

# DELAWRITER

The quarterly newsletter of AMWA-DVC

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## Winter 2012

### OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE 2012 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

*By Brian Bass and Lori De Milto*

Everyone's an expert about something. What's your expertise, and will you share it with your AMWA colleagues?

The AMWA 72nd Annual Conference will be in Sacramento, CA, October 4-6, 2012. Planning is now full throttle, and we're eager to tap into the fantastic knowledge and experience base of DVC members. It's a great way to give back, get involved, and put another notch on your belt (or item on your resume). Not only that, it's simple! Give us your idea for a short session, breakfast roundtable, or poster. EUREKA! This is your golden opportunity to make an impact and make a difference.

**Deadline for submitting ideas: February 27, 2012**

#### Short Sessions

One-hour sessions on practical approaches to issues in medical communication.

#### Goals

- To be instructional
- To show the audience how you or your company or institution handles a particular issue or problem
- To solicit feedback from the audience

See [AMWA's website](#) for more information, including sample topics.

#### Poster Presentations

Poster presentations allow you to share recent innovations, advances, and discoveries related to medical communication. Posters may be about editing/writing, education, freelancing, public relations, medical marketing, and the pharmaceutical industry. AMWA is particularly interested in posters that report study designs and results of empirical research in medical communication (eg, in language, learning, value of the profession) or that share innovative responses to challenges and opportunities faced by medical communicators.

See [AMWA's website](#) for more information, including sample topics.

## Roundtables

Leading a Breakfast Roundtable is a fun and easy way to share your knowledge about a specific topic with other conference attendees. Roundtables are interactive discussions on educational topics related to working in medical communication.

Want to learn more? E-mail [loriwriter@comcast.net](mailto:loriwriter@comcast.net) for a roundtable overview, including sample topics, agendas, handouts and proposals.

*Brian Bass is Conference Administrator for the 2012 AMWA Annual Conference. Lori De Milto is co-chair of the Roundtables for this conference. Both are long-time active volunteers with AMWA-DVC.*

## 10th ANNUAL FREELANCE WORKSHOP: APRIL 14, 2012

### Enlightening Presentations, Roundtable Discussions, and Networking

This year's annual Freelance Workshop, to be held at the Crowne Plaza in King of Prussia, PA, on April 14, 2012, marks a decade of bringing together freelance writers and editors from our chapter and others for a day of enlightening presentations and roundtable discussions, networking, and a lot of food.

This year promises fresh educational sessions designed for freelancers with many new topics and fresh speakers from both inside and outside our chapter. Learn about new medical writing opportunities in regulatory, marketing, CME, and other areas. Take home skills you need to move your business to a higher level and discuss ways to de-stress and keep your life in order.

You'll find out what your peers are doing to improve their editing, writing, and research skills. You'll also learn how to determine and set your rates from Laurie Lewis (Empire State Chapter). You'll hear about hot, must-have technology tools from Jeanne McAdara-Berkowitz (Rocky Mountain Chapter); and how to make your marketing message shine in a regulated world from Elizabeth Ramicone (Ohio Valley Chapter). Plus, a panel of experts will explain how you can set up a freelance ecosystem that supports your ability to earn a living from what you do best.

### More Details Coming Soon

Mark your calendars and stay tuned for more details coming soon. And if you've got an idea for a roundtable topic, please contact Jen Maybin at [Jennifer@jmaybin.com](mailto:Jennifer@jmaybin.com).

## 16TH ANNUAL AMWA-DVC PRINCETON CONFERENCE: MAY 12, 2012

The 16th Annual AMWA-DVC Princeton Conference will be held on Saturday, May 12, 2012 at the Wyndham Princeton Forrestal Hotel and Conference Center in Plainsboro, NJ. This preeminent local educational conference for professional medical communicators will feature 4 credit workshops plus 2 How-To Workshops divided into morning and afternoon sessions.

### Conference Content

Confirmed credit workshops to date include:

- Essential Ethics for Medical Communicators taught by Charmaine Cummings, PhD, RN
- Statistics for Medical Writers and Editors, taught by Bart J. Harvey, MD, PhD
- Basics of Epidemiology taught by Bart J. Harvey, MD, PhD

One more credit workshop will be confirmed soon. In addition, plans for 2 How-To Sessions are underway, including a How-To on Developing CME for Performance Improvement, and a How-To to help medical writers and editors become fluent in addressing graphic design/typography issues in their Word documents.

### **More Details Coming Soon**

Participants can register for one workshop in the morning, and one in the afternoon. A continental breakfast, sumptuous buffet luncheon, and mid-morning and afternoon breaks are included in the registration fee. Details will be announced on the AMWA-DVC [website](#).

Registration will open within the next few weeks. For more information, contact Brian Bass at [bam509@optonline.net](mailto:bam509@optonline.net), or Nick Sidorovich at [nick@rollinghillmedia.com](mailto:nick@rollinghillmedia.com).

## **HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FALL AMWA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

*By Cyndy Kryder and Jen Maybin*

Attending the AMWA annual conference and networking with colleagues is always a treat, and this year's conference in Jacksonville, FL, on October 20-23, 2011 was no different. As in the past, the Board of Directors met the afternoon before the conference began to discuss issues of relevance. We wanted to summarize some of the highlights of the board meeting and the annual conference for our DVC members.

### **Progress Toward Credentialing of Medical Writers**

The issue that's probably foremost in the minds of medical writing professionals is credentialing. AMWA is moving forward with developing a system by which medical writers will be certified. At the fall board meeting, board members and delegates approved the establishment of the Medical Writing Certification Commission (MWCC) to initiate, evaluate, maintain, and oversee the credentialing program for medical writers. The MWCC, which was appointed by AMWA's Executive Committee, comprises a Chairperson, Chairperson-elect, and 4 at-large committee members. Members include:

- Sue Hudson, Senior Medical Writer, Medical Writing Associates
- Marianne Mallia, ELS, Manager, Scientific Publications, Texas Heart Institute
- Barbara Gastel, MD, MPH, Professor, Texas A & M University
- Robert J. Bonk, PhD, Associate Professor of Professional Writing, Widener University
- David Clemow, PhD, Scientific Communications Consultant, Eli Lilly and Company
- Thomas P. Gegeny, MS, ELS, Team Lead and Senior Medical Writer, Envision Scientific Solutions, Inc

The MWCC will make recommendations on certification policy and quality improvement and, in collaboration with the consultant testing agency, will oversee the application, examination, recertification, and appeals processes. Creating such a program is a long-term process, with these initial proposed benchmarks:

- Year 1, January 2012-January 2013: Practice analysis study to define the target audience for the credential and provide a clear definition of the primary domains, specific task statements, and related knowledge and skills required for competent performance of medical writing professionals.
- Year 2, January 2013-January 2014: Examination development, which will include the identification of 10 subject matter experts to serve on the item-writing committee who will develop and assemble a draft of the examination. This will occur in consultation with a testing agency/psychometrician.

The committee will report on its progress at subsequent board meetings, and we will share updates with our members as they become available.

### Freelance Directory Changes

Look for changes to the *Freelance Directory* in the future. Faith Reidenbach and committee have been working to make the Freelance Directory more user friendly and easy to search. Beta testing was planned for January 2012 (in fact, beta testing is now complete), and updates will be made based on the results. If you currently advertise in the Freelance Directory, you don't need to worry. Your ad will remain unchanged. Once the new system is up and running, you will receive instructions on how to change or modify your ad.

### Pocket Trainings

Over the past year, new Pocket Trainings have been published as a members-only benefit, with a total of 9 [Pocket Trainings](#) currently available. Pocket Trainings are mini-tutorials developed by AMWA members that are similar to the Short Courses offered at the Annual Conference.

The Web and Internet Technology (WIT) Pocket Training Subcommittee is always looking for additional topics. If you have an idea, submit it for consideration to subcommittee chair, Mary N. Wessling, PhD, ELS, [editor@wesslingmedtech.com](mailto:editor@wesslingmedtech.com)). The proposal form is posted [here](#).

### AMWA Journal Compilations

The board announced the formal launch of the *AMWA Journal Collections*, a new derivative publication series that includes reprints of articles previously published in the *AMWA Journal*. Each collection has been organized by theme and is available electronically in PDF format. Two collections have been compiled thus far: Authorship and Acknowledgement; and Exploring a Career in Medical Communication. AMWA members can purchase these collections at a discounted rate [here](#).

### Chapter Greet and Go

The DVC was well represented at the annual Chapter Greet and Go on the first evening of the conference, when 32 DVC members hoofed it to nearby Jacksonville Landing for dinner. Since we are such a geographically diverse chapter, as are

many of the AMWA chapters, the Greet and Go provides the opportunity to meet some of our colleagues who live and/or work in distant regions. We especially enjoyed chatting with some of our newer members who were attending their first Annual Conference.

### **2012 AMWA Annual Conference**

The DVC's own Brian Bass is serving as Conference Administrator for the 2012 AMWA Annual Conference, which will take place on October 4-6, 2012, at the Sacramento Convention Center, the Hyatt Regency Sacramento, and the Sheraton Sacramento hotels. There's still time to propose topics for short sessions, breakfast roundtables, and poster presentations. Find out more [here](#).

*Cyndy Kryder is a freelance medical writer and current AMWA-DVC President. Jen Maybin is a freelance medical writer and current AMWA-DVC President-Elect. Both Cyndy and Jen were delegates to the fall Board of Directors meeting.*

## **BECOME A MASTER NETWORKER**

### **Recap of November Dinner Meeting with John Hadley**

*By Bonnie Schultz*

On Wednesday, November 16, members of AMWA-DVC met in the East Windsor Holiday Inn to learn how to become master networkers. Beth Pulaski, a volunteer for the Pennsylvania Programs Committee, invited John Hadley to speak to the group. Hadley is a well-known career counselor, editor, and writer, with a monthly "Career Tips" newsletter that has over 8,700 subscribers.

Hadley began by saying that the most common question in networking, "What do you do?" is a question that you shouldn't answer. He feels it is vital that people not pigeonhole themselves, and you should instead imagine that the question you were asked is "Why should I pay your salary?" or "Why should I buy your services?" We are all trained, he said, to define ourselves by what is on our business card, such as "accountant," thus creating a slot that initiates rejection if someone does not want your services. It does not help if one is trying to promote visibility and engagement.

### **Masterful Marketing Message**

Hadley suggested that instead of volunteering, "I'm a small business accountant," one should construct a "masterful marketing message." A masterful marketing message is short, positive, and result-oriented. In other words, instead of saying, "I prepare tax returns and financial statements," which is a "duty" and boring, one could say, "I help small businesses save money on taxes." The second statement does not convey excessive information and contains a benefit, raising room for questions or starting a conversation.

### **The Elevator Pitch**

A strong elevator pitch, delivered perhaps "in the elevator" to someone who can help you in your career, should be memorable, focused, and designed to create another interaction. According to Hadley, it is important to "always leave them wanting to know more" and to engage, not merely inform. Hadley told the group that he has never had a job that did not

result from networking. He says that one should work to create visibility and expand the list of potential references. It helps, Hadley believes, to develop contacts who can uncover opportunities for you even when you are not actively looking for work yourself.

### Challenges to Marketing Yourself

Some of people's biggest challenges in marketing themselves are shyness, reluctance to sell, fear of rejection and difficulty in initiating small talk. Hadley recommends rehearsing your speech and narrowly focusing on your target. Hadley feels that, while you may want to "sell yourself" to the people you are speaking with, you can also plan to make them a "node in your network" if they are not working directly in your field. You can then "tap" into all the people they know.

Hadley recommends the book, *Good to Great* by Jim Collins. The book describes how a good company becomes great, with their process of "first getting the right people on the bus and then finding the right seats for them."

### How to Market Yourself

While at a networking event, you become a master networker by your ability to:

- Make yourself comfortable in your networking
- Set a fine net to make it easy to find contacts
- Target a client to build your business
- Stand out and make new relationships
- Focus on the other person, have a conversation, don't just tell your life story
- Use marketing "headlines" to describe your experience and qualities
- Know your "case studies" or anecdotes: think about your accomplishments and turn them into one-minute stories and have "back pocket questions" to fill lulls in the conversation
- Not cling to the person you're networking with; the goal is to network
- Remember to exchange contact information by delivering your card (It is more effective to present your background so the other person requests it)
- Set a date to meet again
- Deliver your message
- Tell the person you look forward to the next meeting.

At the end of your conversation, exit gracefully, saying, "I'll free you up to meet other people."

If you attend a networking event, write follow-up notes. If you are unable to schedule a meeting with those you've met at the event, still drop them a line. The point is to "polish" your relationships so that people know you and remember you exist.

"Remember that real networking consists of one-on-one networking meetings," says Hadley. "Before you have your meeting, make sure to plan your agenda. Be ready to say what you think you bring to the table."

John Hadley's website: [www.JHACareers.com](http://www.JHACareers.com)

*Bonnie Schultz is a freelance journalist who focuses on health and medical issues.*

## MARCH 2012 DINNER MEETING ANNOUNCED

The March chapter dinner meeting will be held in Philadelphia on March 29, 2012, and will feature representatives from schools with medical writing programs. Details will be posted on the chapter web site.

### Delawriter

Published quarterly by the American Medical Writers Association-Delaware Valley Chapter

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