

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Cheryl Iverson to Speak on New AMA Style Manual, June 28, 2007

Cheryl Iverson, Chair of the Editorial Committee of the *AMA Manual of Style*, will speak on what's new in the 10th edition of the *AMA Manual of Style* at the June AMWA-DVC dinner meeting. Cheryl is an engaging speaker and the new edition of this valuable source for many of us has much new material to help us navigate the challenges of putting words on paper.

We will also have a brief business meeting for the election of a new President-Elect and Treasurer, a financial report, and the recognition of the many volunteers who have made the Chapter "run".

#### Meeting Details

Thursday, June 28, 2007: 5:30 pm - Registration and networking  
6:00 pm - Dinner and program

#### Location

Hilton Philadelphia City Line, 4200 City Avenue, Philadelphia, PA  
Phone: 1-215-879-4000

#### Cost

With advance registration: Members: \$40.00; Non-Members: \$45.00;  
Full-Time Students \$10.00.

Door registration: Add \$10.00 to each of the above categories; available only if space permits. Payment by check only. No cash or credit cards accepted. Visit [amwa-dvc.org](http://amwa-dvc.org) for directions and additional information.

Dear AMWA-DVC Members,

As many of you know, AMWA-DVC is currently celebrating its 50th anniversary. To recognize the anniversary and the contributions of so many members over the years, the next few editions of the *Delawriter* will contain a special anniversary section.

Congratulations and best wishes for the success of the Chapter for the next 50 years!

Yours sincerely,

Debbie Early, PhD, AMWA-DVC President

Bernice Schacter, PhD, AMWA-DVC President-Elect

Scott Metsger, PhD, AMWA-DVC Immediate Past President

Dear AMWA-DVC Members,

We are pleased to inform you that the IRS recently determined that the Chapter is now recognized as a 501(c)(6) tax-exempt organization. This was achieved through the hard work of the current Executive Committee, which deserves thanks.

Yours sincerely,

Debbie Early, PhD  
AMWA-DVC President

Bernice Schacter, PhD  
AMWA-DVC President-Elect

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## Highlights from the AMWA Spring Board of Directors Meeting

By Debbie Early and Bernice Schacter

The annual conference in Atlanta will have:

- 98 Workshops, the most we have ever held
- 38 Open Sessions
- 62 Breakfast Roundtables
- 9 (to date) Poster Sessions
- 38 Coffee and Dessert Klatches
- Creative Readings
- 8 tours (several with a science background)

On-line registrations will be accepted beginning July 16. There will be no increase in registration costs or fees from last year because the organization has had such a good financial year.

### Nominations

The board approved the nomination of Cindy Hamilton for President-Elect, Tom Gegeny for Secretary, and Judith Pepin for Treasurer. These members have been actively involved at the Chapter and National level for many years.

### Education News

The *Sentence Structure and Patterns* self-study module is on track for delivery at the 2007 annual conference. It is likely that the next module to be developed will be on *Statistics for Medical Writers and Editors* (regular member rate is \$159/\$250 for nonmembers). Development of the science curriculum continues since about one third of members seek sciences courses.

### Windfall Benefits

A Delegates' Task Force was formed at the October Board of Directors meeting to recommend a special initiative or member benefit to be developed using \$15,000 from AMWA's 2006-2007 revenue. Recommendations included offering webinars, capturing virtual meeting sessions from the annual conference, and offering reference resources on the website. The decision was made to offer a pilot webinar. Cheryl Iverson, Chair of the Editorial Committee of the *AMA Manual of Style: A Guide for Authors and Editors, 10th edition*, and Annette Flanagan, member of the editorial committee, will lead an interactive webinar on June 13, 2007, at 2 p.m. EDT. The details will be distributed soon. (Cheryl is also the speaker for our June 28 meeting. Look for the announcement.)

### Annual Conference

This year the program will offer annual conference attendees the option of hearing the lunch speakers, without having to register for lunch. Attendees will not be permitted to bring food into the lecture hall.

More details will be provided in the registration brochure.

A short disclaimer will appear in the registration brochure stating that AMWA does not endorse the various drugs or devices shown at the conference.

## Opportunities and Challenges in the Evolving World of Continuing Medical Education (CME)

*From the Freelance Workshop*

By Kimberly McFarland, PhD

Karen M. Overstreet, EdD, RPh, FACME, ELS, described the evolving regulation of continuing medical education (CME) and implications of CME regulations for medical writers during the AMWA-DVC Fifth Annual Freelance Workshop, on April 21, 2007 in Blue Bell, PA. An AMWA member, Overstreet is President of Indicia Medical Education, LLC, a company dedicated to the development and management of CME activities.

### Increasing Regulation of CME

Government regulation of CME has increased since 1990. Several factors have led to closer examination of CME activities, including increasing healthcare costs, media scrutiny, public perception, perceived bias in CME, and cases of undue pharmaceutical company influence on prescription practices. As of 2006, the Office of the Inspector General and states' attorney generals have had more than 140 ongoing investigations and virtually all pharmaceutical companies had been investigated. In addition, the Senate Finance Committee has requested information from pharmaceutical companies and the Accreditation

## Opportunities from 2

Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) regarding the role of sales and marketing in educational grants.

Involvement of more government agencies in the CME regulatory field has led to greater penalties for inappropriate execution of CME activities. Guideline violations may have previously resulted in a warning letter from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to the commercial supporter or, in ACCME, refusal to continue provider accreditation. Now, however, an Office of the Inspector General investigation that reveals certain violations can lead to criminal penalties, civil monetary sanctions, and exclusion from federal healthcare programs. Other consequences may include fines for commercial supporters and fines or imprisonment for participating faculty, commercial supporter staff, and CME provider staff – including writers.

### The Importance of Disclosure

Writers should be aware of CME guidelines and changes in the CME regulatory environment in order to provide the best possible service to their customers/clients/employers and to safeguard themselves and others against punitive action. For instance, disclosure of off-label drug use in CME programs is no longer required by the ACCME. However, medical writers should be aware that the FDA still requires such disclosure. The ACCME Standards for Commercial Support also stipulate that individuals involved in the

development of CME activities can be disqualified if they do not disclose financial interests and resolve conflicts of interest. Impartial content review is one way of resolving conflicts of interest, medical writers can assist by ensuring balance in content quality, use of reliable references, etc. Medical writers can assist in disclosure and conflict resolution by revealing their own financial relationships with program supporters and by encouraging the provider to include peer review in content development.

Disclosure is important because all guidelines recommend the separation of educational and promotional activities. This can affect medical writer project participation. A writer with expertise in the cardiovascular therapeutic area may be excluded from developing content for a CME activity on hypertension if she or he has recently done promotional work for a client who markets a drug to treat hypertension. The writer may still be able to work on a CME project regarding lipid control. Therefore, it is important that writers disclose potential conflicts of interest.

### How Writers Can Comply with CME Guidelines

Overstreet listed things writers should do in order to ensure compliance with CME guidelines:

- Know the rules. Network and discuss the issues. AMWA events and resources provide good opportunities for this.
- Select partners with shared values. Select educational partners who adhere to CME guidelines in letter, spirit, and intent.

- Learn about changes in physician education and practice. ACCME accreditation criteria have been updated to meet new requirements for physician certification maintenance. Awareness of these changes will help writers meet the needs of physicians and CME providers.
- Use credible reference sources and verify data. It is no longer appropriate to use “data on file.” Participants in a CME activity should be able to verify any information presented.
- Encourage partners to use peer review of content. This assists in resolving conflicts of interest.
- Disclose relationships with commercial interests. Overstreet recommended volunteering this information if it is not requested. Full disclosure protects the writer and the provider.

Overstreet recommended that writers encourage providers and supporters to share their methods and results. This will help the entire industry document which CME approaches are effective.

### CME Resources

Overstreet provided CME regulatory environment resources:

- Alliance for CME ([www.acme-assn.org](http://www.acme-assn.org))
- NAAMECC ([www.naamecc.org](http://www.naamecc.org))
- *Medical Meetings*
- *PharmaVoice*
- *Medical Marketing & Media*.

*Kimberly McFarland, PhD, is a medical writer based in King of Prussia, PA, with experience in several therapeutic areas.*

## The Genesis of the Delaware Valley Chapter

By Scott Metsger, PhD

Harold Swanberg, MD, marked the beginning of the Delaware Valley Chapter of the American Medical Writers Association in his history of AMWA (1965). Swanberg noted that the third chapter of AMWA was the Delaware Valley Chapter. The Delaware Valley Chapter was organized on May 18, 1956 in Philadelphia with Julian A. Sterling, M.D., of Philadelphia, as President, and John I. Shaw, B.A., of Philadelphia, as Secretary-Treasurer.”

We are in the midst of celebrating the silver anniversary of our chapter. Our work on documenting the people and highlights identified with our chapter during the first 50 years continues as we sift through memorabilia. Beginning with this issue of the newsletter, we are printing stories from members who are volunteering to share anecdotes, escapades, memories, lessons, journeys, or personal information that describe their rich and varied experiences. Some stories are from retired members, others are from active members. Some have written about their start in medical writing, others write from their mid-career perspective. And some may now be affiliated with other chapters, having left our beautiful Delaware Valley.

We hope you'll enjoy these vignettes. Please consider sending one of your own. Stories should be double-spaced documents in rich text format and attached to an e-mail. Send to Scott Metsger [DVCStories@biomedix.biz](mailto:DVCStories@biomedix.biz) or Edie Schwager [dearedie@verizon.net](mailto:dearedie@verizon.net).

## Becoming a Freelance Medical Writer

By Mary Royer

I had the good fortune to be a member of the Delaware Valley Chapter at about the same time I was starting my freelance business. DVC was truly a lifeline—the much-anticipated meetings provided camaraderie, engaging and informative presentations, and important networking opportunities and leads.

It eventually became necessary to relocate to Ithaca, New York, because of my husband's job. Losing my proximity to this wonderful chapter ranks as one of the most difficult aspects of the move. Although I still miss my involvement there, I am grateful to have had the chance to be part of the chapter.

Today, many years later, I continue to enjoy the friendships and professional relationships forged during that time. I still look forward each year to seeing my former chapter colleagues at annual conferences.

## Naming the Chapter Newsletter

By Gerry Bernfeld

When I was Vice-President of the Delaware Valley Chapter and Rosalie McMahon, I believe, was the president [1983-1984], I thought the chapter should have a distinctive name for its newsletter. I also thought that a “Name Your Newsletter” contest would stimulate members to participate in chapter activities and play a role in the chapter's history. We ran the contest.

The response was good; four finalist names were submitted. A committee reviewed the submissions and selected “DelaWriter” as the most original and appropriate name. A couple of dissenters felt that outsiders would think only Delawareans were welcome, but they were overruled, since we are the Delaware Valley Chapter.

I can clearly visualize the contest winner, but do not recall his name! [Ed. note: It was Joseph (Joe) Brown, who worked or lived in Raritan, NJ, and who joined AMWA in 1981. His later address was Southampton, PA.] It certainly would be an incentive to the newer members if they knew about that clever gentleman and how Delawriter was conceived. The winner was disclosed at the February 1984 chapter meeting and in the March 1984 Delawriter, when Larry Liberti was the Editor. [Joe submitted the name

*See Naming on 5.*

## Naming from 4

DelaWriter, which was ultimately simplified to its current title.]

I think the prize was a free dinner at Williamson's Restaurant in Bala-Cynwyd, PA, a frequent dinner meeting place for the chapter. But the real rewards were peer recognition, an enhanced interest in the chapter and an opportunity to contribute to the chapter's history.

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## Stargazing

*By Larry Liberti*

Every annual conference provides a forum for conversation. Over the past 20 years, I have met some of the most eloquent, facile, and fascinating conversationalists around. While the opportunity to teach offers intellectual conversation, I have always been inspired by the camaraderie and opportunities for personal growth that come from listening to and learning from my AMWA and Delaware Valley Chapter colleagues.

The 1994 annual conference in Phoenix, AZ, was no exception. After several long days of attending and giving lectures, six of us rented a van and headed to the mythical destination of Sedona. We visited mystical shops selling stress-relieving crystals and consciousness-expanding incense. We watched as red sun-painted hills framed the sunset. The day drew to a close, and we found our way along the now-desolate highway back to Phoenix.

Overcome by the long day and cool night, our lively chatter gave way to sleep. Until our driver, Robert Hand, woke us gently: "Guys, get out of the van." A bit startled, we scrambled out, finding ourselves in the proverbial middle of nowhere. Then we understood why Robert had stopped. No ambient lights, no other cars—just gentle sounds from the nocturnal wildlife and the overwhelming halo of the Milky Way crowning the blue-black, moonless sky.

For some of us, it was not the first time we had seen the Milky Way; none of the others had ever witnessed such radiant glory. We stood motionless, speechless, the brilliant conversationalists were overcome by a sight we could not describe. Shivering from the cool desert air, we went back to the warm van, each of us now sharing our own quiet conversation with the universe.

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## My AMWA Mütter Experience

*By Barbara Rinehart*

I attended my first AMWA-Delaware Valley Chapter meeting in the fall of 1990 at the Mütter Museum. Most people might think this place odd, but I have relished the medical macabre ever since grade school. After I earned my Girl Scout knife, my favorite summer pastime was dissecting frogs on a stump in my back yard. I had only just heard of AMWA. I was leaving the corporate world and, with trepidation, entering the mysterious world of freelance medical writing. Heck, I had never even heard of medical

writing until then. Armed with a Master in Science degree and words from a colleague ("You are a good writer"), but having had no freelance or serious medical writing experience, I jumped in with both feet.

Fortunately, AMWA and DVC were there to soften the blow and mentor me along the way. While we were touring the tombs and perusing odd body parts at the museum, the president of the chapter introduced herself and spent a great deal of time talking with me. As I looked around, I saw seasoned, intelligent, warm and kind people: people willing to offer advice, friendship, and even ways to get ahead. People encouraged me. What a contrast to the backstabbing world I was leaving! That first evening, I felt that this new career endeavor was one that would work and one I could grow old with.

Well, now I am somewhat older, by some 16 years or so, and much, much wiser because of the wisdom imparted by my AMWA mentors. I have been freelancing ever since Mütter. I faithfully attended chapter meetings, I served on the Executive Board, and I began teaching. Then I began to freely give back what had been given to me: courage, lifelong friends, experience, knowledge and inspiration. None of this would have been possible without the many dedicated members of this great organization. If I didn't thank you then, I am thanking you now. Thanks for being a part of my life. My fervent hope is that I'll be attending AMWA functions for at least another 16 years, and I also hope I'll be as well preserved then as the "soap lady" is today.

## Designing a Website for a Freelance Medical Writer

*From the Freelance Workshop*

*By Rebecca O'Donnell MS.Ed., MBA*

“A website is today’s version of a business card,” said Susan McCrossin, Principal of PA Internet Marketing, during her presentation at the AMWA-DVC Fifth Annual Freelance Workshop. There are many reasons to have a website, including:

- Building brand identity
- Attracting new customers
- Converting visitors of the site to customers
- Encouraging visitor/customer referral

Best of all, a website can work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, making it an invaluable and economical business tool.

### Who should build my website?

Many companies are capable of building a website. The business owner must decide how much time versus how much money to dedicate to this form of marketing. Obviously, the more tasks the owner assumes, the more economical the website will be to design and maintain. Building a website can cost hundreds, even thousands of dollars, but running (ie, hosting) it is not expensive. Basic hosting for a website should cost about \$9 per month. Expect to pay more for additional

functionality such as document management.

### What should the content include?

When building or updating a website, ensure that the site is easy to navigate and downloads quickly. Implement modern web 2.0 design style guidelines (large fonts, bold colors especially green, and centering the page on the screen). Consider adding downloadable brochures, white papers, and document sharing capabilities. Pictures should be clear and easy to see. Develop a schedule for maintaining, updating, and creating content for the website. Every page of the website should have a call to action. Finally, recruit some close friends to download your site to ensure easy navigation across multiple computer platforms.

### What marketing should support a website?

Once the website is active, add the URL to all business stationery,

business cards, and business e-mails. To increase traffic to the website, consider implementing a search engine optimization plan. Search engines like Google and Yahoo use different ranking systems to list websites when a keyword is searched. Using strategies to move your website up the rank can mean the difference between being on page 1 or on page 1000 when a potential customer searches on a key word. Strategies include:

- Ensure searchable key words are between 2% and 8% of the text on each page
- Submit the website to search engines and directories,
- Entice other websites to link to your website by developing content like white papers that can be downloaded from your site (.gov and .edu sites are best)
- Register the website site map to Google and Yahoo
- Purchase search advertising

*See Website on 8.*

## Delawriter

Published quarterly by the American Medical Writers Association — Delaware Valley Chapter: [www.amwa-dvc.org](http://www.amwa-dvc.org)

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## Nominations for the 2007-2008 Year

The AMWA-DVC Nominating Committee is please to announce the following nominations for the 2007-2008 year: Marie-Therese Zenner for President-Elect and Michael G. Pappas for Treasurer.

### Marie-Therese Zenner, PhD

Dr. Zenner has a broad range of experience in research, funding, and project management in the Delaware Valley and abroad. She has more than 30 years of successful fundraising experience; 20 years as co-founder of an international nonprofit, in addition to 15 years as an independent researcher, author, and speaker.

Soon after joining AMWA in 2005, Zenner launched Zenner BioMed, a grant/proposal writing firm, based in Haverford, PA, dedicated to funding scientific research and education. Zenner has actively volunteered for AMWA-DVC and was invited to serve as co-chair for the 2007 Freelance Workshop. Immediately prior to joining AMWA, Zenner worked as a multilingual business consultant for 4 years throughout Western Europe, under the name Villard Arts, Inc. with offices in Fontaine-les-Coteaux, France, and Haverford, PA. Advanced Internet research skills formed a cornerstone of this business.

Before transitioning to business, Zenner pursued postdoctoral multi-disciplinary research (science, technology, architecture, art), in association with the Centre national de la

Recherche scientifique in Poitiers, France, following a year there as a National Fulbright Scholar.

Marie-Therese Zenner received a B.A., magna cum laude, in Fine Arts from Bryn Mawr College, an M.A. in History of Art from Temple University, and a PhD in History of Art from Bryn Mawr College (with course work at the University of Pennsylvania), followed by a J. Paul Getty Postdoctoral Fellowship in the history of quantified sciences, technology, and architecture.

### Michael G. Pappas, PhD

Dr. Pappas comes to AMWA-DVC as owner of M.G. Pappas & Co. Biotech Consultants, a company that specializes in grant writing, product research and development, manufacturing, and quality control. He has 15 years experience in biotechnology product development, quality control and marketing. He is author of numerous refereed research articles, book chapters, and review articles, and has written three books focusing on various aspects of biotechnology. He is an Adjunct Assistant Professor at the College of Staten Island, City University of New York.

Although a recent AMWA-DVC member, Pappas has a wealth of experience to bring to the position of Treasurer. He has been a consultant to several US government agencies and has prepared marketing reports, operations plans, and strategic planning reports in the private sector. He has helped biotech start-

up companies prepare and win SBIR and ATP grants.

Prior to joining the business sector, Pappas was a Section Chief of Immunodiagnostics at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, where he developed new diagnostic technologies for rapid, sensitive and specific diagnosis of bacterial, fungal, viral, and parasitic diseases in humans. He has participated in numerous military medical review panels and NIH SBIR and RO1 panels and has served as reviewer for several scholarly journals, including the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene and the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine. He was editor of Drug Development and Industrial Pharmacy for six years.

He received his PhD in Immunology/Parasitology from New York University School of Medicine in 1980.

### Nominating Committee

Laurie Spotila  
Scott Metsger  
John Smith

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## Highlights from 2

### Upcoming Annual Meetings

- 2008: October, Louisville, Kentucky
- 2009: October, Dallas, Texas
- 2010: October, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- 2011: October, Jacksonville, Florida



AMWA-DVC  
c/o Darlene Grzegorski  
114 Bank St.  
Red Bank, NJ 07701

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

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#### Website from 6

Whatever your marketing strategy, monitor your key word search rankings and your visitor traffic.

Unlike a business card, a good website is an ever-changing marketing tool. Ensure the best return on investment by developing a plan, build a user-friendly site, change content frequently, and use tools to market the site.

Visit PAInternetMarketing for resources and a list of helpful tools, [www.painternetmarketing.com/search-engine-marketing/tools.asp](http://www.painternetmarketing.com/search-engine-marketing/tools.asp).

*Rebecca O'Donnell, MS.Ed., MBA, owns TK Solutions, a medical writing and scientific communications company.*

#### 2006-2007 Executive Committee and Key Volunteers

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