

Southwest Chapter News



2003–2004

Chapter Officers

President

Kate Ó Súilleabháin
713.792.3165
Caitcinnor@aol.com

President-Elect/Program Chair

Natasha Calder
281.228.7519
Natasha.Calder@cyberonics.com

Assistant Program Chair/Secretary

Penny Logan, MS
713.721.8996
plogan@lexgen.com

Treasurer

Chris Wogan, ELS
713.792.3160
cwogan@notes.mdacc.tmc.edu

Past President

Thomas Gegeny, MS, ELS
713.527.8219
tom@centerforaids.org

Directors-at-Large

Crissie Chambers
Cchambers@heart.thi.tmc.edu

Jennifer N. Fernandez, PhD
832.251.3100
jennifer@newcombscientific.com

Susan Madigan, RN
713.745.1205
smadigan@hal-pc.org

Laurel Prokop, ELS(D), MT(ASCP)
281.251.2436
Laurel.Prokop@Techstyle.com

Susan Siefert, ELS
281.228.7551
Susan.Siefert@cyberonics.com

Publicity Chair

Thomas Gegeny, MS, ELS
713.527.8219
tom@centerforaids.org

Newsletter Editor

Dawn Chalaire
903.784.1450
dchalair@mdanderson.org

May 2004

5th Annual Career Roundtables Meeting

Wednesday, May 26, 2004, 6:00-8:00 pm
Baba Yega Restaurant, Houston, Texas

The Fifth Annual Career Roundtables Meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 26, 2004, in the private banquet room of Baba Yega restaurant, an antique-filled bungalow located in Houston's historic Montrose district. This popular event provides an interactive, relaxed forum for discussing important aspects of biomedical communication. Each roundtable discussion will start with a brief presentation by an expert in an area of biomedical communication, which will be followed by a discussion with the roundtable participants. So that those planning the meeting can guarantee the final headcount to the restaurant, please *register by e-mail on or before Monday, May 24, 2004*. Please see "Registrations" on page 3 for details.

Participants may choose one of the following four roundtable discussion topics. In your e-mail registration, please identify a first and second choice.

1. Finding Your Market: Starting and Running a Freelance Medical Writing Business, with Lorraine Cherry, PhD. Starting a successful freelance business involves identifying what you do well and finding customers who need you and (very important) have the money to pay you. This roundtable will give pointers on conceptualizing a medical writing business, setting up an effective marketing campaign, and making the business work on a day-to-day basis. Dr. Cherry has run a successful freelance medical writing business for 8 years. She received a PhD in genetics from the University of California at Berkeley and has held faculty positions at The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center and The University of Texas–Houston Health Science Center.

2. Principles of Layout and Design, with Thomas Gegeny, MS, ELS. Back by popular demand, this roundtable will focus on the basics of layout and design for editors and writers who occasionally must review the work of designers or do simple layout of newsletters, brochures, and slides. Discussion will focus on how to incorporate graphic elements into design and how to effectively use fonts, margins, and white space. Mr. Gegeny is currently Interim Director

continued on page 2

Career Roundtables Scheduled for May 26

continued from page 1

and Editor at the Center for AIDS: Hope and Remembrance Project (CFA) in Houston. He has extensive experience in design and layout, both in print and electronic media. His portfolio includes posters, newsletters, brochures, programs, and logos. He has taught numerous classes for AMWA as well as the Houston Academy of Medicine-Texas Medical Center Library, including PowerPoint Presentations, Biomedical Desktop Publishing, and Biomedical Writers Workshops I and II.

3. Common Statistical Mistakes/Flaws in Biomedical Research and, thus, in Biomedical Publications, with Joe Ensor, PhD. Dr. Ensor will take roundtable participants through the most common flaws conducted and reported in biomedical communication today and answer participant's questions about this critical aspect of scientific research. Dr. Ensor is a research statistician who has considerable experience in the statistical analysis of medical data, with more than 10 years of experience in applied health care research and managed care. He currently works at The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center Department of Biostatistics and also serves on the Technical Advisory Group and HEDIS Methodology Panel for the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA). He received his doctorate in statistics from Texas A&M University and has held faculty appointments at Rice University, Texas A&M University, University of Houston, Sam Houston State University, and Arkansas State University. He has also served as Director of Forecasting and Research at U.S. Quality Algorithms, the health informatics subsidiary of Aetna, Inc.

4. Designing and Editing Slides for Effective Presentations, with Karen F. Phillips, ELS. Slides used for biomedical presentations typically contain a large amount of technical information, including extensive tables and complex graphs. This roundtable will focus on how to make the most out of your slide presentations, with tips on editing this type of information down into a manageable format. Karen Phillips has been a medical manuscript editor in three states, for two pharmaceutical companies, two biomedical communications agencies, and an academic research institution. She also conducted a successful freelance editing business for two and a half years. She currently plies her trade in the Department of Scientific Publications at The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, where she is Scientific Publications Manager and Managing Editor of the Journal of Clinical Ultrasound. Educated initially in the world of veterinary medicine and then in the pharmaceutical sciences, Karen spent the first 7 years of her career on the bench in a microbiology laboratory. She has been involved with medical and scientific writing, editing, and publishing since 1980 and began designing and editing slides in 1987.

The annual chapter business meeting will be conducted at the May meeting as well. This portion of the meeting will include the voting in of the new chapter officers. If you are unable to attend this meeting, please complete the absentee ballot printed in this newsletter and send it by Monday, May 24, 2004, to Natasha Calder, 4300 Bay Area Blvd. #2120, Houston TX 77058 or natasha.calder@cyberonics.com.

We will gather at 6 pm at Baba Yega for socializing, with dinner and the business meeting beginning at 6:30 pm. The price is \$26 for AMWA members and \$28 for guests and nonmembers. Dinner will start with a Caesar salad and proceed with your choice of either chicken breast topped with a marsala wine and mushroom cream sauce accompanied by mashed potatoes and julienne-style vegetables or penne pasta with fresh pomodoro sauce, portabella mushrooms, asparagus, broccoli, julienne zucchini, yellow squash, and carrots. Carrot cake will be served for dessert. A choice of tea, coffee, or soft drinks will be provided, and a cash bar will be available before dinner.

continued on page 3

Roundtables Meeting

continued from page 2

Registrations

To register, please RSVP *via e-mail* by Monday, May 24, to Natasha Calder at

natasha.calder@cyberonics.com.

Include your first and last name, address, telephone number, first and second roundtable choices, and entrée preference. In addition, please indicate whether registrants are AMWA members or nonmembers. Please be prepared to pay by cash or check (payable to AMWA Southwest) at the door on the day of the event. *Owing to the meeting format, the headcount guarantee required by the restaurant, and the limited space available at each table, no tentative registrations can be accepted. Payment will be required for each e-mail registration received.*

Directions to Baba Yega

Baba Yega is located at 2607 Grant Street (2 blocks east of Montrose Boulevard and between Westheimer and Fairview). * From the Museum District, travel north on Montrose and pass Westheimer. The second street after Westheimer is Missouri Street; turn right and go 2 blocks. The restaurant is at the intersection of Missouri and Grant. * From I-10 (the Heights area), travel south on Montrose and pass Fairview. The second street after Fairview is Missouri Street; turn left and go 2 blocks. The restaurant is located at the intersection of Missouri and Grant. * For more detailed directions, please call the restaurant at 713.522.0042.

Membership Appreciation Event a Success

On Wednesday, March 31, 2004, approximately 25 people gathered at Majors Books in the Texas Medical Center for the Southwest Chapter's annual Membership Appreciation Event. Members socialized for about an hour, while enjoying a lovely selection of fruits, cheeses, wine, and soft drinks. This social period provided members an opportunity to browse through the extensive selection of medical resources at Majors and to purchase items of interest before the start of the seminar.

Chapter President Kate Ó Súilleabháin opened the meeting with a brief summary of upcoming chapter events and then introduced the speaker, Dr. Grace Kuo. Dr. Kuo is an assistant professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine and a pharmacotherapist at Baylor Family Medicine, focusing on alternative therapies. Dr. Kuo spoke to the members about several aspects of alternative medicine, including potential interactions between herbal remedies and prescription drugs and regulations governing alternative therapies and dietary supplements. She also discussed issues surrounding patients' hesitations in informing traditional physicians of their use of alternative therapies for fear of being ridiculed or chastised. Dr. Kuo recommended several excellent texts to consult for more information on alternative therapies, many of which were on display at Majors, and a useful website for reference (www.herbwatch.org/links.html).

Chapter Moves Toward Paperless Communication with E-mail Group

The Southwest Chapter is streamlining its communication with all chapter members by encouraging participation in our "amwasouthwest" Yahoo! Group.

Any chapter member who is not part of the group is strongly encouraged to sign up by going to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/amwasouthwest> or by sending an e-mail to group moderator and chapter publicity chair David Galloway at dgallowa@mdanderson.org.

Chapter announcements, updates, job postings, and the chapter newsletter will be delivered through the Yahoo! Group in an effort to reach members more effectively as large, bulk e-mails are becoming more difficult to send without being treated as spam.

If you have any questions, please contact David Galloway via e-mail or at (281) 467-5557.

Southwest Chapter Sponsors Miniconference

The Gulf Coast Medical Writing and Communication Conference, an all-day Southwest Chapter event held on Tuesday, April 27, 2004, was an unqualified success, attracting about 70 participants. Held at The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center in cooperation with the institution's Department of Scientific Publications, the event featured three core curriculum workshops, an advanced workshop, and a noncredit class, as well as a plenary lecture.

Each participant could take up to two workshops: one in the morning and one in the afternoon. The workshop leaders were Thomas Lang, M.A. (who led two core curriculum workshops, "Statistics for Medical Writers" and "Improving Comprehension: Theories and Research Findings"), Marianne Mallia-Hughes, ELS (who led a noncredit workshop titled "Giving Effective Presentations"), and Flo Witte, MA, ELS (who led the advanced curriculum workshop "Microediting" and the core curriculum workshop "Sentence Structure and Patterns"). All instructors and workshops garnered high praise from the participants, who were surveyed at the end of each workshop.

Attendees gathered that morning to pick up their registration packets and badges and to enjoy a light continental breakfast. After the first session of workshops, all were invited to attend the plenary lecture by

Richard Gibbs, PhD, director of the Genome Sequencing Center at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. In keeping with the Chapter's status as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational organization under the 1986 Internal Revenue Code, the plenary lecture was open to the public. (For details on the Chapter's nonprofit status, visit <http://www.amwasouthwest.org/About/about.htm>.)

Southwest Chapter President Kate Ó Súilleabháin opened the plenary session by thanking the attendees and workshop leaders and acknowledging Conference Chair Paula Zimlicki, Web Manager Marlane Kayfes, Publicist Thomas Gegeny, Program Chair/President-Elect Natasha Calder, and Assistant Program Chair Penny Logan for their help in organizing the conference. She also thanked the Department of Scientific Publications at M. D. Anderson Cancer Center and extended a special welcome to the 15 or so attendees from out of town. Ms. Zimlicki then introduced Dr. Gibbs, who gave a lively talk about how far the genome project has come and took questions from the audience. The plenary lecture was followed by lunch and then by the afternoon session of workshops.

The conference gave Southwest Chapter members from outside Houston a chance to participate in a Southwest Chapter event and to meet other AMWA members and colleagues in their fields. Southwest Chapter members traveled from Austin,

Dallas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and New Mexico. In addition, several AMWA members from other chapters attended; these included members from Arizona, Illinois, New York, and Puerto Rico.

M. D. Anderson does not charge for the use of its excellent conference facilities if these are booked with the cooperation of a department within the institution. For this reason, the Southwest Chapter is especially grateful to the Department of Scientific Publications (which includes many AMWA members and Southwest Chapter officers) for its help in reserving the facilities. Charges for food, equipment, and other services are also reasonable at M. D. Anderson, allowing the Southwest Chapter to keep registration fees to a minimum.

This event was the third miniconference in the Southwest Chapter's history, the first being in 1986 and the second in 2002. Because of the apparent demand for these events, Chapter conferences may be held every two years or as determined by attendance at future chapter events and Chapter member feedback.

If you attended the conference (or would like to attend or help plan one in the future), your feedback is welcome! The Southwest Chapter is always looking for new volunteers and ways to improve its chapter events. Please send your comments to Kate Ó Súilleabháin at Caiteinnor@aol.com.

AMWA Southwest Chapter News

Dawn Chalaire
441 12th S.E.
Paris, TX 75460

Phone: 903.784.1450
E-mail: dchalair@mdanderson.org



Ballot

Officer Candidates for 2004–2005

President • Natasha Calder
Program Chair • Penny Logan
Assistant Program Chair • Hai Nguyen
Treasurer • Christine Wogan, ELS
Secretary • Katie Matias
Newsletter Editor • Dawn Chalaire
Director-at-Large • Lorraine Cherry, PhD
Director-at-Large • Thomas Gegeny, MA, ELS
Director-at-Large • Jane Krauhs, PhD, ELS

If you will not be attending the May 26 Career Roundtables Meeting, please send your votes by Monday, May 24, to Natasha Calder, 4300 Bay Area Blvd. #2120, Houston TX 77058 or by e-mail to natasha.calder@cyberonics.com.

Meeting Reservations

Career Roundtables Meeting

Wednesday, May 26, 2004

6:00-8:00 p.m.

Baba Yega Restaurant

Members \$26 and Nonmembers \$28
Please register by Monday, May 24, 2004

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