

Technically speaking ...

STC

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Local Mission

Connecting Students to the Future of Technical Communication



SOCIETY FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION

STC Mission

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

Contact Information

Student community

Web site:

http://www.ncsu.edu/stud_orgs/stc

Carolina community

Web site:

<http://www.stc-carolina.org>

International STC

Web site:

<http://www.stc.org>

Mailing Address:

NC State University
Student Community-STC
c/o Myra Moses or
Sarah Egan Warren
Box 8105
Raleigh, NC 27695-8105

Happy Spring!

by John Martin

Okay, well it *is* the Spring semester! Happy 2007, and welcome back to classes, or welcome to the program if you're just starting out.

No matter what time of the year it is, or where you are in the program, it's always a good time to join the fun of what is our student chapter of the *Society of Technical Communication*. We'd love to have you socialize and network with us—our gatherings are always fun, and often we manage to get things done or learn something, too. *Bonus.*

If you'd like to join us, please e-mail Garrett Sparks, our Membership Coordinator. His contact information is on the back page of this newsletter.

This year's STC@NCSU board would like to take this opportunity to thank Will Flowers for his service on the board during his time in the MS in Tech Comm program. Will has been a significant contributor to the fun factor of many of our events, as well as having *organized* several of them, including our renowned Superbowl party, another of which we're having in February!

Will has also contributed to this newsletter—see his article, "675 Survivors," in the October edition. Thanks, Will, and congratulations for surviving "675" yourself, and in earning your Master's degree! ♦

The President's pen

by Kim Rothwell

What's in a name? So you've joined your local STC community and when

your colleagues ask what student club you could possibly be a part of you say, "STC at NCSU, or is it the Wolfpack Technical Communicators, or maybe the Nominative Committee for Singular Understanding about Scientific and Technical Communications (NCSU-STC for short)?"

"What is our name now?" you might ask. Well, to STC we are known as the "North Carolina State University Student Community," and to NC State we are known as "Society for Technical Communication Student Chapter." Sneaky, huh?

I hope many of you remember the flurry of e-mails about a possible name change for our student club and STC student community. All suggested new names had to adhere to two basic rules:

1. The name cannot have "STC" or "Society for Technical Communication" in it, as dictated by STC, and
2. The name cannot have "NCSU," or "NC State" in it, as decreed by NC State. Needless to say this left us with few options for renaming ourselves.

(See how we're going to address this conundrum by reading the rest of this article on page 8.) ♦

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Spring 2007 activity calendar ‡

January

01/11/2007	(A)* Faculty Candidate Presentation—Loel Kim	1:30-2:45	Tompkins 123
01/11/2007	(S)* Faculty Candidate Social—Loel Kim	5:00-6:00	Mitch's Tavern
01/18/2007	(A)* Faculty Candidate Presentation—Brent Faber	1:30-2:45	Tompkins 123
01/18/2007	(S)* Faculty Candidate Social—Brent Faber	5:00-6:00	Mitch's Tavern
01/22/2007	(S)* Faculty Candidate Social—Lynne Cooke	5:00-6:00	Mitch's Tavern
01/23/2007	(A)* Faculty Candidate Presentation—Lynne Cooke	1:30-2:45	Tompkins 123

February

02/10/2007	(P)* Help Day with STC Carolina Community (an Unconference)	10:00-4:00	Talley Student Center @ NCSU
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March

03/20/2007	(S)(A)* Student / Faculty Roundtable	5:00-6:00	Global Village Coffee Shop (Hillsborough St.)
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April

TBA	(S)* Meeting, Social, & Trivia	TBA	Sammy's Tap & Grill
TBA	(S)* Service Raleigh	TBA	Meet at the Brickyard
TBA	Election of Officers for 2007-2008 Academic Year	TBA	

‡Dates and events are subject to change. We will communicate changes in a timely manner.

* (S) = Social, (A) = Academic, and (P) = Professional networking opportunities.

Editor's corner

by John Martin

Welcome to the third of four newsletter editions that we put out each academic year. It's been a great experience for me, and when it's all said and done in May, I'll be proud to add four nice pieces of work to my technical communication portfolio.

How's *your* portfolio looking? Do you need four nice pieces to add to yours over the coming year? If so, consider being my replacement for the next academic year! In April, this year's STC@NCSU board will be looking for replacements to fill their positions for the 2007–2008 school year. *Won't you be mine?* (No, that is *not* an early Valentine's Day plea.)

Seriously, it's a win/win experience—our chapter gets a newsletter, and you get to do some creative technical writing (if that isn't an oxymoron!), and enhance your portfolio of work, which might just give you a competitive edge in an interview upon graduation.

And don't worry about not having any previous experience. You'll have the support of Myra Moses, who's been nothing short of wonderful to work with, and with her guidance, and access to the archives of past newsletters, you're bound to be successful. Plus, I'll still be in school for my final semester in the Fall, and I'd be happy to participate in a smooth, helpful transition.

Think about it, and once you recognize it as the golden opportunity it is, please contact me by e-mail at nematome@nc.rr.com, and I'll make sure your interest is made known to the board.

I hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter. ❖

Our benefit rocked!

by John Martin

In her *President's Pen* column in the October edition of the newsletter, Kim mentioned that we had just completed "our largest charity event ever." She was referring to the Benefit Rock Concert that our chapter organized at the Brewery on Hillsborough Street on Sunday, October 8, 2006.

This event was spearheaded by board member Milton Hawes, and it benefited a local charity called Source Force, for which another of our board members, Garrett Sparks, volunteers.



This event brought together five local bands, "The Pirate Captain" (Whil Piavis, pictured above) as our emcee, members of Source Force, the STC board members, and the fans of the bands!

When it was all said and done, we ended up with just under \$100 to donate to Source Force for the good work that they do in our community, which you can read about on the Internet at source-force.org.

STC would like to thank the

bands: Sons of Gondor, Mick Dundee, Ghost Dog, Idea of Beauty, and Colossus for their generosity in donating their time and talent to help us out.

It would be a good enough story if it ended there, but late-breaking news at the end of the semester put a bigger smile on our faces, and warmth in our hearts, when Suzanne Brown of Source Force e-mailed us to tell us that their organization had received an anonymous donation of \$250 as a direct result of our benefit concert.

Kim Rothwell, our chapter president, wrote to our members: "Because the donation was anonymous and Suzanne only knew that the donor was a member of STC at NCSU, she has asked me to pass along her many, many thanks for the contribution to whoever sent the gift.

"This money, she says, has already been deposited and is being used to help some of the Source Force clients celebrate what may be their last holiday season. Source Force provides a holiday meal, as well as food, clothes and other items for its clients.

"It is an honor to work with you all and messages like this really make my day!"

Sarah Egan Warren,
STC Faculty Advisor

"Thank you, too, from me. I am so glad your involvement with STC has helped you to find people to help this holiday

season and that you have enhanced our ability to make a difference in the community."

"It makes me proud to be associated with people like you, and that includes both the anonymous donor and those of you who worked to raise the money at the concert."

Dr. Stan Dicks,
STC Faculty Advisor

It took a great deal of work to pull off this benefit, and Milton Hawes learned a lot doing it for us.

Milton said, "This has definitely been a learning experience, and I would love to help out if the STC wants to do this again next year."

Our event at the Brewery had more turnout, and made more money, than any other event held there in an attempt to raise money on a Sunday afternoon. This is something—Sunday afternoons are not the best time for fund raisers at the Brewery—that Milton found out *after the fact*, and though we still managed to be successful, Milton lists this as a "lesson learned" from his experience.

Turn the page to read about other lessons learned, and some wise advice, which Milton has compiled in case you help him (or someone else) organize an event like this one *next* year! ♦

The anatomy of a benefit rock concert

by Milton Hawes

This year I took on the responsibility of planning the first annual STC Benefit Rock Concert. Although it didn't turn out to be the huge bash that I had envisioned, we did manage to put together a decent show and raise a little money for a good cause—not bad for a first go around. I had a great time planning the event, and I learned a lot along the way.

My suggestions apply specifically to securing bands, but I'm sure they can be abstracted to other types of entertainment.

- Make a to-do list
- Delegate, delegate, delegate
- Document everything!
- Find a gimmick—or 2, or 3, or 4!
- Information table
- Find bands
- Find a venue
- Promote

Make a to-do list

Brainstorm, trying to think of every possible task, and then start narrowing things down to three categories: impossible, unreasonable, and ridiculous. Wait, better lump those into one category and then add “for me,” and “to delegate.”

Delegate, delegate, delegate

This is a large undertaking. Try to engage your fellow STC members, friends, or anyone else who is dedicated to the cause, or to you! It is better to do a few tasks well, than to try to run the whole show yourself, and spread yourself too thin.

Next, put the tasks in

chronological order. Planning an event like this has to happen in steps and there are just certain things that you cannot do until you have other items done, such as having the bands or venue confirmed.

Document everything

Everything includes more than just e-mail, fliers, and other correspondences. I'm talking about photographs, videos, journals, online postings, and audio recordings as well!

This really is a fun part of the experience, and I wish I had done more of it along the way.

Find a gimmick

Every good event like this type of event should have a gimmick—we had five!

1. *A great emcee.* We managed to get The Pirate Captain, our ex-student body president, and he was great!
2. *Gift certificates.* We went to local stores and solicited donations. It's best to know someone who works at the place you're approaching; that way, you might be able to bypass trust issues and formalities.
3. *All-Girl Arm Wrestling.* Know your audience. If this would seem sexist to yours, consider something else.
4. *Best Man [body asset] Competition.* Again, know your audience. This one didn't work so well for us.
5. A piñata. Try to have one that supports your theme, or that is associated with the group you are benefiting. *Make sure that*

all of your donors are far enough away from the piñata so they won't get hit with it as some enthusiastic batter takes a swing at it.

Set up an information table

The point of the event is not only to raise money, but also to raise awareness of both the cause of the beneficiary and of our STC organization. I had a guy this weekend ask me if I design cell phones!

A table is essential at the venue—with pamphlets, brochures, and good conversationalists sitting at it.

Find bands

If you're not knowledgeable of the local music scene, ask around. There is always a college student who supports local music.

Contact the college radio station, or a locally-owned music store, and see who they recommend. They are usually quick to respond to e-mails. If you don't hear back from them within 24 hours, try someone else.

Almost every band with access to a computer has a Web presence; search for local bands, and you'll find plenty.

Another tool I used was to solicit a professional photographer. All bands need some good, professional promo shots, but usually can't afford them. I arranged for my father to come and to donate pro shots of each band, which they really appreciated.



Sons of Gondor (Milton Hawes, second from the left.)

At this point, you can pick out some bands and tentatively plan your lineup, but *do not contact any bands yet*.

Find a venue

This must happen before you contact the bands, who will be much more likely to agree if they know you have a secure venue.

At the same time, the venue will want to know what bands you have in mind. Share your proposed lineup, and let them know that you have ensured with the bands that there are no conflicts with their schedules.

Get in touch with the venue at least six weeks in advance, more if you can. Prime time weekend dates are what everyone wants, and they book up quickly. The higher profile the bands are, the more likely you are to get a good date.

Almost all venues have a Web site, as well as online calendars, which are generally updated at least once each month. Reference that calendar before proposing a date to the venue.

I found that it was better to use a local venue that specializes in music. There are on-campus performance venues, but the

cost of hiring a sound man, renting a sound system, and hiring security generally makes it cost prohibitive.

Additionally, there are numerous codes and rules about having such an event on campus.

Promote

I found more promotional avenues than I thought I would, and each of these deserves more than space allows, but consider:

- The Technician, NC State's newspaper—print and online.
- WKNC, NC State's radio station—streamed online, too!
- *myspace.com*, an online social networking site.
- Flyers, which we put all over campus, local high schools, and nearby towns.
- Word of mouth, probably the single most effective promotion.
- Painting the Free Expression Tunnel, which is a lot of fun!
- Chalking the Brickyard, also a lot of fun, though tougher on your back!
- E-mail listservs—finally, spam with a cause.

And, finally, a couple of lessons learned from this particular experience:

- Sunday is traditionally a tough day for fund raisers, and probably anything else. Next time: Thursday, Friday or Saturday!
- Seriously consider a popular band—the tradeoff will be that you will probably have to pay them, but they will probably draw a bigger crowd (a.k.a. *donors*).

- Consider a bigger venue, especially with a more popular band.

All in all, it was a great first try. I got to see some of my favorite local bands, hang out with my STC friends, and raise money for a great cause. I hope that STC makes this an annual tradition.

And, finally, I would like to thank all of the STC folks who helped me pull this together, the volunteers from Source Force who staffed their information table (and for the work they do in our community), and, of course, a big thank you to all who made a donation by attending!

The STC Board would like to thank Milton for the tremendous amount of energy and work that he put into this event for us. In addition to benefit planner extraordinaire, Milton is the drummer for the Sons of Gondor, as well as our STC student community Secretary. Thank you, Milton! ♦



Podcasting—entertainment or edutainment

by John Martin

What do you think about someone you see walking around, or riding the bus, with earbuds in? I've wondered: *What song are they listening to? What kind of music are they listening to? I wonder how loud that music is in their ears!*

There's a name for that "tinny sound that leaks out of somebody else's iPod." NPR producer Neva Grant calls it "ear spray." *But I digress...*

Personally, I listen to about as many podcasts on my iPod as I do songs. Often, on a bus, when I literally "LOL" at something in a podcast episode, I wonder if people are wondering what could possibly be so funny about a song. And then I realize that what they're really thinking is, "It's not the song that's a looney-tune."

My newest podcast series subscription is to one called "Grammar Girl," which I found addictive (or is that addicting—see episode #16 for the answer) after hearing the first two episodes. What's great about them to me is that they address issues that even the most experienced of writers and editors think about, and they are presented in a most concise manner.

According to her Web site, "Grammar Girl quietly hides in plain sight as the real-life science writer Mignon Fogarty. She makes her living writing highly technical documents for large biotech companies (e.g., Applied Biosystems) and health articles for Web sites (e.g., the Stanford Cancer

Center).

Mignon earned a B.A. in English from the University of Washington in Seattle and a M.S. in biology from Stanford University.

Grammar Girl believes that learning is fun, and the vast rules of grammar are wonderful fodder for lifelong study. She strives to be a friendly guide in the writing world."

Her average podcast is less than five minutes in length, and some topics covered so far in the series include:

- Overuse of the word "of"
- "i.e.," vs. "e.g.,"
- "Who" vs. "that" when talking about companies
- "Which" vs. "that"
- "Who" vs. "whom"
- "Effect" vs. "affect"
- "Among" vs. "between"
- Split infinitives (*She calls this a "grammar myth."*)
- Style guides (*Don't work anywhere without one!*)
- Fighting wordiness and investigating idioms
- "If I were there" vs. "I was there"
- Which words in a title should be capitalized
- Ending a sentence with a preposition (*Times have changed!*)
- Redundancy with acronyms (e.g., *the HIV virus*)
- The difference between acronyms, initialisms, and abbreviations
- Helpful tips for effective proofreading

- Single quotation marks vs. double quotation marks
- Generic singular pronouns (e.g., "he" vs. "she" vs. "one" vs. "s/he," etc.)
- When to use dashes
- When to use colons
- How to identify sentence fragments
- "Its" vs. "it's"

Grammar Girl is big on mnemonics, and whenever possible, she offers them as a way to remember a certain rule or tip. Here's one she gives to remember the difference between *effect* and *affect*: "The arrow affected the aardvark," and "the effect was eye-popping." There are *a* words in the *affect* sentence, and *e* words in the *effect* sentence.

The other thing that's great about her is that she is not at all pretentious. She freely admits that she's there to provide "quick and dirty" tips. Here's one of them with regards to the use of "who" and "whom": "Like *whom*, the pronoun *him* ends with *m*. When you're trying to decide whether to use *who* or *whom*, ask yourself if the answer to the question would be *he* or *him*. That's the trick: If you can answer the question being asked with *him*, then use *whom*, and it's easy to remember because they both end with *m*."

She gives an example for better understanding: "If you were asking, 'Who (or whom) do you love?' the answer would be 'I love him.' *Him* ends with *m*, so you know to use *whom*. So it's, 'Whom do you love?'

“But if you were trying to ask, ‘Who (or whom) stepped on Squiggly?’ the answer would be, ‘He stepped on Squiggly.’ There’s no *m*, so you know to use *who*. So, it’s, ‘Who stepped on Squiggly?’”

Before her quick and dirty tip, of course, she does give the actual grammar rule, in this case: “Use *who* when you are referring to the subject of a clause, and *whom* when you are referring to the object of a clause.”

Two other things I really like about Grammar Girl's teaching style are that she provides historical context to rules when it might help in learning, and she uses current events as an impetus for some episode topics.

An example of historical context use can be found in her episode on apostrophes, where she says, “An interesting side note is that it doesn't seem so strange that an *apostrophe s* is used so make words possessive once you realize that in Old English it was common to make words possessive by adding *es* to the end. For example, the possessive of *fox* would have been *foxes*, which was the same as the plural. I assume that caused confusion, and someone suggested replacing the *e* with an apostrophe to make *fox's* in the possessive case. So, *apostrophe s* for the possessive case was initially meant to show that the *e* was missing, and then the idea caught on and everyone eventually forgot all about the missing *e*.”

With regards to topics around current events, a recent podcast discussed the use of the word *is*

in the Christmas carol line, “The Lord is Come,” another about whether Saddam Hussein was *hanged* or *hung*, and yet another about why people are saying, “Nancy Pelosi is the first *woman* Speaker of the House,” when they would never say, “He was the first *man* Speaker of the House.” *Grammatically inquiring minds want to know!*

There is a transcript of each episode on the Grammar Girl Web site, though she is currently polling her audience as to the value in this time-consuming activity for her. The transcript usually contains two sections at the end, one called “References,” which basically contains her citations, and another called, “Further Reading,” which contains pointers to articles of interest on the topic, or to the “nitty gritty” of the topic when the “quick and dirty” doesn't tell the whole story.

Grammar Girl is committed to continuously improving her product. She often polls her audience on various ways to improve her episodes, and is currently working to add “slides” to her podcasts, so that, depending on what kind of “client software” you're using to receive her broadcast, you can see written examples of what she's talking about, which at times, would be incredibly helpful. Eventually, she'd like to delve into video as well.

You can listen to Grammar Girl podcasts even if you don't have an MP3 player! Just go to her Web site, at either *qdnw.com* or *grammar.qdnw.com*, and you can listen online!

I, as a technical editor, intend

to share this “resource” with the writers for whom I edit. (Even though Grammar Girl says it's okay to end a sentence with a preposition these days, some old habits die hard.)

The official podcast name is “Grammar Girl's Quick & Dirty Tips for Better Writing.” All quotes in this article are from Grammar Girl episode transcripts at her Web site at qdnw.com. ❖

Teachers under the influence

by John Martin

We have a unique opportunity to influence the future faculty of the MS in Tech Comm and the PhD in Communication, Rhetoric, and Digital Media programs here at NCSU.

The English Department is searching for a new Associate Professor, and has three strong candidates. They'd like your input on these candidates!

See them on this schedule:

Loel Kim, Associate Professor, University of Memphis
Presentation: 01/11, 1:30–2:45
Happy Hour: 5:00, @ Mitch's

Brent Faber, Associate Prof., Clarkson University
Presentation: 01/18, 1:30–2:45
Happy Hour: 5:00, @ Mitch's

Lynne Cooke, Assistant Prof., University of North Texas
Presentation: 01/23, 1:30–2:45
Happy Hour: 01/22, 5:00, @ Mitch's

All presentations are in Tompkins 123. ❖

The President's pen

(Continued from page 1)

In the end, these e-mails produced the following potential names:

- Wolfpack Student Community
- Wolfpack Technical Communicators
- Wolfpack Technical Communications Group
- Technical Communicators
- Nominative Committee for Singular Understanding about Scientific and Technical Communications (NCSU-STC for short)
- Nerdy Community for Singular Understanding about Scientific and Technical Communications (again, NCSU-STC for short)

I do believe the last two were jokes aimed at thwarting the bureaucracy.

We have two choices for what we may do next with our name:

1. We can keep using the current dual names and maintain consistency with other STC student communities and NC State clubs. One of our faculty advisors, Sarah Egan Warren, recommends this choice.
2. Vote on a name change at a meeting. We need a two-thirds approval for a name before this can happen (which probably means we need to narrow down our choices).

Please respond with your choice on our survey page at: <http://ceres.cals.ncsu.edu/surveybuilder/Form.cfm?testID=3568>

It is up to you, the members of the... um... *club!* Please vote today. ♦



V O T E



T O D A Y

Meet & greet

by Jennifer Cianchetta-Riordan

Several students from the STC community met with professors David Covington, Stan Dicks, Carolyn Miller, and Jason Swarts for a faculty Meet and Greet at Bruegger's on October 24, 2006.

The topic of conversation was, "The State of Technical Communication." Our discussion focused on some of the pertinent questions in our field: *How do we add value in our field of technical communication? Where is the market going? How do freelancers in the workplace affect full-time staff?*

This was a fantastic way for us to chat in a casual environment with our past, current, and future professors—as well as fellow students—further revealing the close-knit community that we have here at NCSU. Some of our greatest resources are the people who we see on a daily basis. Be sure to join us at our next *Meet and Greet* on February 20, at Helios coffee shop on Glenwood Avenue.

For those of you who were unable to attend but would like to explore these topics in greater detail, here are some resources:

- Dicks, R. S. (2004). *Management principles and practices for technical communicators*. New York: Pearson Education, Inc.

(See pages 137-145: Value Added for Technical Communication.)

- Pandit, M. M. (2005). Seven habits for successful freelancing. *Intercom*, 52(3), 25-27.
- Pringle, K. & Williams, S. D. (2005). The future is the past: Has technical communication arrived as a profession? *Technical Communication*, 52(3), 361-370.
- Rowell, L. (2005). Making your move into freelancing. *Intercom*, 52(2), 9-12.

Jennifer Cianchetta-Riordan facilitated the discussion at the Meet & Greet. She is the Vice President of our STC student community, as well as our community webmaster. ♦



Congratulations 675 survivors!

A good portion of our last edition was dedicated to the trials and tribulations of *ENG 675: Projects in Technical Communication*, also known as *The Capstone Course* for students in the Master of Science program in Technical Communication.

This time the talk is about the *triumphs*. Please join me in congratulating the newest survivors:

- Brian Coe
- Will Flowers
- Lee Ann Gillen
- Lisa Johnson
- Allan Kosiner
- Shelita Overton
- Lars Sahl
- Maryellen Smith
- Brooke Walker
- Anthony Will
- Jason Winter

Congratulations to each and every one of you! ❖

A message from Susan Burton



Dear STC members,

To help STC provide enhanced educational programming and a new level of service, the Board of Directors has approved the

creation of a totally new level of service, the Board of Directors has approved the creation of a totally new position, Director of Education. This role will help position STC as a leader in providing the most advanced, dynamic, and future-oriented training and education in the field of technical communication.

I am delighted to report that Lloyd Tucker is joining the STC staff on November 1st as the new Director of Education. Lloyd has been the Director of Education and Membership at the Document Management Industries Association (DMIA) for the past ten years. He was the architect and project leader for an award-winning and profitable association e-learning system, developed and managed the education program for the annual conference and worked with regional and local leaders in planning community events.

Prior to his twelve years with DMIA, Lloyd was in the Air Force for twenty-five years, culminating his career as a Lieutenant Colonel. He supervised military intelligence training, served as a spokesperson for Defense Intelligence in international forums and developed a \$26 million worldwide intelligence communications program. He gave daily morning intelligence briefings to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during Operation Desert Storm. One of his references, a general, told me that Lloyd "is a technical communicator with great creativity, skill and grace under fire—literally—as well as a fine educator and leader."

Having a director-level position focused on education will

enable STC to offer programs valuable to the experienced technical communicator as well as the neophyte. Lloyd's experience with all forms of delivery mechanisms, from conference programming to small training sessions and e-learning, will benefit the entire membership.

Please welcome Lloyd and send him your suggestions for quality educational programming for STC at his e-mail address: lloyd@stc.org. Thank you!

*Susan Burton, CAE
Executive Director
Society for Technical
Communication ❖*

Employment news

Employment opportunity information for MS in Technical Communication students is disseminated through the *etc listserv*, which is maintained by Dr. Stan Dicks.

You'll hear about hiring positions at the likes of IBM and SAS, as well as those at NCSU and other smaller companies in the Triangle area.

Since the last newsletter, opportunities such as these, have been advertised:

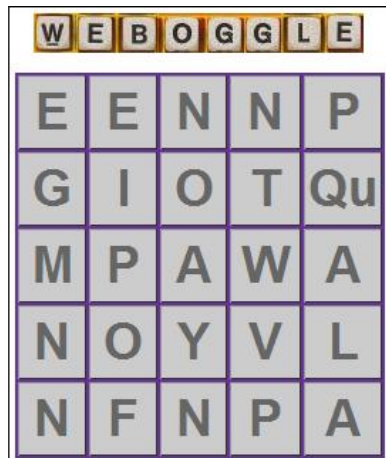
- IBM Library Science, Information design, and Human factors students for 2007 summer internships
- Senior editor position at Network Appliance, Inc.
- Contract-to-Hire Graphic Designer position (in Charlotte) through ProEdit, Inc.
- Contract-to-Hire Instructional Designer position through ProEdit, Inc. ❖

It's all fun and games until someone uses a big word

by John Martin

There is no shortage of word-related games on the Internet today. Do you play any? Here are some that I play, as well as some I found in a quick search:

Weboggle



You are given a 5-by-5 grid of letters and the aim of the game is to try and find as many four-letter words as you can. All letters must be adjoining each other either up down left or right.

weboggle.shackworks.com/5x5

Play Crosswords

Online crosswords that change daily. To play, click on the board to be given the clue and when you know the answer write it in using the keyboard.

www.bestcrosswords.com/bestcrosswords/Home.page

[~Ed.: I like puzzles.usatoday.com for my daily crossword.~]

Vocabulary Test

A quick vocabulary test, which changes. You are offered three

possible options for the correct meaning and you have to guess which one is right.

www.zdaily.com/vocabulary1.htm

A Game A Day

Enjoy a new word game, word search, brainteaser, trivia game, anagram, cryptogram, crossword and more each weekday! Challenge your general knowledge, vocabulary, spelling, memory, concentration, critical thinking and problem solving.

www.agameaday.com

BrainGamez

Includes a Hangman, Tic-Tac-Toe, AnagramZ and Scrabble games, which you can play with other people who are online.

www.braingamez.com

Typer Shark



The deep sea is full of treasure and adventure, but it's also full of creatures that want to eat you. Luckily, you have your trusty keyboard at your side and you've got the typing skills to keep from becoming

somebody's dinner. Or, do you?

Free download at: www.Realarcade.com/promo?game=typersharkdeluxe&tps=google_&src=google_typershark

[~Ed.: I have played this game, and *highly* recommend it. It's fun, *and* a great way to improve your typing skills.~]

Play With Your Mind

This Web site hosts a series of games:

Wordle



Strategically build words with the letters that come at you one by one. Decide where to place them and when to use your cheats.

Broken Words

Try to reassemble the list of words that have been broken into pieces and mixed together.

Falling Jumbles

Try to unscramble the words before they hit the ground.

Hangmind

Figure out the whole sentence—not just a word—in

this advanced game of Hangman. Use different types of cheats to achieve your goal.

Sentenced



Try to take mixed up words and arrange them into a coherent sentence.

Wording

Try to build the highest scoring words with the set of letters. Strategically arrange them as you try to use them all.

Driftwords

Scramble to put together good words as the letters drift around the screen.

Whiddle

Make sense of the random words by strategically adjusting them, letter by letter.

Wordbox

Strategically fill the grid with letters to build horizontal and vertical words.

playwithyourmind.com/online-games.php?category=Word

[~Ed.: I had fun playing some of these games, especially "Wording." YMMV. I don't like that "Falling Jumbles" doesn't indicate correct answers to you.~]

Do you play any of the games listed in this article? What are your own favorite word-related games—online or off?

My favorite "real life" word games include *Catch Phrase* and *Wise or Otherwise*. I am also a huge crossword puzzle fan, which most of you have probably figured out by now.

Send your list to nematome@nc.rr.com, and tell me the name of the games, whether they're an online or offline game (include the URL if it's online), and what you like about them.

If I get enough responses, I'll publish the results in this year's final edition of the newsletter, which you can expect some time in April. ❖



www.txt2pic.com

Speaking of words...

Here are the answers to the October puzzle. For 15 down, "Hon" would also be acceptable, and for 14 Down, "Yep" would also work.



It takes a lot of energy to make up crossword puzzles. If you haven't lost interest in them, drop a "Letter to the Editor" to let me know! ❖

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Regional & international STC news

STC-CAROLINA COMMUNITY EVENTS

More information @ www.stc-carolina.org.

Trends & Technology SIG: *Second Life and a Yugma Virtual Meeting*— We'll try creating a second life to play in a 3D world. Second Life is an online society within a 3D world, where users can explore, build, socialize, and participate in their own economy. Wednesday, 01/17/07, Noon–1:00PM @ Symantec.

FrameMaker SIG: *Fun with the FrameMaker Application Pack for DITA*—Create DITA-compliant documentation and convert it to PDF, HTML, or compiled help--all inside FrameMaker. DITA maps, relationship tables, conrefs (or text insets), and cross-references are all supported. Best of all, the application pack is free. Tuesday, 01/23/07, 2:30–4:30PM @ Misys Healthcare.

Trends & Technology SIG: *Online Help Trends in the Triangle and Beyond*—A day devoted to learning the latest in online help trends. Technology SIG members will show off their online help projects and describe the authoring and production processes. Saturday, 02/10/07, 10:00–4:00PM @ NCSU Talley Student Center.

STC INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

Registration information @ www.stc.org.

The Xfactor-From HTML to XHTML: Neil Perlin presenting, for beginner/intermediate levels, January 17, 2007.

Creating Indexes on Web Sites and Intranets: Heather Hedden presenting, for all levels, February 7, 2007.

Working in Global Teams: Makarand Pandit presenting, for all levels, February 21, 2007.

Community meetings & reports

Our next community meeting, followed by a social, will be on March 20 @ 5PM @ Global Village on Hillsborough Street.

Meeting minutes can be found on the STC NCSU Community Web site at www.ncsu.edu/stud_orgs/stc/minutes.html.

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Editor

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Reprint policy

You may reprint original material from this newsletter as long as you acknowledge the author and the source.

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