

# DELAWRITER

The quarterly newsletter of AMWA-DVC

## Winter Edition December, 2016

As the seasons blur and 2016 comes to a close, the editors of the Delawriter wish everyone a healthy and prosperous New Year.

### Season's Greetings from DVC

AMWA-DVC spread the holiday joy in a new location this year-Princeton's own Triumph Brewery. Treated to an evening of appetizers, salad, and a buffet-style dinner, more than 25 members congregated to network and take advantage of the locale to sample local craft beer and wines at the open bar.

"Getting to see Princeton at the holidays and meet with my awesome DVC friends was a double treat this year," said Julie Munden, DVC's new Programs Committee Chair. "The space at Triumph was perfect for our group to mingle and meet new colleagues and catch up with old friends! The food and drinks were fabulous too!"

In DVC's first ever raffle, long-time member Ruwaida Vakil, MS, won a free entry to either the [Freelance Workshop](#) (March 18, 2017) or the Princeton Conference (April 22, 2017).

"The drawing for a free entry to a DVC event, especially something as large as a conference or workshop, was a great prize to offer to the participants of the networking event. It was a pleasant surprise when my business card was pulled and I won. I am looking forward to attending the Princeton conference," Vakil said.



*Catching up with friends at Triumph Brewery*

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## Quick Notes

### Enhancing AMWA's Educational Mission

During the annual conference in October, chapter representatives met with the AMWA executive committee to discuss ongoing education offerings and strategies to enhance AMWA's ability to provide more relevant and accessible education and resources.

"I loved this new location-the food was great, the company was even better. It's like I blinked and the evening was already over. I'm already looking forward to next year's event," said DVC President Michelle Dalton, ELS.

DVC President-Elect Jen Minarcik, MS, said the evening was a "wonderful celebration. The location was great, the food was delicious, and the staff at Triumph Brewery was welcoming. It was so good to relax, have a glass of wine, and spend the evening with dear friends and new acquaintances."

Vakil added the location "was beautiful and very convenient," noting several participants enjoyed having a networking event of this caliber in New Jersey.

## Learn and Network at the 2017 Freelance Conference Workshop

*By Ruwaida Vakil, Jennifer Minarcik, and Karen Golebowski*

If you're a freelance medical writer or editor, or thinking about becoming one, don't miss AMWA-DVC's 2017 Freelance Workshop, to be held on Saturday, March 18, 2017, at the Crowne Plaza Philadelphia in King of Prussia, PA. In addition to three interactive presentations on marketing, business savvy, and the science of learning, two breakout sessions will list common challenges and describe best practices: one for aspiring and newer freelancers and one for seasoned pros. As always, the workshop will feature a networking luncheon and roundtable discussions.

**Why You Must Attend:** "This is the one workshop that I make sure I attend each year," says Ruwaida Vakil, a freelance medical writer and one of this year's co-chairs.

"Our Freelance Workshop offers extraordinary learning and networking for seasoned, new, and aspiring freelance medical writers," says Lori De Milto, MJ, a freelance medical writer since 1997 and one of this year's speakers.

"This is the one workshop a year where I know my investment is worthwhile before I even set foot in the door," says Michelle Dalton, ELS, a freelance medical writer since 2006, and AMWA-DVC's current president.

"The Freelance Workshop is THE event each year where freelancers can come together, share experiences, and learn from one another. Everyone is so welcoming!" says Jennifer Minarcik, MS, one of this year's co-chairs, President-Elect, and Webinar Chair for AMWA-DVC.

**Get Involved:** Gain new skills and build your network even more as a member of the Freelance Workshop Committee. "The annual DVC workshop invigorates freelancers, as writers/editors, business owners, AND

Stay tuned what AMWA has in store for its members.

## 2017 AMWA ANNUAL CONFERENCE UPDATE

Planning for next year's AMWA Annual Conference on Nov. 1-4 in Orlando, FL, at the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin continues.

## Call for Proposals

### Call for Proposals

portal for AMWA's 2017 Medical Writing & Communication Conference is now open. Submit your idea today!

## AMWA Journal

Be on the lookout for the March issue of the AMWA Journal, which will include the association's annual financial report and new editorial staff.

chapter members. It provides a forum for invaluable learning, exchange, and networking, and in my case, a great opportunity to become more involved with the chapter," notes Karen Golebowski, MS, biomedical writer. Karen is serving as the third co-chair of AMWA-DVC's 2017 Freelance Workshop.

We have many volunteer opportunities available, with varying time commitments. To learn more, or to volunteer, email: [freelance@amwa-dvc.org](mailto:freelance@amwa-dvc.org).

**Register Early:** Early bird registration is only \$99. Registration is open on DVC's [website](#). Prices increase to \$125 in January.

The full program for the Freelance Workshop will be posted by January 2017. We expect a large crowd this year, so register early.

Ruwaida Vakil, MS, is a freelance medical writer and owner of ProMed Write LLC. She specializes in CME, patient education, sales training, and medical communications.

Jennifer Minarcik, MS, is a freelance biomedical communicator specializing in early drug discovery models, diagnostic technology, and promotional medical education materials. Currently, she is the President-Elect and Webinar Chair for AMWA-DVC.

Karen Golebowski, MS, is President and Principal Biomedical Writer of Write Rite, Inc. She specializes in multimedia biomedical writing and advisory board and medical congress coverage.

## Upcoming Events

### January 31, 2017: Making a Case for Case Studies

- Dinner meeting at the University of the Sciences, Philadelphia, PA
- In-depth presentation on the necessary building blocks needed to develop effective case studies. Fellow DVC member Scott Kober, MBA, will discuss a new case study assignment.

### February 2017: What's Hot in Regulatory Writing?

Webinar topics will include:

- What is regulatory writing?
- What should you know about the industry?
- What credentials should you have to break into the business?
- What are the hot jobs trends right now?
- FREE to DVC members

### March 18, 2017: 15th Annual Freelance Workshop

- King of Prussia, PA
- Tailored to new and seasoned freelance medical writers, this 1-day intensive program covers topics from the science of learning to the business of freelance to instructional design

### April 22, 2017: 21st Annual Princeton Workshop

- A 1-day intensive program that offers a Primer in

## June 2017: DVC Annual Chapter Business Meeting

- Dinner Meeting
- Stay tuned for a location and date!

Want to help make these events a success? [Volunteer](#) to be part of the programs committee.

## New Upcoming Online Learning and Webinars from AMWA National

AMWA is introducing several new educational offerings in the upcoming months, including these two new online learning courses.



The first, [Unlock Secrets to Freelance Success - The 3-part series](#), is from DVC's own Brian Bass, Cyndy Kryder, and Lori De Milto. In this package, new freelancers (or those considering becoming a full-time freelance medical communicator) will learn how to set up and maintain an efficient and effective freelance business, work with current clients to grow the business, and expand outreach efforts to gain new clients.

A second, brand-new training module, [Get FIT with AMWA: Introducing Fast, Interactive Training](#), promises to "help medical communicators stay healthy. In only 15 minutes, jog your memory, tone your writing muscles, build your core skills, and stretch your knowledge." This just launched in mid-December.

AMWA's next webinar, [5 Easy Steps to Making the Ethical RIGHT Choice](#), scheduled for January 18, 2017, will empower medical communicators to stand up for ethical medical communication practices by providing the tools you need to make the RIGHT choice. It's free for members! For more details, click [here](#).

## Report on the Medical Education Communications Companies Dinner

*by Julie Munden*

AMWA-DVC hosted its latest dinner program at the Sheraton Bucks County in Langhorne, PA, on November 15, 2016 entitled "Understanding the Medical Education Communications Company (MECC) Universe and the Important Role of Medical Writers." Susan Stein, MPH, chief operating officer of Connexion Healthcare (Newtown, PA) outlined what MECCs are and what her company looks for in their medical writers in an hour-long slide show.

Stein encouraged audience participation throughout the presentation that prompted lively discussion about the

personal experiences of the medical writers in attendance. The audience comprised a mix of about 25 freelance and industry medical writers.

MECCs are known commonly as Healthcare, Scientific, and Medical Communications Companies. Essentially, these companies produce promotional and nonpromotional health and scientific material to educate those in the pharmaceutical and biotechnical arenas.

Connexion Healthcare is a 17-year-old, personalized, boutique MECC that produces strategic healthcare communications focused exclusively on the therapeutic areas of oncology and rare diseases. "Science drives our communications," Stein said. "Our medical writers take complex science and translate it into clear, consistent communication."

"Our medical writers strive for the right message, the right vehicle, the right time, and the right audience," Stein stated. Skills, such as writing, researching, literature reviews, proficiency in American Medical Association editorial style, are some of the basic competencies that Connexion Healthcare seeks in potential medical writers. Connexion Healthcare also expects their medical writers to possess more advanced skills, such as storytelling, understanding multiple communication channels, staying on message, and promoting the company both internally and externally.

Stein closed the meeting with good advice for medical writers: "Know your strengths as a writer and stick with what you really know well, but also offer that you have other skill sets that show your flexibility."

Julie Munden is a freelance medical editor with 14 years of experience working with medical communications agencies producing marketing and sales training materials for the pharmaceutical industry. She is located in Souderton PA and is the current Programs Chair for AMWA-DVC.

## Report on the PRA Networking Event

*By Julie Munden*

On Tuesday, November 29, 2016, a small group of AMWA-DVCers braved the weather to "Meet & Greet" with PRA Health Sciences, one of the world's leading global research organizations (CROs). The networking event was held in PRA's spacious Blue Bell, PA, headquarters for an evening of lively networking, delicious food, and a comprehensive presentation that delivered a message that resonated with all: There's a lot of world in the world of medical writing...and PRA is listening for a good fit in their medical writers and editors.

About 25 people from PRA Health Sciences Strategic Solutions Division and AMWA-DVC gathered around a

large conference table for an informal, but extremely informative, 4-part presentation that outlined and how medical writers and editors can fit into PRA's world.

The 90-minute interactive presentation included networking among DVC members as well-and attendees learned how we became medical writers and editors. A few of us climbed a straight ladder to success. Most took a winding road with many turns. Either way, medical writers and editors can find a place with one of PRA's many partners in the vast world of medical writing attendees were told.

PRA's representative then took center stage to describe how a CRO partners include some of the world's leading biopharmaceutical companies. For example, PRA works directly with Merck & Co. on its blockbuster cancer therapy, Keytruda®, which has over 250 clinical studies in development. Merck looks to PRA to fulfill numerous positions (from senior medical regulatory writers to principal medical writers to clinical trial editors). PRA currently is looking for the right talent with regulatory experience that includes a deep understanding of the guidelines and processes and also "soft skills," such as communication, teamwork and collaboration, and problem-solving," the group said.

PRA is currently seeking medical writers for open positions with Takeda Pharmaceuticals in 2017. Any DVC member who is interested in medical writing opportunities, please visit their [website](#) for opportunities to search for [jobs](#) and contact a PRA Recruiter, [Craig Quinn](#).

## Review on the "Targeting Lay Audiences" Open Session at National Conference

*By Carol DiBernardino*

AMWA's current president, Lori Alexander, often teaches workshops at the annual conference, but this year, she also presented an open session entitled "Targeting Lay Audiences,"

Alexander discussed medical writing as a form of rhetoric and persuasion, and focused on the key principles of rhetoric (rational appeals, emotional appeals, and ethical appeals), and how they are used in medical writing.

For instance, Alexander discussed how the audience determines which appeals should be used for the piece. Therefore, the first step in writing is audience analysis. What information does the audience need, and why are they reading this piece? She also discussed how to reach out to diverse audiences, which can be challenging.

Logical appeals are used when patients are seeking

balanced health information. Alexander used the issue of the autism-vaccine controversy as a concrete example of how this information is targeted to that lay audience. This type of appeal is supported by providing clear numbers and facts.

The second type of focus is the emotional appeal, best conveyed by patient stories and visuals. These pieces are often "very powerful", she said.

In ethical appeals, the author establishes his or her reliability, credibility, and integrity in the area. The main way the author establishes credibility is through presentation of credentials. Also, the author's expertise could be well known or established in the community.

On a personal note, Alexander's session reached me on a much more profound level than I had believed. I also teach English 102 at Camden County College in Blackwood and Cherry Hill, NJ, as an adjunct professor. In the class, I introduce freshmen to rhetoric and persuasive writing, so Alexander's discussion was profound on many levels for me. In fact, I incorporated Alexander's use of rhetoric into my class, how she provided concrete evidence of how the principles of rhetoric are used in the world of business and healthcare, and not just in the realm of academia. The students, many of whom are majoring in nursing, medicine, and science, were truly inspired by this idea. The light was turned on that rhetoric is relevant to their lives. In presenting this session at the National Conference in Denver, Alexander reached another target audience-future medical and scientific writers.

Carol DiBerardino is a medical editor and writer with more than 25 years of experience in medical publishing and pharmaceutical promotional materials. She lives in Lindenwold, NJ.

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