

BLUE PENCIL

PITTSBURGH CHAPTER, STC

[HTTP://WWW.STCPGH.ORG](http://www.stcpgh.org)

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Stay Tuned for Web 2.0 and Writing for Search Engine Optimization

In the next few months, STC Pittsburgh will be presenting on two emerging technologies: Web 2.0 and search engine optimization, or SEO. An increasing number of job openings in technical communication will involve working with these and other emerging technologies, not to mention that you may need to learn about these technologies in your current job.

Web 2.0

Chuck Lanigan, a knowledge management consultant at a financial services company, and owner of www.WaysofKnowing.com, will be attending the East Tennessee 25th Annual Practical Conference on Communication. Part of this conference will be a seminar on Web 2.0. Chuck will share what he learned about Web 2.0, particularly

social networking, at our October monthly meeting.

The past few years have seen an explosion in web-based collaborative technologies, known collectively as Web 2.0. Web 2.0 includes Wikis, blogs, and social networking sites similar to MySpace, Facebook, and LinkedIn. Organizations are now taking advantage of these technologies to enhance creativity, knowledge-sharing and collaboration among their employees, service partners, and customers. However, an organization's success in leveraging Web 2.0 technologies depends as much on the skills of its personnel in using the available technology as the technology itself. Literacy, communication, problem-solving, and other collaborative skills all play a role in ensuring success.

Search Engine Optimization

For the November monthly meeting, chapter president Bryce Walat, an SEO copywriter, and his colleagues at IMPAQT, a Greentree-based search marketing firm, will talk about writing Web content for Search engine optimization (SEO).

SEO means making your Web site's content easily accessible to search engines like Google and Yahoo. Writing Web content for SEO means writing for two kinds of readers: human readers and non-human readers, namely search engines. Search engines look for particular keywords that searchers enter and return the most relevant results first.

Writing Web content for SEO helps your Web site be among the first results

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Fashion Faux Pas - by Tam Malloy

What do mismatched socks, broken shoe heels, and broken zippers combined with nervousness have in common?

Answer: Our clothing mishaps at job interviews. Our fashion faux pas have caused many of us beet red embarrassment at job "inquisitions."

Flamingo Pride

I still feel the facial flush of a job interview soon after I had bought a bright yellow VW Beetle. For the appointment I was wearing my best and only winter interview suit with a long, warm coat.

The interview was scheduled late in the afternoon, the hour before quitting

Fashion, cont. on page 4



President's Column - *by Bryce Walat*

Welcome back!

As your President for the 2008-2009 STC Pittsburgh event year, I'd like to officially welcome everyone back, thank all those who volunteered last year for their hard work and great ideas, and introduce our 2008-2009 Executive Board:

- Vice-President: Lisa Over
- Secretary: Kathee Kuvinka
- Treasurer: Beverly Spagnolo
- Immediate Past President: Nancy Carpenter

I've spent a lot of time working with these experienced, diligent, and sharp individuals in the last few years, and am pleased to be working with them this year.

The 2007-2008 event year was one of the most successful in the history of STC Pittsburgh. We experienced this success because we had high-quality leadership in place, offered appealing topics and speakers, kept up a high level of symbiosis with WorkQuest, and allocated our time, money, and energy efficiently. These successes led us to earn a Community of Excellence award for 2007-2008.

The 2008-2009 event year is on track to match, if not exceed, last year's success. We plan to keep what works in place, and we plan to change a few things, too. We've got a seasoned leadership team in place with a solid working relationship,

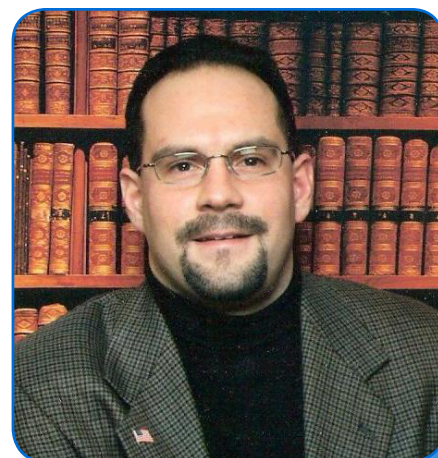
and we've got fresh people we're courting for future leadership roles.

We've got some great speakers and some really interesting new topics like social networking and writing for search engine optimization. We've got some new twists, like our Peer Review Clinic, and an End-of-Year Picnic. We also plan to repeat consistently successful events, like our Employment Roundtable and Stress Reduction sessions.

You may notice that we are sending the Updates electronically. This allows us to save money and save the environment. If you request it, you'll still get a paper copy. We've also moved the monthly meetings to the second Tuesday of every month to accommodate members for whom Mondays aren't the best time to meet.

We're even looking at some BHAGs (Big, Hairy, Audacious Goals) for our chapter, such as a Community of Distinction Award.

Our success, in fact our very livelihood as a group, is possible because of people who do more than "just belong" to STC Pittsburgh. It's a sad but true fact of life, but many members of professional groups like STC Pittsburgh "just belong" to put something on their resumes, or "just belong" to get networking leads. While it's a good thing to join STC Pittsburgh for those reasons, I've noticed that those who get the most out of it are those who



do more than "just belong." Even doing seemingly "small" things like helping to set up before a meeting, or passing out name badges, or writing an article for Blue Pencil can be rewarding.

As your 2008-2009 STC Pittsburgh President, I challenge you to make the 2008-2009 event year the best yet.

I challenge all of you to do more than "just belong" to STC Pittsburgh.

I challenge you to step forward to help with just one effort, no matter how small.

I challenge you to get just one new person to join STC Pittsburgh.

I challenge you to give us an idea that can make STC Pittsburgh a Community of Distinction.

Let's Go STC Pittsburgh!

Society for Technical Communication

Pittsburgh Chapter

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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>).

Announcing Call for Papers for STC One-Day Conference

On behalf of the Cedarville University STC Student Chapter, we would like to inform you of the following conference:

"A 2020 Vision of the Future"

Cedarville University, Cedarville, OH
November 8, 2008

www.cedarville.edu/stc

For the first time in 16 years, Cedarville University's STC Student Chapter is proud to be hosting an STC One-Day Conference. Since the role of technical communication is rapidly increasing and changing, we will focus on the future of the profession. Our conference title, "A 2020 Vision of the Future," portrays our desire to catch a glimpse of what technical communication will be like in the next decade.

Our keynote speaker will be **Mark Clifford**, STC President, and special guest speaker **Dr. Carolyn Rude**, chair of the English Department and Professor at Virginia Tech. We are looking for other speakers for our breakout sessions. We welcome proposals on all subjects, but we especially welcome those that focus on where the world of technical communication is heading. Some suggested topics include the following:

- Innovations in technical communication
- New and current programs
- Technical communicators and future technologies
- Repercussions of increasing technology
- Engineering's role in technical communication

- The role of user-centered documentation in an online world
- Changing roles and expectations for technical communicators

All proposals will be reviewed, and we will inform you of our decision by September 30, 2008.

Please send your submissions via email to harners@cedarville.edu or submit them on our website www.cedarville.edu/stc. Word documents or PDFs are preferred. **The deadline for all proposals is September 15, 2008.**

We look forward to receiving your proposal and hope you will be able to join us on November 8. If you have any questions, please contact:

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Fashion, cont. from page 1

time. The interview was completed and seemed to go well. I walked out of the office building with the gentleman who had conducted the interview.

We both headed toward the office's parking lot. Admittedly I was a bit too proud of my new/used car, and punishment ensued. A higher power decreed that pride cometh before a fall.

As I waved to the interviewer, I stepped inside my lemon colored Bug, catching the coat hem with my shoe heel. Like a frozen flamingo on one leg, I fell sideways into the front seats. My legs straightened, broke free of the coat hem and dangled out the open driver's door.

The interviewer must have seen me falling flat on my face inside the car, and then my rattled body suddenly jerking upward. Automatically my right hand shot up and gave a nonchalant wave as if all was well and "normal."

Business Casual?

A co-worker was willing to share his interview faux pas with me as long as I didn't mention his name. An educated, experienced CPA, my friend took pride with his career clothing sense. (In reality, his wife is the one with the horse sense, combined with fashion finesse.)

He appeared at his interview, impeccably dressed for the high-level job in upper management. Standing way above six feet, he could get the job by simply showing up and smiling. All who interviewed him were impressed, offering him the position once he passed a short, company medical exam.

The tests were scheduled for the next working day in the same building where the interview took place.

Dressing very casually, my friend intended just to pop in and pop out of the medical lab in the lobby. As he entered the office building, the same group of people who had interviewed him the day before came out of the elevator. Shocked, my friend realized that he was caught wearing paint stained shorts, a stretched out T-shirt and his decade-old flip flops.

The group smiled, greeting him warmly. Several days later, he was hired. However, he was forever teased by his co-workers. They found out on that medical test morning his wife had left early for work. She wasn't home to lay out his clothes for the day.

Fly the Friendly Skies

Back in the "old" days, the early 60s, my neighbor across the street was talked

into interviewing for a stewardess position with now-defunct Eastern Airlines. My neighbor, in her early 20s and living in Texas at that time, was not the least bit interested in flying the friendly skies.

But knowing she was not secretarial material, she reluctantly went on a local interview for the airline. She was accepted to take a more in-depth interview in Miami Springs, Florida. This interview included a free, round-trip airline ticket from Houston, Texas to Miami Springs, two nights of free hotel lodging, and a daily food stipend. This sure looked like a win-win situation. If she weren't hired, she still would have a three-day Florida vacation for free.

Keep in mind that the woman's interview "uniform" of the 60s was

Fashion, cont. on page 5

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generally a simple dark suit or dress, black shoes, a slip and a garter belt to attach the stockings. Despite the Florida heat and better judgment, my friend chose to take her wrist-length, black gloves made of expensive leather.

For the interview she entered a huge room with 50 other pilot and stewardess applicants. My friend sat near the front entrance. A man would come out from a door at the other end of this small auditorium and yell out the name of the next applicant. A half hour passed when my friend's name was called.

She stood up, suddenly feeling the snap release from a garter belt hook. There were two garter belt hooks for each stocking. Fortunately, one of the two hooks for the right stocking was still holding. She hesitantly walked slowly across the huge expanse, feeling all eyes on her. As she reached the man who called her name, she felt the snap release of the second, remaining garter belt hook on the right stocking.

The stocking started falling fast to her knee, then down to the ankle. More horrified than my friend was the interviewer as he stammered, "You must need to get to the rest room." She was taken down a long hallway, past airline executive offices. All must have noticed her having to stop every few feet to lift her limp stocking continually draping over her shoe.



**"Denim doesn't seem very businesslike,
so on Casual Fridays I wear sticky notes!"**

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In the rest room, a woman employee observed the stocking problem, uttering soft sympathy, "You poor thing, here on an interview." My friend just grinned and accepted her fate, now assuming she wouldn't get the job. Stocking fixed, she walked to the interview room to be greeted by the male interviewer as if nothing had happened.

Feeling rather warm, my friend started to pull off her black leather gloves. The gloves would not budge, seemingly glued to her damp hands. The interviewer jumped up and leaned over to help in yanking at the gloves, finger by finger. With the gloves ripped off, my friend laughed when she saw a multitude of black leather "crumbs" covering the palms of her hands.

After just a few questions, the smiling man inquired when she could start stewardess school. Surprised how quickly the interview was completed, my friend asked if she had been hired. The interviewer grinned and said, "If you could come through your stocking falling down in front of so many people, then manage to laugh during the wet leather glove struggle, you could handle anything on an airline flight."

The Usual Mishaps

Important zippers not zipped, mismatched socks, buttons in wrong buttonholes, wet hair and clothing from a forgotten umbrella – unexpected interview occurrences for the majority of us. No matter what takes place during the interview process, the BEST thing to wear is a big smile. Often the reason we are hired is how confidently we handle our fashion faux pas.

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STC Pittsburgh Celebrates Summer at the Church Brew Works

Summer is officially over, according to some. STC Pittsburgh didn't let the summer end without celebrating with good food, handcrafted beer and other beverages, and good conversation at Lawrenceville's Church Brew Works.

STC members got to meet and greet the new officers for the 2008-2009 event year, enjoy great food and drinks, talk about their summer activities and future plans, network, and just get back together.

Although fewer people attended than anticipated, what the event lacked in quantity of people it more than made up for in the good time that was had by all.

Meetings. cont. from page 1

that searchers see when searching for specific keywords and entices searchers to visit your site from a search, especially visitors who are likely to use your products or services. There's more to SEO than just adding popular keywords—it's important to write the content to appeal to searchers and emotionally engage them to keep them coming back for more and telling others about your site.

Check our Web site, www.stcpgh.org, and our monthly updates for more details!



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Blue Pencil Survey

The Blue Pencil is YOUR newsletter! To help make it better serve your needs, please complete the following survey and hand in to one of the chapter officers by the end of the meeting. **Thank you.**

1. Do you currently read the Blue Pencil? Y N
2. If you currently do NOT read the Blue Pencil regularly, what is the primary reason? (check one response)
 _____ Don't always know it is available _____ Don't have the time to go to the web site
 _____ Can't get the pdf file to open easily _____ Don't find the content useful enough
 _____ Other _____
3. The following types of articles and notices have appeared in the Blue Pencil. Please rate each item on two aspects: how useful it is to you (information, tips, techniques you can apply), and how interesting it is to you (do you enjoy/look forward to reading it). Please use a scale of 1 to 5 (1=not at all, 5=highly) for each rating.

Newsletter Item	How Useful?	How Interesting?
President's column		
Software/technology articles		
Grammar and style articles		
STC national news/policies		
Results of competitions, contests, etc.		
Summaries of previous chapter meetings		
Networking/job search articles		
Excelling at work articles (adding value, communicating your value, surviving company politics, working with others, etc.)		
Notices of local (but not STC Pgh) and regional STC-related happenings		
Pittsburgh STC chapter happening notices		

4. If you have interest in articles about software and technology, do you prefer "big picture" articles (what needs do a specific software package or technology address) or "close focus" articles (how can you perform specific tasks with a software package or technology)?
 _____ Big picture _____ Close focus _____ No preference
5. What software packages/technologies are you interested in learning more about?
6. What types of articles would you like to see in the Blue Pencil that currently do not appear?
7. Would you be willing to write an article for the Blue Pencil? Y N
8. If yes, on what topics(s)?

Contact information (optional, but appreciated if you answered "yes" to question 7) THANK YOU!

Name:

Email:

