

TRYING SOMETHING NEW

Submitted by Jessi Strawn, STC-Central Iowa Newsletter Editor

You will see on the list of board candidates below that I am running for STC-Central Iowa president. I have been part of the board as the newsletter editor for two years now, and I'm looking forward to doing something different.

Several of the members running for the next board have a lot of experience in past and current roles, and I think that will be a big help as we work to continue the great work of Alisha Sauer and Michael Gernes who served before Alisha.

value we offer. Let's keep the momentum we have going, and have another great year with a wonderful board! ●



We have a lot of exciting opportunities ahead of us next year, and it would be fun to continue serving an important role as we try new things as a community.

As president, I would be open to any suggestions, and I hope to engage more members in meeting planning, outreach opportunities, and increasing our membership and the

STC-CENTRAL IOWA BOARD CANDIDATES

Keep your eyes opened for the online voting ballot for the next STC-Central Iowa board. Below is a list of the candidates:

- Jessi Strawn—President
- Sara Smith—Vice President
- Dr. Therese Judge—Secretary
- Michael Gernes—Treasurer
- Ryan Barcus—Newsletter Editor
- Eden Picht—Membership Manager
- Chris Thiessen—Employment Manager
- Ryan Barcus—Communications Manager (Webmaster) ●

APRIL 15 COMMUNITY MEETING

JOB MARKET DURING THE RECESSION

Heidi Myers, a recruiter from Technisource, will present on the job market for technical communicators in a recession.

When: April 15, 2009, 11:30 a.m.

Where: Spaghetti Works, Des Moines, Iowa

RSVP: Closed.

Fee: Cost of your meal. ●

STC-Central Iowa is a community within the Society for Technical Communication (STC).

Visit www.stc.org for more information about STC.

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NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Submitted by Alisha Sauer, STC–Central Iowa President

GOODBYE, AND THANKS FOR ALL THE FISH!

As I enter my last month of service as president for STC–Central Iowa, I feel free to let out my true inner geek.

No, what I meant to say is that I have been reflecting on the good experiences I've had

and the friends I've made by participating in STC–Central Iowa over the last three years in my various roles. The experience has given me a sense of community with other technical communicators that I wouldn't have experienced otherwise.

I'm looking forward to keeping in touch with the community by regularly attending STC–Central Iowa events and fulfilling my duties as immediate past president. ●



STC–CENTRAL IOWA OFFERS STC ANNUAL CONFERENCE GRANTS

To foster and support the professional development of our members, STC–Central Iowa is offering grants up to \$1,500 to attend the STC Annual Conference.

Deadline to register is Thursday, April 30.

To be eligible for this grant, an applicant must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- **Be a current STC member or a student member at the time of application and award.**
- **Agree to provide community service by either:**
 - **Presenting a summary at a community meeting.**
 - **Writing an article for publication on the STC–Central Iowa Web site and/or in *Perspectives*, STC–Central Iowa's monthly newsletter, within six months of the conference completion.**

Awards will be granted for the following actual expenses:

- **Registration**
- **Lodging**
- **Travel**
- **Other miscellaneous expenses such as, meals**

The maximum award per applicant is \$1,500. While proof of expenses, such as receipts, will be required, you can work with our treasurer to get the award in advance of the conference if that works best for you.

Fill out the application form at www.stc-centraliowa.org/stc-ann-conf-grant-appl/. ●

STC—CENTRAL IOWA BOARD CANDIDATE MESSAGES

EDEN PICHT—MEMBERSHIP MANAGER



Eden Picht has been in the workforce for approximately eleven years in the Des Moines metropolitan area, working in the financial services, insurance, and electronic funds transfer industries. She has experience as a technical communicator and trainer, and is currently employed with a regional electronic funds transfer organization as a marketing business analyst. Eden completed undergraduate coursework at Des Moines Area Community College, earning an associate of arts degree, and transferred to Iowa State University where she completed her four-year degree in English with an emphasis in rhetoric and professional communication. She also has a master of science degree in adult learning, performance, and development with a leadership concentration from Drake University.

Eden has been a member of the Society for Technical Communication since 2003 and enjoys all of the benefits STC has to offer at both the local and national level. Eden has been active on the STC—Central Iowa Community board for five years as a former vice president and most recently in the treasurer position. She wants to remain on the board for 2009-2011 as the membership manager so she may continue to reach out to new and existing members. As the membership manager, she hopes she can make impact by educating other writers and those who are affected by the field of technical communication, to pursue an interest in STC at the local level by attending meetings, volunteering for various opportunities, and enjoying creating relationships with other writers through STC-sponsored networking events. One of Eden's main goals as membership manager is to reach out to local educators and employers to expand knowledge about STC—Central Iowa and all it offers for members.

MICHAEL GERNES—TREASURER



I'm Michael Gernes, and I'm a candidate for STC—Central Iowa's Treasurer. I hope that most of our 'regulars' know me, but for those who only know my name I'll give a little background about my experience. I've been a member of STC—Central Iowa since 2004, and in that time I've held the secretary, vice president, and president positions. I stepped down from the presidency in May of '08 to take a break for some personal development outside of STC.

During my tenure, I was proud to be able to re-fill several of our leadership positions as well as help earn a Community of Merit award for Central Iowa. I've kept involved on a small scale by assisting with some small projects. I've been very happy to see where Alisha, Sara, and everyone else have taken things since I stepped down.

When the call was put out for a new person to fill the treasurer position and give Eden Picht a much-needed break, I thought it would be a good opportunity for me to step in again. Serving as treasurer would be a new role for me and a chance to develop new skills. I'm interested in gaining this experience and contributing to our organization. I've worked with most of our leadership board members before, and I'd look forward to doing so again!

If anyone has any questions or comments for me, please feel free to contact me at gernesm@nationwide.com. ●

MARCH MEETING RECAP

Submitted by Linda Foltz, STC–Central Iowa Webmaster



The STC–Central Iowa Community meeting was held on Monday, March 23, 2009, at 5:30 p.m. at Rodholm Hall at Grand View University.

BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA

Attendees enjoyed dinner from Gateway Market. President Alisha Sauer called the business meeting to order.

The following topics were discussed:

- Election of Officers for Next Year—Alisha announced that nominations are open for the board positions. Eden Picht gave the following treasurer’s report—We have a lot of money that we need to spend since we are a non-profit organization due to the new pass-thru model.
- STC–International announced scholarships are available to the Technical Communications Summit conference to unemployed or under-employed members.
- The results of the survey about having a regional conference showed that there is enough interest. The Regional Conference will be held in September in the Chicago area. The call for papers and more details will be coming soon.

PRESENTATION

Charlie Kostelnick is the professor and chair of the English department at Iowa State University where he has

taught business and technical communication, as well as a graduate and an undergraduate course in visual communication in professional writing. He was the co-author (with Michael Hassett) of *Shaping Information: The Rhetoric of Visual Conventions* and co-author (with David Roberts) of *Designing Visual Language: Strategies for Professional Communicators*.

Kostelnick presented “Humanizing Technical Communication: The Uses of Human Forms in Pictures.” His presentation examined the use of human forms in technical communications, most notably instructional materials (and warnings), including the purposes human forms serve, the conventions for using human forms, and the consequences of NOT using human forms. Using contemporary and historical examples, he explored ways that human forms add value to pictures, and he demonstrated conventional, cost-effective techniques for deploying them.

His presentation showed how human forms can add clarity, emphasis, enhance ethos through identity, and set the tone of the document.

Historically, human figures were not used in technical drawings, where human forms couldn’t be envisioned, and non-instructional pictures. The use of human forms originally provided empowerment for individuals, impersonalization

(disembodied hands and arms and shadowy figures), social figures in complex processes, and identification (gender, culture, race, and ethnicity). Using human figures in documents persuades users that they can perform tasks successfully and efficiently, that they can solve important problems, and the forms add clarity to images.

When using figures, don’t let them distract from the document, use an image of an everyday person, and hide identifying traits of the individual to maintain anonymity.

Another important consideration is using figures that help a user identify through either gender, race, ethnicity, or culture. Use the following guidelines when deciding what figure to use:

- Calculate the clarity benefits—scale, instructional value, and level of detail.
- Use a human figure for emphasis.
- Enhance ethos through identity.
- Set the proper tone for the document—inviting, casual, or distressed.
- Test, test, and re-test the figure to ensure you get the desired results. ●

SUMMIT UPDATES FROM STC—INTERNATIONAL

For detailed information about the conference, visit <http://conference.stc.org/>.

SPLIT-PAYMENT OPTION FOR CONFERENCE REGISTRATIONS

Members attending the STC Summit may choose to spread their registration payment by paying half with their registration form and half onsite. “It’s a small gesture,” explained STC chief executive officer Susan Burton, “but being able to spread the cost of the conference over two billing cycles can be helpful to many whose budgets are already stretched.”

SAVE MORE ON HOTEL ROOM

Members who wish to share hotel rooms in the Hyatt Regency Atlanta have begun to match themselves on the STC Forum. The discounted hotel room rates for the conference have been extended until April 21. Visit the forum at <http://stcforum.org/>.

STC OFFERS 250 SUMMIT SCHOLARSHIPS TO MEMBERS WHO HAVE BEEN LAID OFF

Recognizing the impact the economic downturn has had on technical communicators, STC announced that it will grant 250 scholarships to members who have been laid off, let go, downsized, or have been forced to take a pay cut of 10 percent or more.

Up to 250 scholarships of \$400 will be given to members wishing to attend the STC Technical Communication Summit May 3–6 in Atlanta, GA. To be eligible for the scholarships, an individual must be a current member of STC (classic, e-member, SuperSig, or an individual in the Corporate Value Program) in good standing, be currently unemployed, or have been forced to take at least a 10 percent cut in salary. Members who are consultants or own their own business may apply if they have experienced

a downturn in business revenue of at least 10 percent. Applicants must also stay at the official conference hotel (Hyatt Regency Atlanta) to take advantage of this benefit.

Scholarships will be awarded on a first-come, first-awarded basis. To apply for the scholarships, members should download the PDF of the Scholarship Registration Form from the STC Web site (www.stc.org) and complete the section indicating their employment status prior to sending it with payment. **NOTE:** The interactive, standard online registration form should not be used for scholarship applicants.

Completed forms may be faxed to the STC office at +1 (703) 522-2075 with credit card payment, or mailed with a check. Scholarship recipients will be notified within 48 hours. The scholarships will be offered until all are awarded or until April 21. ●

TECH EDIT SIG OFFERS SCHOLARSHIPS

The Technical Editing SIG offers two scholarships of \$2,000 each. The first scholarship assists students who are pursuing an undergraduate degree in technical communication and the second assists students who are pursuing a graduate degree in technical communication. Students applying for one of these scholarships are expected to be able to demonstrate their focus on topics related to technical editing through their academic studies, current jobs, special projects, or undergraduate/graduate program. The winners will be announced in the Technical Editing SIG newsletter.

The deadline for submission is May 1, 2009. Winners will be notified in early to mid-June 2009. To apply, complete the online Scholarship Application at the STC Technical Editing Web site:

www.stc-techedit.org/tiki-index.php?page=application/. ●

LOOKING TO TOMORROW - NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE

Next issue will be the last until next fall, so feel free to submit an article on anything you want. Make suggestions for the next board or offer up some expertise on a tech comm matter. Or, submit a book or software review. This is an opportunity to share anything you would like with the community!

Remember, whatever you have to say, we want to hear it. Articles are due by 5:00

p.m. April 27. Please e-mail submissions (or any questions) to jessi.strawn@gmail.com. Include a brief bio and photo (if you are willing) with your submission.

Perspectives invites writers to submit articles they wish to be considered for publication.

NOTE: 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.

Copyright is held by the writer. In your cover letter, please let the editor know if this article has run elsewhere, and if it has been submitted for consideration to other publications. ●

CONGRATS!

STC-Central Iowa Vice President Sara Smith had a baby boy! Avery Smith was 5 lbs. 2 oz. Congratulations, Sara and Josh! ●

STC-CENTRAL IOWA BOARD

Alisha Sauer (asauer@shazam.net), President
Sara Smith (smith.sara@principal.com), Vice President
Mary Gerhardt (gerhardt.mary@principal.com), Secretary
Eden Picht (epicht@shazam.net), Treasurer
Leslie Akehurst (lakehur@shazam.net), Public Relations Manager
Linda Foltz (lfoltz@shazam.net), Webmaster
Jessi Strawn (jessi.strawn@gmail.com), Newsletter Editor
Chris Thiessen, Employment Committee Manager

PERSPECTIVES INFO

Perspectives is a monthly publication of STC-Central Iowa. The newsletter is published monthly, from September to May, and is produced by volunteers of the Central Iowa community.

If you are interested in volunteering as a copy editor, photographer, advertising manager, or for any other position, contact the newsletter editor, Jessi Strawn (jessi.strawn@gmail.com).

Creating and supporting a forum for communities of practice in the profession of technical communication.