

# DELAWRITER

The quarterly newsletter of AMWA-DVC

Delawriter Editors

Fall Edition, October 2019

## Volunteer Corner

Showcasing members who contribute time, energy, and expertise to AMWA's Delaware Valley Chapter

## An Inquisitive Mind and a Knack for Balance

by Jacqueline M. Mahon, MA

Jennifer Minarcik started her business, Jennifer Minarcik Biomedical Communications, LLC, 8 years ago. As with many of us who chose the freelance career path, her route to that end included higher education, extensive training, and a desire to spend her days doing what she loved. Minarcik's engaging intellect and boundless enthusiasm served her well on that path and continue to bolster her business.

"I was always interested in health and medicine," Minarcik notes. "As a child, I loved science, biology, and chemistry. My father is a pharmacist and family members are healthcare professionals, so the career idea came naturally to me." She completed a pre-med track at Stockton University and considered her options, one of which was to start a family. She chose to embark on the great adventure--and eternally jam-packed schedule--that is motherhood, and paused her education.

By 2002, Minarcik was ready for her next adventure, and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in molecular genetics at Rowan University. Fortuitously, this work led directly to a position as a research technician in a molecular genetics laboratory at the nationally renowned Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP). As a research technician for approximately 9 years, Minarcik delved into primary cell isolation, immunoblotting, RNA/DNA purification, laser capture, and immunofluorescence, plus various assays and other technologies. She also wrote manuscripts, congress abstracts and posters, slide presentations, and lab-animal protocols. These writing projects engaged Minarcik in a different way--and planted seeds.

"Eventually I wanted to expand beyond the laboratory, so I started thinking about which tasks I liked best there, because maybe they could provide a springboard to a career change," Minarcik says. Having answered that question, she simply Googled "presenting medical information," and up popped the American Medical Writers Association (AMWA). "Google was my career counselor," Minarcik says, laughing. She attended the Delaware Valley Chapter (DVC) Freelance Workshop (an all-day educational forum held annually in March) and was thrilled by the many ideas and suggestions she gathered there. Soon thereafter, she left CHOP, devised a company name, set up an office, and began offering her services to . . . CHOP. Many freelance writers get their start by creating content for former employers. Minarcik also was able to benefit from the broader network she established while working at CHOP. In addition, she strengthened her writing expertise by completing a Master's of Science degree in biomedical writing at the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia.

Minarcik is adept at creating a broad range of scientific and health-related pieces for both consumers and healthcare professionals. "About 2-3 years into your business, though, you start to realize the kind of content and clients you most enjoy," Minarcik remarks. "For me, it's promotional content and messaging," including print/web-based marketing collateral, sales-training modules, video scripts/vignettes, and web content (eg, microsites, emails, and banner ads).



Jennifer Minarcik, MS

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## QUICK NOTES

### Join the DELAWRITER

The DELAWRITER needs contributing authors for the quarterly publication. *Have an idea for an article?* *Haven't used that byline recently?* If so, please contact the [editorial team](#).

## Quarterly Quotes

*"They say a picture is worth a thousand words. But let me tell you, a story is worth a million pictures." - Randall Ingermanson*

*"A Smile is a curve which can set a lot of things straight." - Victor Borge*

## Quarterly Tip

[Using Paste Special](#)

Minarcik manages to balance her business schedule with her family life, volunteer work, and hobbies. She has 6 children: Her daughter is a classically trained ballet dancer; one son is a contractor and another is a jazz performer; and three children are in grade school. Her volunteer commitments have included serving as webinar coordinator and Freelance Workshop Co-chair for the AMWA-DVC, President and Past President of AMWA-DVC, and she has been on multiple national AMWA committees including the Nominating Committee, the Annual Conference Program Committee, and the AMWA Engage committee. She has chaired the Chapter Advisory Development Committee and is currently Co-Editor of Social Media in AMWA Journal. As for hobbies, Minarcik stimulates her creative proclivities with oil painting.

Naturally, the question arises: how do you find the time?

"I would say a key business tactic is avoiding problematic clients. For example, if someone's manner is demeaning or disrespectful (eg, reviewer comments such as 'makes no sense'), then I am not available for future projects with this individual. Also, if a client's initial project preparation is poor, and I'm provided inaccurate information, then I ask myself, 'Do I want to engage with these people going forward?' We cannot let difficult clients eat up our time and set the tone for each day." Successfully navigating client relationships in a way that best preserves our precious time allows us to avoid workaholism—a not uncommon disorder for sole proprietors.

From Minarcik's perspective, "the whole point of venturing out on our own is to be free and in charge. It's a critical early lesson: balancing work quantity with client satisfaction and also living our best lives in terms of personal relationships and non-work interests. "Once your business is secure, you've got to learn to say 'No,'" advises Minarcik. Freelancers want to be available for collegial, talented 'star' clients, and if we're mired down in unprofessional situations, we miss those star clients."

"Of course, most clients are delightful," Minarcik adds. "I love my work and feel professionally fulfilled. Just remember that your time is precious," she advises.

Jacquie Mahon, MA, is owner of Acorn Freelance in Philadelphia and has been a writer and editor of medical education and pharmaceutical communications for 24 years.

## Start Talking Science: An Event to Help Scientists Communicate with the Public

*By Kelly Franklin*

On September 26, 2019, the Science History Institute in Philadelphia hosted the 6th Annual Start Talking Science (STS) poster session. Undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, educators, and professionals from surrounding institutions came together to present their research in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medicine. The goal of this event was to increase public awareness and promote accessibility of scientific research that is being conducted locally.

STS was conceived and organized by Drexel University Physics faculty member Christy Love, PhD. The first event was held in August of 2014 and featured 10 local scientists interested in bringing their research to the general public. Since then, STS has attracted greater numbers of presenters and attendees every year.

This growing audience exemplifies increasing public interest in science communication coming directly from the source: scientists. Zenobia Cofer, PhD, AMWA member, presented her postdoctoral research at the first STS poster session. Since then, she has become an STS board member, providing feedback to scientists interested in developing their communication and presentation skills. With the gain in momentum surrounding the event, the ability to communicate science to the public becomes increasingly vital to academic and industry scientists alike.

In preparing posters for STS, presenters are expected to write in non-technical language appropriate for the general public. STS board members and previous presenters provide feedback at communication workshops held at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), one of the program's sponsors. During these workshops, presenters break into small groups where they discuss scientific communication and collaborate on ways to improve the presentation of their research to people unfamiliar with complex scientific subjects. Ultimately, each researcher receives feedback from both STEM experts and trained communicators on their presentations to help them hone their scientific content and the clarity of their message for the public.

Through these workshops, scientists gain confidence and build communication skills for disseminating their findings to a broader audience. The feedback provided by professionals is invaluable for many presenters at early stages in their careers. STS achieves more than simply informing the public about research being conducted in the Philadelphia area; it also provides participating scientists with the skills to create interesting narratives that engage audiences. These stories often compel listeners to dig deeper into complex scientific topics than they ordinarily would have.

Given the current skepticism surrounding science, the ability to clearly and concisely communicate it is imperative to fostering a greater connection between scientific research and the general public. STS is one of a few events to bridge this gap and improve the public relations surrounding academic and industry scientific research. As a community of scientific communicators, AMWA knows the importance of providing accurate and understandable information to the public. Organizations like STS help all of us in our efforts to promote a

Using Paste Special?  
Do you remember when you first learned about Paste Special?

You can specify formatting when you paste slides, text, pictures, objects, and tables from other programs or the web into your Office application such as Access, Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and Outlook.

Like pictures and other objects, text in a presentation has its own formatting - such as typeface, color, and font size.

When you copy text that has different formatting into an Office program, the program, such as PowerPoint or Word, automatically reformats that text to match the text of the original document.

However, you can use Paste Special to keep source formatting or to match destination formatting.

and understandable information to the public. Organizations like STC help all of us in our efforts to promote a more scientifically informed public.

Kelly Franklin, BS, BFA, is new to the field of scientific writing and is currently pursuing her MS in Biology at Temple University in Philadelphia, PA. She is interested in scientific journalism concerning climate and the environment.

## Trailblazing Translational Scientist, Janet Woodcock, CDER Director at FDA, honored at Temple University's RAQA Anniversary

By Alexa Gordon

On October 2nd, Temple University celebrated the 50th anniversary of their Regulatory Affairs and Quality Assurance (RAQA) graduate program and honored individuals who contributed to the program's success. Temple presented the Outstanding Service Award to Janet Woodcock, MD, who played a significant role in developing the RAQA program. Dr. Woodcock, director of Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER) at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), created a bridge between the FDA, the

pharmaceutical industry, and academia through Temple's program.

In her acceptance speech, Dr. Woodcock remarked about the growth of the pharmaceutical industry over the past decades. She recognized the accelerated drug development with new molecular entities including gene therapy, cell therapy, complex drugs, and targeted therapies.



**Dr. Janet Woodcock, Director of CDER and Alexa Gordon at Temple University**

She stated "We live in an exciting time in drug development" and emphasized the importance of the translational application of science. This translational application extends basic scientific research into clinical investigations and the market. Pharmaceutical professionals are needed to advance drug development for regulatory review and approval. Regulatory writers and publication professionals have important roles in sharing knowledge with health authorities and healthcare professionals, thereby supporting evidence-based decision making for incorporating new therapies into practice.

Darryl L'Heureux, AMWA-DVC Immediate Past President and Temple RAQA alumnus, added, "Writing documents for a regulatory submission to initiate a clinical trial or to report on the results of a study advances scientific knowledge from the bench to the bedside. When my writing is part of a drug being evaluated and approved to treat patients, this is truly translational."

Medical writers and scientific communicators can appreciate Dr. Woodcock's advocacy for our work. While we may stand on the "shoulders of giants" in drug development, medical writers play a key role in explaining science and medicine to the general public so patients and caregivers can seek better health outcomes.

Alexa Gordon is an aspiring medical writer and enrolled in the Professional Science Master's program in Scientific Writing at Temple University.

## Upcoming Education and Networking Events for our Members

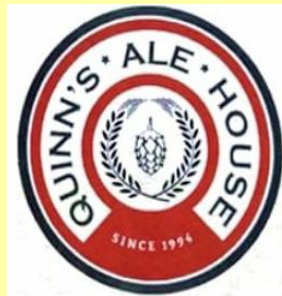
**AMWA 2019 National Conference, San Diego, CA November 6th to November 9th.**

### Chapter Networking at 2019 AMWA Conference in San Diego

The AMWA-DVC Chapter Networking Event will be held from 6:30 to 8:30 PM at [Quinn's Ale House](#) in the Sheraton San Diego Hotel and Marina (conference hotel). Join us to network with colleagues while enjoying a broad range of appetizers. Purchase drinks at cash bar.

Registration is \$20 for AMWA-DVC members and \$30 for nonmembers. Register [HERE](#).

Invite your colleagues and bring your friends! We hope to see you there!



## AMWA-DVC Presentations at 2019 AMWA Conference in San Diego

Our AMWA-DVC members are presenting many topics at the 2019 AMWA Medical Writing & Communication Conference. Come support your fellow members at the 2019 meeting. Hope to see you there!

AMWA-DVC Member	Title	Date and Time
Deborah Anderson	How to Nurture Clients into Long-Term Relationships and Boost Your Bottom Line	Fri. 9:00 AM-10:30 AM
Deborah Anderson (Roundtable)	Instructional Design: Are You Considering Learner Usability in Your End Products?	Sat 12:00 PM-1:30 PM
Brian Bass	Jam Session for Seasoned Freelancers	Sat 2:00 PM-3:30 PM
Ann Davis	WS-12 Best Practices for Developing Journal Manuscripts	Wed 9:00 AM-12:00 noon
Ann Davis	WS-30 Writing for Visual Media: Best Practices	Thurs 9:00 AM-12:00 noon
Scott Kober	The CMEpalooza Story: Lessons for the Medical Writing Community	Thurs 3:15 PM-4:15 PM
Cynthia Kryder	President of AMWA National	
Lawrence Liberti	WS-22 Assessing and Communicating Benefits and Risks of Medicines	Wed 2:00 PM-5:00 PM
Jeff McCrindle	Augmenting Medical Writing with Artificial Intelligence and Natural-Language Generation	Thurs 9:00 AM-10:30 AM
Katherine Molnar-Kimber	How to Nurture Clients into Long-Term Relationships and Boost Your Bottom Line	Friday 9:00 AM-10:30 AM
Katherine Molnar-Kimber	Art of Writing Effective Response Letters to Journal Editors	Sat 9:00 AM-10:30 AM
Katherine Molnar-Kimber (Roundtables)	Art of Writing Accredited and Non-accredited Continuing Medical Education (CME)	Friday 7:15 AM-8:45 AM Sat 12:00 noon-1:30 PM
Monica Nicosia	Can Fitting in Fun Make Us Better Medical Writers?	Thurs 9:00 AM-10:00 AM
Janet Novak	WS-54 Principles and Practice of Visual Data Presentation	Sat 9:00 AM-12 noon
Becky Nuttall	The Science and Art of Project Stakeholder Management	Thurs 1:45 PM-2:45 PM
Christina Ohnsman	You Can Find a Diamond in the Rough: Medical Writing Opportunities in Rare Diseases	Thurs 9:00 AM-10 AM
Amanda Pennington	"X" Marks the Spot: Creating an Annotation "Treasure Map" for Quality Control Review	Thurs 11:00 AM-12:00 noon
Laura Sheppard	Findings from the 2019 AMWA Medical Communication Compensation Survey	Friday 12:45 PM- 1:45 PM
Michele Stofa (Roundtable)	I Have the Abstract: How Do I Make It into a Poster?	Friday 7:15 AM-8:45 AM

### Creative CME Content Development to be Focus of November 21 Dinner Program

A special program for creative CME writers will be held immediately following the annual meeting of the Mid-Atlantic Alliance for CME (MAACME) on Thursday, November 21, 2019 in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Beyond the Needs Assessment: Creative Perspectives on CME Content Development will be of interest to medical writers and editorial directors who are, or wish to become, active in the accredited CME space.

We will meet in the private dining room of the moderately priced **Dog and Pony Restaurant**, inside the **Sheraton Harrisburg/Hershey Hotel**. Complimentary appetizers and handouts will be provided, courtesy of AMWA-DVC. After the program ends, attendees will order off the menu and pay for their own dinners and beverages. Registration is free, but space is limited to 20 participants. To reserve your seat and receive additional details, send an email by Monday, November 18 to [Don@hartingcom.com](mailto:Don@hartingcom.com). First come, first served.

#### Beyond the Needs Assessment: Creative Perspectives on CME Content Development

5:00 to 5:30 PM	Networking, complimentary appetizers, cash bar
	Creativity in CME Content Development: A brief lecture with slides by Donald Harting MA, MS, ELS, CHCP

5:30 to 7:00 PM	<p>Creative Perspectives on Advanced Assignments: A moderated panel discussion where each panelist describes how to approach a different type of CME writing assignment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andrew Bowser ELS, CHCP: "How I write interactive case studies"</li> <li>• Annette Schwind, MS, CHCP: "How I write outcome reports for posters"</li> <li>• Ruwaida Vakil, MS: "How I write video scripts"</li> </ul> <p>Q&amp;A from the audience</p>
7:00 to 8:00 PM	Dinner in private dining room
8:00 PM and on	More networking in hotel bar

## Proposals for AMWA-DVC Freelance Workshop due November 30.



The 2020 Freelance Workshop will be held March 14, 2020 in Plymouth Meeting. AMWA-DVC is soliciting proposals for presentations using [SurveyMonkey](#).

If you are interested in presenting an interactive roundtable, panel discussion, or workshop at the AMWA-DVC Freelance Workshop, please fill out the survey [here](#):

### Delawriter Editorial Team

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