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## So Long, Farewell...

Ryan Martin, STC Snake River Chapter President



### Chapter Schedule

We do not have any chapter meetings this month. In June, we have our annual chapter picnic and networking opportunity. Please check the meetings page for the date and location which will be posted in a few days. After June, chapter activities begin again in September.

### Chapter Elections

Later this month, expect to receive voting ballots for the election of officers onto the local administration council for next year. We will again send the ballots electronically to save on paper and postage. We have candidates for all of the elected positions, but any one can run against another for the following positions:

- President
- 1st Vice President (Programs)
- 2nd Vice President (Membership)
- Treasurer
- Secretary

If you are interested in running for any of the council positions and we have not communicated yet, please let me know by Friday, May 16.

### So Long, Farewell . . . .

I have chosen not to run for re-election again so next year you'll have a new president. I want to express my thanks and gratitude to all of you for helping to support the Snake River Chapter. Serving on the council definitely has been a growing experience both personally and professionally for me. I am glad that I was able to meet so many of you at chapter events and for those who were unable to attend, I hope that I can meet you at future chapter meetings.

~Ryan Martin

### May

The May activity is the STC annual conference. This year, it's June 1-4. Visit <http://www.stc.org/55thConf/register/index.asp> for details and registration information.



Date: Sunday, June 1 - Wednesday, June 4, 2008

Location: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Registration:

Member rate:

Advanced \$895 (by May 23)

On-site \$995

Non-member rate:

Advanced \$1095

On-site \$1195

Student member rate:

Advanced \$175

On-site \$250

Student non-member or retired member/non-member rate: \$255

2007 Testimonials:

"It was a fantastic conference, and all of the speakers I heard and material they presented were great!" –Meredith Kinder

"I've attended STC conferences since 1982 and the Minneapolis Summit Conference was the best ever. I attended all sessions, workshops, lunch round tables, dinner networking, and enjoyed the conference from the opening keynote address to the wonderful wrap-up speaker!" –Cynthia Sparks

"Great job focusing on ALL aspects of the technical writing industry!" –Philip Heinrich

### June

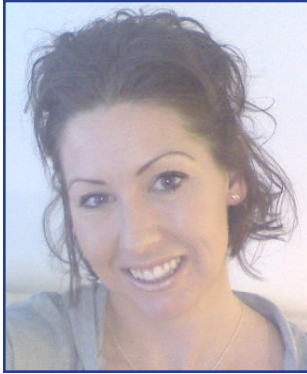
The June meeting is a cookout and will be held sometime in mid-June (tentative date below). Our outgoing president, Ryan Martin, will host the barbeque at his house. Members will receive e-mail invites with more details.

Time: 7:00pm (tentative)

Date: Tuesday, June 17th, 2008 (tentative)

Location: Ryan Martin's house

# Collaboration: Putting the “I” in Team



Danica Rhoades

by Danica Rhoades, Snake River Chapter member

Teamwork is the active ingredient in the corporate pie. Professional societies, education institutions, and employers promote this idea—but is it really teamwork they’re looking for? Perhaps not.

Every person who’s ever participated in a team sport knows this: There is no “I” in team. Individuals make plays, but it takes a team to win. From an early age, athletes are taught how to be successful: practice, practice, practice; play hard; listen to your coach; put the needs of the team first. Undoubtedly, players on winning teams adhere to these ideas, but when professionals employ these tactics do they prove successful?

### *Practice, Practice, Practice*

For the most part, there is no practice in the business world. One could argue, however, that degree programs and both formal and informal training provide professionals with opportunities to practice (or hone) their skills. While this argument is valid, these forms of practice are focused on skills rather than improving teamwork. You might be thinking, “Isn’t that what sports teams do in practice—improve skills?” Yes and no. Sports teams do practice skills, but in doing so they also learn each other’s strengths and weaknesses. They learn how to work with and trust one another as well as their coaches. Education and training opportunities do not typically offer this type of practice because each course comprises a different collection of individuals who may not work together to complete projects outside of the course.

### *Play Hard*

Business is not a game to be played so for this comparison, consider the business equivalent to be “work” hard. Clearly, this is valuable in an infinite number of life situations. The business world expects its professionals to work hard and make work a priority.

### *Listen to Your Coach*

Depending on the composition of the business team, there may not be a clearly defined leader. There may not be a leader at all. A group of athletes would be at a standstill in this situation. In the best scenario, one person would take the lead, allowing the team to move forward. The team’s ability to achieve its goals would vary significantly depending on the skills and knowledge of the self-appointed leader. In the worst scenario, the team would accomplish nothing with no one to direct them. Or it would fall apart because everyone tried to take charge. Even with a defined leader, it is extremely uncommon to find a business team that operates as a dictatorship the way sports teams do. A business leader must consider each person’s input and act accordingly, recognizing that no individual’s ideas are always superior (even his/her own ideas).

### *Put the Needs of the Team First*

Athletes who can step away from personal pride or ambition to look at the game itself are easily able to determine when to make the play and when to rely on a teammate for support. Professionals who can step outside of themselves to focus on creating the best products possible are much more likely to work well with their peers and satisfy the needs of their businesses.

continued on next page...

## Collaboration, Cont'd...

As described in this article, only half of the key teamwork principals apply in the professional setting. So what are businesses really looking for? They want people who can work well with others, people who contribute but can also appreciate others' contributions, people who understand what it takes to accomplish a common goal. Businesses want collaborators. And unlike a sports team, where the coach controls its destiny, a productive collaborative model requires professionals to put an "I" in team. The best results can only be achieved if everyone involved offers up their experiences and perspectives to make quality decisions and products.

*Danica has been a member of STC for two years and has worked as a technical communicator for five years. Currently, Danica is pursuing an M.A. in Technical Communication at Boise State University. While completing this coursework, Danica also works full-time as a proposal specialist for Lionbridge Technologies, Inc. and recently established her own editing/writing company, Write Rhetoric ([www.writerhetoric.com](http://www.writerhetoric.com)).*

*In recent years, Danica's writing has been featured in several transportation engineering publications: Streetwise, the Florida Institute of Transportation Engineers' newsletter, and the Gold Coast chapter of the Institute of Transportation Engineers newsletter. In addition, she serves as a volunteer copy editor for STC's Technical Editing SIG.*

## STC NEWS

## I Wondered What It'd Be Like When I Got Here



John Hedtke

The last R7 Director column by John Hedtke, the last R7 Director

This is my last R7 Director column and, as it happens, the last column from ANY R7 Director, because Directors are no longer associated with specific regions. I want to tell you about the last three years on the Board, where we are now, and about those campaign promises I made three and a half years ago.

Three years ago when I took office, I was wondering what it would be like in 2008. I figured I would be glad to be done with my term (I was right) and I had hopes that I'd have achieved my campaign promises (see below), but I really didn't know what else to expect. As it turns out, anything I could've expected from my 2005 POV would've been wildly inaccurate. In the last three years, we've seen major changes, including:

- the departure of Pete Herbst, followed by Rob Moran as interim Executive Director and our new Executive Director, Susan Burton
- a complete revision of the Annual Conference, including support for continuing education certificates, a focus on presentation topics relating to the conference theme, and the vendor room being open on Wednesdays (which it seems everyone had wanted for years)
- an open STC Office, figuratively and literally: the STC Office door used to be closed at all times; getting in was something special and not for the mere hoi polloi membership
- a complete revision of the STC Office internal procedures, including moving our software into the 21st century with the purchase of iMIS
- a complete revision of the dues structure, so chapters and SIGs get specific amounts for each member, regardless of size, and get the money much faster, as well
- the elimination of regions and the role of "Sponsor" for the Directors, bringing us in tighter compliance with NY corporate law and also freeing the Directors and other Board members to start working strategically instead of tactically

## R7 Director Column, Cont'd...

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The list goes on, but you catch the drift: we've seen huge changes. In fact, when I chose to run, it wasn't at all clear to me that there was going to even BE an organization in five years. Personally, I was only betting even money that we'd survive we had so many problems. I am much happier with where we are now: I'm willing to bet 5-1 or better that we'll be around in five years. But what's going to happen in the next five years is not something I can guess at very easily (though I really hope I'm around in 2013 to find out). Things are going to continue change in ways that I'm not sure anyone can envision.

A little history here: the STC Transformation effort some years ago, designed to "transform" the STC into I'm-not-sure-what, was just a disaster. The management was bad, the communications were ghastly, and the end results were dismally small. There weren't clear goals, measurable benchmarks, a timetable, or even a clear sense of direction.

My reaction when we were ultimately told that the Transformation was complete was "Oh, yeah? How can you tell?" "Well, there's been a change to the membership status so you can pay \$10 less and get electronic rather than paper publications." (To be completely fair, there were a couple other things, but this was the biggie.) "Well, gee, don't do me no favors, now." After 2-3 years of messing around and beating drums and telling us how good it was all going to be when they got done, this was all they could pull out of the magic bag? What a failure!

Except, I've come to realize, it wasn't. What the Transformation accomplished at the time was nothing, nada, bupkes. What the Transformation did that was so good was that it gave subsequent Boards the permission to consider changing things. I don't think we'd be here now if that hadn't happened. I couldn't have imagined saying this three years ago, but the Transformation was a screaming, wild success.

Changing things was a new thought for the STC. (It still meets with lots of resistance a few years later.) But all of a sudden, Board members were saying, "Why do it this way? Couldn't we do it this other way? And what happens if we do?" Individual Board members had certainly said this over the years, but this was the first time in recent history that we'd had a whole Board thinking about this.

And change things we did. When Pete Herbst decided to leave, we hired Rob Moran as interim ED to guide us in the transition process and to help us find a permanent ED. He stepped us through a lot of the more painful parts of the initial transition and our search committee found Susan Burton as our permanent ED. She's first-rate.

With the decision in 2005 by the STC membership to eliminate regions and remove sponsorship from the duties of a Director, the Board was able to start approaching things strategically. That was another big change. The first questions we asked were "Where are we now? And where do we want to go?" It turned out that no-one really knew where we were, so we rolled up our sleeves and got to work.

We quickly realized there were a thousand things that needed to be changed, starting with the STC Office. Our internal procedures weren't working. Our membership software was hopelessly inadequate: the annual membership process was handled manually and required the work output of the entire office for about 2 months just to get everyone entered in seven different databases, none of which had all the data for a member's record. (The horror, the horror!) We ultimately bought iMIS, an association management package, that is doing all sorts of good things for us.

While all this was going on, the Board was looking at where we'd like to be. We've spent lots of time on strategic planning, developing the infrastructure to support the STC (a lot of things worked only because they'd never broken down, but we were on thin ice), and figuring out what to do next. As a result, we've got a good direction and the Board's doing well at implementing our plans as fast as possible.

## R7 Director Column, Cont'd...

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As for my campaign promises: when I was running for R7 Director, I very intentionally kept my campaign promises modest, because I figured it would be easier to fulfill them if I hadn't promised the moon. As it turns out, I didn't have to promise the moon to make it hard; I could've just promised Tukwila or Grant's Pass and still had trouble. There were three things I wanted to accomplish:

- Create a list of the complete range of services available to members, chapters, and regions from the STC Office
- Set up a newsletter bureau
- Set up a speaker's bureau

Let me address these in reverse order. The speaker's bureau, providing a list of speakers and topics to chapters and communities, is about to go live. Several other IT projects necessary to being able to keep running (notably getting the iMIS software in place) took priority. However, by June, we'll have the first few dozen speakers entered so we can test the system. If everything looks good, the STC Office will be opening this up to all and sundry thereafter. Check that one off the list.

The newsletter bureau, aimed at giving newsletter editors and web managers a resource for content from authors, is not up yet... but the structure of this is very similar to that of the speaker's bureau system we're testing. Once that's up and running, I have high hopes that we'll be able to get the newsletter bureau set up not long thereafter.

"Creating a list of services:" This was the answer to a question I'd had for about 20 years that had gotten me the brush-off for just about as long. The answer to this question is "No-one knows right now." The reason no-one knows is this: I want you to imagine a closet that things have been getting pitched into for years and years. More things kept getting added to the pile but nothing's been cleaned out in ages. For the last couple years, the Board has been cleaning out the closet. We're removing the mess far faster than it accumulated, but we've still got a few years to go before the floor can be swept clean and everything's back in place.

As a result, we're still putting things in place and evaluating what we can do for members, so there's just no way to produce a canonical list of services. The best I can say is "You want something? Talk to any of the Board members." The Board's the best place to start; if nothing else, you can find out who the right person is to talk to, if there's anything like it being done already, and so on. Be sure to follow up, too; Board members can forget things. There's no promise the Board or the STC Office will be able to get to it right away or that they'll say "Yes" to your request. It's not like there aren't a thousand other things to do, too. But it's our job and our pleasure to do what we can for the membership and we will give reasonable consideration to just about anything.

Hot tip for increasing your chances of success: depending on what it is you're asking for, be prepared to show a business case/what needs to be done/how to do it/ideas on raising money or finding budget/an offer to volunteer to spearhead the group to do this. The Board and the STC Office both adore people who put their money where their mouths are and show commitment to making something happen. It also makes it far more likely your idea will be considered that much sooner. Hey, if you're unsatisfied with the response you're getting, consider running for a seat on the Board. It's a worthy goal and you can help make the STC become what you'd like it to. Come talk to me if you're interested; I'll be glad to answer questions.

Let me close by saying that it has been an honor and a privilege to serve this region, which I love and am enormously proud of, the STC, and the membership. I'm not done working for the STC—I will continue as head of the Ethics committee this coming year—but I am pleased to say "My three years are up! It's time to party!"

## 2008 STC Snake River Chapter Election

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from Ryan Martin, Current STC Snake River Chapter President

The annual STC election will be held in April, 2008, and only members who have paid their dues by February 28, 2008, will be eligible to vote.

An option on the dues renewal forms and new membership applications for 2008 allows members to receive their ballots via e-mail. In March, members who selected this option will be e-mailed voting instructions. Members who did not select this option will receive their ballots by first-class mail.

Be sure to renew your membership to have a say in STC's future!

Here is the list of the admin council members for next year:

### *Elected Positions*

President – Russell Willerton

1st Vice-President (Programs) – Amaya Berriochoa

2nd Vice-President (Membership) - **Vacant**

Treasurer – Angela Fleischmann

Secretary – Theresa Sherman

### Inherited Position

Immediate Past President – Ryan Martin

### Appointed Positions

Public Relations Manager - Vacant

Newsletter Editor – Adrienne Martin

Web Content Manager – (Tentative) Jeff Carter

Employment Liaison - Darla Scott

We will hold the elections in May. We will send the ballots and collect the votes electronically again like last year. If someone shows interest in running for the office that you want to hold next year, we'll add your name to the ballot. Contact Ryan Martin at [rtmartin@cableone.net](mailto:rtmartin@cableone.net) for more information.

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## SIDENOTES

### **Corporate Partners**

We would like to thank ExecuTrain, H&W, iLevel by Weyerhaeuser (formerly Trus Joist), Barnes & Noble, and Boise State University for generously donating their facilities for chapter functions. We would also like to thank SolutionPro for hosting our website.

### **Advertising**

Limited advertising space is available in The Sidebar. For rates and guidelines, send us an e-mail ([council@stc-src.org](mailto:council@stc-src.org)) with the words ADVERTISE STC-SRC in the subject line.

## ABOUT THE SNAKE RIVER CHAPTER

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Ryan Martin



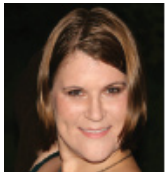
Russell Willerton



Theresa Sherman



Darla Scott



Angela Fleischmann

## Elected Council Members

President: Ryan Martin ([president@stc-src.org](mailto:president@stc-src.org))

1st Vice President/Programs: Russell Willerton ([programs@stc-src.org](mailto:programs@stc-src.org))

2nd Vice President/Membership: Theresa Sherman ([membership@stc-src.org](mailto:membership@stc-src.org))

Secretary: Angela Fleischmann ([secretary@stc-src.org](mailto:secretary@stc-src.org))

Treasurer: Sherry Hamilton ([treasurer@stc-src.org](mailto:treasurer@stc-src.org))

Immediate Past President: Kit Brown ([pastpresident@stc-src.org](mailto:pastpresident@stc-src.org))

## Appointed Council Members

Web Content Manager: Jeff Carter ([webmaster@stc-src.org](mailto:webmaster@stc-src.org))

Newsletter Editor: Adrienne Martin ([newsletter@stc-src.org](mailto:newsletter@stc-src.org))

Employment Liaison: Darla Scott ([employment@stc-src.org](mailto:employment@stc-src.org))

## ABOUT THE SIDEBAR NEWSLETTER

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Adrienne Martin  
Newsletter Editor

*The Sidebar* is the official publication of the Snake River Chapter (SRC) of the Society for Technical Communication (STC). Issues are published monthly from September to May. The design and layout of this newsletter are ©2008 STC.

### *Publication Policies*

The Sidebar invites writers to submit articles that they wish to be considered for publication. We welcome contributions, book and product reviews, letters, and articles that are relevant to the field of technical communication. Content is due the 26th of every month. Your text may be edited to conform to the style guidelines and space restrictions of the newsletter.

### *Copyright Statement*

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