Hello, everyone.

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I'm Amy Fulton, the voice of AMWA Carolinas.

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I'm a student at Duke University and an AMWA Carolinas volunteer, and it's my pleasure to welcome you to this podcast series.

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I encourage you to follow us on our website and LinkedIn and share this podcast with your friends and colleagues if you enjoy.

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I'm so delighted to be hosting this first podcast episode.

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Our topic is the 2024 Year in Review, and we'll be interviewing Dr.

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Jenni Pickett, who is the president of AMWA Carolinas for 2024.

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Let's welcome Dr.

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Pickett.

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So I'm here with Jenni Pickett, who was the 2024 president of the AMWA Carolinas chapter.

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We'll be talking a little bit about the Year in Review.

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So Jenni, could you tell me a little bit first about what attracted you to the role of president for AMWA Carolinas?

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Yeah, thanks for having me, Amy.

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Yeah, what attracted me is that serving on the Board of Directors or the conference committee is really a great way not just to meet connections, but to build friendships.

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So I actually really look forward to our meetings because we're not only doing the work that we need to do to serve our chapter membership, but we're also getting to know each other and we have a good time.

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And our board consists of engaging and highly capable people.

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So it was really an honor for me to be able to lead them this year to accomplish our goals.

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That sounds awesome.

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I'm so glad that you've really been able to make those connections and work with so many great people.

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Could you tell me a little bit about your current work right now?

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Yeah, so in November, 2024, I made a pretty big change and I now work for an AI company, which is YSEOP.

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It's spelled Y-S-E-O-P.

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And my title there is Medical Writing Customer Success Director.

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And that title is quite a mouthful, but essentially I provide medical writing expertise to help Yseop expand their platform, which is a blend of expert AI and generative AI to speed up some of the routine text and table generation for regulatory writers and their workflow.

02:04

That's really interesting.

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I definitely would like to learn more about that in the future, and thanks for sharing.

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I'm excited right now, though, to hear about the 2024 year in review for AMWA Carolinas.

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Could you tell me a little bit about some of the highlighted events for the chapter in the past year?

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Yeah, happy to.

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So we started off the year with our annual business meeting, as we usually do.

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And that also included a discussion of the AI tools that were presented at the AMWA National Conference in Baltimore.

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And then we had our book club in February, which was focused on the book *Under the Skin* by Linda Villarosa.

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And then in March, we had our first fundraiser event and that helped us provide a reduced student and post-doc rate for our annual conference.

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And in that event, Kim Jochman presented a little mini workshop for us called Clinical Trial Data, How to Write More Than Just Numbers.

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And we got 75 attendees for that workshop.

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So that was a big success.

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And then in May is typically when we have our conference and we had a wonderful conference this year.

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It actually sold out for the first time in my memory at least.

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Awesome.

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And yeah, it was really great.

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At the Friday Center, we had two tracks full of content from, you know, experts locally and around the nation.

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I think we've become sort of a destination conference as well, people who are looking for a smaller conference to really connect with others in a way that you can do when the conference is a little bit smaller.

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And we had a pre-conference event, which is a good social event that we enjoy having the night before the conference as well in May.

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And then in the fall, our 2025 president, Jaya Samaranayake helped with a cool event that we just started last year, which was I guess two years ago.

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And this was our second event where we do a collaborative event with the North Carolina Regulatory Affairs Forum or NCRAF.

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And this is a career-focused event.

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So we had a panelist talking about, you know, how to get jobs, change jobs, you know, from a recruiter's perspective, from a hiring manager's perspective.

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And I think that that was really cool, was a hybrid event.

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So we had people in person at the NC Biotech Center, we had people joining virtually and we had two moderators and that was a really cool event for us to mingle with our regulatory colleagues and also learn a little bit more about how the hiring process works behind the scenes.

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So that was really cool.

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And then we got to get together in New Orleans in October.

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For our conference chapter dinner while we were there for the national conference and that was really cool.

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We had this private room and we got together at small tables and got to sort of chat with people and just get sort of that one-to-one small experience within the larger context of the national conference.

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And then we had our holiday parties which are fun.

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We get to have two regional parties this year and that's just a purely social event where people get to just come together and talk about what's going on and just celebrate the festive season.

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So we had a pretty solid year of events and I think that's only possible because of the engagement of our membership.

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People really provide us with a lot of cool ideas for us to put together each year and they also show up and participate.

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And then we have a lot of volunteers that make that possible as well.

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That's awesome.

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Yeah, I love hearing about the mix of business and career advancement, but also social events and lots of chances for members to get to know each other.

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Also, I love the fundraiser event.

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As a student myself, I know I always love going to conferences, but it can be hard to make that happen.

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So that's really great that you guys were able to support students and postdocs to come to the conference.

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What would you say-- did you have a favorite event this year, or one that you specifically enjoyed?

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Yeah, the conference, the chapter conference is always my favorite event.

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And you know, it's partly because the food at the Friday Center is really delicious.

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I'm not gonna lie, the dessert table.

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But we did some cool things this year that really increased my enjoyment even more.

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We had a networking session.

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So after our round table event, we actually had this networking session where we had to, you know, come together in tables and really get to know each other and it really kind of increases the factor of having a local conference and really getting to walk away with some new connections, new friends.

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And so I got to meet some people that I had met in our chapter through that networking session.

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So definitely my favorite event of the year.

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It's tiring to put it together and we have a lot of tireless volunteers that make it happen.

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But when we get finally get together on the day, it's so worth it.

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Yeah, that's great.

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That sounds really rewarding to be able to meet people, especially sort of locally.

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Make those connections and meet new people.

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I'm really glad you were able to do that.

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Are there other than events?

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Are there some accomplishments from the chapter over this past year?

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Maybe things that you've achieved or that you're proud of from the chapter?

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Yeah, we started the year with some key goals.

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Some small, some larger to kind of improve our service to our members.

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And one of them, which was kind of a small thing and also kind of a big thing, was that we didn't have an address.

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So it's kind of a minor thing to not have an address.

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But as a nonprofit organization, we wanted to have a lasting address.

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And so we now have an address that we can use to get mail and that can pass from volunteer to volunteer.

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Oh yeah, that's great.

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And then we also were really interested kind of coming out of the book club.

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We were really interested in diversity, equity, and inclusion and how we could have a role in that.

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And medical writers, you know, across the different types of medical writing actually have a pretty big impact possibly on solving healthcare disparities by using the types of language that will encourage people of different groups that maybe aren't well served by clinical trials currently and encourage them to participate.

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Oh yeah, absolutely.

08:00

So we wanted to really increase access to the types of training so that people could become aware of their possible impact and what the current best practices are in terms of language or in terms of study design that can help with closing those disparities and gaps that we learned about at the book club.

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And so, you know, as a chapter, what we thought we could do is put together a resource.

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And so we had the membership, we polled the membership for like all the types of trainings that they recommend, papers, videos and so forth, regulatory guidances.

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And we put it all together on a new page on our website so that our chapters can see, you know, what's new from AMWA National, you know, what are some other resources that they can read

from, from FDA and so forth and all in one place so that people can work down the way down the list and know what the most current information is on the topic.

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That's really great.

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That is something that we're yeah really excited about having for this year.

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Yeah, I'll definitely have to take a look at that.

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That's really awesome.

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Sounds like a great project to get a lot of people involved as well.

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Yeah.

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Is there.

09:04

So that sounds like that really kind of helped like grow the chapter and its mission.

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Are there other events or a project this year that you specifically feel like really grew the chapter or advanced its mission or something like that?

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Yeah, sure.

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We had a couple more things and one was the new chapter history initiative.

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And so we noticed that we had not a lot of records currently in the chapter.

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It was basically what people remembered from the current board.

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And so we had a volunteer work on getting our records from AMWA National and making that part of our chapter records that we keep within our leadership on the Google Drive.

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And also we are able to make a list of all of our chapter executive committee members all the way back to 2012 on our website.

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And through that work we were able to issue five-year service awards as well.

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By getting our records in shape, we could recognize people who had served the chapter for five years or more.

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So that was an exciting way to sort of recognize the people that have grown our chapter to what it is today through the sort of longevity of service.

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And then the final thing was we've been working for a couple of years with the North Carolina Biotechnology Center, which is local to the RTP area to become an intellectual exchange group.

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And so this year they approved our application and this is provides some exciting perks for us.

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As an organization, first of all, they're going to be able to share with their larger membership some of the events and just the fact that we exist to the larger North Carolina biotechnology community.

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And also we get the use of their facilities at no charge.

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And so we'll be able to start offering events at their facility, which is a beautiful facility in Durham.

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So we're really excited to be part of their intellectual exchange group program.

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Yeah, that sounds really exciting.

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It always seems great to sort of connect with similar organizations and be part of larger groups to get the information out.

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And that's really cool as well about the history.

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I think it's always interesting, but also really important to keep track of sort of the history and where the organization has been so you can see where it's going.

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So that's really awesome to hear about.

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It sounds like overall an amazing year for the AMWA Carolinas chapter.

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Are there things you're looking forward to next year?

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Anything continuing on from this year or maybe new projects that you're excited about?

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Yeah, I'm really excited about our new leadership under Jaya.

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I think that she's going to bring a new energy.

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I think each president brings their own flavor to the chapter.

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The chapter gets stronger and stronger as a result.

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And I'm really, of course, looking forward to the conference again this year.

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I'm serving on the conference committee, so I got a preview of the cool proposals that we have, we're going to have enough for two tracks again this year, really solid proposals and a variety of topics I think our members are going to love.

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So I'm looking forward to that event.

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That's really exciting.

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Yeah, I'm looking forward to seeing all that as well.

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Is there anything else that you want to share, make sure everyone knows about this past year or anything you've been up to?

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I guess I just wanted to close with just thanking our members because like I said.

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The things that we accomplished in 2024 is thanks to their membership and how engaged they are, the ideas that they give us and also to the entire volunteers.

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We have not only our executive committee and our board of directors, but we have volunteers like yourself and a lot of other people who pitch in for cool ideas that they want to bring to life that can sort of bring more benefit to our members and non-members and just the medical writing community at large.

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So thank you, and thanks to all the other volunteers that pitched in.

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Yeah, of course, a huge thank you to all of the members and volunteers that have done so much for the chapter over the past year.

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And thank you, Jenni, so much, for everything that you've done and for chatting with me today.

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This has been really cool to hear about, and thank you.

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Thank you, Amy.

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Thank you so much, Dr Pickett.

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We really appreciated the time and information that you've shared today.

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It was really interesting to hear about all the projects and events from 2024 from the AMWA chapter.

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I hope that you all enjoyed the conversation.

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And again, I encourage you to follow us on our website and our LinkedIn.

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Share this podcast with your friends and colleagues if you enjoyed, and of course, check back in for our next episode.

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That's all for our story today.

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We'll look forward to launching our next episode of the podcast next month.

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13:37

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If you have a topic you'd like us to cover for future episodes, just send us a message.

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We would love to hear from you.

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I'm Amy Fulton.

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Thank you so much for listening.

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Until next time, stay curious, keep exploring.