

DELAWRITER

The quarterly newsletter of AMWA-DVC

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Fall 2015

Thoughts from a Grateful Member (and Past President)

By Eileen A. McCaffrey

Thank you all for the opportunity to serve as your chapter president last year. We are fortunate to have a large and active chapter with many wonderful volunteers - all of whom strive to serve you, the members. We are solvent financially, and the chapter dues have supported many AMWA-DVC activities. This year marked our introduction of chapter webinars to serve members unable to attend our in-person events - and for anyone who wishes to join us and learn. The following is a quick look at DVC 2014-2015 by the numbers:

- 3 chapter webinars covering the following topics: social media, freelance business issues, and continuing medical education (CME) needs assessments
- 2 all-day conferences-Freelance Workshop in King of Prussia, PA and the Princeton Conference - 94 attendees between the 2 events
- 3 networking events - the season opener at the Black Bass Inn in Lumberville, PA on the Delaware River, holiday networking at the Radnor Hotel, and the annual volunteer recognition meeting at Sandy Run Country Club in Oreland, PA
- 2 dinner meetings with speakers, featuring the 2015 McGovern Award winner, Ivan Oransky (on scientific retractions); and Princeton University librarian Jennifer Baxmeyer (on literature search techniques)

The aggregate attendance at these events is 382 people. Not bad for a chapter of roughly 600 members. True, members of other chapters and people who are not members of AMWA also attend. And some people

participate in more than 1 event. Still, 8 events and 2 all-day conferences within a 12-month period averages an event in most months. Our committees do try to keep your calendar filled with learning and networking opportunities. We invite you to join us. Lend us your time, talent, and enthusiasm. You will meet some extraordinary people and contribute to your own professional development.

All the officers and committee heads have served you so well. Special thanks to my immediate predecessor as president, Joanne Rosenberg, whose support and guidance meant a great deal to me. And thanks so much to Jen Maybin, who has stepped down from the executive board after many years of service in various roles - including chapter president.

It has been a humbling experience, a privilege, a great opportunity, and lots of fun to serve as your president for the last year. Thank you!

Eileen A. McCaffrey, MS, is the immediate Past President of AMWA-DVC and a freelance medical writer.

75th AMWA National Sneak Peek

By Nancy Malaga

The 75th annual AMWA convention is here! It starts today, September 30 and runs through October 3. If you are still sifting through the almost 100 workshops and open sessions, consider attending OS-21 Using Social Media for Marketing: Harnessing the Power of Twitter, LinkedIn, and Beyond, Friday, October 2, from 11 am until noon.

If you are like many medical writers, who are technical by nature, you may shy away from the idea of marketing. The face-to-face interaction required by traditional marketing tactics, such as cold calling, may make you cringe. But, in this economy, to stay competitive, marketing, whether traditional or social media, is a key component of success.

In this session, Ruwaida Vakil, MS and Jennifer Minarcik, MS will show how social media marketing may be easier than you think. They will discuss some novel ways to lighten the burden of marketing yourself and overcome some of the limitations of traditional marketing. With their guidance, you may be able to launch your own social media marketing campaign in just 10 to 15 minutes per day! "Medical writers are communicators. But they may not be comfortable marketing themselves," says Vakil. "Social media is a more subtle form of marketing. It should be intuitive, fun and will give you more bang for your buck." By "bang for your buck," Vakil means social media marketing has the potential of reaching a broader audience in less

time and at less cost than traditional marketing, such as direct mail/print marketing.

According to Minarcik, the seminar will focus on social media marketing as a distribution strategy that crosses multiple platforms to help you maximize your presence and brand you as an expert. "If you are not part of social media, you are missing out," she says.

Attendees can expect to learn the importance of a strong content marketing strategy for social media marketing; evaluate the technology each platform has to offer regarding capabilities, content, and visual marketing strategies; and explore novel social media tools that can support your marketing campaign. For example, Periscope, a new, state-of-the-art, live video-streaming app for iOS and Android, is on the agenda.

"Most of us may know about blogs, newsletters, mailers, and traditional marketing," says Vakil. "In this session, we will take you beyond traditional to other social media platforms."

Although the session will discuss the importance of content marketing as an indirect form of advertising, it will not get into how to create content. "Our starting point will be 'Now that you have the content, what can you do with it?'" says Minarcik. The session may be especially helpful to regulatory writers who may need some tips on how to present themselves on the web.

Both Vakil and Minarcik are experienced medical writers and are well versed in social media. Ruwaida Vakil is a freelance medical writer, communications specialist, and owner of the online business ProMed Write LLC. Jennifer Minarcik, MS is a freelance biomedical writer who specializes in digital and social media communications for the pharmaceutical industry.

To get more information about OS-21 Using Social Media for Marketing: Harnessing the Power of Twitter, LinkedIn, and Beyond, you can tweet Ruwaida and Jen at #AMWA15SM or view their YouTube [channel](#) Freelance Medical Writers and submit questions.

Nancy Malaga is an editor at Ogilvy Commonwealth Worldwide in the pharmaceutical marketing division. She is also an editorial consultant in healthcare communications.

National Report

By Kent Steinriede

In April, I drove to Bethesda, MD, for the AMWA Spring Leadership Meeting, which bring together the national Board of Directors and chapter leaders from across the country and Canada. When I learned that the second day included a 4-hour strategic planning brainstorming session guided by professional facilitators, I was skeptical. I've never been a big fan of formal group brainstorming because the ideas and insight gleaned are often fuzzy at best. But I put my prejudice aside.

My colleagues and I considered prompts from the facilitators, went from table to table and bounced ideas off each other, and presented childlike posters we'd created with butcher paper showing where AMWA is now and where it should go. I could see themes emerging from the chaos. We looked at each other and realized that AMWA is a group of like-minded people, and that's why we're involved. Another part of the brainstorming was to improvise from a list of trends and issues in the industry, such as the globalization of biomedical research and publishing and the digital delivery of educational materials. This made it apparent that AMWA needs to have a global focus and reach out to countries in Asia and other regions with growing communities of medical writers.

With so much change in the industry, AMWA needs to help medical writers stay informed and keep their skills up to date. It also emerged that AMWA is a champion of ethical practices and advocate for the writer. A lot of good ideas were written on butcher paper, yet they were mostly hypothetical. However, in the weeks after I returned, I realized that some ideas weren't just wishful thinking. They were becoming reality.

On September 30, the first class of candidates will sit for AMWA's Medical Writer Certified (MWC) **exam** at the Annual Conference in San Antonio, TX. It's been a nearly 10-year journey from the idea stage, to developing criteria for the certification and the exam, to medical writers taking the test. The exam will be given again in March 2016 at the Drug Information Association's **forum** for Medical Communication, Medical Information, Medical Science Liaison, and Medical Writing professionals in Kissimmee, FL (application deadline December 15, 2015) to apply for the exam). The MWC exam will then be given at AMWA's 2016 Annual Conference in Denver, CO (application deadline June 30, 2016) and at the 2017 Annual Conference in Orlando, FL (application deadline, TBA).

This year, AMWA introduced the Medical Communication News feed, powered by PR Newswire. Updated daily on the AMWA home **page** in more depth, it contains hundreds of news releases full of leads for researching prospective clients and employers. More industry and AMWA news is available through AMWA's Twitter **feed**, which includes links to multimedia news reports of interest to medical communicators. That's where I learned of the latest **update**

to Good Publication Practice (GPP3).

The AMWA Journal, our peer-reviewed paper and digital publication, was redesigned last year to include better graphics and a wider variety of content. I met journal editor Vickie White MA, ELS, in Bethesda in April. She told me that the [journal](#) is especially looking for contributors to submit articles and original research related to regulatory writing.

Finally, if you're interested in getting involved with AMWA on the national level, check out the [volunteer page](#). The 2015-2016 AMWA Volunteer Opportunities list should be posted soon. There's plenty to get involved in, including helping plan the annual conference, which I did this year.

Kent Steinriede, MS, is President of the Delaware Valley Chapter and a medical writer at Parexel International. He works from home in Bala Cynwyd, PA.

DVC Members Lead the Way in the Development of AMWA Pocket Trainings

AMWA is constantly looking to provide useful resources for the membership. Among those resources that many may not be aware of are the "AMWA Pocket Trainings". DVC members are leading the way in helping to creating pocket trainings. These resources are designed to deliver information quickly and effectively. Most of the trainings are short PDFs that range from 2 to 6 pages in length or a short-recorded presentation of about 15 minutes. The topics include performing end-of-the-year reviews to improve your business and how to create a podcast.

One of the newest trainings is by DVCs own Ruwaida Vakil and Don Harting about CME needs assessments. Vakil and Harting join other DVC members including Robert Bonk, Julie Munden, and Laura Ninger as training creators for AMWA. Further proof that the DVC is one of the most active chapters within AMWA.

Take a look for yourself by clicking this [link](#), which will bring you to the AMWA Pocket Training page.

AMWA-DVC 2016 Freelance Conference

Take the AMWA-DVC 2016 Freelance Conference Survey and tell us about what you'd like us to offer at the 2016 conference. The short survey asks about your preferences for interactive sessions, presentations, roundtables, networking, and more, along with specific topics you'd like

to learn about.

Take the 4-Minute Survey Now. Click [here](#) to take the survey. Deadline: October 9.


AMWA-DVC 2016 Freelance Conference

Mark Saturday, March 12 on your calendar for the AMWA-DVC 2016 Freelance Conference, to be held (again) at the Crowne Plaza Philadelphia-King of Prussia in King of Prussia, Pa.

Join the AMWA-DVC 2016 Freelance Conference List

Not a DVC member? Join our list to get an email when the 2016 conference program is finalized. Email loriwriter@comcast.net and write "DVC Freelance Conference list" in the header.

20th Annual Princeton Conference



AMERICAN MEDICAL WRITERS ASSOCIATION
DELAWARE VALLEY CHAPTER

THE PRINCETON CONFERENCE

*Providing educational excellence in
medical communications for 20 years*

Save the date: Saturday, April 16, 2016

This year AMWA-DVC celebrates 20 years of the Princeton Conference which promotes excellence in writing, editing, and producing medical communications. The Princeton Conference planning committee is working on the new agenda and conference format.

- *What would you like to see at the 20th Annual conference?*
- *Did you miss a workshop at Annual Meeting?*
- *Are you interested in a specific medical writing topic?*

Please [email](#) us with your suggestions.

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Executive Editor: Kent Steinriede, MS

Editor: Jason Vian

Assistant Editor:

Designer: Darryl L'Heureux, PhD

Editorial Consultants: Nancy Malaga, Elisha Darville, Robert Hand, Rachana Sainger, Katherine L. Molnar-Kimber, PhD

E-mail List Manager: Darryl L'Heureux, PhD

Please direct change of address/information to
AMWA Headquarters Staff:

American Medical Writers
Association
30 West Gude Drive, Suite 525
Rockville, MD 20850-1161
(240) 238-0940 (tel)
(301) 294-9006 (fax)
e-mail: amwa@amwa.org

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