



The Buzz Word

Volume 2, Issue 1

October 2003

Don't miss the opportunity to learn more about

Macromedia Dreamweaver!

When:

Thursday, October 30, 2003

6:30 p.m.

Where:

Pummill 408

Inside this issue:

First annual teaching conference	2
Southard speaks about jobs	2
Dreamweaver presentation	3
Student starts dream career	3
51st annual STC conference	4
Contact information	4

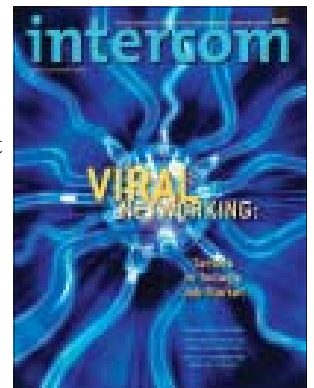
Welcome to another exciting year

By Sarah Nord, chapter president

Welcome back for another eventful year in SMSU's student chapter of the Society for Technical Communication! We have several exciting meetings planned for this semester, including an Introduction to Macromedia Dreamweaver workshop by Fawn Warner, web coordinator at the Discovery Center of Springfield. I hope you will be able to be involved in STC this year by participating in our monthly meetings and by attending the national conference in May 2004.

Last year was also packed with great events for our chapter. We toured a printing company; heard a presentation about the relationship between graphics and text from designer Jason Frazier; and learned about project management, analyzing target groups, and making oral presentations from Dr. Tom Warren of Oklahoma State

University. Dr. Sherry Southard also visited our chapter from East Carolina University and gave an excellent presentation about various career paths in the field of technical commu-



Sept./Oct. 2003 *Intercom*

nication. We hope the meetings planned for the upcoming academic year will match the quality of the events we hosted last year.

I'll send an email each month to let you know what's coming up for our chapter, and I hope to see you on Thursday, October 30, at 6:30 p.m. in Pummill 408 for our Macromedia Dreamweaver workshop.

Seminar on teaching tech. communication

By Angela Burroughs Kelly, newsletter editor

In April 2003, the SMSU chapter of STC sponsored the first annual seminar for teachers of technical communication. The event started at 8:30 a.m. on Friday, April 11, with 23 attending. The seminar featured three presenters: Dr. Steve Gerson, Dr. Tom Warren, and Dr. Sherry Southard. Gerson and Warren presented in the morning at Plaster

Student Union, while Southard presented in the afternoon at Strong Hall. Gerson, STC Fellow and English professor at Johnson County (Kansas) Community College, gave a presentation called, "Bigger is Not Better: How Technology Is Impacting Technical Writing" in which he discussed how

(Technology changes teaching, continued on page 2)

Technology changes the teaching of tech. communication

technical writers are having to conform their writing to new formats, such as PDAs and web sites.

Warren, an STC and Association of Teachers of Technical Writing Fellow, is an English Professor at Oklahoma State University. His presentations included “Trends in the Profession” and “Creating Class Assignments.” In “Trends in the Profession,” Warren described what has been, what is, and what will be in the profession of technical communication. This overview helped participants in the seminar gain a better understanding of what will be expected of them as technical communicators. Multimedia, hypertext, and interactive video are some of the tools for future technical communicators.

In the presentation “Creating Class Assignments,” Warren

shared ideas for instructing a successful writing class. Warren told technical communication teachers to consider this question when deciding what to assign: “Do the exercises ask for knowledge or skills students do not have yet?” Warren also discussed some of the more important requirements when designing assignments, such as making sure results can be measured, establishing criteria, and creating some level of complexity to the assignment.

Southard, an STC Fellow, is Lead Faculty at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina, for the M.A. in Technical & Professional Communication and the post-baccalaureate Certificate in Professional Communication. Her presentation, “E-Learning Resources for Virtual and Traditional, Face-to-Face Learning Environments” gave e-learning teachers suggestions on

how to create a traditional classroom environment through a virtual one.



From L to R: Gerson, Southard, and Warren after receiving their thank you gifts.

Southard presents new job opportunities, options

By Angela Burroughs Kelly, newsletter editor

Dr. Sherry Southard of East Carolina University gave a presentation on April 10, 2003, in Strong Hall, in which she discussed careers available to those with a degree in professional and technical communication. She stressed that when conducting a job search, a job-seeker needs to be “flexible, flexible.” She said it is important to have “flexibility in the types of documents you can do and your software knowledge and a willingness to move elsewhere.” She also said that a career in technical writing is a life-long learning experience because the field is ever changing with technological advancements.

A suggestion she gave about conducting job searches was to look for jobs that are not necessarily in the writing or editing field. For example, she suggested going to Monster.com

and typing not only “writer, editor” in the search engine, but also “information specialist, communicator.”

Southard also gave a few pointers on how to create a market for yourself when job seeking.

- Work for a company that focuses on your communication abilities—not your “toolsmithing”
- In your classes, target the areas in which you want to gain expertise
- Try to do freelance or volunteer work
- When networking, get to know the people, instead of asking about job opportunities

Southard concluded by saying, “How you market yourself is how you are able

to answer some of the questions future employers ask during the interview.”

“[It is important to have] flexibility in the types of documents you can do, software knowledge, and a willingness to move elsewhere.”

October workshop to cover the basics of Dreamweaver

By Sarah Nord, chapter president

Writing for the web is an important job function for many technical communicators, and it's a good idea to know the basics of web development so you can contribute meaningfully as a writer on a web-based project. To help us get up to speed on web development software, STC will host a Macromedia Dreamweaver workshop on Thursday, October 30 at 6:30 p.m. in Pummill 408. In this workshop, Fawn Warner, the web coordinator for the Discovery Center of Springfield, will teach some basic design and content-editing skills so we can start experimenting in web development.

Macromedia Dreamweaver is a program many web designers use to create sites that are graphically impressive and



easy to use. You don't have to be a pro with HTML code to design and add content to your web site in Dreamweaver, although the program does provide easy ways to view and edit code if you're interested. Dreamweaver offers many advanced features for experienced web designers, including cascading style sheets and accessibility compliance tools, but the program's basic features for design and content editing are simple enough for a novice web developer to master quickly.

I hope you'll join us for this fast and furious introduction to Macromedia Dreamweaver. The workshop is free and open to anyone interested in technical communication. For more information e-mail sms_stc@yahoo.com.

Photo courtesy of www.macromedia.com

Student starts dream career after graduation

Name: Heather Barbre Blades

Age: 25

Graduated SMSU, Master of Arts in Writing, Professional Writing track in May of 2003

Current occupation:

Senior Editor for The American College of Forensic Examiners International

Job duties:

Senior Editor for 2 peer-reviewed journals: *The Forensic Examiner* and *The Annals of the American Psychotherapy Association*. She sends articles through the peer-review process; corresponds with authors and professional members of the editorial advisory board who review articles; selects which articles will appear in each journal; edits scientific and technical articles once they are accepted for publication; conducts interviews with top forensic, homeland security, and psychotherapy and counseling professionals; and writes/edits other content for journals.

"I've always had a deep passion for science and health



Heather Barbre Blades

writing, and I couldn't be more thrilled to be doing what I'm doing now. Every day I'm enhancing my writing and editing skills while learning something new. Plus, I get to see the results of my work in print, and I get the satisfaction of knowing that my work is helping to keep professionals educated and informed. There may be no greater reward for a professional writer."

Barbre Blades also said, "Learning how to work with other people, especially other writers and subject matter experts, was one of the most valuable things I learned at SMSU."

How I got the job:

"Before Spring Break I went to talk to Dr. Sutliff about places to apply in Springfield, and as I was leaving I jokingly said 'Oh, I'm not worried about finding a job. I know somebody will call you with the perfect job for me.' I left the office and she checked her voicemail and had a message from American College that they were looking for a writer. I interviewed immediately, was hired part-time until I finished my coursework, worked as a writer full time for two months, and have been the company editor for the past month."

**SOCIETY FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION
SMSU STUDENT CHAPTER**

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STC

*If you have any ideas for the next
STC newsletter, please e-mail,
sms_stc@yahoo.com*

Check out our
web site:
[http://
studentorganizations.smsu.edu/stc/
default.htm](http://studentorganizations.smsu.edu/stc/default.htm)

Our Mission Statement

The Society for Technical Communication (STC) is an individual membership organization dedicated to advancing the arts and sciences of technical communication. Its 22,000 members include technical writers, editors, graphic designers, multimedia artists, and others whose work involves making technical information understandable and available to those who need it.

The Southwest Missouri State Student Chapter of STC serves the needs of technical communication students and technical communicators in the Springfield, Missouri region. SMSU STC held its first meeting in March 1993 and now has an equal membership of students and professionals. The chapter collaborates on programs with the St. Louis and Kansas City chapters, and invites practicing technical communicators to speak to the students at SMSU and the professionals in the surrounding community. SMSU STC is part of STC Region 6.

The 51st Annual STC Conference: May 9–12, 2004 Baltimore, Maryland: Navigating the Future of Technical Communication

By Angela Burroughs Kelly, newsletter editor

STC will hold its 51st Annual Conference from May 9–12, 2004, in Baltimore, Maryland. The title of this year's conference is Navigating the Future of Technical Communication.

STC's annual conference is the largest gathering of technical communicators in the world, so don't miss your chance to meet others in the field of technical communication. For more information about this conference, go to STC's web site: www.stc.org.



Other news from STC

STC made the news in April 2003 on the technology home page of www.monster.com. STC was the highlighted professional organization. The article gives the fundamentals of STC: who we are and what we do. If you are interested in the article, please go to <http://technology.monster.com/articles/profstc/>.

New Officers for 2003-2004

On Thursday, September 18, 2003, our chapter voted for new officers for 2003-2004. The results were:

President: Sarah Nord

Vice-President: Jennifer Lawrence

Secretary: Ada Wallender

Treasurer: Laura Fugitt

Publicity Chair: Matt Frauenhoffer

Web Site Editor: Ed Thompson

Newsletter Editor: Angela Burroughs Kelly