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Saturday, Feb. 7 Event Spotlights Report Editors from the Columbia Accident Investigation Board for Excellence in Technical Communication

DC Area Tech Writers & Artists Honored for 39 Projects at Annual DC Event at Capital Hilton

Washington, DC -- The editorial team of the Columbia Accident Investigation Board (CAIB) tops this year's list of 39 honorees, most from local companies and organizations, chosen by the Capital Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication (www.stcwdc.org). STC (www.stc.org) is an international organization based in Arlington, VA.

Each year the Capital Chapter of STC honors the best examples of technical writing, print publications, art, online communication and web-based technical training. The chapter submits top winners in each category to STC's international competitions.

The CAIB was established on February 1, 2003 -- the day Shuttle Columbia was destroyed during re-entry. With 13 Board members and a staff of 120, the CAIB had a mandate to determine what caused the accident and what could be done to prevent a recurrence.

The editorial team, part of that staff, worked to produce the Board's final report. Team members included: Lester Reingold, freelance aviation/space editor and writer from Maryland; Patricia Trenner, senior editor of Air & Space/Smithsonian Magazine, Washington, DC; Dennis Jenkins, aerospace engineer and author, of Cape Canaveral, FL; Christopher Kirchhoff, at Cambridge University; and Ariel Simon, at Oxford University.

Valador, Inc., a Herndon, VA-based professional services company, provided administrative and technical support for the CAIB. Among its many services, Valador contracted with technical experts, developed the Board's web site and maintained its database of inputs from the public. The CAIB's headquarters were originally near the Johnson Space Center in Texas, but then relocated to Arlington, VA offices as field work drew to a close.

Bethesda-based **Martin-Schaffer, Inc.** is this year's top chapter honoree for technical art. All honorees are listed at www.stcwdc.org/0304_winners.shtml.

"The goal of all technical communicators is to make scientific and technical information understandable to an audience with widely varying technical expertise," said Chapter President Daree Allen-Woodard.

"The mission of the CAIB investigators and editors reminds us why effective technical communication is so important in today's world," she added.

"The CAIB report (www.caib.us) is unquestionably a technical document," said Lester Reingold, lead editor on the award-winning team. "But it also has an emotional component. A photo of Columbia's crew hung in our office, and we saw it every day that we worked on this report. Our aim was to preserve a part of their legacy. February 1, 2003 was a day of profound loss, but by documenting the lessons of that catastrophe, we sought to make it also a means of safeguarding the lives of astronauts yet to fly. We are very grateful that our efforts have earned this recognition from our fellow writers and editors."

A continuous multimedia presentation of entries from companies throughout the DC metropolitan area will be on display at the event.

Saul Carliner, assistant professor at Montreal's Concordia University and former international president of the STC, will be the keynote speaker.

ABOUT STC:

The Washington, DC Chapter, or Capital Chapter, is one of the Society for Technical Communicators' largest, with almost 800 members in fields such as computer manufacturing, education, electronics, engineering, marketing, medicine, publishing, research, and software development. STC is the world's largest professional organization serving the technical communication profession.

STC is a Section 501(c)(3) not-for-profit educational, scientific, and charitable organization dedicated to creating and supporting a forum for communities of practice in the profession of technical communication.