

# Devil Mountain Views

Newsletter of the East Bay Chapter of STC  
March/April 2005

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## **Surviving Resume Screening, a Brutal Process!**

**Joy Montgomery** offers insight into creating a resume that helps you get your foot in the door with an interview.

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## **Volunteer Editing and Writing**

**Dara Golden** has experience with editing and writing for STC newsletters and shares her thoughts on how to make the most of both activities. This is the second of two articles on the subject.

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## **Ask Elaine: The Truth About Ampersands**

**Elaine Parrish** reveals the history of ampersands and (or &) lets you know when it's OK to use them.

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## **EBSTC Needs You!**

**Sue Phelan** has news on how you can become more involved in the chapter by running for office. This is a great opportunity to give back to STC and to beef up your resume.

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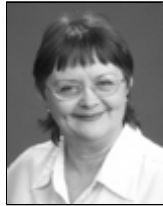


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Newsletter Competition

# Surviving Resume Screening, a Brutal Process!



by [Joy Montgomery](#)

STC Senior Member

EBSTC Nominating Committee Member

Gordon Scholarship Committee Member

About Joy:

- *Procedure Analysis & Documentation Specialist*

- *Short Story Writer*

- *Communication Coach*

- *Small Business Owner: [www.structural-integrity.com](http://www.structural-integrity.com)*

*This is the second installment of a two-part article on resume writing. The [first article](#) discussed adjustments you can make to your resume to make sure it is seen in the best light. This second article offers tips for surviving the resume screening process and getting an interview. This information is excerpted from Joy's soon-to-be-published book. Please contact Joy for more information on the book.*

Your goals are to survive the screening process, LOOK like you might be the best person, and get the interview.

To get that interview when the people who need you are drowning in resumes, you have to make the sale in the first half of the first page and keep making it, no matter how many pages you send. Screening happens in multiple steps. You have to survive each one to get on the "short list."

## The Short List

The screener is looking for any reasons to shorten their list. For example, if you are into extreme sports, the resume is not the place to mention it unless you are applying for a job as a Sports Illustrated photographer or as a crash dummy! Don't scare them off with visions of absenteeism and missed deadlines.

## The First Pass

The first pass by a screener is often nothing more than a glance at appearance. This pass does not consider one speck of your wonderful ingredients. If your resume looks like a meal slapped on a mess tray, you are on your way to the reject pile. An employer can visualize a lack of concern about the appearance of your resume as a lack of concern about the excellence of your work for them.

## The Second Pass

The second pass gives you more seconds to make an impression. This time, some of the content is considered. Does your cover letter match the position? Does your resume have an objective? Does the objective match the client's objective? Are there gaps? The focus is still easy rejections. An objective that doesn't match their objective is an automatic rejection unless you have done something that makes headlines and they already wanted you. Gaps could be explained by the prison sentence you served after you assaulted your last employer.

## The Third Pass

By the third pass, the resume is taken seriously. You presented yourself well. You actually want the position the employer wants to fill. You have the required skills. You have used those skills to contribute to an employer's success. You said where you did this and when. You meet the educational requirements. You have other features that make you desirable. When you make it through this pass, you are probably on a short list that will get interviews. When you go, make sure you have hard copies (on beautiful, 100% cotton content paper) of this exact resume for yourself and for the client.

**Polish Your Portfolio**

While you are waiting for the interview, polish up your portfolio. Your portfolio is the basis for your live marketing presentation. It helps you to make sure you present the most important ingredients with just the right seasoning, in just the right quantity (not too much!), and at the right time. Of course, you will make sure that what you need to demonstrate the skills and accomplishments that got you the interview is included in your portfolio. ▲

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## Volunteer Editing and Writing

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by [Dara Golden](#)  
 DMV Contributing Editor

*Dara Golden is the former Interim Editor of [Connection](#), the Silicon Valley Chapter's newsletter.*

*This is the second article in a two-part series. The first article [first article](#) focused on editing volunteer newsletters, while this second article focuses on writing for volunteer newsletters.*

### Working with Editors

How is writing for a newsletter different from writing technical manuals? Volunteer writing is unlike technical writing—deadlines are more firm and, if you want to keep writing for the publication, you need to establish a rapport with the editor. Basic writing skills are a must—do a spell check, follow basic grammar rules, and ensure that your article has a conclusion.

How to keep editors wanting your work:

1. **Meet deadlines.** Deadlines are firm dates. If you don't think you can make the deadline, ask the editor if you can submit the article a day or two later, but then hit that date. If the deadline is firm, you must hit the scheduled date.
2. **Ask questions.** Ask if there is a style guide, submission standards, or topics the editor would like to have covered.
3. Be proactive. If you have a topic idea, suggest it to the editor, even between issues of the newsletter. If the editor doesn't think it fits in with the newsletter's focus, try another newsletter.
4. **Hit the suggested word count.** If the range is 400–600 words, don't submit an 800-word article. Edit it to within the range or maybe a few words over. If you cannot edit it yourself, give the editor the word count and ask for help.
5. **Keep the editor in the loop.** If you proposed an article idea and the deadline is a week away, let the editor know how the article is progressing. Editors like to know if the article is going to appear or not and may be able to offer help if things are not progressing as you'd like.
6. **Read back issues of the publication.** See the range of topics covered by previous writers. Reading back issues can help determine whether you should write for the publication. If the writing appears solid and interesting, then propose a topic. If the back issues appear weak and dull, look for another publication.
7. **Edit your own work.** Spell checkers do not catch everything. Both “your” and “you're” are correct English words, but only one is correct in the phrase “your manager.” Whenever possible, have someone else edit your article before submission. Multiple pairs of eyes reviewing the article can only improve it.
8. **Do the basics.** This cannot be overstated. Perform a spell check, meet grammar rules (such as tenses matching, no excessive “be” verb forms, and complete sentences), ensure that essay writing rules are met (such as introduction, thesis, and conclusion), and follow the style guide.

### A Job Well Done

Editors are not “out to get you.” Their job is to get people to read the newsletter. Your job as a writer is to write something people want to read. Submitting the best article you can is important, but remember that the editor

also has a job. For an editor, a good article on time is better than a great article too late to publish. Working with the editor can improve not only your writing, but also your chances of writing more—which can always help your resume. ▲

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## Ask Elaine: The Truth About Ampersands



by [Elaine Parrish](#)  
DMV Copyeditor/EBSTC Senior Member

*If you have an editing question you'd like to see addressed in a future column, please submit it to [Ask Elaine](#).*

As a technical communicator, you're always looking for ways to make every word count. To be able to write concisely is a highly valued skill. You also want your writing to be "reader-friendly," flowing naturally without seeming overly formal or stilted. Streamlining your writing is a desirable goal, but don't be tempted to take shortcuts that make your writing so casual it appears unprofessional.

### The Ampersand Shortcut

For example, many writers, perhaps taking their cue from informal email communications or popular advertising, get carried away by using the ampersand symbol (&) instead of spelling out the word *and*. It's true that the ampersand is a cute and handy little symbol whose use saves two keystrokes. It also has a distinguished history. If you look closely at the symbol, you can see that it is a combination of the letters E and T joined together. Those two letters spell *et* (Latin for *and*).

### Effects of the Ampersand

You'd think a symbol with its roots in Latin would lend a certain air of sophistication to text, but the ampersand has the opposite effect: it makes the writing seem careless, as if the writer had hastily slapped it together. That's perfectly OK for an informal email message to your friend ("Bob & Tom are coming to the party Saturday & will call you & let you know what time they'll be there"), but you want to avoid that effect in serious writing. Besides, if you use one ampersand, they will start to multiply and ultimately become very distracting to the reader ("Press & hold Control, Alt, & Delete simultaneously & bring up Task Manager & see what applications & processes are running").

The ampersand does have its uses, but they are limited. Use an ampersand in the title of a company when the company styles it that way (AT&T, for example), or for two items that are conventionally known as an established unit (M&P). As a general rule though, if you're not absolutely sure whether an ampersand is appropriate, use *and* instead. The bottom line: when in doubt, spell it out.

If you're like me, you probably see amusing word usage all over the place—a lot of it written by people who are actually getting paid to do it. Here are three of my favorites:

#### **Where Ever You Go**

*(...you'll find slogan writers who are paid by the word.)*

#### **You'll Never Look or Feel Better**

*(...so why even bother to try our product?)*

**Using offensive language can irate the customer**

*(...almost as much as using an adjective instead of a verb!)*

Seen any good typos lately? Send your favorites to [Ask Elaine](#) and I'll compile them for a future column. ▲

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## EBSTC Needs You!



by [Susan Phelan](#)  
 EBSTC Nominating Committee Manager

**Mission** The mission of the East Bay Chapter is to provide a forum for members to network, build professional skills, and stay current in the field of technical communication.

**Calling All Leaders!** Candidates are needed for the following positions. What do you gain by participating in the leadership of EBSTC? Creating or maintaining visibility, shaping our chapter's direction and goals, and (last but not least) having fun.

If you are interested in any of these positions, we would love to talk to you. Please contact [Susan Phelan](#) or [Joy Montgomery](#).

Position	Responsibilities	Benefits
<b>President-Elect</b>	Assumes the duties of the President if the President is incapacitated, oversees SIGs, maintains the Bylaws, encourages special projects, and becomes President the following year.	Honing management and organizational skills.
<b>Vice President — Arrangements</b>	Oversees arrangements for meetings, accepts reservations, and coordinates with the restaurant to be sure chapter needs are met.	Developing negotiating skills; improving interpersonal and organizational skills.
<b>Vice President — Programs</b>	Manages the Program Committee, including planning chapter meetings, finding speakers, and working with speakers to be sure presentation needs are met.	Meeting interesting leaders in the profession; developing organizational and scheduling skills.
<b>Secretary</b>	Records minutes of all board meetings, handles official correspondence, and sends thank you notes to speakers and VIP visitors.	Perfecting organizational and report-writing skills.
<b>Treasurer</b>	Keeps the books, prepares and monitors the budget,	If you like numbers and money, this is

	makes deposits and payments, and prepares the (very simple) Annual Fiscal Report.	the job for you.
<b>Nominating Committee Member</b>	Selects qualified candidates for the annual election, prepares and distributes the ballot, validates and counts the votes, and notifies board and chapter of election results.	Sharpening persuasion and interpersonal skills; really shaping the chapter's direction and goals; having way too much fun. ▲

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## Editor's Message

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by [Becky Rude](#)  
 DMV Managing Editor

In this issue, we welcome back our familiar writers as well as a couple of new writers. A new member, **Greg Thompson**, is just the kind of member we like to have as he volunteered to help the chapter as soon as he joined. Greg wrote the [meeting report](#) for January when we held a roundtable discussion called "Cool Careers for Technical Communicators." We also welcome longtime STC member, **Patrick Lufkin**, who wrote a [book review](#) of O'Reilly's *XML Hacks*. Patrick has long been an honorary EBSTC member, but this year became an official member, choosing EBSTC as his second chapter. (Remember you can now join additional chapters for just \$10.)

This issue also contains advice from our feature writer **Dara Golden** on [writing for volunteer organizations](#).

**Joy Montgomery** presents the second article in her two-part series on [resume writing](#). Following her advice could get your resume past the screening process where it's easy for resumes to be brushed aside.

And finally, our own copyeditor, **Elaine Parrish**, entertains and educates us with her regular column [Ask Elaine](#).

### Looking for Writers

Our final issue for this fiscal year will be published in May. If you would like to contribute, please [contact](#) me. We're always looking for talented writers!

Becky ▲

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## President's Message



by [Becky Rude](#)  
EBSTC President

A special thank you to [Saillant Consulting Group](#) for letting the EBSTC council use their Pleasanton facilities for our recent meeting. We appreciated a quiet space to conduct our business!

Several of our leaders have been busy trying to improve EBSTC and to make it a better organization for you. Following is a discussion of these improvements.

### College Liaison Committee

**Gwaltney Mountford** is leading a committee consisting of **May McKoon, Angelina Nachimuthu, Rosalind L. Rogoff, Joy Montgomery, and Janet Gray**. The purpose of this committee is to "speak to student and faculty audiences in selected local colleges for the purpose of promoting the technical communication profession and STC, influencing and contributing to the content of technical communication curriculum, and developing an ongoing relationship that will benefit the schools and EBSTC."

If you would like to work on this committee, please contact [Gwaltney](#).

### PayPal for Reservation and Payment System

EBSTC is now using PayPal as our reservation and payment system for chapter meetings. We sent an email notice to all members in January regarding this change. One of the main reasons for the change is that some people make reservations and do not show up for meetings. We must pay for any dinners that are reserved so this can be costly to the chapter. A great benefit of the new system is that it is easier for members, as you do not have to carry cash or take your checkbook to meetings. With a few clicks your reservation and payment is made electronically. This new system will also streamline our meeting check-in process to prevent lines at the door.

To make a reservation, simply go to the [Meetings](#) page and click **Reserve**. Click the **Add to Cart** button next to the rate that applies to you (Member, Non-Member, Meeting Only). Then, follow the on-screen instructions.

You can read more about PayPal on our [About PayPal](#) page. Thanks to **Janet Bran, Hillary Russak, and Joe Humbert** for making this change happen.

### Email Communication Service

This month we stopped using bCentral, a Microsoft small business product, for email communication. We are now using a free service with our ISP to communicate with members. When we used bCentral, we received comments that members were not

receiving mail (there was a problem with AOL users in particular), that members using Lotus Notes could not open the messages, and that many members couldn't read the HTML format. Messages are now sent in text format so that a larger number of members should be able to open the messages.

Please let us know if you have problems with receiving or reading chapter messages. Thanks to **Janet Bran** and **Hillary Russak** for researching and setting up this new service.

## Touchstone Revival—Seeking Executive Director

I am happy to announce that the NorCal chapter presidents are planning to get Touchstone, the popular Northern California technical writing competition, up and running in time for entries this fall. We will need scores of volunteers, so please consider whether you would like to be involved in this prestigious competition. Watch for announcements about these openings.

Currently we are seeking an *Executive Director* who will be responsible for oversight and planning of the competition. If you would like to nominate someone, including yourself, please contact me by [email](#) or phone at 925-462-1676.

## Other Opportunities

We have other opportunities for you to contribute to EBSTC if you want to become involved. You can see these opportunities on our [Volunteers](#) page.

I hope that you have a chance to attend one of the remaining monthly chapter meetings. **Melody Brumis**, V.P. of Programs, has some great programs lined up.

If you have any suggestions, concerns, or questions, please send me an [email](#).

Becky ▲

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## Chapter Meeting Information

### Upcoming Meetings

Attending meetings is a great way to learn new things and connect with technical writers around the East Bay.

East Bay programs are usually held at Crow Canyon Country Club in San Ramon. For details on meeting location and reservations, see the [meetings page](#) on the chapter web site.

Date	Speaker	Topic
March 3	<b>Jack Molisani</b> 	<p><i>How to Use a Portfolio to Ace a Job Interview</i></p> <p>Have you ever interviewed for a job you wanted but didn't get? Chances are you were lacking a successful interview strategy. In this presentation I will show how a portfolio is not just a sample of your work, it is an interviewing tool you can use to achieve the four critical steps needed to receive a job offer. The presentation includes what to put in a portfolio, how to get things to put in your portfolio, and most importantly how to use your portfolio to ace a job interview.</p> <p><b>About our speaker:</b></p> <p>Jack Molisani has been a project officer in the Space Division of the United States Air Force, the manager of training and documentation of a multi-million-dollar software company, and currently is the founder and president of ProSpring Inc., an award-winning technical communication and staffing firm: <a href="http://www.prospring.net">www.prospring.net</a></p> <p>He is also producing <a href="#">LavaCon: The Conference for Technical Communication Managers</a> this September in Honolulu, Hawaii.</p>
April 7		<i>To be announced</i>
May 5	<b>Linda Urban</b>	<i>What's New in Online Help</i>
June 2	<b>Becky Rude, Linda Shaltz</b>	<p><i>Changing of the Guard</i></p> <p>Join us for a party to honor our volunteers and swear in our new officers. ▲</p>

## Meeting Report: January 2005

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by [Greg Thompson](#)  
 EBSTC Member

### “Cool Careers for Technical Communicators”

Because of the job down-turn of the last few years, a common phrase many of us have unfortunately had to become familiar with is “transferable skills.” At the January EBSTC meeting, “Cool Careers for Technical Communicators,” we were able to learn how some technical communicators, who had worked in more traditional jobs, were able to leverage their skills and add additional technical and domain expertise to work in less traditional jobs.

The best thing about the meeting was the format. Instead of having each panel participant come up to the front and address the group as a whole, each got their own table and we rotated to them, seven or eight of us at a time. This small-group format made the meeting more intimate and informative for all of the audience.

The panel members included:

- **Nan Breedlove** – Grant writing
- **Mel Cox** – Graphic communications
- **Judith Herr** – Instructional design and training
- **Beau Cain** – Marketing communications
- **Mimi Wessling** – Medical writing
- **Janet Bran** – Web design

### Organize! Organize! Organize!

This is **Nan Breedlove’s** mantra. The ability to organize one’s work tasks is the real skill that a good technical communicator can bring to working in a non-profit environment. In addition to organization, the writing and research skills that Nan developed as a technical writer help her to develop grants and other written materials for non-profits. Her handouts listed non-profit resources like the [Foundation Center](#), where writers for non-profits can go to get information on grant writing and newsletter formats.

### Graphics for All Sorts

**Mel Cox** doesn’t just work for computer companies. A variety of different industries have used his graphic design skills, including manufacturing and plumbing. Mel brought samples of his work to share with the audience and show the variety of projects on which he has worked.

### Tech Writing Skills = Training Development Skills?

If you were a tech writer, can you be a trainer? **Judith Herr** seems to think so. Her handout entitled “An Encouraging Exercise: Match Technical Communicator abilities to anticipated activities in training material development/delivery,” listed twenty-five different skills that a technical writer and a trainer/instructional designer have in common. Judith has made this successful transition in projects like designing materials and curriculum for training 6,000 personnel and vendors worldwide for a garment manufacturer.

### If You Can Document, Can You Market?

Many recruiters for marketing communication jobs don’t seem to think so. I have seen many online ads for marketing communicators that have included the phrase “tech writers need not apply.” **Beau Cain** thinks this restriction is nonsense. He has taught a college course called “Writing White Papers” that shows tech writers how to insinuate their skills into the product development and sales process. His handout listed each

type of marketing communication document, its function, and where it belonged in the sales cycle.

### **Calling Dr. Wessling, Calling Dr. Wessling**

**Mimi Wessling** is a linguistic physician for those in the medical world who don't like to write. Combining an academic background (a B.A. and M.A. in physical chemistry) with a certificate in technical communication, Mimi writes manuals for instrumentation at a UCSC laboratory.

### **A Picture and a Thousand Words**

As technical communicators, some of us focus on putting words on paper while others do the same with images. Some, like **Janet Bran**, have learned to do both. Janet took classes at the [Academy of Web Design San Francisco](#) (AWDSF) and now considers herself both a web designer and a technical communicator.

### **References**

This meeting was very informative for the audience. And, people seemed to enjoy it, as they lingered for a long time after the meeting ended. You can download the presenters' handouts from the chapter [meeting page](#). ▲

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## Congratulations to New Members

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Welcome to our new, transfer, and reinstated members! We hope you can come meet us at a chapter meeting.



- Yvonne Bullock
- Annette Greiner
- Guy Haas
- Amanda Hall
- Dolly (Sarvinder) Harish
- Julie Johnson
- Katherine Lasisz
- Glenda Leatherman
- Patrick Lufkin
- Angus MacDonald
- George Mena
- Joan Schoettler
- Beverly Shultz
- Laurice Strickland
- Greg Thompson
- Mariellen Wallace
- Lorean Williamson
- John Wolley

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## Networking

- [Northern California STC Chapters](#)
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### Northern California STC Chapters



There are six active Northern California STC chapters. Each chapter meets on a different Wednesday or Thursday so you can attend all the meetings. Contact the respective presidents for more information or visit the chapter web site.

Wednesdays	Chapter	President
Week 1	<a href="#">Sacramento</a>	<a href="#">Cindy Kite</a>
Week 2	<a href="#">Berkeley</a>	<a href="#">Joe Devney</a>
Week 3	<a href="#">San Francisco</a>	<a href="#">Susan Becker</a>
Thursdays	Chapter	President
Week 1	<a href="#">East Bay</a>	<a href="#">Becky Rude</a>
Week 3	<a href="#">North Bay</a>	<a href="#">Rolfe Dlugy-Hegwer</a>
Week 4	<a href="#">Silicon Valley</a>	<a href="#">Marie Highby</a>

### Professional Development SIG

The EBSTC Professional Development SIG supports and encourages our personal evolutions as we transform ourselves to remain marketable.

#### Monthly Meetings

It's easy to remember when we meet because it's exactly a week after our chapter meeting.

<b>What</b>	EBSTC Professional Development SIG meeting
<b>When</b>	Second Thursday of the month at 11:45 A.M.
<b>Where</b>	Willow Tree Restaurant, 6513 Regional Street, Dublin, 925-838-9111

#### Join the SIG Yahoo Group

Because the group is private, you can't find it using the search function. If you'd like to join, send us an [email](#). ▲

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- [52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference](#)
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### 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference

Mark your calendars! STC's annual conference is the world's largest gathering of technical communicators. Among the many highlights of the conference are educational sessions, workshops, vendor exhibits, and displays of the winning entries of the Society's international competitions.

Technical communication professionals also benefit from numerous networking opportunities and employment resources. In addition, STC chapters organize regional conferences to address the specific needs of technical communicators in a particular geographic area.



### Elections 2005

In early March, the STC office will send out ballots for STC's 2005 elections (for both officers and the referendum) via e-mail or First Class mail. (The delivery format is based on how members requested, on their membership applications or renewal forms, to receive their election materials.) The deadline to vote in the election is **12 noon (EDT), April 15, 2005**.

View the [candidates' statements](#) (PDF).

### Proposed Amendments to the STC Bylaws

In addition to electing candidates for Society office, voters will be asked to approve amendments to the STC Bylaws.

The board of directors has approved the placement of the following changes to Article IV of the STC Bylaws. Changes to Articles I, II, IV, X, and XI of the bylaws require an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the votes cast by the membership. The board has recommended a vote of YES to these changes, in order to establish parity among chapters and SIGs in representation. More information will be provided with the ballot sent out in February for the regular STC elections. Voting on this referendum will take place at that time.

Change Article IV, Section 3. Duties of Board Members, Item C. Second Vice President, to read, "The second vice president acts for the first vice president when the occasion arises. The second vice president also performs such other duties as the president or the board may assign."

Change Article IV. Section 3 Item G. Directors, to read, "Directors attend all board meetings, serve on Society committees, and perform such other duties as the president or the board may assign."

Remove STC Bylaw Article IV, Section 5. Regionalization: "The Society is

divided into eight regions; each region includes all chapters, members-at-large, and other affiliations that exist in that region. Those members assigned to a region elect one director who represents that region.”

### Note from Your EBSTC President

There has been much discussion recently on the STC president's listserve about this amendment. I encourage you to consider carefully whether to vote in favor of this amendment.

You can read STC President, **Andrea Ames**, argument in favor of the amendment on the [Transformation web site](#) (PDF).

You can also read an opposing opinion from the President of WritersUA, **Joe Welinske**, on the [WritersUA web site](#).

--Becky Rude ▲

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## Book Review: *XML Hacks*



by [Patrick Lufkin](#)  
 STC Senior Member



[XML Hacks: 100 Industrial-Strength Tips and Tools](#)

Michael Fitzgerald, O'Reilly, 2004 [ISBN 0-596-00711-6, 478 pages, \$24.95 USD]

### XML—A Technology You Need to Know

Since its first appearance as a World Wide Web Consortium recommendation in early 1998, the Extensible Markup Language (XML) has become increasingly popular. XML markup looks a lot like HTML, but instead of indicating how text is to be displayed, the markup indicates a datum's meaning within a document, e.g., "Part number" or "Price." As a result you get "smart data" and "smart documents," which can then be stored, searched, sorted, parsed, combined, and displayed in a myriad of ways.

Because of its power and flexibility, XML is the technology of choice wherever smart structured information is needed. Today XML is routinely being used to improve the utility of web pages, to manage data for electronic interchange, to convert documents from one type to another, and much more.

### XML Hacks

Whether you are using XML now, or suspect that it might be in your future, you might want to take a look at *XML Hacks: 100 Industrial-Strength Tips and Tools*, from O'Reilly.

Don't forget, as an EBSTC member of the O'Reilly User Group Program, you can buy any of this publisher's books at 20% off. Just enter the code DSUG when ordering online at [O'Reilly](#).

Each book in O'Reilly's "Hacks" series presents an impressive collection of tips, tricks, tools, and workarounds for getting the most out of a particular tool or technology. Other books in the series can be found on the [Hacks page](#).

*XML Hacks* is a gold mine for "techie" who want to explore, experiment, and push the XML envelope. But if you are not particularly technical, don't let that put you off. Because the book is divided into 100 discrete hacks, most of which only take a page or two to explain, it is an excellent source of quick solutions to practical real-world problems such as converting plain text to XML, or HTML to XHTML. Taken as a whole, the book also provides a good overview of the many things that can be done with XML.

### Easy Gradient

*XML Hacks* is organized to move the reader from the very basic to the increasingly complex. It starts with clear explanations of

the parts of an XML document, covers how to display XML documents in a browser, and moves on from there. Among the hacks are many that may be of particular interest to technical communicators:

- Editing XML files using various editors
- Converting Microsoft Office files to XML
- Converting old comma-separated text files into XML and vice versa
- Generating PDF files and SVG graphics from XML documents
- Converting SGML files to XML
- Creating books, technical manuals, and papers in XML with DocBook

For the more technically adept, further hacks show how to validate documents against an XML schema, create document type definitions, and more.

## Resources

Much of the magic of XML is unleashed through the use of software tools that parse, validate, and manipulate files in various ways. Many of these tools are introduced in the hacks, along with details on how to obtain them. Many are free or low cost, and readily available on the Web.

Sample hacks and all code examples from the book are downloadable from the [O'Reilly web site](#). ▲

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## About Devil Mountain Views

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

For information about STC, go to the [Society's web page](#).

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**DMV Basics** The East Bay Chapter newsletter is named after a local landmark, Mount Diablo, in Northern California. With a few exceptions, all distances in California are measured from that point, called the Mount Diablo Meridian. The East Bay Chapter serves the cities along the 680 corridor and the east/west part of 580. City-wise it's Vallejo to Pleasanton, Tracy to Oakland and Fremont. We have members from each of those places.

### **PUBLICATION POLICY**

We are always interested in sharing technical communication trends and information with our readers. For details, contact the [Managing Editor](#).

### **PUBLICATION SCHEDULE**

Devil Mountain Views is published bimonthly, five times a year (September, November, January, March, May) with occasional e-news.

### **ARTICLE SUBMISSION DEADLINES**

Sep/Oct 2004 issue – Aug 2, 2004  
Nov/Dec 2004 issue – Oct 2, 2004  
Jan/Feb 2005 issue – Dec 2, 2004  
Mar/Apr 2005 issue – Feb 2, 2005  
May/Jun 2005 issue – Apr 2, 2005

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If you are submitting an article, please download our [template](#) to use as a guideline for writing your article.

### **REPRINT POLICY**

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Becky Rude, Managing Editor, 665 Oak Circle, Pleasanton, CA 94566.

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**Inquiries:** If you have questions or want to start your ad, please contact the [Managing Editor](#).

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*Devil Mountain Views* also reserves the right to edit articles to fit its stylistic standards and space constraints. Articles are edited, copyedited, and proof-read before publication. The newsletter also reserves the right to not print articles deemed unfit for publication.

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**Note:** We will update this section as our chapter archives are updated. If you were a Managing Editor during a time frame that is missing from the history, please [let us know](#).

<b>Year</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>2004–2005</b>	Managing Editor: Becky Rude
<b>2003–2004</b>	Managing Editor: Becky Rude Guest Managing Editor: Gwaltney Mountford <b>Award of Excellence</b> in the STC International Newsletter Competition.
<b>2002–2003</b>	Managing Editor: Ashwini Tharval <b>Best of Show, Most Improved, Distinguished Technical Communication</b> awards in the STC International Newsletter Competition.
<b>2001–2002</b>	Managing Editors: Ashwini Tharval and Becky Rude. The newsletter is launched online in Web format. <b>Award of Merit</b> in the STC International Newsletter Competition.
<b>1999–2001</b>	Managing Editor: Teresa Washburn <b>Award of Excellence</b> in the STC International Newsletter Competition.
<b>1997–1999</b>	Managing Editor: Kelly Walker <b>Award of Excellence</b> in the STC International Newsletter Competition.
<b>1996–1997</b>	Managing Editor: Melody Brumis Newsletter name changed to <i>Devil Mountain Views</i> . Susan Moxley won the contest held to rename the newsletter. In July 1996, a spoof issue called <i>East Bay Flame</i> is published.
<b>1995–1996</b>	Managing Editor: Bruce Robinson An offshoot, the <i>Twig</i> , is published by President Gwaltney Mountford to supplement the <i>East Bay Log</i> .
<b>1994</b>	Newsletter name changed to <i>East Bay Log</i> .
<b>1962</b>	The <i>Pacifica News</i> was published in the fall in the year the <i>Pacifica</i> chapter was founded. (The chapter was renamed to <i>East Bay</i> in 1982 under President T.R. Girill.) ▲

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