



## Message from the President

by Julia Forjanic Klapproth

Rome wasn't built in a day. And as I've discovered, neither was a website. I hope, as you read this, that by now our new website has gone live and you have not encountered too many problems in using the new functionalities. In my last message I indicated our plan to get the first phase of the website established in December and to get the rest of the website up in January. Unfortunately, reality had different plans. There were a few glitches in the system... Suffice it to say that after several delays, we have finally got our website up and running in time for the Barcelona conference, if a little late off the mark. And I hope that you will find the new website easy to navigate and a tool that simplifies your interactions with EMWA, whether it be for registering for a conference, updating your personal membership details, or finding information.

That the launch of our new website coincides with this issue of *The Write Stuff*, focusing on the history of EMWA, is a rather opportune twist of fate. For as EMWA moves forward into the modern age of technical administration, we are pausing to consider the legacy that made EMWA into what it is. And as you will see by the articles in this issue, EMWA has come a long way. What started out as the brain storm of a handful of writers has blossomed into a full fledged, professional organisation that is slowly but surely becoming a central point of reference for things to do with medical writing in Europe. Journal editors and regulatory authorities alike recognise EMWA as an authoritative body. This is the product of many years of hard work by EMWA members who have worked together to pool their knowledge and experience to share this with others in a professional way.

The upcoming conference in Barcelona will be the 26th conference ever held by EMWA since it began (see Box on page 3). Initially there was 1 conference per year in the spring. As the demand for training grew, a second conference was held in the autumn in 1999. Because the spring conference was longer and larger, it was considered as the main annual conference. However, in the meantime, the autumn conference has grown so large that although it is only 1.5 days, we had more participants in Basel than we had at the first spring conference I organised in Montpellier! As the distinction between the spring and autumn conferences has begun to wane, we felt it was time to instate a numbering system that applies to both conferences and simply number all sequentially. Thus, what is our 17th annual spring conference is also our 26th conference since EMWA began and we will move forward with a sequential numbering for all future conferences.

EMWA continues to strive to build on the knowledge base of its members. This year we are tapping into those mem-

bers in the field of pharmaceutical and medical translation and expanding our repertoire in this area. In addition, the conference in Barcelona marks a milestone in what has long been a personal goal, namely establishing closer ties with neighbouring organisations who share common interests. In planning this conference I contacted the Mediterranean Editors and Translators (MET) organisation and the Spanish Medical Writers Association (AeRTeM, Asociación Española de Redactores de Textos Médicos) with the aim of bringing our organisations closer together. As a result, several members of both these organisations will be involved in the programme and I hope that this will be the start of a productive collaboration between our organisations. EMWA was founded on the concept of pooling knowledge and I think that we can all gain by sharing opportunities that cover common grounds.

Another topic that needs preparation is one that is close to my heart. A mentoring system for new members was implemented by Kelly Goodwin for the first time in Vienna. The coordination of that was a little bumpy, and I would like to smooth the process to make it a more effective experience for all involved. To get it started we need volunteers to be mentors for the new members who request one. By now you will have received an email that outlines what the criteria are to be a mentor (they are quite simple). Take a look at that mail, and if you have the inclination to get involved as a mentor, please let me know. The more the merrier and it makes a big difference for those new members who don't know anyone yet.

Now that most of my work is done in organising this conference, I am setting my sights on the next conferences. In particular, I am beginning to plan the theme of the next spring conference, which will be held in Ljubljana, Slovenia from 26-30 May 2009. Having had a conference on medical communications, and a conference on translating, the theme of the upcoming conference will focus on the regulatory domain of medical writing. The concept for this theme has not yet solidified, and I would like to ask for your input. I am looking for 5-6 members who would be willing to join a team to help me develop this concept further, including coming up with ideas for seminars, speakers, and discussion forum topics. If you would be interested in getting involved and have some ideas for this area, please let me know. All ideas are welcome!

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