

Delawriter

Late Fall 2002

The quarterly newsletter of the American Medical Writers Association—Delaware Valley Chapter

UPCOMING MEETING

“The Dilemma of Treatment Options” on December 4

How do physicians guide their patients after startling and confusing reports about a major study are published? Join us on Wednesday, December 4 to find out how Joseph Ferroni, MD, handled this situation after the recent highly publicized cessation of a major study.

Dr. Ferroni, director of the Gynecology and Menopause Center in Malvern, PA, and campus chief of OB/GYN at Paoli Memorial Hospital, will discuss “The Dilemma of Treatment Options,” related to the Women’s Health Initiative (WHI) and Heart and Estrogen/Progestin Replacement Study (HERS).

HERS, a study of the risks and benefits of estrogen plus progestin in healthy postmenopausal women, was one aspect of the WHI, which was designed to clarify the risks and benefits of strategies that could potentially reduce the incidence of heart disease, breast and colorectal cancer, and fractures in postmenopausal women. HERS was a randomized controlled primary prevention trial designed to last for 8.5 years. But 5.2 years into the study, the safety monitoring board recommended discontinuing it because the number of invasive breast cancers exceeded the stopping boundary for this disease.

Dr. Ferroni is a frequent lecturer on menopause and osteoporosis. *Philadelphia Magazine* named him a “Top Doctor for Women” in 2000 and a “Top Doctor” in 1999 and 1996. Dr. Ferroni will help us put the noise and conflicting information into perspective, and shed light on doctor-patient communication.

Details

- Wednesday, December 4
5:30 to 9:00 p.m.
- Doubletree Guest Suites—
Plymouth Meeting
640 West Germantown Pike
Plymouth Meeting, PA
610-834-8300
www.doubletreeplymouth.com

Reservations

- Cost:
\$30 per person for members
with advance reservations
\$35 per person for non-
members and for members who
are not pre-registered
- To reserve your place contact
Joan DeVinney: 610-983-3050,
or jbdevinney@earthlink.net

CALENDAR

- **Wednesday, December 4**— “The Dilemma of Treatment Options,” Plymouth Meeting, PA
- **Saturday, January 18**— “Freelance Workshop,” Villanova Conference Center, Radnor, PA
- **Tuesday, March 11**—NBC 10 Medical reporter Cherie Bank, Location to be announced
- **A Saturday in April**—Princeton Conference, Princeton, NJ
- **Wednesday, June 4**—Annual Business Meeting; speaker and location to be announced

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The logo for the American Medical Writers Association, featuring a stylized 'AMWA' acronym above the full name 'AMERICAN MEDICAL WRITERS ASSOCIATION'.

Freelance Workshop Set for January 18

Freelance medical writing can be challenging, productive, and sometimes scary. AMWA-DVC has assembled a panel of experts to help freelance medical writers—and those thinking about becoming freelancers—learn about some of the key issues involved in freelancing: marketing a freelance business, time and project management, taxes, and how to decide if a freelance career is right for you. The workshop will be held on Saturday, January 18, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Villanova Conference Center in Radnor, PA.

Workshop Topics

MARKETING YOUR FREELANCE BUSINESS

Lori DeMilto, Writer for Rent

- Getting started: Determining your strengths, choosing clients, naming your business, and investing in your business.
- Marketing tactics that work: Nine success stories.
- Creating marketing materials with impact: Everything from business cards to brochures.

TIME AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Debra Gordon, Freelance Writer

- Time management: How to make every hour worth two.
- Project management: Managing multiple projects without losing your mind.
- Managing the money: Setting up systems, tracking expenditures, getting the most bang for your buck.

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See LISTSERVE on 5

AMWA-DVC to Start Listserve

To help you find the information and resources you need to succeed in medical writing, AMWA-DVC is starting a listserv. Members who sign up for the listserv can submit questions, which will be sent via e-mail to all listserv members. Possible categories include freelance business practices and general medical knowledge and clinical research methods. Anyone who has an answer can share it. We will publish excerpts of questions and answers in future issues of *Delawriter*.

Volunteer Needed

We're looking for a volunteer to take charge of the listserv. You will moderate the list, review and screen postings, and delete any that are inappropriate.

To volunteer, contact Kate Casano at kate@casano.com.

CAREER TRACKS

This column will highlight your professional achievements: promotions, new jobs, new businesses, awards, etc. All highlights must be 75 words or less and are subject to editing (only professional achievements will be included).

Send your news to Jennifer Long at jenniferlong@ireland.com.

Delawriter

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Princeton Conference

Planning is underway for AMWA-DVC's annual Princeton Conference, which will be held on a Saturday in April. Princeton Conference Chair Brian Bass hopes to offer four Core Curriculum and two non-credit workshops at the one-day conference.

Watch your e-mail for the registration form in January. If you haven't given AMWA headquarters your e-mail address, or it's changed, please notify rob@amwa.org. The registration form will not be mailed out this year, but it will be available on the AMWA-DVC Web site (www.amwa-dvc.org).

Staying Fit at Work

By Peggy Stansfield

Writing is a risky business—at least in terms of staying fit. Sitting in front of a computer burns about 100 calories per hour—even if you are typing. You can boost the number of calories you burn at work and help improve your overall fitness and well-being if you:

- Get up and move around
- Walk
- Climb stairs
- Swing your arms
- Stretch
- Use weights or exercise bands
- Jog in place
- Drink plenty of water.

Studies have shown that short

Mixer at the Mutter Museum



AMWA-DVC members search for medical facts and oddities by the Mutter Museum's wall of skulls

The 68 people who attended AMWA-DVC's Mixer at the Mutter Museum on September 17 now know that Siamese Bendy has two navels. The plastic Gumby[®]-like toy, highlighted in a display of Siamese twin memorabilia, was just one of the 20,000 medical objects contained in the Mutter's collection.

After cocktails and a buffet in the museum's elegant entrance hall, members found their teammates (assigned via nametag) and began the Medical Fact Hunters Game, a scavenger hunt for medical facts and oddities. They explored the museum while searching for clues. Each team searched the wall of skulls to find a sailor, read that Charles Dickens wrote about Jim Porter's giant hands, identified an upside down Sumarian tablet, found Dr. Kitchen's sink, and more.

Since every team answered all of the questions correctly, the winner was chosen via lottery. Congratulations to Team B: Ray Bisogno, Kate Casano, Dan Di Paolo, and Dawn Willis. Each team member received a \$25 gift certificate to Barnes & Noble.

Thanks to the AMWA-DVC members who helped plan and run the meeting: Joan DeVinney, program chair and president-elect; Steve Collins, master of ceremonies for the Medical Fact Hunters Game and

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periods of exercise can add up to a substantial health benefit. Increasing your daily physical activity by 30 minutes a day (even when done in 5- to 10-minute increments) can help you maintain an ideal weight and improve your physical fitness. So get up and move around when you are not actively working – think on your feet, swing your arms, stretch.

Old Laptops Wanted

To better serve the attendees at our annual conference and lower the cost of audiovisual equipment, AMWA staff would like to have several laptop computers. These computers would be used to streamline the onsite registration

See LAPTOPS on 6

WORKSHOP from 2

TAXES

Randy Heiser, Owner, Heiser Associates, a public accounting practice

- Structuring your business.
- Meeting IRS standards for independent contractors.
- You are not a rock star: How to pay your taxes on time.
- Drawing the line: Keeping your business separate from your personal accounts.

DECIDING TO FREELANCE

Brian Bass, Director of Medical Communications, DesignWrite, and former freelance

- To leap, or not to leap? That is the question.
- Survive or thrive — Have you got what it takes?
- What did I get myself into?

QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD WILL FOLLOW

The Panel Members

Lori De Milto, Writer for Rent, BA and MJ in journalism, has 20 years of experience in marketing communications, including 9 in medical marketing communications. Lori is the newsletter editor and a chapter delegate for AMWA-DVC.

Debra Gordon, writer and editor, has focused her career on health and medical writing as a newspaper reporter, editor, and executive writer. She is a Kaiser Family Foundation Media Fellow. Her freelance clients include magazines, Internet sites, foundations, and book publishers.

Randy Heiser, BA in accounting, Navy veteran and former Navy SEAL, is the owner of Heiser Associates, a public accounting practice specializing in accounting and financial and estate issues for people and small businesses.

Brian Bass is director of medical communications at DesignWrite, a medical communications company in Princeton, NJ. Prior to joining DesignWrite, Brian was a successful freelance medical writer for more than 12 years. An AMWA Fellow, Brian has served AMWA-DVC as president, and as programming, publicity, and Princeton Conference chair. He has served on the AMWA Executive Committee for several years.

Workshop Details

- 9:00 a.m. Registration and breakfast
- 9:30-12:30 Workshop
- Villanova Conference Center (at the Montrose mansion, not the university campus) 601 County Line Road Radnor, PA 19087 <http://www.villanovaconfctr.com/>

Ideas Wanted

Did you know that our members provide a rich source of program ideas for AMWA-DVC meetings? Many members work in centers of excellence and know top performers in science and medicine. Other members are experts who would make great speakers. We schedule our programs far in advance and welcome your ideas for future programs. Please send your suggestions for program topics and speakers to Program Chair Joan DeVinney (jbdevinney@earthlink.net or 610-983-3050); include the topic, and the speaker's name, affiliation, and contact information.

Registration

Registration will be limited to the first 75 people who send in their checks.

- Cost (advance registration only):
\$40 per person
\$50 for non-members
- To reserve your place, send your check, payable to AMWA, along with your name, address, e-mail address, and phone number, to:

Joan DeVinney
Eastgate Medical Writing
395 Country Lane
Phoenixville, PA 19460.

Or complete the reservation form in the printed brochure (which will be mailed in early December).

**Registration deadline:
January 11**

MY FAVORITE COMPUTER NUGGETS

A Little Software Gem

By Steve Collins

Finding a great piece of software provides a special thrill like discovering a great, unpublicized restaurant; you feel as if you've joined an exclusive club of those-in-the-know. Of course, the big application packages like Word and PowerPoint in which I do most of my work are invaluable, but they're more or less just *there*. Outside of these gargantuan programs, by far the most useful software I have discovered in my four years as a medical writer is a little gem called ClipCache.

ClipCache is like an extended version of the familiar Windows clipboard, but with far more going for it. It runs "resident" on the Windows taskbar, and can store a nearly unlimited supply of text and graphic clips that can be pasted into documents at will. Its user-

friendly interface, comparable to that of Outlook Express, lists all stored clips, with navigation tools that enable you to search, modify, rearrange and delete the clips as needed. When preparing a typical document, replete with trademark-laden brand names and measurement units like $\text{nmol mL}^{-1} \text{hr}^{-1}$, the ability to store and paste extensive text strings complete with formatting has saved me untold hours.

For those of us on the receiving end of e-mails that have been forwarded through multiple recipients, ClipCache also provides a cleanup tool that automatically removes the ">>>" symbols from text, so you can copy and paste a clean version.

ClipCache does much more, but the best news is the price: \$19.95. You can buy and down-

load ClipCache from xrayz software, at <http://www.xrayz.co.uk/clipcache/?page=default>. Buy it today; you'll thank me at the next AMWA-DVC meeting.

To share your "computer nuggets" with other AMWA-DVC members, send a brief description (in lay terms), to Steve Collins at stevecollins@mindspring.com.

LISTSERVE from 2

Professional Liability Insurance

We're starting the listserv with a question on professional liability insurance that has come up many times. According to the National Writers Union, there have been significant changes in the insurance world recently, with companies growing more conservative in the policies they underwrite and in setting terms for those policies. Professional liability insurance is harder to find than before, and is likely to cost substantially more.

Do you have professional liability insurance? If so, what company did you purchase it from? What does it cover? What does it cost? If not, why did you decide not to get professional liability insurance? Would you like to buy it if you could find it?

Please send any information you have about professional liability insurance to Kate Casano at kate@casano.com.

MIXER from 3

The winning team (l. to r.): Dan Di Paolo, Dawn Willis, Kate Casano, and Ray Bisogno



immediate past president; Brian Bass and Gretchen Worden (Mutter Museum director), who created the scavenger hunt; and Kate Casano, membership chair, and Maitland Young, who both handled registration.



AMWA-DVC
c/o Lori De Milto
1018 Hartley Court
Sicklerville, NJ 08081

News and notes from the American Medical Writers Association— Delaware Valley Chapter

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LAPTOPS from 3

process and could serve as backups for workshop leaders in the event of technical difficulties.

If you or your company has an old laptop(s), please consider donating it(them) to AMWA. Your donation will help your association serve you better. AMWA is recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, so your donation is tax deductible in the United States as a charitable contribution to the maximum extent provided by law.

You can ship your laptop to:

AMWA Headquarters
40 West Gude Drive, Ste 101
Rockville, MD 20850-1192.

HQ will send you a receipt for tax purposes.

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