



President's Address

By Thomas Gegeny, MS, ELS, 2009-2010 AMWA President

Friends and colleagues in AMWA, I am deeply honored to be standing before you today in service to this great organization. Little did I know, when I joined AMWA in 1998, that 11 years later I would be charged with leading this association of talented, dedicated, and passionate professionals. My charge is to continue to help this organization fulfill a mission that has been the source of our goals and activities since AMWA's inception almost 70 years ago. AMWA's mission is to promote excellence in medical communication and provide education and resources to support that goal.

Indeed, through the vision and hard work of so many members, AMWA has been advancing the standards, educational opportunities, and awareness of this honorable profession for decades. AMWA remains the leading organization for professional medical and health science communicators. Still, our profession faces challenges—the rapid expansion of a global medical communications industry, a lack of general understanding of our value and legitimacy in the increasingly collaborative process of scientific research, and an expectation (both internally and externally) that we must raise the bar in terms of education and ethics.

As an organization, AMWA has been rapidly adapting to these and other challenges. AMWA has grown in numbers as well: in less than a decade, the membership has increased by 20%—reaching its highest level in the most recent fiscal year. Our educational program continues to be a cornerstone of our efforts to provide essential education in core skill sets as well as leading-edge and advanced topics pertinent to our profession. A few years ago, AMWA introduced its Science Fundamentals certificate program, which has been met with enthusiastic support and participation. Now, in the coming months, AMWA will roll out an unprecedented expansion of its educational certificate program—built on the model envisaged nearly 30 years ago by several of our own pioneers in AMWA.

This expanded educational program will allow for more certificates to be earned as part of continuing professional development and will incorporate an ethics component into every certificate achieved. For sev-

eral years, AMWA members have requested more educational opportunities, and we have heard numerous calls to further develop the breadth and depth of our offerings. By now, you may have heard about this change in the *AMWA Update*, and you will find more details in an article in the March issue of the *AMWA Journal*. The expansion of the educational program is the product of extensive efforts by Susan Aiello, Larry Liberti, and many other AMWA volunteers, not to mention AMWA staff. Furthermore, the latest AMWA self-study module, on the topic of statistics, has recently been released. This is the fourth module in a series of core workshops that can now be taken remotely for AMWA certificate credit by sending in an evaluation exam. These modules, and the others in the AMWA pipeline, represent a means for providing education regardless of geographic or other challenges.

Another initiative, about which you will hear in the coming months, involves a new offering to be called *AMWA Pocket Trainings*. These short, informational overviews and tutorials will cover a variety of interesting topics for professional medical communicators, from useful software features or applications to basic how-to discussions on various aspects of medical communication work. The content will cover a variety of formats from PDF documents, to slides, to actual multimedia/podcasts. This effort is being taken up by a subcommittee of the Web and Internet Technology (WIT) Committee and will eventually become a member-driven vehicle for sharing timely and useful information with AMWA colleagues.

Yet, with all of our forward thinking and looking ahead, we must not forget our storied past. Not only now, but for decades to come, AMWA members ought to know about the genesis and roots of our unique association—the people who built AMWA to where it is today. Many of those individuals are with us; sadly some are not. Past efforts by Barb Good and others provided us with some key historical information, which can be found on the AMWA Web site (www.amwa.org). Now is the time to take this even



further as the association prepares to mark three-quarters of a century. A task force for the AMWA History Project has been formed and will continue its work during my administration. Written histories, as well as oral histories and interviews, are now being gathered. The AMWA History Project will not only describe key events and happenings as told by AMWA members but will also seek to archive and index the many books, photographs, and other materials kept at AMWA headquarters, some of which could be incorporated into the final historical work. Please participate and spread the word.

Clearly, medical communicators both within and outside of the United States recognize the critical role AMWA plays in advancing our profession, not only from our works today but from a rich history of past accomplishments. Improved use and application of technology increasingly defines our world, and AMWA must continue to explore new ways to disseminate knowledge, enhance communication among members, and reinforce ethical principles to medical communicators and related stakeholders around the world. In reality, AMWA is just one group within a much larger community of medical communicators, and our association must continue to grow in its leadership role to ensure the honorable and ethical evolution of this profession.

Thank you for placing your trust in me and the rest of AMWA's leadership to plan for the future, engage the challenges of the present, and build on the accomplishments of the past. In an organization such as AMWA, progress happens in every corner, wherever members come together to further our educational mission and advance the profession. AMWA members are innovators, problem-solvers,

and generous providers of both time and resources. This year, I have asked several individuals to serve alongside me as members of the 2009–2010 Executive Committee (EC). I am honored that they have agreed to assist me with furthering a vision to move AMWA forward and make it an even better professional association for our members. Please allow me to introduce the 2009–2010 EC of AMWA. These volunteers will devote their time, intellect, and creativity to take this organization forward as we meet challenges, surpass expectations, and build upon the good work of so many others in previous years.

Immediate Past President: Cindy Hamilton, PharmD, ELS

An AMWA member since 1984, Cindy credits AMWA for her ability to run a freelance business in her home in Virginia Beach. She worked her way up through the organization and joined the EC in 2001, first as Administrator of Chapters, followed by Annual Conference Administrator and then Treasurer for 4 years. She was honored with AMWA Fellowship in 2005. Having completed her term as President, she automatically becomes Immediate Past President. Cindy enjoys leading workshops and has chaired several task forces. One of these task forces developed the AMWA Position Statement on Acknowledging the Contributions of Medical Writers to Scientific Publications, which was adopted in 2002. Cindy promotes the statement by speaking to members of AMWA, the Drug Information Association, and the Council of Science Editors. Cindy holds a BS degree in pharmacy from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a PharmD degree from the University of the Sciences in



The 2009-2010 AMWA Executive Committee

Front row, left to right: Catherine Magill, Melanie Fridl Ross, Tom Gegeny, Mary Royer, Cindy Hamilton, and Judi Pepin.

Back row, left to right: Larry Liberti, Steve Palmer, Faith Reidenbach, Barbara Snyder, Donna Miceli, Tami Ball, Doug Haneline, and Donna Munari, AMWA Executive Director.

Philadelphia. She has written more than 50 publications, including articles in peer-reviewed medical journals, book chapters, and books.

President Elect: Melanie Fridl Ross, MSJ, ELS

Melanie has been a member of AMWA since 1996 and will serve as President-Elect. She has been a member of AMWA's EC since 2003, serving as Public Relations Administrator, Publications Administrator, 2006 Annual Conference Administrator, and Chapters/Membership Administrator. She was awarded AMWA Fellowship in 2008. She also chairs AMWA's History Task Force. In addition, she was a member of the 2006–2007 Science Curriculum Task Force and served as President of the Florida Chapter in 2002–2003. In her non-AMWA life, Melanie is Director and Senior Medical Writer/Editor at the University of Florida (UF) Health Science Center's Office of News & Communications in Gainesville, FL. She also produces the award-winning radio program "Health in a Heartbeat," which airs on public radio affiliates in 18 states and in Washington, DC. She is on the adjunct faculty at UF's College of Journalism and Communications, where she teaches news reporting. She holds a master's in journalism from Northwestern University.

Treasurer: Judi Pepin, PhD

Judi is looking forward to beginning a third term as AMWA Treasurer. She had previously been a member of the Budget and Finance Committee for 3 years and Treasurer of the Ohio Valley Chapter for 7 years. She also served as Administrator of Development in 2006-2007. Judi is a senior writer in the Department of Scientific Writing and Editing at The Procter & Gamble Company, with 19 years of experience in regulatory, manuscript, and scientific report writing. She has a bachelor's degree in biochemistry from Smith College and a master's and PhD degree in pharmacology and toxicology from the University of Connecticut, and she completed a postdoctoral fellowship in Vascular Cell Biology and Atherosclerosis at the Cleveland Clinic.

Secretary: Mary G. Royer, MS, ELS

A member of AMWA since 1987, Mary will begin a second term as secretary and has also served as the WIT Administrator as well as Publications Administrator. Mary has been a member of many committees, including the Long-Range Planning Committee (4 terms), Publications Committee (6 terms), Nominating Committee, Fellowship Committee, Elections Task Force, and the Swanberg Award Committee (2 terms, one as chair). She was also a member of the task force that developed AMWA's Position Statement on the Contributions of Medical Writers to

Scientific Publications. She has participated in annual conferences as a workshop leader (2004-2007) and as the coordinator of many sessions. She was awarded the President's Award in 2000 and Fellowship in 2001. She is a graduate of Tufts University and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

Annual Conference Administrator: Barbara Snyder, MA.

Barbara joined AMWA in 1981 and has served in many roles in the Ohio Valley Chapter and on the national level, including most recently as Administrator of Publications, Administrator of Education, and Administrator of Development. Barbara has 28 years of medical writing and management experience in the pharmaceutical industry and is currently the Director of Scientific Writing & Editing at Procter & Gamble. This year also marks Barbara's 27th year as an AMWA member. She received the AMWA President's Award in 2003 and was awarded AMWA Fellowship in 2005. Barbara holds a bachelor's degree in English literature and composition and a master's degree in American literature.

Annual Conference Workshops Coordinator: Catherine Magill, PhD.

A fourth-generation California native, Catherine followed her grandmother and great-grandmother to the University of California (UC) Berkeley, where she graduated with a degree in neurobiology. She continued her education at Stanford to receive a PhD. She then moved to Harvard for postdoctoral studies. From there, she joined a biopharmaceutical company in the San Francisco Bay Area, starting as a scientist and advancing to Director of Pharmacology and Cell Biology over her 11-year tenure in industry. In 2005, Catherine resigned her position, joined AMWA and began a career as a freelance medical writer/editor and consultant. Catherine has served multiple terms as a delegate to the AMWA Board of Directors and has contributed to the development of AMWA's Science Fundamentals certificate program.

Awards Administrator: Tami Ball, MD.

Tami is the perfect person to serve as Administrator of Awards in a year when 2 new AMWA awards are being introduced. Many things she's done in 5 years of AMWA membership have been new. At her first annual conference, she sat alone at the Chapter Meet and Greet. Her chapter had been inactive for a number of years, but largely through her efforts, a year later, 12 Michiganders circled a meet-and-greet table, and 12 months after that, an executive board and 5 committees had been established. As Chapter President, she has led the development of the chapter's first Web site and helped coordinate the chapter's first regional conference in many years. At the national level, she has been

a chapter delegate on the Board of Directors, a judge on the Eric Martin Awards Committee, and a contributor to the Science Fundamentals certificate program. She was a co-coordinator of the breakfast roundtables at the 2009 Annual Conference and has developed a workshop on evidence-based medicine.

Chapters and Membership Administrator: Stephen N. Palmer, PhD, ELS. After serving as last year's Chapters Administrator, Steve will be taking on the expanded role of Administrator of Chapters and Membership. He joined the Southwest Chapter of AMWA in 2002, while he was a post-doctoral student doing pain research, before taking his job in that field at the Texas Heart Institute in 2003. Because of his spirit of volunteerism, Steve quickly became his chapter's delegate to the national Board of Directors, then Chapter Program Chair, then Chapter President, and he now chairs the Planning Committee for the chapter's biannual mini-conference. On the national level, in addition to being Chapters Administrator, Steve has served on the Membership and Constitution & Bylaws committees and was Poster Session Coordinator for the 2008 Annual Conference.

Education Administrator: Doug Haneline, PhD. A teacher of literature and writing for over 30 years, Doug has been at Ferris State University in Michigan since 1984. He teaches research writing, advanced composition, medical writing, science fiction, American and British Literature courses, and Introductory Latin. Doug is a doctoral graduate of Ohio State University. He is a Fellow of AMWA and a workshop leader. He served on the Michigan Humanities Council, which is the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Publications Administrator: Faith Reidenbach, ELS. Faith will serve as this year's Administrator of Publications and chair of the Editorial Board of the *AMWA Journal*, where she will focus on gaining readership and contributions from external audiences. Faith has previously served 3 terms on the WIT Committee, as the Administrator of Awards, and as the leader of popular chapter and national conference sessions on freelancing. She will continue chairing an ad hoc WIT subcommittee that's exploring ways to further improve the Freelance Directory, and continue writing her column "Briefly Noted" for the *AMWA Journal*. Faith has worked in medical communication for her entire career, which has included tenure as Executive Editor of Reuters medical news for physicians.

Special Projects and Communications Administrator: Larry Liberti, RPh, RAC. Larry is excited about this newly formed department and hopes to bring to it his more than 25 years of experience in AMWA. He has served as Treasurer and President of the Delaware Valley Chapter and is a Fellow of AMWA. He is trained as a pharmacist and holds a master's degree in pharmacognosy (the study of natural products). Larry currently is the Executive Director of the CMR International Institute for Regulatory Science—a London-based not-for-profit think tank that brings together industry, regulators, and academics to define and develop best practices in the global regulatory arena.

WIT Administrator: Donna Miceli. Donna is serving her second term as WIT Administrator. A member of AMWA since 1989, she was active in the Delaware Valley Chapter for 11 years—serving as Secretary and Chapter Board delegate—before moving to Florida in 2000, where she currently works as a semi-retired freelance medical writer. Donna, who holds a bachelor of science degree in journalism and speech from Syracuse University, was named a Fellow of AMWA in 2007.

AMWA PACIFIC COAST CONFERENCE

Asilomar, Pacific Grove, Calif.

April 18 to April 21, 2010



Program highlights: Two keynote speakers, four credit workshops, six open sessions, on-site BELS exam, open forums, and beach stomp

Come meet AMWA friends, network, earn credits toward your certificate, have fun, and delight in Asilomar!

Registration: Dec. 10, 2009 through March 10, 2010