

Sixth Annual Freelance Workshop: April 12, 2008

Mark Saturday, April 12, 2008, on your calendar for AMWA-DVC's Sixth Annual Freelance Workshop. The full-day workshop will include panel presentations, Q&A, a networking luncheon, and 2 sessions of roundtables.

We will be returning to Normandy Farm in Blue Bell, Pennsylvania (www.normandyfarm.com), the site of last year's freelance workshop. Normandy Farm combines state-of-the-art conference facilities with old-world charm; it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

2008 Freelance Workshop Content

Content is under development. We're currently exploring presentations on:

- an employer's perspective on working with freelancers;
- types of freelance opportunities;
- the business of freelance writing;
- writing skills.

Roundtables will include some of last year's most popular topics (eg, marketing your business, writing journal articles, and writing effective patient education materials), plus new topics.

Look for the workshop brochure in early February on the DVC Web site (www.amwa-dvc.org).

Volunteers Wanted

Lori De Milto is chairing the 2008 Freelance Workshop. We're looking for a few more volunteers to help out. If you're interested, contact Lori at loriwriter@comcast.net.

Did You Know . . .

- AMWA has a retirement benefit for long-term members. Sorry, not a pension, but free membership for those with 10 years of membership prior to age 70. Contact the national office for details.
- *Harrison's Online*, the easily searchable electronic version of the authoritative reference *Harrison's Internal Medicine, 16th Edition*, is now free to members. Find it at the Members Only page at www.amwa.org.
- PDFs of *Delawriter* and the *AMWA Journal* are available online. You can read past issues of the *AMWA Journal* at the Members Only page at www.amwa.org. *Delawriter* appears on our chapter Web site, www.amwa-dvc.org, and includes all issues since January 2000.
- AMWA members get discounts of 20% to 50% on useful (perhaps

See Did You Know on 4.

DVC Volunteer Corner

AMWA-DVC President-Elect Barbara Rinehart, MS, was recently invited to serve as liaison to the national task force on promotions. She has now established an AMWA-DVC promotions committee. Members include Wendy Gloffke, PhD, Elizabeth Kuhn, and Maria Vinal. This new committee will begin outlining goals and assessing the

See DVC Volunteer on 6.

Princeton Conference

On Saturday, May 17, 2008, the 12th Annual Princeton Conference, an intensive 1-day program, will be held at the Wyndham Princeton Forrester Hotel & Conference Center, Plainsboro, New Jersey.

Inside

Highlights from the AMWA Board of Directors Meeting, Fall 2007	2
AMWA-DVC Meets with Robert Wood Johnson Foundation	3
Felice Frankel: The Phenomenon of Nature	5



Highlights from the AMWA Board of Directors Meeting, Fall 2007

By Marie-Therese Zenner

Approximately 101 DVC members attended AMWA's 67th Annual Conference, *A Legacy of Leadership*, which was held October 11–13, 2007 in Atlanta. As the largest and most active chapter of AMWA, DVC's presence was clearly felt, whether at formal board meetings or the informal chapter Greet & Go, where DVC members mingled.

The conference attracted 992 registrants and the 3-day program was filled from morning till night with:

- 95 workshops
- 43 open sessions
- 72 breakfast roundtables
- 9 poster presentations
- 34 coffee and dessert klatches
- 19 exhibitor booths

DVC delegates attended 3 meetings. The board of directors met Tuesday afternoon before the start of the conference, under outgoing President Jim Cozzarin, ELS. After the board meeting, chapter delegates met to discuss chapter-specific matters; and the full board met a second time briefly on Saturday morning, under the new national president, Sue Hudson. Highlights from the meeting discussions are outlined below.

Education

The Atlanta conference served to launch a new certificate program in science fundamentals: the open session introducing the program was standing-room only. Three new credit workshops and 4 out of 12 of the noncredit workshops were science courses. As of September 2007, 50 AMWA members had enrolled in the science fundamentals certificate

program. Further details are available in the spring 2007 issue of *AMWA Journal* and on the national Web site, amwa.org.

Chapter Delegate Conference Calls

The year 2007 saw the launch of cross-chapter communications in between biannual board meetings, in addition to the chapter listserv. The first hour-long optional conference call was held on April 24, 2007, and addressed recruiting new officers and volunteers. The second call was held on July 9 to discuss chapter budgeting and finance. Future calls may include the topic of Web expenses, which vary greatly across chapters.

Other Chapter Meeting News

Other highlights include plans to publicize and perhaps expand the use of the chapter travel fund and the plan to complete the update to the online chapter manual.

Membership News

AMWA membership reached more than 5,600 in September 2007, reflecting a 12% net growth in 3 years. Fifty-two people joined or rejoined to purchase the self-study module, *Punctuation for Clarity and Style*, released at the 2006 annual conference; a total of 263 modules were sold in the first year. The 2007 salary survey results were provided in an open session at the conference and are now available online to members only at www.amwa.org.

Endowment Fund

The Endowment Fund was established in 2004 and passed its target of \$85,000. As of August 1, 2007, the fund had

grown to \$103,500. A task force identified a long list of potential projects. On October 10, 2007, the board voted to investigate costs for indexing and providing online access to *Dear Edie* columns.

AMWA Web and Internet Technology (WIT) Committee

AMWA offered its first Webinar in 2007 and 410 members attended; the Webinar "What's New in the 10th Edition of the *AMA Manual of Style*" continues to be available online and is free to members. An online index for the *AMWA Journal* is underway; a Chapters listserv for communication among all officers was re-launched; the Freelance Networking listserv is up and running and an announcement to this effect will be made shortly; AMWA staff is currently working to update incorrect e-mail addresses on the membership database.

DVC Member Participation

We extend our thanks to the many DVC members who chaired sessions and led workshops, as well as to Scott Metsger, PhD, who served on the executive committee as awards administrator. A full listing of volunteers will appear in the summer 2008 issue.

Upcoming Annual Meetings

- 2008: October 23–25, Louisville, KY, *Setting the Pace*
- 2009: October 22–24, Dallas
- 2010: October, Milwaukee
- 2011: October, Jacksonville, FL

Marie-Therese Zenner, PhD, is president of AMWA-DVC and a chapter delegate. She is Principal of Grants/Proposal Writing @ Zenner BioMed, Haverford, PA.

AMWA-DVC Meets with Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

By Elizabeth A Manning

On October 30, 2007, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) hosted a special panel presentation for AMWA-DVC entitled “A Conversation with Leaders in Public Health and Health Care” in Princeton, New Jersey. RWJF is the largest domestic private foundation devoted exclusively to health and health care.

The presentation focused on the role of RWJF in the areas of health care, insurance coverage, and other public health issues such as childhood obesity. Advice for medical communicators and resources available at RWJF were also discussed. The panel members included John R Lumpkin, MD, MPH, Senior VP, Director Health Care Group; James S Marks, MD, MPH, Senior VP, Director Health Group; and David J Morse, MA, VP, Communications. The panel moderator was Adam M Coyne, Director of Public Affairs.

Current Health Care Problems

The meeting began with Dr Lumpkin discussing some current health care problems and how RWJF is trying to address them. “The US spends approximately \$2 trillion per year (about 16% of the gross domestic product) on health care, and yet approximately 47 million people (including 9 million children) in the US do not have health insurance,” he said.¹ To address this, RWJF provides funding and research, in addition to working with state-level initiatives, to try to increase access to health care. RWJF also focuses on ways to ensure that high-quality health care

is accessible to all, regardless of race, income, education level, and other demographics. The foundation sponsors a variety of programs to improve the quality of care and the public reporting of health care issues. Additionally, RWJF invests in human capital through scholars and fellows programs that provide financial support to students and faculty in the health care industry. This is especially important now due to a shortage of nurses and nursing faculty. Presently, RWJF is exploring strategies to help increase nursing faculty salaries and expedite the processes for nurses obtaining advanced degrees and faculty positions.

Childhood Obesity

Dr Marks, who followed next, described the childhood obesity epidemic as an example of a significant and current public health issue. The prevalence of childhood obesity has increased more than three-fold over the past 30 years, accompanied by significant increases in type 2 diabetes cases in children and adolescents.² “We may now be at the first generation where children will be sicker and die younger than their parents,” he said. This epidemic has grown so quickly, it appears to be due less to genetics and more to cultural aspects. For example, the growing serving sizes and other changes in the American diet may be affecting the overall health of our country’s youth. Inactivity within daily lifestyles may be another factor. Surprisingly, fewer than 10% of schools within the US have daily mandatory physical education programs.³ RWJF is a partner in a program entitled “Alliance for a Healthier Generation,” which provides schools with standards for nutrition, wellness programs, and exercise. Changes implemented through this program led to a 41% reduction in the total beverage calories shipped to schools in 2006–

2007 compared to 2004.⁴ Hopefully, changing the content of food available to students will help them to make healthier food choices.

The Role of Medical Communication

The final panel member, David Morse, spoke about the role of medical communication and public health. Morse paraphrased Richard Wirthlin, the pollster for President Ronald Reagan, who stated that people are informed rationally, but are motivated to act emotionally. This example highlights the 2 key roles of medical communicators. First, medical writers have a responsibility to present and explain data in a clear and concise manner in order to educate and inform the public and policy makers. Second, in order to persuade and promote change, medical writers need to know and understand their audience and tailor messages accordingly.

Tips for medical communicators:

- avoid the excessive use of adverbs and adjectives;
- eliminate jargon and other “insider terms” that may be misunderstood or vague, or that may have dual meanings; and
- avoid elliptical or indirect writing, which limits accountability and responsibility.

For more information, Morse referenced the writings of Tony Proscio, whose works include the humorously titled books *In Other Words: A Plea for Plain Speaking in Foundations*; *Bad Words for Good: How Foundations Garble Their Message and Lose Their Audience*; and *When Words Fail: How the Public Interest Becomes Neither Public nor Interesting*.

The panel discussion concluded with Morse describing the types of information available from RWJF.

RWJF from 3

An anthology is published annually that summarizes results from the many sponsored programs. If interested, AMWA members may find more information regarding these writing opportunities on the RWJF Web site, www.rwjf.org, including press releases, journal articles, policy information, and reports describing results from grant-funded research. The anthologies and grant results are often prepared by outside consultants who have undergone training by RWJF.

In summary, this session was an opportunity to learn more about RWJF and its agenda for public health. Current health care problems—such as escalating costs and the uninsured—are already hot political and social issues. Moreover, obesity is quickly beginning to rival tobacco use as the major preventable cause of disease and death in our country. In a culture where many underestimate the risks of unhealthy behavior and would rather take a pill than make lifestyle adjustments, the role of medical communicators becomes increasingly important in providing information and influencing both the public and the policy makers to implement changes towards healthier lifestyles.

References

1. DeNavas-Walt C, Proctor BD, Lee CH. *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States*: 2005. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office; 2006: 60-231. US Census Bureau Current Population Reports.
2. National Center for Health Statistics Web site. Prevalence of overweight among children and adolescents: United States, 1999–2002. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/pubs/pubd/hestats/overwght99.htm>. Accessed November 5, 2007.

3. Lee S, Burgeson C, Fulton J, Spain C. Physical education and physical activity: results from the School Health Policies and Programs Study 2006. *J Sch Health*. 2007 Oct;77(8):435-463.

4. American Beverage Association. School Beverage Guidelines Progress Report 2006–2007. September 2007.

Elizabeth A Manning, PhD, is a Clinical Research Specialist at Akros Pharma Inc in Princeton, NJ, and participates in regulatory writing and other clinical trial-related activities.

- The World Association of Medical Editors (WAME) has a wonderful resources page for editors and writers. Check it out at www.wame.org/resources/resources-for-medical-editors. WAME seeks to foster international cooperation among editors of peer-reviewed medical journals. Don't confuse WAME with EMWA, the European Medical Writers Association, which supports education and professional training of medical writers and editors in Europe. For more information on EMWA, see www.emwa.org.
- You can submit information to national's Chapter Corner in the *AMWA Journal*. This section provides brief reports of chapter events and activities, details on upcoming events, and new chapter officers. The Corner section also includes information on members promotions, new positions, awards, and publications. Contact Tracey Fine, MS, ELS, Chapter Corner Editor at finemedpubs@earthlink.net.

Did You Know from 1

even essential) tools such as the latest *AMA Manual of Style*, bibliographic database software, and full-text article delivery. Visit the Members Only page at www.amwa.org and you can save enough to pay for your membership.

Delawriter

Published quarterly by the American Medical Writers Association—Delaware Valley Chapter (www.amwa-dvc.org)

Executive Editor: Marie-Therese Zenner

Co-editors: Alan Struthers and Kate DeBevois, Delawriter@amwa-dvc.org

Production: Peggy Stansfield

Editorial Consultants: Elisha Darville and Elizabeth Manning

Changes of address/information:

E-mail: ronnie@amwa.org

Mail: American Medical Writers Association

40 West Gude Drive, Suite 101

Rockville, MD 20850-1192

Phone: 301-294-5303

Felice Frankel: The Phenomenon of Nature

By Marie-Therese Zenner

If you google the name “Felice Frankel,” you will come across 25,400 Web sites, among them some of the most prestigious science sites. Across dozens of these sites, unusual combinations of words abound: artist, scientist, photographer, innovative computing, materials science, technology, design, data-intensive science, information visualization, image maker, beautiful image, complex ideas, engineering, physics, basic principles, graphics, nanotechnology, magnetism, the surface tension of water droplets, cognition, perceptual psychology, visualizing multi-valued data, image and meaning, wonderful patterns, amazingly perfect, natural sciences.

Felice Frankel is a passionate leader and an international advocate for a multidisciplinary visual profession that renders science visible. Some commentators have noted that Frankel began as a landscape photographer; few have seen her landscapes use the same principles of design and reveal the same insights into nature as her science photographs. Her body of work suggests that complex 3-D natural phenomena at any scale can share a visual logic.

Since the development of the Internet, visual culture continues to gain in prominence, in part because visual language lends itself so readily to the expression of complex matter at a single glance, much as medieval heraldic symbolism was used to instantly communicate an individual’s identity and status.

Often visual language involves a code. Top researchers learn that one secret to understanding any code is to know the right questions to ask. Studying multivariate data requires knowledge and experience, and often

the best way to acquire that is through interdisciplinary studies.

What does all this have to do with medicine?

Scientific disciplines, in general, are focusing in ever greater detail on the physical properties of nature’s building blocks. In medicine, many pharmaceutical companies have turned to fundamental scientific research—for instance, ribonucleic acid interference (RNAi)—for their next major discoveries. Frankel’s work aims to clarify the visual interplay of matter at the smallest scale; in the best case scenario, her photo’s visual logic demonstrates the physical properties in play. Her photos are meant to be a stimulus for rethinking the science at every stage, from exploration through peer-to-peer communication, or for communicating the science to someone seeing it for the first time.

Frankel has received international recognition for her work, perhaps most notably in the US through ongoing support from the National Science Foundation, and most recently abroad through the prestigious Lennart Nilsson 2007 Award. Still, reviewers and sometimes even Frankel herself are distracted by inappropriate questions such as the art-versus-science debate. It seems more appropriate to think in terms of the basic concepts of visual logic.

Visual logic is intertwined with the physical laws of nature: their vocabularies overlap considerably through concepts such as symmetry, contrast (of tone, temperature, scale, texture, and form), self-assembly versus variability, distinct separateness versus flow or mixing.

Visual reality is not separate from material reality. The reality of color

is just as crucial to human survival as it is to communicating science concepts. If the entire world were white or if it were pitch black without any light, we would have no depth perception or grasp of detail. And so, Frankel routinely colors scanning electron photographs (always captured in black and white) to reveal the inherent physical properties at play. The occasional argument about scientific deception is self-defeating: the methodology behind each of her photographs is clearly explained.

We were fortunate that Frankel came from Stockholm to the Delaware Valley (Haverford College, Haverford, PA) in the first half of November. You can find further information about her work at these Web sites:

Podcast: New York Academy of Sciences (posted January 23, 2006). www.nyas.org/snc/update.asp?UpdateID=38

Webcast: National Science Foundation (taped October 28, 2002). www.tvworldwide.com/globe_show/booz_allen/021028

Best mini-biographies: <http://mmp.planetary.org/artis/franf/franf70.htm>; www.apple.com/science/profiles/frankel/index2.html; www.businessinnovationfactory.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=169&Itemid=109

For the many exciting projects underway, see Frankel’s home page: <http://iic.harvard.edu/people/felicef>

Marie-Therese Zenner, PhD, Principal of Grants/Proposal Writing @ Zenner BioMed, Haverford, PA, also began with one foot in science and one in art; a former researcher, she co-founded an international society for interdisciplinary study of science, technology, and art upon entering graduate school in 1984.



AMWA-DVC
c/o Alan Struthers
623 Chicago Boulevard
Sea Girt, NJ 08750

News and notes from the American Medical Writers Association— Delaware Valley Chapter (www.amwa-dvc.org)

6

DVC Volunteer from 1

needs for promoting AMWA-DVC in the greater Delaware Valley in conjunction with the national task force's promotional activities. Please send any ideas to Barbara Rinehart at brinehart@comcast.net.

Please welcome Jennifer Maybin, MA, in her new role as volunteer coordinator, replacing Marge Thorell, PhD; Kate DeBevois in her new role as co-editor of the *Delawriter*, replacing Darlene Grzegorski, MS; and Elizabeth A Manning, PhD, in her new role as editorial consultant for the *Delawriter*.

The chapter thanks Marge, Darlene, and former DVC President Debbie Early for their important contributions to AMWA-DVC.

Please contact jennifer.maybin@patmedia.net if you would like to volunteer in any capacity.

2007–2008 Executive Committee and Key Volunteers

President
Marie-Therese Zenner, PhD
President@amwa-dvc.org

President-Elect
Barbara Rinehart, MS
PresidentElect@amwa-dvc.org

Immediate Past President
PastPresident@amwa-dvc.org

Secretary
Linda Felcone, MA
Secretary@amwa-dvc.org

Treasurer
Michael G Pappas, MS, PhD
Treasurer@amwa-dvc.org

Publicity Chair
Shirley Bonnem
Publicity@amwa-dvc.org

Membership Chair
Laurie Spotila, PhD
Membership@amwa-dvc.org

Web site Chair
Suzanne Klein
Webchair@amwa-dvc.org

Program Chair
Janet Manfre, RD
Programs@amwa-dvc.org

New Jersey Program Chair
Kira Belkin, PhD
NJPrograms@amwa-dvc.org

Newsletter Chair
Peggy Stansfield
Delawriter@amwa-dvc.org

Education and Princeton
Conference Chair
Brian Bass
Princeton@amwa-dvc.org

Freelance Workshop Chair
Lori De Milto, MJ
Freelance@amwa-dvc.org

Volunteer Coordinator
Jennifer Maybin, MA
Volunteer@amwa-dvc.org

Delegates
**Marie-Therese Zenner, PhD and
Barbara Rinehart, MS**
President@amwa-dvc.org and
PresidentElect@amwa-dvc.org