



Message from the President:

by Geoff Hall

Right, cup of coffee time. Surely I have done enough today. Better check the e-mail.

Subject: Message from the president

Content:

Hi Geoff,

Article time!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

It's from Barry Drees, editor, Edinburgh banquet performance artist, highly intellectual bird-watcher and bully. At the end of a busy period that has seen me: having to read through briefing documents fully 10 cm thick in preparation for writing a conference report that will run to no more than eight pages, run around trying to organise trips to China (got last seat on the flight) and the US (oh, I am so looking forward to the AMWA meeting), as well as writing copy and reports on topics as diverse as quality control in clinical trial packaging, the pharmacoeconomics of osteoporosis management and luxury cruises up the Amazon to Manaus - I don't need Barry chasing me for an article. (Diary note: must try to write shorter, less complex sentences.)

It makes you wonder what I ever did to find myself in this position. A question often asked by medical writers, as we discovered at a plenary panel discussion at the Copenhagen conference. I always knew that there are many types of medical writers. Some of us write study reports, papers for publication, are involved in the design and writing of study protocols, work in communications agencies. The brief life histories revealed in "Sounds like a good job" demonstrated the variety of ways in which people became medical writers and the diversity of job descriptions.

Mike Matthews, who chaired the session, is a physician who had worked for big pharmaceutical companies in the UK and France and for medical communications agencies. He then endured a four-year spell as a freelance medical writer before becoming Director of Medical Affairs with ICON Clinical Research in the UK. Jane Stock's route took her by way of academia to clinical research to freelance medical writing. Dave Peters qualified as a pharmacologist but found white-coated life at the bench unfulfilling. He then worked for communications agencies in New Zealand and the UK before joining Zeneca.

The Write Stuff

From the President's Desk

And the writing of medical writers is not confined to the medical. Joan Affleck was there - a medical journal editor who has written poetry reviews, articles for the feminist press, and even authored a survival guide for expatriates in Paris. My co-workshop leader in Copenhagen, Chris Roose, advertising copywriting guru and 'creative' in specialist pharma ad agencies, scored a first for an EMWA member during the summer by devising and writing a show that ran in London's West End. OK, so it was one of the West End's smaller theatres, but you have got to be impressed (Hey Chris, how about an article for *TWS*?). Julia Forjanic Klapproth has actually published her poetry in a literary journal (a movie deal is being negotiated).

So we are a diverse bunch, and as more and more different facets of medical communication become represented among our membership, the greater the opportunities to share and learn from each other. Our membership is now over 300 as EMWA keeps growing in numbers and variety. This has been achieved almost entirely by word of mouth, so keep spreading the word. Here's to 400 members by next spring.

Best wishes

Geoff Hall
58 Church Road
Worcester Park
Surrey, KT4 7RW, UK
Tel: (+44) 181 715 1368
Fax: (+44) 181 715 1369
medwritehall@worldscope.co.uk

The 301 members by country:

147	UK
40	Germany
23	Belgium
18	France
11	USA
10	Netherlands
10	Sweden
8	Switzerland
8	Ireland
5	Spain
5	Denmark
5	Italy
3	South Africa
2	Austria
1	Iceland
1	Israel
1	New Zealand
1	Norway
1	Singapore
1	Australia

151 are also AMWA members.