

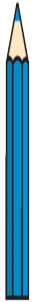
BLUE PENCIL

PITTSBURGH CHAPTER, STC

HTTP://WWW.STCPGH.ORG

VOL. 44, No. 6 - MAY 2008

Pick of the Issue



This last issue of the Blue Pencil for the year is full of content - in part to make up for the lack of an issue in April (for which I apologize - and blame a month-long trip out of the country and taxes). There are articles that acknowledge accomplishments (pp. 1,3,5), give you helpful tips (pp. 6,9), and make you laugh (p. 7). I want to thank everyone who has submitted an article for the BP. This is your newsletter, and I hope to see even more of your work when we restart in the fall.

-Meg Papa, BP Managing Editor

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Publications Competition Once Again Successful

by Marlene Miller

The Pittsburgh Chapter recently wound up another competition year, with 30 entries received from five states—California, Iowa, Ohio, Tennessee and Pennsylvania— and Japan. The entries in the Technical Publications, Technical Art, and Online Communications competitions ranged in category from online help to interpretive illustration to technical reports and informational materials.

This year, about 23 percent of the entries were from organizations in and around Pittsburgh. By comparison, over 35 percent of the entries in the 2006–2007 competition were from Pittsburgh-area organizations.

Fifteen volunteer judges reviewed entries, meaning that every entry had three evaluations. The Pittsburgh Chapter is well known for the quality of our competition evaluations, which can suggest ways to enhance and improve an author's work. The evaluations rated an entry depending on the entry's category. Such elements as the navigation of a website or a book's index were considered as well as the structure, organization, and readability of content. Judges were selected according to their familiarity and experience with a particular type of entry.

Two Technical Publications entries won Distinguished awards in this year's competition and were automatically entered in STC's International Technical Publications Competition (ITPC). Those results will be announced later this month.

This was the chapter's fourth year using Invision's Power Board (professional bulletin board software, www.invisionpower.com) to conduct online judging discussions and voting. After receiving their entries in the mail, judges were able to discuss them with each other and vote for awards in a customized judging forum. Judges downloaded evaluation forms and judging guidelines via the judging board, and then took advantage of other features like subscribing to discussions about specific entries and voting for awards in preparation for the final consensus vote for each entry.

Competitions, cont. on page 4

President's Column - by Nancy Carpenter

It's been a great year for the Pittsburgh Chapter. There's a lot to report.

We had a full season of interesting and fun meetings. Topics were *Human Performance Technology*, *Indexing*, *Cool Tools for Under \$100*, *Stress Reduction*, *Setting Up an Editing Process*, and *If You're So Smart, Why Does Your Writing Suck?* The annual career roundtable continued to be popular. And our banquet featured Dr. Barbara Johnstone who spoke on Pittsburghese.

Membership increased a bit. Attendance at meetings averaged about 25 people, and quite a few of these people were not members. We love being able to reach out beyond the writing community. Software Saturdays continue to be popular. We found a new venue, ProTech Training in Plum, who gave us a discount on the room rental, by the way. The room was packed and we have a list of requests for training for next season.

The competition that we've held for many years now is a lot of work and has been worth every hour. Though maybe I should have checked "worth every hour" with Marlene Miller and Heather Lum, the driving forces behind the event! The event allows us to see the finest work from our colleagues. This year, we'll send two Distinguished winners to the international competition (see the full list of winners on page 5). Congratulations to the winners and to all those who were able to develop work that they could submit. That in itself is a significant achievement. And our own Janis Ramey was honored to be chosen as a judge for the international competition.

And that's not all Janis has done. She's one of the chapter's charter members, having joined as a student and now has the distinction of being a member for 50 years. She and WorkQuest also were honored in a community spotlight article in Intercom.

As for a fiscal report, due to careful control, we remain in the black. The competition did not net a profit this year, although it usually does, but we covered our expenses on the meetings and mailings.

As a service to the community, we took a collection for UNICEF at the October meeting and raised \$53.81.

While reporting the year's accomplishments to the Society, we applied for a Community Achievement Award and just learned that we won for Chapter of Excellence. Thank you to Kathee Kuvinka for her work in preparing the application. We also submitted a nomination for Distinguished Chapter Service Award and are delighted to announce that our nominee Nancy Ott won! Congratulations, Nancy. Here's the citation and a brief history of her accomplishments.



"For sustained contributions to the Pittsburgh chapter— your highly-evolved technical brain, your enviable ability to manage and direct technical projects and people, and your wondrous appreciation of the "technical" in Technical Communication..."

Nancy has been an active member of the STC Pittsburgh chapter for many years. She has always been outspoken and a positive advocate for the chapter and for STC. During the time she has been a Pittsburgh chapter member, she has played many roles:

- Editor of our chapter newsletter the [Blue Pencil](#), during which time she completely redesigned the layout of the newsletter. Blue Pencil won an Excellence award in April of 2000.
- Vice president of the chapter in 2002-2003
- President of the chapter in 2003-2004. Under Nancy's leadership, STC Pittsburgh held a very successful Region 4 conference "Writers Without Borders: Trends in Technical Communication"
- Special projects coordinator from 2005 to 2007. Nancy took on such projects as compilation of required information for a Chapter Achievement award. Thanks

Column, cont. on page 3

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>).

Column, cont. from page 2

to Nancy's organization and attention to detail, Pittsburgh has won Chapter of Excellence or Distinction in each of the last three years.

- Career roundtable presenter. Each year, STC Pittsburgh hosts a career roundtable dinner meeting, inviting speakers to present mini-sessions related to careers. Nancy's sessions on electronic résumé and portfolio development have always been a winner.
- WorkQuest™ presenter. WorkQuest™ is an independent group sponsored by the Pittsburgh chapter. Its mission is to provide self-help for people looking for work. Nancy has presented sessions to this group on electronic résumé and portfolio development.
- Judge and frequent submitter for STC Pittsburgh chapter competition

Nancy also works full-time for Carnegie Mellon University at the National Robotics Engineering Center. She was first hired part-time to write API documentation for software libraries, but the job has expanded considerably since then. She's now their full-time staff writer/publications specialist, spending about half of her time writing technical marketing material (web site content, news stories, posters, brochures, etc.) and the other half doing technical writing and editing projects for the various groups (writing manuals, testing and editing robotics curricula, editing technical papers, etc).

Our chapter held its first elections in years. I can't remember the last time we did this. Although the offices were uncontested, the board felt that we needed to follow a formal process and

validate the officers each year. Here are your officers for the next season:

- President, Bryce Walat
- Vice President, Lisa Over
- Treasurer, Beverly Spagnolo
- Secretary, Kathee Kuvinka

I thank STC Pittsburgh Chapter and all of you who have served on the board and committees, taken on special tasks, written articles in Blue Pencil, presented topics at meetings, and answered emailed questions. This society can be a vital part of a technical writer's career. I know it has been for me and I hope it is the same for you.

On a personal note, the officers wish to express special appreciation and admiration for our new Treasurer Beverly Spagnolo who, soon after being elected to Vice President three years ago, contracted breast cancer. At her request, she continued to perform this office while she fought off the cancer with a sense of humor that few can match. She moved to President then Immediate Past President and began the fight again, continuing full steam and being an invaluable aid to me as President. Hang in there, girl. We love you.

Please look for our opening mixer in August, as we kick off what we hope you will find to be another interesting year of service to you, our members.

Sincerely,
Outgoing President,
Nancy Carpenter

Competitions, cont. from page 1

Thanks to Volunteers

The chapter wishes to thank the volunteer judges who gave the entries the benefit of their valuable time and expertise: Technical Art judges Todd Pinkham, Leanne Lappe and Sheela Nath; Technical Publications and Online Communications judges Wendy Austin, Nicky Bleiel, Sulbha Buhl, Susan Gatt, Mike Grape, Martin Houser, Susan Kushner, John Lum, Diana Mathis, Mary Matzen, Sheela Nath, Nancy Ott, and Bill Proudfoot.

Marlene Miller and Heather Lum managed this year's competition with assistance from Susan Gatt and Wendy Austin. Please contact Marlene at mgmiller33@hotmail.com if you would like information about helping with next year's competition.

Please see page 5 for the full list of award winners.

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"On the Whole, I'd Rather Be in Philadelphia"
by Al Brown, senior member, STC Philadelphia Metro chapter



We hope you take W.C. Fields' epitaph* to heart and join us here for the Technical Communication Summit June 1-4. You know what to expect at the Summit itself: news about the latest developments and techniques in our field and the chance to get together with colleagues and friends, old and new. But there are plenty of surprises and unexpected pleasures waiting for you in the City of Brotherly Love.

Just a few examples of what you can do:

- Visit the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall, where it all began. Or Franklin's Court to see a working replica of Ben Franklin's printing press and find out how things were done before laser printers.
- Wander out Ben Franklin Parkway to see the Museum of Natural History, the original dinosaur museum; climb aboard a full-size Baldwin locomotive at the Franklin Institute (almost everything here was founded by or named after Old Ben); or check out the world's largest collection of work by Dadaist master Marcel Duchamp at the Art Museum.
- Hop on the SEPTA subway to take in a Philadelphia Phillies (baseball) home game at Citizens Bank Park. (Yep, they are in town May 30th through June 5th.)

- Head down the Avenue of the Arts for a musical, theatrical, or dance performance by one of our world-class companies.
- Or if you really want to go hard-core Philly, try the Mummer's Museum (2nd Street at Washington Avenue).

In short, there are lots of things to see, do, and eat (not just pretzels and cheese steaks) in William Penn's "Greene Country Towne." Stop by the STC-Philly Metro Chapter's Hospitality Booth and say hello. We'll be glad to suggest something exciting that fits your particular interests.

See you there!

**Well, it isn't really, but why spoil a good intro?*

gw
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Competition Award Winners

Competition award winners will be recognized at the annual STC Pittsburgh Awards Banquet on Monday, May 19.

COMPETITION	CATEGORY	ENTRY NAME	COMPANY	AWARD	CONTRIBUTORS
Online Communication	Help	ComponentOne Ribbon for .NET (2.0) Help	ComponentOne	Merit	Leanne Lappe, ComponentOne Documentation Team
Online Communication	Promotional	Artificial Retina Project: Restoring Sight Through Science	Oak Ridge National Laboratory	Merit	Marissa Mills, Kris Christen, Denise Casey
Online Communication	Reference Material	BODIBEAT BF-1 Owner's Manual	Yamaha Corporation	Excellence	Yamaha Corporation, Marty Lighthizer
Online Communication	Help	Care360 Physician Portal 6.0 Help	MedPlus Inc.	Merit	Sabrina Darnowsky, Lisa Burriss, Cathy Stine
Technical Art	Display	Biological Pathways to Renewable Fuel Production	Oak Ridge National Laboratory	Merit	Andrew Sproles, Jennifer Bownas, Marissa Mills
Technical Art	Mechanical Illustration, Line	Solid Oxide Fuel Cell and Stack Configuration	Oak Ridge National Laboratory	Merit	David Cottrell, Victor Pardue, Joe Marasco, Oak Ridge National Laboratory
Technical Art	Informational Materials Design	Breaking the Biological Barriers to Cellulosic Ethanol: A Joint Research Agenda	Oak Ridge National Laboratory	Merit	Judy Wyrick, Shirley Andrews, Betty Mansfield
Technical Art	Annual Report Design	2005 Annual Report, Center for Computational Sciences	Oak Ridge National Laboratory	Excellence	Jane C. Parrott, Julia White, Deborah Counce
Technical Art	Informational Materials Design	15 Years of Leadership Computing at Oak Ridge National Laboratory	Oak Ridge National Laboratory	Merit	Jane C. Parrott, Julia White, Jayson Hines
Technical Art	Interpretive Illustration, Line	Liquid Metal Heat Exchanger for Efficient Heating of Soils and Geologic Formations	Oak Ridge National Laboratory	Merit	David Cottrell, Joe Marasco, Oak Ridge National Laboratory
Technical Publications	Technical Reports	Breaking the Biological Barriers to Cellulosic Ethanol: A Joint Research Agenda	Oak Ridge National Laboratory	Merit	Betty Mansfield, Judy Wyrick, Jennifer Bownas
Technical Publications	Magazines	Oak Ridge National Laboratory Review, Vol. 40, Nos. 1, 2, and 3, 2007	Oak Ridge National Laboratory	Distinguished	Carolyn Krause, Larisa Brass, LeJean Hardin
Technical Publications	Informational Materials	Oak Ridge National Laboratory Facilities: A Sustainable Campus	Oak Ridge National Laboratory	Merit	Jeanne Dole
Technical Publications	Technical Reports	Selection Forecast 2006 2007: Slugging Through the War for Talent	Development Dimensions International	Merit	Development Dimensions International
Technical Publications	Books	70: The New 50	Development Dimensions International	Distinguished	Development Dimensions International
Technical Publications	Promotional Materials	Pearson 2007 Springfield Proposal	Pearson	Merit	Lisa Livingston, Kathy Pawluk, Lisa Robertson, Alice Donner, Tom Siegel
Technical Publications	Quick Reference Guides	Cisco Smart Business Communications System Setup, Version 1.1	PD Communications, LLC	Merit	Rosemary Christian, Paula DeLay, Linda Devendorf
Technical Publications	Informational Materials	Medicare Made Clear 2007		Excellence	Deborah Edwards, Don Moyer, Roberta Pavol
Technical Publications	Quick Reference Guides	TENORI-ON TNR-W Quick Guide	Yamaha Corporation	Excellence	Masayuki Uchida, Kent Ibbott, Yamaha Corporation
Technical Publications	Hardware/Software Combination Guides	USB Mixing Studio MW12CX/MW12C Owner's Manual	Yamaha Corporation	Merit	Yamaha Corporation
Technical Publications	Quick Reference Guides	BODIBEAT BF01 Quick Guide	Yamaha Corporation	Merit	Yamaha Corporation, Marty Lighthizer
Technical Publications	Quick Reference Guides	Care360 Physician Portal 6.0 Writing a Prescription QuickStart	MedPlus Inc.	Merit	Lisa Burriss, Cathy Stine
Technical Publications	Software Guides	Care360 Lab Orders and Results User Manual	MedPlus Inc.	Merit	Sabrina Darnowsky

Editing Processes Made Easy - by Bryce Walat

On March 3, 2008, Lisa Adair, an editor from Rockwell Automation and a member of the Northeast Ohio chapter of STC, presented the topic "Managing and Growing a Formal Editing Process."

When she first came to Rockwell Automation, Lisa Adair discovered that there was no formal editing process in place, resulting in inefficiencies and errors. Therefore, Lisa spearheaded an effort to put a formal editing process in place.

Lisa works with two other editors and numerous writers across the globe. Together, they edit about 400 new and revised publications a year. A key challenge in her work is bringing all of these people together. In addition, Rockwell Automation was moving from a publication-oriented approach toward a topic-oriented approach to publication. Lisa created a task force to evaluate the state of technical editing at Rockwell International and offer recommendations for improvement.

The task force came up with these recommendations:

- Develop style guidelines
- Design a consistent editing process
- Create metrics for editing

The task force used *The Microsoft Manual of Style* and Sun's *Read Me First!* as the bases for style guidelines that support structured authoring and content reuse. First, the task force released the initial guides and incorporated any feedback received.

Next, the task force developed an editing workflow. The editing workflow used a review database to track documents' statuses and feedback. Projects were tracked in an Excel spreadsheet. In addition, the task force developed an editing checklist and three levels of edit: light, medium, and heavy, as well as time estimates for each level of edit.

To ensure efficiency, publications were prioritized according to editors' availability and the type

of document. On a quarterly basis, editors examine each other's document reviews to ensure consistency across grammar, style, and reuse; in other words, to see which issues are consistently caught by all editors and which issues are "pet peeves."

The result of these processes is that actual time to meet estimates was within 80 percent of the goal. One added benefit is that editors were able to show their return on investment in improving publications. Moving forward, editors at Rockwell Automation are seeking to edit from the content reusability perspective, because consistent editing with one voice makes content more reusable. To assist in this goal, Rockwell Automation is converting to structured authoring.

Congratulations All Around

Kudos to Nancy Ott, who has been named the recipient of STC's Distinguished Chapter Service Award (DCSA) for the Pittsburgh Chapter! A list of her many contributions to the chapter are listed in the President's Column beginning on page 2. Thanks for all your service, Nancy!

Janis Ramey was selected to judge STC's international competition. She received entries in three categories (software guides, software/hardware combo manuals, and informative materials) and worked with the entire committee at the consensus meeting in Atlanta at the end of March. Congratulations, Janis! It's an honor to be selected to judge at this level.

Finally, Pittsburgh's own WorkQuest was highlighted on the "Community Spotlight" page of the February 2008 Intercom, the national STC publication. Way to go!

"Say, What?" Interviews - by Tam Malloy

A famous television comedy began the first show of the first season with an unforgettable interview between grumpy boss "Lou Grant" and confident job applicant, "Mary Richards". The following is a paraphrased rendition from this 70s "Mary Tyler Moore" TV show:

Lou Grant (with a penetrating stare): "What religion are you?"

Mary Richards (a bit shocked): "I don't believe you're allowed to ask me that."

Lou Grant (with same stare): "What are you going to do – arrest me?" [pause] "Okay, how old are you?"

Mary Richards (avoiding age question): "Presbyterian."

Proper, acceptable and even legal interview etiquette has changed over the decades. I recently found a copy of my grandfather's 1940s résumé created after his college graduation. Among the list of his qualifications, he included his height, his weight, race, sex and even his religion – unthinkable in the 21st century. His photograph appeared at the top of his résumé.

Recently, a neighbor sent her résumé to a very small office on Route 19 to apply for the secretarial position. Called for an interview, my neighbor endured a long process of job related questions by the second in command. The interviewer smiled and said, "You're highly experienced – and hired."

Employment forms were prepared, and the interviewer had just one more question. "You ARE a college graduate, aren't you?" My neighbor said she had only a year of college, 1970 -1971, and had indicated that on her résumé. The interviewer shook her head and stated, "I missed that information. My boss won't hire anyone for his business without a college degree, even the secretarial position." My neighbor numbly stood up and left, wondering why an experienced secretary who hadn't been in college for over 25 years would be required to have a degree.

Often an interview may include certain software tests, such as Word, Excel and Access. A friend of mine had a horrifying interview test. She was placed alone in a small room and given a long, multi-choice personality

questionnaire. The interviewer insisted that each question must be answered with one of the two multi-choice options.

The questions began in a simple mode and gradually became more involved and more personal, and possibly even illegal. One of the last multi-choice questions: "Would you rob a bank or leave your spouse and children for another person?"

"How many light bulbs are in the United States?"

Feeling increasingly uncomfortable with the test, especially with this last question, my friend left the unfinished test on the table. She went to the interviewer and asked if she could use the bathroom.

The interviewer sent her to the building floor's shared restroom. My friend used the excuse to continue walking, out the door and down the elevator. She never looked back, confident that she had avoided working for a peculiar business.

I have had numerous interviews over the years, enjoying the process of meeting business management and proudly sharing my qualifications. Most of my interviews have been relatively "normal," until I was asked the most bizarre interview question.

The interview was with two, young entrepreneurs of a start-up company. With smirks on their faces, the first

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The Want Ads - by Joe Brennan

“I want a job.”

You’ve probably said that to yourself at some time in your life. So let’s take a deeper look at that remark. In doing so, we might consider an analysis in three degrees. You mildly want a job; you moderately need a job; or perhaps you intensely crave a job. Which is it? There is a difference. That is to say, would you mildly like to have a job to modestly support yourself and keep busy, or do you need money to maintain yourself and your responsibilities, or do you have a deep-felt craving for a job and its commensurate lavish perks? In a sense it comes down to the question of: To what degree do you want?

We are all familiar with the multitudes of want ads which appear daily in newspapers and other publications, where people pay money to advertise their wants - making requests for all kinds of products and services. For example, you might encounter this car ad: “Wanted 1959 red convertible Cadillac no rust original motor and transmission.” Similarly, an employer may run an ad with a lengthy list of specific attributes. Well, then, is it realistic and reasonable to expect to find such a rarity? And if one such rarity does exist and is for sale, then is the buyer really prepared to pay the fair market value? On the other hand, is the person who placed the advertisement merely exploring the realm of possibilities? Maybe they might settle for a 1967 white

Cadillac El Dorado V8 with a rebuilt engine and body work.

So then, seemingly, it is wise to recognize that you must correctly assess the want of the buyer (employer) and your want as a seller (job seeker) - a basic principle of free market enterprise. If a company craves your skills and services,

**Want, Need, or
Crave? It matters for
your job search.**

you have a great deal of power in the negotiation of the agreement. However, if you crave a particular job and the employer merely wants someone to fill a vacancy, then you are in a weak position. Ideally, you should define the employer’s base needs and insure that you meet and/or exceed them. Keep in mind, their true ‘wants’ (experience, skills, attributes, etc.) may not be their advertised wants! Furthermore, your ‘degree of want’ should match their position. In simple terms, it’s all about the buyer: if they need you, then you should need them. In this sense, you can find a work relationship which is a “good fit” for both parties.

Conversely, you may tailor your degree of want to an available job (or employer). The trick is to match your want as the prospective employee to your want of an employment relationship. Many people have jobs they do not fit or they dislike, although they need the

job (which is a higher degree of want – necessity). Their mild want of a lesser job is overshadowed by the requirement of money. Do you crave a high paying, prestigious, powerful job which may be disagreeable to you, or do you essentially require money? If it is a modest amount of money you primarily want, then you might accept a tradeoff of a lesser paying job and curtail your spending, avarice or desire for excess wealth and thereby feel more relaxed, peaceful and content in yourself and in your job chosen.

So, now you’ve got to ask yourself: “How much do I want?”

Special thanks to Richard Truett of Auto News for expert automotive advice.

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Record-Setting Meeting Did Anything but Suck - by Bryce Walat

Whether it was the speaker, the topic, the food, or the low price of admission (free), April's meeting, the last meeting of the 2007-08 event year, set a new attendance record with more than 45 attendees from the ranks of STC members and non-members alike.

Subject-matter experts in a given domain of knowledge are intelligent, diligent, and even brilliant individuals, but you'd never know that from the way that some of them write for and communicate with those outside of their domain of expertise. Karen Schriver, STC Fellow and principal of KSA Communication Design & Research, offered insight into the gap between subject matter expertise and clear communication with "If You're So Smart, Why Does Your Writing Suck?" Karen offered examples of writing that sucks, writing that doesn't suck, and research that supports her reasoning behind why some writing sucks, other writing doesn't suck, and still other writing is truly excellent.

The main reason why smart people's writing often sucks is because it includes information it shouldn't and fails to include information it should. Another reason is because smart people fail to see the difference between writing that is topic-oriented (telling people about a topic) and performance-oriented (telling people how to perform a task). Yet another reason is that experts often are not concerned about errors, or are concerned about the wrong errors. In other words, when experts are inconsiderate of non-expert audiences, they produce writing that sucks.


Experts are inconsiderate of their audience because they fail to see themselves as others see them and fail to see information as non-experts see it. Experts tend to overestimate others' understanding of the terminology and topic, see details and connections between ideas that others don't see, and assume that others can understand ideas as easily as they can. This lack of perception comes from a lack of contact with non-experts, the belief that readers need to know, or don't need to know, certain details, excessive reliance on schemas for domain-specific issues, and the concern that their expertise will be less valuable if non-experts can understand their domain of expertise.

There is a lot of writing by experts that doesn't suck, and there are many experts who can communicate their expertise

to non-experts very well. How do these experts write so well? Domain experts who are excellent writers can see their domain from a non-expert point of view, know how much information is the right amount, know the difference between "knowing about" a topic and "knowing how" to use expertise to perform a task, and see their writing as clarification, not simplification.

How can you, as a writer, or as a subject matter expert, avoid writing that sucks? One key measure is to beware of the "knowledge effect" that occurs the longer a writer works with a given subject area. Fresh eyes are essential to stopping sucky writing. In addition, usability and readability testing is helpful in getting an outside perspective. Finally, it's important to make the value of good information design and writing clear to experts and non-experts alike as a value added to expert knowledge.

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question was, “How many light bulbs are in the United States?”

Immediately feeling uncomfortable with this start of an interview, I quickly lost my enthusiasm for any job this company might offer to me. I gave their light bulb question a brief thought, and then blurted a quip of an answer: “Boy, it’s a good thing I’m not here for an accounting job.”

The entrepreneurs laughed and asked me briefly about my writing qualifications. They didn’t let me off the hook with my “accounting” answer. I was told that I had to provide a realistic answer to the light bulb question within 24 hours.

I didn’t want to waste my time, but felt challenged to arrive at a suitable reply. I realized the entrepreneurs had

immense egos. The answer I emailed was, “There are as many light bulbs in the United States as there will be customers using your company’s services.” I got the job, but the start-up business folded six months later.

On the TV comedy show “Mary Tyler Moore”, the character “Mary Richards” survived her interview and was hired as a secretary, and then a producer. The TV series ended after seven years, and the last episode showed “Mary Richards” losing her producer job. The fictional “Mary,” like me, had to search for another job.

To have a job, you have to get a job. And, that means facing those “interesting” interviews with their “Say, What?” questions! Good luck to us all!

Tam can be reached at tam.malloy@gmail.com.

Have a Great Summer!

2007-2008

STC Pittsburgh Officers

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