

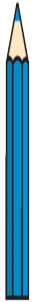
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PITTSBURGH CHAPTER, STC

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Pick of the Issue



Sometimes we (Nancy and Meg) use this space to highlight an article that may be overlooked otherwise. Not this month! The Pick this month is definitely Laurel's front-page preview of the Annual Employment meeting set for January 7. Whether you are happily employed or seeking a change, use the employment meeting to refresh your skills and keep up-to-date with current trends. What a great way to start the new year!

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Hone Your Hire-Ability at STC's Annual Employment Meeting by Laurel Patterson

STC's Annual Employment Meeting on January 7, 2008, at Duranti's in Oakland promises to be a winner. Our career roundtable includes a nice dinner, networking, and valuable information on the theme *Hone Your Hire-Ability*. (See our website for more details—www.stcpgh.org.)

Five experts will share their knowledge on abilities that affect our potential to be sought-after, desirable employees or entrepreneurs. They'll focus on five areas that can improve hire-ability—résumé & interviewing skills; display of a confident, positive attitude; up-to-date technical talents; networking skills; and global awareness. Here's a preview of what they've prepared:

A Complete Step-by-Step Guide to Winning Interviews —Robert Bruns, Senior Recruiter with Westinghouse Electric Co.

Congratulations! You have a great résumé, have identified the perfect company for which you would like to work, and now you are ready for the interview. Now that your potential employer believes from your résumé that you are the right candidate, how do you convince them during the interview that you are in fact the best candidate? We will provide you with a complete step-by-step guide to successful interviewing and the pitfalls to avoid.

Be Confident at Interviews: SHOW it with your Body Language —Dr. Nancy Mramor, Transformedia

Want to shine at interviews? Dr. Nancy Mramor will show you how to think, sit, stand, relate to your interviewer, and use the most skillful body language to put your best foot forward. This experiential seminar, by a recognized expert, will give you an edge that will put you above the rest of the competition!

Sharpening Your Technical Skills —Matt Tomsho, MJTomsho Consulting

Employers are interested in not only what you know, but also whether you can apply it. How can you show that you can effectively stay with the times, and even apply new *Hire-Ability, cont. on page 4*

President's Column - by Nancy Carpenter

Giving Back

I got the best job I've ever had through STC, and I still work there. It's a great feeling.

Here's how it happened. I was about halfway through raising a family and had let my STC membership lapse, due to



money and time pressures. But the biggest pressure became my job—it had changed and had become a dead-end job with very little writing. The work was primarily property database management and administrative assistance, with a couple hours a week of writing. I was slowing down, losing touch with good grammar and becoming a dinosaur!

Finally, it occurred to me to rejoin STC, freshen my skills and look around. I placed my résumé on the chapter's employment page that Noelle Conover was heading. In a few weeks, I got a call for an interview.

But winning the job was not enough. I had never written software documents, so I was very nervous as well as clueless. Again, this chapter provided meetings that kept me alive at work.

And so it goes on. The work has changed a few times. Each time, STC has helped.

STC will continue to help me with my job. We cycle through some topics every five or ten years, introducing new ones as the field and its tools change. But even on the repeated topics, there's something new to learn.

After getting so much, it became time to give back. I accepted a position as Secretary on the board, eventually moving to Vice President and now President.

Giving back is a great feeling, too. It's a feeling I recommend to you all.

See you at a meeting!



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Software Saturday: Adobe Acrobat and Captivate

Date: Saturday, January 26, 2008

Place: ProTech Training, Monroeville

Time: 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Cost: \$45 student/unemployed; \$60 STC members; \$75 non-members.

February Chapter Meeting

Date: Monday, February 11, 2008

Topic: Love Yourself: Stress Reduction Panel

Society for Technical Communication

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STC Pittsburgh's Mission Statement

STC Pittsburgh's mission is to provide professional support for technical communicators in the region. The chapter strives to:

- * Provide opportunities for professional enrichment
- * Help members achieve their career goals
- * Support the local business community
- * Promote technical communication as a career.

Keep Your Information Current

Receive your STC emails and publications on time! Update your STC contact information at www.stc.org. STC Members, Member Directory, Address/Restriction Change Form link: (<http://www.stc.org/stcmembers/formAddressChange01.asp>).

Notes from the National Office

Upcoming Telephone/Web Seminars

See <http://www.stc.org/edu/seminars01.asp> for more information and to register.

The cost for each seminar is \$79 for members and \$149 for non-members. All seminars are scheduled from 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. EST.

December 19, 2007

Thinking Strategically about Your Technical Communication Team

Presenter: Barbara A. Giammona

January 30, 2008

eDiscovery, The Law and You: Expanding Your Sphere of Influence

Presenter: Jack Molisani

February 13, 2008

Converting Captivate Demonstrations into Simulations

Presenter: Keven Siegel

France Chapter Annual Conference

March 14, 2008

The France Chapter STC will host its annual conference in Paris, France. This year's theme is "Communicating Europe." The conference will celebrate the diversity of technical communication in Europe. For more information, please e-mail conference@stcfrance.org, or visit www.stcfrance.org.

Atlanta Chapter Annual Conference

March 14-15, 2008

The Atlanta Chapter STC will host its annual conference, "Currents

2008," at the Southern Polytechnic State University campus in Marietta, Georgia. Jean-luc Dumont is scheduled to be one of the conference's speakers. For more information, please contact Dirk Bender, Conference Manager, at dirkbender@gmail.com, or visit www.stcatlanta.org/currents.htm.

Rochester Chapter Conference

March 28, 2008

The Rochester Chapter STC will hold "Spectrum 2008" at the R.I.T. Inn and Conference Center in Rochester, New York. STC Fellow Ginny Redish—a usability consultant for Redish & Associates, Inc., who founded the Document Design Center for the American Institutes for Research in 1979—will serve as keynote speaker. For more information, please watch www.stcrochester.org for updates.



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Hire-Ability, cont. from page 1

technologies as they come out? This session will review how to identify what you should know, how to develop skills and keep current with changing technologies on your own, and what you can do to actually show practical application, not just book learning.

Networking: The FORM Method

—**Deanna Tucci Schmitt, Executive Director of BNI in Western PA**

Do you avoid networking? Do you wonder what you will talk about? What if you run out of things to say? How do you remove yourself from a conversation? Come learn the FORM method for making networking work!

Cultural Diversity in the Light of Globalization

—**Dr. Yuki Lu, Workforce Education and Development at Penn State**

The world isn't globalizing—it is global. Goods, money, and people now cross borders at astonishing rates. Understanding and knowing how to interact with different cultures is the way to survival—for your companies, economy, and way of life. To survive, we must compete in a global economy, and to compete effectively, we must understand the many cultures that differ from ours. Cross-cultural interactions were once reserved to the traveling affluent, but now global diversities permeate all levels of the workplace and society. Ignoring this contemporary reality is not only arrogant, but also bad for business and our lives.

Points covered will include the definition of culture and key elements of culture; diversity barriers and initiatives; societal stereotypes and their effect on our perceptions and interactions; and developing a deeper understanding of cultural diversity issues in the workplace.

It's obvious that times have changed. People will no longer have just 1 or 2 jobs, but more likely 10 to 15 jobs in their lifetime. Nowadays job security is not achieved by simply remaining loyal to one company and maintaining good attendance. Now we need to invest in ourselves, making sure our skill sets are up to date and above average. STC's Career Roundtable will help us do just that.

Presenters' Bios

Robert Bruns is a senior recruiter with Westinghouse Electric Company in charge of talent acquisition. Westinghouse, a group company of Toshiba Corporation, is the world's pioneering nuclear power company and is a leading supplier of nuclear plant products and technologies to utilities throughout the world. Robert has nearly 10 years of recruiting experience and is AIRS Certified (Advanced Internet Recruitment Strategies). Additionally, he has extensive experience with behavior-based interviewing strategies. Prior to joining Westinghouse, Robert recruited talent for numerous Fortune 500 companies including: PPG, Alcoa, FreeMarkets, WellPoint Blue Cross Blue Shield, Fannie Mae, Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines, FedEx, Publics, USS, and Time Warner.

Dr. Nancy Mramor of Transformedia is a health, clinical, and educational psychologist, certified in Neuro-linguistic programming and hypnosis, and the author of the award-winning book, *Spiritual Fitness*. You can see and hear Dr. Nancy's health tips on the first Monday of the month on KDKA-TV at 9 a.m. on Pittsburgh Today and every other Saturday night on The Life Lounge. She has been on the adjunct faculty of five Pennsylvania Universities, and is on the staff of UPMC Shadyside.

Matt Tomsho is a Business Management Coach, specializing in helping companies unleash the hidden effectiveness of their most powerful asset: their people. Matt has 30 years of experience in the technical and management fields, as a Programmer, Analyst, Programming Manager, Operations Director, and IT Director.

Deanna Tucci Schmitt is the Executive Director for BNI in Western Pennsylvania (www.bni-westernpa.com) with 32 chapters and over 650 members. Deanna is contributing author in *Masters of Networking* and the newly released bestselling *Masters of Sales*. Deanna and her husband Bob live in Pittsburgh, PA, with Piper, Cessna, and Beech – their dog and two cats.

Dr. Yuki Lu brings a unique blend of experience to Organizational Management Development from her strong professional knowledge and experience, with over sixteen years in higher education, while studying abroad and working with business and industry globally. She has academic preparation and working experiences in workforce education development, which consists of training curriculum development and implementation, HR management, cultural diversity, leadership, and organizational management development.

What Makes a Good Index? - *By Nancy Carpenter*

Laura Shelley's talk at the November STC chapter meeting was a delightful insight into the work of an indexer. Amid anecdotes about the books she has indexed, Laura described the perfect index and the indexing process she uses. She included a few facts about the qualities that an independent indexer needs, how to enter the field, and how to network for projects.

According to the Chicago Manual of Style the ideal indexer "sees the book as a whole, both in scope and in arbitrary limits; understands the emphasis of the various parts and their relation to the whole; and perhaps most important of all, clearly pictures potential readers and anticipates their needs." And that also pretty well summarizes the process and the index.

Index Content

The perfect index should allow the user to find whatever he is looking for, no matter how general or how specific. It should reflect what the author wrote, but also make that information more approachable. To do these tasks, the index should cover concepts even if the term does not appear on the page. This is why it's helpful for you to learn the subject's jargon. It should combine references to similar concepts using headings with subheadings, cross-references, double-postings.

The index should cover the topic fully, but be as short as possible. A good rule-of-thumb is that most regular trade non-fiction books will end up averaging 4 to 6 index entries per page of text. A scholarly work is usually much denser and averages 8 to 15 entries per page. Certain reference or directory type books can require more than 25 index entries per page.

A multi-volume index might require a volume number prefix.

If any aspect of the index requires explanation or if categories are not indexed, this should be explained in an introduction.

Headings should be consistent in form and in usage. Obsolete or idiosyncratic terms should be cross-

referenced to terms in current use. Abbreviations, acronyms, symbols, or other abridgments of word or phrases should be defined.

The Process

An indexer will read the book, several times. First, Laura prints the PDF, looks at the entire book for its structure and content--table of contents, introductory material, appendices, resources, etc. She uses Wikipedia, Britannica and other resources to learn the vocabulary. She marks the beginning of each chapter and pages through the book to become familiar with it and to identify blank pages. (You don't charge for them). To track progress and set goals, she lists the starting and ending page numbers in a spreadsheet and uses a formula to calculate percent completed.

Now she starts to read the book, highlighting names, titles of books, and other important terms, making notes of concepts and multiple-page coverage of topics.

After completing the book once, she starts entering terms into her indexing software, re-reading the book as she goes. This is when she can spot inconsistencies, typos and other errors. She lists these for the author or editor. Since she's the last person to read the work before publication, this service is invaluable.

When she completes the draft, Laura edits and proofreads it, once again reading the book. At this point, she attempts to create order and structure that helps the author present his material, sometimes adding higher-level headings to relate the various concepts or events.

Laura cautions that this process doesn't always result in a good index, but such a process is necessary if you hope to satisfy the customer and yourself.

Qualities of an Independent Indexer

The Editorial Freelance Association (EFA) suggests that indexers can expect to earn \$25 to \$60 per hour depending on their speed. Since most indexers are paid by the number of indexable pages and the pay per page is often based on the

Indexing, cont. on page 6

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complexity of the text, the indexer's speed will translate into an hourly rate.

In the indexing field, almost everyone is a freelancer and it generally takes about three years for indexers to market themselves enough to get a sufficient number of jobs to begin to build a decent résumé and potentially get repeat customers and some word of mouth.

Self-motivation is the major factor affecting your success. You also should be detail oriented, have good pattern recognition skills, read carefully and quickly, be a good listener for the author's intentions, have good concentration skills, work well alone, have common sense and perseverance, be able to imagine what other readers will want to find, love to seek information, and like to organize.

Probably the most difficult part of freelance indexing is the isolation. On the other hand, every book is a new challenge and a different learning experience.

Training and Networking

How does one become a good indexer? There are courses you can take, at library schools, on line, or by correspondence. One of the best correspondence courses is offered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Professional societies such as the Society of Indexers in Great Britain, ANZSI (the Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers), ASI in the United States and EFA,

(Editorial Freelance Association) have websites with extremely useful information on sources of training, resources and lists that you can join to get peer assistance. In addition to these associations, there are numerous Internet discussion groups.

And to find projects, you can make cold calls, but you also can access the online directories that these professional societies maintain. One group, Indexers Unlimited is a consortium limited to 50 indexers with over 3 years experience and it uses Google advertising and other tools to generate job leads for members.

Software

Almost all indexers use software these days. Currently, there are three stand alone indexing software packages that make the indexing process much, much easier—Macrex, Cindex and SKY. Just

as with any software, each has its strong proponents. They all work, but an individual's satisfaction with a particular package will depend on how the user thinks. Different interfaces will work better for different people.

About Laura

For almost 27 years, Laura Shelley was Director of Northland Public Library in the North Hills of Pittsburgh. Before that she had been a department head in the St. Louis Public Library, a consultant for the institutional services at the State Library of Florida, assistant director in a public library, and a school librarian.

After being hired to do indexing/abstracting for a project at Westinghouse, she was lucky enough to learn about freelance indexing. For the last seven years, she has been a freelance indexer who also does proofing and editing. See her website for more complete information: www.shelleyindexing.com.

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Annual Employment Meeting: Honing Your Hire-Ability

Date: Monday, January 7

Time: 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.

For details on the speakers and the topics to be addressed, please see the article on page 1.

Location: Duranti's Restaurant, 128 North Craig St., Oakland (see <http://duranti.biz/directions.html> for directions)

Cost (includes dinner and beverages): \$18 STC members; \$20 non-STC members; \$8 students and unemployed

RSVP: By January 2 to Bryce Walat at 412-779-1795 or vicepresident@stcpgh.org. Please include your name, phone number, and email address.



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2007-2008

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