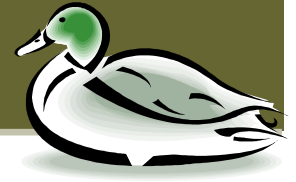


QAAC NEWSLETTER



News Letter of the Quality Assurance Association of Connecticut, Inc.
www.qaac.org

Message from the President

QAAC has signed the QAI North American Chapter Network Agreement with QAI Worldwide. The common objectives of QAAC and QAI are outlined in the following excerpt from the agreement:

OBJECTIVES

The shared objectives of QAI and the local chapters are:

Promote the value of IT quality

- Increase overall awareness of IT quality as a critical success factor in achieving goals throughout all organization levels

Promote and support the IT quality profession

- Advocate recognition of IT quality as a profession locally, nationally, and internationally
- Develop quality leadership skills
- Promote the value of professional certifications sponsored by QAI
- Facilitate communication among IT quality professionals
- Share information and concepts about IT quality practices

Support the IT quality professional

- Improve competency and skills of IT quality professionals
- Assist IT quality professionals in obtaining professional certifications sponsored by QAI
- Assist IT quality professionals in achieving CPEs to maintain their professional certification
- Assist Chapters in maintaining and building a local organization
- Improve employer recognition of certified IT quality professionals
- Support IT quality professionals during job transitions

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Promote QAI and chapters

- Be the 'first choice' organization for IT quality information, certification, education, and networking
- Increase the value of the organization to members

The benefits provided to chapter members are presented from the agreement as shown below:

Chapter Discounts from QAI

1. Chapter members receive a 10% discount or 1 year free QAI individual membership when registering for QAI classes, workshops and conferences. The Chapter will receive a list of the people who designated their Chapter when registering.
2. Chapter officers receive a 20% discount when registering for QAI classes, workshops, and conferences. The Chapter will receive a list of the people who identified themselves as the Chapters' officers when registering. QAI provides a complementary QAI membership to all Chapter officers for the duration of their term.
3. Chapter presidents are invited annually to QAI's conferences and are provided one complementary conference registration. The Chapter's president can designate a delegate. A chapter networking event and/or Chapter president's coaching occurs at the conference.

Message from the President from page 1

Certification testing is no longer offered by QAAC. QAI has agreements with Prometric to perform testing. Prometric has three Connecticut testing sites: Glastonbury, Hamden and Norwalk. West Springfield, MA may be more convenient to other test takers. Drill through the QAI Worldwide web site to match your preferred location, date and examination. Typically there are multiple testing dates available.

QAAC has chosen **Metrics** as the theme for the September 19, 2008 full day seminar. More information on speakers and their topics will be presented as we work out the details.

A reminder, if you hear a good speaker that you would like to recommend for your fellow QAACers, be sure to send their contact information to Randy or Maria via their emails on the website www.qaac.org.

Bill Schreyer
President
2008 QAAC Board of Directors

Tool Review – FreeMind

By Cheryl Klein

FreeMind is a mapping tool that I've had the opportunity to use on several projects. Even so, I am only beginning to scratch the surface of what I think it has to offer. If you are looking for a tool to let you plot out a flow or map some relationships, this will work very well. FreeMind offers version for MS Windows, Mac, Linux and a generic version. I've used the MS Windows version for several months and had no issues with the tool.

FreeMind allows you start with a main point and build out from there. It has about 30 different icons that you can use to flag points on the path for question, with a priority or, to for follow up. Paths can be collapsed and expanded to make for easier viewing. It has some formatting options (bold or italic text) but not many; you really need to rely on the icons for highlighting items. Links are possible, that allow you to circle back to earlier points in the flow as appropriate. There is the ability to export the document to about half a dozen other viewers such as HTML or JPEG. This comes in handy if not everyone you are working with has installed the FreeMind Tool. I've used the export to JPEG and others have been able to open and view the documents.

You will find they have a very good web site to support this tool. Documentation is available on-line or can be downloaded as a PDF document. There is a Help forum where you can get answers from other users and they also have a Wiki available.

As of my writing this the most current version available for download is FreeMind 0.8.1. You can download the tool from their website:

http://freemind.sourceforge.net/wiki/index.php/Main_Page

According to their website you will need to have Java Runtime Environment 1.4 or later, about 13 MB of Hard Disk Space and at least 512 MB of Memory.

Be aware when you download it, you may see a pop-up ad (while annoying, you can't blame them; they have to pay for it somehow). After the tool is downloaded the install is done via a wizard and is very quick.

Book Review: “Best Kept Secrets of Peer Code Review”

Reviewed by: Cheryl Klein

Jason Cohen has written an honest book about code review that I found interesting and refreshing. The book focuses on 5 types of code review: Formal Inspections, Over-the-Shoulder, E-mail pass-around, pair programming and tool-assisted reviews. When evaluating the various options he honestly discusses the good and bad of each type. There is no implication that any particular type will work all the time. So often I read things that have a one size fits all mentality to various processes and tools - I actually found this to be a nice change. It is a honest evaluation of why something may or may not work under certain conditions.

Along with discussing the types of reviews, he touches on problems that will be faced, such as resistance to change. And ways to counter those obstacles. He also talks about metrics and evaluation, but does so indicating you can't add the process for the sake of process. You need to have measurable and attainable goals around adding this type of process. Those goals need to be a concise statement, not the generic “fix more bugs” type of goal. He also

recommends keeping things small - short checklists, short sections of documents for review, short meetings. There is an understanding that more isn't always better. Sometimes people can focus and function better when looking at or working on small modules of a larger work product.

The one draw back to the book is the last chapter is a sales pitch for the Code Collaborator tool produced by Smart Bear. I can't really complain too much, since I did get a free copy of the book from them; they have to pay for it somehow. And in general the sales pitch was contained to the last chapter, they didn't use the whole book to do a heavy push for their product.

In general, if you are interested in or are doing code reviews and want some balanced information on them. I would recommend this book.

“Best Kept Secrets of Peer Code Review”

Written by: Jason A. Cohen
ISBN 1-59916-067-6

Mark Your Calendar QAAC September Seminar

September 19th will be the next QAAC event. This will be a full day seminar with several speakers all focused around the topic of Metrics.

This annual event is always well attended and a big hit! Mark your calendar now; and get that request in to your supervisor for the training day! More details to follow.

Watch for details on the QAAC website and in your August newsletter.

Newsletter Submissions

I know, I know.... You are thinking I don't have time to write anything for the newsletter. However, I bet you are already doing it and just never thought to submit the information for the QAAC Newsletter.

Anyone working on maintaining their certification usually has to provide documentation: a synopsis of the book they have read, class attended or webinar you listened to. Why not take that write up you have for your certification and send it in for the newsletter? And how better to support your claimed hours as a QAAC member than by showing you contribute to the local chapter's newsletter?

To submit a book review, job posting, class summary or any other article for the newsletter please send your submission to Cheryl Klein @ Ch_K_Klein@comcast.net. The next newsletter will be August. All submissions should be sent in by August 7th.

Free Webinars Available for Training by Cheryl Klein

CAI (Computer Aid Inc.) and the IT Metrics & Productivity Institute provide a series of Software Best Practices seminars via the web for free. If you are trying to keep up your certification hours, these webinars do count towards those hours/credits. Topics covered include areas such as software testing, project management, Six Sigma and Outsourcing. Currently their website has a schedule running through mid-December 2008. Most their webinars run 1 ½ hours. The majority of the time is presentation with some time left at the end for Q&A. The meeting requires you to phone in for the audio portion and the web presentation is via Go To Meeting. You can run this over the internet without having to sign up or subscribe.

CAI has a pretty extensive schedule, and the webinars are held on different days and at different times, so even if you can't make one, you will probably find others that will fit your schedule. I've also found on the last 2, that the authors presenting provided a discount code for anyone attending the seminar who wanted to purchase a copy of their book. I don't know if this will always happen, but for those couple sessions it was a nice surprise.

You can see the list of sessions, get more information and register from their web site:
<http://www.itmpi.org/webinars/>

QAAC is a tax-exempt, non-profit educational organization, independent but affiliated with the Quality Assurance Institute (QAI) as a local chapter of its Federation of Associations.

QAAC is exempt from federal (and state) income taxes (and state corporate taxes) under section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code as an organization described in section 501(c)(3). We handle money only to pay our expenses. We do not pay our officers or board members. We have no employees. We collect dues from our members to cover our operating expenses. We are permitted to accept donations to further our goals, and they are tax deductible.