

AMWA's MISSION is to promote excellence in medical communication and to provide educational resources in support of that goal.

Newsletter of the Northern California Chapter of the American Medical Writers Association



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Welcome 2013!

President's Address

Greetings my fellow AMWA professionals of the Northern California Chapter! It is my privilege to act as your Chapter President until October 2013.

It was with great pride that I submitted a Chapter report to the National Board of Directors and represented you when I attended the Annual Conference held in Sacramento this year. It was wonderful having 80 attendees from Northern California and meeting some long-time members with whom I had not yet become acquainted. I hope that those of you who were able to attend found it worthwhile. I know that I always come away with a wealth of information and new ideas ... not to mention the sense of community and solidarity that I develop with my colleagues and fellow professionals.

When stepping into a leadership role in this professional society, I have thought a great deal about why we are participating in AMWA. In this age of Generation Y, it seems like many people decide to opt out. But you, as members of AMWA, have decided that there is value in being in this association for medical writers. Why? After some inquiry and research, I have found some of the reasons:

- You want to obtain training to become a better medical writer.
 - You want to stay in touch with the practices and standards of your chosen profession.
 - You want to network and stay in touch with other people in your profession.
 - You want to find resources and benefits through this professional organization.
- Of course, being a member of AMWA increases your value to your employers.

As your fellow professionals in AMWA, the Northern California Board and I have been planning a year of education, networking, and community building. On top of the quarterly

chapter meetings that we hold at various locations around the SF Bay Area, we are

- Invigorating the Chapter newsletter, *The Pacemaker*, to better communicate with you.
- Keeping our jobs list active.
- Maintaining a chapter LinkedIn group for easier communication with the chapter community. (LinkedIn group name: AMWA Northern California Chapter)
- Starting a series of webinars for more education and communication with those who might not make it to the face-to-face events.

We also act as advocates for our NorCal members, communicating your issues to the National Board of Directors.

If you want to participate or contribute to the *Pacemaker*, give or suggest a webinar or chapter meeting presentation, offer other ideas or suggestions, or simply find out who your fellow members in the neighborhood are, we welcome your interest. Please contact me at president@amwancal.org or our entire board at board@list.amwancal.org

SUZANNE CANADA, PRESIDENT

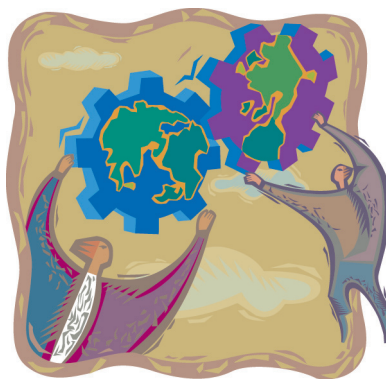


Perfecting Partnerships

By
*Amanda
Jacobson*

Amanda Jacobson, a member of our NorCal AMWA Chapter, received her PhD in immunology from the University of Utah, which was followed by a postdoctoral fellowship in Seattle, WA. She transitioned from bench top to laptop as a medical writer in the Department of Pediatrics at Stanford University and now works for a Bay Area clinical research organization, InClin, Inc.

“Nonprofit” and “Big Pharma” are rarely used in the same sentence. However, one South San Francisco-based nonprofit drug development company, in partnership with a number of pharmaceutical companies and academic institutions, has proven that good things happen when companies come together and forget about the bottom line. This rare relationship may promote drug development and provide career opportunities for medical writers, in addition to providing medications for people in need.



The Institute for OneWorld Health (OWH), a not-for-profit global health organization, was founded in 2000 by Victoria Hale to help develop drugs to treat the neglected tropical diseases that mainly affect the poor throughout the world. “The initial goal [of OWH] is to improve access of medicines to everyone [by] taking a look at drugs left on the shelf,” says Elena Pantjushenko, associate of external affairs at OWH. The nonprofit works with local governments to place previously studied, but under-used, medicines on the national medicine list. OneWorld Health’s initial accomplishment was the implementation of paromomycin intramuscular injection to treat Kala-Azar (visceral leishmaniasis) in Nepal and Bangladesh.

Today, OWH is teaming with companies, academic institutions, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to put affordable drugs on the market for malaria and cholera. The institute’s malaria program, 8 years in the making, best demonstrates successful partnering with academia, pharmaceutical, and biotechnology companies. The goal of this program is to develop semi-synthetic artemisinin to support the supply needed for artemisinin-based combination therapy (ACT), the gold standard of malaria treatment. Artemisinin is a plant-based product harvested from wormwood farms. As crops yields vary from season to season, the supply of artemisinin is at the mercy of the weather, harvest, and the time of year. OneWorld Health is partnering with the synthetic biology experts Amryis, Inc., and Sanofi-Aventis to develop synthetic artemisinin (which is based on inventions licensed from the University of California, Berkeley) to make ACT more affordable, and thus more accessible, to the millions of people infected with malaria.

A third major project centers on OWH’s investigational new drug iOWH032 to treat diarrheal diseases. Some people might say that this is OWH’s greatest accomplishment because it demonstrates that a nonprofit company can develop an innovative drug. This success involved collaboration with Roche and Novartis to screen for promising drug candidates, and the program has been approved by the FDA to proceed with Phase 1 clinical trials.

Elena stated it best, “Forming partnerships that work is OWH’s greatest strength”... but it takes two to tango. Companies that collaborate with OWH, or other nonprofit organizations, sign up for a “no-loss, no profit” commitment. I was pleased to discover that pharma companies are more likely to collaborate today than they have in the past. In early 2012, thirteen pharmaceutical companies, the United States, United Kingdom, and United Arab Emirates governments, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the World Bank, and other global health organizations announced a pledge to accelerate progress toward eliminating or controlling ten neglected tropical diseases by 2020. It seems that people are demanding more from these companies, and they are starting to pay attention.

Near the end of 2011, OWH became the drug development affiliate of PATH, a nonprofit, Seattle-based, global health organization currently working in the areas of emerging and infectious diseases, vaccine development, health technologies, and maternal and child health. I asked Elena what she thought was next for OWH as far as drug development: “all doors are open... as long as it is safe, effective, and affordable”.

Pharma nonprofit organizations, such as OWH, may have something to offer medical writers professionally. They are involved in international Phase 1–3 clinical trials and are committed to publishing their work. Thus, proposal writing is a large component of their work. If you enjoy the collaborative environment and want to do some good while doing a good job, put nonprofits on your radar. Finally, the accomplishments of OWH make the benefits of working together obvious. As a group, medical writers are collaborative in nature. After all, it takes a team to get a document written, a manuscript published, or a drug approved.

The Word Witch

By
Maggie
Norris

Maggie Norris is a long-time member of the NorCal AMWA Chapter and currently serves on the Chapter Board

Navigating an Unfamiliar Word Interface Using Keystroke Commands



Today's tip shows a powerful technique for staying productive during a transition from one version of Word to the next. Using keystroke commands, versus a menu-and-mouse approach, is useful whenever a writer is working with an unfamiliar Word interface. It may be especially relevant in the transition from Word 2003 to Word 2007 or 2010 because these interfaces are so different from what we've become used to.

KEYSTROKE COMMAND BASICS

Sending a command using keystrokes has the same effect as selecting the command from the menu. Most keystroke commands work exactly the same way in all current Windows versions. Only a slight adjustment is needed for them to work in all Mac versions. Although the menu interface has changed radically several times over the years, most keystroke commands have remained exactly the same since Word 3.0 for DOS. The keystroke commands you master now will probably function in the same way in future versions of Word as well.

For a complete list of all Word keystroke commands in all current Windows versions, go to <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/290938>

For Mac, go to: <http://mac2.microsoft.com/MacOffice/en-us/help/f7701a9f-35bc-49c5-a5b5-8c24b085a1661033.msp>

Command	Windows	Mac
Open file	Ctrl + o	⌘ + o
New file	Ctrl + n	⌘ + n
Print	Ctrl + p	⌘ + p
Cut	Ctrl + x	⌘ + x
Copy	Ctrl + c	⌘ + c
Paste	Ctrl + v	⌘ + v
Undo	Ctrl + z	⌘ + z
Save	Ctrl + s	⌘ + s
Close	Ctrl + w	⌘ + w
Apply default character format ^a	Ctrl + space	⌘ + space
Help ^b	F1	⌘ + /
SpellCheck	F7	F7

^a Removes applied character formatting

^b This command is particularly useful in Word 2007 because by default the Help files are not loaded.

QUICK START WITH KEYSTROKE COMMANDS

Most of the editing commands a writer uses frequently can be executed using simple 2-stroke combinations of the Control key (Ctrl) and a letter key: open, save, print, and close a file; cut, copy, and paste selected content; apply bold, italic, and underline character formatting; undo and repeat an action. Several more frequently used commands are even easier: just press one of the F-keys at the top of the keyboard. The chart at the left shows the location of a few of these. To execute a Ctrl+key command, hold Ctrl down while pressing the letter key.

BEYOND THE BASICS

Every one of the letter keys works in combination with the Ctrl key to execute a command. And that's only the beginning. There are hundreds more keyboard commands, more, in fact, than there are menu commands. In a future article, we'll get to know Ctrl and the other "Modifier keys" and how they can be combined with character keys, F-keys, arrow keys, and other accessory keys

The Word Witch will give a live seminar on navigating the Word 2007 / 2010 interface at a chapter meeting later this year. Details will be in the next issue of the *Pacemaker*.

Recent Guidance Documents Issued by the FDA

Documents issued during the last quarter

Category	Title	Type	Date
Electronic Submissions	Guidance for Industry: Providing Submissions in Electronic Format -- Summary Level Clinical Site Data for CDER	Draft Guidance	12/18/12
Electronic Submissions	Specifications for Preparing and Submitting Summary Level Clinical Site Data for CDER's Inspection Planning	Draft Guidance	12/18/12
Clinical/Medical	Investigational New Drug Applications for Positron Emission Tomography (PET) Drugs	Final Guidance	12/03/12
Procedural	FDA Oversight of PET Drug Products -- Questions and Answers	Final Guidance	12/03/12
Clinical/Antimicrobial	Vaginal Microbicides: Development for the Prevention of HIV Infection	Draft Guidance	11/21/12
Over-the-Counter; Small Entity Compliance Guide	Labeling for Bronchodilators: Cold, Cough, Allergy, Bronchodilator, and Antiasthmatic Drug Products for Over-the-Counter Human Use (Small Entity Compliance Guide)	Final Guidance	11/14/12
Clinical/Antimicrobial	Guidance for Industry Acute Bacterial Sinusitis: Developing Drugs for Treatment	Final Guidance	10/05/12
International Conference on Harmonisation - Efficacy	E14 Clinical Evaluation of QT/QTc Interval Prolongation and Proarrhythmic Potential for Non-Antiarrhythmic Drugs -- Questions and Answers (RI)	Final Guidance	10/12/12
Clinical/Antimicrobial	Guidance for Industry: Acute Bacterial Otitis Media: Developing Drugs for Treatment	Final Guidance	10/01/12

The Writer's Nook

*Lessons to Write
By: Excerpts
from Writers on
Writing*

THE CRAVEN CONDITIONAL

By William Safire

Many academics, diplomats and television commentators share a favored locution that can be described as "the craven conditional" - the weak-kneed, pompously deferential "it would seem" or "I would say".

...

"Maybe and maybe not" is implicit in "would"; the conditional sense has a wish or a worry built in it. "I would say" or "I would think" means, literally, that the speaker would say or think something "if". In recent years, however, this misuse of "would" has become accepted - even embraced - by avid hesitants.

"It would seem" offers a triple helping of mealy-mouthedness. The construction itself passively attributes responsibility to an indeterminate "it"; the "seem" refers to appearances only; the "would" adds such a further condition as to back the phrase off a cliff. The *Oxford English Dictionary* says the phrase is used to express somewhat more of hesitation or uncertainty than is expressed by "it seems". I would call it a weasel phrase - and not only would I, I do.

...

The phrase you hear on television is intended to carry great authority, not great doubt. It avoids "it seems to me," which is at least an honest weasel.

"Seems Madam? Nay, it is; I know not seems." That was Hamlet speaking, and they said he was ambivalent, though I am of two minds about that. Would that his kind were speaking the indicative unconditional today.

First published in the New York Times then in the collection titled *On Language*, published by Times Books, New York, NY, 1980.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Upcoming Chapter Presentation

Title: Defy Your DNA **Speaker: Stephen Shrewsbury, MD**

When: Sunday, January 20, 11AM – 1:30PM

Where: Michael's at Shoreline
2960 North Shoreline Boulevard, Mountain View, CA 94043
(650) 962-1014

Members: \$25
Non-members: \$30

Register at: <http://ncal012013.eventbrite.com>
If you would like to pay by check please contact me directly (magill_catherine@yahoo.com)
Registration closes at midnight on Thursday, Jan 17, 2013

Sarepta Therapeutics is developing a series of therapeutic oligomers for Duchenne muscular dystrophy. Therapeutic oligomers that are directed to block, or splice switch, messenger-RNA may herald a Golden Age of Medicine and Dr. Shrewsbury has written a book to introduce the subject to the medical, scientific and lay communities who may not be aware of the rapid approach of this exciting new breed of drug. His mission now is to raise awareness about these drugs and how, along with personal genome sequencing, the era of personalized medicine will affect us all.

Dr. Stephen Shrewsbury was formerly Chief Medical Officer at AVI BioPharma (now Sarepta Therapeutics). Stephen is also publications coordinator for the pan-industry think tank, the Oligonucleotide Safety Working Group.

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Upcoming Meetings

April 28-May 1, 2013	Pacific Regional Conference - Pacific Southwest AMWA Chapter	Asilomar Conference Grounds , Pacific Grove, California
May 3-6, 2013	Council of Science Editors Annual Meeting	Montreal, Quebec, Canada
June 23-27, 2013	Drug Information Association 49th Annual Meeting	Boston, Massachusetts
November 6-9, 2013	AMWA's 73rd Annual Conference	Columbus, Ohio

Upcoming Board of Editors in the Life Sciences Exams

Saturday, February 16, 2013, 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Emory University, Atlanta GA
Register by January 26, 2013

Saturday, May 4, 2013, Montreal, Quebec
Location to be announced
Associated meeting: Council of Science Editors
Register by April 13, 2013

*Improving
the quality of
writing actually
improves the
quality of
thought.*

George Gopen and
Judith Swan. *The
Science of Scientific
Writing*. American
Scientist, November-
December 1990.

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Vice-President/President-Elect: Maggie Norris

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Immediate Past President: Nancy Katz

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Contribute to the Pacemaker

Northern California AMWA Chapter Members

We need your input!

- Have you attended a great conference session?
- Do you know of a terrific book that all medical writers should be aware of?
- Would you like to share knowledge on a particular medical topic?
- Do have super tips about software that we writers use?
- Have you heard of great podcasts that we should know about?
- Do you want to share a humorous anecdote about life as a medical writer?

These are just a few of the topics that we want to hear about. If you have something to share with your colleagues or suggestions for the *Pacemaker*, please send them to the editor of the *Pacemaker* at newsletter@amwancal.org. Being featured in the *Pacemaker* impresses your colleagues, bolsters your credentials, and makes you feel good all over.

Thank you!

Caren Harper Rickhoff

Editor, *Pacemaker*