

Southwest Chapter News



2004–2005

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May 2005

Sixth Annual Career Roundtables Meeting

Wednesday, May 25, 2005, 6:00-8:00 PM
Baba Yega Restaurant, Houston, Texas

The Sixth Annual Career Roundtables Meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 25, 2005, in the banquet room of Baba Yega restaurant 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 on or before Monday, May 23, 2005*. Please see "Registrations" on page 4 for details.

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

1. How Far Should You Go? Setting Editorial Priorities, with Karen F. Phillips, ELS. How do you decide how much editing is enough? If you were given 4 hours to edit a manuscript, what would your top editorial priorities be? Would those priorities be different if you were given 4 days? At this roundtable, we will look at several levels-of-edit systems that address these kinds of questions, and we will consider the controversial—and occasionally contradictory—assumptions made in trying to use such systems to set editorial policy. Karen has 25 years' experience in medical and scientific editing in different environments: the pharmaceutical industry, biomedical communications agencies, a freelance business, and now in a clinical- and research-oriented academic institution. Despite that experience, she still occasionally struggles with deciding at what level to edit certain documents and looks forward to sharing experiences and tips with others.

2. Is This Going to Be on the Test? The How and Why of the BELS Exam, with Stephen Palmer, PhD, ELS, and Christina Chambers, MA, ELS. This roundtable will focus on BELS certification: its potential benefits for different types of medical writers, and some of the ways in which one can

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May Meeting to Feature Roundtable Discussions

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prepare for the examination. Dr. Palmer received his doctorate in Social and Health Psychology from the State University of New York at Stony Brook in 1999 and has published papers in medical and psychology journals. He is currently a scientific medical writer in the scientific publications department at the Texas Heart Institute and received his BELS certification in 2004. Christina Chambers is also in the scientific publications department at the Texas Heart Institute, where she holds the title of senior medical writer/editor. She received her BELS certification in 2003.

3. Evidence-Based Medicine: What Is It, and What Does It Mean for the Medical Writer?, with Jude Richard, ELS. Evidence-based medicine (EBM) will affect medical writing and editing in the years to come. The push for EBM is affecting everything from clinical treatment to FDA filings to how review articles and book chapters are written to how clinical trials of drugs and treatments are conducted. Jude began his career as a medical editor in 1990, when he joined the Department of Scientific Publications at The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center. After 10 years there, he moved to the Office of Scientific Publications at the Texas Heart Institute (THI). Jude edits for staff physicians and laboratory researchers at THI. He is also the managing editor and a writer for Heart Watch, an institutional newsletter targeted at cardiovascular surgeons and cardiologists.

4. Medical Journalism: On the Outside, Looking In, with Ruth SoRelle, MPH. Twenty years as a medical journalist in Houston takes you around the world and gives you insight into judging sources and stories, but it should never make you a participant in medical politics. How does one maintain objectivity in an era of subjective journalism? Ruth SoRelle served as the Houston Chronicle's medical writer for 20 years before leaving in 1998 to become senior director of special projects in the office of public affairs at Baylor College of Medicine. She has a bachelor's degree in journalism with honors from the University of Texas at Austin and a master's degree in public health from UT School of Public Health in Houston.

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 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 23, 2005, to Steve Palmer, 6615 Meadowlawn Street, Houston, TX 77023 or spalmer@heart.thi.tmc.edu.

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.

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, call the restaurant at 713.522.0042.

Membership Appreciation Gathering Held March 30 at Majors Bookstore in Houston

On Wednesday, March 30, 2005, AMWA Southwest hosted a membership appreciation gathering at Majors Bookstore in Houston, Texas. The meeting was highlighted by a presentation on the state of the life sciences industry locally and nationally and the opportunities that it raises for medical writers and editors.

Beginning at 5:30 pm, the 24 attendees, including members and guests, mingled over wine, cheese, and sandwiches and browsed the aisles of the medical bookstore. Then, at 6:30 pm, chapter president Natasha Calder introduced the featured speaker, Jason Moore, MS, MBA, manager of industry programs for BioHouston, a nonprofit organization based in Houston. Mr. Moore, a past member of AMWA Southwest, started his biotechnology career as a medical writer and still provides regulatory and medical writing consulting to researchers in academic institutions.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Moore explained BioHouston's mission: to stimulate growth of the life science industry in metropolitan Houston by fostering the transfer of technology from research concept to commercial use. He noted the Houston area's extraordinary potential for biotechnological industry and innovation, fueled by the presence of the world's largest medical center, the large amounts of life science research conducted here annually, the large existing workforce of 75,000 life science professionals, and the region's established research and clinical leadership in the fields of cancer, cardiovascular medicine, genomics, nanotechnology, biodefense, and infectious diseases.

Mr. Moore noted that even though Texas has lagged behind California and Massachusetts in establishing and promoting start-up life science companies, the gap is not insurmountable and is being closed.

During and after his presentation, Mr. Moore took questions from the audience, including several about whether growth in the biotechnology sector will increase opportunities for medical writers and editors. He noted that such opportunities will arise, for example, when companies making new drugs or products begin to seek regulatory approval and to publish their research findings. However, he also said that these openings may have to be sought out by resourceful medical editors or writers who stay abreast of developments in the industry and anticipate the need for their services by networking through groups such as BioHouston and AMWA Southwest.

The evening's program ended at about 7:45 pm. Several members remained behind for more conversation with Mr. Moore before finally being shooed out by bookstore employees anxious to go home for the night.

Ballot

AMWA Southwest Chapter Officer Candidates for 2005–2006

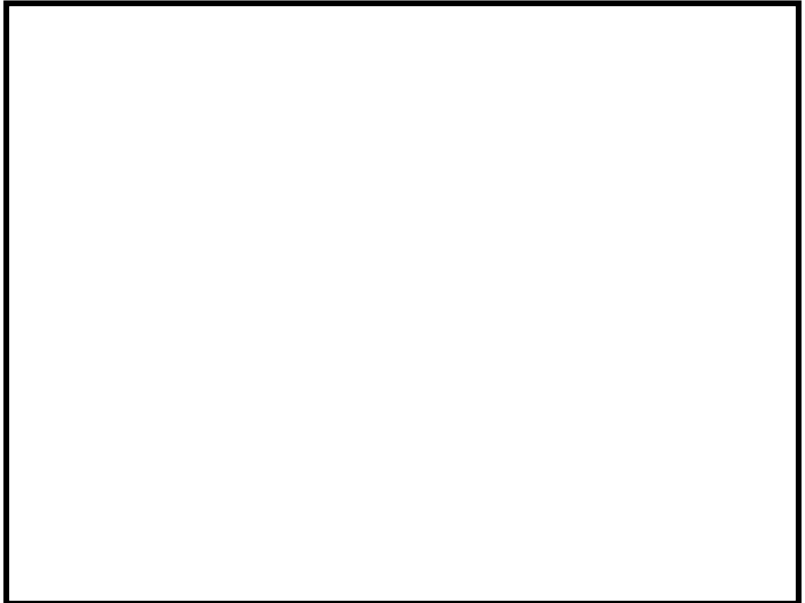
- President:* Chris Wogan
- President-Elect/Program Chair:* Stephen Palmer
- Assistant Program Chair:* Anita Frijhoff
- Treasurer:* Allison Woo
- Secretary:* Jude Richard
- Past President:* Natasha Calder
- Newsletter Editor:* Hanson Yu

If you will not be attending the May 25 Career Roundtables Meeting, please complete this ballot and send it by Monday, May 23, 2005, to Steve Palmer, 6615 Meadowlawn Street, Houston, TX 77023 or spalmer@heart.thi.tmc.edu.

AMWA Southwest Chapter News

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Registration Form

Roundtables Meeting

Wednesday, May 25, 2005

Registrant(s)

Name(s) _____

Daytime Phone _____

Roundtable (Mark your first choice with "1" and your second with "2"):

Editorial Priorities _____

BELS Exam _____

Evidence-Based Medicine _____

Medical Journalism _____

Entrée (check one):

Chicken marsala _____ Vegetarian pasta _____

_____ AMWA members x \$26=\$ _____

_____ Nonmembers x \$28=\$ _____

Please RSVP by Monday, May 23. Mail this form with your check (payable to AMWA Southwest) to Steve Palmer, 6615 Meadowlawn Street, Houston, TX 77023.

Registrations

To register for the May Career Roundtables Meeting, please RSVP by Monday, May 23, to Steve Palmer, 6615 Meadowlawn Street, Houston, TX 77023 or spalmer@heart.thi.tmc.edu. If registering by email, please 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 email registration received.*