

# Quill

Spring 2004, Volume 10, Issue 1



## Calendar of Events

**Saturday, April 17, 2004**

Mid-Atlantic Chapter spring meeting  
Bethesda, MD  
(details on this page)

**Saturday, June 19, 2004**

Mid-Atlantic Chapter Conference  
Alexandria, VA  
(details on p. 3)



**October 21-23, 2004**

AMWA Annual Conference  
St. Louis, MO

## 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](mailto: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. Thanks!

## Conversational Immunology— The Abridged Version

*Save the date: Saturday, April 17, 2004*

If you don't know an antigen from an antibody and are totally bemused by the difference between a lymphocyte and a cytokine, this talk is for you! Immunologist (and former AMWA-MAC Board member) Alex Politis, PhD, will present an abridged version of his noncredit workshop, "Conversational Immunology," which he has presented at several AMWA annual conferences.

Dr. Politis is Chief of the Infectious Diseases and Microbiology Integrated Review Group at the Center for Scientific Review, National Institutes of Health (NIH). Before joining NIH, he was assistant editor of the *Journal of Immunology*, a scientist at Human Genome Sciences, Inc., and a postdoctoral fellow at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences. He earned his PhD in cell biology at the University of Maryland, College Park.

The meeting will take place at the Bethesda Regional Services Center, 4805 Edgemoor Lane, Bethesda, MD, at the corner of Old Georgetown Road and across the street from the Bethesda Metro station. Underground parking (free on weekends) is available. For directions, visit [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/govtmpl.asp?url=/content/RSC/bcc/directions.asp](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/govtmpl.asp?url=/content/RSC/bcc/directions.asp).

For further details and information about how to register for this event, visit the Mid-Atlantic Chapter's Web site, [www.amwa-midatlantic.org](http://www.amwa-midatlantic.org). Sign up today to beat the April 12 deadline for registration!

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## President's Message: MAC Needs You!



When you've worked in biomedical communications for a while, you learn that the easiest way to confront a formidable project is to break it down into small, manageable tasks. If you've contracted to edit a 600-page textbook (which comes to you single-spaced, in unrelenting 9-point type), it may be easiest not to think about the number of words and drafts that lie ahead, but to approach it one chapter at a time, one task at a time.

Taken together, the Mid-Atlantic Chapter looks a lot like a formidable editing project. If MAC is to maintain its energy and purpose, a myriad of essential positions must be fulfilled through the efforts of generous volunteers. Many of these positions appear daunting at first glance—like editing the *Quill*, as Eleanor Mayfield has done for the last several years, or organizing a chapter conference, as Lori Alexander is doing this year, or coordinating Web site content, as I did until recently. It's a challenge to find people in our chapter who are willing to shoulder such tasks on top of work, family life, and other commitments.

It's easier if you consider these projects in terms of their parts. The chapter Web site, for example, is a collection of pages grouped into sections: Events, What's New, Contact Us, Chapter Conference. All I need to do is find people who can fill in the blanks: Could someone who's registered for the next chapter event write a 200-word recap? Do we have a date and venue yet for this year's chapter conference? Are these contact listings up to date? Can we call someone with the DC Science Writers group to get on the mailing list for their meetings?

Each of these items involves a fairly minor task: a snippet of writing that can be done in Word and passed along to John Wachter, our ÜberWebmaster, for posting. Yet, taken together, these items keep our Web site alive. You *don't* need technical skills (such as knowledge of HTML) to write for the Web site.

The only formidable thing about it is that

there are a *lot* of these snippets—and we haven't even begun to establish our Members-Only section or Freelance Resources or Information for New Members.

Today, when I think about the Web site, I envision a core group of coordinators, each keeping an eye on one section of the site. Pretend you're one of them: You scan your section regularly to make sure everything's up to date; you get in touch with chapter members who might contribute to that section. Before you know it, there's something vital happening online and it's got your name on it (as the coordinator, the person to call with questions or information).

It's something you can put on your CV. And if you find at some point you no longer have time to take care of it—maybe you want to move on to other things—you can find someone else to take over. It doesn't have to be forever.

I offer all this as an analogy. Working with the Web site is just one way you can become part of the force that maintains the Mid-Atlantic Chapter. Another is to serve as a Board member, which puts you in a position to influence the chapter's direction for the good. A bit more of a challenge is the President-Elect position, which is a fabulous training ground in the esoteric ways of event-planning—skills that will serve you in ways you can't imagine, from launching a new business to coordinating a family reunion.

And if you're perennially overcommitted already, you can tackle a modest task: volunteer as registrar for a forthcoming chapter event or call eight MAC members in your area and get together for an informal networking breakfast.

Please help us make this happen. Contact me, or any other member of the Board (our contact information is on p. 5). Let us know you're interested. Tell us what you want to do and/or let us know how much time you have to spare. MAC needs you now!

—Tamia Karpeles, ELS

## 2004 Mid-Atlantic Chapter Conference Set

The Mid-Atlantic Chapter will offer two AMWA core curriculum workshops at its annual educational conference on Saturday, June 19, 2004, at the headquarters of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) in Alexandria, Virginia. The workshops are

◆ **Essentials of Copyediting**, led by Susan Aiello, DVM, ELS.

◆ **Business Aspects of a Freelance Career**, led by Cindy Hamilton, PharmD, ELS, and Mary Royer, ELS.

Each workshop fulfills requirements toward the AMWA Core Curriculum certificate.

Essentials of Copyediting focuses on the basic skills needed to revise scientific and medical papers to ensure clarity, accuracy, and consistency. Participants will work on exercises that will enable them to identify typical copy

problems and compare various editorial choices.

Business Aspects of a Freelance Career focuses on such issues as setting up a business, marketing services, finding clients, setting fees, preparing contracts, keeping records, and dealing with taxes.

Lunch will be provided during the break between the two workshops. During this break, an internationally recognized leader in oncology will discuss recent advances in cancer research.

A brochure providing more information about the workshops and details about registration will be sent to all chapter members in March. If you have questions about the chapter conference, please send an email to Lori Alexander at [alexandl@asco.org](mailto:alexandl@asco.org).

—Lori Alexander, MTPW, ELS

## Chapter Scholarship Program Accepting Applications

Applications are now being accepted for the Mid-Atlantic Chapter Scholarship Program, which will award a \$500 scholarship for the 2004-2005 academic year to the top applicant and a one-year complimentary AMWA membership to the first runner-up.

Brochures announcing the scholarship have been sent to colleges and universities in Maryland, Washington, DC, and Virginia that offer undergraduate programs in technical or medical writing, journalism, or health sciences. The guidelines and application are on the chapter's website ([www.amwa-midatlantic.org](http://www.amwa-midatlantic.org)). The deadline for applications is Friday, May 7, 2004.

The scholarship program is designed not only to help support students enrolled in academic programs leading to a career in medical writing but also to draw more students into AMWA by heightening awareness of the organization and its opportunities for professional development.

Chapter members are encouraged to help promote the program by getting the word out to students they know or to colleges or universities in their area. To be eligible for the program, a student must be a sophomore or junior, have an interest in medical writing, and have an overall GPA of at least 3.0. In addition to the application, the student must submit two letters of recommendation from professors and a 500-word essay on his or her medical or technical writing career plans or goals.

The Scholarship Committee needs volunteers to review applications and select the scholarship recipient and runner-up. To volunteer for the committee, ask questions about the program, or suggest colleges or universities that should be notified about the scholarship program, please send an email to Lori Alexander at [alexandl@asco.org](mailto:alexandl@asco.org).

—Lori Alexander, MTPW, ELS

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## Nine Win AMWA Curriculum Certificates

Nine Mid-Atlantic Chapter members were awarded AMWA curriculum certificates in 2003. Congratulations to all of you!

### Core Curriculum

#### *Editing/Writing:*

Tatum K. Birdsall (American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Washington, DC)  
Denise H. Buckley (American Society of Clinical Oncology, Alexandria, VA)  
Lisa L. Dwyer, MPH (Advance PCS)  
Mary F. Mitchell (American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Washington, DC)

#### *Multidisciplinary:*

Lori F. Alexander, MTPW, ELS (American Society of Clinical Oncology, Alexandria, VA)  
Sabrah M. n'haRaven (Freelance)

#### *Pharmaceutical:*

Gretchen M. Longcore (MedImmune, Inc., Gaithersburg, MD)  
Susan M. Tamborini, MS, MBA (Decision Biotech, Washington, DC)

### Advanced Curriculum

Sandra Bryant, ELS (*American Journal of Epidemiology*, Baltimore, MD)

## E-Quill: The Votes Are In

In the fall 2003 issue of the *Quill*, readers were asked to weigh in on whether this newsletter should go all-electronic—that is, would you prefer the *Quill* to arrive in your email box instead of your “snail-mail” box?

The response wasn't exactly overwhelming: Six people weighed in, with five voting in favor of an all-electronic newsletter. (That's six out of a chapter membership of about 325, by the way.)

Although disappointed that a larger number of chapter members didn't choose to express their opinions on this issue, the Board of Directors has decided to move in the direction of expanding the chapter Web site as the principal vehicle for communication within the chapter.

Watch your email box for more information—and be sure to check the chapter Web site, [www.amwa-midatlantic.org](http://www.amwa-midatlantic.org), regularly for news and updates!

## Self-Study Workshop Available

AMWA's first self-study workshop is now available. *Basic Grammar and Usage for Biomedical Communicators* was developed by Flo Witte, MA, ELS, one of AMWA's most experienced workshop leaders (and current AMWA president).

The self-study workshop consists of a workbook and CD-ROM. Purchasers can earn credit toward an AMWA certificate by successfully completing the final examination included in the workbook. The workshop is designed for professionals at all levels of experience and will be valuable as a reference guide after the course has been completed.

AMWA members may purchase the self-study workshop for \$155; the cost to nonmembers is \$250. Orders may be placed on AMWA's Web site ([www.amwa.org](http://www.amwa.org)); go to Products/Services and click on Self-Study Workshops).

A second self-study workshop (*Punctuation for Clarity and Style*) is in development, with an anticipated release date of October 2004.



## 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.

A significant part of the firm's work involves book agency and subsidiary rights placement. The firm's four literary agents represent both first-time and established writers of fiction and nonfiction. Literary agency services are provided on the standard contingency basis.

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

For more information about the discounted legal services program or to discuss a legal question or a book project, please call Nina Graybill at 202-861-0106.

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### Mid-Atlantic Chapter Board of Directors 2003-04

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## AMWA-MAC Southeast Satellite

## 2004 Annual Conference Set for St. Louis

Did you know that the Mid-Atlantic Chapter has a "satellite" in southeast Virginia? Members who live in the Richmond-Williamsburg-Virginia Beach area hold local meetings periodically throughout the year.

Information about meetings of the "southeast satellite" is sent by email and is also posted on the chapter Web site ([www.amwa-midatlantic.org](http://www.amwa-midatlantic.org)). If you have questions or would like to be added to the email list to be informed about future activities of the southeast Virginia satellite chapter, please contact Rachel Preston, [rprx@yahoo.com](mailto:rprx@yahoo.com).

St. Louis, Missouri, will host the 2004 AMWA annual conference, taking place from October 21-23. As always, the conference will consist of three jam-packed days of learning and socializing with fellow AMWA members.

Information about the conference will be posted on AMWA's Web site ([www.amwa.org](http://www.amwa.org); go to Conferences; click on 2004 Annual Conference) as it becomes available. The conference registration brochure will be mailed to all AMWA members in July, and will also be posted on the Web site as a PDF file.

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