

Dateline Houston

Board Meeting Special Issue

Designing the future of technical communication

December 2004

STC Board of Directors Welcomed to the Bayou City Board Meeting Helps Kick Off an Exciting 2005 for STC Houston

Houston welcomes the STC Board of Directors to the Bayou City for its January 2005 meeting. Approximately 20–25 Society officials are expected, including elected Board members, assistants to the president, and STC Executive Director Peter Herbst, among other STC leaders.

The meeting takes place at the Doubletree Hotel Post Oak, in the heart of the Galleria area of Houston.

Getting Around Houston

Transportation is always an issue at Board meetings, and the Houston meeting is no exception. The Galleria area is a popular destination with many dining and shopping options. Road construction on Loop 610 makes things more challenging. While many attractions of interest to Board members are within walking distance of the hotel, everyone is encouraged to allow for extra time getting to and from the airport and around the city.

Houston has two major airports. George Bush Intercontinental Airport/Houston (IAH), is the principal airport and is approximately 26 miles

northeast of the hotel. Meanwhile, William P. Hobby Airport (HOU), is approximately 18 miles southeast of the hotel.

The Doubletree Hotel does not provide a shuttle service to and from the airports. Instead, the hotel staff recommends that visitors use either of the following shuttle services:

- Express: 713-523-8888
- Texans: 713-781-6600

Out-of-town guests can work with the STC Houston Board Meeting Host Committee for making transportation arrangements to and from the airports, provided that those arrangements are made by January 1.

January 21 Welcome Reception

STC Houston will host a welcome reception for Board members at 6:30 p.m. Friday, January 21, at Canyon Café, 5000 Westheimer, Suite 250. The restaurant is within walking distance of the hotel. Everyone is encouraged to dress informally and wear comfortable shoes.

Transportation will be provided from the hotel in case of bad weather.

The reception provides Society officials and STC Houstonians the opportunity to meet and visit in a relaxed, informal atmosphere. Current and prospective student members from Houston Community College, the University of Houston–Downtown, and Texas A&M University are also expected to attend.

Menu includes Pancho's Chicken Enchiladas, beef fajitas, and Adovo Pasta (a vegetarian pasta). Side dishes include Southwestern rice, black beans, warm flour tortillas, and pico de gallo.

Soft drinks, water, tea, and coffee will be provided, and a cash bar will be available for guests wishing to enjoy other beverages. Cost is \$25.

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Dateline Houston

Dateline Houston is the newsletter of the Houston Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication, a nonprofit organization. This special issue of *Dateline Houston* was created by the chapter's Board Meeting Host Committee as authorized by the STC Houston Administrative Council for the January 2005 Board of Directors meeting in Houston.

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Securing the Board Meeting Chapter Hosts Poetry Contest to Encourage Selection as Board Meeting Host City

Communities wishing to host a STC Board of Directors meeting start their lobbying efforts early. STC presidents choose two of the three cities where the meeting will be held during their term of office. The third Board meeting is held at the STC Annual Conference.

STC Houston was interested in hosting the meeting, and decided to go all-out in its lobbying efforts when Andrea Ames was elected STC second vice president in the spring of 2002.

To encourage Andrea to choose Houston as a Board meeting site, STC Houston sponsored a poetry-writing contest in which participants wrote poems touting Houston's virtues. Participants said they enjoyed having the chance to express themselves in a creative, non-technical way. Holly Jahangiri, an information developer at Hewlett-Packard, submitted the winning entry, which is as follows:

We "Ames" to Please

*Within the heart of Texans everywhere
Is hospitality we long to share.*

*Dear Andrea, you know we "Ames" to please—
Don't make us get down on our bended knees!*

*Our Houston's home to seven-story pines,
Encased in bright orange trumpet-flower vines.
Humidity's a blessing and a curse
"Bad hair days" we all share (it could be worse)!*

*Come play in Houston—we've got "bumper cars,"
And NASA brings us closer to the stars!*

*Long sultry days of summer baseball quenched
With Minute Maid, or by a downpour drenched,*

*There's much to see in Houston, much to do—
That said, the Houston chapter welcomes YOU!*

Panel of Judges

The poetry judging panel was composed of the following STC Houstonians:

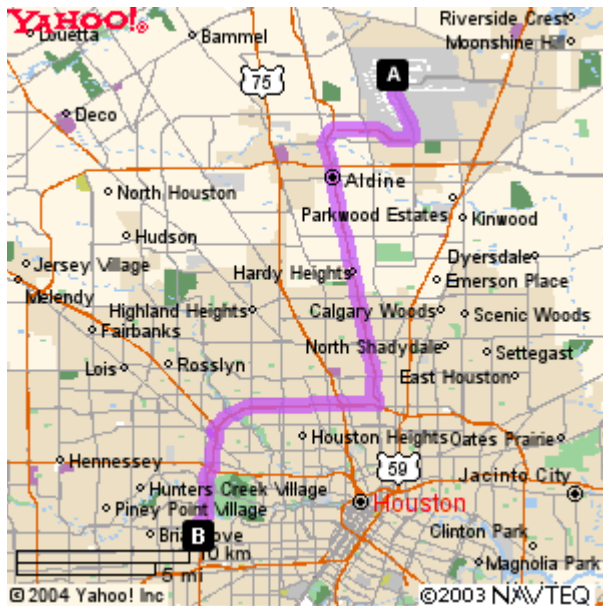
- Melanie G. Flanders, 2002 Distinguished Chapter Service Award recipient and author of the *More Than Melancholy* poetry anthology
- Linda Oestreich, STC Fellow and Region 5 Director-Sponsor
- John Reynolds III, 2000 Distinguished Chapter Service Award recipient and STC Houston 2001–2002 Man of the Year

Did You Know?

Houston was named for Sam Houston (1793–1863), former governor of Tennessee, hero of the Battle of San Jacinto (at which Texas won independence from Mexico), and first president of the Republic of Texas. Sam Houston later served as a senator from and governor of Texas.

Houston Area Airports

George Bush Intercontinental Airport/Houston



Intercontinental Airport (IAH), item A, is approximately 26 miles northeast of the Doubletree Hotel Post Oak, item B.

William P. Hobby Airport



Hobby Airport (HOU), item A, is approximately 18 miles south-east of the Doubletree Hotel Post Oak, item B.

Tentative Board Schedule

Date	Time	Event	Location	Contact
Jan. 20	Various	Guests arrive in Houston	Determined by individual schedules	N/A
Jan. 21	All Day	Board Meeting	Doubletree Hotel Post Oak 2001 Post Oak Blvd.	Peter Herbst pete@stc.org
Jan. 21	6:30 p.m.	Welcome Reception	Canyon Café 5000 Westheimer, Suite 250	George Slaughter gslaughter@flex.net
Jan. 22	All Day	Board Meeting	Doubletree Hotel Post Oak 2001 Post Oak Blvd.	Peter Herbst pete@stc.org
Jan. 22	Following meeting	Individual Activities	Determined by individual schedules	N/A
Jan. 23	Various	Guests depart Houston	Determined by individual schedules	N/A

STC Board of Directors Welcomed to the Bayou City

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Other Spring 2005 Events

While the Board meeting is a much-anticipated event for STC Houston, it is not the first major event the chapter will host in 2005. STC Houston hosts its first program meeting of 2005 on January 11, and its fourth annual

Employment and Free Agent Share-the-Knowledge Event (STK) on January 15. STK speakers provide members, students, and prospective members with career guidance on a variety of topics, and also review resumés and portfolios. This year's STK has been expanded to include

consultant and independent contractor issues (thus, the "free agent" designation), and promises to be another hit with members.

STC Houston hosts its annual Awards Banquet on February 6.

A Tradition of Service

STC Houston Helps Technical Communicators Become Successful

Founded in July 1962 by the late STC Fellows John Colby and Marx Isaacs, STC Houston has earned a reputation as one of the Society's top chapters. In its 42-year history, STC Houston has received numerous chapter and individual awards, including Chapter Achievement or Pacesetter Awards in eight of the last 10 years. This article introduces some of the people who helped build this tradition of service.

Distinguished STC Houstonians

Besides John and Marx, arguably the most famous STC Houstonian is Janis Raymond Hocker. Janis was elected STC Houston president in 1978 and led the chapter to its first Chapter Achievement Award in 1979. From there, Janis's STC career skyrocketed. She served as director-sponsor from 1981–1984, and served as STC president from 1987–1988.

While Janis is the only Society president to come from Houston, she was the second director-sponsor from the chapter. Joseph A. Rice (1978–1981), Sherri Smith (1988–1993), and Linda Oestreich (2002–2005) all served as director-sponsors from Houston.

Linda, an STC Fellow, will stand for second vice president in 2005.

Rising Stars from Houston

STC Houston continues to provide experienced, dedicated leaders for Society-level activities.

After her stint as director-sponsor, Sherri, a contractor with Hewlett-Packard, served as the chapter liaison for the Society-wide technical publications, art, and online



STC Houston presidents choose a chapter theme for their term in office. STC Houston President Cindy Pao chose "Strengthening Our Community" as the 2004–2005 program year chapter theme.

communication competition judging events that Houston hosted in 2002 and 2004. Sherri is also an STC Fellow.

Jeff Staples, a senior information developer with Valley Forge/Kitba Consulting, is a recent recipient of the Distinguished SIG Service Award.

Jocelyn Williams, a freelance consultant with ExxonMobil, has served as Region 5 webmaster and published an article on Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) in the December 2004 *Intercom* magazine.

Ann Jennings and Melanie G. Flanders, both of the University of Houston–Downtown, are popular STC Annual Conference speakers on academic topics.

Meanwhile, Paul Mueller, a documentation manager at NetIQ, has become a popular speaker on technical topics.

Recently named STC Associate Fellows Deborah Silvi (2002) and Jim Hunt (2004), both of BMC Software, have long been noted for their leadership in chapter affairs and mentoring future chapter leaders. Deborah is a technical publications manager, while Jim is a senior technical editor at that company. One of Deborah's BMC Software protégés, STC Houston President Cindy Pao, has provided enthusiastic leadership this year.

STC Houston Vice President Nicole Wycislo, owner of Verb Consulting, served as manager of the highly successful 2001 Region 5 Conference held in Houston.

Houston-Area Web Sites

Note: These selected web sites serve as only a starting point to discovering what Houston offers its guests and residents. Welcome to Houston!

Learning About Houston and Meeting-Related Venues

Name	Description	URL
Houston Chronicle	Houston's daily newspaper	http://www.houstonchronicle.com
Doubletree Hotel Post Oak	Site of January 21–23 Board meeting	http://doubletree.hilton.com/en/dt/hotels/index.jhtml?ctyhoun=IAHWSDT
Canyon Café	Site of January 21 welcome reception	http://www.canyoncafe.com
STC Houston	Board meeting host chapter	http://www.stc-houston.org

Dining and Shopping Options

Name	Description	URL
Cheesecake Factory	Popular restaurant in Galleria that deserves its own mention; great food, and great cheesecake	http://www.thecheesecakefactory.com
Eatzi's	Excellent selection of food	http://www.eatzis.com
The Galleria	World-class shopping mall with chain restaurants (for example, Chili's, La Madeline) within mall	http://www.galleriahouston.com

Houston Attractions

Name	Description	URL
Contemporary Arts Museum	Double Consciousness: Black Conceptual Art since 1970, starts January 22	http://www.camh.org
Menil Collection	Deep Wells and Reflecting Pools, starts January 21	http://www.menil.org
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston	Taos Modern: Paintings by W.H. Dunton from The Stark Museum of Art, through January 30	http://www.mfah.org
Museum of Printing History	One-of-a-kind museum that has served as a chapter meeting site	http://www.printingmuseum.org
Alley Theatre	After the Fall, starts January 14	http://www.alleytheatre.org
Jones Hall	Graf in the New World, starts January 22	http://www.ci.houston.tx.us/cef/jones
Radio Music Theatre	Wiener Day at the Rollercade, starts January 22	http://www.radiomusictheatre.com

STC Mission Statement

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