

DELAWRITER

The quarterly newsletter of AMWA-DVC

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Spring 2016

2015 President Award Winners

Hello and welcome to a special issue of the DVC's Delawriter newsletter: the theme is volunteerism! AMWA-DVC has a long history of people willing to contribute time and energy toward helping the members of our great chapter. This issue features a few of those members. We hope that their stories will help motivate others to volunteer in some capacity to help make the Delaware Chapter better able to provide services and support for members. Enjoy!

Sincerely,
The Delawriter Team

Darryl Z. L'Heureux, PhD
Medical Writer, Bristol-Myers Squibb

Article by Eileen A. McCaffrey

As Delaware Valley Chapter communications chair, Darryl L'Heureux, PhD, has shown a flair for promotion. A regulatory writer by profession, he demonstrated a public relations professional's eye for phrasing and scheduling of emails announcing chapter events and other notices. Members have to be aware of our chapter's educational offerings to attend, and Darryl's efforts increased registration for chapter events. For his creativity and consistent willingness to serve, Darryl received the President's Award last June. We are fortunate that he chaired the 20th Annual AMWA-DVC Princeton Conference on April, 2016. At his day job, he serves as a late phase medical writer for Bristol-Myers Squibb, where he has received several Star Awards and continues to teach/lecture at local Philadelphia colleges. Here is what Darryl says about why he volunteers for AMWA-DVC:

"In the field of medical writing, few of us have had a dedicated, determined path. Many have migrated from other careers in science or journalism to our current niche. I was fortunate that my first manager supported my AMWA membership and attendance at the Annual Conference. After

attending AMWA workshops and sessions, I realized that medical writing had its own key opinion leaders who were generous with sharing knowledge and ideas."

"My professional development has been built upon raising my hand and volunteering. Serving my professional society has enabled me to expand my skills and learn more about medical writing and scientific communications. It has offered me the opportunity to collaborate with professionals from other companies and other backgrounds to provide education and guidance for our newer colleagues, and to exercise my creativity."

"A few years back when I volunteered for my first medical writing conference, my role quickly expanded from giving a single talk to leading a session to chairing the entire conference—all within a few years. Along the way, I worked with business professionals in pharma, biotech, contract research organizations, government agencies, and academic institutions to build programs and design sessions. During these conferences, I networked with other professionals, interviewed with hiring managers for new opportunities, and learned from other like-minded individuals."

"If you want to advance your career, I highly recommend that you step up and raise your hand." Please join fellow volunteers of AMWA-DVC by sending an [email](#).

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

Jennifer Minarcik, MS **Principal, Jennifer Minarcik Biomedical** **Communications**

By Jason Vian

The time was spring 2011, and for the past 10 years, Jen Minarcik's professional career revolved around bench science as a Research Associate at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. While slowly tiring of the benchtop life of a scientist, she began reflecting on what to do next. When she took a personal inventory of what she most enjoyed, communicating information to others in a manner they could understand bubbled to the top of her list. Next was some Internet research on Google and the keyword search of "science and medical writer." Her search revealed The American Medical Writers Association (AMWA).

Coincidentally, at the same time her search began, there was an upcoming freelance conference in the Philadelphia area. She signed up with equal parts excitement and trepidation, intent to find out more about this potential career path. Looking back fondly, she recalls, *"I loved everything*

about the conference; the camaraderie, the support for one another, and the wealth of information being presented. I decided that I needed to be a part of this organization." She met many people that day who were in various stages of their career in the profession, including folks such as Brian Bass and Lori De Milto. She was amazed by the amount of information people were willing to give without any kind of expectation of return. Thus, she began a journey to learn as much as she could about medical writing.

Soon after, she decided to enroll in the Biomedical Writing Program at the University of the Sciences, while balancing her fledgling medical writing business and a family. Her capstone project for the program centered around the use of social media in medical writing. Her mentor for this capstone was Brian Bass, who noticed her interest and asked her to help with AMWA's Online Social Media and Forums Committee. That opportunity led to her being asked to become the Webinar Coordinator for the Delaware Valley Chapter (DVC).

One only needs to look at the last several years to see where her involvement has taken her. Presenting at conferences, organizing webinars, and helping to organize conferences have all been opportunities to learn new skills and grow as a writer. *The "skills that I have acquired through volunteering at DVC include improved networking and marketing strategies, delivering interactive presentations, and developing/hosting webinars through multiple platforms."* In addition, Jen states *"Becoming involved has truly made a difference professionally. Great opportunities that I've had and the growth of my company are a direct result of the involvement with AMWA."* Her service to both AMWA's national organization and DVC was recognized last year when she became one of the 2015 DVC President's Award recipients.

AMWA-DVC, like many other organizations, finds it challenging to find people willing to get involved. Volunteer opportunities can help both DVC and the writer. When asked what her biggest barrier to getting involved with DVC was for her, she was very candid:

"The biggest barrier in getting involved was myself. Putting myself out there, whether to share an idea or speak to someone new, did not come natural to me. I had to really push myself to engage. Once I finally did, what a difference! I've learned so much, grown professionally, and built wonderful friendships."

"I think a lot of people feel the same as me: insecure about speaking up, nervous about introductions, thinking that they don't have anything exciting to offer to the organization. In addition, I think people don't realize the number of ways they

can volunteer. It can be a very small task to a larger role. There is no pressure, and we all rely on one another to get the tasks done."

Volunteers are the lifeblood of the DVC. We all have the opportunity to help improve the chapter and ourselves by becoming involved and helping in ways that we are able. It could be using a skill set that you already possess or learning a new one by helping in an area of interest. The opportunities are available and your help is needed. Go for it! If you are interested in learning more about volunteering with the DVC, please click [here](#).

Jason Vian is a freelance medical writer/ instructional designer living in Nazareth, Pennsylvania

The Mighty Lori De Milto

Principal, Writer for Rent

By Nancy Malaga

In 1994, Lori De Milto started freelancing part-time and the rest-to cite a familiar adage-has become history. Freelance history, that is. Most recently, in 2015, she was named one of the winners of the AMWA-DVC President's Award, in recognition for her outstanding dedication and performance in the field of medical writing.

Over the past 20 years, Lori has grown from part-time novice to a seasoned freelancer and expert in marketing for freelancers. In 2002, she founded the Freelance Conference and has been its chair or co-chair almost every year since. Looking back at her experience in freelance medical writing, she recalled just getting into business: "I started freelancing part-time to see what I might want to do next in my career. I got some medical writing assignments without even knowing that it was a field! I enjoyed them and found that I was good at it," she said.

Within 1.5 years of taking her first assignment, Lori was doing freelance medical writing exclusively and launched her business [Writer for Rent](#) in 1997. She considers herself a writer, creative thinker, and self starter whose business goal is to deliver targeted medical content (newsletters, magazines, web content, and blog posts) that engages, informs, and motivates. She writes for patients, consumers, physicians, and other audiences, and her client list ranges from hospitals and medical practices to disease associations, and communications companies.

The same year she launched her business, Lori joined the American Medical Writers Association, a decision that has culminated in receiving the President's Award and running a successful freelance medical writing company. "I knew that

networking was crucial to succeeding as a freelance, and that volunteering was the way to build the deep relationships that would lead to referrals and learning." Today, she said, her only problem is keeping up with all of the work her marketing has generated.

In addition to keeping up with her ever-growing business, Lori has been diligently working at several AMWA events or with several committees, both with the Delaware Valley Chapter (DVC) and on the national level. In addition to playing an active part in the annual Freelance Conference, Lori has served as DVC president, secretary, and newsletter editor. She participates with AMWA nationally in the Journal Freelance Forum and on various committees. She is a frequent presenter at AMWA's Annual Conference on topics related to marketing a freelance business.

Since publishing two books on marketing for freelancers in 2014 and 2015, she has launched The Mighty Marketer website (themightymarketer.com), which offers free and paid resources for freelancers. The tagline for that site is "Get the Clients You Deserve": its mantra "And Make More Money Doing Work You Love." Lori's long career has embodied both those ideals and she hopes to continue doing the work she loves for a long time to come.

"I love my work and my involvement with AMWA and plan to continue both. I'll also be expanding The Mighty Marketer," she said.

Lori, who grew up in Philly, went to school at Temple University in Philadelphia and earned two degrees in Journalism (bachelor's and master's). She married Joe De Milto in 1987, and although she considers herself a city person, she has been living in South Jersey with her husband since that time. She has found the time to read, sail with friends, and travel. A little known fact about her is that she has been to both Timbuktu and Katmandu.

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

Jobs, jobs jobs!

Where are they now?

And where will they be in 5 years?

The landscape in our industry is changing - again. Are you wondering where the job opportunities are right now, and where they're likely to be down the road a few years from now? Which areas are growing? Which ones are shrinking? What advice can help you navigate this terrain a little better.

Join us on **Thursday June 23** for an interactive discussion

with Dan Benau, Director of Biomedical Writing Programs at the University of the Sciences, and Brian Sulpizio, Managing Partner with Inseption Group.

Click [here](#) to register. Click [here](#) for more information.



Delawriter

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

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