

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

AMWA Delaware Valley Chapter 2006-2007 President's Report

By Deborah Early, PhD

The American Medical Writers Association Delaware Valley Chapter (AMWA-DVC) has had a very good year. The year's highlights are presented here. My full report is available at the DVC Web site (www.amwa-dvc.org).

To celebrate the Chapter's 50th anniversary, special pins were distributed to DVC members at the 2006 annual AMWA meeting. In addition, a special anniversary edition of the newsletter was published in the spring of 2007, and we upgraded our Web site to reflect the 50th anniversary.

We are the largest and most active of the 20 AMWA chapters. Membership is stable with an average of 890 members for the last 6 months of 2006. Thirty-nine people have been members for at least 10 years. Approximately 50 members volunteered to help DVC this year, several of them volunteering in more than one capacity.

DVC held regular dinner meetings in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Average attendance has been

increasing the past 2 years. From fall 2006 through summer 2007, the chapter held the following meetings:

- October 19: "Phantom of the Manuscript: The Controversies Surrounding the Use of Professional Medical Writers in Preparing Manuscripts"
- December 6: "West Meets East: The Evidence Base for Complementary and Alternative Medicine"
- January 23: Networking dinner in NJ
- March 1: Networking dinner in PA
- April 21: Annual Freelance Workshop
- May 17: "Risk Communications and the Avian Flu"
- June 9: Annual Princeton Conference
- June 28: "What's New in the 10th Edition of the AMA Manual of Style"

The Delawriter was published 4 times in the 12-month period, our usual frequency. All issues have been

Science Photographer Felice Frankel to Speak at Haverford College

By Marie-Therese Zenner, PhD

Noted science photographer, Felice Frankel, will be presenting a lecture at Haverford College in Haverford, PA, on Thursday, November 1, 2007. AMWA-DVC members are invited to participate in this event. The DVC listserve will post the times, location, and parking information. An exhibition of Frankel's work will open the following day at the college's Cantor-Fitzgerald Gallery, running from November 2 to December 2, 2007.

See Science Photographer on 2.

posted on our Web site. There is a total of approximately \$52,000 in the checking and money market accounts. Receipts and expenditures are, as of June 26, 2007, within budget and are expected to close within budget for the fiscal year. The application for tax-exempt status was successful and there was no extraordinary tax bill; therefore, the contingency money was not spent. Since revenues were below \$50,000, an internal, rather than external, audit is required.

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Message From Your President and Acting President-Elect

To All AMWA-DVC Members,

A recent change in officers gives us a renewed opportunity to introduce Marie-Therese Zenner, PhD, as president and Barbara Rinehart, MS, as acting president-elect. This major administrative transition took place during the summer according to the bylaws, falling at an opportune time to bring experienced volunteers to two key positions dedicated to serving member needs over the next few years.

The past year for AMWA-DVC saw major changes marking our 50th anniversary with the incorporation as a 501(c)(6) nonprofit organization. This new status garners us the ability to qualify for nonprofit rates from vendors, as well as the right to apply for state sales-tax exemption in PA and NJ, which translates into lower cost for membership activities.

You have a very active chapter with many committees and our local volunteers are already planning the 2007-2008 educational programs and special events. In addition to a full slate of activities, we plan to increase public awareness of the central role of medical communicators within all health related industries throughout the Delaware Valley.

We look forward to hearing how we can better serve your needs.

With best regards,

Marie-Therese Zenner, PhD

AMWA-DVC President

president@amwa-dvc.org

and

Barbara Rinehart, MS

AMWA-DVC President-Elect (acting)

presidentelect@amwa-dvc.org

What's New in the AMA Manual of Style, 10th Edition

By Janis Hammett, BS, MBA

Cheryl Iverson, MA, Chair of the Editorial Committee of the AMA Manual of Style, 10th edition, provided an overview of changes in the manual since its 9th edition at the chapter's June 28 meeting.

Many things have been added to the 10th edition, increasing the size from 600 to over 1000 pages. Key changes include a larger index, running headers on each page to reflect the current text point, new chapters on medical indexing and tables and boxes, expansion of the

nomenclature chapter to include more international terms, and greater detail on legal and ethical issues.

In addition, a number of policy changes were made in the 10th edition:

- References citing documents with group authorship will now list all author names
- Issue numbers should be included in all journal references
- Footnotes in tables should use lower case superscript letters

See AMA Manual on 8.

Science Photographer from 1

Felice Frankel is a senior research fellow at Harvard University, where she heads the Envisioning Science Project and organizes the Image and Meaning events at the University's Initiative in Innovative Computing. She holds a concurrent appointment as a research scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Her published work includes *On the Surface of Things: Images of the Extraordinary in Science* (1997) and *Envisioning Science: the Design and Craft of the Science Image* (2002).

The organizers of the lecture and exhibition are Suzanne Amador Kane, Associate Professor of Physics at Haverford College, and Amy Slaton, Associate Professor, History of Science and Technology at Drexel University. They note that Frankel's photographs are featured in both art exhibits and in prominent scientific journals, and they ask: "Are they science or art (the latter designation one she rejects forcefully)—or both—and how does one decide?"

AMWA-DVC members may learn more about Ms. Frankel's exceptional work at the following Web sites:

- <http://www.iic.harvard.edu/people/felicef/>
- *American Scientist Online* (her regular column on imaging in science):
<http://www.americanscientist.org/template/AuthorDetail/authorid/573;jsessionid=baa6gWCz81>
- Image and Meaning: <http://www.imageandmeaning.org>

Understanding Risk Communications and the Role of the Risk Communicator

By Pat Bartling, MLS, MS

On May 17, AMWA-DVC hosted Peter Sandman, PhD, and Jody Lanard, MD, for an entertaining and informative presentation on “Risk Communications and the Avian Flu” at the Nassau Club in Princeton, NJ. Attendees were treated to the wisdom, humor, and common sense of this husband-and-wife team of risk communications specialists. Dr. Sandman, a pioneer in the field of risk communications, coined the “Risk = Hazard + Outrage” formula that has become the foundation for assessing risk, especially in public health situations. Dr. Lanard is a writer and risk communications consultant, who, along with Sandman, has consulted with corporations, advocacy groups, and non-government organizations throughout the world.

Sandman’s main point about risk was that the correlation coefficient between hazard and outrage has been quantified as 0.2. There is little correlation between the actual threat a hazard poses and how people perceive it. Furthermore, people’s degree of outrage about a hazard drives their perception of that hazard. In general, technical experts tend to focus only on the actual hazard. By ignoring the outrage component, they fail to accurately assess the true magnitude of the risk.

It is the job of the risk communications specialist to help manage the public’s outrage, or lack thereof, so that people are appropriately prepared for whatever degree of hazard the risk poses. Sandman distinguished between 3 “toolkits” that a risk communicator must have in hand, depending on the risk situation: precaution advocacy (when hazard is high and outrage is

low), crisis communications (when both hazard and outrage are high), and outrage management (when hazard is low and outrage is high).

Sandman and Lanard engaged the audience in a discussion of risks that require each of the toolkits. For instance, seasonal flu requires precaution advocacy. Some issues are not so clear-cut, however, especially when the science of the hazard has not been sorted out. The speakers explained that risk perception is affected by many things, including culture, with control being a big issue for Americans and trust a big issue for Eastern Europeans. They also demonstrated that, in the case of the avian flu situation, the Asian chicken farmer’s view of the risk is very different from that of a person whose livelihood is not based on raising chickens. Western public health consultants feel they need to

educate the farmers. The farmers, however, are outraged at the loss of their livelihood.

Risk communications is relevant for medical writers, because it involves analyzing audiences and communicating biomedical issues, skills characteristic of medical writers. Of the 3 toolkits described, the techniques used in outrage management are the least commonly used and may be counterintuitive to those more experienced with an advocacy style of communication.

For further information about risk communications, visit the speakers’ Web site at www.psandman.com.

Pat Bartling, MLS, MS, is a medical writer for Image Solutions, Inc. (ISI) in Whippany, NJ and specializes in medical writing for regulatory submissions and related documents.

Delawriter

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Special Section—50th Anniversary Issue

A Pediatrician Makes a Special Delivery

By Arnold Melnick, DO

The presidents of the Delaware Valley Chapter included many congenial and illustrious physicians. I especially remember these chapter members who became AMWA presidents: Edward Rosenow, MD, the recipient of a chapter award and an illuminated certificate; Henry Moss, MD, who was an outstanding surgeon at Einstein Medical Center; and Edward Huth, MD, who is the nationally known author of several books on medical and scientific writing and a book on medical quotations. Many Philadelphians will also remember Jonathan Rhoads, MD, who was a famous professor and surgeon at the University of Pennsylvania and its hospital.

I joined AMWA in 1958, and served as president of the DVC in 1973. Many of our meetings took place at the now-vanished Marriott Hotel in Bala Cynwyd, PA. Then in 1975, I became the national president of AMWA.

George Stickley was chapter president before me and a good friend. At the time, he was a vice president and editor at J. B. Lippincott & Company. Later, he founded his own publishing company. Through his influence, I was able to publish my first book, *Pediatrics: Some Uncommon Views on Some Common Problems*.

Of all my DVC colleagues, Edie Schwager is the most notable. I met her through DVC and she remains a dear friend. She was of great help to me—and the chapter and AMWA—in every position I held and every activity I undertook. She earned an international reputation as a renowned teacher of medical English

and an authority on the language. Who can forget “The King’s English and so is the Queen”? She was always active in the chapter and at the national level. She never sought office, but was happy to serve when asked. She was chapter president for two 2-year terms.

In 1972, I was a faculty member for the chapter workshop at the Philadelphia County Medical Society, and made a presentation on “Pitfalls in Medical Writing.” Shirley Bonnem, who was then the director of public relations at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, was the contact person, and Dr. Rhoads gave the keynote address.

Also in 1972, I gave my presentation, “How I Delivered My Own Baby on the Kitchen Table,” at the AMWA annual conference in Dallas. I showed a few facetious slides, showing me at work and accompanied by obstetrical-type captions. The next year, I repeated it at a DVC meeting. This is the story: With a partner, on a shoestring, I founded a glossy magazine titled *Maternal and Child Health*, which eventually became the official publication of the American College of Osteopathic Pediatricians and the American College of Osteopathic Obstetricians and Gynecologists. I edited every monthly issue and did the layout and paste-up on my kitchen table (there were no computers then). The new baby ran for 5 years.

The chapter was kind enough to present a certificate to me “for devoted service” on May 13, 1980. After Anita, my wife, and I moved to Florida that year, I became the dean of the new Southeastern

College of Osteopathic Medicine in North Miami Beach. In my very first curriculum, I created and taught an 18-hour course on medical communication, specifically writing and speaking. It was probably the first required course in communication in any medical school in the United States. I went on to establish and operate five additional health professions schools and, along the way, we became a university. Ultimately, through a merger, we became Nova Southeastern University. I was the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost.

Throughout my career, I’ve received many awards and fellowships (the AMWA Swanberg Award in 1977 and a fellowship), and was president or chair of 13 professional groups.

I retired in 1998, but I am still active. Over the years, I have had 6 books and more than 150 articles published. In my so-called retirement, I am an editor of 2 newsletters and a regular columnist for 4 professional periodicals (on pediatrics or communication), including the *AMWA Journal*. And I’m still an AMWA member—and have loved every minute of it for 50 years.

My Start in Medical Writing: From Fungal Genetics Research to Pharmaceutical Sales Training in Less than 3 Years

By Darlene Grzegorski, MS

After graduating from Texas A&M with a master of science degree in molecular biology (fungal genetics) and spending some time in Europe, I began my search for a job. December 2002 was not a great time for me to find a lucrative position in science. Merck in Rahway, NJ, where I had worked before graduate school as a contract scientist (in the development of drugs from natural products), was in the throes of a drastic reorganization.

I worked with several recruiters, letting them know that I was open to positions outside of research. In 2003, I took a job with Medicom Worldwide, a medical education company in Morrisville, PA, which focused exclusively on continuing medical education (CME). The person hiring for the position, a former bench scientist herself, was looking for someone to train. That was my chance.

As often happens in a small business, my position changed from one job responsibility to another. I learned about the CME industry, project management, and multimedia production. I was not a medical writer, but a reviewer of materials sent in by freelance medical writers.

The turning point that led me toward medical writing occurred on a flight to the annual meeting of the American Pain Society in Chicago in March 2003. Many other people on that plane were headed there. I caught a taxi to the hotel with another conference attendee, Genevieve Belfiglio, an AMWA member. During the ride, I explained my reason for going to the conference. She told me she was a medical writer sent to cover

the conference, and that sparked my interest. She said that my scientific background would be a great asset if I wanted to be a medical writer, and suggested that I look into AMWA and attend the annual Princeton Conference to get a better feel for the field.

By the time I decided to join AMWA, the Princeton Conference had just passed. The next big AMWA event was the annual conference in Miami in September 2003. I resolved to schedule a vacation in Key West to coincide with the conference.

What a great time it was! Every session was interesting. People were so friendly. Brian Bass gave me a free career consultation over lunch at an outdoor café. I remember chatting with several other members, including Debbie Early. I left the conference convinced that this was the career for me. Now, how to get there?

Seasoned AMWA members will often tell new members looking to get a start in medical writing to look for opportunities by asking their current employers for writing projects. I took advantage of that opportunity. There was a small project pending at Medicom, but it had no deadline or writer. I asked if I could be the writer. The answer was yes! I used a transcript and slides from a presentation by a psychiatrist, supplemented with my own research into her topics. This led to my writing an article on continuing education for social workers on medication compliance in patients with schizophrenia. The article was published in the *Journal of Case Management*. It was so exciting to be

creating something from scratch, and I loved doing the research.

One project I was managing, a continuing nursing education program, involved case studies of patients with breast cancer who had anemia. The nurses I worked with wrote the case studies and I wrote underlying educational information, drawing on the latest research in that field.

In August 2004, I was presented with an opportunity I knew I couldn't pass up—to go to Germany to work for a small e-learning company on an employee training program for the American workforce of Siemens Medical Solutions. Within less than 2 weeks, I had left my job at Medicom and was on a plane to Erlangen, Germany.

For this project, I edited and proofread all of the content, which was originally written in German and translated. My charge was to ensure that it had the right American-English sound. Some of it was well-translated, some creative aspects needed refining to "sound American," but some was incomprehensible to me.

Upon returning home, I looked for local opportunities in medical writing. With my portfolio in hand, featuring two publications from my research days and the CME programs I had managed, edited, and written, I approached Educational Resource Systems, a company in my hometown, which specializes in pharmaceutical sales training. I was hired to do a small freelance project in January 2005, a couple of days after my interview. It has now been 2 years, and it never gets dull!

AMWA-DVC Celebrates Long- Term Members

We would like to recognize 39 AMWA-DVC members who have achieved 10 or more years of AMWA membership. This includes 7 members with 20 or more years of membership. Congratulations to:

35 years—AMWA Members since 1972

- Gerald E. Bernfeld, Wynnewood, PA

30 years—AMWA Members since 1977

- Mark Dana, Exton, PA

25 years—AMWA Members since 1982

- Michael J. Umen, PhD, Glenside, PA

20 years—AMWA Members since 1987

- James M. Kesslick, Boyertown, PA
- David S. MacDougall, Trenton, NJ
- Scott D. Koppa, Hillsborough, NJ
- Nancy J. Priff, MEd, Ambler, PA

15 years—AMWA Members since 1992

- Joanne M. Conaty, Wilmington, DE
- Sena A. Berkowitz, Collegeville, PA
- Eileen G. Moran, PhD, Jeffersonville, PA
- Charol Abrams, Doylestown, PA
- Terri B. Goshko, Lansdale, PA
- Elizabeth V. Hillyer, DVM, ELS, Bernardsville, NJ
- Gary M. McQuarrie, PharmD, Newtown, PA
- Mary Jeanne Krob, MD, Wexford, PA

10 years—AMWA Members since 1997

- Jonathan Cargan, MD, Norristown, PA
- Reina A. Marino, MD, Philadelphia, PA
- Daniel P. Di Paolo, ELS, North Wales, PA
- Mary Jane Prior, PhD, MPH, North Wales, PA
- Liesma Reilly, Lafayette, NJ
- Nathalie A. Turner, MS, ELS, Newtown, PA
- D. Scott Metsger, PhD, Eagle, PA
- Dvora Konstant, Ambler, PA
- Patricia A. Walsh, MBA, Norristown, PA
- Maryjo R. Dixon, RPh, Kendall Park, NJ
- Richard Feldesman, Media, PA
- Maria Larson, King of Prussia, PA
- Deborah Matour, PhD, Harleysville, PA
- Madhavi Gidh-Jain, PhD, Bethlehem, PA
- Lori De Milto, MJ, Sicklerville, NJ
- Laureen A. Klein, PharmD, Hillsborough, NJ
- Lila A. Cleaver, MA, Medford Lakes, NJ
- Marie Rauscher, MA, Wilmington, DE
- Charles A. Sutherland, PhD, Green Lane, PA
- Joanne Rosenberg, MS, Highland Park, NJ
- Bertil Wagner, PharmD, Raritan, NJ
- Shirley Bonnem, Philadelphia, PA
- Peter Rittenhouse, PhD, West Chester, PA
- Christine Shimp, Bordentown, NJ

What Excerpta Medica Expects from Freelance Medical Writers

From the 2007 Freelance Workshop

By Kent Steinriede, BA

Freelance medical writing is not a solo high-wire act. It's a collaborative effort with several key players, said Rosa Real, MD, Medical Director at Excerpta Medica, who spoke at the AMWA-DVC Fifth Annual Freelance Workshop, on April 21, 2007, in Blue Bell, PA.

Excerpta Medica, part of Elsevier, is a medical communications agency in Bridgewater, NJ. Real and Joanna Bligh, MEd, RT, CMA, a senior medical writer and editor, shared their wish list for freelance writers in their presentation, "What Excerpta Medica Expects from Freelance Medical Writers."

Ideally, the company prefers to have a stable of about 10 versatile freelance writers that it can call on frequently. The agency looks for writers with:

- At least 5 years professional writing experience
- PhD, Pharm D, MPH, MS, Clinician NP, PA, RN, or a BA in Journalism
- Accessibility
- Organizational skills
- Creativity
- Responsibility
- Ability to accept constructive criticism

How does a freelance writer break into Excerpta Medica? "The key is professionalism," Bligh said. When making an e-mail introduction, be considerate of your audience. Make sure that the e-mail letter is

See Excerpta on 7.

Excerpta from 6.

formal, concise, and copyedited. Use the proper titles and know what they stand for. Don't address an MEd as "Dr." In follow-up communications, follow the lead of the sender. If the communication becomes less formal, make sure that this is initiated by the prospective client.

Next, summarize your own educational background and experience. Indicate the therapeutic areas where you have experience and interest, as well as the types of projects you have worked on. If you've published articles or papers, tell how many.

Once Excerpta Medica has agreed to work with the freelancer, they then become part of a team that includes a medical editor, medical director, program manager, and the agency's client. The project will begin with a conference call to discuss, among other items, the format, content, client's message, timeline, number of drafts, and pay.

As the project moves along, there should be a free-flow of communication between the writer and the team. However, because everyone is busy, the writer should avoid superfluous e-mail messages, especially about issues that have already been agreed upon and discussed. Read the documents before you fire off an e-mail, Bligh said.

Respecting deadlines is a sign of professionalism. If a writer anticipates trouble meeting a deadline, the team should be made aware of it as soon as possible. Most importantly, stay in touch, especially if a manuscript is late.

Excerpta Medica wants to establish long-term relationships that will benefit the agency and the writer. "That's the whole point," Real said. "Everybody wants to be better."

Kent Steinriede, BA, is a freelance writer in Philadelphia.

How to Prepare a Winning Proposal

From the Freelance Workshop

By Michelle Dalton

During the AMWA-DVC Fifth Annual Freelance Workshop, Brian Bass, president of Bass Advertising & Marketing, explained that thoroughly assessing the scope of work a potential client desires, outlining each party's responsibilities, and defining the deliverable are paramount to developing a winning proposal.

Ask about details

Bass advised attendees to analyze the assignment proposal with the same attention to detail that they would give the actual project. First and foremost, they need to determine what it is they are being asked to provide to the client. Attendees should not presume, however, that initiating something will take longer than revisions to existing documents.

"If the client has an 'outline' of what's expected, it's often not referenced or sourced and may be worse than starting something from scratch," he said.

Extenuating factors

Before submitting the proposal, Bass advised attendees to consider factors such as the amount of personal experience in the therapeutic area, with the medium, or with the potential audience and whether the timeline allows for sufficient time to complete the job.

"Always ask yourself about the hidden expectations," he said. "Things might not be on anyone's radar unless they're asked about."

Pricing the proposal

Once the preliminaries are understood, then and only then, should freelancers start to develop a price for the proposal. "Charging by

the hour punishes the proficient and rewards the inefficient," Bass said. For example, a writer who estimates a project will take 50 hours and charges the average AMWA rate of \$85/hr will make \$4,250. "With experience, the amount of time you spend on a project you've done before decreases. So that same project that you made \$4,250 on when you first started out is now only earning you \$1,700 years later, as it only takes you 20 hours to complete. You're working twice as hard to make the same money." Knowing what you're worth and charging appropriately go hand-in-hand with negotiating effectively, Bass explained.

Key pearls

Bass said a proposal should act as a timeline, detailing what's to be done at each step and by whom; is a promise that you understand what the job entails; and is a contract, defining the responsibilities of each party involved. Lastly, he revealed some tricks of the trade:

- Itemize revision drafts separate from the first draft.
- Itemize each deliverable separately.
- Specify what is and is not included, such as out-of-pocket expenses for travel or reference procurement.
- Specify a payment schedule. "If this is a long-term project," he said, "break payments into thirds."

It may sound simple, but "promise what you will deliver and deliver what you promise. It's a tall order, but we are in the service business," Bass said. "Be on time, on target, and on budget, the first time and every time."

Michelle Dalton, medical writer and director of Dalton & Associates, specializes in the development of manuscripts, abstracts, posters, and monographs.



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

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- Information within tables will be presented with sentence-style capitalization.

Ms. Iverson provided some guidelines for references to electronic media. The phrase “available at” is no longer necessary. References to journal articles that are published online before appearing in print should specify this, as the online version may differ from the printed version. For electronic media, it is important to include the dates that the article was published, updated, and accessed.

The 10th edition has a Web site, www.amamanualofstyle.com, which contains a comprehensive overview, including errata and frequently asked questions.

Janis Hammett, BS, MBA, is a Senior Medical Writer at Bristol-Myers Squibb, and has 20 years of pharmaceutical industry experience.

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