Ragged Left

APRIL 2001

Vol. 15, No. 4

THE SOCIETY FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION   BERKELEY CHAPTER

Let's Get Technical:
Documenting APIs

Have you ever had to document an application program interface or API? Does the idea make you shudder? Fear not help is at hand. Jim Bisso, president of Bitzone, LLC in Richmond, California will help make it all okay with his presentation at the April STC meeting, "When I Grow Up I Want To Document APIs".

For any of you new to the subject, an API is a set of routines, protocols, and tools for building software applications. A good API allows programmers to write applications that will be consistent with the operating environment. They guarantee that all programs using a common API will have a similar user interface, making it easier for users to learn new programs.

Mr. Bisso's talk will examine how to approach the task of documenting this strange new creature. You'll learn who your audience is, how to write API documentation, how to interview your information source and other tips. He'll share online and print resources for writing API documentation.

Mr. Bisso has an extensive background in teaching, both through Bitzone's training programs and at the university level at Golden Gate University, San Jose State Extension, UC Berkeley Extension, and Mills College. A member of Berkeley STC,

he gave a well-received talk on this subject to the East Bay chapter and on Java to the Silicon Valley chapter.

Please join us on Wednesday, April 11th, to learn more about this vital area of the technical writing trade. Meeting details appear on page 2. You can reserve by check or make a reservation online at *www.stc-berkeley.org*.

STC Conference Breezes Into Chicago

STC's 48th annual conference is happening in Chicago on May 13-16. STC's annual conference is the largest conference in the world that focuses on the arts and sciences of technical communication.

The conference includes more than 250 educational presentations. It offers opportunities for networking and a chance to view vendor exhibits and award-winning entries from STC's technical communication competitions.

Full conference details and registration forms can be found at *http://www.stc-va.org/48thconf/index.html*. This year, for the first time, you can register for the entire conference online

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About the STC

TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION is the bridge between those who create ideas and those who use them. Conveying scientific and technical information clearly, precisely, and accurately is an essential occupation in all sectors of business and government.

STC has more than 20,000 members and 144 chapters world-wide. Its members include writers, editors, artists, illustrators, photographers, audiovisual specialists, managers, supervisors, educators, students, employees, and consultants.

STC strives to:
- Advance the theory and practice of technical communication.
- Promote awareness of trends and technology in technical communication.
- Aid the educational and professional development of its members.

Membership
Membership is open to everyone. Regular membership is $110/year, with an additional $15 enrollment fee the first year. Student membership is $45/year.

To receive additional information and an application form, via mail or email:
- Call our chapter voicemail number 510-466-5464 and leave a message.
- Send email to *bkymbrs@stc.org*.
- Send mail to STC-Berkeley, PO Box 1007, Berkeley CA 94701-1007.

Advertising Rates
Page $70, 2/3 page $50, 1/2 page $40, 1/3 page $30, 1/6 page $20, business card $10. STC members receive 20% off. Ad deadline is the fifteenth of the month prior to publication.

Submissions
Ragged Left publishes original articles and illustrations. We edit them to meet our needs. You retain copyright but grant every STC publication royalty-free permission to reproduce the article or illustration in print or any other medium. Please contact the editor for details of how to submit articles and illustrations.

Deadline for unsolicited submissions is the 21st of the month preceding publication. Other STC publications are hereby granted permission to reprint articles from *Ragged Left*, provided such reprints credit the author and the specific *Ragged Left* issue, and a copy of any publication containing such a reprint is sent to the *Ragged Left* editor.

STC-Berkeley Chapter Meeting Details

Next meeting: Wednesday, April 11.

The Silver Dragon Restaurant serves STC-Berkeley members delicious Chinese food. The meeting begins at 6 P.M. with networking and conversation, and dinner at 6:30 P.M. Chapter business and announcements are made around 7:15 P.M., followed by the speaker.

If you want to eat dinner, reservations are required and *must* be received (by Ruth) no later than 12:00 NOON the Monday before the meeting (April 9). Reservations are necessary so that we can order the right amount of food. Do *not* contact the restaurant.

Send checks to Ruth Wright, 586 Vernon Street, Oakland, CA 94610.

Checkout

RSVP online: Use your credit card to order meeting reservations via the chapter Web site, *www.stc-berkeley.org*.

With a reservation, the meeting fee with food for members is $20, for student members is $17, and for nonmembers is $23; if you come for the program only, starting at 7:30 P.M., the fee is $12 for members and non-members ($10 for students). If you are not eating, payments may be made at the door.

Fix Your Résumé

STC-Berkeley offers free résumé reviews to all comers, whether they are members or not. If you know someone who is a technical writer and would like some help with his or her résumé, we offer résumé reviews by people who have experience making hiring decisions.

With the average employer taking less than a minute to look at your résumé, another pair of eyes can help present your qualifications in the best light, *and* get you hired.

Résumés for review must be received the Friday before the monthly meeting (April 6). Send résumés to *employment@stc-berkeley.org*, using *résumé review* in the subject on the email.

Chapter Elections Near

Keep an eye out for the upcoming Berkeley Chapter elections ballots. Chapter officers decide the direction our chapter takes for the coming year: speakers, meeting locations, and how we spend our money. Ballots and instructions for voting will appear on the chapter Web site; votes will be counted at the May chapter meeting.

Candidates are: President—Kathryn Munn; Treasurer—Susan Marchionna; VP of Programs—Ruth Wright; VP of Membership —Paul Sinasohn—all running unopposed. The two candidates running for Chapter Secretary have submitted the following:

Candidate Statements for Secretary

DAVID MCCOARD

I am running for Secretary because I would like to become more active and develop relationships in the Chapter. This is a position in which I feel I can contribute my experience.

For eight years (1985-92) I took minutes of one and a half-day meetings of a regional church board and one of its committees and printed them for distribution. For thirteen years (1988- 2000) I also took and published minutes of monthly board meetings of a local food pantry, and for four years (1997-2000) did the same for a local church committee. In all cases, members gave positive feedback on the quality and usefulness of these minutes.

JOSEPH RYSHPAN

As a member of the Berkeley chapter for the past two years, I am familiar with its operations. I helped Richard Mateosian wrap up the work on this year's Touchstone competition.

My 16 years as a professional writer and editor have given me extensive experience in many aspects of writing and editing, including business correspondence and the taking and transcription of careful notes. I am fully versed in the tools I would have to use as Secretary, such as Framemaker and Word.

If elected, I will perform with the competence and efficiency the chapter has come to expect in its Secretary.

New Biotech Column Debuting Next Month

by Ruth A. Wright

Want to invest in a biotech that manufactures monoclonal antibodies but you don't have the slightest idea what those are? Re-evaluating whether you want to immunize your children against childhood illnesses and wondering what the current opinions are

on the issue? What do local biotech companies consider to be baseline-hiring requirements?

This is an open invitation for questions and information related to the life sciences and biotech field. I want to hear from you—questions about working in the field, about the impact biotech has and will have on our lives, on your life, or information you have that you would like to pass on to the group. If I don't know the answer, I'll find it.

I will answer your questions and we will print your comments and proffered information each month in the *Ragged Left*. Please forward all to Ruth Wright at *programs@stc-berkeley.org*.

Shaping Effective Online Content

All websites have content. Whatever your site's business goals, and whatever it offers to users (information, sales, digital distribution, education, entertainment, community), research shows that high quality content will make or break your website's success. Find out how you can shape and present effective online content that fulfills your site's goals and drives traffic.

In this packed-with-information presentation, you'll get quick insight into how branding and usability come together to make content compelling. You'll learn how to leverage existing content, write compelling new content, link and cross-link effectively, and keep content fresh long after your site is launched.

Brenda Kienan, a principal in Tauber Kienan Associates, is a content strategist and e-commerce management consultant. She has written 12 books, including *Managing Your E-Commerce Business*, *Webmastering for Dummies*, and *Small Business Solutions for E-Commerce*. She has produced feature content or provided services for CNET, WebReview, Work.com, E*Trade, and others. Brenda shares her expertise as a frequent speaker and has appeared at the Stanford Conference on E-Commerce as well as the Ragan Technology for Communicators Conference.
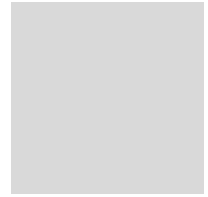
This presentation is based on her ongoing classes in content strategy, development and management at U.C. Berkeley extension and in San Francisco State University's Multimedia Studies program.

Meeting Location: London Wine Bar, downstairs
415 Sansome Street, Downtown San Francisco
STC members: $10; Non-members: $12; Students: $8
Details: *http://www.stc-sf.org*

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Next Meeting:

Wednesday

April 11

Let's Get Technical—
Documenting APIs

WITH JIM BISSO

Meal reservations required by Monday, April 9.
See page 2 for costs and meeting details.

RSVP online: Credit cards accepted at
.stc‑ e d .o g.
Silver Dragon Chinese Restaurant:
835 Webster Street (at 8th) in Oakland
Dinner   6:30 - 7:30
Announcements and Program   7:30 - 9:00
Please do   ot call the restaurant!
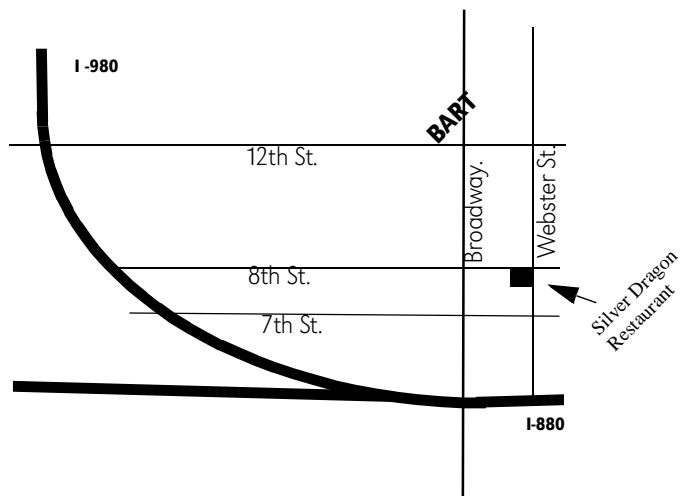
STC-BERKELEY MEETING DIRECTIONS

From north of Oakland: Take the I-880 North. Merge onto the I-580 East ramp towards downtown Oakland. Merge onto I-980 W. Take the 18th street exit towards 14th street. Merge onto Brush St. Turn left onto 17th St. Turn right onto San Pablo Ave. Turn slight right onto City Hall Plaza. Turn left onto 14th St/International Dr. Turn right onto Webster St. and proceed to 8th & Webster.

From south of Oakland: Take I-880 north from San Jose through Oakland. Take the Oak Street exit towards Lakeside Dr. Turn right onto Oak St. Turn left onto 8th St. Turn right onto Harrison St. Turn left onto 10th St. Turn left onto Webster St.

From San Francisco: Take the Bay Bridge towards Oakland (I-80 East). At the end of the bridge, take the I-580 East ramp towards downtown Oakland (CA-24)/Hayward-Stockton. Merge onto I-580 E. Take I-980 West ramp towards downtown Oakland. Merge onto I-980 W. Take the 18th street exit towards 14th street. Merge onto Brush St. Turn left onto 17th St. Turn right onto San Pablo Ave. Turn slight right onto City Hall Plaza. Turn left onto 14th St/International Dr. Turn right onto Webster St.

From far East Bay: Take Highway 24 west through Caldecott Tunnel. Highway 24 west becomes I-980 west. Take the 18th street exit towards 14th street. Merge onto Brush St. Turn left onto 17th St. Turn right onto San Pablo Ave. Turn slight right onto City Hall Plaza. Turn left onto 14th St/International Dr. Turn right onto Webster St. and proceed to 8th & Webster.

Join us in our New Meeting Location in Oakland

By BART: Exit the 12th Street Oakland station. Walk south for two blocks, to Webster St. Turn right and walk west to 835 Webster St.