

AMWA MID-ATLANTIC CHAPTER

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The New Forums – How to Use Them

Last summer, the listservs were replaced with online forums on AMWA's website. Although they have not been as busy as the listservs, they are still a valuable vehicle to share and seek medical communications advice. AMWA's Executive Committee has decided to use them for another year to see if they can grow in popularity.

When you subscribe to a forum, you will receive an email for new postings (scroll down to read the content), but to reply to one, you must log into AMWA's website instead of just responding to the email.

The forum topics include subcategories under the main topics of: AMWA Announcements, Essentials of Writing, Professional Communities (with several subcategories of medical writing like freelance, regulatory, etc.), Watercooler, Freelance Opportunities (for Directory subscribers), and Leaders & Committees.

These steps will allow you post to or subscribe to a forum:

1. Log into your AMWA account. (Unless you've changed these, your username is your last name plus the last 2 digits of your AMWA member number; your password is you AMWA member number.)
2. In the "Members only" box on the lower left, click "Online Forums."
3. On the Forum Homepage, you'll see the list of forums.
4. From here, you can either subscribe to a forum to receive regular postings, or just post a new question/comment.
5. To subscribe to a forum, click "Member Control Panel" with the gear icon next to it.
 - a) Click "Subscriptions" at the bottom.
 - b) At the bottom, under "Subscribe to Email Notification of New Posts," use the drop down arrow to select the forum you want and click "Subscribe." You may sign up for more than one; they will appear in the top box "Forum(s) that you have Subscribed to Email Notification."
6. You do not have to subscribe to a forum to simply post a new question/comment. From the Forum Homepage, click an appropriate topic.
 - a) Click "New Topic +" found at the bottom of the list of comments.
 - b) Type in the subject, message, and click "Post New Topic."

More about the forums can be found at:

http://www.amwa.org/files/User_Guides/OnlineCommunityForumUserGuide.pdf

AMWA-MAC Meets at the National Conference

Fifty-seven AMWA-MAC members attended November's national AMWA conference in Columbus, Ohio. About 20 of us met for a delicious dinner for the Chapter Greet-N-Go, and then another 12 or so met the next day for more informal networking. It is always nice to put faces with names and emails, and to hear more about what each of us does in our jobs.

Feedback from members was that they like what our chapter is doing, but they would like some events to be on weekends. Other suggestions were to have webinars and tours of NIH or other medical museums in our museum-rich region.

Along the lines of planning events, we were reminded that any AMWA-MAC member is welcome to plan an event, even if they are not the designated regional coordinator in an area. Those interested in running an event can contact their nearest regional coordinator (listed on the MAC website/About us/Governing board) to perhaps collaborate or inform them of an idea. Members may also send in a request for funds to pay for an event, subsidize part of it, or provide refreshments. Please see below for more information.

How to Plan an AMWA-MAC Event

1. Decide on a location. If it is a restaurant, can the group have a small area to itself?
2. Decide on a date and time.
3. If a regional coordinator is in your area, check with them to see if they are available.
4. Run the idea past Jill Roberts (jillwroberts@msn.com) for any conflicting events.
5. If funds are needed, send a short request proposal to the treasurer, Tracey Robinson (tmrobinson12@gmail.com). The Board meets once a month and can review the request then.
6. Compose an email with the who/what/where/when information and send it to Jill Roberts for review.
7. Pick 3 dates (one month out, 2 weeks out, a few days out) for an email blast to be sent to the chapter. Email these dates and your announcement's subject and text to the webmaster, Judy Stoffer (jstof408@gmail.com).
8. Feel free to contact Cherie Dewar (cherie.writer@gmail.com) with any questions.

Save the Date... AMWA-MAC's Regional Conference

The Board of Directors has been hard at work lining up speakers for AMWA-MAC's regional conference taking place **Friday, March 14, 2014** in Gaithersburg, MD. We thank all of those who submitted Request for Proposals and we have a wonderful lineup of breakfast roundtables, 1.5-hour, and 3.0-hour open sessions! Registration opens in December. Classes include:

Credit workshops taught by Dr. Cindy Hamilton, AMWA's 2013 Harold Swanberg Distinguished Service Award Winner:

- Writing Abstracts
- Essential Ethics for Medical Communicators

Non-credit workshops taught by your fellow MAC members:

- How to write in plain language
- Sifting through style: A functional comparison of AMA, CMS, and APA for medical communicators
- White Papers: How, why, and what they mean for the healthcare industry
- Ask a Freelancer! Our experiences and advice
- Challenges and opportunities for scientific editing
- How to win IRB approval
- Writing from the Inside: In-house Scientific Research and Publications at the FDA

Update: JAMA Media Briefing on Critical Issues in U.S. Health Care

The November 13, 2013 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA) is a special theme issue devoted to critical issues in U.S. healthcare. The National Press Club recently invited AMWA-MAC members to a media briefing devoted to this topic. Following are a few highlights of the briefing for those who were not able to attend.

In his opening remarks, Howard Bauchner, M.D., Editor-in-Chief of JAMA, outlined the complex challenges faced by physicians and public health experts. These include: rising health care costs, single service reimbursement systems, a lack of care process models, growing populations of patients living with chronic illness, and strategies for reducing the health care costs associated with aging.

Hamilton Moses III, M.D., described the relationship between health care costs and GDP. He noted that patients have become disempowered by the consolidation of health care.

Ezekiel J. Emanuel, M.D., outlined steps the U.S. healthcare system must take in order to "fix" the delivery and efficacy of health care over the coming decade. One of the key changes he called for is an increase in "high-touch" disease management for chronic conditions.

Joanne Lynn, MD, pointed out that while the number of elderly people in the U.S. will double by 2030, the number of available unpaid caregivers is expected to fall. Dr. Lynn outlined steps that could redress this imbalance between available medical care and lack of long-term services and supports for the elderly.

To learn more, go to <http://jama.jamanetwork.com/journal.aspx>. Scroll down to "Critical Issues in U.S. Healthcare." Registering for the "JAMA Reader" enables access to the entire issue. For more information about the briefing, contact sarah@markelcommunications.com



Bethesda Regional Networking Event

A rousing good time was had by all at the networking event on November 14th in Bethesda. The folks who drove in from outlying areas, namely Baltimore and Arlington, get extra credit for attending! After dinner and introductions, those who had attended the national AMWA conference in Columbus shared their impressions and experiences from the conference. We also shared our aspirations for ourselves (career change, increasing business, working less/working more) and for our organization (more agile ways to communicate with each other online, more ways to connect and learn). Attendees got a

sneak peek at the program for the upcoming chapter conference scheduled for March 14, 2014. The group was a nice mix of new and long-time members whose collective experience comprised scientific editing, scientific research, academia, project management, veterinary medicine, laboratory medicine, and, of course, various types of writing: web content, patient information, newsletters, and technical and regulatory documents. What an interesting, diverse group of people and what a great way to spend a pleasant evening. "Death by PowerPoint" is our new favorite buzz phrase (you had to be there). Hope you will join us next time!

Meet the New Chapter Officers

A huge thank you goes out to June Baldwin, Fran Daniels, Jill Roberts, and Christie Rogers for their time as chapter officers. Their tenures have come to an end and the positions have been filled by the following:



Sarah Markel (LinkedIn Coordinator) is a freelance medical writer based in Alexandria, Virginia. She writes for consumer magazines, the federal government and several hospital systems. Her specialties include behavioral health, teen suicide prevention and veteran's health issues. Sarah is excited to be the LinkedIn coordinator and she looks forward to helping build an online meeting place for our chapter (please see the last page of the newsletter). Learn more about Sarah by visiting her Web site at www.markelcommunications.com.



Tracey Robison (Treasurer) enjoys the challenges and rewards of medical communication. She is a veterinarian by training and previously practiced small animal medicine in the mid-Atlantic region before joining the AMWA in 2012. Since receiving her AMWA Essential Skills Certificate in Medical Editing and Writing, she has focused on biomedical research publication and works as a freelance editor.

Tracy Warren (Chapter Conference Coordinator) works as a Technical Writer at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and was previously an Associate Researcher at the Department of Energy's Oak Ridge National Laboratory. She has more than 15 years' experience writing and editing science and technical documents. Tracy has an MS in biomedical engineering and an MS in biopsychology.

Vita Washington (Bethesda Regional Coordinator) has extensive expertise in project management, scientific writing, editing and development of evidenced-based medical research guidelines for profit and non-profit organizations. Her experience with scientific writing and healthcare project management has been quite rewarding, and she aspires to become a certified medical writer in the very near future.



Nicole Van Hoey (Northern Virginia Regional Coordinator) has been an independent science writer/editor for nearly 10 years, specializing in educational writing for consumers, students, and health professionals and editing manuscripts for trade and academic publication. Before working an entirely freelance schedule, Nicole served as a technical writer and managing editor with a contractor for National Library of Medicine's Clinical Information Services. She currently supports large-volume market access research in a staff position as senior writer with Evidera.

If you have an interest in volunteering with the chapter, please contact Cherie Dewar at Cherie.writer@gmail.com.

Save the Date...

Casual or business casual dress is appropriate for these regional AMWA-MAC events.

Northern VA – December 12th

Who: AMWA-MAC members

When: Thursday, December 12, 2013

Time: 11:30am-1:30 pm

Why: Let's meet for a casual pre-holiday coffee break to network and plan some 2014 events in our area.

Where: M.E. Swing Coffee Co.

501 East Monroe Ave.

Alexandria, VA, 22301. 703-370-5050

Transportation/parking: Nearest Transit Station is Braddock Rd Metrorail (Blue, Yellow); street parking

No RSVP needed.

Questions? Contact Northern VA Regional Coordinator Nicole Van Hoey at 703-283-5022 or

nicole_vanhoey@comcast.net

Frederick – January 23rd

A very special regional networking event is planned for Frederick, Maryland. Along with discussing the recent AMWA Annual Conference, we are lucky to bring in word-of-mouth marketing guru Juli Monroe. See details below, mark your calendars, and join other medical writers for an evening of fun learning, networking, and business development! Whether you have a job or are a freelancer, this event is for you and will increase your effectiveness.

Who: AMWA-MAC members and all others interested in medical writing

What: Frederick Maryland Networking and Educational Meeting "Word of Mouth Marketing Made Simple"

When: Thursday, January 23, 2014

Time: 6:00 pm

Why: Network, learn, get to know fellow medical writers, and have some good food

Where: Mimi's Café, 5120 Buckeystown Pike, Ballenger Creek, MD 21704, (301) 228-2633.

<http://www.mimiscafe.com/>

RSVP and Contact: Regional Coordinator Michelle Eby Michelle.Eby@fda.hhs.gov

Does the thought of networking make you uncomfortable? Do you get an uncomfortable feeling in the pit of your stomach when someone talks about the newest social media platform? What about LinkedIn? Do I need a website?

If any of this sounds familiar, then worry no longer. Join us Thursday, January 23, 2014 for a regional AMWA-MAC chapter dinner when networking guru and life coach Juli Monroe gives us her pearls of wisdom.

Her talk will cover:

1. Defining your target market in clear, concise terms
2. Creating realistic word of mouth marketing goals
3. Deciding on which word of mouth channels (in-person and/or social media) are right for you and your business
4. Does a website make sense for your business?
5. Linking LinkedIn to both your in-person and online networking activities
6. Developing a comprehensive action plan

Juli has more than eight years of networking and sales experience helping small business owners grow their business through effective networking and word of mouth marketing. Her approach to life and business revolves around building relationships, both in person and online. She uses Twitter, Facebook, and other online platforms to maintain the relationships she makes in-person and to find new friends she's yet to meet "in real life."

She is excited to have published a book entitled, *The Enthusiastic Networker* (available from Amazon and Barnes and Noble), which helps readers find and build those relationships to support them forever. It also helps people find their unique networking presence and voice.

Upcoming National AMWA Conferences

➤ October 8-11, 2014 ♦ Memphis, Tennessee / September 30-October 3, 2015 ♦ San Antonio, Texas

Reducing Reliance on PowerPoint Slides

At the national conference, Eric Bergman, author of *5 Steps to Conquer 'Death by PowerPoint,'* presented an open session that stood the concept of PowerPoint presentations on its head when he pointed out that audience members do not have the cognitive ability to simultaneously read slides and listen to a speaker.

To demonstrate this, Mr. Bergman showed the audience a Coca-Cola commercial that included several screen images, a voice sound over, and intermittent messages along the bottom of the screen. With so much going on at once, it was difficult to catch everything. Mr. Bergman then played the commercial once with only audio and once with only images. From this, the audience realized that they learned something new in each format because it was easier to absorb one input at a time. In another demonstration, Mr. Bergman conducted a conversation with an audience member while the audience member first looked at the projector's screen, and then while the two made eye contact. The audience member acknowledged that he was more engaged in the conversation when he made eye contact, exemplifying that, when audience members are looking at a screen, they are less inclined to listen to what the speaker is saying.

This open session was eye opening and revealed that, most of the time, slides should be removed from a presentation for true communication to take place. Mr. Bergman suggested that PowerPoint slides be sent out for review before a meeting so that they can be discussed during the meeting, not actively viewed. Mr. Bergman mentioned that Amazon and LinkedIn run their meetings this way.

For Mr. Bergman's free workbook about this topic, *Present with Ease*, see http://www.fivestepstoconquer.com/workbook_final.pdf and his website at <http://www.fivestepstoconquer.com/>.

Join MAC's LinkedIn Group

Hello AMWA-MAC members,

My name is Sarah Markel. I am the new LinkedIn coordinator for the AMWA Mid Atlantic Chapter Subgroup. I met quite a few of you in Columbus. In the coming months, I hope to get to know the rest of you online and in person at some of our local chapter networking events.

In the meantime, I would like to extend a warm invitation to those of you who are not yet members of the AMWA Mid-Atlantic Chapter LinkedIn subgroup. Unlike the national group, our chapter sub-group is open only to AMWA members. Comments and discussions are private. That means we can discuss issues relevant to medical communications without getting bogged down by messages (and spam!) from people and organizations outside our field.

We are hoping to use the LinkedIn subgroup to create an online meeting place where chapter members can network, share ideas for making our jobs easier, occasionally blow off steam and, most importantly, build community. (Maybe even find jobs! Stay tuned!)

In order to do that, we need your participation. If you are not already a member of our subgroup, here is how to join:

1. Go to <http://www.linkedin.com/groups/AMWA-MidAtlantic-Chapter-3789712/about>.
2. Click the button that says "join."
3. Within 48 hours you should receive a link via email allowing you access to the group.

You can also find the subgroup by scrolling through the list of subgroups on the right hand column of the AMWA LinkedIn group's main page.

If you have ideas for the types of content you would like to see in the discussions, please send an email to sarah@markelcommunications.com. I will forward them to the board for consideration.

See you on LinkedIn!

Thanks,

Sarah Markel

AMWA-MAC LinkedIn Moderator