

Newsletter Competition

By George Slaughter, *STC Newsletter Competition Rules Coordinator, and Senior Member, Houston Chapter*

The STC Newsletter Competition rewards excellence in chapter, student chapter, and special interest group (SIG) newsletters that communicate news about and develop interest in the Society for Technical Communication. All chapters and Society-level SIGs are encouraged to enter the competition. Chapters and SIGs that want to receive feedback on their newsletters without entering the competition may also submit their publications for review by the competition judges; simply check the circle for “noncompetitive entry” on the entry form.

Rules Change

Director-sponsor reports have proven to be an important ingredient in chapter newsletters, and with good reason. The reports provide members an insider’s view of Society and Board of Director news, straight from the director-sponsor. In recent years, however, director-sponsors have been challenged to produce a monthly column in addition to their other duties, while the demand for Society-level news remains strong.

To address this evolving scenario, the present Newsletter Competition (February 1, 2004 to January 31, 2005) allows newsletters to count announcements from the Society office, or reports from elected Society-level leaders, in the same category as director-sponsor reports.

Submitting an Entry

Three *consecutive* issues of either a paper or online newsletter must be submitted. Here are the deadlines for submitting entries to the Newsletter Competition:

- **October 15** (postmark date). Deadline to submit your entry form, initial issues, and Supplementary Checklists.
- **January 10** (postmark date). Deadline to submit any remaining issues and documents.

For paper entries, eight copies (two may be photocopies) of each issue must be submitted. Online entries that are available on the Web must include the URL and note on the entry form the three consecutive issues to be evaluated. For online entries that are not available on the Web, PDF newsletters as e-mail attachments, CDs, or diskettes must be submitted. Remember to include a completed Supplemental Checklist for each issue that you submit.

An entry packet including a copy of the competition rules, an entry form, sample evaluation forms, and instructions will be mailed to all chapter presidents, student chapter advisors, SIG managers, and newsletter editors on record with the Society office. If you hold one of these offices and have not received a packet by September 15, 2004, please contact the Society office at stc@stc.org to request one. Packet materials, as well as the 2004–2005 *Rules for the STC Newsletter Competition*, will be available on the STC office Web site. You may change your entry from competitive to noncompetitive any time between October 15, 2004, and January 10, 2005 (the two postmark deadlines).

Volunteering as a Judge

Judging in STC's newsletter competition is one of the most rewarding ways to participate in STC. Judges for this competition will have an opportunity to evaluate some of STC's best chapter, student chapter, and SIG newsletters.

The following checklist is offered for 2004–2005 STC newsletter competition judge candidates:

- Have you earned an award in an STC Newsletter Competition?
- Are you interested in evaluating the design and editorial quality of STC newsletters?
- Are you available for judging during the month of February?

If you answered, “yes” to these questions, the Newsletter Competition Committee wants to hear from you! Note that current STC newsletter staff with available time are eligible to judge and will be assigned newsletters other than their own.

For an application, please contact either STC Newsletter Competition Manager Beth Bailey or STC Newsletter Judge Coordinator Kristin Bojanowski, no later than October 1. You can contact Beth at ebaileyl@comcast.net, or Kristin at Kristin_Bojanowski@praxair.com. Beth or Kristin will e-mail you a Judge's Information form, which requests information for the purpose of assigning entries.

Deadlines

The competition evaluates three consecutive issues of a chapter or SIG newsletter published between February 1, 2004, and January 31, 2005. Copies of the first issue must be postmarked by October 15, 2004. Copies of the remaining issues must be postmarked by January 10, 2005.

Please send all entries to the STC office at the following address:

Society for Technical Communication
Attn: Newsletter Competition
901 N. Stuart Street, Suite 904
Arlington, VA 22203-1822

Or, you can send an e-mail note at stc@stc.org with a subject line of “Attention STC Newsletter Competition.”

Qualifications

Any officially recognized chapter, student chapter, or Society-level SIG of the Society for Technical Communication is eligible to enter the competition if it publishes a paper or online newsletter that meets or exceeds the following publication frequency standards: Chapter newsletters must be published at least six times per year; student chapter newsletters must be published at least four times per year; and SIG newsletters must be published at least three times per year.

Only one newsletter medium—online or paper—is eligible per chapter, student chapter, or SIG. Note: Eligible online entries include newsletters in PDF format as e-mail attachments, on CDs, or on diskettes, and newsletters formatted in HTML or PDF that are accessible from a chapter, student chapter, or SIG Web site that includes an archive of back issues. All newsletters must have been published during the competition year.

A panel of judges will evaluate entries in these areas:

- Fundamental elements, such as newsletter size, frequency, and title
- Recommended topics, such as meeting notices and reports, feature articles, and chapter or SIG activities
- Editorial quality, such as usage and style
- Design and delivery, such as typography, graphics, page design, production quality for paper entries, and navigation for online entries

Awards

Online and paper newsletters will be judged together within three award classifications: chapter newsletters, student chapter newsletters, and SIG newsletters. To determine the Most Improved awards, entries within the chapter newsletters classification will be further classified by the size of the sponsoring chapter as of June 30, 2004. Entries in each of the classification brackets are eligible for the following awards:

- Distinguished Technical Communication
- Excellence
- Merit
- Most Improved

Only one Most Improved award may be granted per chapter size category, per student chapter category, and per SIG category. Also, one Best of Show award (selected from the Distinguished award winners) will be granted. (For information on the criteria by which these awards are granted, see the *Rules for the STC Newsletter Competition* at www.stc.org/PDF_Files/Ad-39-04.pdf.)

Award-winning entrants will be notified by April 10, 2005. By the same date, all Society officers and director-sponsors will be notified of the results.

Winning entries will be displayed at STC's 52nd Annual Conference in Seattle and will be recognized in a summer issue of *Intercom*. Starting in the fall, the award-winning newsletters will be included in the traveling exhibits of the STC competition winners.

For more information about this competition, please contact:

Beth Bailey
Manager, STC Newsletter Competition
(214) 674-4588
ebaileyl@comcast.net

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