



CAROLINA CONNECTIONS

Carolinas Chapter—American Medical Writers Association

Summer 2005

Freelancing Panel Back By Popular Demand Next Quarterly Meeting, Thursday, August 18

The AMWA Carolina’s Chapter will again be featuring a freelance panel discussion at its August 18 meeting, which will be held at 6 p.m. on Thursday, August 18 at Hock Plaza (directions below).

This year’s panel will feature four speakers with different perspectives on freelancing. Tara Hun-Dorris will speak about her experiences making the decision to go freelance and what she has learned during her first full year as a freelancer. Veteran freelance writer Tracey Fine will discuss the challenges of freelancing she has encountered over the years. Experienced freelancer and project manager Joanna Moore will discuss strategies for running a freelance business. Angie Miller of MedThink Communications, which frequently hires freelancers, will discuss what companies look for when they hire writers and editors.

The meeting will be held at Hock Plaza, 2424 Erwin Road in Durham. Hock Plaza is on the corner of Douglas and Erwin roads, next to the VA Medical Center. For free parking, enter the parking garage from Erwin Road. The free visitor parking spaces are located near the entrance. If these spaces are filled, go to the gate, press the buzzer, and tell the security guard you are here for the AMWA meeting. You will receive a ticket and will not be charged for parking.

To get to the auditorium, exit the garage and enter the plaza via the main entrance. This is located just outside the garage on the VA Medical Center side of the building. Sign in at the security desk and take the elevator to the ground floor. Turn left out of the elevator; then turn left at the first hallway. Follow the hallway to where the wall curves, and the auditorium will be on your right.

Call for 2005-2006 Officers

The AMWA Carolinas Chapter executive committee issued a call for nominations for 2005-2006 officers. The offices to be filled are:

- President-elect
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Newsletter editor
- Program Chair

Jennifer King, the current president-elect, will serve as president for 2005-2006.

Ballots will be sent to chapter members in August, and results will be announced at the August 18 chapter meeting, on the Web site, and in the next issue of *Carolina Connections*.

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President's Message

BY JENNY WALKER

It began with a bang and maintained its momentum until the very end. I am, of course, referring to the AMWA Carolinas Spring 2005 Conference held at the Friday Center in Chapel Hill on May 6.

On the evening of May 5, we were treated to a pre-conference lecture on writing from the reader's perspective by George Gopen, professor of the practice of rhetoric at Duke University (see article on page 4). It was not only a very well-received presentation, but the event gave conference attendees, chapter members, and conference presenters a chance to visit before the busy conference the following day.

For the conference itself, we had 46 registrants. In addition to our chapter members from North and South Carolina, we had attendees from Florida, Georgia, New Jersey, Virginia, and West Virginia. Our workshop presenters were Susan Aiello, from Ohio; Bart Harvey, from Toronto; and Nancy Taylor, from South Carolina. A description of each workshop follows.

Essentials of Copyediting (EW), Presented by Susan Aiello

BY RICHARD MORRILL

I immensely enjoyed the *Essentials of Copyediting* workshop taught by Susan Aiello at the spring conference. Who would have thought that sitting through 3 hours of copyediting, of all things, would be so much fun? Everything fell into place that day. The facilities at the Friday Center were excellent. Susan had assigned homework that seemed to have a purpose to it. She distributed handouts listing useful proofreading and editing symbols, and she kept all 25 workshop participants involved through a combination of lecture *cum* PowerPoint slides and discussion. The only thing we didn't learn about copyediting was how much we dare charge our clients per hour. Actually, Susan said that she usually submits bids with a total job cost estimate. Then, depending upon how long she takes to complete the job, she has a good or not-so-good hourly wage.

Basic Grammar I (G), Presented by Nancy D. Taylor

BY JENNIFER BRIDGERS

As an English major and avid reader, I expected Nancy Taylor's basic grammar class to be a wonderful refresher. I soon realized how much I had to learn! Nancy led us through the parts of speech and their relationships in sentences, including verbals and clauses. She also provided good reference handouts that I have used several times since the course. Rather than say something "sounds right," I now can examine the granular level to justify sentence construction. The course was valuable, and I am glad that I attended it.

Advanced Data Presentation: Tables, Graphs, and Charts (ADV), Presented by Bart Harvey

BY JENNY WALKER

It was my first advanced AMWA workshop, and I sort of felt like Dorothy when she said, "Toto—I've a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore." If all advanced AMWA workshops are like Advanced Data Presentation: Tables, Graphs, and Charts, then they live up to their name—they truly do cover advanced material and presume some familiarity with the topic being presented. Bart Harvey, of the University of Toronto, taught the very informative advanced data presentation class. The homework assignment introduced us to the different types of graphs, tables, and charts and gave us practice in constructing them. We went over the homework in class and enjoyed lively discussion of the merits (and demerits) of the different ways of displaying data. After this and Mr. Harvey's class presentation, we came away with knowledge of how to compose a table or graph from raw data or data in paragraph form, the basic parts of a table or graph, the functions of tables and graphs, the strengths and weaknesses of different types of tables and graphs, and the appropriate data-presentation style to use to illustrate and enhance your writing.

See "President's Message" continued on page 3

Punctuation for Clarity and Style (G), Presented by Nancy D. Taylor

BY DEBRA MARION

I had the pleasure of attending Nancy Dew Taylor's workshop, *Punctuation for Clarity and Style*. Ms. Taylor's workshop offered an excellent combination of formal instruction and stimulating class participation in the use of stops, intra-sentence marks, and term and word marks. The class spurred a lively discussion about hyphenation of "low-molecular-weight heparin." (You can see where I stand on the matter.) Although no consensus was reached, all attendees had strong opinions. The seven accomplished editors with whom I have the pleasure of working are split on whether to hyphenate LMWH (one way to skirt the dilemma). One editor likes to hyphenate the term because it is then counted as two words, a handy tool when shortening a manuscript to meet journal specifications.

Did you know...

AMWA has a Freelance Directory accessible via the AMWA Web site, www.amwa.org.

It lists AMWA members who offer their writing and editing services on a contract basis. The directory is searchable by keyword, last name of

About the AMWA Carolinas Chapter

Virginia A. Walker, MLS, CCRP • president • jenny.walker@duke.edu • 919-668-5929

Jennifer King, PhD • president elect • jking@augusteditorial.com • 919-598-3182

Carol Bader, MS • secretary • cbader@rhoworld.com • 919-595-6333

Sam Uhl • treasurer • samuhl@mindspring.com • 919-244-6339

Diane Feldman • list serve manager • dmfeldman@mindspring.com • 919-403-3357

Pat French • webmaster • pat.french@duke.edu • 919-668-5940

Tara Hun-Dorris, MMC, ELS • newsletter editor • tarahun@nc.rr.com • 919-562-1194

Good Structure Leads to Good Writing

George Gopen Conveys Message to Spring Conference Attendees

BY PAT FRENCH

Carolinas Chapter AMWA members received a rare treat the night before the spring conference.

On May 5, George Gopen, professor of the practice of rhetoric and senior lecturer,

Editor's Note

AMWA Changes to Meet Member Demands

BY TARA HUN-DORRIS

AMWA is constantly evolving to best meet the needs of its members, at the national and local levels. We are excited to announce two new programs, one at the chapter level and the other at the national level. Please review the information here and online about the professional development certificate (PDC) and the new networking event schedule for the Carolinas Chapter conference. We hope that both events will serve to get members more involved in professional development activities that will enhance their professional skills and networks of resources.

Professional Development Certificate Available from National Office

In that spirit, AMWA announces the establishment of a PDC, retroactive to January 1, 2004.

The PDC can be earned every two years and is intended as a method of keeping members, particularly those who have earned certificates, active in the organization. Members receive a PDC when they earn 50 points by completing various activities in a two-year period and submitting a \$45 application fee. Activities and points are as follows. Please see www.amwa.org for more details.

The following activities are worth 5 points:

- Attending an AMWA chapter meeting or annual conference
- Chairing or serving on a national AMWA committee, subcommittee, or board of directors
- Attending a 3-hour non-credit workshop
- Reviewing a new core, advanced, or non-credit workshop
- Leading a roundtable at the annual conference
- Attending a non-AMWA conference in scientific communication

The following activities are worth 10 points:

- Serving as a chapter officer for one year
- Coordinating annual conference work-

shops, open sessions, or roundtables

- Publishing an article or book chapter of ≥ 1000 words in the *AMWA Journal* or another peer-reviewed journal
- Co-leading an AMWA workshop or speaking in an open session at a national or chapter conference

The following activities are worth 15 points:

- Leading an AMWA workshop at a national or chapter conference
- Completing a relevant university-level course

The following activity is worth 20 points:

- Teaching a relevant university-level course

The following activity is worth 25 points:

- Publishing a book ≥ 100 pages

AMWA Carolinas Changes Networking Plan to Fit More Schedules

BY JENNY WALKER

Beginning in the fall, the AMWA Carolinas Chapter will try a new networking plan. We have been meeting monthly for a networking lunch. Since not everyone is able to get away at lunchtime, we are going to start having alternating lunches and dinners. Every other month we will meet for dinner instead of lunch and will have a specified topic for discussion. The other months we will continue to have our "free-for-all" lunches, a less-structured event where people can just meet and talk about anything that interests them.

Now—we need to have volunteers to help lead the discussions for the dinners. If you have a topic that you're knowledgeable in, I'm sure others would like to discuss it with you. So step right up and volunteer to lead a discussion.

If there's a topic you'd like to learn more about, please suggest it, and your executive committee will attempt to find someone to lead a discussion on it.

Coming to the lunches (and soon dinners) is an excellent way to meet your colleagues and exchange ideas. Please come—you won't regret it.