

Nominations for the 2008–2009 Year

By John Smith, Chair, Nominating Committee

The AMWA-DVC Nominating Committee (John Smith, BS, PhD; Lori De Milto, MJ; Brian Bass) is pleased to announce the following nominations for the 2008–2009 fiscal year: Lisa Breck for president-elect and Cyndy Kryder, MS, for secretary. Their biographies follow:

Lisa Breck

Lisa Breck is a marketing and communications professional with over 20 years' experience. As president of Breck & Company, Inc, a medical education and communications company, she utilizes her business expertise in partnership with clients to provide needs assessments and comprehensive programs to meet their communications goals. From strategic planning and business development to new product launches, continuing medical education (CME) events, sales training, and patient education, she brings a wealth of expertise.

Lisa held numerous senior marketing positions prior to becoming a publisher at Chilton Publishing where she managed several business-to-business publications, including titles in ophthalmology and eye care. After leaving Chilton, she was approached by a former competitor to launch a medical education and conference division. In this capacity she assisted clients with product launches, conferences, train-the-trainer programs, CME, and patient education. Notable projects included the launches of Bausch & Lomb's

PureVision contacts; Novartis' Visudyne, the first available treatment for age-related macular degeneration; and the creation of the Vision Care Institute, Vistakon's training program for optometry students. Her Healthcare Conference Group quickly became the most profitable division in the company, enhancing the company's portfolio for its eventual acquisition by Wolters Kluwer.

Lisa left her division in 2003 to incorporate as Breck & Company, retaining her former division as one of her first clients. Current clients include medical publishers and medical education agencies, as well as pharmaceutical and biotech companies.

A graduate of Boston University's School for the Arts, Lisa studied violin with several members of the Boston Symphony. She later pursued an MBA at the Hartford Graduate Center division of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. She currently plays violin with the Lower Merion Symphony.

She has held board memberships on a variety of community organizations including Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic, the Marple Newton String Ensemble, Rose Tree Pops, and Lower Merion Symphony. Professionally, she is currently a member of AMWA, Drug Information Association, Healthcare Businesswomen's Association, The Healthcare Marketers Association, and The International Publication Planning Association.

Cyndy Kryder

Cyndy Kryder began her freelance medical writing career in 1992 and became a member of the AMWA—Delaware Valley Chapter in 1993 following the advice of her mentor and former neighbor, Donna Miceli, an active AMWA national committee member.

Cyndy earned her master's degree in speech/language pathology in 1977 from Bloomsburg State College, now Bloomsburg University, in northeastern Pennsylvania. She brings a clinical background to medical writing, having worked previously as a speech/language pathologist, department director, and clinical director of a residential

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How AMWA Helped Me Succeed

By Lori De Milto

When I decided to freelance in 1997 and to specialize in medical writing, I knew very little about the field. A journalist by training, I had an aptitude for writing about medicine and was willing to work hard. I also had AMWA.

Within a year and a half of starting my freelance medical writing business, I had all of the work I wanted and was making more money than I had ever expected to make as a writer. I had also started to build a network of colleagues to turn to for advice and support, and to share freelance opportunities with.

Building My Network

Of course, all of these things didn't happen simply because I joined AMWA. They happened because I got involved, mostly with the Delaware Valley Chapter (DVC). I started off with a small volunteer commitment, writing articles about meetings for the DVC newsletter, the *Delawriter*. I've done many other small volunteer

tasks, such as working the registration desk at a meeting, helping to develop program ideas, or serving as a monitor at the Princeton Conference.

Over the years, I've been DVC newsletter editor, secretary, president, and Freelance Workshop chair/co-chair. For AMWA national, I've also been a delegate, an annual conference panelist and roundtable leader, and a member of various committees.

Reaping the Benefits

As other AMWA members got to know me, they began to refer clients to me. I've also gotten work through AMWA jobs online and have met clients at AMWA-DVC meetings. In fact, one of my current clients was a speaker at an AMWA-DVC meeting a few years ago, and he recently referred me to a company that has become another client of mine. I met another client through the Freelance Workshop. And I've also used the AMWA directory to market my services.

My AMWA network has been a terrific resource for managing my business, learning how to do specific things, and more. For example, when I was trying to figure out which legal form of business (eg, sole proprietor, limited liability company, or corporation) was best for me, I talked to my AMWA colleagues. When I was helping a client establish a company style sheet, I turned to my network for advice.

As an AMWA volunteer, I've also learned new skills and expanded my capabilities. I've learned how to motivate people, manage an organization, prepare presentations, run a program, speak in public, and more.

Although the path to medical writing is different for each of us, the most successful medical writers I know have something in common: they are actively involved in AMWA.

Lori De Milto, MJ, is a marketing medical writer based in Sicklerville, NJ.

Writers Wanted

Publish, don't perish! The *Delawriter* is looking for articles appropriate for our readership (well-educated medical writers and editors). Get published and help your chapter! We hope to make the newsletter more relevant and interesting you.

We need a writer for the "Did You Know" column. The pay is low (actually, nonexistent), but we will give you a byline. The ideal candidate would be the solicitor and collector of information from many people, in addition to being an idea generator. If you're not ready for a commitment, you can share your favorite tidbits of knowledge and resources for

communicators by writing a 3-to-7-sentence blurb.

We need writers for a planned regular feature of short book reviews. We foresee a review of 200 to 300 words in each issue, written by a different author each time. Is there a valuable book that deserves the attention of your colleagues? Let us know if you can write a review. Our next deadline for copy will be in June.

We are also looking for articles on basic science and medicine, developments or trends in treatment or regulation, or practical approaches to dealing with the challenges of writing and editing scientific

materials, which could include explanations of research databases, tips on word processing techniques, a discussion of how to write or edit a particular type of document, or business development ideas.

We are open to other ideas as well, perhaps something in the national news that AMWA members should be informed about or a worthwhile conference or presentation that you attended. Query us with your idea. Even if you don't have an idea but would like to write for us, contact us and we'll give you an opportunity. Submit your articles and ideas to the editor at Delawriter@amwa-dvc.org.

Reserve the Date

Important Business at the June Chapter Meeting

- **WHO:** All AMWA-DVC Members
- **WHAT:** Annual Business Meeting
- **WHEN:** Last Week of June (exact date to be announced)
- **WHERE:** Pennsylvania, near Philadelphia (exact location to be announced)

Volunteers are arranging a dinner meeting in Pennsylvania to round off the 2007–2008 season of educational events.

In addition to offering great speakers and great food, each year the meeting in the last week of June carries the special privilege of serving as the occasion to elect DVC's nominees for president-elect and an executive committee officer. In even years this is the secretary, and in odd years the treasurer, who each serve 2-year terms for continuity. The bios of the nominees for the 2008–2009 fiscal year—Lisa Breck for president-elect and Cyndy Kryder, MS, for secretary—are published in this issue of the *Delawriter* and online at www.amwa-dvc.org. You must be present to exercise your privilege to vote, so please plan on attending.

The business portion of the meeting will be brief but significant: the current president will give a final report on the state of our chapter and announce the President's Award. We will then conduct the election. Nominally, the election means a hand-over of the 'keys' to the new president.

So when the listserve announcement for this meeting goes out in late May or early June, be sure to save the date and register early!

LOOK FOR THE E-MAIL ANNOUNCEMENT IN LATE MAY OR EARLY JUNE!

The Elusive Goal of Balance and Practical Strategies for Achieving It

By Roberta Dunn Higgins and Judith E Nager

On Tuesday, March 4, 2008, attendees at the AMWA-DVC meeting received 2 memorable gifts from Drexel University: the presentation by Ana Núñez, MD, “Healthy Relationships: Balancing Work, Family, and Self Care”; and a Drexel University College of Medicine mug.

Dr Núñez is a nationally recognized medical educator in women’s health, curriculum reform and cultural competency. At Drexel University College of Medicine, she is an associate professor of medicine in the Division of Internal Medicine, director of the Center of Excellence in Women’s Health, and director of the Women’s Health Education Program.

Dr Núñez led attendees through a fast-paced, entertaining and informative overview of the following concepts:

- various elements of stress
- role of procrastination in work/home balance challenges
- coping strategies
- role of relationships
- stress and health
- take-home tips

Dr Núñez cited relevant examples of stress-inducing situations and attitudes and offered suggestions for dealing with them, whether one worked from a home or a corporate office. She noted that extreme multitasking is highly overrated and offered the true-life example of

someone driving across a bridge to work while simultaneously eating breakfast and text messaging. Throughout her presentation, Dr Núñez interspersed gentle reminders about the cornerstones of healthy living: to take care of Self by getting annual medical exams, following a healthy diet, exercising regularly, controlling weight, ceasing smoking, and moderating alcohol consumption.

Then, Dr Núñez had attendees participate in an exercise. Each attendee labeled 3 notepapers Self, Home, or Work and then listed items in each category that he or she wanted to see more of or less of. For example, for Work one might want to decrease the time needed to get organized, whereas for Self one might want to increase the amount of time spent exercising. Finally, each person chose the single item to be addressed first, as well as the timeframe for achieving the desired change, and then discussed this choice with a tablemate. Everyone seemed to find the exercise useful and willingly shared their decision with another AMWA member.

In summary, this was a relevant, engaging, and participatory presentation that offered numerous snippets of sage advice and considerable food for thought.

Roberta Dunn Higgins is president of MEDetect Clinical Information Associates, Inc, and Judith E Nager, RPh, MBA, is a consultant medical writer.

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living program for traumatically brain-injured adults. Cyndy also worked as managing editor of the Hayes Medical Technology Directory before hanging out her freelance shingle.

Cyndy has donated her time to AMWA-DVC in several capacities. She has led numerous roundtable discussions at several AMWA-DVC Freelance Workshops and serves as a member of the planning committee for this annual event. She also presented a noncredit workshop on publication planning at the annual AMWA-DVC Princeton Conference in 2006. At the national level, Cyndy was a committee member to select poster sessions for presentation at the AMWA national conference and has assisted in the selection of the recipient of the Eric Martin Award. She looks forward to becoming more active in the organization at both the local and national level.

Student Scholarships for AMWA’s Annual Conference

Attention all students! Are you looking for a communication career that reflects your interest in science or medicine? If so, apply for a scholarship to attend AMWA’s 68th Annual Conference held (October 23–25, 2008) in Louisville, KY. Two scholarships are sponsored by Eli Lilly & Company.

For the full listing of benefits, requirements, application form, and submission instructions see www.amwa.org. Applications are due June 8, 2008. Awardees will be notified by July 8, 2008. Questions? Contact Shari Lynn at (301) 294-5303 or slynn@amwa.org.

DVC Volunteer Corner

By Jennifer Maybin

Volunteering for AMWA-DVC activities offers rewards on many levels. First, volunteers meet and forge close working and personal relationships with other members. Second, volunteering may put you in contact with colleagues who can offer tips on hot job prospects—for either freelance opportunities or permanent positions. Third, the commitment to volunteer, even for one short-term task, may be just that extra incentive that gets you out of the office for an event you might otherwise miss.

Opportunities to volunteer come in all ‘sizes and lengths.’ You can take a small step today by volunteering to man (or woman) the registration desk at an upcoming chapter meeting. This task is a 30-minute commitment of your time on the night of an event you already planned to attend. And, if you are planning to attend an upcoming speaker meeting, consider offering to author an article for the *Delawriter*. This is a short-term commitment that also allows you to get your name in lights with a byline in *Delawriter*. Need a portfolio—what could be an easier or faster way to get in print?

Membership on the promotions committee, Pennsylvania or New Jersey programs planning committees, or the larger Freelance Workshop and Princeton Conference committees offers marketable experience in program planning, speaker contact/management, venue logistics, or conference registration. Even these permanent committees have positions for both short- and long-term volunteers. Currently, the PA programs committee, chaired by Janet Manfre, RD, is seeking volunteers for ongoing planning and execution; specific tasks include generating programming, contacting speakers, working with

venues, assisting with registration, and more. (Contact Janet Manfre at Programs@amwa-dvc.org.)

Many thanks go to the volunteers currently working on one or both of DVC’s largest meetings. For the Princeton Conference, thanks go to Brian Bass (chair), Ellen Schneider, Patrick Stephens, and Sarah Reedy. For the Freelance Workshop, we thank Lori De Milto (chair), Susan Aiello, Brian Bass, Lisa Breck, Kira Belkin, Nicole Cooper-Johnson, J Lynne Dodson, Cynthia Kryder, Lynne Lederman, Jennifer Maybin, Barbara Rinehart, Pat McAdams, Lesley Macphee, Sarah Reedy, Kent Steinriede, Ana Traversa, Maria

Vinall, and Marie-Therese Zenner.

To find out more about volunteering opportunities, in which you can interact more closely with fellow AMWA-DVC members, please contact Volunteer Coordinator Jennifer Maybin at Volunteer@amwa-dvc.org or 908-685-6365.

Jennifer Maybin, MA, is the principal of Maybin Healthcare Communications, in Branchburg, NJ. She writes and edits for journals, Web sites, and textbook publishers, and teaches English at Raritan Valley Community College.

Did You Know . . .

- The US Small Business Administration (SBA) offers free online courses that can help you start, plan, market, and develop your business. The topics include business plan workshops, how to identify your target market, how to start a business on a shoestring budget, how to find start-up funding, assessing financial needs, accounting fundamentals, building your brand, conducting a market analysis, and building your Web site, among others.

See Did You Know . . . on 6.

Delawriter

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Executive Editor: Marie-Therese Zenner

Co-editors: Alan Struthers and Kate DeBevois, Delawriter@amwa-dvc.org

Production: Peggy Stansfield

Editorial Consultants: Elisha Darville and Elizabeth Manning

Changes of address/information:

E-mail: ronnie@amwa.org

Mail: American Medical Writers Association

40 West Gude Drive, Suite 101

Rockville, MD 20850-1192

Phone: 301-294-5303



AMWA-DVC
c/o Alan Struthers
623 Chicago Boulevard
Sea Girt, NJ 08750

**News and notes from the
American Medical Writers Association—
Delaware Valley Chapter (www.amwa-dvc.org)**

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The courses are self-paced and designed to take about half an hour to complete. Go to www.sba.gov/services/training/onlinecourses/index.html to access these resources.

- For local access to high level, free or low-cost, personalized business advice and services, contact one of the SBA Resource Partners, including SCORE, Small Business Development Centers, and Women's Business Centers through this one site: www.sba.gov/localresources/index.html.
- If you are an out-of-chapter AMWA member, you can sign up for the DVC meeting notification list. Send an e-mail to Kate Casano, MHS, at kate@casano.com, to be added to the guest notification list.

2007–2008 Executive Committee and Key Volunteers

President
Marie-Therese Zenner, PhD
President@amwa-dvc.org

President-Elect
Barbara Rinehart, MS
PresidentElect@amwa-dvc.org

Immediate Past President
PastPresident@amwa-dvc.org

Secretary
Linda Felcone, MA
Secretary@amwa-dvc.org

Treasurer
Michael G Pappas, MS, PhD
Treasurer@amwa-dvc.org

Publicity Chair
Shirley Bonnem
Publicity@amwa-dvc.org

Membership Chair
Laurie Spotila, PhD
Membership@amwa-dvc.org

Web site Chair
Suzanne Klein
Webchair@amwa-dvc.org

Program Chair
Janet Manfre, RD
Programs@amwa-dvc.org

New Jersey Program Chair
Kira Belkin, PhD
NJPrograms@amwa-dvc.org

Newsletter Chair
Peggy Stansfield
Delawriter@amwa-dvc.org

Education and Princeton
Conference Chair
Brian Bass
Princeton@amwa-dvc.org

Freelance Workshop Chair
Lori De Milto, MJ
Freelance@amwa-dvc.org

Volunteer Coordinator
Jennifer Maybin, MA
Volunteer@amwa-dvc.org

Delegates
**Marie-Therese Zenner, PhD and
Barbara Rinehart, MS**
President@amwa-dvc.org and
PresidentElect@amwa-dvc.org