

**December 2016**

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

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

# PACEMAKER

## HIGHLIGHTS

### Letter From the Chapter President

Myrna Faulds details exciting website updates, technology improvements, the “Share the Experience” program, and the chapter’s priority plan.

### Upcoming AMWA Events

Save the date for the January event highlighting trends in oncology drug development.

### Coverage of the Pacific Coast Conference 2016 Open Sessions

Full-length articles covering all 5 open sessions.

### Mummies and Medicine Event

Travel to ancient Egypt.

### Welcome New Members and a North Bay Meet-up in February

### Word Witch Tutorial: GO BACK

Learn how to get back to where left off in your document.

### Tax Tips for Freelancers

Great tips for taking the stress out of taxes and advice about the home office deduction.



# Letter From the President

Dear Chapter Members,

First and foremost, let me thank everyone who has contributed so much to our chapter. During the last several months, it has become ever more apparent to me how the contributions of our volunteers have benefited all of our members.

Our plans for the 2016–2017 year are outlined below and will focus on three activities:

1. Continue to innovate and improve our technology program.
2. Initiate the “Share the Experience” program that focuses on sharing the wealth of experience and knowledge of our esteemed past members have.
3. Continue implementation of the Northern California Chapter Priority Plan.

As always, we encourage *your* participation and feedback. Both are invaluable.

## **Ongoing Technology Program**

Our Communications Committee has been diligently meeting these last 2 years to address our chapter's communications needs. Next year, in support of our chapter's members and addressing the online administration needs of our Board of Directors and Chapter Leaders, we will focus on the following:

- Deployment of an updated website. Wesley Clark is supervising this much-needed transition of our website to WordPress (look for an email announcing the update in the next couple of months).
- Finalization of secure chapter email addresses for all Board Members and Chapter Leaders; see the updated information at [www.amwancal.org/contacts](http://www.amwancal.org/contacts).
- Creation of a central communications forum for our Board of Directors and Chapter Leaders to be launched at time of the new website launch.
- Review and synchronization of chapter storage options, whether online or jump drive-based.

## **Website Update: Share the Experience**

In discussions with medical writers at the AMWA National Conference in Denver in October, a recurring reflection was on the breadth of skill sets and experience that AMWA medical writers possess. From novice to experienced members, AMWA is composed of medical writers who have learned their craft through a variety of educational avenues. I would count as foremost among methods of learning—gleaning tips from fellow medical writers. The history of our chapter's Board of Directors is rife with the stories of members who contributed to our chapter while learning more skills along the way; without these members working for the best interests of all chapter members, we would have a very different AMWA.

The beginning of the year, early February in fact, will see a new History page launched as part of a website overhaul. The History page will detail information on past Northern California Chapter Board of Directors. In honor of tireless behind-the-scenes work, let us remember yesterday's voices as we make our way forward; it can make for a more informed future. In recognition that there is no communication that can yet replace face-to-face communication, we invite long-standing and novice members alike to join us and share their stories at upcoming chapter Meet-ups or other planned events. Our history: It starts with communication.

*Continued on the next page*

# Letter From the President (concluded)

## **Northern California Chapter Priority Plan**

During this year's summer social, Caren Rickhoff, our Immediate Past President, outlined several long-term strategies that will greatly benefit our chapter. In recognition and respect for her work, and not wishing to reinvent the wheel, we will be instituting Caren's prioritized chapter plans next year. A 1-year tenure for a President is hardly any time at all in the long run. With our combined support over the next several years, the outlined plans can become our reality and make our chapter the bellwether we know it to be. The plan outlines roles and responsibilities that include managing current activities more efficiently and initiating new activities that will expand the knowledge base of our members and provide additional learning, networking, and volunteer opportunities.

I have found it a truism that with greater personal involvement come greater benefits. What may start out as small separate efforts can catch fire and come together with the force of relevance. On behalf of this year's Board of Directors, I invite each of you to join one of the chapter committees listed on our website's contact page and make your impact. All chapter work is 100 percent volunteer, conducted with our members uppermost in mind. With your support and help, we can make the kind of difference that is ours to make.

Together we are powerful. We always have been.

It is an honor to be the incoming President for the Northern California Chapter of AMWA.

Your input is kindly requested and hugely appreciated. Please do not hesitate to contact me.

Myrna Faulds

## Chapter Board of Directors 2016-2017

### **Elected Officers**

President: Myrna Faulds  
Immediate Past President: Caren Rickhoff  
Vice President/President-Elect: Nancy Katz  
Secretary: Barbara Arnoldussen  
Treasurer: Catherine Magill

**Congratulations to our new  
Vice President, Nancy Katz!**



### **Advisory Council**

Program Co-Chairs: Barbara Boughton, Caren Rickhoff  
Newsletter Editors: Nicola Gillespie, Michele Anderson  
Jobs List Administrator: Alexa Meehan  
Membership Chair: Arushi Sinha  
Communications Committee Chair: Suzanne Canada  
Communications Committee: Mimi Wessling, Nicola Gillespie, Michele Anderson  
Outreach Chair: Open  
Nominating Committee Chair: Open  
Past President: Maggie Norris

## Letter From the Editors

We are so pleased to be the new editors of the Pacemaker. Nicola worked as a veterinarian before transitioning to a career as a medical writer and editor, and Michele has come to medical writing after a career in newspaper publishing and law (from which she is, thankfully, retired).

We want the Pacemaker to educate our members on the latest scientific advances, regulations, and best practices for medical communication as well as to provide technology, writing and editing, and publication tips. We also aim to encourage involvement and participation among our members by sharing networking, social, and educational events in the pages of this newsletter.

Our goal is to publish the Pacemaker at least 3 times a year, and we will need contributions from our members to make that happen. Please send us your ideas for articles or volunteer to write about one of our events.

Best regards,  
Nicola and Michele  
[pacemaker.editor@amwancal.org](mailto:pacemaker.editor@amwancal.org)

## AMWA Events and Education

### Northern California Chapter Events

#### **Trends in Oncology Drug Development**

January 28, 2017 • Luncheon and presentation

*Michaels at Shoreline • Mountain View, CA*

#### **North Bay Meet-Up**

February 25, 2017 • 3 PM

*Marin Brewing Company • Larkspur, CA*

### Other AMWA Chapter Events

#### **Delaware Valley Chapter Freelance Workshop**

March 18, 2017

<http://www.amwa-dvc.org/>

#### **Pacific Southwest Chapter Conference**

April 22, 2017

Costa Mesa, CA

### AMWA Live Webinars

#### **Five Easy Steps to Making the Ethical Right Choice**

January 18, 2017

10:00-11:00 AM PST • Available free to AMWA members

[Archived On-Demand Webinars are available online.](#)

# AMWA Pacific Coast Conference (PCC) 2016

## 10 Things Every Medical Writer Needs to Know About Regulatory Publishing

### Speakers

Stacia Higman, BA, CPIM

*Higman Graphics—General Publishing; San Francisco, CA*

Caren Rickhoff, BA, MWC

*Principal Medical Writing Consultant, MedGraphica Medical Writing Services; Sunnyvale, CA*

*By Nicola Gillespie, DVM*

Stacia Higman and Caren Rickhoff used their combined expertise and experience in the pharmaceutical industry to highlight 10 best practices for writers preparing regulatory documents. Working closely with the publisher, asking questions, and establishing expectations early in the writing process can help writers avoid problems at the time of publication.

#### 1. Confirm the Microsoft Word Versions and Computer Platforms in Use

Use one version of Word and one platform (either PC, Mac, or enterprise system) to avoid corrupted documents.

#### 2. Talk to the Publishing Group Early in the Process

Try to set up a meeting with the person who will be publishing your document, whether an in-house or external publisher. Confirm the use of templates and any specifications to be followed (standard margins, page number locations, header and footer information).

#### 3. Use Hyperlinks

Hyperlinks are required for electronic submissions. Rickhoff recommended summarizing in the text and linking to the details where reasonable; that is, don't repeat detailed data lists. Higman advised writers to consider sentence structure and place hyperlinks at the end of the sentence. Generally, the writer creates internal inks (to in-text tables, figures, and other sections within the file or references) or must at least indicate where these links need to be placed. Using the "insert cross-reference" feature in Microsoft Word creates bookmarks when the document is converted to PDF. The publisher usually creates the external or across-document links.

#### 4. Be Aware: ICH ≠ eCTD

The International Council of Harmonisation (ICH) E3 Guideline for Clinical Study Reports does not always fit with the electronic Common Technical Document (eCTD). Work with the publisher to find a place for the parts of the document that don't have a strict category. Also consult the CORE Reference available online.

#### 5. Follow Standard Cross-Referencing Practices

Rickhoff stressed consistency in the terminology used for cross references. Make sure to be clear with references and carefully list which tables, figures, or sections should be linked.

#### 6. Know Your Template

Try to get a lesson from the company that created the template. One key aspect of the template is the instructional text that is hidden; the writer or publisher must delete this text. The other key aspect of templates is the boilerplate text (suggested headings and prewritten text), and the fixed set of styles (for consistent formatting). These styles are based on regulator requirements.

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# AMWA Pacific Coast Conference (PCC) 2016

## 10 Things Every Medical Writer Needs to Know About Regulatory Publishing (concluded)

### 7. Use Styles, Use Styles, Use Styles

Rickhoff and Higman could not stress this point enough. Writers should always use the styles provided in the template. If the template does not include styles, contact a colleague familiar with regulatory publishing requirements for recommendations for the best approach.

### 8. Practice Safe “Copy and Paste” Habits

Do not copy the paragraph sign because it brings over specifications for style and imports those into your document. Some situations do allow for pasting formatted text, such as figures and references.

### 9. Convert Your Document to PDF

This allows you to find and fix problems before you deliver the document to the publisher. Even if you are unable to fix the problems, you can point them out to the publisher. Convert a Word document to PDF by choosing Save-As then PDF as format. Under options, be sure to click “create bookmark” using “headings.”

### 10. Collaborate

Rickhoff and Higman concluded their talk by emphasizing, “No medical writer is an island.” Regulatory submissions require writers and publishers to combine their expertise and work together to prepare successful documents.

## Resources

- ICH M2 EWG Electronic Common Technical Document Specification ICH eCTD Specification V 3.2.2 July 2008, Appendix 7
- Portable Document Format (PDF) Specifications, Technical Specifications Document, September 2014 [This Document is incorporated by reference into the following Guidance Document(s): Guidance for Industry Providing Regulatory Submissions in Electronic Format – Certain Human Pharmaceutical Product Applications and Related Submissions Using the eCTD Specifications]
- ICH M2 EWG The eCTD Backbone File Specification for Study Tagging Files V2.6.1 June 2008, iii.Study-document and doc-content elements
- Guidance for Industry: Providing Regulatory Submissions in Electronic Format – Certain Human Pharmaceutical Product Applications and Related Submissions Using the eCTD Specifications. Revision 3. FDA. May 2015
- Draft guides in comment phase:
  - ICH M8 Expert Working Group, ICH eCTD v4.0 Implementation Package, DRAFT Specification for Submission Formats v.2.0, November 13, 2014
  - M8 Electronic Common Technical Document (eCTD) v4.0, Draft Implementation Guide v2.0 November 13, 2014
- The CORE Reference: this reference is a user manual to help medical writers navigate relevant guidelines as they create clinical study report (CSR) content relevant for today’s studies
  - General website: <http://www.core-reference.org>
  - The CORE Reference: [http://www.core-reference.org/media/1032/core-reference-v1\\_o.pdf](http://www.core-reference.org/media/1032/core-reference-v1_o.pdf)
  - The Mapping Tool: [http://www.core-reference.org/media/1031/core-reference-ich-e3-mapping-tool-v1\\_o.pdf](http://www.core-reference.org/media/1031/core-reference-ich-e3-mapping-tool-v1_o.pdf)

# AMWA Pacific Coast Conference (PCC) 2016

## What You Should Know About Data Transparency and an ICH E3 Update

Speaker

Nancy Katz, PhD, MWC

*President and Principal Medical Writing Consultant, Illyria Consulting Group, Inc.; Soda Springs, CA*

*By Suzanne Canada, PhD*

Nancy Katz presented an overview of the history of changes in reporting clinical trial data, the latest of which were proposed early this year. These changes require de-identified data to be shared on public registries in order to publish the trial results. Of course, over time there has been a trend towards more public access to everything, so it is no surprise that the results of clinical trials—a highly regulated arena—would be subject to the same scrutiny.

- FDAAA Title III Clinical trial database (2007): This US law requires registration of trials on a public database. This is enforced by penalties for filing false claims, possible loss of grant funding, and public notices of noncompliance.
- NIH Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (2014): This requires clinical trial sponsors to submit results data about unapproved products, and required more patient-friendly information to be disclosed. These provisions are still being implemented
- Institute of Medicine Recommendations on the sharing of clinical trial data (2015): This report makes recommendations on responsibilities, what data should be shared, and how.
- PhRMA and EFPIA joint principles on clinical data sharing (2015): Industry groups support clinical trial data sharing.
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Bill (2015): The US Congress has approved the bill, which states “registered users will be allowed access to de-identified clinical trial data.”
- EU Clinical Trials Register: The EU version of the clinical trials register run by the EMA.
- EMA policy 0043: Effective 2010, this policy makes the contents of CSRs available upon request.
- EMA policy 0070: The Policy says that the EMA will disclose the information in CSRs for new MAAs after making a decision; allows redaction of confidential information (implemented in 2015).
- ICJME data-sharing proposal (January 2016): This proposal requires authors to share de-identified individual patient data no later than 6 months after publication. It also requires authors include a data-sharing plan as a component of the clinical trial registration.

The WHO issued a statement calling for increased transparency in April 2015, and new EU clinical trial regulations have been rolled after April 2016.

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# AMWA Pacific Coast Conference (PCC) 2016

## What You Should Know About Data Transparency and an ICH E3 Update (concluded)

What are the takeaways from all this information?

1. Clinical trial reporting takes a lot of planning: sponsors need to plan for how to share this information.
2. Recognize that CSR information is being viewed publicly and there is a need to manage those expectations of disclosure.
3. Sponsors should establish policies and procedures for managing this requirement, making sure that all information is adequately reviewed and prepared for sharing.
4. We will need to monitor and assess the evolving landscape of public disclosure.

Naturally, attendees had a lot of questions about how sponsors would share information anonymously, as this could have a big impact on the expectations and workload of medical writers who work on clinical trials in any context.

Suzanne Canada, a past president of our chapter, is the Communications Committee Chair and a longtime member of AMWA.

*Save the Date!*

Pacific Southwest Chapter Conference  
Costa Mesa, CA

April 22, 2017





# AMWA Pacific Coast Conference (PCC) 2016

## **LinkedIn: How to Maximize Your Visibility**

Speaker

Andrew Davis

*Synergistech Communications; San Francisco, CA*

*By Almas Shabvani*

Andrew Davis gave a very informative presentation on how to make the most of your LinkedIn account. LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network that uses a social media model. Most of us think of LinkedIn as a job board or an online resume database, but its content is more organized and deeper. This is why hiring managers and recruiters often visit LinkedIn long before they post job opportunities. Mr. Davis's presentation highlighted many lesser-known features of LinkedIn and the best ways to utilize them to your advantage. For example, tweaking your profile by using the 120 characters allowed under your name will attract the attention of hiring managers and recruiters. This is also a good place to put your email and other contact information.

LinkedIn profiles should be more detailed, and less formal, than your resume because you can include additional information in a more engaging way (especially by using multimedia files and links to portfolio sites). The more content you include in your profile, the more likely you are to be found by those who can benefit you. Include your picture or *any* picture because profiles with pictures get 80 percent more hits. Recommendations by peers and managers also boost your search ranking immensely. Joining groups is another effective way of connecting. You can build your credibility by contributing to and learning about a specific topic.

Finally, the most important tip from this presentation was, as Davis says, "good things happen to those who are connected." So check your network for in-house connections at a potential employer. Use those connections to get the inside track or even ask to have a good word put in the manager's ear! The hiring manager may also ask your connections at the company for a candid opinion about you and your work.

So let's get linked-in!

Almas Shabvani has her BS degree in Respiratory Care and Medical Technology. Almas is a new member of AMWA, and she is interested in writing about topics related to respiratory care and pulmonary medicine. She enjoys poetry and singing, and she performs locally at Indian and Pakistani events. She can be contacted at [irecruit2@yahoo.com](mailto:irecruit2@yahoo.com).

# AMWA Pacific Coast Conference (PCC) 2016

## PLOS (The Public Library of Science)

### Speaker

Sara Kassabian, MS

Communications Associate at PLOS; San Francisco, CA

By Nicola Gillespie, DVM

Social media was in the spotlight at one of the PCC Conference sessions this year. Speaker Sara Kassabian began the open session by explaining the history and mission of PLOS (the Public Library of Science), a nonprofit open-access publisher founded in 2001. PLOS's mission is "to accelerate progress in science and medicine by leading a transformation in research communication."

In 2003, PLOS became a publisher and advocacy organization "committed to making the world's scientific and medical literature an accessible public resource." All articles published by PLOS are peer-reviewed and freely available under a CCBY license. The 7 PLOS journals include: *PLOS ONE*, *PLOS Biology*, *PLOS Medicine*, *PLOS Computational Biology*, *PLOS Genetics*, *PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases*, and *PLOS Pathogens*. PLOS also curates content into PLOS Collections and publishes *PLOS Currents*.

*PLOS ONE* is the largest open-access scientific journal. The *PLOS ONE* mandate is to publish all scientific research that is technically sound, regardless of the novelty of the research. For example, although other journals may reject inconclusive results, *PLOS ONE* publishes them to build upon the scientific literature. Negative, null, and inconclusive results are included in the *PLOS ONE* "Missing Pieces" Collection.

As the communications associate at PLOS, Kassabian explained how she works with PLOS Blogs and PLOS social media, including promoting the publisher's presence on Facebook, Twitter, and reddit. However, her quick survey of the audience members revealed that most of them were not using Twitter or reddit. She then began her social media tutorial.

Twitter, she explained, is a free online social networking service that allows members to post short messages called tweets. Tweets are limited to 140 characters and can include hyperlinks and photos. Reddit is a social news aggregation and discussion website where users (known as redditors) write posts and vote on the content. The posts with the most positive votes move up to the top of the page. Reddit is sometimes called an electronic bulletin board, which is divided into areas of interest or "subreddits."

Kassabian then discussed how Twitter and reddit are used to share science content with the public. PLOS works with reddit to produce PLOS Science Wednesday, a weekly series of live chats with PLOS authors, called "Ask Me Anything" sessions (AMAs) on reddit (r/science). Reddit users can ask authors questions and anyone with an Internet connection can read along. PLOS Science Wednesday allows researchers to showcase their work and interact with other scientists, including many early career researchers, and nonscientists with curiosity about the topic.

To conclude the session, Kassabian encouraged the audience to take a look at the PLOS Blogs platform and to join in on the weekly PLOS Science Wednesday AMAs, hosted weekly from 1-2 PM ET on reddit.

### Resources

<https://plos.org/who-we-are> Accessed October 31, 2016.

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-world-s-largest-2-way-dialogue-between-scientists-and-the-public/>. Accessed November 28, 2016

PLOS Science Wednesday AMAs: [www.reddit.com/search?q=PLOS+Science+Wednesday+](http://www.reddit.com/search?q=PLOS+Science+Wednesday+)

PLOS Blogs: <http://www.blogs.plos.org>

# AMWA Pacific Coast Conference (PCC) 2016

## Who Goes There? The Need to Define the Profession of Medical Writing

Speaker

Tom Lang, MA

*Tom Lang Communications and Training International*

*By Nicola Gillespie, DVM*

Tom Lang opened this PCC conference session by explaining that we cannot support and promote our professional identity without first adequately defining it. He also asked, “Have we adequately questioned our assumptions about writing?”

In the first part of the session, Lang described the history of writing instruction in the United States. Initially, literature professors taught grammar and writing through the study of Greek and Latin literature. After the Civil War, American literature replaced Greek and Latin, but English was still taught by literature professors, and proper grammar became the mark of an educated person. Between the 1960s and 1980s, the teaching of writing was separated from the study of literature. Increasingly, part-time faculty or graduate students taught the writing classes. To survive professionally, composition instructors marketed their classes as general courses serving all other disciplines and began to develop writing instruction as a profession in itself.

Current writing instruction in high school and college, says Lang, is insufficient training for medical writing. Educators do not have enough time, training, or motivation to teach writing competently; students are not writing enough to develop expertise; and many assignments are unrelated to the writing required after college. Students write for an audience of one, who knows more about the topic than the student knows, and who has no functional interest in the writing. In other words, the flow of information is backward and the opposite of what is required of medical-technical writing.

Lang recommended that AMWA begin to provide additional training in the form of “deliberate practice” to develop truly expert writer and editors. Deliberate practice involves prolonged, intense efforts in writing, analyzing, and revising a text. To develop real skill, students have to perform beyond their comfort zone, and revise their texts several times, each time making it clearer, better, and shorter, all under the guidance of a mentor with high and uncompromising standards.

In the second part of the session, Lang noted that scientific-technical writing differs from literary, creative, and popular writing in its purpose, style, and evaluation criteria. As a result, scientific-technical writing requires different skills. According to Lang, in contrast to literary and academic writing, scientific-technical writing is not about the writer: it’s about the content. Scientific-technical writing should be judged not by what someone thinks about the writing or the writer but by how well readers understand, find, remember, and use the information.

Lang highlighted two common misconceptions of medical writing. First is the assumption that the authors of the thoughts or ideas must also be the ones who express these thoughts in writing. Medical-technical writers typically—and appropriately—document the research and discoveries of others precisely because the development of content can be separated from its presentation in writing. Lang stressed, “We are the professionals who bridge the gap between those who create information and those who use it.” The second misconception is that medical-technical writing is limited to communicating in words, which neglects the importance of communicating with tables, graphs, and images.

*Continued on the next page*

# AMWA Pacific Coast Conference (PCC) 2016

## **Who Goes There? The Need to Define the Profession of Medical Writing (continued)**

According to Lang, typical definitions of medical writing define the profession as essentially “writing about medicine,” which neither identifies the defining characteristics of medical-technical writing (that is it functional writing) nor adequately describes what we do. He proposed the following definition:

“Medical writing is the craft of efficiently and effectively communicating and documenting in words, tables, graphs, photographs, and cinematic images the information needed to develop and use health care technologies by preparing individualized and standard communications that provide specific information, formatted for a specific medium, to help a specific audience achieve a specific purpose; communications that are designed to help audiences understand, find, remember, and use this information.”

Lang concluded his session by saying that, to have a profession, “we need to perceive ourselves—and be perceived as—trained, expert writers and editors who communicate about science and medicine and not as physicians, scientists, or poets who coincidentally write about topics in the life sciences.”

### **Additional Reading**

Lang T. Medical Writing Up Close and Professional: Establishing Our Identity. *AMWA J.* 2015;30 (1):10-17.

Nicola Gillespie, an AMWA member for just over 1 year, is a veterinarian who transitioned to a career in medical writing and editing. She works as a freelance writer and editor and writes articles about science, medicine, and animals for her website. Nicola enjoys running, cooking, and spending time with her husband and 2 children. You can contact Nicola at [nicolagillespiedvm@gmail.com](mailto:nicolagillespiedvm@gmail.com) or through her website [www.nicolagillespiedvm.com](http://www.nicolagillespiedvm.com)

## CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

We need volunteers to fill our Outreach Chair and Nominating Committee Chair positions. Volunteering doesn't take much time, and it is a great way to give back to our chapter, meet other members, and learn something new.

**Help the Northern California AMWA Chapter be the best it can be!**

# Mummies and Medicine

By Carla Johnson, DVM

Carla Johnson works as a small animal emergency and day practice veterinarian, and she is relatively new to the field of medical writing. She has been a member of AMWA for the past year, has completed her AMWA Essential Skills Certificate, and is working on her Composition and Publication Certificate. Carla is an avid runner, reader, gardener, painter, and equestrian. She can be contacted at [drcarlapetvet@gmail.com](mailto:drcarlapetvet@gmail.com)



This summer, Suzanne Canada and Mimi Wessling orchestrated a quick getaway to ancient Egypt. In August, several Northern California Chapter members and their guests met at the Legion of Honor museum in San Francisco to enjoy the Mummies and Medicine exhibit. Two mummies, over 2500 years old, were displayed in their actual form, along with 3D CT scan images and an interactive virtual dissection program that allowed us to see inside the remains. A team of scientists, Egyptologists, physicians, and museum curators offered interpretations of the mummies' lives and deaths and the painstaking post-mortem preparations for the afterworld. We examined artifacts from the tombs while catching up with old friends and meeting new members.

At our own pace, we perused the much larger Legion of Honor Collection of Fine Arts. Many Dutch, Flemish, and French painters were highlighted. Strange and beautiful porcelain pieces, sculptures by Rodin, ornately carved 18th- and 19th-century English furniture, and paintings by Van Gogh, Manet, and Toulouse-Lautrec were included. Some of us stayed to check out the other exhibits like California BookWorks, the Wild West, and Greco-Roman Pottery.

Afterward, most of us met to network, chat, and laugh over delicious coffees, desserts, and lunch at the Legion of Honor Café. The bees in the garden drove us inside, but the atmosphere and spirit were lighthearted and relaxed. We also included our significant others in the fun. The two "Dans" stole the show with their identical T-shirts and matching personalities and interests. It was a great experience for all involved and a perfect venue to welcome new members into the Chapter.

Photograph courtesy of Myrna Faulds

## Tell Us What You Are Reading

We would like to devote a section of our newsletter to interesting books our members are reading. If you have a book to recommend, please send us book reviews or even just a few sentences about why you liked the book.

Please email [pacemaker.editor@amwancal.org](mailto:pacemaker.editor@amwancal.org)



# Welcome New Members



## NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER



Lori Dixon  
Tracey Gant  
Xiaobing Tan  
Guoping Su  
Tonia Buchholz  
Rebecca Vilevac  
Vidya Schalk  
Kathryn Stromberg  
Anna Herrera  
Catherine Woods  
Lisa Accettola  
Jessica Cheng  
Carol Hartland  
Amy Rundle  
Leia Harper  
Ryan Coyle

Natalie Marino  
Eileen Kim  
Judith Frederick  
Rhodora DeLeon  
Dheepika Weerasinghe  
Sarva Lal  
Rachel Alt  
Divna Rosenzweig  
Viviana Davila-Bhatia  
Elizabeth Little  
Sabina Hoque  
Carolyn Doyle  
Adela Ramirez-Torres  
Jennifer Ham  
Kathy Wang

David Ryan  
Kristina Gilkey  
Natalie DeWitt  
Rosy Pegu-DSouza  
Wesley Clark  
Jeyanthi Ramasubbu  
Jaena Gurley  
Jin Cui  
Jessica Beifuss  
Keith Joseph  
Erica von Studnitz  
Monique Semp  
Tomasina Barton  
Michele Anderson  
Paul Miller



Please join us!

Our next Meet-up will be at the

**Marin Brewing Company (Larkspur, CA) on February 25, 2017 at 3 PM**

Meet-ups are a great way to socialize and network with members

# Word Witch Tutorial: GO BACK

By Maggie Norris, BSc, ELS

Maggie Norris, a past president of our chapter, is a long-time member of AMWA.



Who likes scrolling around in a long complex document looking for the place you just left? Who likes watching other people do that? Nobody? I thought so.

Editing and reviewing complex documents often requires that you move to another page or section, eg, to check some detail, and then return to the previous insertion point to continue editing. In this tutorial, I show you two quick tricks to move the cursor back to the exact point you moved away from. These techniques are efficient for editing and even more so during review meetings, when several busy people are counting on you to make good use of their time.

## Basics

**F-keys (Function keys)** numbered 1 through 12 or higher, are found in a row along the top of the keyboard. Alone or in combination with the modifier keys (**Ctrl**, **Alt**, **Sh**, and the rest), **F-keys** provide a fast and ergonomic way to execute dozens of commands. It's the *only* way for some very useful commands, including **Go Back**.

## Procedure

Here's how to **go back** instantly: no scrolling, no searching, and no screen flipping.

Tap **Sh + F5** to return the cursor to its immediately previous location.

This command (**Go Back**) can be executed *only* with this F-key combination. There is no menu or ribbon command. There's not even an icon you can place on the QAT (Quick Access Toolbar). But **Sh + F5** is so fast and easy, who needs another way?

Be aware, as always, that Word is extremely literal: If you perform any operation at the second insertion point (where you went to check that detail), like enter text or fix a typing error, **Sh + F5** will go back to the second insertion point (possibly only 2 characters away). Another **Sh + F5** may go back to the first insertion point, or it may not.

**Power user tip:** Tap **Sh + F5** immediately after you open a file to jump the cursor to its location when you closed the file; ie, where you stopped. This works whether you closed the file yesterday or a year ago.

## Go Back from a hyperlink target

There is an exception: **Go Back (Sh + F5)** doesn't go back after you have used an internal hyperlink (a hyperlink to a target in the same file, eg, a cross-referenced heading or a bookmark in the List of References). For that, there's another key command.

From the hyperlink target, tap **Alt + ←** (left arrow key) to return the cursor to its previous location.

This command simplifies the otherwise tedious and frustrating task of checking the hyperlinks.

# Tax Tips for Freelancers Presentation

*By Barbara Boughton*

Barbara is a medical writer and editor who has worked in health and medical communications for over 20 years. She is the co-author of a consumer health book on cancer prevention called *Reduce Your Cancer Risk: Twelve Steps to a Healthier Life*, published by Demos Health and the American Cancer Society in 2010. Barbara has been an active member of AMWA for 12 years.

## **Speaker: Joshua Cooper, CPA; President, Tax Lovin'—An Accountancy Corporation**

The Northern California Chapter of the American Medical Writers Association met for a brunch, networking, and educational presentation titled **Tax Savings for Freelancers** on Saturday, September 17th, at the Delancey Street Restaurant in San Francisco. Joshua Cooper, CPA, who gives presentations on this topic throughout the United States, was the invited guest lecturer and tax expert. Cooper, who is also a yoga teacher, specializes in taxes for freelance contractors, and his presentations often center around making taxes as stress free as possible.

Cooper began his presentation in an unexpected fashion by having the audience do a deep-breathing exercise. Then he led the audience in a humorous chant of “Profit and loss: my applesauce.” The take-home message for the audience was that although taxes are serious business, taxes should also be approached with a sense of enjoyment—if at all possible.

To be effective at doing your taxes means more than just finding tax deductions, Cooper said. Since it's easy to get overwhelmed by the task, one should start by creating a “powerful work environment” for accounting work—one that should reduce stress. That means making your work space as pleasant as possible through aesthetics, aroma, and even rituals. Cooper gave the example of his own work space, where he uses a lavender diffuser for stress relief.

Doing taxes starts with obtaining financial clarity—not just about your income, tax burden, and expenses—but also about your various revenue streams, Cooper said. Many freelance writers and editors make their living from a number of different clients, and in some cases, from different sorts of clients. So it's important to accurately track your income—and the different sources of that income—in order to calculate your estimated taxes and identify tax deductions.

Cooper also discussed tax deductions in detail, including deductions such as office supplies, office equipment, office rent, and the use of a home office. While deducting home-office expenses used to be a red flag for auditors, that's no longer the case, Cooper noted. The home office deduction can actually save you a significant amount of money, so it's important to take this deduction if you actually use your living space for freelance work. Yet it's also crucial that you take the home office deduction only for the amount of space you actually use. The reason? The IRS has access to property records that include the square footage for your address, and these records help the IRS flag home office deductions that are too large.

Cooper also discussed income tax deductions that most people don't take—usually because they don't realize that the deductions are valid. One example is meals and entertainment during events where you will spend at least part of your time networking. Even though you may not spend your entire time at an entertainment event working, you may be able to take part of the cost of attending that event as a deduction. If you spend at least part of the time at an entertainment event networking or talking with clients, then part of the cost is also a valid tax deduction. The same goes for travel. Travel that is partly personal and partly work related can be taken as a tax deduction—as long as you take a deduction just for the portion of your time that you actually spent working.

*Continued on the next page*



# Tax Tips for Freelancers Presentation (concluded)

It's vital to keep good records of your income and expenses, even if you hire a bookkeeper, according to Cooper. To really know if your bookkeeper is effective, you also should familiarize yourself with the tasks involved in bookkeeping for your business. And the best way to accomplish this feat is to do your own bookkeeping for at least several months.

Cooper also talked about the different types of business entities that freelancers can form to do business. While forming an LLC is right for some freelancers, the stiff \$800 yearly fee that California charges should make you think twice, Cooper said. You may be able to get just as much liability protection for your business—and do it more cheaply—by purchasing business liability insurance, he noted.

## Summer Social

Caren Rickhoff and her husband, Dan, were the generous hosts of a delightful summer gathering for the chapter members. We enjoyed delicious food and great conversation while relaxing among Caren's beautiful flowers. New and long-time chapter members attended this wonderful event to share stories and celebrate new and cherished friendships.



# The 2016 AMWA Medical Writing & Communication Conference

## Denver, Colorado



The 2016 AMWA Medical Writing and Communication Conference had it all—workshops, great open sessions, invigorating keynote speakers, and a beautiful mountain backdrop.

The Northern California Chapter was well represented with 43 members in attendance. Many new and long-time chapter members enjoyed our chapter dinner at Monroe's Restaurant. We welcomed new members, shared what we had learned at the conference so far, and planned future chapter events and activities.



## Medical Writing & Communication Conference

NOVEMBER 1-4 | ORLANDO, FL

*Trends and Opportunities for Medical Communicators*

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## CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

### **Alliance for Continuing Education in the Health Professions**

January 26-29, 2017

San Francisco, CA

[www.acehp.org](http://www.acehp.org)

### **American Association for the Advancement of Science**

February 16-20, 2017

Boston, MA

<http://meetings.aaas.org>

### **DIA 2017**

June 18-22, 2017

Chicago, IL

[www.diaglobal.org](http://www.diaglobal.org)

### **Council of Science Editors Annual Meeting**

May 20-23, 2017

San Diego, CA

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