.org

September 18-19, 2000

Public Relations Society of America
Leadership and Management of the Public Relations
Function
Renaissance Hotel, Washington, DC
Event URL: www.prsa.org/pd/70015.html

September 19-21, 2000

Virginia Internet Technology Conference 2000
Williamsburg Marriott, Williamsburg, VA
Point of Contact: Michelle Carpenter
E-mail: mcarpent@vectec.org
Event URL: www.vitconference.org/

September 21, 2000

The Metro DC Chapter of the American Society for
Training and Development Career Development and
College Fair
Tysons Corner DoubleTree Hotel, Falls Church, VA
Event URL: www.dcastd.org/monthly_meeting.html#sep

September 21, 2000

Internet Recruiting Strategies & Techniques
UVA/VT Graduate Center, Falls Church, VA
Point of Contact: Bret Hollander
Phone: 301-523-7823
E-mail: Bret@NETRECRUITER.net
Event URL: www.netrecruiter.net

September 24-27, 2000

IPCC/SIGDOC 2000 Technology & Teamwork
Cambridge, MA
Event URL: <http://ieeepcs.org/2000>

October 17-18, 2000

InterChange Conference
Boxborough, MA
Presented by the University of Massachusetts Boston, and
the Boston and Northern New England Chapters of the
Society for Technical Communication (STC)
Event URL: www.interchangeconference.com

October 30, 2000

Deadline for Call for Proposals for the American Society
of Indexer's Annual Conference
May 31-June 4, 2000, Boston, MA
Event URL: www.asindexing.org/conferences/conf2001 ✉

STC to Launch Financial Industry Special Interest Group

Would you like to become a member of a Special Interest Group (SIG) devoted to the issues unique to technical writers and instructional designers connected to the financial industry? STC is currently in the process of forming such a SIG, and is seeking members to get it started.

Technical communicators should consider joining the SIG if they work for the following types of organizations:

- Accounting firms
- Business or economic analysis companies
- Commercial banks
- Credit unions
- Financial message boards
- Investment firms
- Loan brokers
- Loan servicers
- Mortgage brokers/bankers
- Online brokerages
- Private mortgage lenders
- Real estate-related companies
- Real estate investment trusts
- Stock brokerage firms
- Thrifts
- Any company related to the financial industry.

If you're interested, please email your expressed interest (or questions) to Steven Marshall at steven_marshall@indymac.com. Please include your name and email address. ✉

You're Invited to be a Judge

Would you like to volunteer for a worthy cause, meet new people, gain networking contacts, and see the newest methods and techniques your peers are using to create award-winning documentation?

The Society for Technical Communication invites you to serve as a judge for the Washington, DC Chapter's 2000-2001 Technical Communication Competitions. In exchange for a little bit of time, you'll get a chance to develop your professional contacts by meeting and working with other writers, graphic artists, and technical communicators from our area. You'll also see a wide variety of examples of innovative and original technical communication.

Judges in the competition evaluate entries as part of a team of several judges. We need judges in the online, art, and publications competitions. Team judges must be

available to meet at the pickup and consensus meetings. At the pickup meeting, you'll receive the entries in the category you're judging, and instructions on how to fairly and effectively judge the entries. Before the consensus meeting, you'll evaluate entries and fill out judging forms with your comments. At the consensus meeting, you and your team discuss your findings and decide which entries should receive awards.

If you've judged before, we also have lead judge positions available. Lead judges provide direction in determining the awards, review scoring sheets and evaluations, and serve as a mentor and resource for Team Judges.

To volunteer to judge, fill out the judging form on the STC Washington, DC chapter website, or contact the judging coordinator. You can specify which categories you're interested in judging (for example, help or tutorials in the online competition, or hardware guides or newsletters in the publications competition). The website provides a listing of these categories. If you cannot judge this year, but you know someone who would be a good judge, please pass along their name and contact information.

Competition web page: <http://www.stc.org/region2/wdc/www/judcall.shtml>. Includes information about the judging schedule (including the pickup and consensus meetings), a listing of judging categories, a link to the volunteer form, and judging forms to download in Microsoft Word or PDF.

Judging coordinator: Kerry Ogata, c/o Cisco Systems, 13625 Dulles Technology Drive, Herndon, VA 20171; 703-484-3227; klogata@cisco.com.

Thanks for volunteering and supporting the chapter and your peers. ✍

Welcome to All!

New Members

Susan Bracket
Margaret Ann Chulupsky
Sandra Doyle
Kimberly McGarghan
Marilyn White

Transferred Members

Brian Chirles
Beth Hamilton
Susan Mosher
Paul C. Wilkins

Congratulations to the following members who recently attained senior member status:

Neil Berger
Tamara Berry
Leslie Bouvier
Melissa Brown
Kenneth Chaletzky
Susan Church
Kevin Coleman
Anna Colton
John DeLellis
Kathleen Evans
Rebecca Filardo
Lucinda Garlock
Debbie Ginsburg
Jonathan Hine
Lisa Hylton
Carolyn Kelley Klinger
Marissa Levin
Mackenzie Lovings
Martha Martin
Steve Martin
Scott McDaniel
Cheryl McNutt
Jean Morra
Hilary Silvert Newell
Cathie O'Donnell
Leslie O'Gwin-Rivers
Paul Petersen
Peter Reider
Lenore Ross
C. Ryan Saidla
Henry Sheard
Basil White
Grace Wiedeman ✍

September Is Be Kind to Writers and Editors Month

Congratulations, JMU Chapter

The James Madison University (JMU) Student chapter received a Chapter Pacesetter Award at the STC Annual Conference in May. The Pacesetter Awards are designed as one-time celebrations of excellence in the specific activity for which the chapter is nominated. Chapters are recommended for the award by their regional director-sponsor. The JMU chapter's citation read

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY (ST) CHAPTER

For an enthusiastic and highly effective start-up program that will provide a model for all new STC student chapters.

Congratulations to Dr. Roger Munger, faculty advisor, and all the JMU STC members. ✍

How I Contribute to the Strategic Direction of the Organization

adapted from a contribution by Donn Le Vie, Senior Member, Austin, TX chapter (author unknown)

As a technical communicator, I do the following to add value to my organization:

- I make subject matter experts appear more articulate in customer documentation.
- I make integrated statements out of disjointed ideas found in specs and customer documents.
- I find flaws in content or ambiguity in arguments, and find the means to resolve them.
- I fill in gaps in thinking to help customers use our products.
- I transform the raw material of ideas into communication that transfers knowledge.
- I transform disorganized information into a consistent interface.
- I have an excellent facility with language skills, and apply them to all projects.
- I make effective use of communication fundamentals to develop better documentation.
- I have an understanding of the human factors that affect communication.
- I stay current with practices, tools, technology, and research in my field.
- I know and use alternative methods for reaching customer audiences.

- I make technical documentation organization invisible to the user.
- I remove irrelevant detail from customer documentation so as not to confuse the reader/user.
- I am not a desktop publisher, formatter, comma inserter, or word processor.
- I am a user advocate, consultant, and advisor, with the customer's success in mind.
- I make suggestions for improvement; I do not demand changes without reason.
- I try to maintain the author's style; I do not alter that style without just cause.
- I advise where rewriting is needed; I do not rewrite on a grand scale, unless asked.
- I use project management techniques on all major projects.
- I am an expert in the publishing process, which means I can do it quicker and right the first time.
- I am a generalist who juggles many concurrent projects; I can also be a focused specialist as the need dictates.
- I work hard to grasp technical concepts, and view the product from the customer's perspective.
- I use digital architectures (SGML, HTML, XML) to relay information to customers in a variety of media.
- I am a technologist in my field in a variety of applications, methodologies, and tools.
- I have the skills, experience, and knowledge to add value to any software, hardware, or Web-based project.

How else do you as a technical communicator contribute to your organization? Send your comments to the editor, doreenm520@aol.com, and we'll print them in the next issue. ✍

Pleased to Meet You!

by Chris Benz, Region 2 Director-Sponsor

As you might know, I became the Region 2 Director-Sponsor (D-S) during the STC Annual Conference this May, replacing Tracey Chiricosta. It's already been a pretty wild ride, but I'm glad that I have this chance to stop and introduce myself, and I hope to meet many of you in person over the next three years.

For those of you who don't know what a D-S is or does, I'll discuss that in more detail in future articles. For now, let me say that I am your representative on the STC International Board of Directors. If you have questions, comments, ideas, or concerns that need Society-level attention, please let me know and I'll see what I can do for you. You may contact me in the following ways:

Chris.Benz@e-pubcorp.com; 1-919-226-0060 (w); 1-919-479-4891 (h)

One of my many roles as D-S is to attend STC Board of Directors meetings three times a year. The board uses these meetings to discuss and vote on issues that affect

Continued on page 7

The Dingman Center's Mentor Program

Entrepreneurs from Maryland, the District of Columbia, and Northern Virginia who have completed a first draft of their business plan, are qualified to apply for a mentor from The Dingman Center. Mentors are experienced entrepreneurs, service providers, and faculty members with expertise in nearly all areas of interest. There is a modest charge of \$45/hour for this service and a one-time \$25 application fee. Please remember that individuals without a business plan will not be considered. Mentors lend advice on various business problems and issues, including

- Accounting
- Compensation and staffing
- Financing and financial planning
- Government contracting
- International business
- Joint venturing
- Legal and management issues
- Marketing and sales
- Strategic planning

For more information, access the center's website at www.mbs.umd.edu/dingman/default.htm. ✍

Loans

To multiple chapters, \$2,500 for the Region 6 Conference

Research Grants

- To Saul Carliner, \$9,960 for "What Do We Manage? A Survey of the Management Portfolios of Large Technical Communications Departments"
- To Michael Albers and Loel Kim, \$10,000 for "User Web Browsing Characteristics using Palm Handheld for Information Retrieval"

Brand Tools

Several tools presented by the Brand Development Team to help focus and strengthen STC's brand (more details on this as we start rolling out these tools)

Interim Executive Council Actions

- Dissolved the Illinois State University student chapter
- Dissolved the Montana student chapter, and formed a Montana chapter with a \$200 start-up grant
- Formed a Long Island chapter with a \$350 start-up grant

Industry Fellowship for Faculty

To Dwedor Morais Ford, a \$2,000 Industry Fellowship for Faculty, contingent on her obtaining an industry internship position. ✍

Pleased to Meet You, continued from page 6

our Society in both the short and long term. This year's spring meeting took place in May, the day before the start of the STC Annual Conference. Here are the items the Board approved (all dollar amounts are USD):

Merit Grants

- To the Michigan Tech University student chapter, \$3,000 in seed money for a scholarship fund to send selected students to STC international and regional conferences
- To the Northeast Ohio chapter, \$500 to support and expand its mentoring program
- To the Northeast Ohio chapter, \$1,000 to enhance its publicity program
- To the Central Ohio chapter, \$1,500 for a Region 4 leadership training workshop and conference for leaders of both student and professional chapters
- To the Singapore chapter, up to \$1,000 to ship the International Technical Publications Competition winning entries

Region 2 Anthem

by Larry Kunz, STC Associate Fellow

Here is our rallying anthem for Region 2. Sing this to the tune of the "Mickey Mouse Club March" from The Mickey Mouse Club (music written by Jimmie Dodd).

Home of where communication
Suits us to a "T"
Region 2, Region 2,
Best in STC!

Region 2 (Region 2!)
Region 2 (Region 2!)
Forever let us hold our banner high!
High! High! High!

From Pittsburgh north to Charlotte south
And chapters 'cross the sea,
Region 2, Region 2,
Best in STC! ✍

Editor's Soapbox

The Evolution of a Member

by Doreen Mannion

For the first few years of my membership in STC I was content to read *Intercom* and the *Journal* and attend a meeting every now and then. I had practiced technical communication a few years before joining, not knowing what the name was for what I was doing. (I'm sure there are many members in our chapter with the same history.) After being a member for a few years, I began to look for ways I could become more involved in Society activities.

One of the aspects that scared me about becoming more involved was my perception of myself as a wallflower. To be sure, at company functions or any social event, I'd be the one holding the wall up. I had convinced myself that not only was I not good at small talk, but that I had no interest in it, and no one would have interest in what I had to say either. (Those of you who have met me may find this difficult to believe, but it's true.)

About the same time I was looking for ways to get involved, I discovered my employer would pay for my attendance at the annual conference if I presented a session. I took a workshop on indexing technical documentation that I had developed and delivered internally, refined it, and sent it in as my first conference proposal. Much to my surprise, it was accepted. Fortunately, I thought, the session was held in a relatively small room of maybe 30 attendees. But as I went through my presentation, I noticed a strange transformation in myself; I got a "high" and was "on" doing this public speaking thing, much like the feeling I used to get as an athlete. Judging from the audience feedback and evaluation sheets, I was fairly good at it, too.

All my life I had looked for something that I could do well. In elementary school, I tried to play violin, but failed miserably. My classmates seemed to have no problems whatsoever. Years later I learned that two of the four of them became professional musicians. No wonder I was awful in comparison! I played sports, but with few exceptions was a fairly ordinary player. My siblings were wonderful artists; I couldn't draw a stick man (still can't!). I thought I was a good writer, but how could that ever be judged? I never thought I would translate my writing abilities to speaking; I was prone to errors. My mother the teacher still points it out when I answer the phone incorrectly. "It is she." "It is I." "It's her." I just don't know!

After many years of presenting at the annual conference and basically ignoring local chapter activities, I started attending chapter meetings. I've belonged to several STC chapters and firmly believe our chapter is special. I slowly got to know many members and have become good friends with several. Through the mentoring I've received from members of our chapter, I met members from around the country, indeed, the world. I met some because they were my conference stem manager; I met others through my participation in the management SIG. I now have this amazing support system of people in my field, people I can call or e-mail when I have a puzzling problem or just need to vent to someone who will understand.

Now when I present at conference, I typically present to triple digit attendance. The past few years I've been heard to complain that the conference organizers haven't given me a big enough room! Am I still an introvert? Yes, I think I am. But being an active member of this society has taught me a wonderful lesson: you can be anything you want to be, the possibilities are limited only by your imagination. I found something I can do well. I can speak in front of people. Won't you step away from the wall and join me? ✍

From the President

by Cynthia A. Lockley

Outgoing STC President Mary Wise quoted in her parting speech at this year's STC Annual Conference, "We can't control the wind but we can adjust our sails." This is particularly true for STC and for our chapter. We had a very successful year thanks to the hard work of the Administrative Council and the many volunteers who pitched in where they were needed. Thanks to this support, we were able to adjust our sails and fill gaps in leadership roles to ensure all our activities worked smoothly. I am grateful that many have volunteered to serve the chapter again as newly elected officers, committee managers, and committee members.

As we move further into the new century, we will examine all activities and programs to ensure we are providing more value to the members of the Washington, DC Chapter (WDC). And this falls right in line with this year's President of STC, Mark Hanigan, whose theme for the year is "Providing Value." During the summer break, the new Administrative Council and committee managers have been busy planning the events for the coming year. We have identified several areas where we can improve our services and procedures. This year we are implementing changes to the fees for our monthly programs. Instead of one general fee for all attendees, we created three levels of fees: one for STC members, a higher fee for nonmembers, and a lower fee for students. The amounts will vary as usual depending on the location, speaker, and food provided for the program. We've changed some terminology. For example, meetings are now programs. We've raised the entry fees for the competitions by \$5 to cover our expenses better. We received a generous rebate from the Society based on our large increase in membership and this will help fund the High School Technical Writing Scholarship. We are encouraging corporate sponsorship of programs and the scholarship fund, and we plan on continuing our growth in membership.

The Society is also making changes. For example, new committees were created to provide value for disabled members, revamp the Society and Regional Chapter Web sites, and devise a new and shorter mission statement, which is "STC: designing the future of technical communication." The Society revamped the Chapter Achievement Awards, and the new guidelines help chapters work toward meeting one of several levels of achievement. We've been in the running for the past few years. The WDC's Administrative Council is planning how to meet the new requirements and one of our goals for the year is to win an achievement award!

These are just a few of the changes you will see. Our new Strategic Planning Committee will be developing a three-year plan for the chapter and we plan on improving communication to all the members about programs and events. If you have suggestions for changes you'd like to see, please let me know. I look forward to serving you again as Chapter President and all the members of the Administrative Council look forward to bringing you another successful year. We have some dynamite programs planned with guest speakers you won't want to miss. We're planning on having a terrific year with continued growth in membership. Spread the word—the Washington, DC Chapter is hot! Our job announcement service is respected across the country, our competitions receive entries and judges from around the world, and we have dedicated members who help make our successes possible. If you are new to the chapter this year, welcome—I hope to meet you at one or more of the monthly programs. If you are a returning member, welcome back! ✍

CAPITAL LETTER

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In This Issue

2000-2001 Events and Programs	1
On the Agenda: Branding in September	1
Looking for a Job?	2
Public Relations (PR) Mailing List (listserv)	2
Where Are You?	2
STC's New Mission Statement	3
Calendar of Events	4
STC to Launch Financial Industry Special Interest Group	4
You're Invited to be a Judge	4
Welcome to All!	5
Congratulations, JMU Chapter	6
How I Contribute to the Strategic Direction of the Organization	6
Pleased to Meet You!	6
The Dingman Center's Mentor Program	7
Region 2 Anthem	7
Editor's Soapbox	8
From the President	9