

Acting President's Message

Catherine Magill, PhD



Hello Members of the Northern California Chapter of AMWA-

I hope you all have had a good fall and a very happy Thanksgiving, and I'm wishing that you are having success in your careers. I know these are very hard times, but there are jobs. It's just a matter of finding them.

Our previous President, Forrest Blocker, has left her position and I am stepping up to manage the chapter until we get through the fall elections, which we should have had several months ago. We need a president and a vice-president, but are fortunate to have most of our current Board members willing to remain for another year. Mimi Wessling is continuing as Webmistress and has taken on the role of Membership Chair. Fred Gebhart is continuing as Newsletter Editor. Sunny Bishop is continuing as Treasurer, Joan Brodovsky as Secretary, and Kristen Mayo is doing a yeoman's job of pulling together the Asilomar conference for next April.

Please consider helping the chapter out. You'll find that it is not particularly time consuming and is a good forum for mixing with other medical writers. For me, being on the Board has led to several jobs.

We are having a chapter meeting this coming Saturday, 12/5. Daryl Faulds, CEO of Gemmus Pharmaceuticals, will talk about developing a broad spectrum therapeutic agent and vaccine for influenza. In this time of H1N1, the topic is timely and should be educational. The meeting will be at my favorite location, Delancey Street Restaurant in San Francisco, Sat. Dec 5. I'm working on few more events for early next year.

In This Issue

December, 2009

Pacific Coast Conference..... 2	Contests..... 9
Help Wanted 4	New Self-Study Module..... 10
Membership Reward Ending... 4	Word Witch..... 10
Grief and Article Rejection 5	Deduct Now, Learn Later 13
Next Meeting 7	Chapter Board 14

I also want to mention the email that you received at the end of November from the National AMWA organization regarding the expansion and reorganization of AMWA's certificate program. The details of this expansion are in that email, so I won't go into them except to say that I think this is a really good thing.

It demonstrates how successful our organization has been in developing curricula to advance the career development of our members. The change has been done very carefully and in a way to ensure that no one loses credits and to avoid any increase in fees beyond the normal small annual increase that every organization needs to add.

This expansion demonstrates as well our commitment to ethics. Every new certificate will require an ethics workshop that will be developed to support ethical concepts and practices that are specific to each program. I'm looking forward to being a part of this certificate expansion and have taken on the role of 2010 Annual Conference Workshop Coordinator for the national organization's Milwaukee conference in November, 2010.

Presenters and program developers will work with me to create new workshops as painlessly as possible. The new certificate program is a fantastic development and I'm committed to helping make it stronger.

Take care during this holiday season, relax, and enjoy it. Take some time to spend with your friends and family. They will appreciate the gift of you more than anything else!

REGISTER FOR ASILOMAR!

Registration for the 2010 Pacific Coast Conference opens on December 10.

Our very own Northern California Chapter is again hosting the conference, scheduled for April 18 - 21, 2010 at Asilomar in Pacific Grove, California. With an onsite BELS exam, dual keynoters, four credit workshops, five open sessions, and open forums every evening, the 2010 conference promises something for everyone!

Why attend?

(1) Meet up with your AMWA friends and colleagues and network - network - network!

(2) Earn credits toward your AMWA certificate.

(3) Learn interesting ideas at the open sessions.

(4) Relax and enjoy a natural scenic setting on the California coast.

(5) Take advantage of the great value.

Keynoters include Robert Urban, PhD and Mark Plotkin, PhD. Dr. Urban will explore recent innovations emerging from the collaborative research of Koch Institute scientists and engineers with practicing physicians which is providing hope for new oncology solutions. Dr. Plotkin, an ethnobotanist, will discuss his efforts to preserve indigenous cultures and forests with the Amazon Conservation Team and international pharmaceutical firms.

Our credit workshops include:

- Tables & Graphs [editorial approach] (G #111), Howard Smith, MA
- Basic Immunology for Medical Writers and Editors (SBS #1100), Michael Petrarca, PhD
- Editor-Author Relationship (WE #201), Dan Liberthson, PhD and Susan Eastwood, ELS
- Risks and Rations (ADV #7210, Thomas Lang, MA)

We also have a tempting menu of noncredit workshops:

- Statistics for Medical Writers and Editors, Robert Hoop, MA, MPH
- Global Product Development: A Regulatory Perspective, Suzette Dowling
- Writing Clinical CTD Summaries for IND and Marketing Applications, Nancy Katz, PhD
- Nanomaterials for Regenerative Medicine, Tejal Desai, PhD
- Autoimmune Diseases: Immunity Gone Awry-Why?, Matthew Frankel, MD, MBA

Look for more than a little fun

The good times start with our annual Asilomar Ramble, a ranger-led tour highlighting the architecture, natural history, and ecology of Asilomar. We have social and freelance events each evening, an unforgettable skit by an author so recognized that he declines to be named in advance, and the annual beach stomp in search of bioluminescence. If time, tide, and temperature cooperate, we may actually see phosphorescent sparkles and glimmers in the sand this time!

Registration opens Dec. 10. Look for an email alert or check the chapter website, www.amwancal.org/pcc, for program, registration, and housing details.

And remember, space is limited, so register early!

Help Wanted

Elections for the Chapter Board of Directors are on the way. Finally!

We need candidates for both President and Vice-President, members willing to commit to these offices that are so vital to keeping our Chapter running efficiently and effectively. Our Bylaws have the formal details, but here's the quick version.

The President is coordinator-in-chief. He/she is chairperson of the chapter Board of Directors and an ex-officio member of all other committees. She/he appoints the chairs of all committees and presides at Chapter business meetings. The Board holds at least two meetings each year, usually done by conference call. Finally, the president serves as a delegate to National AMWA or appoints another Chapter member to represent us.

The Vice-President is President-elect and the President's back-up. She/he assists the President and is responsible for programs if, for any reason, there is no Programs Chair on the Board. The VP is also expected to attend chapter business meetings and Board meetings and to preside if the President is absent.

Can you do it? Neither office carries a burdensome time commitment but both are absolutely vital to our chapter and to each of us individually. In this difficult economic environment, it is crucial for us to support our colleagues, our associates, and our friends by maintaining a vibrant network where we can all find professional connections when we need them the most.

Deadline For Membership Referral Reward

AMWA is still giving away \$25 gift cards from Amazon.com to every AMWA member who recruits a new member - but not for long.

The recruitment drive ends on December 31, 2009 and the referrees must join by December 31 in order to earn the \$25

gift card. The good news: There is no limit on the number of referrals each member can make. [Click here](#) for more detailed information and a member recruiter form.

The Stages of Grief Associated With Article Rejection

Richard Browne, PhD, Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children

Introduction

For the investigative researcher, nothing is more thrilling than completing a project, writing a manuscript, and sending it to a journal editor. Rare is the researcher who does not view his/her proposed article as a brilliant piece of insightful investigation, written in a style that will automatically make it the lead article in a future issue. Some of the methods and conclusions are certain to be widely cited in the years to come.

Therefore, the sense of shock is profound when the manuscript is sent back as rejected. It is as if one's own precious child was voted ugliest kid on the block. Often, the author's hands will shake as he/she re-reads the letter, hoping that the letter was meant for someone else, or that the letter holds the door open for a re-write. When this hope is dashed, the author will often burst into wave upon wave of obscenities, using combinations of obscene words never heard before. The letter may be wadded up and thrown against the wall, or hurled to the floor and then stomped on repeatedly.

It is at this point that the author will begin the grieving process. This malady is not widely recognized and often goes untreated. Like Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, this is not something you just "get over." Sadly, the grieving process over a rejected paper is poorly understood, and the distressed author is often at a loss as to what comes next.

We have determined that the stages of the grieving process resulting from a rejected paper is quite similar to those described by Elizabeth Kübler-Ross (On Death and Dying, 1969). Inspired by her model, we propose the following 5 stages of the manuscript-rejection grieving process.

5 Stages of Manuscript Rejection Grief

1. Denial - This is the stage during which the author goes about saying: "I can't believe this happened!" or "They must have my article confused with another!" The grieving process then quickly moves on to the second stage.

2. Anger - This stage can go on for some time. This is the time that the author will often break forth in torrents of obscenities, either in private or in public, often speaking in derogatory terms of the editor's ancestry. The author will repeatedly claim that the editor is blind or wholly incompetent.

Reading the comments of the reviewers will exacerbate the condition, with the author making obscene gestures at the pages while mumbling unintelligibly. He/she will state that the journal has gone down the drain with the current editor, and that this would not have happened if a prior editor was still there. Declarations are frequently made that the reviewers must have skimmed over the article, perhaps reading the text while on the toilet, which would explain the words they used to describe this masterpiece of science.

It is during this time that friends can only offer words of consolation, echoing the author's declarations, and stating that the work was brilliant and the reviewers are 10 times worse than the author has said. When appropriate, colleagues can share their stories of agony over similar disappointments in the past. Otherwise, colleagues and friends can commiserate by simply shaking their heads in disbelief.

3. Bargaining - After several weeks, the author begins the Bargaining Phase of the grieving process. At this time, the author may write to the editor and ask for a fresh review, as it is obvious that the reviewers were incompetent. If this is not successful, the author may seek to make a colleague into a co-author, so that the colleague can make cosmetic changes to the manuscript so that it will be accepted. Another possibility is skimming lesser journals to find one that might accept the original underappreciated manuscript.

4. Depression - When the Bargaining Phase has run its course and no one has eagerly embraced the manuscript, the Depression Phase begins. During this time, the author begins to believe that none of his/her ideas are worth a hoot, and that maybe he/she should just get a job as a toilet cleaner at the university, as he/she sees her career as going down the toilet.

5. Acceptance - At some point, the author will finally do something that gets a word of praise, or be reminded of the trials and tribulations of authors at his/her level, such as Albert Einstein. The author will then begin to realize that he/she is not lower than whale excrement. Now, the author has begun the Acceptance Phase.

The author may look back over the comments of the reviewers, though with some pain, and see that they may have had a point, or that the author may have worded things poorly. Realizing that all is not lost, the author has begun the healing process. Of course, this assumes that colleagues and department heads are not piling on, seeking to keep the author in the Depression Phase.

Discussion

We believe that these 5 stages of Grieving the Rejection of a Manuscript should be included with any rejection letter sent out by journal editors. This would be a very humanitarian gesture, and might prevent lawsuits from being brought against the journal.

It should be noted that these 5 stages may be cyclical, if the author submits the manuscript to another journal. The only way to break out of the cycle would be to find a journal, no matter how lowly, to publish it or to perpetually claim it is under review at a journal whose name he/she cannot recall at the moment.

Finally, we recommend that psychologists be brought in to provide psychological counseling to rejected authors. Perhaps the cost of such counselors could be included in university overhead associated with federal grants, as part of the No Scientist Left Behind program.

Reprinted with permission from The Journal of Irreproducible Results, the science humor magazine, www.jir.com. Dec, 2009. 50;6.

Last Call for December 5 Meeting

Influenza vaccination is the most effective method for preventing influenza virus infection and its potentially severe complications. But vaccination requires substantial development time, may not target epidemic strains, and is often ineffective in older individuals. Many individuals resist vaccination. Gemmus Pharma is developing a potential solution, a broad spectrum therapy for moderate to severe influenza infection currently called GP1001. Effective at any stage of infection, GP1001 blocks the cytokine storm associated with severe influenza. Gemmus CEO Daryl Faulds, PhD, will present the details.

When: Saturday Dec 5th, 2009, 10:30-1:00PM

What: Brunch and seminar

Where: Delancey Street Restaurant, 600 Embarcadero, San Francisco, CA 94107

Cost: \$25.00/members, \$30.00 non-members

How to register: Please register with a credit card at <http://amwancal.eventbrite.com> or email Catherine Magill, magill_catherine@yahoo.com, if you'd like to use a different option.

Contests to Win

AMWA Award for Best Published Research

What it is: The best paper reporting original empirical research on medical communication published in a peer-reviewed journal indexed by PubMed

Who is eligible: Any AMWA member who is author or co-author on an original research paper investigating the value added by medical writers and editors. The paper must have been published in a peer-reviewed journal indexed by PubMed between Jan. 1, 2005 and Dec. 31, 2009.

What you win: \$2,000 plus travel reimbursement up to \$1,000 to attend the 2010 national convention.

How to enter: Details and forms are online at amwa.org.

Deadline: All entries must be received by Jan. 31, 2010. For more information, contact Shari Lynn, CMP, Awards Liaison, (301) 294-5303; e-mail: slynn@amwa.org.

AMWA Award for Student Research

What it is: The best research paper on medical communication by a student pursuing a degree or certificate at an accredited college or university. The award is designed to encourage college students to conduct original research in medical communication and to foster interest in pursuing a career in this field.

Who is eligible: Any student, undergraduate or graduate, currently enrolled in a degree or certificate program in the liberal arts or sciences at an accredited US or Canadian college or university. Entrants must be sponsored by a professor but need not be an AMWA member. The entry includes a research report no longer than 5,000 words

What you win: \$500 plus travel reimbursement up to \$1,500 to attend the AMWA 2010 Annual Conference in Milwaukee, WI, Nov. 11 - 13, 2010. The winner also received a one-year membership in AMWA and publication of the winning report in a future issue of the AMWA Journal.

How to enter: Details and forms are online at amwa.org.

Deadline: All entries must be received by May 30, 2010. For more information, contact Shari Lynn, CMP, Awards Liaison, (301) 294-5303; e-mail: slynn@amwa.org.

American Society for Microbiology 2010 Public Communications Award

What it is: The ASM Public Communication Award was created to recognize outstanding achievement in increasing public awareness, knowledge, and understanding of microbiology.

Who is eligible: Primary authors of information concerning the microbiological sciences appearing in mass media, including print (newspapers and periodicals) and broadcast media readily available to the general public and websites. Individual items and series are eligible; books and institutionally sponsored publications are not eligible.

What you win: \$2,500 cash, a commemorative plaque, and a trip to the ASM General Meeting in San Diego in May, 2010.

How to enter: Details and forms are online at www.asm.org/PCAWARD.

Deadline: All entries must be received by January 31, 2010. For more information, contact Garth Hogan, ghogan@asmusa.org.

Association of Health Care Journalists 2009 Awards for Excellence in Health Care Journalism

What it is: The Awards for Excellence in Health Care Journalism recognize the best health reporting in print, broadcast, and online media.

Who is eligible: Work can be entered in multiple categories, including metro newspapers/national wire services/national websites, community newspapers/regional wire services/regional websites; general interest magazines; trade publications/newsletters; TV; radio; multimedia; and beat reporting.

What you win: \$500 for each category, comp lodging and registration for AHCJ's annual conference, Health Journalism 2010, April 22 - 25, 2010, Chicago.

How to enter: Details and forms are online at www.healthjournalism.org/awards

Deadline: All entries must be postmarked by January 22, 2010.

Statistics For Medical Writers And Editors Self-Study Module

You saw it at the annual conference in Dallas-unless you didn't attend. Either way, AMWA is pleased to announce the launch of its latest self-study workshop, Statistics for Medical Writers and Editors.

The newest module joins the previously released, Basic Grammar and Usage, Sentence Structure and Patterns, and Punctuation for Clarity and Style. Self-study workshops expand the association's educational program and serve as lasting reference resources. The self-study workshop modules are available at the special AMWA member price of \$159, a substantial discount off the nonmember price of \$250. Visit the AMWA website for information on all AMWA self-study modules and an online order form.

The Word Witch: Managing Formatting Through the Styles and Formatting Task Pane

Maggie Norris

The purpose of building an elegant and functional electronic template is, of course, so that you can apply the custom paragraph and character styles to text in your electronic document.

The Word programmers have included a number of tools for applying styles, the **Styles and Formatting** task pane among them. However, to make the **Styles and Formatting** task pane a truly useful and effective tool for this purpose, we must adjust the settings so that it displays all the styles comprising the custom template and only the styles comprising the custom template.

Background

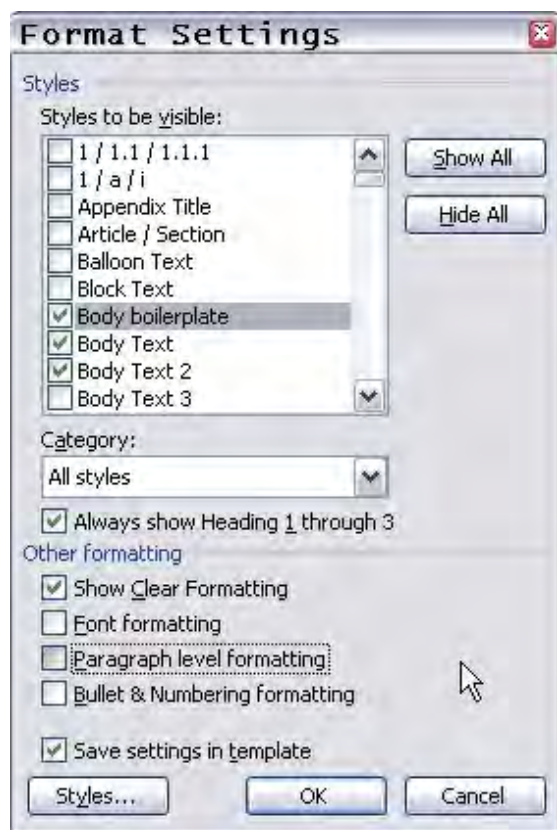
Displaying the Styles and Formatting Task Pane

The Task Pane is a window that displays to the right of the document window. If it is not in view on your screen, choose **View | Task Pane**.

The **Getting Started** task pane is displayed by default. To display the **Styles and Formatting** task pane, click the

arrowhead at the top right of the task pane and choose **Styles and Formatting** from the dropdown menu of task pane options.

A closer look



Screenshot 1, to the left, shows the **Styles and Formatting** task pane. The top section, Formatting of selected text, shows the style of the paragraph containing the insertion point in the document window.

Pick formatting to apply contains a list of paragraph and character style names. There may be anywhere from about 6 to over 200 style names in the list; the configuration of the list depends on the option chosen in the **Show** dropdown list, at the bottom of the section. By reconfiguring this list, we can make it into a truly useful tool for carefully applying template styles.

Tutorial

Before we begin, verify that the document bears the custom template; ie, that you are working in the correct custom template. (As always, prefer to make no changes to Normal.dot.)

Choose **Tools | Templates and Add-Ins**. In the **Templates** tab, **Document template** field (near the top of the dialog box), verify the name of the attached template.

If you don't see what you are expecting, click **Apply**, navigate to the **Templates** folder, and choose the correct template file (the custom template dot-dot file).

Working in a copy of your document file, display the **Styles and Formatting** task pane. Refer above for the procedure. Just for interest, have a look at the current settings.

Configuring the styles list

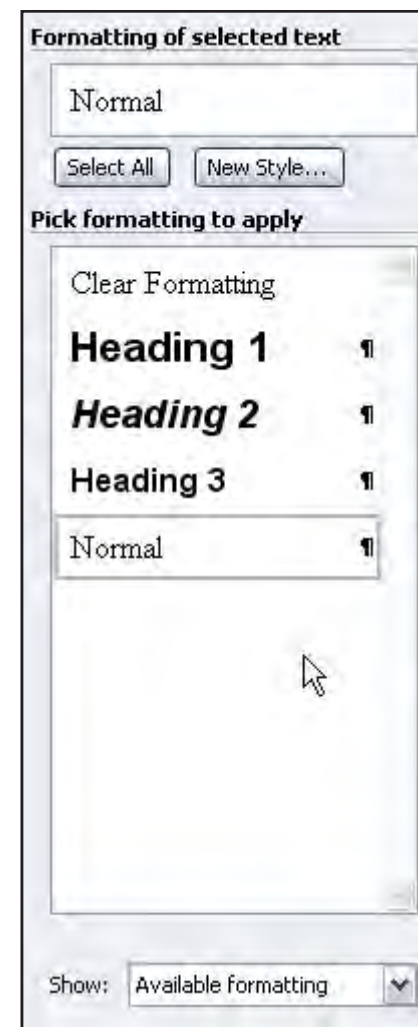
In the **Show** field, open the dropdown list and choose **Custom**. This will call up the **Format Settings** dialog box, seen to the right.

Start by duplicating the settings in this screenshot in the dialog box on your own screen. You must activate the checkboxes for the paragraph styles of your choice in the **Styles to be visible** list.

Apply styles

In the document window, place the insertion point in any paragraph. Check **Formatting of selected text** in the task pane to see the style currently applied to the paragraph. Now click on any other paragraph style in the **Pick formatting to apply** list.

The paragraph will now have the paragraph style you chose. Click the original style name to restore the formatting.



Having performed this quick exercise, you now know how to apply any template paragraph style with one click. To apply a character style, select the text to be formatted, then click the character style name.

Clearing extraneous formatting

Sometimes applying a different paragraph style fails to have the desired effect on the formatting of all the text. This can be because some kind of ad hoc character formatting was applied to this text at some point in its history.

To remove this formatting, highlight the misformatted text, then click **Clear Formatting** option in the **Pick formatting** list, then click the correct paragraph style name again. Or select the whole paragraph to clear all the misformatting at once. (Occasionally, ad hoc formatting is meaningful. Be sure to have a look before you wipe it out. You may have to restore the formatting using template styles.)

Beyond the Basics

Both the **Styles and Formatting** task pane and the **Format Settings** dialog box contain numerous tools for managing the application of template styles. Experimentation is possibly the only way to get a handle on how they all work.

Fine Print Publication Services LLC, Fine_Print_Services@mac.com. Novato, California. 650-814-1676

Deduct Now, Learn Later

Time is running out to score a 2009 tax deduction for attending the Northern California Chapter's very own Pacific Coast Conference next year. That's right, grab a 2009 tax deduction for attending the conference in 2010.

How does it work? Just register and pay your conference fees in full before midnight on December 31. Because IRS rules let most of us deduct expenses in the year we pay the expense, paying your conference fees this year gets you a tax deduction this year.

File your federal tax return early next year and you could attend the April 18 -- 21 conference knowing that Uncle Sam is already picking up part of the tab.

The 2010 conference offers three days of workshops, including four AMWA Curriculum Workshops, two keynote presentations, and five open sessions. That's on top of annual favorites like the nighttime Beach Stomp in Search of Bioluminescence, a rollicking skit by a nationally recognized

and yet-to-be-revealed author, and time to discuss issues, exchange views, share ideas, find solutions, and build lifelong friendships. And did we mention that the whole thing takes place at the Asilomar Conference Center, nestled behind the sand dunes on the edge of Monterey Bay?

Look for an email with all the details just before registration opens on Dec. 10. Details and registration links will also be on the chapter website at www.amwancal.org/pcc.

Attendance is limited to the first 90 paid registrations and past conferences have sold out. Register now and don't be disappointed in March!

Like What You See? Want to Make it Better?

The Pacemaker, our Northern California chapter newsletter, needs your help and your contributions.

Send your likes, dislikes, suggestions, and submissions to *Pacemaker* editor Fred Gebhart, pacemaker@amwancal.org. The deadline for the next issue is January 24, 2010.

2009 Northern California Board of Directors

Acting President	Catherine Magill	president@amwancal.org
Vice President	vacant	president@amwancal.org
Programs Chair	Catherine Magill	programs@amwancal.org
Treasurer	Sunny Bishop	treasurer@amwancal.org
Secretary	Joan Brodovsky	secretary@amwancal.org
PCC Conference Chair	Kristen Mayo	conference@amwancal.org
Newsletter Editor	Fred Gebhart	pacemaker@amwancal.org
Membership Liaison	Mimi Wessling	membership@amwancal.org
Webmaster	Mimi Wessling	webmaster@amwancal.org
Past President	Catherine Magill	pastpresident@amwancal.org