

Calendar of Events

Saturday, February 1, 2003

Making the Most of Medline
National Library of Medicine
Bethesda, MD (details p. 6)

Saturday, June 7, 2003

Mid-Atlantic Chapter
Conference
(Registration opens March
29—details p. 1)



September 18-20, 2003

AMWA Annual Conference, Miami, FL

Do We Have Your Current Email Address?

To reduce mailing expenses, the chapter would like to communicate with members by email as much as possible. If



you are not currently on the chapter's email list, please contact our email list coordinator, Michael Altus, MichBALT@aol.com,

and ask him to add you to the list. Also, if your email address has changed, please avoid bounced messages by sending Michael your new address. Thank you!

Mark Your Calendar for the 2003 Mid-Atlantic Chapter Conference

Save the date: Saturday, June 7

The 2003 Mid-Atlantic Chapter conference will be bigger and better than ever! As a result of the impressive turnout for the past two years and comments from participants, the conference is being expanded from two workshops to four.

The 2003 conference will take place Saturday, June 7 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Linthicum, MD (near Baltimore Washington International Airport—www.embassysuites.com). Based on feedback from the email survey (thanks to all who participated), we have decided to offer the following workshops:

- ◆ Building a New Drug Application (instructor: Howard M. Smith)
- ◆ Sentence Structure and Patterns (instructor: Flo Witte, MA, ELS)
- ◆ Tables and Graphs (instructor: Howard M. Smith)
- ◆ Writing About Health and Medicine for Magazines (instructor: Jill M. Shuman)

In a change from previous years, the conference brochure and registration form will be available on the chapter Web site (www.amwa-midatlantic.org) in early March to help would-be attendees who need to obtain pre-approval from their employers before registering for the conference.

Registration begins March 29 and is open to both AMWA members and nonmembers on a first-come, first-served basis. Space is limited and we expect the workshops to fill quickly. If you are interested in attending one or more workshops, please don't delay in mailing your registration form and payment.

(continued on p. 3)



President's Message

I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday. Now that things have quieted down a bit, I'd like to take a moment to reflect on what being actively involved in our local AMWA chapter has meant to me—and what it could mean to you.

I've always heard that you get more out of any organization you belong to if you put more into it—and that certainly has been my experience with AMWA. Being a writer is essentially a solitary endeavor, which I enjoy very much. But how refreshing it can be to talk to other writers and find they have been grappling with similar issues and may even have come up with better solutions! Through my involvement in our chapter, I have gotten to know a number of other writers who have become both friends and colleagues, whom I can call upon when I'm stumped or just need someone else's input.

Now I'm inviting you to share in the largesse—get involved! If you aren't sure how much time you can offer, volunteer for a time-limited task. If your appetite is whetted for more commitment, consider running for a position on the chapter Board of Directors. We're recruiting candidates now for 2003-04. I guarantee that you will find your time well spent.

Please contact me with suggestions or questions about our chapter. I am really pleased to have the input (410-740-0086, sja25@cornell.edu).

– Susan J. Atlas, PhD
Mid-Atlantic Chapter President

Need Legal Advice? Get It at a Discount Through AMWA

The Washington, DC, law firm Graybill & English, LLC, specializing in literary, media, and entertainment law, offers Mid-Atlantic Chapter members a discounted legal services program. Areas of law in which the firm is experienced include:

- ◆ contract drafting, review, and negotiation
- ◆ book and magazine publishing
- ◆ Internet licensing
- ◆ copyright issues
- ◆ trademark registration and infringement
- ◆ libel and privacy
- ◆ Freedom of Information Act requests and litigation

Graybill & English also offers traditional legal services such as drawing up wills and trusts and administering estates. Mid-Atlantic Chapter members receive a discount off the firm's regular hourly rates for all legal services. In addition, the firm offers literary agency services (for both first-time and established writers of fiction and nonfiction) on a standard contingency basis.

You do not need to be located in or close to Washington, DC, to take advantage of these services—much of the firm's work is done by phone and fax.

For more information, or to discuss a legal question or a book project, please call Nina Graybill at 202-956-5131 or email her at ninagraybill@aol.com.

AMWA-MAC's Fall Event: Insight on Web Sites

Presenters Joan Cranmer and Merry Bruns teamed up for an interesting, fun, and interactive presentation, *Untangling the World Wide Web*, at Cadmus Professional Communications in Linthicum, MD, on Saturday, October 5, 2002. Joan and Merry spoke to a group of about 25 AMWA members about building user-friendly Web sites and writing copy for the Web.

Building a Web site

Joan Cranmer, CEO of Tempest Web Publications (www.TempestWeb.com), covered the fundamentals of constructing a Web site from domain name registration to testing and launching the site. She identified essential design tools and suggested specific design features. For example, she recommended incorporating multiple linking schemes and avoiding frames. She described desirable hosting features, such as 24/7 technical support, traffic analysis, and searchability.

When designing and developing content for a Web site, Joan said, think in terms of potential visitors' needs and expectations and organize and present your information accordingly. Many people who use the Web have disabilities, she noted. To optimize accessibility, use highly readable fonts and avoid features like flashing text and animation.

To learn more about Web site development, Joan recommended FreeSkills (www.freeskills.com), which provides free access to tutorials on topics ranging from content management to preparing Web pages for search engines. She suggested checking out Clear Ink's Palettman (www.palettman.com) for help selecting color schemes and www.coolhomepages.com for ideas on home page design.

Writing and editing for the Web

According to recent studies, most people scan Web site text rather than reading it from top to bottom, said Merry Bruns,

principal of ScienceSites Communications (www.sciencesitescom.com).

For this reason, it's important to structure Web content so visitors to a site can readily find the information they're looking for, she said. Strategies for writing good Web copy include writing as concisely as possible, using headings and bulleted lists to express important points, and placing white space around blocks of text. Also, include plenty of links.

Merry provided on-line examples of well designed and poorly designed Web sites and gave us exercises to help us understand key points such as developing audience awareness, writing concisely, and editing for clarity.

Merry and Joan addressed comments and questions throughout their presentations. Later, after a delicious lunch, participants returned to ask more questions. The discussions continued well beyond schedule, and it was time well spent.

Many thanks to Joan and Merry, and to event organizers Tamia Karpeles and Eleanor Mayfield, for this program. Thanks also to Cadmus Professional Communications for providing meeting facilities.

— *Eve Wilson, PhD, ELS*

Mark Your Calendar

(from p. 1)

Please note that early registration is *not* permitted; registration forms received before March 29 will be returned to the sender. Email reminders will be sent when the registration form is available and again when registration begins.

If you need a print copy of the conference program (via regular mail or fax), if you would like more information about the conference, or if you have special needs, please contact the conference coordinator, Jennifer Sizemore (jennifer.sizemore@worldnet.att.net; 301-916-5265).

Get Involved in Your AMWA-MAC Web Site!

Many thanks to Kirstie Saltsman, who developed the content outlines for archived issues of *The Quill* that appear on our chapter Web site (www.amwa-midatlantic.org). Many other Web projects remain unfilled – and *you* could be the one to fill them. Knowledge of Web design is *not* required – our pro bono Webmaster, John Wachter, will handle the technical stuff.

Please get in touch with Web site editor Tamia Karpeles (tamiak@comcast.net) if you're willing to take on any *one* of the following tasks:

Events

- ◆ Search out event information from other local organizations
- ◆ Act as event coordinator for your geographic area
- ◆ Regularly review event postings to make sure they're current

Chapter information (new section)

- ◆ Write brief copy describing the Mid-Atlantic Chapter
- ◆ Write (or borrow) bullet points listing the benefits of AMWA membership
- ◆ Set up a virtual meeting place on the site where members can exchange infor-

mation on developing regional chapter groups and coordinate local activities

Members-only area (new section)

- ◆ Develop a survey form we can use to query members about their optional listings in the online membership directory
- ◆ Write guidelines and act as the point person for a Member News page
- ◆ Create a page that will energize potential contributors to a Creative Forum

Freelance area (new section)

- ◆ Develop a survey form to query freelancers about listing their services in our freelance directory
- ◆ Create a guidelines page that will inspire members to contribute how-to articles and anecdotes about the freelance life

Links/resources (new section)

- ◆ Scour the Internet to collect the best resource links for MAC members
- ◆ Regularly test the links to make sure they're still live

– Tamia Karpeles, ELS

Volunteer Opportunity

The Mid-Atlantic Chapter seeks a volunteer to take over the task of writing letters of welcome to new chapter members. Many thanks to Gayle Scott, who has performed this important task for the past three years. To volunteer or learn more, please contact chapter president Susan Atlas.

AMWA Mid-Atlantic Chapter Needs You!

WANTED: Enthusiastic volunteers with energy and ideas for keeping our chapter active and responsive to our members' needs. If you've been thinking that it's time for *you* to get more involved, there's no better time: The Nominating Committee is now seeking candidates for chapter Board and committee positions for 2003-04. To learn more, please contact chapter president Susan J. Atlas (sja25@cornell.edu; 410-740-0086).

New Faces at AMWA HQ

The AMWA National Office is pleased to welcome two new staff members.

Shari L. Pfistner joined the AMWA staff in July 2002 as the marketing/meetings coordinator, a new position created last year. Shari brings to AMWA more than 20 years of marketing and customer service experience and 5 years of meeting planning experience.

Crystal L. Williams joined AMWA in June 2002 as the office administrative assistant. She works closely with the education and membership coordinators and also assists with bookkeeping. Crystal has more than 6 years of experience in office administration and customer relations.

AMWA headquarters is located at 40 West Gude Drive, Suite 101, Rockville, MD 20850 (phone 301-294-5303, fax 301-294-9006, www.amwa.org).

Who's Who at AMWA HQ

- ◆ Donna Munari, CAE, Executive Director: dmunari@amwa.org
- ◆ Norine Downs (Conference Registration/ Job Market/Freelance Directory): norine@amwa.org
- ◆ Jean Hillary (Accounting): jean@amwa.org
- ◆ Dane Russo (Education): dane@amwa.org
- ◆ Shari Pfistner, CIG (Meetings/Marketing/ AMWA Journal Advertising): spfistner@amwa.org
- ◆ Rob Saienni (Membership/Website): rob@amwa.org
- ◆ Crystal Williams (Administrative Assistant – Accounting/Education/Membership): cwilliams@amwa.org

Satellite Chapter Meets

The Southeast Virginia satellite chapter will meet in January in Williamsburg. The guest speaker will be Marilyn Wells, PhD, MPH, Assistant Professor of Health Education at Hampton University, who will discuss information technology. In addition to her faculty responsibilities, Dr. Wells has an active consulting practice in health communications, medical writing, and market research.

The date, time, and location of the meeting will be sent via email and posted at <http://www.amwa-midatlantic.org/>. If you have questions about this meeting or would like to be added to an email list to receive information about future activities of the Southeast Virginia satellite chapter, please contact Rachel Preston, rprx@yahoo.com.

– Rachel Preston, PharmD

Mid-Atlantic Chapter Board of Directors 2002-03

President		
Susan J. Atlas, PhD	410-740-0086	sja25@cornell.edu
President-Elect		
Tamia Karpeles, ELS	410-544-0216	tamiak@comcast.net
Treasurer		
Maryalice Ditzler	800-257-5529	ditzlerm@cadmus.com
Secretary		
Sharon Williams	301-651-1736	sharon.williams@verizon.net
Board Members		
Bruce B. Dan, MD	301-320-2122	drbbd@aol.com
Janice Deal, ELS	703-691-3090	jdeal@Ideal-Services.com
Susan Farrer, MA	301-588-6560	susanfarrer@erols.com
Cindy W. Hamilton, PharmD	757-481-2700	cindy@hamiltonhouseva.com
Immediate Past President		
Donna R. Savage, MEd, ELS	301-942-2447	Infingers@aol.com
Quill Editor		
Eleanor Mayfield, ELS, ELM Communications	301-681-8977	elmayfield@radix.net
Quill Design and Layout		
Jenifer F. Walker, MA, Cartref Communications	540-338-4120	editor@cartrefcomm.com

Coming Sooner than You Think: 2003 AMWA Annual Conference

It's not too soon to mark the date for the 2003 AMWA annual conference in your new calendar: September 18–20. Traditionally, the conference has taken place in late October. The reason for the change is that rooms at the conference hotel (Hotel Inter-Continental Miami) are less costly in September than in October or November, saving AMWA members \$31 per night.

Interested in getting involved in the annual conference? Don't wait to be asked. Look for information about volunteer opportunities in the *AMWA Journal*, on the Internet at <http://www.amwa.org/conference/conference.html>, and in the monthly mini-mailings from AMWA. (Conference-related materials will all be printed on orange paper, so they'll be hard to miss.)

– *Cindy W. Hamilton, PharmD*

Eleanor Mayfield
10227 Green Holly Terrace
Silver Spring, MD 20902

Making the Most of Medline

Join the Mid-Atlantic Chapter on Saturday, February 1, 2003, at the National Library of Medicine (NLM) in Bethesda for a workshop on getting the most from Medline and other NLM databases.

NLM staff will introduce us to the library's vast online resources and services and provide practical tips on using databases such as Medline and MedlinePlus. There'll be time for a brief tour of the library, followed by a catered lunch. To register for the event, go to the chapter Web site (www.amwa-midatlantic.org). The deadline for registration is January 25. Questions? Contact Tamia Karpeles (tamiak@comcast.net).

This event is a reprise of one of the most popular sessions at the 2002 AMWA annual conference in San Diego. For those of you who didn't make it to San Diego (or for those who did but missed this session), don't miss this opportunity!

