

# Passing the torch: The sequel

**Phillip Leventhal**  
Outgoing Editor-in-Chief

For the last 8 years, I have been serving as Editor-in-Chief of *Medical Writing*. I feel that it's time to pass the torch to a new person with new energy and fresh ideas. As I wrote in 2012, "This is yet another step in the evolution of the journal."<sup>1</sup> But first a little about the journal's evolution so far.

*Medical Writing* began life in 1993 as a newsletter produced by EMWA's predecessor, the European chapter of the American Medical Writers Association.<sup>2</sup> With EMWA's establishment as an independent association, the newsletter continued under the appropriate name of *The EMWA Newsletter*, produced by Keith Veitch. Five years later, in 1998, under the direction of Barry Drees, the newsletter expanded to become a "real" journal, *The Write Stuff*, a play on the title of the book and film about the beginning of the US space programme. Barry passed the responsibility for running the journal on to Elise Langdon-Neuner in 2014, as he said, "with great satisfaction."<sup>1</sup> For 8 years, Elise almost single-handedly produced the journal as it grew, which became a rather large job. Just before passing the torch to me in 2012, to reduce the load, she



arranged to move production of the journal to a publishing house and give it the more professional name *Medical Writing*.<sup>3</sup>

After about 2 years, it became clear that we were off course and that I and the rest of EMWA would be better off bringing the journal back in-house. This was tricky, but we managed to take back control and begin producing the kind of journal that our members wanted. To reduce the work, we added Victoria White as Managing Editor, expanded the Editorial Board, and created

a very successful Guest Editor programme. Thanks to the work of these people and our many contributors, we now have a high-quality, attractive, practically useful, and professional journal.

Now that the journal is operating smoothly, it is with "great satisfaction" that I pass it on to a new Editor-in-Chief, Raquel Billiones. Raquel has already brought her energy and ideas to the journal as a frequent contributor and Guest Editor, as well as to EMWA as a workshop leader, Executive Committee member, and Special Interest Group chair. I am pleased that she has volunteered and look forward to the next step in the

evolution of *Medical Writing*.

## References

1. Leventhal P. Passing the torch. *Med Writ*. 2012;21:265.
2. Drees B. The history of the Write Stuff: 10 years of bringing European medical writers together. *The Write Stuff* 2008;17:408.
3. About the Medical Writing journal. *Med Writ*. 2012;21:3.

# Filling big shoes

**Raquel Billiones**  
Incoming Editor-in-Chief



I have small feet. With shoe size 35, I will never be able to fill the shoes of Elise or Phil. But I am comfortable in my own shoes, I love running and walking in them, always with a direction and a goal in mind.

The EMWA journal and I have a long history that goes back to the time when I got my little foot in the door of medical writing. Somehow Elise saw the potential in a fledgling medical writer, published my first article in *The Write Stuff* in 2007,<sup>1</sup> and encouraged me to write more. I became a convert. Several articles later, I moved on to co-edit (together with Sam, Anu, and Kat) the Out on Our Own section.

When Elise passed the torch to Phil in 2012, he also inherited me as an associate editor and together we travelled the "man(ey)ic" times of the journal. Phil prevailed.

Like Elise, Phil was always open to new ideas. When I presented him the Getting Your Foot in the Door section in 2016, he told me to run with it and I did. Since then I have (co) guest edited two issues of the journal, *Careers in Medical*

*Writing* in March 2019 and *The Data Economy* in June 2020.

In the last 8 years, Phil has transformed *Medical Writing* into the world-class journal that it is now. So when he popped the question, it was easy for me to say "yes". Not least because of the amazing editorial board and production team who will be supporting me.

Yes, I humbly and gladly accept the torch and the responsibility of keeping the flame of the journal burning. I am no Olympian, but I will run with it while my knees can still hold me up and take it to the next level, whatever that may be. And Elise and Phil will always be my inspiration, the pacesetters and the tailwind that will push me forward.

And take note – this a relay. Someday, I will be passing the torch to someone else. When that day comes, remember – I have small feet.

## References

1. Billiones R. From academia to medical writing – and staying there. *The Write Stuff*. 2007;16:177.