
NEWSLETTER



Affiliated to the American Medical Writers Association

In this issue:

Spring-1998

The Editor's Red Pencil

Keith Veitch page 2

Message from AMWA

Art Gertel page 3

Comments from the Outgoing President

Barry Drees page 4

Impressions of AMWA, Boston

Catherine Murphy page 6

58th AMWA Conference, Vancouver

..... page 7

EMWA Web site - new address

Marian Hodges page 8

The Editor's Red Pencil

All things must come to an end, and so it comes to pass that this is the last time I will be writing this part of the Newsletter, as I pass the poisoned chalice of the Editorship on to the next incumbent who will be appointed at this year's conference in Madrid. One thing is for certain, being editor is certainly a stimulant for the creative juices. It has to be or there would not be a Newsletter. A recurring theme of my scribblings over the last two years has been an ardent appeal for more material from the membership. It has always amazed me that an organisation composed of people who make their living from writing, often unacknowledged, are not eager to apply their skills to contribute to their own newsletter, and even be openly seen as the author. Perhaps that is where the problem lies, in that we have become so used to being in the background that we do not want to expose ourselves in the public arena.

This attitude does not bode well for the future of EMWA as an independent organisation, newly free from our American affiliate, if it indicates that there is only a hard-core of active members who will participate. I hope I am wrong, for we will only stagnate in the absence of fresh contributions from the "silent majority". At the last count there were 90 members expected at Madrid. My appeal is to all of those members to add their own contribution, however small, however against the "party-line" it may appear. A little bit of controversy to stimulate debate will enhance rather than detract, and it will give my successor something to write about.

Our great friend Art Gertel, who as indicated in his piece on page 3, has been an integral part of EMWA since its inception, has recently become President of AMWA. Over the years Art has provided great support and friendship to EMWA, both in his assistance with our development of affiliate status, and through his greatly appreciated courses on Project Management at EMWA conferences. It is comforting to know that we have such a friend "at court" as we start to build ourselves into an International organisation as suggested by Barry Drees on page 5. Please ensure that this is accomplished with as many voices as possible by speaking up now.

Keith Veitch

e-mail: veitch@sbbio.com (preferred)
KeithVeitch@compuserve.com

THE FUTURE IS GLOBAL

As I assume the presidency of the AMWA, it is with a great allegiance to the global profession. As some of you veterans of EMWA may know, I have been a proponent of a worldwide affiliation of professional medical communicators since some informal gatherings and discussions at the AMWA Annual Conference in Los Angeles in 1990. In Toronto in 1991 I proposed to the Executive Committee of AMWA that it officially sanction an attempt to address the needs of non-North American members. At EMWA's inaugural meeting in Brussels in 1992 there were 32 attendees and I was there as a representative of AMWA, to present the case for joining forces. In April, 1993 EMWA became an official Chapter of AMWA. Since then, I've been working very closely with a succession of EMWA Officers to forge a working relationship that will provide the greatest benefit to all of us. Although this is still a work in progress, we continue to evolve toward what I hope to be a truly global professional association.

In keeping with this historical motif, the watchwords of my administration are **Integration and Globalization**.

The former, **Integration**, can be achieved by ensuring that the activities of all of our administrative functions are co-ordinated to achieve maximum efficiency. In a professional organization where so much is accomplished through volunteerism, it is essential that we create a synergy of effort among the interconnected areas of oversight. Look at the administrative offices: Annual Conference, Awards, Chapters, Development, Education, Membership, Publications, Public Relations, Sections, and Workshops. It should be obvious that there is a great deal of interconnectivity. We must exploit this overlap by clearly communicating commonality (how's that for alliteration?) and co-ordinating our efforts.

The latter, **Globalization**, refers not just to the service of the world-wide medical communications community, but to the forging of links with our sister professional organisations. Through **Affiliation, Association, and Mutual Recognition**, we can provide valuable programs to their members, just as their organisations can provide valuable services to ours. There is no reason why we can not exist in symbiotic fashion. We have already embarked on the creation of Affiliate Status with EMWA, many of whose members attended the AMWA Annual Conference in Boston. We have created an alliance based on common history and a strong desire to ensure that Medical Communicators have the opportunity to learn and to develop professionally, without limitation by native language or geography. I anticipate nothing less than success.

I look forward to a continued collaboration as we, together, build the global community. I eagerly await the upcoming EMWA Meeting in Madrid.

Viva Cadiz!

Art Gertel, AMWA President

FROM THE OUTGOING EMWA PRESIDENT

Greetings fellow members,

Since this is the last of these messages you'll be getting from me (I'll be handing over the presidency to our current Vice-president, Gerold Wilson, at our annual conference meeting in Madrid), I think I'll take the opportunity to update everyone on the current status of the various projects I described in the first of these messages back in June. Let's make this a "State of the organisation" message since it would seem to be the season for that sort of thing.

The most important news is that we are in excellent financial health. There was concern among some of the members of the executive committee that things might be a little difficult in our first year of independence until we learned what exactly we could afford, but it looks like the expenses of setting up an EMWA headquarters has been neatly balanced by the additional funds we're keeping from the membership dues as a consequence of our independence from AMWA. This together with the fact that we have corporate sponsorship for both the Madrid and Copenhagen conferences means that we can all breathe a lot easier and enjoy the fine service provided by our headquarters. For example, wasn't it nice to receive written confirmation of your conference registration this year (something we'd never been able to organise in the past)? If any of you are interested in the precise financial details, they'll be presented at the meeting in Madrid and they'll also appear in the next issue of the newsletter.

The other big news and major goal I set out to achieve this year is our legal status. We now have an offer from Association Management Enterprises to get us set up and registered as a European, non-profit organisation which will be presented and voted on, together with our constitution (which we need for the new legal status) in Madrid. Several people have mentioned to me that with all voting being done at the yearly conference, it does tend to mean that those who can't attend the conference for whatever reason are essentially voiceless. I am sympathetic to this problem, there's nothing worse for an association than to be controlled by small, exclusive elite; but EMWA simply doesn't have the resources at present to conduct comprehensive membership-wide voting. I would very much like to see this change in the near future as our headquarters becomes more established and we can perhaps increase our staff, but for now, the best

we can offer is the promise of the Executive Committee to address any and all of the concerns which you communicate to us as well as to keep you informed via the newsletter and website. We did, of course, include the request for nominations for the office of Vice-president in our recent mailing about the new constitution - no one responded.

We are moving forward with the master's program in medical writing, but since Tim Perrot is the one in charge of this project I'm going to let (insist?) that he tell you all about it in the newsletter or the website in the near future. The corporate sponsorship program is also moving ahead, albeit, somewhat more slowly than I had hoped, but the fact that we have generous corporate sponsorship for this year and next year has reduced the urgency of this problem. Nevertheless, we have the basics of our plan and we're now talking to people with some experience in these matters to decide how best to approach potential sponsors. I expect the system will be up and running long before we will next need it in the year 2000.

And finally, I am happy to announce that EMWA is now on three continents as we will be honoured by the presence of some of our newest members from Singapore (we also have members in South Africa). I hope that those of you going to Madrid will join me in giving a warm EMWA welcome to members from what is really our farthest frontier. So, anyone for a name change to the International Medical Writer's Association?

As I noted at the beginning of this message, this marks the end of my term as president of EMWA. Therefore I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for voting for me and entrusting me with the reins of the organisation during this most difficult period. I have to say it's been an honour and a privilege, and most importantly, a whole lot of fun. I'd also like to thank all the people on the Executive Committee and all the other members who've worked with me during the year for helping to make it so successful and so enjoyable. And lastly, I'd like to thank all the members. Remember, it's all the great people in our membership that make EMWA the dynamic, worthwhile and enjoyable organisation it is.

Barry Drees

Barry.Drees@hmrag.com

AMWA CONFERENCE, 1997

The 57th Annual Conference of the American Medical Writers Association was held in Boston, Massachusetts, November 12-15, 1997. There were 815 conference registrants, the largest number of members to participate in any annual conference. This number could have changed by one. My first introduction to AMWA was the shock of discovering that the hotel had no record of my reservation or deposit. To cap it all they even refused my credit card. If it had not been for a Lillian Sablack, who by some miracle managed to straighten out the missing hotel reservation and for a certain Keith Veitch who happened to be standing by with a credit card (Ed. It was a company card - no worries!). The majority of the delegates were from the U.S. with the exception of approximately 40 coming from Europe and some from Canada and Asia.

The conference was well organized. Congratulations and thanks to the enthusiastic and highly energetic conference committee members headed by conference administrator Barbara C. Good. The committee was supported by John B. Ferguson, then President, the members of the executive committee, Lillian Sablack, and the AMWA Headquarters' staff located in Bethesda, MD.

For a first time participant this was indeed a great experience. The conference offered an opportunity in which to meet and talk with writers from other organizations and from many different professional backgrounds, to share ideas and to learn from each other. The format varied from round table breakfast discussions to formal gatherings. There was a mix of some 70 different workshops for professional development, ranging from basic communication skills to specific applications. A variety of 15 plenary sessions were offered concurrently with the workshops in the form of paper presentations and forums. In addition, we had the opportunity to listen to outstanding speakers. One such speaker was Dr. A. Fauci, a leader in the field of AIDS research at the NIAID in Bethesda and another was Dr. M. Angell, the current editor of the NEJM. We were also offered the opportunity to participate in informal tours, receptions, dinners, and meetings.

A friendly and welcoming atmosphere prevailed throughout the 4 days. The members' reception which was held on the first evening, provided a lasting memory, especially for first time attendees. As part of the welcoming process, the "old timers" were on the look out for the new attendees and made sure that a little red heart was stuck on his/her name

tag. At the end of the evening, it was easy to identify the initiated first time attendees behind their decorative name tags. This was great fun and it created a special camaraderie within the group.

This was an outstanding conference, full of great experiences, such as trekking through the snow and slush with the European contingent, to participation in many outstanding workshops, informal networking sessions and discussions. It was a terrific venue for learning and sharing of new ideas. I left this conference with an increased appreciation for the profession and for the quality and intelligence of its members (Ed. and a new set of golf clubs!).

Catherine Murphy

The AMWA 58th Annual Conference, Vancouver, October 28-31, 1998.

The 1998 AMWA conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency, Vancouver, Canada in October. As European members usually receive their registration notification later than their North American counterparts we advise you to contact AMWA directly to be put on the mailing list to be informed of the registration details for this conference as soon as possible. This is especially important if you wish to register for AMWA Curriculum Courses, as the more popular ones are frequently fully booked before you even have a chance to apply.

American Medical Writers Association

9650 Rockville Pike

Bethesda MD 20814-3998

USA

Phone: 301-493-0003

Fax: 301-493-6384

E-mail: amwa@amwa.org

Web: <http://www.amwa.org>

WHAT HAVE YOU HEARD?

If you have attended or will attend any meetings or conferences where subjects of potential interest to our members are discussed, become an "EMWA roving reporter" and let us know about it. Any aspect of current or future pharmaceutical legislation or practice, licensing or reporting - send it in. This especially applies to AMWA 1998 at Vancouver.

Advertisement

Foundation Course in Medical Writing

PPD Pharmaco run training courses in medical writing designed to provide a comprehensive training for those new to medical writing within the pharmaceutical industry, or wanting to improve and extend their writing skills.

The next course will be held on September 9-11, 1998 at the **Jarvis Hotel, London**. Cost of the course and materials is £750. Staying at the Jarvis Hotel is extra, but there is a specially negotiated rate of £92 per night.

This three-day course aims to provide a thorough understanding of the role of the medical writer in clinical research and drug development. It teaches the skills necessary for writers to prepare documents for clinical trials and marketing authorisations from protocol to final study report to expert report. It also provides introductions to Regulatory Affairs, biostatistics, Pharmacokinetics and Pharmacodynamics, and Quality Assurance for medical writers. For more details contact:

Sue Wilmshurst, Maxwell training co-ordinator

Tel. (44) 1703 724807 Fax. (44) 1703 230513

Surf's still coming in at the EMWA World Wide Web site!

The magnificent EMWA Home page on the World Wide Web, expertly prepared by Marian Hodges has a new address. If you want to know more of the latest news in EMWA., or work available point your browser at <http://www.emwa.org/> or contact Marian by e-mail (marian@molesoft.demon.co.uk).