

President's Corner

by **Betsy Callahan**

President, Oklahoma Chapter



Well, I guess I am still in the "change" conversation. Information concerning change keeps showing up from all sorts of sources, some new, some quite old. For one, my husband brought home a library book entitled, *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change*. You know that law of perception—when you begin to notice something, suddenly you see it all over the place. Like when a word not previously in your vocabulary draws your attention, that word shows up three more times the next day.

Here are a few quotes that gave me food for thought on the subject of change. I hope they do the same for you.

A rock pile ceases to be a rock pile the moment a single man contemplates it, bearing within him the image of a cathedral.

—Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, French novelist

Confusion is a word we have invented for an order which is not yet understood.

—Henry Miller, American novelist

The winners of tomorrow will deal proactively with chaos, will look at the chaos per se as the source of market advantage, not as a problem to be got around.

—Tom Peters, American writer

I'm not afraid of death. It's just that I don't want to be there when it happens.

—Woody Allen

The "silly question" is the first intimation of some totally new development.

—Alfred North Whitehead, British philosopher

An adventure is only an inconvenience rightly understood. An inconvenience is only an adventure wrongly understood.

—C. K. Chesterton, British writer

I have seen the future, and it's a lot like the present, but much longer.

—Dan Quisenberry, Professional baseball player

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Member News

Gail Beyers is awarded the Oklahoma Chapter Member of the Year

Gail has been one of our most dedicated members this year. She is currently serving on the Administrative Council as Secretary and has supported all of us in the planning of every chapter event with her sharp attention to detail. She served as our representative on the planning board for the successful Communicator's Workshop last October. Gail also took on creating the first pages of our updated chapter Web site and has agreed to act as Webmaster this upcoming year.



Gail graduated last Spring with a Master's in Technical Writing from the OSU Technical Writing Program and transferred her STC membership from the OSU Student Chapter. She also holds an MBA. Thank you for all your hard work, Gail.

Matzell and Schell Make Senior Status

Timothy Matzell and Harry Schell have achieved senior member status. Congratulations, guys!

Selling STC to the Boss

Having trouble selling the idea of STC membership to the boss? Get it paid through your corporate training budget. Dictionary.com defines "training" as follows: "to make proficient with specialized instruction and practice."

- ✓ "Training" happens when a chapter workshop on XML helps you develop superior company documents—faster and more efficiently.
- ✓ "Training" happens when an STC telephone seminar teaches you and your colleagues the basics of single sourcing—and thereby streamlines your company's production processes.
- ✓ "Training" happens when a technical session at an STC annual conference shows you how to develop a usability plan that returns valuable feedback on your company's product—resulting in a better product and more satisfied customers.
- ✓ "Training" happens when an article in Intercom or Technical Communication shows you how to translate a company Web site—to reach an international audience.

STC membership provides training with a bonus: a vibrant professional community with numerous opportunities for networking.

If an STC- or chapter-sponsored event or activity shows you how to improve your company products or processes, that's "training." Nonmembers often pay significantly more for STC programs, conferences, and workshops than do members. And STC membership provides training with a bonus: a vibrant professional community with numerous opportunities for networking. For information about joining STC or renewing a membership, visit the Society Web site. STC helps you make career opportunities happen.

U.S. Members: Deduct Your STC Dues

If you pay taxes in the United States, keep in mind that STC dues are tax deductible. You can claim dues as a deduction in several ways.

Charitable Expense

All STC members who pay taxes in the United States can deduct at least a portion of their STC dues if they claim this portion as a charitable donation. IRS publication 526 (rev. 2000) defines this option:

You may be able to deduct membership fees or dues you pay to a qualified organization. However, you can deduct only the amount that is more than the value of the benefits you receive.

As a 501(c)(3) organization, STC is a qualified organization. The only determination you need to make is the amount that is more than the value of the benefits you receive. STC's tangible benefits can be estimated at \$30 (\$15 for the Society's quarterly journal, Technical Communication, and \$15 for the magazine, Intercom). The difference between the cost of membership (\$125 for 2003) and tangible benefits (\$30) is \$95, and members may claim that amount as charitable contribution.

Business Expense

Employees and self-employed consultants may claim the full amount of dues as a business expense.

Miscellaneous Deduction

Those who do not fall into the categories defined above may claim the amount of the dues as a miscellaneous deduction. (For miscellaneous deductions that can affect taxes, the total amount of miscellaneous deductions must exceed 2 percent of your adjusted gross income.)

If dues are deducted as a charitable expense, business expense, or miscellaneous deduction, they must be deducted from the tax return filed for the year in which they were paid. In other words, dues paid in 2003 may be deducted only on 2003 tax returns. Members who have questions should contact their local IRS representatives or their accountants.

Money, Not Time

Please be aware that, while dues, contributions, and out-of-pocket expenses may be deducted, personal services may not.

STC Offers Members New Health Insurance Program

STC now offers its members a range of health insurance options, thanks to a program recently implemented in cooperation with Marsh Affinity Group Services, a leader in insurance program management.

The new health insurance program gives STC members living in the United States a number of options. Those who value "freedom of choice" may enroll in the Major Medical Plan (Traditional). Those who prefer to choose from a prepared list of doctors and facilities may enroll in a Preferred Provider Option (PPO). Both plans are offered to individuals and to employers with a small number of employees. Self-employed members may want to consider the new Medical Savings Account (MSA) option, while some small employers may prefer a Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) option.

In February, Marsh will mail informational brochures to STC members who have consented to be listed on the STC mailing list. The Marsh Web site

provides additional information about insurance options and allows members to get rate quotes from providers in their local areas.

Members concerned about privacy should rest assured: Marsh does not sell information to third parties. Unless members instruct otherwise, they will not be contacted by providers.

STC members may also enjoy discounts on other types of insurance from Mutual of Omaha. These include disability coverage, critical illness insurance, life insurance, long-term care insurance, and pension plans. Information about these insurance options can be found on the Mutual of Omaha Web site.

If you have questions about the insurance options and discounts offered to STC members, please contact the STC office by e-mail or by telephone at (703) 522-4114.

Article: At First

Linda Oestreich, Director-Sponsor, Region 5

At first, the year stretches ahead with possibilities. At first, we see it as a blank slate, a white canvas waiting for our words or drawings of wealth and success and humor and health. Yet the newness, the opportunity, the excitement is all in our heads. We can make any day a new day, any month a new month, any moment a moment of possibility.

If I have learned anything over these last months of unemployment and personal loss, it is that I am blessed. I found strength and friends and funds that I didn't know were there. And I found hope and confidence in myself. I had new things to learn, new places to go, new ideas to embrace. But, above all, I learned to trust.

At first, before we really can do anything well, we must believe in ourselves and know who we are. I have a friend who is a marriage and family counselor. She says we each have "our story." When someone asks about you, what do you say? Do you identify yourself by what you do? By how many children you have? By how much money you make? Or do you identify yourself by the influence you have on your world? How do you share that story?

We in technical communication have a blessing in our job titles. Because most people don't know what a technical writer or information developer does, we are forced to explain it. My mom never did understand my job, yet she was proud of me. As I look back, I realize her pride came mostly from the success I achieved through STC. She could see those. She could read about them. She understood about me mentoring others, and giving speeches to folks who were attending their first conference, and helping people write better resumes. She never did understand what I did to make a document more readable or better designed.

I recently took advantage of an outplacement agency. One exercise was to develop a 15-second introduction. In 15 seconds, we had to explain to a stranger what value we brought to others through our work. Can you do that? Practice it. "Hi, I'm Joe Bagadonuts, I help people use and understand technology by providing them with clear, concise, and complete printed and online guides that are built with simple words and easy-to-understand pictures." As you can see, even after months of practice, I still can't get it quite right! And, is that really the value I bring to the workplace?

So, what is your story? At first, you might have to think about it. What are you known for? What do you want to be known for? I don't want to be known as an editor or writer. I want to be known for helping others attain their goals. I want recognition for helping others understand what their value is and for manifesting it in their work, in their play, and in their hearts. But telling others that's what I do isn't the answer. I have to show it. I have to do it. Then, from at first to at last, no matter what "job" I have, the recognition will come, but it really won't matter because I will be doing what I love. My actions are my story. They are my first and my last. And it won't matter if it's January or July.

'Till next time, Linda

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Resources for Writing Entrepreneurs

Compiled by Beth Brooks

The following three pages contain is a great resource list created by Beth Brooks for her presentation on Starting a Contract Business, given at the January chapter luncheon. This information will be useful for those contemplating going into business for themselves and for those already on their way.

Tulsa City-County Library Catalog Search: Freelance

- *The ASJA Guide To Freelance Writing: A Professional Guide To The Business, For Nonfiction Writers Of All Experience Levels* - Edited by Timothy Harper; foreword by Samuel G. Freedman
- *The Complete Handbook For Freelance Writers* - Kay Cassill
- *The Freelance Writer's Handbook: How To Succeed In A Competitive Business* - Dennis E. Hensley, Holly G. Miller
- *Handbook For Freelance Writing* - Michael Perry
- *How To Sell 75% Of Your Freelance Writing* - Gordon Burgett
- *Making Money In Technical Writing* - Peter Kent
- *Power Freelancing: Home-Based Careers For Writers, Designers, And Consultants* - George Sorenson
- *Secrets Of A Freelance Writer : How To Make \$85,000 A Year* - Robert W. Bly
- *Start And Run A Profitable Freelance Writing Business : Your Step-By-Step Business Plan* - Christine Adamec
- *Successful Freelancing : The Complete Guide To Establishing And Running Any Kind Of Freelance Business* - Marian Faux
- *Too Lazy To Work, Too Nervous To Steal : How To Have A Great Life As A Freelance Writer* - John Clausen
- *The Well-Fed Writer: Financial Self-Sufficiency As A Freelance Writer In Six Months Or Less* - Peter Bowerman
- *The Writer's And Photographer's Guide To Global Markets* - Michael H. Sedge
- *Writer's Digest Handbook Of Making Money Freelance Writing* - editors, Amanda L. Boyd [et al.]
- *Writing Freelance* - Christine Adamec

Tulsa City-County Library Catalog Search: Client

- *138 Quick Ideas To Get More Clients* - Howard Shenson, Jerry R. Wilson
- *Advertising Freelancers : Everything About This Promising Workstyle As Told By Successful Copywriters And Art Directors And Their Clients, Companies And Ad Agencies* - by Sue Fulton and Ed Buxton
- *The Consultant's Guide To Proposal [I.E. Proposal] Writing : How To Satisfy Your Clients And Double Your Income* - Herman Holtz
- *The Consultant's Guide To Winning Clients* - Herman Holtz
- *Get Clients Now! : A 28-Day Marketing Program For Professionals And Consultants* - C.J. Hayden

Tulsa City-County Library Catalog Search: Marketing

Authors:

- Marcia Yudkin
- Jay Conrad Levinson
- Herschell Gordon Lewis

Resources for Writing Entrepreneurs *(continued)*

Web Sites

- Title: Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance
URL: <http://www.cfda.gov>
Description: Federal grants and assistance programs
- Title: Small Business Administration
URL: <http://www.sba.gov>
- Title: Oklahoma Department of Commerce
URL: <http://www.odoc.state.ok.us-Menu4.nsf-BusServFrame>
Description: Oklahoma business loans
- Title: Oklahoma Small Business Development Center
URL: <http://www.osbdc.org>
- Title: Minority Business Development Center
URL: <http://www.mbda.gov>
- Title: SBA Online (Small Business Administration)
URL: <http://www.sbaonline.sba.gov>
- Title: Business Plans
URL: <http://www.bplans.com>
- Title: Center for Business Planning
URL: <http://www.businessplans.org>

Periodicals

- *Better Buys For Business*
- *Black Enterprise*
- *Entrepreneur*
- *Inc*
- *Tulsa Business Journal*
- *Tulsa Daily Commerce & Legal News*
- *Tulsa Metro Chamber Report*

Resources for Writing Entrepreneurs *(continued)*

Organizations

Name	City of Tulsa Minority-Female Business Enterprise Certification Program
Contact Info	707 S. Houston, Ste.303, Tulsa, OK 74127 (918) 596-7818
Name	Greenwood Chamber of Commerce
Contact Info	131 N. Greenwood Ave., 2nd Floor, Tulsa, OK 74120 (918) 585-2084
Name	Oklahoma Department of Commerce
URL	http://www.odoc.state.ok.us
Contact Info	700 N. Greenwood Ave, Suite 1400 , Tulsa, OK 74106 (918) 594-8116
Name	Oklahoma Export Assistance Center
URL	http://www.odoc.state.ok.us
Contact Info	700 N. Greenwood Ave, Suite 1400, Tulsa, OK 74106 (918) 581-7650
Name	Oklahoma Home-Based Business Association. OSU-Cooperative Extension Service
Contact Info	4116 E. 15th, Tulsa, OK 74112 (918) 746-3706
Name	Oklahoma Native American Business Development Center
URL	http://www.indiansbusiness.org
Contact Info	616 S. Boston, Suite 304, Tulsa, OK 74119 (918) 592-1113
Name	Oklahoma Small Business Development Center
Contact Info	616 S. Boston, Tulsa, OK 74119 (918) 583-2600.
Name	<u>SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives)</u>
URL	http://www.score.org
Contact Info	<u>907 S Detroit, Suite 1012, Tulsa, OK 74120</u> <u>(918) 581-7462</u>
Name	Small Business Answer Desk (Small Business Administration)
URL	http://www.sba.gov
Contact Info	(800) 827-5722
Name	Tulsa Business Assistance Center
URL	http://www.tbac.org
Contact Info	6111 E. Skelly, Ste.100, Tulsa, OK 74135 (918) 828-5300

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