



AMWA e-news

June 2007

Greetings! An important date for your diaries is the AMWA Professional Development Day on Saturday 27 October at the Sydney Mechanics School of Arts in Pitt Street, Sydney. While AMWA was involved in the recent 5th World Conference of Science Journalists in Melbourne, the forthcoming event gives members and their colleagues the chance to attend our professional development workshops and, for the first time, the Board of Editors in the Life Sciences (BELS) examination.

It is also membership subscription time so could everyone who knows that some of their details have changed since May/June last year please email your details (address and email) to our secretary, Jacinta Miller at: secretary@medicalwriters.org.

Feel free to email the newsletter editor: rada_rouse@yahoo.com

AMWA events

The Sydney AMWA/ARCS networking function held in Sydney on Wednesday 13 June was well attended with members from both organisations. The guest speaker was Sophie Scott from the ABC who spoke about her recently launched book, *Live a Longer Life: the scientific secrets of health and wellbeing at any age*.

The AMWA Professional Development Day 2007 is on Saturday 27 October, 9 am – 5pm at the Sydney Mechanics School of Arts, 280 Pitt Street. Registration will be from 9–9.30am. We are offering two workshops: "Writing for the web", which will be held at 9.30 am running concurrently with the BELS exam (see below) and "Statistics for medical writers" will be held after lunch at 2 pm. Both workshops will count towards a PDP certificate. All participants will gather for lunch and networking from 12.30 to 2pm and the Annual General Meeting will be held at 1 pm. More details about the workshops and leaders will be circulated by email.

For inquiries about the BELS exam planned for the same day contact AMWA executive member, Rhana Pike at: rhana@australianeditor.com

What's new?

Medical journalists are invited to a briefing about the world's biggest HIV conference to be held in Sydney in July. The International AIDS Society Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention is held every two years and will convene in Sydney 22–25 July (www.ias207.org). Co-chair Dr David Cooper will brief journalists on 12 July, 10–11 am at DFAT conference room, Level 10, Angel Place, 123 Pitt Street. If you want to go, contact press officer Michael Kessler on 0404 366 409.

The Third International Clinical Trials Symposium preliminary session titles and times are now available for viewing at: <http://www.clinicaltrials2007.com/Program.htm>. To view, please see the timetable grid followed by the pre-symposium workshop descriptions on the same page. You are invited to submit abstracts for consideration for the free-communication program at the symposium — the closing date is 20 July. The Symposium is hosted by the NHMRC Clinical Trials Centre and the University of Sydney. It will be held at the Sydney Hilton on 23–26 September 2007

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists invites entries for the 2007 RANZCO Media Awards for excellence in journalism related to eye health. There are two categories for print and electronic media. Each offers a prize of \$3000 to the media professional who is judged to have given readers/viewers/listeners the best understanding of eye care issues specially related to the work of Australian and/or New Zealand ophthalmologists for work published/broadcast or televised between 2 September 2006 and 31 August 2007. The closing date for entries is 5pm Monday 3 September 2007. More details can be found on the RANZCO website at: www.ranzco.edu.

The Association of Regulatory and Clinical Scientists to the Australian Pharmaceutical Industry LTD (ARCS Australia) has Clinical Statistics for Non-Statisticians in Sydney on 30–31 August and Melbourne on 30–31 October. This course is designed to be an introduction of basic statistical concepts fundamental to clinical research, for professionals who have regular exposure to statistics either through studies or professional experience. More details can be found at: www.arcs.com.au.

Getting to know one another

Dr Kimberley Ivory, Port Macquarie, NSW



What a cliché! I always wanted to be a journalist, but ‘got the marks’ for medicine, I’d moan. When it finally clicked that ‘writers write’, I cut my writing teeth on Arts Council publicity under the guidance of an old school journo.

Then to my surprise, the handwritten *Mea Culpa* I sent to *Australian Family Physician* was accepted, and they wanted more. Next came a call from then-*Medical Observer* editor, Margaret Rice: ‘Would I write a column about general practice?’ Would I what! That column lasted seven years and thanks to Margaret’s excellent mentorship I moved into features, news and travel. Ironically, medicine had made me a journalist.

In 1994 I became health editor for a new consumer magazine, *That’s Life!* It was exciting to build the magazine’s health content and I still contribute some dozen years later. Meanwhile, I also wrote travel, health and lifestyle features for mainstream media, and edited a relaunch of *Senior Lifestyle* for Rural Press.

In 1995 I left general practice to freelance full-time. Living rurally, I searched for ways to improve my craft and connect with other writers. AMWA was the key to both. Despite some fiery stand-offs between ‘real’ journos and ‘hobbyists’ (doctors), AGMs were a great source of fun and support. Serving on the committee, winning the AMWA Award and developing the first web site were highlights

1999 was a watershed year...a true *fin de siècle!* Like many freelancers I found it hard to say ‘no’. As my commissions and stress levels peaked, my body screamed, ‘Stop!’ Two frozen shoulders in two years ended full-time freelancing and decimated my income.

Today I work in both medicine and journalism part-time. I aim for balance, practicing yoga and exercising regularly. I was recently appointed consulting editor, General Practice, to the *Journal of Complementary Medicine* and GP 'expert' for *Slimming and Health*. I am completing a Master of Public Health, and hope to fruitfully combine communication and health.

My advice to budding freelancers? Write what you know; listen to those who know better; cherish your rejection slips, keep writing... and look after your health.

A website we like

Last month we featured a new open access medical journal, Open Medicine. We've now discovered the useful site www.freemedicaljournals.com that lists journals and textbooks with free content (although it doesn't appear to have caught up with Open Medicine!). You can register to receive info about new ones.

To unsubscribe to this newsletter please email treasurer Katherine Baverstock:

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www.medicalwriters.org

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