

The Chapter Handbook



Managing Chapter Newsletters

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So, What About These STC Newsletters?

Your STC newsletter is the single piece of communication that reaches all members of your chapter on a regular basis. For many members, the newsletter is their primary link with your chapter.

Being the editor of your chapter newsletter places you in one of the most visible positions of your chapter leadership. With each issue, members will evaluate your skills as an editor and manager. They will let you know when you make mistakes. They may or may not let you know when you do a good job (but don't worry, your chapter leaders will).

The STC newsletter has a variety of purposes. One of its most crucial purposes is to create a sense of community between the members of your chapter and STC—at the chapter, regional, and international levels. The Society-wide publications from the STC office (e.g., *Intercom*, *Technical Communication*) are very important, but your newsletter can be more accessible. Members may contribute to the newsletter themselves or may know the people who write for your newsletter. They may even know you.

Your newsletter may have a number of goals, including:

- ◆ informing members about meetings and encouraging them to attend
- ◆ informing members about news and events occurring in other chapters and at regional and international levels
- ◆ increasing involvement in STC by showing people how they can become involved and by exciting them about the benefits of membership
- ◆ educating members about issues, tools, and trends in technical communication
- ◆ offering members an opportunity to do other types of writing than they do at work
- ◆ encouraging nonmembers to join STC
- ◆ representing technical communication as a profession to nonmembers. Your newsletter is a marketing tool to prospective members, employers (or potential employers) of technical communicators, speakers at your meetings, and so forth. It represents STC and the profession of technical communication to these people.

Most STC newsletters vary in length from four to twenty-four pages. Most are monthly (with a break over the summer).

A Pep Talk Before You Get Started

You want to avoid, as much as possible, looking frazzled. And you can—by planning your newsletter and by looking for support from your chapter leaders and other chapter newsletter editors.

Most of the time, because you've planned wisely, the newsletter will come together with relatively few problems. Articles will be delivered on time (and electronically, even!). The articles will be so well written that you'll hardly need to edit them (okay, maybe just a little bit). Layout and printing will go without a hitch. And all members will receive the newsletter at least a week before the monthly chapter meeting. (Yes, this really is possible!)

But there will also be times when you think the newsletter is never going to get into print. Like the month when your newsletter and work deadlines all fall in the same week or, worse yet, the same day (and you're behind schedule on both). Or when half of the contributors for an issue call to tell you they just can't get those articles done.

Take a deep breath. Don't hang up on your contributors—even when it's the third or fourth time they've been late. Like you, they're volunteers.

Curse and stomp around until you feel a little better, pick up the phone and call a friend or another newsletter editor with whom you've become friendly, and let off some steam. Then take another deep breath and think about how to make this month's issue better than the last—even without the articles you had counted on.

You can. You've done it before.

The success of the newsletter is up to you—and you are up to the challenge.

Planning the Budget

Part of managing the chapter newsletter is planning the annual budget. To know what the costs will be, you'll need to come up with the numbers before you've actually begun to work on the newsletter. Here are some tips to make this process as painless as possible:

- ◆ **Get a copy of last year's newsletter budget.** This will give you a starting point. Also make sure that you get a copy of the *actual* costs from the chapter treasurer. If last year's newsletter went over budget for legitimate reasons (especially ones that are likely to recur), you'll need to consider these costs in your new budget.
- ◆ **Talk to the previous editor.** Find out all you can about how he or she budgeted the newsletter. Were there areas where more money would have been helpful? Was money redistributed in the budget during the year (e.g., more money spent on printing, less on postage)?
- ◆ **Find out how much money is likely to be available.** Contact the chapter treasurer to get a ballpark figure. If you're going to need to cut corners, it's better to know this before you plan the budget than after you're done.
- ◆ **Read through this chapter to find other areas where money may come into play.** The obvious areas are paper, printing, and postage. But each of these general costs involves a multitude of detailed (and often hidden) costs that you'll need to consider.
- ◆ **Look into chapter special events to see if they affect the cost of the newsletter.** Should the newsletter budget include any special inserts? For example, are the entry forms and guidelines for the publication and art competitions inserted in the newsletter? Will you publish a membership directory? What about ballots for voting in new officers? Special inserts affect both the cost of printing and, potentially, the postage. Check with each of the chapter leaders and committee managers to see if their plans will affect the newsletter.
- ◆ **Consider the cost of distributing the newsletter to the copyeditors.** You may need to consider the cost of faxing, copying, and mailing copies of the newsletter while you're working on it. You may also need to budget the cost of telephone calls (perhaps even conference calls) and mileage. Editing the newsletter often requires several passes, so think about the most cost-effective way of managing this distribution.
- ◆ **Look at hidden production costs.** These costs can include software, clip art, paper, film, and photograph development.
- ◆ **Look at hidden printing costs.** Are you preprinting a second color or buying special paper?

Will you scan photographs, or will your printer do it for you? If so, what are the charges? What are the costs of folding and sealing (for larger newsletters)? Will the printer mail the newsletter for you? If so, find out how much it costs to label, wafer-seal, meter (if applicable), and deliver the newsletter to the post office. *Hint:* One way to anticipate hidden costs is to look at the job ticket your printer fills out for each job. And be sure to discuss your job fully with the printer.

- ◆ **Look at hidden postage costs.** Don't plan postage based on only the current membership. Your chapter will grow during the year. And you'll also be mailing the newsletter to prospective members, other chapter newsletter editors, and other interested persons. If you plan to apply for a bulk mail permit, remember to budget for the application and annual fees. You may also need to budget for incidental postage—such as for mailing reminder letters for pending articles and sending thank-you letters and sample copies to contributors.
- ◆ **Remember the income aspect of your newsletter.** Although chapter newsletters certainly aren't money-makers, advertising income can defray several hundred dollars of your expenses over the course of a year. Develop an advertising policy to help you to decide what kinds of advertisements you'll accept. For example, you might accept ads from members, printers, educational workshops, software companies, and other organizations that offer products or services that interest or benefit technical communicators. Develop an ad rate schedule to send to prospective advertisers. If you don't know what rates to charge, contact other chapters of equal size and see what rates they charge. Print the advertising rates in the newsletter.

After you have written the budget, submit it to the chapter president for approval by the chapter leadership.

Putting Together Your Staff

The size of your staff depends on many factors, not the least of which is how many people you can find to help you on a regular basis. And the commitment of your staff is very important. Writing articles may be an intermittent contribution, but being part of the newsletter staff means that putting in the time each month to make sure the newsletter is published when and how it should be.

In some chapters, the newsletter staff is just one person—you. In others, it may consist of any combination of:

- ◆ **Managing editor.** The person who runs the show—handles the budget, decides on the editorial scope (with input from the other editors), helps with editing, gets people to write for the newsletter (and makes sure they get their articles in on time), oversees printing, and manages the newsletter staff.
- ◆ **Editor, associate editor, copy editor.** This person is generally responsible for copyediting according to whatever style guide you choose.
- ◆ **Layout/design editor.** This person designs the “look and feel” of your newsletter and does the layout of each issue. Sometimes, this person also takes care of printing.
- ◆ **Department editors.** In some chapters, editors may be assigned to particular departments (e.g., software or book reviews).
- ◆ **Advertising manager.** This person solicits advertising, makes sure advertisements adhere to your guidelines, and takes care of other matters related to advertising in your newsletter.
- ◆ **Contributing writers.** Although contributors aren’t really staff members, they provide the “meat” of each issue of the newsletter. These people will probably vary from month to month.
- ◆ **Photographers.** Ask three or four people who can handle the task on an as-needed basis, so they can rotate according to their schedules (and your needs).

In some cases, being on the newsletter staff is a two- or three-year commitment. But don’t let the thought of a long-term commitment keep you from volunteering. A one-year stint is not unheard of. In some chapters, editors even share the newsletter for the year: One manages during the first half of the year, while the other manages during the second half.

Each member of the newsletter staff should be listed on the newsletter masthead. It’s also nice to list that issue’s contributors, if you have the space.

As soon as you know who the managing editor(s) will be, inform the Society office by e-mail at membership@stc-va.org. That person’s name will be listed in the next *STC Administrative Directory* as the primary contact for the newsletter. From this listing, the Society office, editors from other chapters, and

persons interested in advertising know whom to contact.

Editorial Meetings

If you have a large staff, it’s difficult to get all the editors together in person to discuss each issue of the newsletter, so many of your “meetings” may take place with one person at a time, over the telephone, or perhaps by fax or e-mail. However, it’s a good idea to get everyone together at least a couple of times a year to make sure communication stays open—especially when new staff members join.

During your first meeting of the year, talk about the role of each staff member (which should include what each member *wants* to do, not just what you think they *should* be doing). Discussing roles will help minimize conflicts during the year.

Between meetings, make sure you keep the lines of communication open. Don’t let editors find out about the administration of the newsletter through the grapevine. They’re interested in the newsletter; that’s why they volunteered.

Student Editors

Consider inviting a student in technical communication to become part of your staff. To be an intern on the newsletter is a valuable work experience (not to mention a great opportunity for portfolio-building), and the newsletter will benefit from the student’s fresh ideas. The 1994 staff of *News & Views* (Philadelphia Metro chapter) included a student editor who managed an entire issue by herself. She determined the scope of the issue, found other students to write, assisted with layout, and so forth. Other chapter newsletters insert a page or two of news from their local student chapter or have a column written by a student contributor.

To find a student intern, contact the chairs of English, communication, or technical communication departments of local colleges and universities. Of course, it’s best if you can find a student from a technical communication program, but any communication student can benefit from newsletter experience.

Planning Editorial Content

Before you start to write your newsletter, you should plan the editorial content. Remember: The newsletter is a volunteer effort. You’re working on it during personal time. You will want the newsletter to fall into

place as efficiently as possible. Planning the editorial content of the newsletter helps you to make sure it does so.

Planning the content of your newsletter means you must:

- ◆ decide on the scope and length of the newsletter
- ◆ decide what columns should appear in each issue
- ◆ decide on the types of other articles that will appear in each issue
- ◆ decide the purpose and length of these regular columns and articles
- ◆ establish an editorial calendar

If you really think through the content and scope of your newsletter, you'll save yourself time as you put together each issue.

Before you begin to plan your content, download a copy of the *Guidelines for the STC Newsletter Competition* (AD-39-99) from the STC office Web site at www.stc-va.org. These guidelines list the elements the judges look for when they evaluate newsletters during the competition. Even if you don't plan to enter, get a copy of the guidelines; they can help you with ideas on content. And why not enter? You've nothing to lose and perhaps national or international recognition of your newsletter to gain! Refer to The STC Newsletter Competition section later in this guide for further information on the competition.

Ideas for Regular Content

- ◆ **Feature articles.** Generally, features are longer articles (how long depends on the size of your newsletter) that educate readers on some aspect of technical communication. One idea is to focus the feature article on the topic for that month's meeting.
- ◆ **Editor's column.** This column is your introduction to the issue. If your newsletter is theme-oriented, it may point out articles and columns in the issue that contribute to the theme. This column is also your opportunity to have your say on topics of interest to your readers (or on topics you think they *should* be interested in).
- ◆ **President's column.** This column is your chapter president's podium for educating and inspiring members. If you find the president is merely repeating information that's already in the newsletter, you may want to encourage him or her

to look beyond the newsletter (and even the chapter).

- ◆ **Chapter leader's column.** Run a column in which each chapter leader writes about chapter goals, news, or current issues in technical communication.
- ◆ **Director-sponsor news.** Your region's director-sponsor will send you an article each month. (Sometimes a director-sponsor from another region writes the article.) Generally, this column talks about regional and Society news, but it may also cover issues of more general interest, such as employment, networking, and so forth. Encourage your director-sponsor to report on more than Society board meetings.
- ◆ **Monthly meeting report.** This column reports on last month's meeting, including chapter business.
- ◆ **Notice of next month's meeting.** Many newsletters print this notice on the back and/or front pages. It may be as simple as listing the meeting time, date, topic, place, and directions. Some newsletters also include a short article on the upcoming meeting; others (in more organized chapters!) list the entire year's meetings in the first issue of the year and may even offer discounts to members who sign up for meetings in advance.
- ◆ **Letters to the editor.** In theory, members write in with comments, suggestions, tips and tricks, and questions. However, if you include this column in your newsletter, you may occasionally have to write a letter or two or persuade members you know to write letters to fill the column. In short, this column can be a lot of work. But it can also be of great interest to readers when it does fall into place.
- ◆ **Professional achievements, awards, conference presentations, and general good deeds.** You would think that members would be happy to let you know about job changes, promotions, awards, and the like. Some are. But, like the letters to the editor, keeping this column going can demand a fair amount of your time. You may have to call members each month to find out if they know anyone who has, for example, changed jobs. And then you have to call those people for permission to print a notice of the change. One idea to fill this column is to use it to print notices of new members and newly promoted senior members. This way, you can be fairly assured that at least something will be in the column each month (as long as your

membership manager regularly sends you membership news).

- ◆ **SIG reports.** Depending on the chapter size and involvement, your chapter may have a number of special interest groups (SIGs). Ask the SIG managers to report regularly on meetings.
- ◆ **Employment.** Some chapters post “help-wanted” ads (typically free to employers) in every issue. If your chapter has a job hotline, you may decide to just post the telephone number and instructions for the hotline.
- ◆ **Calendar of events.** Use this column to remind members of upcoming STC deadlines and events—chapter, regional, and international. For example, you can post newsletter deadlines, chapter meetings, regional conferences (both in your region and other regions), and STC’s annual conference. You can also use this column to list meetings of related organizations and workshops (both local and otherwise) of interest to technical communicators.
- ◆ **Member interviews.** Let your readers know about the ideas, education, and experiences of other STC members through interviews. Try to convey the personality of the interviewee; don’t just repeat the person’s résumé. A photograph is a nice touch. And you can also use this column to draw inactive members into the fold; such an interview can encourage new or unknown members to become involved.
- ◆ **Software reviews.** Review software applications that technical communicators use—from desktop publishing tools to help development tools to grammar checkers. You can also find reviews in online services and trade publications, but be sure to check out the reprint policies if you do so.
- ◆ **Book reviews.** Like software reviews, reviews of books and other publications that are likely to interest technical communicators should appear in your newsletter. Society publications are a good place to start.
- ◆ **Grammar/style column.** Ask members to write about common problems in grammar and style. This column can inspire other members to write letters to the editor, especially when you print articles about controversial issues (e.g., *which* vs. *that*, serial commas).
- ◆ **Lists of chapter leaders and committee managers.** The masthead should list the newsletter staff and its policies. Somewhere in each issue,

you should also list the names, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses of the chapter officers, committee managers, SIG managers, director-sponsors, and any other contact information for the chapter (e.g., job hotline). Make sure you list the chapter’s mailing address as well.

- ◆ **Educational opportunities.** As newsletter manager, you’ll begin to receive mail from technical communication programs and workshop coordinators. Consider writing articles about these programs (especially local ones). You can also offer these organizations educational rates on advertising.
- ◆ **Networking opportunities.** Inform readers about meetings of other professional organizations in your area.
- ◆ **Filler.** You’ll always need short blurbs to fill in extra spaces. Keep a file of interesting quotations about communication. Scan publications, including the newsletters from other chapters, for articles and facts (e.g., survey results, product announcements, writing tips) that are likely to interest your members. Be sure to credit the sources of filler articles, if necessary.

Tips for Planning (and Filling) Your Editorial Calendar

- ◆ **Survey your readers.** If you know in advance that you will be managing the newsletter, plan a reader survey to find out what interests chapter members. Make the survey short and specific. For example, don’t just ask your readers what subjects they would like to hear more about. Instead, give them a list of subjects (with an “Other” category, of course) that they can check off. Consider repeating the survey six months later to see how you’re doing. Surveys are a good opportunity, by the way, to ask for volunteers to write for the newsletter.
- ◆ **Research chapter, regional, and international events.** Plan articles to promote these events. Print the articles in the issue members receive the month or two before the event. (If you print it too early, readers will forget about it.)
- ◆ **Consider planning each issue around a theme.** A theme makes it easier to decide what will be in each issue, but the theme newsletter has its pitfalls. It requires the newsletter to fall into place exactly as you have planned it. What happens, for example, if the book reviewer for that month’s issue doesn’t come through, but someone else does—with a book unrelated to the theme? What

do you do about offers from volunteers to write on issues that are unrelated to the themes you've planned for the year? The key is to be flexible: You may not be able to have every article in the issue revolve around the theme you've selected.

- ◆ **Refer to conference proceedings.** Ask members who presented papers to write an article on the topic, or if the abstract in the proceedings is detailed, ask permission to use it. Don't rule out individuals from other chapters if you like their topic.
- ◆ **Keep your eyes and ears open.** As you speak with leaders and members, you're likely to hear recurring concerns—a sure signal that you should be planning an article on this subject.
- ◆ **Print the editorial calendar at the beginning and end of the issue year.** Consider printing a reminder midway through the year. Doing so lets readers know what sorts of articles you intend to print and gives them an opportunity to let you know how they can contribute. Of course, printing the editorial calendar commits you to sticking to it. But you can always print a disclaimer: "This is the calendar I've planned for the year—provided you help me out by volunteering to write!"

Designing Your Newsletter

Design comes after you decide on content, but content and design should be closely related.

If you don't have experience in design (and can't find another volunteer who does), don't worry. It's okay for the newsletter to change as you learn. After all, don't the documents you write at your job improve each time you work with them? Take a look at the design books listed in Appendix A at the end of this chapter and consider the hints listed in this section. But most of all, follow your own instincts. And let your newsletter evolve.

The following tips can help you design your newsletter:

- ◆ **Take a one-day seminar in newsletter design.** Look for a reasonably priced one in your area.
- ◆ **Experiment!** Turn off your computer and play. Sketch some sample designs. If you're lucky enough to have a design/layout editor, work with that person to visually express the content of your newsletter. If you'll have regular columns, consider developing artwork (or find clip art) to use as an "icon" for that column. Icons are a great

way to pull together content and design. And they help readers to quickly find that column in each issue. See *Signature* (San Diego chapter) and *News & Views* (Philadelphia Metro chapter) for examples.

- ◆ **Look at other newsletters—and study what they do.** If you aren't already on the mailing list for newsletters from other chapters, open your *STC Administrative Directory* to the listing of newsletter editors and make a few calls. Ask for samples of newsletters from other chapters, and ask to be placed on their mailing list. Compare these newsletters with your own. What do they do better? What do you like about them? Keep a file of the newsletters you like—from STC chapters and otherwise. Pull them out for inspiration whenever you're stuck on a design or content problem.
- ◆ **One-color doesn't have to mean boring.** Most chapter newsletters are printed in one color. However, one color doesn't have to mean black on white. If you're printing offset, for example, consider printing in another color besides black—a rich shade of blue, for example. And even using traditional black text can provide a variety of possibilities. Using a nonwhite paper, for example, creates the look of a second color. Experiment with creating laser-printed screens, rules, and reverses in various shades of black from your laser printer onto the stock you've chosen. You'll be surprised at the results. For some inspiration, browse through the design books listed in Appendix A at the end of this chapter (especially *The Gray Book*).
- ◆ **Copyfit, copyfit, copyfit!** While content precedes design, design precedes writing. Copyfitting means determining the approximate number of words for an article in the space, type size, and font you've selected for the newsletter. Some desktop publishing programs include a file that's specifically designed for copyfitting. (Be sure to apply the correct type size and font to the text for an accurate gauge, and remember to figure in space for headings.)
- ◆ **Strive for clean first—then “embellish” carefully.** Design isn't equivalent to decoration. Remember that your first goal is readability. Visual elements—rules, screens, clip art, and so forth—should contribute to content, not just be cute additions. Details are all part of the big picture—the overall design of your entire newsletter.

- ◆ **Design for a two-page spread.** Except for the front and back pages, your readers will look at (and read) your newsletter two pages at a time. When you design the newsletter, consider the inside pages together and design across pages. *Hint:* When designing two-page spreads, avoid making the design of the pages absolutely symmetrical. “Planned imbalance” helps to make the page more interesting to look at—and to read!
- ◆ **Use end marks.** End marks signal the end of an article. They are especially important to use on pages with lots of short articles as a visual cue for where one article ends and another begins. Most end marks are a common dingbat, such as [insert dingbat].
- ◆ **Look for families of clip art that are visually similar.** Part of the problem with using clip art packages is that each has its own style. When you invest in clip art for the newsletter (or as you’re searching through your stock of clip art), try to find art that is similar in style—especially for art that will appear in each issue (e.g., as an icon for a column) and is therefore part of the newsletter’s overall design. Appendix B, at the end of this chapter, lists some sources of clip art that reproduce well when laser-printed.
- ◆ **Print contents or “teasers” on the front and/or back pages.** Some people read newsletters and magazines from back to front rather than the other way around. So, on the back page, print a variation of the “In This Issue” that appears on the front page. These can be teasers, rather than straight contents. For example, you could pose questions or list interesting facts from the newsletter. Then point readers to the pages where they can read more. Some editors advise that “In This Issue” is best placed only by the mailing label on the back page—not on the front page—while others argue that it should be in both places. Where you place it may depend on a number of factors, not the least of which is how much space you have on each page!
- ◆ **Choose good fonts, but consider any restrictions of your layout editor(s).** A well-designed font for the body type goes a long way toward improving the readability and visual appeal of your newsletter—especially if you’re not producing the newsletter with desktop publishing software. However, if you choose a font that’s not part of the standard set of PostScript printer fonts, make sure each person who will lay out the newsletter has the same set of fonts. Otherwise, the look of your

newsletter will vary with each issue. Use no more than two or three fonts in your newsletter. *Hint:* To avoid problems with printing, choose the same font formats (e.g., PostScript or TrueType). Using fonts of the same format will help you to avoid on-again, off-again problems that occur when fonts conflict with each other.

- ◆ **Choose a clean heading font.** Choose a heading font that makes it easy for your readers to find headings. Compare the heading font not only with the normal body type but also with the bold body type. Does the heading still look as bold in comparison? Bookman (as the body type) is notorious for causing problems in this area; Bookman Bold is very prominent on the page and often overpowers the heading type.
- ◆ **Don’t try to force too much copy into your newsletter.** Type size in a newsletter should be between nine and eleven points, but test the type size with the font you’ve chosen. (Nine-point Times and nine-point New Baskerville fonts, for example, are quite different in size.) Don’t reduce type size so much that it becomes hard to read. Either cut copy or lengthen your newsletter (but remember that you’re filling four-page signatures if you’re printing on 11 x 17" sheets).
- ◆ **Use callouts.** Callouts (also called “pull quotes”) are excerpts from the text that highlight important ideas. Typically, callouts are framed in some way—for example, with a box, reverse text, rules, or white space. *Hint:* Callouts don’t have to be direct quotes from the text. They can rephrase the text, summarize an idea, or even comment on the article or its subject.
- ◆ **Use white space.** There’s nothing harder to read, or less enticing, than a crowded page. Of course, the obvious places for white space are already built in to your newsletter—around headings, between lines and paragraphs, around graphics, and in page margins. But look for other places where white space will help. For example, think about how much white space should be built into callouts or sidebars.
- ◆ **Download a copy of *Guidelines for Using the Society Symbol and Logotype (AD-13-96)* from the Society office Web site.** Use the “Search” feature found on the home page at www.stc-va.org. Make sure your newsletter adheres to these guidelines. The Society logos are also available online at the Society office Web site.

- ◆ **Print the newsletter name and issue date on each page.** Most newsletters place this information in a running footer. This information may be important if a member photocopies an article from the newsletter.
- ◆ **Make the newsletter a self-mailer.** Self-mailers save the cost of purchasing envelopes. If your newsletter will be a self-mailer, save space for the return address, mailing label, and postage (or mailing permit indicia) on the back page. However, make sure you adhere to the Postal Service guidelines for self-mailers. In fact, you should take a mock-up of the newsletter to the post office where you will be mailing your newsletters. Have someone in charge approve the newsletter design. Make sure you get that person's name, in case you have problems later. Get the approval in writing, if possible. *Hint:* Self-mailers don't have to be folded in half and sealed. In fact, folding and sealing can be rather expensive (in both printer's costs and members' time).

Getting People to Write for You

Now that you know what sorts of things your newsletter will cover and what it will look like, the tough part begins—how do you fill it up?

Most chapter newsletter editors—new and seasoned alike—say that the problem of getting members to write for the newsletter has been one of their greatest frustrations. Here are some hints to inspire members to write for you:

- ◆ **Give people every opportunity to volunteer.** Each time your chapter sends out a mailing to chapter members (e.g., voting, surveys), make sure the document includes the question, “Would you like to contribute occasionally to the newsletter?” And, of course, ask for the member's name, e-mail address, and both day and evening telephone numbers. The word “occasionally” is very important, by the way. People may feel threatened by the idea of any every-issue commitment, but they can handle an occasional article.
- ◆ **Don't wait for people to come to you—actively solicit articles.** You'd be surprised how willing people are to help you out—if you ask them. In conversations at meetings, you may hear someone mention a technology he or she is working with, or maybe you've talked on the phone with a member

who tells you about a great work experience. Tell that person how interesting you think this experience is, and ask if he or she would write an article. And make a point of asking new members to help—writing for the newsletter gets them involved quickly with your chapter's activities.

- ◆ **Say yes to every offer from a volunteer.** Even if a member volunteers to do something that's already taken care of, make that person feel that his or her offer is welcome. If the person asks to do a book review and you already have enough of them, tell the volunteer how important you think his or her contribution is (*and it is*)—and then ask if the volunteer would do a software review or feature article instead.
- ◆ **Make it easy for people to submit articles.** First, print a short synopsis of your submission guidelines in your masthead (make sure you ask for articles on disk in a format you can read!). Second, print a list of ideas for the types of articles you'd like to see. Sometimes all people need is an idea to get them started. But make sure your readers know that you welcome *their* ideas, too. You don't want them to feel that they shouldn't submit an article because “it wasn't on your list.”
- ◆ **Let people know the benefit of being published in your newsletter.** Benefit number one is visibility: They get their words and ideas in front of a select audience of peers, perhaps even potential employers. A newsletter article is a great addition to a portfolio. And contributors may be able to practice a new, more journalistic style of writing that they may find appealing and fun. Put on your thinking cap! The newsletter offers plenty of opportunity.
- ◆ **Give people ample forewarning of deadlines—and treasure as gold those people who will help out in a crunch.** If you plan your editorial calendar *at least* several months in advance, you can give your writers that much time to write. As a result, when you ask someone to write a feature article in September, you can say that it isn't due until December. The potential author will be more likely to say yes.

Former newsletter editors will often help you when you can't find anyone else. They may very well miss working on the newsletter (at least every once in a while). And they know from personal experience the problems you face and are, therefore, more likely to sympathize with you

situation. Make sure you know the former newsletter editors in your chapter.

- ◆ **Remember to say “thank you” every time someone helps you.** Each month when you receive the extra copies of the newsletter from the printer, send a letter (along with a couple of copies for the author’s files) thanking that author for his or her contribution. (See Appendix C at the end of this chapter for a sample thank-you letter.)
- ◆ **Do a reader survey.** Tell members that you’re thinking of redesigning the newsletter and that you’re interested in their input. Ask members what they think of the current newsletter, and find out what they want the newsletter to do. It could be that people aren’t inspired to write for the newsletter because they think it doesn’t fill their needs. And, once again, at the end of the survey, ask for volunteers.
- ◆ **Scan the labels each month for potential contributors.** Many members have their STC mail delivered to their work address, which may tell you the type of technical communication they practice. If you’re looking for someone to write on a particular subject, scanning the mailing labels may yield potential “volunteers.” Once you locate likely candidates, call. They can only say no—and often are so flattered that they say yes. *Hint:* The Society mailing labels also identify new and transfer members. So if you want to send a “welcome to STC, won’t you write for my newsletter” letter to them, they’re easy to identify.
- ◆ **Keep in mind the scope of your audience.** According to Society statistics, most STC members do write about computers, but certainly not all. In fact, in your chapter, just the opposite might be true. Keep the diversity of technical communication in mind when you’re looking for contributors. You may be subconsciously ruling out an entire segment of your audience—and lots of great articles!
- ◆ **Make the newsletter the kind of publication that people are proud to write for.** Of course, this is a catch-22. How do you make your newsletter a good publication when you can’t get members to contribute? In the beginning, you’ll need to rely heavily on people you know, but your network will widen. If you work on broadening your network of volunteers at every likely opportunity, the time will actually come when members will begin to call you.

- ◆ **Review previously published articles.** Solicit new or follow-up articles from authors who have contributed in the past.

Other Tips for Filling Your Newsletter

- ◆ **Use reprints from other chapters.** Not all of your articles have to come from your chapter. Selectively printing from the newsletters of other chapters is encouraged. Just be sure to follow the guidelines for reprints in that newsletter’s masthead. (Usually, guidelines include crediting the newsletter and sending the editor a copy of the issue in which you reprint the article.)
- ◆ **Get on the mailing list for other Society publications.** For example, call the Society office and ask to receive *Tieline* and all of the Society SIG newsletters. All are great sources of news and ideas for your newsletter.
- ◆ **Reprint from the newsletters of other professional organizations for communicators.** Other professional organizations typically have similar reprint policies to STC chapters: Acknowledge the source and send a copy to the editor. Call the local chapters and ask whether they would like to exchange newsletters with you. You can then scan their newsletters each month for newsworthy reprints. And be sure to print their meeting notices in your events column.
- ◆ **Reprint (on occasion) from consumer and trade magazines.** Get permission first, of course. When approaching consumer magazines for reprints, let them know that you’re a professional organization (and don’t have any money). Many have fees for reprints; ask them to waive their fees in your case.

Editing Your Newsletter

- ◆ **Decide on a good style guide, such as the *Chicago Manual of Style* or *Words Into Type*.** If you have more than one editor, be sure each of your editors has a copy of the same edition of your chosen guide. Using a standard style guide will help you to resolve editing differences, if they arise.
- ◆ **Record exceptions to the style guide.** If the editors agree to vary from the style guide on certain points, record these variances. This style

sheet will help new editors who join your staff—as well as the newsletter staff that follows you.

- ◆ **Decide how much editing should be done (and don't be afraid to edit).** Some chapter newsletter editors feel that copy should be printed exactly as the contributor writes it, because, after all, it is coming from professional communicators. However, keep in mind that the newsletter style—which is likely to have a more journalistic tone than the typical technical document—is a new experience for many technical communicators. Contributors may actually want your input on their style. By the way, issuing a style sheet of some sort (even if it's just stating what style guide you use) will help you to get around the problem of whether it's "polite" to edit.
- ◆ **But—encourage the editors to preserve the voice of the author.** Some people edit copy to sound like their own writing style. But your newsletter should have a variety of voices; they contribute to the vibrancy of your publication. And just as important, if you severely edit someone's writing for subjective reasons, that person may decline to write for you again.
- ◆ **Make sure the editors consider the design as well as the style and content.** Your editors should understand how your newsletter is put together as well as how to edit for grammar, style, and substance. Be sure you cover the standard parts of the newsletter with them. Have your design/layout editor discuss the design of the publication as well. *Hint:* One way to encourage editors to look at design is to print thumbnails of the pages in each issue, along with the full-sized pages. They won't be able to read the words (unless they really try!), but they can see the layout of pages at a glance.
- ◆ **Investigate fast, inexpensive ways of getting the newsletter to your editors.** For example, will their companies mind if you fax the newsletter to them several times a month? Or can you afford Priority Mail as an alternative? What about e-mailing the newsletter as a file?
- ◆ **Check and double-check that you've met the requirements for the newsletter competition (especially the essential elements).** There's nothing more frustrating than realizing, as you package your first submission for the STC newsletter competition, that you've forgotten some simple requirement, such as putting the issue date on the front page of the newsletter.

- ◆ **Proofread one more time before the newsletter goes to print.** Catch all those typos that crept in during those hurried last minutes. Enlist the help of others, if you can. The more eyes, the better.

Some Common Editing Problems

- ◆ **Too long or too short articles.** You told the writer that the article should be no more than 500 words when you assigned it. It came in with 750 words—250 for you to cut or to make room for in the newsletter. Sometimes (though less often), you have exactly the opposite problem: A 750-word article comes in as 500. Time for filler!
- ◆ **Nonconformance to your style standards.** Expect this; not everyone uses the same style guide as you do.
- ◆ **Weak leads.** Avoid the who-what-when-why leads; try to make your lead paragraphs interesting. Look through the article for a story or example that might brighten the lead paragraph. You may need to do a rewrite if you can't find ideas from the article itself.
- ◆ **No headings or too much text between headings.** Most newsletters have two- or three-column formats. In these formats, you need more headings to break up text than you might need in a book format. You'll receive some articles with a page or two of text between headings, and some with no headings at all. Your job is to add the necessary headings to make the article more readable. You may find yourself adding headings to the formatted document. When you do so, make sure you don't bump the text too much. Your layout/design editor has worked hard to fit the text in the allotted space.
- ◆ **Too many levels of headings.** Newsletters aren't books. Even two levels of subheadings can be a problem.
- ◆ **Sentences that are too long.** This problem seems to occur most often when the writer is trying to convey a complex idea. You can use em dashes, colons, and semicolons to break up sentences without dramatically shortening them—and without drastically changing the author's words.
- ◆ **Overly formal or folksy tone.** What's the overall tone of your newsletter? Is the article very different from what you've received before? And is this okay? Variety makes a newsletter fun to read, but be sure the tone suits your editorial standards.

- ◆ **References to STC as a national organization.** Many long-time members will, on occasion, erroneously refer to STC at the “national” level or STC’s “national” office. PLEASE change all such references. STC is an international organization and the STC office can be referred to simply as the STC office in Arlington, Virginia.

Scheduling the Newsletter

- ◆ **Give yourself plenty of time to edit.** When you ask people to write for the newsletter, let them know the expected article length (based on the copyfit) so that you don’t spend your time cutting 1,500-word articles to 500 words. And ask contributors to send their articles to you before you need them. This way, when they’re “late,” they may really be getting their material to you on time. This extra time also allows you to return the article for rewriting or, at least, to work with the author on the article. *Hint:* Send each author a letter that outlines the subject, length, and due date of the article. Then send reminder postcards or e-mails to authors several weeks before the article is due.
- ◆ **Leave time for entering copy that’s faxed to you at the last minute.** Even in this age of e-mail, overnight mail, and the good old Postal Service, you’ll still receive hard copy faxed to you at the last minute. Expect it. And take it in stride.
- ◆ **Schedule around the monthly meeting.** Members should receive your newsletter in time to RSVP for the meeting. Try to give them at least several days to do so.
- ◆ **Get into print as quickly as possible.** If you’re printing meeting news, you’ll probably receive the report at the last minute. Get your newsletter to print immediately after you receive the meeting report. This is especially important if you aren’t using first-class mail, since the newsletter may take at least a week (sometimes significantly more, if you’re using third-class mail) to reach readers.
- ◆ **Work with your printer to plan your schedule (and meet this schedule).** Let your printer know that the newsletter is time-sensitive; it needs to get out on time every month. It is also very important that *you* meet the schedule you set up with your printer. If your printer is busy and you miss your deadline, the printer may bump your job for that of someone else (who is ready). If this happens, there’s no guarantee that your job will be next in line.

- ◆ **Give yourself (and your staff) some time off between issues.** For larger newsletters, this may only amount to a couple of days. But everyone will welcome it.

Printing the Newsletter

If you aren’t experienced with using printing services, try to find someone to help you with this process. Several of the publications listed in Appendix A at the end of this chapter also offer excellent advice on print buying.

- ◆ **Ask the print shop to donate printing.** Because the audience for the newsletter consists of technical communicators (many of whom buy printing or influence its purchase), you may be able to persuade the print shop to donate the entire or partial cost of printing, perhaps in exchange for free advertising. Of course, you then need to remind readers of the print shop’s sponsorship.
- ◆ **Consider selling ad space to offset costs.** For example, your printer may discount the issue by running a small ad. You can also sell ad space to members who are independent contractors, or to desktop publishing shops, communication workshops, and so forth.
- ◆ **Work from your budget, not the fees of your suppliers or the requests of other chapter leaders.** You have only so much money for the year. Your budget dictates the type of printing you do (and there’s no shame in good-quality photocopying). Keep your budget in mind when other chapter leaders ask you to print an insert or a longer issue. If doing so will blow your budget, ask them to pay for the overage from theirs.
- ◆ **Investigate alternatives in output.** For example, a number of chapters print their newsletters on high-speed printing systems. Essentially high-end, high-speed laser printers, these systems offer 600-dpi (or greater) output from PostScript files produced from your desktop publishing software. Because these systems are designed for running small quantities at a reasonable cost (called on-demand printing), they can be a good alternative to offset printing (which is more expensive) and photocopying (which offers lesser quality).
- ◆ **Select the paper you want to use.** Read *Papers for Printing: How to Choose the Right Paper at the Right Price for Any Printing Job* (listed in Appendix A, at the end of this chapter) for advice on selecting paper. Generally, 60 to 70 lb. text is a

good weight for newsletter stock. If the paper you select costs too much, ask if the printer typically stocks a similar paper. And consider using preprinted paper. Preprinted paper has designs—some even four-color—already printed on it. Most is printed on 8-1/2 x 11" sheets, so you would print your newsletter's front page on the preprinted paper, use matching second sheets for the other pages, and staple each newsletter. However, a number of companies that offer preprinted papers are beginning to make 11 x 17" sheets, the typical newsletter size. (Appendix D at the end of this chapter lists some sources of preprinted paper.)

Hint: If you use preprinted paper, be sure you can find a matching second sheet at a reasonable price.

- ◆ **Test the paper.** While you're in the process of selecting paper, be sure to test the paper with your method of printing. This is especially crucial if you're not printing offset, since the alternatives (typically high-speed laser printing or copying) are often toner-based. Depending upon the paper you choose, the toner may scratch or flake. *Hint:* Often, your best bet with these printing methods is to use laser-approved papers.
- ◆ **If you photocopy, use a good copier.** Even though it's often the least expensive alternative, the office photocopier that your boss has kindly offered for your use may very well be unreliable or in less than tip-top shape (and therefore may produce unacceptable copies). If your newsletter budget can handle it, consider going to a copy shop that specializes in prompt, good-quality photocopying. *Hint:* Experiment with photographs if you photocopy. If you can't achieve acceptable results, you may want to minimize the number of photographs that you use.
- ◆ **For a two-color newsletter, preprint the outside sheet (front and back pages) for the entire year.** Typically, you'll preprint the nameplate, return address, and other items that always appear on the front and back page. This way, the newsletter has two colors on the outside, but you can inexpensively print each issue in one color. Some chapters also preprint the inside sheets (e.g., header/footer rules, STC logo and newsletter name in footer). However, if you do so, take care how much you preprint. Your design is likely to vary at least somewhat from issue to issue, so limit the amount and carefully consider the placement of preprinted details on the inside sheets.
- ◆ **Supply a laser proof with the job.** This is especially important if you are printing from

film—even more so if the printer is shooting artboards or stripping in photographs or advertisements.

- ◆ **Always get a proof before you run the job.** This is standard procedure for the documents we produce at work, of course. But it's just as important to look over a proof or blueline each time you run your newsletter—no matter how well the printer knows your job. You know exactly how you want your newsletter to look; your printer may or may not. This isn't a matter of trust, no matter how much your printer may try to convince you otherwise when time is short (though most good printers do insist on a proof signoff of some sort). In the long run, only you pay for mistakes. You can't control every problem that might occur, but you can limit problems by checking whenever you can.

Mailing the Newsletter

- ◆ **Your labels may come from the Society office, from your chapter membership manager, or from your database manager.** If they come from the Society office, they may be mailed each month to the chapter membership manager, who uses them to update the chapter database. If you have a database manager, he or she may send out the labels. Make sure you receive the labels at least a few days before you go to print. Check the labels to make sure they're printed in ZIP code order; call the Society office immediately for a new set if they aren't. This order is important when the newsletters are sorted for mailing.
- ◆ **On your next trip to the post office, pick up a copy of the *Domestic Mail Manual*.** This book contains the Postal Service guidelines for first-class through fourth-class mail. This book will help you to understand the types of mail and the requirements for each, and, more to the point, will help you decide how to mail your newsletter.
- ◆ **Get any necessary mailing permits.** If you decide to go the bulk-mail route, you will need to apply for a permit (which has application and annual renewal fees). *Hint:* If your print shop has a bulk-mail permit, you may be able to use that permit for mailing and avoid the associated fees.
- ◆ **Weigh a mock-up of your newsletter on the stock you've selected.** Since this weight directly affects the cost of postage, keep it in mind when you're selecting the type of mailing for your

newsletter. Know where the break is in the postage costs. If you add a page to this issue, will it cost you more to mail?

- ◆ **Investigate nonprofit status.** Postage for nonprofit organizations costs significantly less than postage for profit organizations. The guidelines for nonprofit status vary from state to state. In addition, the Postal Service has its own requirements. Refer to page [2-7] in this handbook, or contact the Postal Service for further information.
- ◆ **Look into alternatives for labeling and mailing your newsletter.** If your chapter can afford it, have your print shop or a mailing service label, sort, and deliver the newsletter to the post office. Many print shops offer this service.

The STC Newsletter Competition

Each year, the Society sponsors a newsletter competition. The competition offers you an opportunity to gain well-earned recognition. Win or lose, you can benefit from the written feedback of the judges.

The *Rules for the STC Newsletter Competition* (AD-39-00) are sent to chapter presidents every summer and can be downloaded from the Society office Web site. You should also receive a copy of these guidelines and entry forms in the fall from the newsletter competition manager; the deadline for the first set of submissions is usually around October 15. If you don't receive this information by the end of September, contact the competition manager listed in the *STC Administrative Directory*.

To enter, you're required to submit multiple copies of three consecutive issues printed during the current Society year. There is no entry fee.

For competition purposes, entries are classified by the size of the sponsoring chapter (according to STC membership records at the beginning of the competition year).

The sizes are:

- ◆ more than 600 members
- ◆ 301–600 members
- ◆ 151–300 members
- ◆ 76–150 members
- ◆ up to 75 members
- ◆ student chapters

In each category, awards are given for (in descending order) Distinguished, Excellence, Merit, and Achievement. A Best of Show award is also selected from among the Distinguished winners in all categories. In addition, an award for most improved newsletter is presented to one chapter in each category.

Awards are presented at STC's annual conference.

On to the Next Year

You've made it. Your first year as a chapter newsletter editor has ended, and you have a binder full of great newsletters on your shelf. Time to relax? Almost. First, wrap up these loose ends:

- ◆ **In the last issue of the year, ask members for their suggestions for next year.** Let members know that you're interested in them and their ideas. If you have room, print a form that members can return to you with ideas or to volunteer to write for a particular issue. Be accessible so they feel comfortable calling you. Return phone calls as promptly as you can. Before long, you'll have plenty of volunteers for next year (especially since you did such a good job this year).
- ◆ **Print next year's editorial calendar (at least in sketchy form).** Let members know what you're planning to publish in the next issue year.
- ◆ **Regroup with your staff.** Talk over this year's process and open the floor for ideas on how to improve the editing process next time around.
- ◆ **Plan an "apprenticeship" program.** It's a good idea to begin training the next newsletter manager before you resign (so he or she doesn't have to go through the learning curve alone). Choose a person from your current staff, if you can. If no one on your staff is interested, speak with contributors who had more than the usual interest in what you do. Or print a notice in your newsletter. Let people know what a fun and rewarding job it is (and it *really* is).
- ◆ **Keep your eyes and ears open.** Remember: Most of your ideas will (and should) come from your readers. Listen to them.
- ◆ **Take a break. Get some rest. Go on vacation. You deserve it!**

Appendix A. Additional Resources

Newsletters

Arth, Marvin, Helen Ashmore, and Elaine Floyd. *The Newsletter Editor's Desk Book*, 4th edition. Parkway Press, 1995

Beach, Mark. *Editing Your Newsletter: How to Produce an Effective Publication Using Traditional Tools and Computers*. Coast to Coast Books, 1988

Dorsheimer, Wesley. *The Newsletter Handbook: How to Write and Produce a Successful Newsletter*. New York, N.Y.: Hippocrene Books, 1993

Floyd, Elaine. *Marketing with Newsletters: How to Boost Sales, Add Members, Raise Donations & Further Your Cause with a Promotional Newsletter*. EF Communications, 1991

Floyd, Elaine. *Quick & Easy Newsletters on a Shoestring Budget*. EF Communications, 1998

Hudson, Howard Penn. *Publishing Newsletters*, revised edition. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988

Jorgensen, Linda B. *Real-World Newsletters To Meet Your Unreal Demands*. Alexandria, Va.: EEI Press, 1999.

Parker, Roger C. *Newsletters from the Desktop: Designing Effective Publications from Your Computer*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: Ventana Press, 1990

Design for Nondesigners

Brady, Philip. *Using Type Right*. North Light Books, 1988

Gosney, Michael, John Odan, and Jim Benson. *The Gray Book: Designing in Black & White on Your Computer*, 2nd edition. Chapel Hill, N.C.: Ventana Press, 1990

White, Jan V. *Graphic Idea Notebook*, 2nd edition. Rockport Publishers, 1991

White, Jan V. *Great Pages: A Common-Sense Approach to Effective Desktop Design*. Serif Publishing, 1990

Paper and Printing

Beach, Mark, and Ken Russon. *Papers for Printing: How to Choose the Right Paper at the Right Price for Any Printing Job*. Coast to Coast Books, 1989

Beach, Mark, and Eric Kenly. *Getting It Printed: How to Work with Printers and Graphic Imaging Services to Assure Quality, Stay on Schedule, and Control Costs*. North Light Books, 1999

Periodicals

Adobe Magazine. 801 N. 34th St., Seattle, WA 98103
Before and After: How to Design Cool Stuff. Page Lab, 1830 Sierra Gardens Drive, #30, Roseville, CA 95661

Step-by-Step Electronic Design: The How-To Newsletter for Electronic Graphic Designers. Dynamic Graphics, 6000 N. Forest Park Dr., P.O. Box 1901, Peoria, IL 61656

Appendix B.

Clip Art Sources

This isn't a complete list of clip art publishers; however, it does include companies whose art produces well in black-and-white from a laser printer.

Note: For additional clip art sources, check out the small ads in the back of design-related publications, such as *Adobe Magazine*. (These publications run reviews of clip art, as well.)

Most clip art companies offer low-cost sample disks. Before making a purchase, try out the clip art to see how it prints out from your printer.

Brøderbund Software

Banner Blue Division
39500 Stevenson Place, Suite 204
Fremont, CA 94539
(510) 794-6850

CorelDraw CD-ROM

Corel Corporation
Corporate Headquarters
1600 Carling Ave.
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1Z 8R7
(613) 728-8200

Dream Maker Software

925 W. Kenyon Ave.
Englewood, CO 80110
(303) 762-1001

Dynamic Graphics, Inc.

6000 N. Forest Park Dr.
Peoria, IL 61614-3592
(800) 255-8000
(800) 488-3492 fax
(monthly clip art subscription)

Image Club Graphics, Inc.

729-24th Avenue SE
Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2G 5K8
(800) 661-9410, (403) 262-8008
(403) 262-7013 fax

International Microcomputer Software, Inc.

IMSI Corporate Headquarters
75 Rowland Way
Novato, CA 94945
(415) 878-4000
(415) 897-2544 fax

3G Graphics

114 Second Ave., South, #104
Edmonds, WA 98020
(206) 774-3518
(206) 771-8975 fax

Appendix C. Sample Thank-You Letter

March 3, 1994

Ms. Angela Langstrom
President
The Translation Shop
36 Center Street
Haddonfield, NJ 08033-2420

SUBJECT: Internationalization Article

Dear Angela:

I just wanted to thank you for your excellent article, "How to Write for an International Market," which was published in the March 1994 issue of *News & Views*. I greatly enjoyed reading the article, as I'm sure will the 600 technical communicators who receive *News & Views* each month.

The Philadelphia Metro chapter of STC benefits greatly from the input of persons, such as yourself, who make the effort to contribute to technical communication in our region.

Thank you again for your support. I look forward, as I'm sure you do, to seeing your article in print.

I have enclosed several copies of the March issue for your files.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Lockett Zubak
Managing Editor
News & Views

Appendix D.

Sources of Preprinted Paper

Preprinted papers provide four-color printing at a minimal cost. The advantage is that you can add inexpensive color and attractive design to your newsletter; the disadvantage is that you must select from a set design—and it's always possible that another chapter will decide to use the same paper for its newsletter. (See the section "Printing the Newsletter" in this chapter for more information on preprinted papers.)

In addition to the sources listed here, local copy shops may have a stock of preprinted papers that you can use.

Idea Art

2603 Elm Hill Pike
Nashville, TN 37214-3159
(800) 433-2278
(800) 435-2278 fax

Paper Access

23 West 18th Street
New York, NY 10011
(800) 727-3701
(212) 463-7022 fax

Paper Direct

1025 East Woodmen Road
Colorado Springs, CO 80920
(800) 272-7377
(719) 594-0842 fax

Premier Papers, Inc.

P.O. Box 64785
St. Paul, MN 55164
(800) 843-0414
(800) 526-3029 fax

Queblo Papers

1000 Florida Avenue
Hagerstown, MD 21741
(800) 523-9080
(800) 842-3371 fax

Would you like to see programs on (check any that apply):

- Confined to technical writing only
- Dealing with technical subjects in general
- Concerning communications in general
- Other (please list): _____

Presentations and programs can take several different forms. (Check those that most interest you.)

- Single speakers
- Panel speakers
- Open discussions involving all those attending

Many of us have special talents and expertise that could benefit our group. Would you be willing to share any of this with our membership in the form of a presentation? If so, please suggest a topic or topics:

Perhaps you don't feel fully qualified to talk at length on any particular subject, but would be more comfortable taking part in a panel discussion. If so, please suggest a topic or topics for a panel discussion in which you would like to participate:

Even if your business isn't directly involved in computer hardware or software, most of us use personal computers in our work. Would you be interested in presentations involving such products?

- Yes
- No

If so, what would you be interested in knowing more about?

For which operating system? _____

Suggestions or comments:
