

The Annual Conference

As always, AMWA's 2001 Annual Conference (October 24-27 in Norfolk, VA) provided a wealth of learning and networking opportunities. Delaware Valley Chapter members filled four tables at the Chapter Social.

Some highlights:

Salary survey: The online 2001 salary survey was submitted for review to AMWA's Executive Committee during the conference. Survey results will be published in the *AMWA Journal*.

Distance learning: A needs assessment survey was drafted to determine what AMWA members would like to see in terms of distance learning. Distance learning is very complicated and expensive to develop, but AMWA will explore possibilities.

Opportunities to get involved: The *AMWA Journal* seeks articles by members and Member News. See any issue of the journal for guidelines.

Advanced workshops: AMWA is trying to add more advanced workshops and seeks ideas. Contact Flo White or Marianne Mallia.

by Lori De Milto and Kevin Courtney, M.D.
Both are freelance medical writers living in South Jersey.

AMWA Conferences

The AMWA-DVC Princeton Conference is our local annual training conference in which credits can be earned towards AMWA certification. Brian Bass has run this conference each Spring since its inception in 1997. More information about the 2002 conference in the next *Delawriter*.

If you need your AMWA certification and cannot make it to Princeton or to the AMWA Annual Conference next October, you have other chances to take core curriculum and elective courses. For a full list of AMWA conferences, look up the AMWA.org website. *The Editor*

Ad rates: \$1 per word up to 150 words. Inquire about rates for >150 words.

DELAWRITER

News of the Delaware Valley Chapter

Winter 2001-2002



Chapter Dinner Meetings

March 12, 2002

**Dr. Jeffrey L. Vaught, Ph.D.,
President of Research and Development at Cephalon**

will talk to us about Cephalon drugs. For information: contact Chuck Sutherland: 215-453-9084; skimmer@mail3.enter.net.

December 4, 2001

**Bruce Grant, Ph.D.,
Publisher of ePharm5-daily**

talked to us about how we can use the Internet for communicating medical and pharmaceutical information. The next *Delawriter* will include a summary of his talk.

In this issue:

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Lori De Milto Writes:
Combinatorial chemistry

AMWA certification courses

Our Edie

The AMWA office in Rockville sent me a list of AMWA Fellows which I reproduced in the last *Delawriter*. An AMWA-DVC board member said that did not look right to her, I should check. I asked Rockville again and they insisted the list was right! We went to press, the World Trade Towers were horrifically pulverized and the post office took more than two weeks to deliver your newsletter. At the September dinner meeting, I was still hearing from members who had not received theirs.

Edie Schwager, my favorite member, had received hers. She was waving it at me in the foyer of the Radisson Hotel while Chuck Sutherland was collecting money and giving attendees name tags. Edie told me she was a Fellow and AMWA should have known it. I appropriately blushed and sweated into my jacket and apologized. As a diversion, I pulled the proofs of my book out of my bag to show her. She glanced, no, microglanced, at the book, gave me a look that would wither a rubber plant, and said I spelled "Acknowledgment" wrong.

I spelled it "Acknowledgement", which, according to my Webster's is acceptable if you are British or if you are archaic American. That just about describes me, but I will spell it Edie's way in the next edition. Highlights from Edie's bio inside. She is our AMWA-DVC living treasure, so listen to her. She knows more than you do. *The Editor*

THE FALLOUT FROM THE
MURDERS OF SEPTEMBER 11 AND
THE SUBSEQUENT MILITARY
ACTIONS AFFECTED US ALL
GLOBALLY, NATIONALLY,
LOCALLY, AND PERSONALLY.

TO ANYONE WHO HAS BEEN
BEREAVED: WE WILL BE
SORROWING FOR DECADES.

Medical Writers sought by

Aerotek for contract jobs around Philadelphia. If you have experience with IND/NDA submission please contact Rich Goldbeck at 610-254-5423.

News of the Delaware Valley Chapter
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Delaware Valley Biotech Companies

Our interest and reporting of local biotech companies continues in this issue.

John J. Baldwin, Ph.D., from Pharmacopeia talked to a packed room on September 25 in a hotel close to an empty Philadelphia International Airport. His talk is summarized opposite.

Our March dinner meeting speaker is Jeffry L. Vaught, Ph.D., Senior Vice President and President, Research and Development Division of Cephalon, a publicly traded company that started in West Chester in 1987. Of all start-up biotech companies in the Delaware Valley, Cephalon has made the most rapid transition to a pharmaceutical company. Some of our AMWA members are past and present employees of Cephalon.

Dr. Vaught joined Cephalon in 1991. Since 1997 he has been President of Research and Development. He is currently also Adjunct Associate Professor of Pharmacology at Temple Medical School in the Department of Pharmacology. His resume lists more than 94 journal articles, including one which appeared in *Epilepsia* with your editor as a co-author. Dr. Vaught's formal education includes a Baccalaureate in Chemistry and German from Indiana State University and a Doctorate from the University of Minnesota in Pharmacology and Biochemistry. *The Editor.*

News

AMWA member Kenneth R. Kensey, M.D., was awarded a lifetime achievement award (Eastern Technology Council's Legend Award) for his successes in starting two Biotech companies. The first, the Kensey-Nash Corporation, he started with engineer John Nash after he had asked Mr. Nash to build a rotating scourer to clean out arterial plaque. That device, the Kensey Catheter, formed the basis of the Kensey-Nash Corporation, which went public in 1996. The second company, Rheologics, Inc, Dr. Kensey formed in 1998 entirely to educate us all into the need to have thinner blood which flows smoothly. This basic physiological principle resulted in over 70 international patents issued to Rheologics and Dr. Kensey. Dr. Kensey had two books published during 2001, both about blood viscosity. *The Editor.*

Information for new members:

- 1 AMWA is non-profit
- 2 78 educational workshops were given at the Norfolk Annual Conference
- 3 Volunteers teach all of the AMWA courses
- 4 Post any questions on the bulletin board at amwa.org for staff or other members to answer

Kevin Courtney M.D.

Who are you?

Send in your picture and your news and we'll feature you on this page. Even if you are far too shy to have anything published about yourself, we'd love to hear from you anyway. *The Editor.*

The *Delawriter* is the newsletter of the Delaware Valley Chapter of the American Medical Writers Association (AMWA)

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Articles, haiku, news, advertising: submit to the Editor. Ideas about dinner meeting speakers: contact the President.

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Our Edie

lists Edith as her first name on her resume, but no-one in AMWA-DVC calls her that. Her e-mail address is dearedie@compuserve.com, and that is how we all know her. She has been writing the "Dear Edie" column in the *AMWA Journal* since 1978, setting us all straight on how correct English usage will make our lives easier. Her two books, *Medical English Usage and Abusage* and *Better Vocabulary in 30 Minutes a Day*, have sold briskly since their publication and everyone should keep their copies next to the dictionary.

Edie has received every AMWA award: AMWA Fellow, 1975; McGovern Honor Lectureship Award, 1983; Swanberg Award (the most prestigious of all AMWA awards), 1986; Golden Apple Award, 1989. *The Editor.*

Drug Discovery in the 21st Century

Drug discovery's past, present, and challenges came alive when John J. Baldwin, Ph.D., Chief Science and Technology officer at Pharmacopeia, spoke at AMWA-DVC's September 25 meeting in Essington, PA. Attendees learned interesting facts about drug discovery and heard about Pharmacopeia's vision for the future.

Early therapeutic agents, some of which are still used today, came from plants. But the success rate of natural products is notoriously low, according to Dr. Baldwin, and major pharmaceutical companies are no longer interested in them.

Much of the early drug discovery of synthetic compounds was conducted in Germany. Aspirin, for example, was synthesized there in 1897; today, 10,000 tons of aspirin are made and sales total \$350 million each year.

The birth of the United States pharmaceutical industry after World War II is attributed to the development of the sulfanilamides and the thiazides. For the first time, the pharmaceutical industry became competitive, instead of a "gentleman's game" in which

one company didn't compete in another's area of expertise.

By 1997, worldwide R&D spending had grown to \$42 billion. Just three years later, in 2000, this figure had increased to \$52 billion. "It's a high risk game," said Dr. Baldwin.

Today, pharmaceutical companies face increased pressures. Between 1990 and 1994, the top 10 pharmaceutical companies averaged 0.45 new drugs per year. To maintain a revenue growth rate of 10%, they need to increase productivity 10-fold. Each new drug must have a sales potential of \$350 million per year.

Drug development failures are expensive. Developing a new drug costs \$360 to \$500 million: 90% of pre-clinical candidates fail before becoming a drug.

New technologies such as genomics, rational design, and ultra high-throughput screening will provide some advances in drug discovery. These technologies won't improve understanding of the disease process or assays. They will improve the success rate, however, in selecting

Medical Haiku

Your editor is delighted to present two new medical haiku. Minor torture will not induce me to reveal the identity of the poet disguised behind a pen name.

You have my word that these haiku are from a long-time and paid-up member of AMWA who grew up in the South, was employed in the pharmaceutical industry in the Midwest for two decades before relocating to the Delaware Valley, to write haiku.

Oh say you can see, Before the dawn's early light Thanks, retinal rods!	Brains are never off, Indeed, they often intrude. Gee, what nerve they have!
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Cara K. Li (c) 2001.

mechanisms, screens to hits, and hits to leads. The time from lead to development candidate can be cut by one to two months.

Dr. Baldwin noted that combinatorial chemistry is usually better than structure-based design. He said that genomics probably won't improve drug development; instead, as genomics identifies drugs for small patient populations, the process will become more expensive. Ultra high-throughput screening, which will become common in the near future, can accelerate testing and decrease the cost of drug discovery. However, this technology will create an enormous amount of data, making data management a major issue. Rational design, in which drug-like features are part of the discovery design, will enable researchers to eliminate molecules that are doomed to fail in lead optimization due to bioavailability problems early, before the sponsor invests a great deal of money.

By Lori De Milto.

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