

Devil Mountain Views

Newsletter of the East Bay Chapter of STC

Supporting technical communication in the San Francisco Bay Area since 1962

March/April 2008

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Congratulations, **Richard Mateosian**, East Bay member and frequent contributor to the Chapter, for being honored as an Associate Fellow in 2008.

Richard's career path moved from mathematician to programmer to development manager to technical book author to technical marketer to technical writer, all in the short span of 40 years. He is a member of ACM and IEEE. For the last 20 years, he has been review editor for IEEE Micro.

Richard's STC activities include chapter president and competition director. He is currently president of the [Berkeley Chapter](#), treasurer of the Gordon Scholarship, and treasurer of the Management SIG. He serves on a society-level task force to determine the appropriate funding model for STC communities.

Feature Articles



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2006–2007
STC
International
Newsletter
Competition

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[Linda Cunningham](#), in her first article, writes about the writing gems she and her co-workers found in the Writing Boot Camp workshop sponsored by EBSTC in January.

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[Jane Olivera](#) writes about how to run Microsoft Windows on a Macintosh computer.

[Technical Communications Internships - What, Why, Where, and How?](#)

[Andrew Davis](#), president of Synergistech Communications, Inc., discusses how internships can benefit both the new writer and the company.





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Transitioning from Technical Communicator to Project Manager



by [Laura Dahlinger](#) and Josette Schaber

Laura has been PMP certified for eight years in Columbus, Ohio.



Josette is also PMP certified and has worked as a technical communicator for ten years, also in Columbus, Ohio.

Technical communicators and project managers have similar communication skills: They must manage information and people, and they must communicate clearly and effectively. You can say that becoming certified as a project manager is a natural progression of a technical communicator's talents.

It can be tricky to make the transition, as organizations typically require specific experience. Companies frequently do not realize that they need people who have both skill sets. Project managers organize any type of project from initial conception to completion, whereas technical communicators mainly manage documentation projects from conception to completion. However, you can become qualified as a Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM) or as a Project Management Professional (PMP), use the certification to display your flexibility as an employee, and expand your career capabilities.

Certification Requirements

Requirement	CAPM	PMP
Education	High school diploma or Associate's degree	Bachelor's degree, Associate's degree, or high school diploma

Experience	1,500 hours of work experience on a project team OR At least 23 hours of project management education	Bachelor's degree: 4,500 hours of project management experience within 36 months OR Associate's degree or high school diploma: 7,500 hours of project management experience within 60 months
Project Management		At least 35 hours of project management education

If you have less than five years' experience as a technical communicator, consider the CAPM certification. The requirements are less stringent, and it is a good way to show an employer your flexibility. If you have more experience, consider the PMP certification. The requirements are stricter, but the certification holds more prestige. When applying, you can list only project management experience from the previous eight years.

Project Management Institute

You may want to consider becoming a member of the Project Management Institute (PMI). As a member, you save on the cost of the test; you receive industry-related publications; and you have access to the online library of articles, white papers, and other project management-related information. For more information, visit the PMI website:

<http://www.pmi.org/Pages/default.aspx>

CAPM Certification

Although CAPM certification requires less experience and education than PMP certification, the requirements can still be daunting. Whether you choose the work experience option or the education option, you should take a certification class to help you prepare for the test and compare your experience with other certificate applicants.

The application for the CAPM exam has one part for project work experience and one part for project management education. Be sure to submit the correct part; otherwise, your application is considered incomplete and will be rejected.

PMP Certification PMP certification is more difficult due to the quantity of information required. If you kept track of your project hours, you will have no problem preparing your application. If you did not keep track, start now! It is good information not only for applications (such as these certifications) but also for your resume.

Application Overview PMI bases certification on nine knowledge areas and five main stages of a project. The nine knowledge areas are integration, scope, time, cost, quality, human resources, communications, risk, and procurement.

The five main stages of a project are initializing, planning, executing, monitoring/controlling, and closing. The following table summarizes these stages:

Stage	Description
Initializing	Generally, this stage is the initial discovery phase of the project. You begin planning the project, from how the people, products, and phases integrate to what the customer needs. You investigate the risks and rewards of the project in order to decide if the project is feasible.
Planning	You plan how long the document will take to create, consider such issues as software and subject matter expert (SME) availability, and plan the actual structure of your project. Ask for assistance to mitigate the risk that the document will not be completed on time or with the resources available.
Executing	You may still be waiting for answers (for example, about software integration of a help file), but as long as the answers do not derail the project, you can begin the actual writing. You will log most of your hours during this stage.
Monitoring/ Controlling	You verify that the documentation is proceeding as expected. Are you receiving answers from your SMEs in a timely manner? Are software issues being resolved? Are you writing about items that are not in the scope of the project (for example, documenting marketing uses for a product while writing the help file)?

Closing	You deliver the file or document and record lessons learned. Perhaps you should have spoken to the manager of Development during the planning stage instead of waiting for execution. Or you may have discovered a major flaw in the help authoring tool that forced you to use Web help instead of compressed help. This stage takes about the same percentage of project time as the initializing stage.
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For certifications, you do not have to gain project management experience as the "direct" project manager; you can qualify by "leading and directing project tasks." You must enter hours for specific tasks that PMI includes on the form, such as "Define the scope of the project based on the organization's need to meet the customer project expectations."

For more information on becoming a PMP, see the PMP requirements on the PMI website:

<http://www.pmi.org/CareerDevelopment/Pages/Obtaining-Credential.aspx>

***Laura Dahlinger** is a technical communicator/project manager at the Ohio Department of Transportation for Quick Solutions, Inc. in Columbus, Ohio. Laura earned her PMP certification and has been a technical communicator/project manager for eight years.*

***Josette Schaber** is a technical communicator working for Astute Solutions in Columbus, Ohio. Josette enjoys working in HTML and has helped create several websites for use in small business ventures. She's been a technical communicator for over ten years and a member of STC. Josette also has her PMP certification. ▲*

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Gems from the Writing Boot Camp



by [Linda Cunningham](#)

Linda has been an STC member for 2 years. This is her first article.

Editor's note: STC Director at Large Leah Guren gave a one-day Writing Boot Camp workshop in January 2008. See the [Jan/Feb 2008 Newsletter](#).

When I told a friend that I was going to a one-day EBSTC-sponsored Writing Boot Camp to review the basics, he replied, "What could you possibly learn in a day that would be of practical value?" I thought that was a good question to ponder, especially if I wanted to ask my manager to send me to another class.

I attended the Boot Camp with two co-workers. Everett has a Ph.D. in the sciences and many years of experience writing manuals. Ben has a B.A. in Technical Writing and is new to the company. I have an M.S. in science and have been writing manuals for the last five years. After class, I asked each co-worker to share the gems he found in Leah Guren's class, and include them below with those I found.

Everett

Everett found Leah's suggestion to "cut the fluff" very reassuring. He often cuts phrases similar to "It is recommended that under certain circumstances you might consider doing...." Her 60-second challenge approach to editing intrigued him. He thought that if he could resist the urge to rewrite and make his eyes pick out the most glaring mistakes, then the little rocks and pebbles that needed editing would be apparent. A new consideration for Everett is not using Latin terms such as *e.g.*

Ben

When Leah discussed her clients, she stated that the usual response to asking about their style guide was a brief pause followed by a comment about it being a project on the back burner. I could not help but notice Ben smile at hearing this. Since he was hired, Ben has been an advocate for the standardization of terms: is it shut-off or shutoff?. Ben was also fascinated when Leah told of the history behind the two spaces after a period. He had never really thought about the visual impact made by the white spaces at the sentence level. Ben appreciated the reminder to avoid absolutes when writing safety or hazard warnings, for example, writing "reduce the risk of" instead of "prevent."

Linda

Leah mentioned that a person's linguistic ear for written language is set by age 7 or 8. I thought about how I usually react to the copy my SMEs give me and decided to be more gracious toward their work. My new word of the day was "virgule," which is a slash or stroke between two words, as in and/or. Leah's discussion of writing practices for internationalization, such as not using virgules or Latin, helped me better understand how to communicate with a world-wide audience.

They have also had a number of contracts where they have worked separately. Do they find the benefits of working together outweigh the draw backs of spending 24 hours a day together? Come to the meeting and find out.

Victoria (Viki) Maki, M.B.A., is president of Bitzone LLC, a technical publishing and training company. She has almost 20 years of experience as a trainer and technical writer. She has written and designed software manuals of all kinds, marketing materials, online help systems, websites, white papers, and training materials. Her clients include Chevron, Visa, Oracle, Pacific Bell, and other enterprises, both large and small.

Viki and her husband, Jim Bisso, co-manage the Silicon Valley STC Chapter Technical/API Docs SIG and are co-authors of "Documenting APIs: Writing Developer Documentation for Java APIs and SDKs," which is available at <a href="http://www.bitzone.com" target="_

Windows on a Macintosh Computer

by [Jane Olivera](#)

Jane has been a technical communicator for 20 years. For the last 10 years, she has leaned heavily toward Web development and some programming.

Can you run Microsoft Windows on a Macintosh computer? You can now! All new Mac models use Intel processors — either the Intel Core Duo or Intel Core 2 Duo processor. You do have to buy your own copy of the Windows software (Apple doesn't provide it), but after you do, there are three ways you can run it on your Mac.

Boot Camp

The first way is by using the Boot Camp software provided by Apple in its newest version of OS X (10.5 Leopard). After you perform the appropriate preparations and install your copy of Windows, Boot Camp gives you the ability to boot the Mac in either OS X or in Windows. This method has no costs beyond the purchase of Windows and, for some, the cost to upgrade a previous version of OS X to Leopard.

Parallels Desktop

The second way is with a product you can purchase separately, Parallels Desktop. It also allows you to run Windows, but operates a little bit differently. After you complete the installation process, Parallels allows you to have both operating systems running at the same time, so there is no rebooting to move between the Windows and Mac environments. You can share folders, copy and paste text between Windows and Mac files, and run Windows programs as if they were native Mac applications. Cost: \$79.99.

The differences between these two products go deeper than whether or not you can run Windows and OS X side by side or need to reboot to move between them. With Boot Camp, Windows runs natively, as if it were running on an actual Windows PC, while Parallels Desktop is a virtual machine. This means that Windows runs inside the Parallels virtual machine rather than natively on the Intel processor. One approach is not necessarily better than the other, and they both have pros and cons. The one that is better for you depends on your needs.

Note: One source cautioned not to install both at the same time to try to decide between them. If you install both and activate both, only one will work.

Boot Camp's native support of the hardware means Windows runs a lot faster than with Parallels. You have full compatibility with peripherals, so you have the same access to the CPU, graphics processing, and so on, that you would have if you were using any non-Mac PC. Because the graphics support is native, the GUI is very responsive. These two factors make the Boot Camp version of Windows perform the same as Windows does on a PC. It does have some drawbacks, however. There is limited support for other operating systems such as Linux and BSD, you

have to reboot to switch between Windows and Mac OS X, and it is hard to share your Windows files with OS X. If you're a Windows user and you want your experience to be unchanged, or if you have many Windows applications you want to run, you would probably prefer Boot Camp.

On the other hand, you might prefer to use the Parallels virtual machine if your primary need is to move files between Windows and Mac or you have only a few Windows applications you need to run, providing you're comfortable with some degradation of the "Windows experience." One example might be a Web developer whose main use of Windows is to view pages on both platforms. Parallels Desktop also gives you a faster boot time than Boot Camp, and is quicker yet if you are resuming Windows. Drawbacks for Parallels include a sluggish Windows GUI, which makes the perceived speed of an operation slower even though the actual CPU speed is almost identical. Parallels also may not be compatible with all peripherals.

VMware Fusion

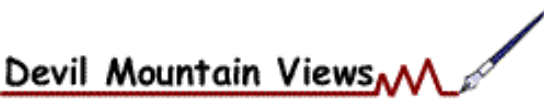
The above two ways to run Windows were available soon after Apple switched to the Intel processor. There is now a third option available, VMware Fusion. It comes from VMware, a company with a long history of providing virtual Windows environments for Macs. VMware is trusted by millions of past users. The early versions had some problems, though, so you'd want to check the reviews about the current version before making a decision. Like Parallels, VMware Fusion is a virtual machine, but a very sophisticated one. From the reviews it looks like Fusion is better at accessing all your hardware, and is the most seamless way to run the two environments. Cost: \$79.99.

Games

For some people, there is one last important consideration — Windows games. For some people, this is the Windows functionality they most want to keep (or get). If games are very important for you, Boot Camp is your only choice. Graphics support is not native with Parallels, so performance on games just won't be the same. VMware Fusion apparently runs select games well. However, you should research this product more thoroughly if you want its excellent virtualization capability.

Summary

In short, the new Intel Macs make it possible to have two machines in one, a Mac OS X machine and a Windows machine. Depending on what you need from your Windows-on-a-Mac, you can run your copy of Windows using the software that is included with the newest version of OS X (Leopard), or you can purchase virtualization software such as Parallels Desktop or VMware Fusion and run Windows in a virtual machine, side by side with your Mac's OS X. ▲



Technical Communications Internships - What, Why, Where, and How?



by [Andrew Davis](#)

Andrew is President of Synergistech Communications, Inc., a technology industry recruiting firm in Napa, CA.

Technical communicators learn best by doing. And real-world experience matters most to the majority of hiring managers. Internships are a synergistic solution to the dilemma of how to efficiently get experience while helping a company do real work.

As a member of the San Francisco chapter of STC's Internship Committee during the late 1980s and early 1990s, I learned a lot about internships: The advantages to both technical communicators and companies and the challenges of arranging them.

What Is an Internship?

Internships are short-term, on-site assignments in which a manager teaches and advises the intern in the performance of typical duties in exchange for a discounted hourly pay rate and the opportunity to hire (or extend) the intern if mutually agreed. The intern:

- Learns how professional technical communicators work.
- Gets hands-on exposure to the tools, processes, expectations, and compromises made in "the real world."
- Contributes to a product or service that affects paying customers.

Internships allow an individual who may have academic training in Technical Writing, or who has explored the profession through STC meetings or informational interviews, to find out what it's actually like.

Legally, interns are temporary W2-based employees of the company for which they are performing services. They are not necessarily eligible for employment benefits, but they are paid for each hour they work. The intern has a fixed-term employment contract, but is subject to dismissal like any other employee under specific circumstances.

Internship Benefits

Companies stand to benefit from hiring interns because they can train the aspiring technical communicator in their process and to their standards. Interns typically do not have the "bad habits" that often plague more experienced professionals. And their levels of motivation and attentiveness often compensate for their lack of experience. Essentially, they are more likely than most to do what they're told.

Interns gain real-world work experience, including exposure to the processes, tools, personalities, and priorities of technical publications departments in actual companies. They also have the opportunity to earn positive professional references and create portfolio samples that will impress future employers. Essentially, the internship is their first job in the business and influences the course of their career.

Interns who excel are often hired as salaried staff by the company with which they have interned. These employment associations often last many years because both parties have established respect, trust, and even mutual gratitude. After all, the company took a chance on an inexperienced candidate and showed him or her the ropes, so candidates can feel strong loyalty and reluctance to leave.

Internship Costs

Internships are guaranteed wins for the intern. He or she gets all the benefits cited above with little or no risk.

From the hiring manager's viewpoint, internships are a "resource sink" if not seen as a long-term investment in the company's business practices and culture. When considered only as a near-term cost-benefit tradeoff ("What is our guaranteed reward for hiring an unknown and training him or her for three-to-six months?"), internships have little merit from the corporate perspective.

Here's why: Apart from the money actually paid to the intern - which we suggest be in the range of \$25-30/hr (gross cost to the employer) - companies must provide employment benefits if the intern works more than 30 hours/week. Hiring managers typically must also secure headcount and funding, just as they would for a regular employee. This can be time-consuming and challenging to justify if the alternative is to hire a more senior resource. And when an intern comes aboard, he or she must be fully trained, equipped, and supervised more completely than regular employees. Finally, when the internship ends (and the intern isn't hired), he or she leaves and the company's investment evaporates.

Which Workplaces Are Best-suited to Internships?

Not all companies are suitable for internships. "Lean and mean" startups and exceptionally fast-paced departments are usually inhospitable places for a would-be Technical Writer if there's no one available to guide, buffer, and provide consistent feedback. Even if the intern is used to life in high-tech's oncoming lane, too much fundamental training is inevitably left to chance, and bad habits result. Even if the company considers the association a success, odds are that the intern has been exploited rather than instructed and thus no sense of loyalty results.

Companies, led by an experienced manager and in which the role of technical publications is respected and also ideally where there are several levels of seniority among the staff, are best-suited to hosting internships. In our opinion, the manager or a designated Lead-level Technical Writer needs to commit at least two hours a week to meeting with the intern, evaluating his or her work, and sharing constructive feedback. He or she must also be available on short notice to intervene and troubleshoot projects on the intern's behalf. Merely throwing the intern to the wolves will not work to the company's advantage, even though it may have been the way the intern's supervisor learned.

We were all beginners once, and internships are not the right vehicle for torturing the trainee. Our advice: don't hire an intern, or accept an internship, if either party isn't willing to make a formal and enforceable commitment to "safe" learning and regular constructive feedback.

Internship Implementation

By accepting internships, interns leave the world of theory and enter the realm of economics-driven pragmatism, often for the first time. Internships must meet the needs of the manager to whom he or she reports; the intern must accept the manager's priorities and resulting guidance. To avoid exploitation and generate better productivity and long-term allegiance, the arrangement must also meet the needs of the intern.

Summary

In practice, internships must have the following:

- Specific objectives
- Measurable goals
- Explicit accountability (from both parties)
- Documented accomplishments and references
- Rights to actual portfolio samples and professional references

If all five criteria are not agreed to and documented in a formal Internship Agreement, internships always fall short of their potential.

For more information about what works and what doesn't, contact Andrew Davis at andrew@synergistech.com, or the directors of

participating academic programs, such as Ms. Lu Rehling(
rehlingl@sfsu.edu) of San Francisco State University's Technical
& Professional Writing Program. ▲

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President's Message



by [Helen Cheung](#)

EBSTC President

Greetings East Bay STC Chapter members!

The year is winding down quickly and the chapter has been keeping busy and making good progress. We have some great articles in this issue of the newsletter. I hope you will take some time to read them.

Past Events

In January, Andrew Davis gave a useful presentation on resumes and portfolios. Tim Bombosch was our speaker in February, and he talked about the challenges we face as communicators when it comes to Web 2.0. The program was educational and very informative. If you missed any of our programs, you can check out those that were recorded on our Podcast page at <http://www.ebstc.org/podcasts.html>.

Also in January, Leah Guren, STC Director at Large, taught a one-day writing workshop. The workshop was a huge success and I have heard many positive reviews from attendees. Forty-five people registered for the class. Schedule permitting, we are going to try and plan another workshop this year, so stay tuned.

Updates

The following are some updates on what's been going on with our chapter:

- As mentioned in the last newsletter, Dave Eicher has stepped down from his chapter responsibilities and we are seeking a new president-elect.
- Joe Humbert, our treasurer, webweaver, and membership manager, has temporarily taken over the managing editor duties from Dave for this issue and the Jan/Feb 2008. Luckily, he has three volunteers that helped him with this issue of the newsletter. The following people are our copy editors: Ken Evans, Elaine Pendergast, and Susan Moxley. Thank you, Ken, Elaine, and Susan! If you have any articles to contribute for the May/June issue, not only on technical writing, but even poems or short stories, contact Joe

Humbert (JoeHumbertSTC@aol.com).

This just in — a new member may be wanting to take over the managing editor job. Great!

- The Rechartering Committee has been working hard putting together the Rechartering Plan. We had our first meeting on January 23rd and we got a lot done. I hope to wrap up the plan soon and post it on our website. We will send out an email announcement when it is posted. When it is on our website, I encourage you to look at the plan and provide feedback. Remember, this is your chance to voice how you want the Society to view the chapter and what you want your chapter to do for you and for our members.
- We are still working on putting together a Webinar this year. The Webinar will be a special topic outside of our monthly meetings. The Webinar Committee is working out the details. So stay tuned for more information.
- I will be submitting our chapter for the STC Community of Excellence award this year. We have accomplished a lot this year and with a Community of Merit Award under Joe Humbert's leadership, I feel we are on our way in achieving the Community of Excellence award.
- We already submitted three issues of last year's newsletters, under Dave Eicher's leadership, for consideration in the annual STC Newsletter Competition. He and his staff won a Merit Award last year.
- We have had three productive Council Meetings with our voting officers and program leaders this year. The minutes will be posted on our website soon - look under Administration page at <http://www.ebstc.org/administration.html>. I plan to schedule one more Council Meeting for the year.
- Elections for chapter leaders will occur in May. When you receive the email ballot, please be sure to vote.
- Be sure to vote in STC's Board Election: one plug for our own Judith Herr, an East Bay member. <http://www.stc.org/candidatesFAQ/index.asp>
- Finally, if you haven't renewed your STC membership with East Bay, we encourage you to do so. <http://www.stc.org/membership/join01.asp>

Upcoming Programs

We have some great programs scheduled for the rest of the year. Here is a partial list:

- **March 6** — "Trends in Technical Communication: Couples Who Work Together" — panelists Gwaltney and Carl Mountford, Viki Maki, and Jim Bisso, moderated by Ann Adams
- **April 3** — "What's the Point of Punctuation?" by Robyn Brode Orsini, a.k.a. the Comma Queen
- **May 1** — To be announced
- **June 12** — "Changing of the Guard" and a report from the Annual Conference

Get Involved

Beef up your resume and get involved in our chapter! We are always seeking new volunteers. To read about open positions, visit our "Volunteers" page at <http://www.ebstc.org/volunteers.html>.

I also encourage you to participate in our Yahoogroups discussion board. Remember, this is a forum for you to share your ideas and concerns. To sign up, click "[East Bay STC Network](#)" link in the upper right corner on the homepage of the website.

I want to hear from you! I believe open lines of communication keep the chapter going. If you have any questions, feel free to drop me a note at helen_ews@yahoo.com.

See you at the next meeting!

Helen ▲

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Editor's Message

by [Joseph M. Humbert](#)



Joe is a Senior Member of STC and is currently the Treasurer and Web Weaver for East Bay STC.

Welcome. This is my second stint as your Managing Editor. In the last issue, which I took over in an emergency, I put out a plea for help. Luckily, folks responded with offers of help and articles.

First of all, let me thank my copy editors, [Ken Evans](#), [Elaine Pendergrast](#), and [Susan Moxley](#) for stepping up to the plate. And I may have a new Managing Editor take over the next issue and beyond. Terrific.

We have some great articles in this edition:

[Laura Dahlinger and Josette Schaber](#), two writers out of Columbus, Ohio, write about how to transition from technical communication to project management.

[Linda Cunningham](#) attended the EBSTC-sponsored workshop, Writing Boot Camp. She writes about what writing gems they found.

[Jane Olivera](#) tells you Macintosh computer devotees how to get Microsoft Windows on your Mac.

[Andrew Davis](#) discusses a way new technical communicators can break into the business — internships.

Finally, if you would like to contribute an article for the May/June issue (deadline Apr 2, mid-April at the very latest), contact Joe Humbert at JoeHumbertSTC@aol.com.



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 website.

Date	Speaker	Topic
Mar 6	A panel consisting of Gwaltney and Carl Mountford, Viki Maki, and Jim Bisso, moderated by Ann Adams	<p>Trends in Technical Communication: Couples Who Work Together</p> <p>The March meeting features our annual panel discussion on Trends in Technical Communication. This year, we have something a little different for you. We will be hearing from two couples who have chosen to work together in the field of technical communication. Who better to share their insights than these hardy souls who have developed their special skills and knowledge into the family business? We will hear how they developed those skills and how they work as a team. Our panelists have deep roots as consultants in the Bay Area and have graciously agreed to tell us how they see their — and by extension our — future shaking out.</p> <p>For the past 20 years, Carl and Gwaltney Mountford have provided consulting services to a number of companies in a variety of industries through their company, Mountford Group, Inc. Predominantly a software development company, the Mountford Group specializes in designing and implementing data warehousing, Web applications, and business systems. Between them, Carl and Gwaltney have all the skills needed for the full system development life cycle---Carl specializes in analysis, design, and implementation; Gwaltney in project management, business analysis, communication, and user interface design.</p> <p>They have worked together on a number of projects, including an activity-based costing prototype for Pacific Bell, a hospital reporting system for the State of California, a prescription database for Syntex, and a reservation and scheduling system for airport shuttles. Currently, they are about halfway through a multi-year project with the San Francisco Public Utilities</p>

Commission to build a data warehouse that houses all data about their electric energy generation and load (from forecasting and scheduling of generation and load, to settlements and billing) and structures it for analysis and reporting.

They have also had a number of contracts where they have worked separately. Do they find the benefits of working together outweigh the drawbacks of spending 24 hours a day together? Come to the meeting and find out.


Victoria (Viki) Maki, M.B.A., is president of Bitzone LLC, a technical publishing and training company. She has almost 20 years of experience as a trainer and technical writer. She has written and designed software manuals of all kinds, marketing materials, online help systems, websites, white papers, and training materials. Her clients include Chevron, Visa, Oracle, Pacific Bell, and other enterprises, both large and small.

Viki and her husband, Jim Bisso, co-manage the Silicon Valley STC Chapter Technical/API Docs SIG and are co-authors of "Documenting APIs: Writing Developer Documentation for Java APIs and SDKs," which is available at <http://www.bitzone.com>.

James Bisso, M.A., has 20 years of experience writing API documentation for such companies as Oracle, Sun Microsystems, Inprise, and Taligent. He has taught computer science and documenting APIs at UC Berkeley Extension, Golden Gate University, Mills College, and the University of San Francisco. James has also been a corporate trainer for Oracle University and Bitzone LLC. He is currently CTO of Bitzone LLC.

Ann Adams has been an active volunteer with the chapter from the first meeting she attended last June, where she volunteered to become Hospitality Manager.

Before coming to the Bay Area, Ann was active in the Los Angeles chapter, serving as Membership Manager. Ann plans to include more technical topics at our meetings, along with the tried-and-true soft skills and trends topics. The technical programs she attends in the Silicon Valley have given her fresh ideas for Ann is a Senior Technical Communication Specialist with Kyocera Technology Development in Concord. The group supplies software for Kyocera's global printer business. She is working on improving translation processes and implementing topic-based authoring within a content management system. Ann found her current position through a posting at the Career Center on stc.org. Her employer is very supportive of her STC activities and underwrites

		her annual dues.
Apr 3	Robyn Brode Orsini, a.k.a. the Comma Queen	What's the Point of Punctuation? Robyn will speak about the art and skill of punctuation. She will discuss how punctuation got started and then codified, and how trends in punctuation reflect culture. She will also cover some ways to know when you must punctuate and when you can take liberties. Robyn Brode Orsini comes to her title of Comma Queen honestly, having labored most of her adult life as a freelance copyeditor, proofreader, indexer, and writer. She teaches punctuation, among other classes, through Editcetera, an association of Bay Area freelancers. She also teaches professional editing in the Technical and Professional Writing program at San Francisco State University. 

Networking

- [Northern California STC Chapters](#)
- [East Bay STC Network \(YahooGroup\)](#)
- [Professional Development SIG](#)

Northern California STC Chapters



There are five 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 website.

Wednesdays	Chapter	President
Week 2	Berkeley	Richard Mateosian
Week 3	San Francisco	Gilbert Gonzalez
Thursdays	Chapter	President
Week 1	East Bay	Helen Cheung
Week 3	North Bay	Chris Muntzer/Michael Meyer
Week 4	Silicon Valley	DJ Cline

East Bay STC Network



Connect with your fellow East Bay members by joining this YahooGroups network.

Voice your opinions and your ideas for making this Chapter more responsive to your needs. The more members who sign up the greater our network will be, the better our Chapter will be.

For more information and to join, click [here](#).

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.

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



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Congratulations to Our New and Senior Members



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

Editor's note: Since we didn't get a chance to acknowledge these members this calendar year, these new and senior members include all those from July 1, 2007 through February 29, 2008.

Leah L. Anderson
Andrea Farr
Warren Franklin
Sridhar Harnur
Nancy G. Henderson
Ben Jimenez
Susan Nishizaka
Patricia E. O'Leary
Pamela Payne
Brian T. Phelps
Patrick G. Roebuck
Moshoula Simonidis
Martin E. Smith
Alfred B. Stansbury
George Thompson
Alliene Turner
Zareen Zaffar

Congratulations to our newly conferred senior members! According to the STC bylaws, the grade of senior member is conferred upon those who have held the grade of member in STC for five years.

Don W. Benesh
Kevin G. Lim
Kathleen M. Lant



Devil Mountain Views Archives

March/April 2008 | [Home](#)

The first table lists a quick index.

The second table lists the issue date, the author(s) for the featured article(s), and the article name.

- [Sept 2007 - current](#)
- [Sept 2006 - June 2007](#)

- [Sept 2004 - June 2005](#)
- [Sept 2003 - June 2004](#)
- [Sept 2002 - June 2003](#)

- [Sept 2001 - June 2002](#)
- [2000](#)
- [1999](#)

Date	Author	Article Name
Current Issue: March/April 2008	Laura Dahlinger and Josette Schaber Linda Cunningham Jane Olivera Andrew Davis	<i>Transitioning from Technical Communicator to Project Manager</i> <i>Gems from the Writing Boot Camp</i> <i>Windows on a Macintosh Computer</i> <i>Technical Communications Internships - What, Why, Where, and How?</i>
January/February 2008	Joseph M. Humbert Patrick Lufkin T.R. Girill Andrew Davis Joseph M. Humbert (with Gwaltney Mountford & Helen Cheung)	<i>Podcasting Speaker Programs for STC Communities</i> <i>How Suite It Is: Adobe Showcases Its New Technical Communication Suite</i> <i>Literacy Project Resource Sharing</i> <i>Popular Misperceptions About Contracting</i> <i>2007 Holiday Party</i>
September/October 2007	Patrick Lufkin Andrew Davis Patrick Lufkin Patrick Lufkin Richard Mateosian	<i>STC Board of Directors Visits Bay Area</i> <i>Creating Structured Documentation — Will You Lead or Follow?</i> <i>2007 Gordon Scholarship Winners</i> <i>Call for Entries: 2007-08 Northern California Technical Communication Competition</i> <i>Call for Judges: 2007-08 Northern California Technical Communication Competition</i>

May/June 2007	<p>Jeanie Egbert Patrick Lufkin</p> <p>Andrew Davis</p> <p>T. R. Girill</p> <p>Andrew Davis</p>	<p><i>EBSTC Wins STC Awards!</i> <i>STC Board to Honor Bay Area with Important Visit</i> <i>Volunteers Needed for the 2007 Bay Area Networking Guide (BANG)</i> <i>Technical Writing Returns to Oakland's Media Academy</i> <i>Interview Tips — DOs and DON'Ts</i></p>
March/April 2007	<p>Patrick Lufkin Andrew Davis Kathryn Munn Gwaltney Mountford</p>	<p><i>MadCap Flare and the RoboHelp Saga</i> <i>Synergistech's 2007 Job Market Perspective</i> <i>Documenting APIs: Your First Week on the Job</i> <i>Get in the Running</i></p>
January/February 2007	<p>T. R. Girill</p> <p>Helen Cheung Guy Ball</p>	<p><i>Building Science-Relevant Literacy With Technical Writing in High School</i> <i>West Meets East</i> <i>Creating Video / Web Seminars</i></p>
November/December 2006	<p>T. R. Girill</p> <p>Dara Golden Patrick Lufkin Patrick Lufkin</p>	<p><i>Literacy Outreach to Science Students Through Their Teachers</i> <i>Conducting Interviews</i> <i>Is Podcasting in Your Future?</i> <i>EBSTC Career Connection Reaches Out to Students</i></p>
September/October 2006	<p>Helen Cheung Dara Golden Melody Brumis</p>	<p><i>My Experience as Vice President of Programs Beyond the Resume</i> <i>Member Spotlight on Linda Cunningham</i></p>
May/June 2005	<p>Patrick Lufkin Gwaltney Mountford</p> <p>Elaine Parrish T. R. Girill</p>	<p><i>Leadership for the Emerging Future</i> <i>College Liaison Committee: The New Kid on the Block</i> <i>Sentence's Little Helpers</i> <i>How Technical Writing Supports High School Science</i></p>
March/April 2005	<p>Joy Montgomery Dara Golden Elaine Parrish Sue Phelan</p>	<p><i>Surviving Resume Screening, a Brutal Process!</i> <i>Volunteer Editing and Writing</i> <i>The Truth About Ampersands</i> <i>EBSTC Needs You!</i></p>
January/February 2005	<p>Joy Montgomery Dara Golden T. R. Girill</p> <p>Elaine Parrish Beau Cain Becky Rude</p>	<p><i>Accentuate the Postive; Eliminate the Negative</i> <i>Volunteer Editing and Writing</i> <i>Tech Writing Outreach Meets CAHSEE in Oakland</i> <i>New Year's Resolutions for Writers</i> <i>Director's Report</i> <i>Annual Member Survey</i></p>

November/December 2004	<p>Laura Phillips Joy Montgomery Elaine Parrish Charleen Earley Elaine Parrish Suzanna Laurent</p>	<p><i>Transition, Change, A Rose by Any Other Name... Psst—Wanna Know a Secret? On Becoming a "Senior" Member Spotlight: Liz Miller Confounding Compounds TRAF Technique Saves Time</i></p>
September/October 2004	<p>Dara Golden T. R. Girill Judy Herr Melody Brumis Elaine Parrish June Schaefer</p>	<p><i>Top Ten Things I Wish I'd Known Sooner Sharing Outreach More Effectively Confessions of an STC Conference Groupie Member Spotlight: Sherry Smith Infini(iv)e Possibilities Keeping Our Archive Updated</i></p>
May/June 2004	<p>Dara Golden T. R. Girill Gwaltney Mountford Elaine Parrish</p>	<p><i>Marketing Your Non-Writing Skills An Outreach Theme with Five Variations STC Transformation Project Quick and Dirty Copyediting</i></p>
March/April 2004	<p>Jon Rude David Dick & Kathy Bine Vesa Purho Dara Golden Elaine Parrish</p>	<p><i>Helping Make Projects Work Documentation Management for Dummies Well Planned Is Half Done First Impressions: Resume Tips Ask Elaine: Double Trouble</i></p>
January/February 2004	<p>Sarmistha Purkayastha Suzanna Laurent Adrienne Tange Dara Golden Elaine Parrish T. R. Girill Marsha Howard</p>	<p><i>How I Became a Technical Writer Strategies for Making Change Work Seasonal Poem Style Guides: Basic Considerations Ask Elaine: The Little Things Autumn Literacy Outreach Update Member Spotlight: Joe Humbert</i></p>
November/December 2003	<p>Dara Golden Suzanna Laurent Adrienne Tange Melody Brumis Elaine Parrish</p>	<p><i>What's in a Mark? What do I Get for Belonging to STC? Short Story: Half-Full Spotlight on Hillary Russak Ask Elaine: A Matter of Style</i></p>
September/October 2003	<p>Susan Harlan T. R. Girill Susan Harlan Adrienne Tange Elaine Parrish Becky Rude</p>	<p><i>Notes on the 2003 Annual STC Conference How Literacy Outreach Spent Summer Vacation STC as a Volunteer Organization Short Story: Lethal Pen Ask Elaine: Reining in Apostrophilia Spotlight on Elaine Parrish</i></p>

May/June 2003	Don Huntington Kristine Hahn Rusty Jorgensen T. R. Girill	<i>An Online Project Info Solution (Part 2)</i> <i>Single-Sourcing, XML, Alphabet Soup</i> <i>Dare to Be Dumb</i> <i>Acting Locally, Thinking Globally in Literacy Outreach Project</i>
March/April 2003	Elaine Parrish Don Huntington Scott Wallace Linda Shaltz Susan Harlan	<i>Copyediting—Who Needs It?</i> <i>An Online Project Information Solution</i> <i>Style Guides to the Rescue</i> <i>What Does Video Capture Have to Do With Writing?</i> <i>Alternative Jobs or Alternative Job Search Methods?</i>
January/February 2003	Gwaltney Mountford Melody Brumis Don Huntington Scott Wallace	<i>Contracting: Is It for You?</i> <i>You Have a Contract—Now What?</i> <i>A Plan for Creating Internal Newsletters</i> <i>Taming the Tech-Neologism</i>
November/December 2002	Don Huntington Adrienne Tange Don Huntington	<i>Responding to the Changing Face of the Tech Writer's Role</i> <i>Terminal Contract</i> <i>Staying Busy in a Slumping Economy</i>
September/October 2002	Gwaltney Mountford Susan Harlan Scott Wallace	<i>Nashville Nuggets</i> <i>Trends in Technical Writing</i> <i>The Great "Web" vs. "web" Debate</i>
May/June 2002	Don Huntington John Gallagher Ashwini Tharval & Dipali Godbole Scott Wallace Becky Rude	<i>It Takes a Sexually Stimulated Man...</i> <i>Cross-Cultural Interactions</i> <i>Home Away from Home</i> <i>Writing Effective Online Copy</i> <i>Spotlight on Wallace Clements</i>
March/April 2002	Faraz Hoodbhoy Roz Rogoff Dan Day Ashwini Tharval Scott Wallace Adrienne Tange	<i>3G for Everyone</i> <i>Accessibility = Usability</i> <i>Characterizing Materials on the Nanoscale</i> <i>Technology Unraveled</i> <i>Web Usability</i> <i>Spotlight on Coralyn K. McGregor</i>

January/February 2002	<p>T. R. Girill Gwaltney Mountford Diana Wilcoxson Bill Ardis Scott Wallace Adrienne Tange</p>	<p><i>Looking Back: Technical Writing in the Bay Area</i> <i>Morphing Through the Decades</i> <i>We've Come a Long Way</i> <i>DOS Revisited: 20 Years of C-Prompts</i> <i>Editorial Content on the Web</i> <i>Spotlight on June Schaefer</i></p>
November/December 2001	<p>Linda Shaltz Angelina Nachimuthu Terri Winters Liz Miller Bill Ardis Adrienne Tange</p>	<p><i>Fight or Flight?</i> <i>Online Job Search: Some Tips and Techniques</i> <i>Resumes That Shine</i> <i>Punch Up Your Portfolio</i> <i>Diary of a Consultant</i> <i>Spotlight on Sue Phelan</i></p>
September/October 2001 (1.3 MB PDF)	<p>Don Huntington Ashwini Tharval Patrick Lufkin Patricia Smith Rosalind Rogoff Richard Lederer</p>	<p><i>Grasping the Essentials in Writing for an Online Audience</i> <i>An Introduction to XML</i> <i>Touchstone 2001 Seeks Entries, Volunteers</i> <i>Joys and Pitfalls of Contracting and Consulting</i> <i>Reinventing the Wheel</i> <i>Devouring Words</i></p>
January/February 2000 (1.5 MB PDF)	<p>Lenore Weiss Rosalind Rogoff</p>	<p><i>Stranger in Paradigm</i> <i>Is It Live or Is It Memorex?</i></p>
November/December 1999 (1.9 MB PDF)	<p>Lenore Weiss & Judith Herr Dana Chisnell Judith Herr Lenore Weiss Judith Herr Judy Skinner</p>	<p><i>Technical Literacy Program at Fremont High School</i> <i>STC Outreach -- Where You Come In</i> <i>Art of Leading of an STC Chapter</i> <i>Lenore Visits a Class at Fremont High</i> <i>What Do You Want to be When You Grow UP?</i> <i>Eating Tomato Soup With a Fork</i></p>
<p>September/October 1999 (1.3 MB PDF - Not available)</p>	<p>Jane C. Frazier</p>	<p><i>Employees and Business Process: The Point of the Shared View</i></p>
July/August 1999 (583 KB PDF)	<p>Lu Rehling Lenore Weiss Alice Gallagher Rosalind Rogoff Anahita Wager Smith</p>	<p><i>It's Our Future, So Let's Make the Most of It</i> <i>Creating Partner Documentation</i> <i>Today's Technical Communications Job Market --</i> <i>Answers to Some Frequently Asked Questions</i> <i>Technical Training: Help Authoring Tools</i> <i>Using Knowledge Management to Organize and Deliver Information</i></p>



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](#).

901 N. Stuart Street, Suite 904
Arlington, VA 22203-1822
703-522-4114
stc@stc.org

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 2007 issue – Aug 2, 2007
Nov/Dec 2007 issue – Oct 2, 2007
Jan/Feb 2008 issue – Dec 2, 2007
Mar/Apr 2008 issue – Feb 2, 2008
May/Jun 2008 issue – Apr 2, 2008

WRITER'S TEMPLATE

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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MAILING ADDRESS

Joe Humbert, 7001 Sunkist Drive, Oakland CA 94605

[ADVERTISING POLICY](#)

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DMV Staff **MANAGING EDITOR**

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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Susan Moxley

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Elaine Pendergrast

Ken Evans

Chapter Officers

For a complete list of officers, see the EBSTC website's [Leadership](#) page.

PRESIDENT

[Helen Cheung](#), 510-219-0995

PRESIDENT-ELECT

Open

TREASURER

[Joseph Humbert](#), 510-638-3529

SECRETARY

[Kevin Evert](#), 925-640-7214

V.P. PROGRAMS

[Ann Adams](#)

V.P. ARRANGEMENTS

[Jeanie Egbert](#), 510-521-2601

DMV History

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](#).

Year	Notes
2006–2007	Managing Editor: David Eicher Award of Merit in the STC International Newsletter Competition.
2004–2005	Managing Editor: Becky Rude Award of Excellence in the STC International Newsletter Competition.
2003–2004	Managing Editor: Becky Rude Guest Managing Editor: Gwaltney Mountford Award of Excellence in the STC International Newsletter Competition.
2002–2003	Managing Editor: Ashwini Tharval Best of Show, Most Improved, Distinguished Technical Communication awards in the STC International Newsletter Competition.
2001–2002	Managing Editors: Ashwini Tharval and Becky Rude. The newsletter is launched online in Web format. Award of Merit in the STC International Newsletter Competition.
1999–2001	Managing Editor: Teresa Washburn Award of Excellence in the STC International Newsletter Competition.
1997–1999	Managing Editor: Kelly Walker Award of Excellence in the STC International Newsletter Competition.
1996–1997	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.
1995–1996	Managing Editor: Bruce Robinson An offshoot, the <i>Twig</i> , is published by President Gwaltney Mountford to supplement the <i>East Bay Log</i> .

1994	Newsletter name changed to <i>East Bay Log</i> .
1962	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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