

# Southwest Chapter News

**FREE!**  
Member Event  
March 31  
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AMERICAN  
MEDICAL WRITERS  
ASSOCIATION

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March 2004

## Gulf Coast Medical Writing and Communication Conference

**Tuesday, April 27, 2004, 8 AM–5 PM  
Houston TX**

You are invited to attend the Gulf Coast Medical Writing and Communication Conference, sponsored by the Southwest Chapter of the American Medical Writers Association and the Department of Scientific Publications at The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center. This event will be held at the Hickey Auditorium & Conference Center, located on the 11th floor of the R. Lee Clark Clinic Building at M. D. Anderson



The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center campus, located in the Texas Medical Center

Cancer Center (1515  
Holcombe Boulevard,  
Houston TX 77030).

Registration will begin at 7:45 a.m., and the afternoon session of workshops will end at 5 p.m. **As of the time of this publication, space is available in all workshops. Please register soon!**

The workshop leaders are Thomas A. Lang, MA, Marianne Mallia-Hughes, ELS, and Flo Witte, MA, ELS. A brochure and registration form is available at <http://www.amwasouthwest.org/Events/conference-2004.pdf>. More information is available at <http://www.amwasouthwest.org/Events/miniconference.htm>. The complete list of workshops and the registration and homework deadlines are shown on page 6 of this newsletter.

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# Gulf Coast Medical Writing Conference

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Between the morning and afternoon workshop sessions, participants will break for lunch and to attend the plenary lecture, given by Richard Gibbs, PhD, in the Hickey Auditorium at M. D. Anderson Cancer Center. Dr. Gibbs, the Director of the Human Genome Sequencing Center and the Wofford Cain Professor of Molecular and Human Genetics at Baylor College of Medicine—the largest contributor to the Human Genome Project—will discuss how the burgeoning of data and other information arising from this momentous project will affect biomedical communications in the future.

“I’m thrilled that we were able to get the workshop leaders we did,” Southwest Chapter President Kate Ó Súilleabháin said. “And I think the lecture on the Genome Project will appeal to a lot of people, giving us an inside look from one of its most important scientists.” In keeping with the chapter’s mission as a nonprofit educational organization under Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3), the plenary lecture is open to the public and will be offered free of charge. Registration is not required for those attending only the plenary lecture. (Those who are not taking a workshop are welcome to bring a lunch; lunch will be served to those taking a workshop.)

This conference, the third in the Southwest Chapter’s history, was planned after the highly successful 2002 half-day Southwest Chapter conference, which was attended by about 80 people from throughout the chapter region and beyond. The first Southwest Chapter conference was held in 1983, an event that also marked the first time the Southwest Chapter presented its John P. McGovern Award (which went that year to Edith Schwager).

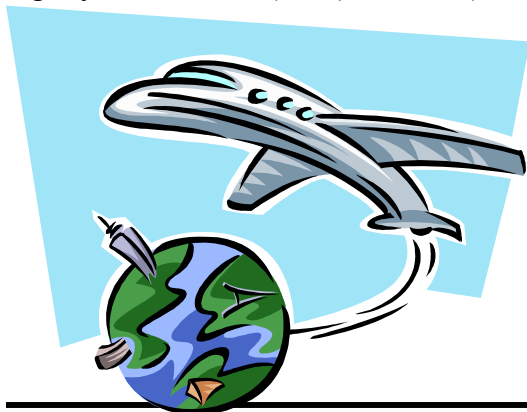
Whereas the 2002 half-day conference featured three Core Curriculum workshops running concurrently, allowing participants to take only one workshop, this year’s all-day event features workshops in the morning and the afternoon, allowing participants to take up to two workshops.

The chapter is still experimenting with the right frequency for local conferences. Whether they continue to be held every chapter year will depend greatly on attendance at this year’s conference. So far, about 35 people have registered. Although most are from Texas, some attendees will fly in from other states, including Arizona, Illinois, New Mexico, New York, and Virginia. Members and nonmembers intending to register should do so soon to ensure their first choice and to make the deadlines (see page 6).

For directions to the conference site, please visit [http://www.mdanderson.org/About\\_MDA/Directions/](http://www.mdanderson.org/About_MDA/Directions/) and select “Getting To, Around & Parking at M. D. Anderson,” then “Houston Maps, Weather & Traffic Information,” then “Directions to M. D. Anderson Cancer Center.” You may park in Garage 10 and use the sky bridge on level 2 to cross over to the clinic building. Take the elevators on the right to the 11th floor. Parking costs \$10 per day (not included in registration fee). For questions about the conference or to receive a brochure/registration form by mail, please contact Kate Ó Súilleabháin at [Caitcinnor@aol.com](mailto:Caitcinnor@aol.com) or 713.792.3165.

## Traveling to Houston for the Conference?

Rooms can be reserved through March 26, 2004, at the Houston Plaza Hilton hotel (713.313.4000) at a special nightly rate of \$115 (suite) or \$105 (standard room). When making your reservation, state that you are attending



the M. D. Anderson conference. You may arrange shuttle service to the conference site after you check in. Other hotels in the area are listed in the conference brochure. For information on traveling from William P. Hobby Airport or George Bush Intercontinental Airport, please visit <http://hou.houstonairportsystem.org/> (click on “Ground Transportation”). The city’s new light rail system offers inexpensive transportation from the Texas Medical Center to downtown theaters and restaurants, museums, and the Houston Zoo.

## MEMBERSHIP APPRECIATION EVENT

**Alternative medicine and herbal remedies**

a talk by pharmacotherapist Grace M. Kuo, PharmD

Wednesday, March 31, 2004, 5:30–7:30 pm  
at Majors Books, 7205 Fannin, Houston TX

As a member of the Southwest Chapter, you are invited to attend a wine and cheese event at Majors Books in Houston on Wednesday, March 31, 2004. Dr. Grace M. Kuo, an assistant professor of Department of Family and Community Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine and a pharmacotherapist of Baylor Family Medicine, will present a talk on alternative therapies, focusing on potential interactions between herbal remedies and prescription drugs. Dr. Kuo has authored several papers and presented many lectures on such topics as patient use of herbal supplements in primary care settings, herbs for cardiovascular and immune system health, and Chinese folk and holistic medicine.

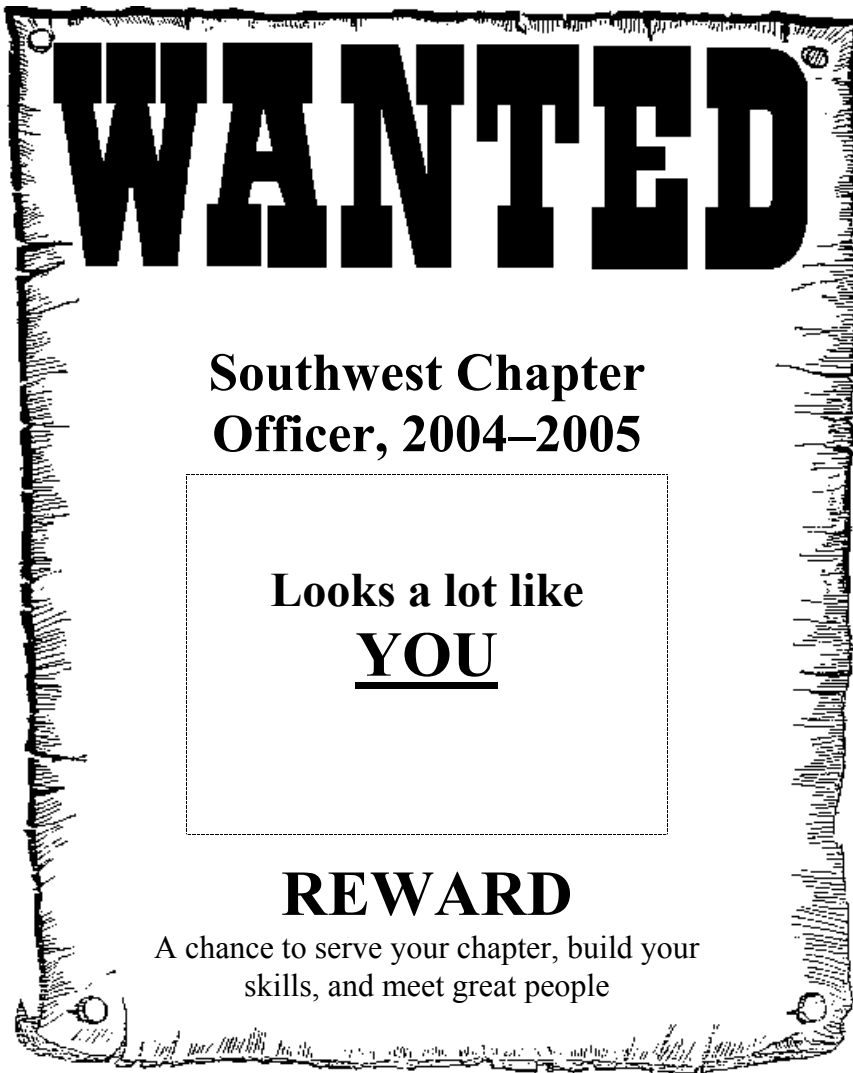


White and red wines and various cheeses will be served. Soft drinks will also be available. Majors Books is located at the southern edge of the Texas Medical Center (on Fannin between South Braeswood and Old Spanish Trail; telephone 713.799.9922); parking is free. Before or after the talk, feel free to browse Majors's fine collection of more than 50,000 medical textbooks and resource guides, including several on alternative medicine. The Southwest Chapter is grateful to Majors's management for opening the bookstore for the evening's event. The spring Southwest Chapter board meeting will take place immediately afterward (at 7:30 p.m.) and will be attended by the Southwest Chapter Officers.

This membership appreciation event is free to all Southwest Chapter members, and registration forms are not being used. However, so that those planning the meeting know how much food and drink to buy, please register with Penny Logan by e-mail ([plogan@lexgen.com](mailto:plogan@lexgen.com)); include your full name and telephone number in the message. (If you do not have access to e-mail, please call Penny at 281.863.3260 to register; be sure to spell your name and leave your telephone number). You may register up to 4 p.m. on Friday, March 26, 2004. If you have any questions, contact Penny Logan at [plogan@lexgen.com](mailto:plogan@lexgen.com). See you there!

## A Message from Your Chapter President

Have you ever wondered whether you could organize a professional event, learn to operate audiovisual equipment you've never tried out, preside over a board meeting, or "work a room"? As your current chapter president and as assistant program chair and program chair from 2001 to 2003, I've done it all—with lots of help from the other Southwest Chapter Officers, and with varying degrees of success, but always with gratitude for the chance to learn so much over these past three years.



In some ways, I was an unlikely potential chapter president. For one thing, I was pretty new to AMWA. For another, I didn't think I would enjoy "politics." Last but certainly not least, I went white-knuckled at the very thought of even the minimal public speaking the position requires.

Yet, I also recognized a chance to grow in this organization, both personally and professionally, and didn't want my misgivings to get in the way of that. Although I was as much motivated by a desire to improve myself as to serve my chapter, I am glad I also got the chance to assist extraordinary people on vital chapter initiatives and to learn the value of teamwork in a professional organization. And I'm pleased to say that this year, in great part because of my involvement with AMWA, I overcame my fear of public speaking to an extent that even surprised me (allowing me to successfully give an hour-long lecture to 90 physicians and researchers last month).

So whether you're a new or a seasoned AMWA member, whether you consider yourself an introvert or an extravert, and whether you're motivated by the desire to improve your chapter, meet new people, enhance your career, or a combination of these, I hope you'll find

your own reasons for serving as an AMWA Southwest Chapter Officer this year. Some of the positions are elected; others are appointed. The Southwest Chapter currently seeks an Assistant Program Chair, a Publicist, a List-Serve Coordinator, Directors at Large, Regional Directors, and other officers for 2004–2005. If you think you might be interested or want to find out more, please e-mail me at [Caitcinnor@aol.com](mailto:Caitcinnor@aol.com) or Natasha Calder at [natasha.calder@cyberonics.com](mailto:natasha.calder@cyberonics.com). Thanks for considering it—and for giving me this great opportunity!

—Kate Ó Súilleabháin

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## Call for Entries

# Student Scholarship in Biomedical Communications

The Southwest Chapter's Student Scholarship in Biomedical Communication is awarded each year to the winner of an essay competition on a topic in scientific research, biomedical technology, or biomedical communication. The winning essay is selected by blinded judges on the basis of appropriateness of tone, technical correctness, and writing style. Winners receive a check for \$500, a certificate of recognition from the AMWA Southwest Chapter, and a one-year membership in AMWA.

To be considered for the scholarship, candidates must be currently enrolled in college-level (undergraduate or graduate) studies in the region covered by the Southwest Chapter (Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico) and be majoring in science or an allied health discipline, English, journalism, or communications. All entries must be received by March 29, 2004. The winner will be contacted by May 3. A complete scholarship description and application forms (PDF and Word formats) can be downloaded at <http://www.amwasouthwest.org/Scholarship/2004.htm>.

## Robert E. Rakel, MD, Receives John P. McGovern Award

On Wednesday, January 28, 2004, about 45 people gathered at the Houston Plaza Hilton to honor this year's John P. McGovern Award recipient, Robert E. Rakel, MD. Dr. Rakel is currently the editor of four primary care textbooks, has served on the editorial boards of several prestigious journals, and has written many articles on primary care and family medicine. He is a distinguished professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

After an opening reception and delicious dinner, Southwest Chapter President Kate Ó Súilleabháin introduced the John P. McGovern Award Chair, Pamela Paradis Tice, who in turn introduced the honored guest. In his thoughtful lecture, "Compassion and the Art of Medicine: The Role of the Humanities in a Caring Profession," Dr. Rakel stressed the importance of respectful listening in patient care in the face of technologic progress. Before the advent of modern medicine, he explained, compassion was virtually all the physician had to offer a patient. Today, medical students and practitioners can become more empathic through the blending of the humanities and the sciences, as demonstrated by the "Compassion and the Art of Medicine" classes at Baylor. He also suggested that physicians read non-medical literature for 30 minutes a day, a practice originally prescribed by Dr. William Osler in the 19th century. After a question-and-answer session, Pamela Paradis Tice presented a plaque and \$1,000 honorarium to Dr. Rakel.

The Southwest Chapter established the John P. McGovern Award (named for the distinguished educator, author, and historian who founded the McGovern Allergy Clinic) in 1982 to honor excellence in medical communications. For a list of past recipients, please visit <http://www.amwasouthwest.org/McGovern/recipients.htm>.



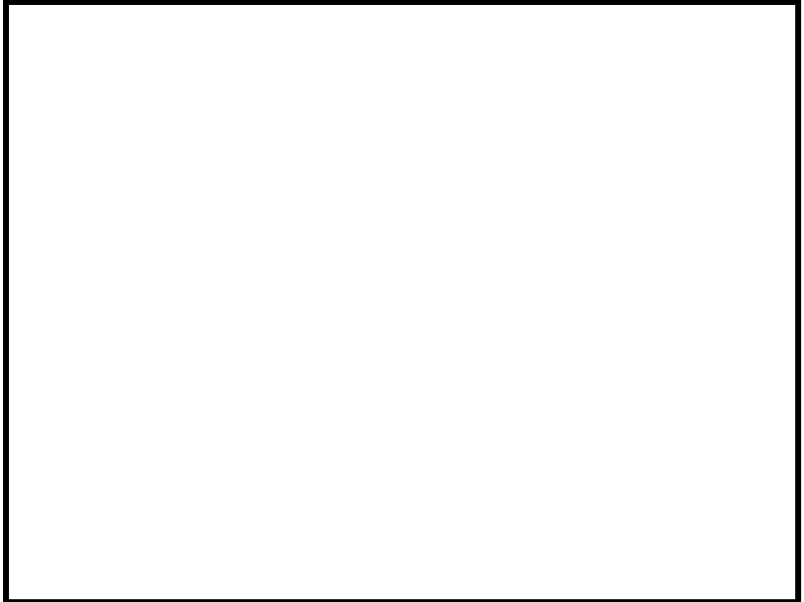
Southwest Chapter President  
Kate Ó Súilleabháin and  
John P. McGovern Award winner  
Robert E. Rakel, MD

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## AMWA Southwest Chapter News

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## Gulf Coast Medical Writing and Communication Conference Tuesday, April 27, 2004, 8 AM–5 PM

### Program in Brief

**Sign-in** .....7:45–8:45 AM

**Workshops, morning session**.....9 AM–NOON

1 Giving Effective Presentations (NC), Marianne Mallia-Hughes, ELS

2 Microediting (ADV) [#717], Flo Witte, MA, ELS\*

3 Statistics for Medical Writers (R) [#110], Thomas A. Lang, MA

**Plenary lecture and Lunch**.....12:15–1:45 PM

*Understanding the Ongoing Genome Project*

Richard A. Gibbs, PhD, Professor, Baylor College of Medicine, Houston TX

**Workshops, afternoon session**.....2–5 PM

1 Improving Comprehension: Theories and Research Findings (EW/ED) [#207], Thomas A. Lang, MA

2 Sentence Structure and Patterns (R) [#109], Flo Witte, MA, ELS

### Registration Deadlines

Advanced Curriculum Credit—**March 23, 2004**

Core Curriculum Credit—**April 6, 2004**

### Homework Due Dates

Advanced Curriculum homework is due **March 30, 2004**.

Core Curriculum homework is due **April 13, 2004**.

### Conference Location

Hickey Auditorium & Conference Center, The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center, R. Lee Clark Clinic Bldg., 11th floor, 1515 Holcombe Blvd., Houston TX 77030

\*Prerequisite required; see conference brochure (<http://www.amwasouthwest.org/Events/conference-2004.pdf>).