

Los Angeles Chapter
September 1998

Inside This Issue

- 2** President's Message
- 3** Region 5 Director-Sponsor Message
- 4** Member Profile: Shirley Thomas
- 7** Employment Listings
Calendar of Events
- 8** September Meeting Focuses
on Future of Online Help

The Technograph

1998 Annual Conference Review

By Pam Wilkes

The 45th Annual Conference in Anaheim was a resounding success, judging from the happy and intellectually stimulated faces of the 2,826 attendees from around the world. The 3-day conference in May was packed with more than 200 technical sessions, and a day of postconference workshops followed. Networking opportunities alone were worth the price of admission. For the second year in a row, I was glad to be part of it.

Preconference Activities

At the Sunday night Welcome Reception, conference-goers had lots of food, entertainment, and opportunities to greet old friends and meet new ones. Celebrity sightings of "Marilyn Monroe," "Lucille Ball," and "John Wayne" provided out-of-towners with plenty of photo opportunities.

Joel Barker's featured presentation

officially kicked off the conference. He spoke about innovations that have revolutionized our world, and about the good technical communication that helped make these innovations possible. He stressed the important role technical communicators play in the success of industries in which documentation is often the first contact the public has with a new concept.

Sessions, Exposition Hall, and Networking

For me, the conference was a dizzying array of diverse topics I wanted—and needed—to know more about. Since I have attended STC annual conferences before, I knew what to expect and took full advantage of the many workshops, luncheons, and receptions as I could. I found it hard to make time to see everything at the Exposition Hall, look at the job listings, cruise through the international competition winners area, and check out the many fine technical communications books for sale.



STC hung out the welcome sign at its annual conference in Anaheim.

My stint at hosting a table at the Networking Luncheon the first day was personally rewarding; the participants at my table shared their online documentation project experiences, and they stayed after lunch, enthusiastically exchanging business cards.

See Conference, page 6

Visit our Web site:
<http://stc.org/region8/lac/www/lahome.htm>

The Technograph

Managing Editor

Christine Stevens
(310) 216-0816
cni@iname.com

Copy Editor

Esther Spachner

The Technograph is published 10 times a year by the Los Angeles chapter of the Society for Technical Communication (LASTC) to disseminate information regarding chapter, society, and industry events.

The editorial staff welcomes articles, calendar items, and advertising from readers. Deadline for submissions is the first of the previous month. Articles should be 250-1,000 words and must be submitted electronically to the editor. The editor reserves the right to edit articles to fit available space. Other STC chapters may reprint articles if credit is given and the editor is sent a copy.

The Technograph is available for \$12 a year to nonmembers and members of other chapters.

STC is an individual membership organization dedicated to advancing the art and science of technical communication. It is the largest organization of its type in the world. Its 22,000 members include technical writers, editors, graphic designers, videographers, multimedia artists, and others whose work involves making technical information available to those who need it. For membership information, contact STC international headquarters:

Society for Technical Communication
901 N. Stuart Street, Suite 904
Arlington, VA 22203-1854
Phone: (703) 522-4114; Fax: (703) 522-2075
Web site: www.stc.org

What if Picasso had a PowerMac with Illustrator?

What if Rembrandt had an airbrush? What if Frank Lloyd Wright had a nice set of graphic markers? (OK, maybe he did.) Well, they could all enter LASTC's 1998-99 Art Competition. The Call for Entries are in the mail, with complete entry information, deadlines, and award details.

If you've created some wonderful technical art (or know someone who has—the competition is open to nonmembers, too), why not submit your work for judging? We're looking for artwork from a variety of fields in all media as long as it communicates a technical, mathematic, or scientific concept or product. The deadline for entries is September 30, 1998.

If you don't want to enter, but really enjoy quality technical art, volunteer to help the competition committee. Details are available as a PDF file on LASTC's Web site. To volunteer, contact George Harmon at gharmon@amerhonda.com or (310) 783-3799.

President's Message

Art Competition Highlights LASTC Year

By Karen Bergen

It's time to kick off the new STC season. We've got some great programs in store for you, starting this month with RoboHELP guru David Knopf. The big event next month is the Region 8 Conference in San Ramon.

One of the highlights of our year is the LASTC Technical Art Competition. You should have received the call for entries by now. Think about the work that you and your co-workers have done in the past year. Wouldn't it be exciting to receive an award for an outstanding illustration, book design, or Web page?

Fill out the application and prepare the work for submission now, before the September 30 deadline. The winners of the highest level awards, Distinguished Technical Communication, will advance to the International Competition and have a chance to be recognized at the Annual Conference in Cincinnati next spring.

Excuses, Excuses

What's stopping you? Are you afraid your work is not good enough? Submit it anyway! There are three levels of awards, and even if you don't win one, you will receive detailed evaluations from several highly qualified judges.

Can't afford the fees? Ask your boss or client. Most pubs managers love to have their work recognized. Companies are happy to pay for the right to claim award-winning documentation, marketing materials, or Web pages.

You don't do design or illustrations? Get your colleagues involved! We all need to be more aware of graphics, pictures, and the visual appeal of our materials. The more artists we get involved in STC, the more we'll all benefit.

Awards and Rewards

And the benefits don't end with submitting your entry. How about getting involved in running the competition? If you're a professional artist or designer, volunteer to be a judge. If not, we've got plenty of other jobs for you—handling the finances, organizing the judging, producing certificates and other awards, planning and publicizing the awards banquet.

Speaking of awards, you're all invited to come and enjoy the exhibit of winning entries at the awards banquet. This will be one of the most exciting programs of the year.

For more information about the LASTC Art Competition, contact Art Competition Manager George Harmon at (310) 783-3799 or gharmon@amerhonda.com. Ω

1998-99 LASTC Council

President

Karen Bergen
 Kbergen@aol.com
 (310) 782-4038

Vice President, Membership

Eugene Morrison
 eugene.morrison@prodigy.net
 (213) 299-0054

Secretary

Madhu Malik
 madhum@jps.net
 (310) 326-7020

Treasurer

Carolyn O'Connor,
 coconnor@flash.net
 (310) 265-9676

Internet Manager

Tom Magnus
 Tom@mrwrite.com
 (310) 318-9100

Employment Manager

Andre Sharp, Asharp@sharpinfo.com
 (310) 379-5179

Mentor Program Manager

Steve Zirl, Szirl@aol.com
 (213) 662-4087

Hospitality Manager

Lisa Priester, Lpriester@earthlink.net
 (213) 413-1639

Public Relations Committee

Pam Wilkes, pmlawilkes@aol.com
 Esther Spachner
 spachner@primenet.com

Dee Camacho,
 dcamacho@mwd.dst.ca.us

Education Manager

Linda Jassim, Jassiml@aol.com
 (310) 396-1247

Society for Technical Communication

Los Angeles Chapter

P.O. Box 91400
 Los Angeles, CA 90009
 (213) 896-2982

Director-Sponsors' Campfire

By Judith L. Glick-Smith

If a horse gets away with something when you are riding, such as bucking at a specific place in the ring, he will continue that behavior ad infinitum if you let him. The lesson becomes a contest of wills. You must learn the correct communication with the horse at the appropriate time so that you can ride through the problem. Sometimes it means changing direction to completely change the perspective of both you and the horse.

Did you ever encounter a challenge so difficult that you wanted to quit? The same type of situation just keeps popping up. Or the same problems keep happening with the same people over and over again. These situations can overpower us at the most inopportune times. The solution is the same.

Learn the Correct Communication

Use this communication at the appropriate time

- Change your perspective
- Ride through the problem
- Learn the correct communication

Different people respond to different forms of communication. Learn to actively listen to the people involved in the situation. Use Steven Covey's method of seeking first to understand and then to be understood. This means that the other person must agree that you understand his/her position completely

before you are allowed to present your own position. This is often a difficult process, but it is highly effective.

Use the Communication at the Appropriate Time

Tune into the situation and into the people involved. You will find that people deal with things in stages. Not everyone goes through the same stage at the same time. A good leader will listen empathetically to gauge where each person is in dealing with the situation.

Change Your Perspective

If you cannot see a solution, get radical. Use brainstorming sessions with all the people involved. Do not allow negative comments or judgments of other's ideas. Think outside the box. Outline "what if" scenarios and think them through to their various conclusions. Sometimes a change of scenery will help. Get creative.

Ride Through the Problem

Stick to the solution-finding process until you and everyone else involved is satisfied with the outcome. This can be an incredible bonding and enlightening experience. You will learn a lot about yourself and about the other people involved in the process. This is not an easy process, but the rewards are great. We all have challenges from time to time. How well we meet these challenges makes us who we are. Ω

Judith L. Glick-Smith is the director-sponsor of STC's Region 5.

Help Build SkillBuilder

What's your favorite course, software, book, or magazine that helps you professionally?

Share it with your fellow STCers. Send it to Tom Wilson (tomwilson@linkonline.net), and he'll put it in SkillBuilder, a new database linked to LASTC's Web site. SkillBuilder lists a variety of professional enhancement products to keep you ahead in your field.

Member Profile: Shirley Thomas

A Golden Era for Air and Space

Dr. Shirley Thomas is the founder of the Aerospace Historical Society and long-time contributor to Southern California's space industry.

By Leslie Kaplan

Southern California is famous for its movie stars and sun-bleached beaches. We have another gem in our diadem that is perhaps lesser known—the aviation industry. Local companies build the most advanced air and space products available today.

We can thank LASTC member Shirley Thomas for documenting much of the aerospace industry's history. Thomas' dedication to the subject led her to found the Aerospace Historical Committee at the California Museum of Science and Industry 14 years ago. On January 1, 1998, the museum changed its name and its mission (becoming the California Science Center) and scrapped the aerospace exhibits. At that time, Dr. Thomas moved the group she chairs to the Museum of Flying in Santa Monica.

After its move to the Museum of Flying, Dr. Thomas changed its status: It is not a committee now, but a nonprofit California corporation called the Aerospace Historical Society. Its distinguished members include Buzz Aldrin (Ret. NASA Astronaut), J. Leland Atwood (Ret. Pres. and CEO of Rockwell International), David C. Jones (Fmr. Chmn. Joint Chiefs of Staff), and other notables in fields from engineering to law to the military. All members have in common is a desire to preserve the history of the air and space leaders. Their only compensation is the satisfaction of seeing the results of their efforts. The IRS has granted the

Society 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. "I was delighted that I managed to get the incorporation without hiring an attorney and was able to satisfy the IRS without bringing in a tax accountant," Dr. Thomas said.

The Aerospace Historical Society has made history of its own with "Chapters in Aerospace History," which are videotaped interviews with some of the leading figures in the field over the past decade. They have 24 subjects to date, most of them narrated by Dr. Albert Hibbs, the Voice of JPL on Public Television during the period of the great unmanned space launches. The interviews contain the memories and opinions of people who were in the forefront of tremendous advances in air and space. "This is a treasure for students, scholars, and historians," Dr. Thomas said. "Elsewhere, some small collections of audiotapes exist, but to our knowledge, no collection of videotapes exists."

A remarkable feature of this video collection is that neither the Society nor the Museum invested even one dollar in their acquisition; it was entirely underwritten by other sponsors: JPL, the U.S. Air Force, and aerospace companies. The videotaped interviews are available for any interested person, and the Society makes them available to museums. The subjects of the interviews include:

- J. Leland Atwood



The Aerospace Historical Society presented its annual award, the International von Kármán Wings, to NASA administrator Daniel S. Goldin, pictured here with Dr. Shirley Thomas, chair of the society.

- Gen. Samuel C. Phillips, USAF (Ret.)
- Dr. William H. Pickering
- Dr. Simon Ramo
- Gen. Bernard Schriever, USAF (Ret.)
- Astronaut Deke Slayton
- Harrison Storms, Jr.
- Lt. Gen. L.C. Craigie, USAF (Ret.)
- Dr. Edward Stone

Another major activity of the Society is its annual event where the International von Kármán Wings award is presented. It is named for Dr. Theodore von Kármán, an engineer-scientist and the first head of Caltech’s Guggenheim Aeronautical Laboratory. He made it his crusade to bring airplane manufacturers to Southern California. Dr. Thomas wrote Dr. von Kármán’s biography when he was at an advanced age. But that was only one of her tributes to him. “I was so impressed by his genius that after his death, I set out to get a U.S. Postage Stamp issued in his honor. It

took me 26 years, but I succeeded in 1992.”

NASA Administrator Daniel S. Goldin received this year’s International von Kármán Wings award on May 23, 1998, at the society’s annual awards reception and dinner. Phil Hartman was the Master of Ceremonies. (It was his last performance before his murder.) The theme of the evening appeared on the gold-colored programs—“The Goldin Era is truly a Golden Era for air and space!”

Administrator Goldin was honored for his revitalization of the U.S. Space Program. Members of the Aerospace Historical Society thanked him for leading the International Space Station program in an improved redesign; for emphasizing environmental monitoring in NASA’s Mission to Planet Earth; and for making the nation’s aeronautical program its first priority. Instead of the multibillion dollar projects of an earlier period, Goldin has brought into being a

policy of “faster, better, cheaper.” Through this approach, he instituted the Mars Pathfinder mission, which took 3 years and cost \$150 million. The Mission climaxed when the lander reached the Martian surface, and a tiny vehicle, the Sojourner Microover, crept out of the lander and explored the surface of the red planet. The impact of this achievement was heightened by the spacecraft’s landing on July 4, 1997.

Dr. Thomas has already called a meeting to plan next year’s annual awards event. “This is my way of maintaining a space-related activity,” Dr. Thomas said. “Before my fifth career, which is teaching at USC and doing consulting, I was the author of 15 books in the field of space. I got the space ‘bug,’ and I will never be cured of it.” Ω

Leslie Kaplan studied technical writing with Dr. Thomas at USC and considers the class to be among the most useful that she has ever taken.

Check out UCLA Extension’s Web site for their latest course offerings!
www.Unex.ucla.edu

Conference (continued from page 1)

Past STC President Saul Carliner closed the conference with "Lessons from the Idiot Box," a humorous exploration of wisdom gleaned from television and its application to the workplace. He shared such personal insights as "The Lucy Ricardo Theory of Project Management" and "The Sweeps Month Theory of Time Management." Carliner likened "The Ally McBeal Principle of Human Relations" to the "STC Annual Conference—a place where you feel people listen; you feel appreciated, and feel listened to."

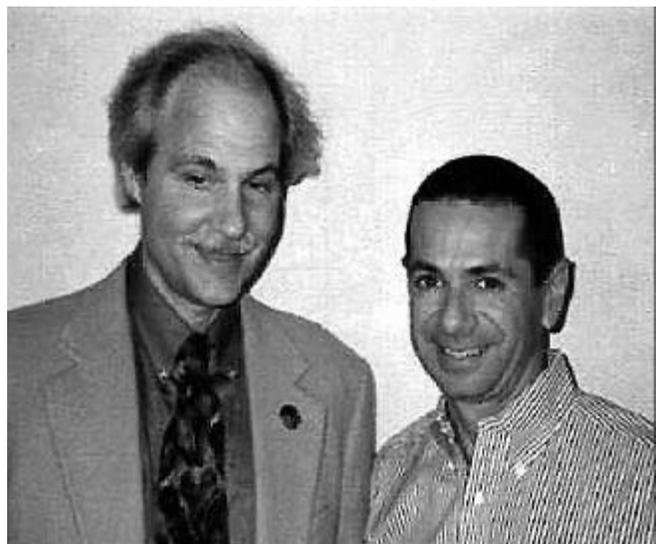
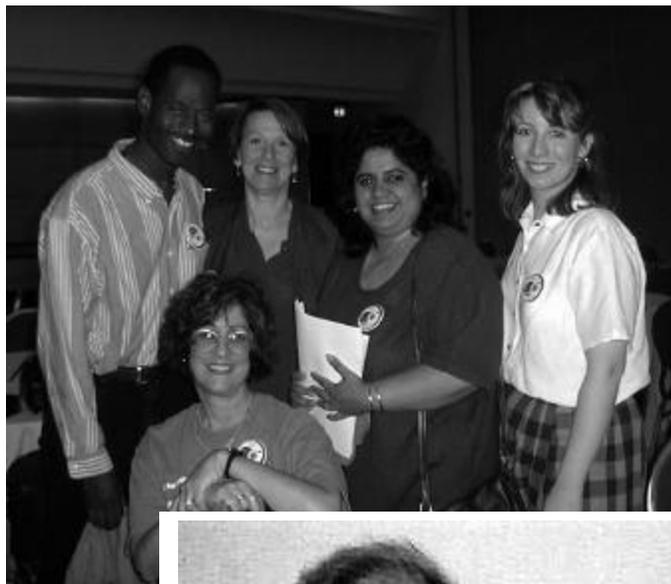
Session Materials on the Web

This year is the first time conference session materials, including speaker handouts and overheads, are available on STC's Web site. Jeff Randolph, the Orange County Chapter Webmaster, has created links to the session materials at both www.stc.org (under Conferences) and www.Stc-va.org (under What's New). Chris Seraidaris, Orange County Chapter postconference Web site co-coordinator, says, "handouts are being posted all the time."

Next Conference Dates

Be sure to reserve the dates of the next two conferences in Cincinnati (May 16-19, 1999) and in Orlando (May 21-24, 2000). Whether you are new to the profession or a seasoned pro, if you attend the STC annual conferences, you will give your career a boost and have a blast as well. Ω

Pam Wilkes is a technical writer and LASTC's Public Relations manager. She won a raffle held at LASTC's April meeting for a free trip to the annual conference.



Top photo, back row: Tom Wilson, Richard Murphy, and Larry Palkovic. **Front row, from left:** Pam Wilkes, Lisa Priester, Karen Bergen. Priester won a drawing at the conference for a basket of goodies from Cincinnati. **Middle photo, from left:** Eugene Morrison, Karen Bergen, Linda Jassim, Madhu Malik, and Carolyn O'Connor at the Leadership Day session. **Bottom photo:** Larry Palkovic, left, and Raymond Urgo both gave presentations at the conference.

Employment Listings

Following is a partial list of open positions in the Los Angeles area posted on LASTC's listserv. For a complete list, subscribe to LASTCJOBS-L, a free service LASTC offers to its members.

Corrected fax number for contract technical writer position listed in last issue for Earthlink: fax to Newt Oliver at (310) 725-4230; e-mail to nwoliver@earthlink.net (ASCII or Word format)

Tech Writer/Documentation Engineer, Pasadena

Documentation engineer/technical writer to write user guides in print and online formats for a suite of integrated circuit design tools. 2-4 years' technical writing experience in a software-development environment. Experience with FrameMaker, Adobe Acrobat, and Windows are required. Experience in online documentation is desirable. A basic understanding of electrical engineering and mathematics is also desirable. Previous writing samples are required. Flexible hours. Work is onsite. Competitive benefits. Contact: Tanner EDA, Attn: Mgr., Documentation Group, 2650 E. Foothill Blvd., Pasadena, CA 91107; phone: (626) 792-3000; fax: (626) 685-5955; e-mail: jobs.dsg@tanner.com; Web site: <http://www.tanner.com/eda>

Technical Writer, work at home

A work-from-home job that requires weekly meeting at the Pacific Palisades location. 3-5 years' experience writing speeches and articles, reports, manuals, instructions, books, catalogs and related technical and administrative publications. Salary: 40K, possibly higher for the perfect candidate. Medical benefits, stock options, profit sharing, and a 401K plan. This is a full-time job for a strong company. They prefer someone who lives in the Pacific Palisades area. Contact: Gary Largent, Masterson, Tate & Associates, 6151 West Century Boulevard #916, Los Angeles, CA 90045; phone: (310) 348-7665 ext. 50; fax: (310) 348-7666; e-mail: mta39@mtear.com; Web site: <http://www.mtear.com>

To receive job listings from LASTCJOBS-L, send a message to majordomo@stc.org. Do not enter a subject. Insert the following command as the only line of the message: **subscribe lastcjobs-L name@email.com** (where name@email.com is your e-mail address).

To advertise a job on LASTCJOBS-L, e-mail lastcjobs-L@stc.org. Do not enter a subject. Insert the following command as the only line of the message: **info lastcjobs-L**. For guidelines on formatting job ads, send a message to majordomo@stc.org.

To obtain a copy of the newly updated and expanded LASTC Employment Handbook or a complete printed copy of the Employment Listings, contact **Andre Sharp, LASTC Employment Manager, P.O. Box 335, Hermosa Beach, CA 90254**, or call (310) 379-5179. Requests for job listings must include a self-addressed, stamped 9" x 12 envelope. Specify contract, permanent, or both.

Calendar of Events

LASTC Monthly Meeting

Thursday, September 24
Embassy Suites Hotel, El Segundo
See back cover for details.

STC Region 8 Conference

October 22-24, San Ramon, CA
Contact

Technical Writing: Process and Products

Thursdays, Oct 1-Dec 10, 7-10 PM, at UCLA
Instructor: Kent Pearson, quality control editor, American Honda Motor Company Inc. Reg#B5977B

Information Design (Online)

Oct 7-Dec 9, Fee: \$550
Instructor: Sara Stohl, senior technical writer, Parsons Corp. Reg#B6200B

ISO 9000: (Almost) Everything You Wanted to Know (Online)

Oct 6-Dec 1. Fee: \$550. Instructor: Adrienne Escoe, Ph.D., president/consultant, Escoe/Bliss Communication, and author, Nimble Documentation. Reg#B6203B

Strategic Communication Planning (Online)

Oct. 5-Nov. 30. Fee: \$550. Instructor: Judy Shane, M.A., communications consultant, Judy Shane Communications. Reg#B6201B

Technical Writing (Online)

Oct 12-Dec 7. Instructor: Bonnie Lund, M.A., owner and founder, The Writing Company. Reg#B6382B

For more information, call UCLA Extension's Department of Business and Management at (310) 206-1654. To enroll, call (310) 825-9971. For a free catalog, call (800) 554-UCLA. Online enrollment and additional course information can be found on UCLA Extension's Web site: <http://www.unex.ucla.edu>

Tech Standards ad goes here

September Meeting Focuses on Future of Online Help

Recently, there has been an explosion of new tools for developing and delivering online Help. Among the best known are Microsoft's HTML Help, Blue Sky's WebHelp, Sun's JavaHelp, Adobe's Acrobat, and of course, the Web. Gone are the days when there was only one kind of online Help and just a handful of authoring tools from which to choose.

If you're looking for a guide through this maze, come to our September 24 meeting. David Knopf, an expert in online technologies and a RoboHELP® certified trainer, will help us explore the new programs. He will identify their strengths and weaknesses, providing specific guidelines for Help authors, technical writers, and managers who

need to know what to do today and how best to prepare for tomorrow.

David Knopf is president of Knopf Online (<http://www.knopf.com>), a San Francisco-based training and consulting firm that specializes in technical and marketing communications, including online Help and Web development. Knopf has taught dozens of seminars on how to think about, design, create, produce, and distribute high-quality online information products.

Today's Help authors and managers face a bewildering array of choices in authoring and delivery tools. Creating an effective strategy for developing and delivering information online has never been more challenging. If you saw the rave review of David Knopf's RoboHELP seminar in the last *Technograph*, you'll know why you can't afford to miss this meeting.

Schedule for September 24 Meeting

- 6:00 PM Networking and Check-in
- 7:00 PM Dinner
- 8:00 Announcements and employment exchange
- 8:15 Program

Location

Embassy Suites Hotel, 1440 E. Imperial Hwy, El Segundo (at the end of the 105 Fwy, one block west of Sepulveda)

Cost and Reservations

- Members with reservations: \$21
- Nonmembers with reservations: \$23
- Without reservations: \$30
- Program only: \$10
- Students/Retirees: \$5

To reserve (or to cancel a reservation), call LASTC's voice mail at (213) 896-2982 no later than 5:00 PM, Tuesday, September 22.

Society for Technical Communication
Los Angeles Chapter
P.O. Box 91400
Los Angeles, CA 90009

| |
|--|
| First Class U.S. Postage Paid Los Angeles, CA |
|--|

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

.
 Enter LASTC's art competition! See page 7 for details.