February 5: Brunch Meeting in Lexington, Mass.
Roundtables to Spark Ideas and Advance Careers

The New England Chapter’s midwinter meeting, a Sunday brunch at the Lexington Sheraton Inn on February 5, will feature the ever-popular roundtable discussions—but with a twist. This time, AMWA is teaming up with the New England Science Writers to offer a joint event. NESW will lead 4 roundtables, AMWA will lead 5, and there will be a joint networking/social table. Members and guests of AMWA and NESW can sign up for whichever table they choose. Each table leader is a knowledgeable colleague who will provide information and guide the discussion. Bring your questions, share your experiences, and explore some new ideas.

If you’re not familiar with our roundtable format, here’s how it works: You choose your top 2 or 3 picks from the 10 available topics, and indicate your choices on the registration form enclosed with this newsletter. Tables, which seat 8 to 10 people, will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. (Space cannot be reserved without payment.) Your table assignment will be confirmed by e-mail.

#1 Transitioning into Medical Writing
AMWA: Jill Shuman
Medical writers work in venues that range from public relations companies and universities to publishing houses and pharmaceutical companies. Learn about the types of projects they work on and the skills required to transition into each of these venues.

#2 Evidence-Based Medicine and Scientific Fraud
NESW: Carol Cruzan Morton & Eugenie Samuel
How can a journalist evaluate the soundness of a story based on research studies? Get some guidelines on what to look for and whom to ask. Also learn how to handle a case of apparent scientific misconduct in research.

#3 Money Matters in the Freelance World
AMWA: Francesca Coltrera
Rates for books, print media, and web work differ widely. Whether you currently freelance or are merely considering it, brushing up on skills for setting or raising rates, collecting your due, and negotiating financial issues in contracts can help you stay afloat.

#4 Life Beyond the Medical Beat
NESW: Richard Saltus
Interested in expanding into other areas of science writing? Learn how to segue from clinical medicine to more basic biomedical stories, or even marine biology and astrophysics. We’ll suggest methods and markets.

#5 Substantive Editing
AMWA: Mary Zoll
Explore the process of substantive editing and the common misconceptions clients have. Learn how to assess the quality of a document quickly and how to use subject-matter experts effectively.

Roundtables continued on page 3
Chapter Calendar

The New England Chapter schedules seven regular meetings a year, from September through June. Five of these meetings are held in the Greater Boston area, and two are held in Connecticut. Every meeting begins with a social hour, followed by dinner (except for a Sunday brunch in midwinter), then a program with a speaker, panel presentation, or roundtable discussions. A writing competition that culminates in the Will Solimene Awards is held every other year, alternating with the New England Conference, an all-day program of workshops. Often, informal networking meetings or tours are scheduled.

Western Massachusetts/Southern Vermont Area

February 21: Networking Dinner in Amherst, Mass.
A Dutch-treat networking dinner is scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday February 21, at Amherst Chinese, 62 Main Street, Amherst, Mass.
For more information or to reserve a place, contact Pat Boone (413-533-5711 or pat@bmtc.biz).

Greater Boston Area

Join your colleagues for an informal, Dutch-treat networking lunch at 12:00 noon on Friday, March 3. Meet at Changsho, 1712 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge (between Harvard Square and Porter Square). Take the Red Line to Harvard Square and walk to the restaurant, or park in the restaurant’s lot across the street.
There is no registration fee, but reservations are a must. At least a few days ahead, contact Francesca Coltrera (781-641-9872 or coltrera@comcast.net).

Worcester/MetroWest Area

The Worcester/MetroWest AMWA Networking Dinner Group had an interesting meeting at Chumleys in Shrewsbury in November, with Professor John Trimbur sharing stories about his experience in the Technical Writing Program at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. The next dinner meeting will be held in March. Watch the chapter e-mail messages and newsletter for details.
Contact Laura Ruth with any questions (508-755-8490 or lrsline@yahoo.com).

Regular Dinner Meetings
Dinner meetings will be held in both Connecticut and Massachusetts in April. Watch the newsletter for more information.

Awards Banquet
June 15: Ceremonies in Waltham, Mass.
The chapter’s year-end meeting will be held on Thursday, June 15, at the Westin Hotel in Waltham, Mass.
The program will include installation of officers for the 2006-07 year, presentation of the Will Solimene Awards for Excellence in Medical Communication, and the biennial Honors Lecture.

2006 Writing Competition
Deadline for entries is February 1

The New England Chapter’s biennial Will Solimene Awards for Excellence in Medical Communication recognize outstanding work in medical, biomedical, and health communication by chapter members. The 2006 competition is open to any chapter member who wishes to submit work published in 2004 or 2005. (For collaborative work, only one of the writers need be a member.)

Entries may be publications for a professional, general, or patient audience in any of the following categories: print publications; CD-ROM, DVD, and online publications; or audiovisual production scripts.

The 2006 Call for Entries, available only in PDF format, includes an entry form and detailed information about the writing competition. To receive the Call for Entries, please send an e-mail to Jill Shuman, Awards Director at jill@jillshuman.com.

Your completed entry form and the associated materials must be postmarked no later than February 1. Don’t miss out on this chance to have your best work recognized by your peers.

Awards will be presented to the authors of the winning entries at the chapter’s 12th Awards Banquet, which will take place at the Westin Hotel, Waltham, Mass., on June 15.
#6 Writing CMEs, Journal Articles, and Abstracts
**AMWA: Andrea Gwosdow**
Learn what’s involved in each type of scientific writing, the skills needed to do it, and clients’ expectations. Find out about opportunities available in industry, agencies, and academia.

#7 The Craft of Writing for Magazines
**NESW: TBD**
From institutional publications to consumer magazines like Vogue, the Boston Globe Magazine, and Men's Health . . . . Discover how to get on the right wavelength—and sell your story.

#8 Development Writing 101
**NESW: Karin Kiewra**
Every large institution needs to raise money. Writers who know about science and medicine are hot commodities if they can learn the language of donors, gifts, appeals, and case statements. Here are the basics.

#9 Turn Your Expertise into Words
**AMWA: Lynne Lederman**
You are a physician, bench scientist, nurse, or lab technologist and would like to parlay your background into a second career in medical writing for the biomedical, biotechnology, or pharmaceutical markets. Find out how to establish your credentials, generate samples, and find clients.

#10 Networking/Social Table
**AMWA & NESW**
Share experiences and contacts with colleagues, find out how to become more involved in AMWA or NESW, or just enjoy some good conversation.

As always, the New England Chapter welcome guests and prospective members.

—Lonnie K. Christiansen  
President-Elect/Program Director

*Note: You can earn 5 points toward an AMWA Professional Development Certificate (see p. 6) by attending this meeting.*

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**Chapter Membership Awards**

**Applications invited**
The New England Chapter’s Judy Linn Membership Awards provide professional development and networking support to medical and health communicators who are fairly new to the field.

The chapter will accept applications from candidates who live and work in New England. There is no application fee.

As many as three awards may be given in any period.

The award, a one-year membership in AMWA (which automatically includes chapter membership), will be presented at a chapter dinner meeting.

Candidates may apply on their own, or may be nominated by a chapter member. Applications may be submitted at any time.

For more information or to request an application form, contact David Olle, Membership Awards Director, at eastshire@direcway.com or 802-254-3899.

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**E-Mail Messages from the Chapter**
The chapter’s e-mail list service allows us to remind you of an upcoming meeting or let you know when we hear of a job opening, freelance assignment, a local event, or anything else that may be of interest to New England AMWA members.

Messages are brief, giving only as much information as is necessary for you to follow up if you want to.

Only the president can post information. If you have something to share, send it to Andrea Gwosdow at editor@gwosdow.com for consideration. (But please do not submit queries. This is not a bulletin board.)

If you don’t want to receive the occasional messages, you may unsubscribe. You can do this online when you receive a message, or you can ask Judy Linn, chapter membership director, to do it for you. If you unsubscribe, then change your mind, Judy can also resubscribe you; you can’t do it yourself. Contact her at judyhlinn@aol.com.

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**Winter Weather Alert**
If severe winter weather requires postponement of the meeting, we will notify everyone by e-mail. If the weather looks really bad and you are unable to access your e-mail on the day of the meeting, call Judy Linn at 508-358-7071 before you go—just to be sure.
October Meeting Report
Tips for Moving from Bench Scientist to Medical Writer

Brazi’s Restaurant was the place to be on October 27 as Lynne Lederman shared tips and tricks for turning scientific expertise at the bench or bedside into a medical writing career. Lynne received her PhD in molecular biology and virology from Cornell. After completing a postdoctoral fellowship and working in the biotechnology sector for a few years, she turned to medical writing full time and never looked back.

Lynne’s presentation focused on practical suggestions for scientists contemplating a career change. Given the enormous scope of medical writing, she stressed the importance of knowing your own particular strengths and weaknesses and identifying one or two types of writing to concentrate on. After self-knowledge, novice medical writers need a professional-looking business card and a primed-and-ready “elevator” speech. Lynne suggested that one way to stand out in a crowd was to make personal contact with a prospective employer (for example, at the national AMWA meeting).

Because medical writers need experience to get a job, but need a job to get experience, Lynne offered tips on how to generate writing samples. Strategies included writing a profile of a hometown physician for your local newspaper, a book review for your alumni magazine, or chapter news for any organization you belong to. In such cases, it’s not the money, but the byline that matters. Lynne explained how she had used writing samples written for a totally different purpose to help her land an account.

She also stressed the importance of networking. Organizations such as AMWA, Science Writers in New York SWINY), New England Science Writers (NESW), and the Association of Health Care Journalists (AHCJ) provide both social outlets and learning opportunities. Their associated Web sites* include many valuable resources, such as listings of events, and may provide job listings through listserves. The National Association of Science Writers (NESW) has some resources for freelances that are available to nonmembers as well.

—Susan Gonsalves
Connecticut Programs Committee

November Meeting Report
The Art of Science Writing

At the New England Chapter’s November meeting at Ristorante Marino, Richard Saltus, a former MIT Knight Science Writing Fellow, whose career spans writing for the Associated Press, the Boston Globe and, currently, the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, discussed the craft of writing.

What makes a good story? he asked. First, pick the right topic. Use great quotes. Determine the scope. Sum up the heart of the story in a single phrase or image. Begin from a pivotal point of view. Use your personal involvement to talk about issues. And create tension to draw the reader into the story.

To illustrate his points, he drew upon other journalists’ writing. “Although putting the author into the story used to be taboo, [today] people like more personal journalism,” he said. He cited an article on the issues and controversies surrounding treatment of short stature with growth hormone, “The Short of It” (New York Times Magazine, October 16, 2005), where author Stephen Hall discusses his own childhood experiences.

Ideas don’t always flow, Saltus confessed. And when they come, it’s not always when you’re sitting by the computer. Sometimes, it’s when you’re in the shower or walking the dog. He ended with an anecdote about the writer F. Scott Fitzgerald—how he wrote with coffee, and rewrote with wine or scotch.

Saltus shared a number of examples of good writing. One of my favorites was the lead by Ari Kelman in an article titled “City of Nature” (Slate, August 31, 2005). The article begins, “In retrospect, the idea was so stupid and yet so American: Move the homeless, the elderly, the impoverished, the unlucky, all those poor souls who couldn’t get out of New Orleans in time to avoid Hurricane Katrina; move them into the city’s cavernous domed football stadium.”

—Adriane Bishko
Secretary
Personal Notes

At the Drug Information Association’s annual workshop for Medical/Technical Writing & Document Preparation held in Washington, DC, this fall, Linda F. Wood, RN, MPH, chaired a session on Writing Guidance Documents. Among the presenters in this session was Kelie Williams, MA, MS, MPTW, who talked about “The Independent Review Charter: Purpose, Development and Essential Features.” Linda, a past chapter president, is director of global regulatory communication strategy at Boston Scientific Corp., Natick, Mass. Kelie is an imaging technical writer at Perceptive Informatics Inc., Waltham, Mass.

Diane Bell, ScD, recently attained an AMWA Professional Development Certificate. Diane is a medical writer at Clinical Therapeutics Inc., Lexington, Mass., and she is the New England Chapter’s immediate past president.

Krisha L McCoy, MS, of Swampscott, Mass., has left her position as a senior writer at HealthGate Data Corp. to pursue a freelance career in health and medical writing.

Lori Thomae has joined the faculty of the University of the Sciences, Philadelphia, as assistant professor of biomedical writing at the College of Graduate Studies, where she will teach courses on regulatory documentation. Lori is also an adjunct lecturer in medical/technical writing at Northeastern University and Boston University. (For information about upcoming regulatory writing courses by contacting Lori at 978-392-9467 or lo.thomae@neu.edu.)

CHAPTER CHANGES: Yasemin Akay, PhD, has moved to Scottsdale, Ariz., and is now in the Pacific Southwest Chapter. Virginia Owen, PhD, has moved to Princeton, N.J., and is now in the Delaware Valley Chapter.

New Members

The New England Chapter cordially welcomes those from our six-state region who have recently joined AMWA, reestablished their affiliation with the association, or moved here from another chapter area:

**Julie J. Banach**
Thomaston, Connecticut

**Thomas E. Brown, PhD**
Hamden, Connecticut
*Yale university School of Medicine*

**Lara J. Burrows, MD, MSc**
Bloomfield, Connecticut

**Steven F. Candela, PhD**
Somerville, Massachusetts

**Regina Ellen Cebula, BS, MS**
Boston, Massachusetts

**Maria Hecht**
Cambridge, Massachusetts
*Blue Cross Blue Shield*

**Gary Jasdzewski, PhD**
Boston Scientific
Natick, Massachusetts

**Mary McGarry, PharmD**
Brookline, New Hampshire
*Bristol-Myers Squibb*

**Brian O’Neill, BA**
Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts
*Harvard Pilgrim Health Care*

**Maria Pepin, BS**
Charles River Labs
Worcester, Massachusetts

**Mary M. Poluikis**
Cramer
Norwood, Massachusetts

**Jacqueline A. Potter, BS**
Pfizer Global R&D
Groton, Connecticut

**Scott E. Rosenberg, BS**
Swampscott, Massachusetts
*Shire*

**David L. Shenkenberg**
Amherst, Massachusetts

**Pamela D. Smith**
Manchester, Connecticut

**Pete Spain**
Peter D. Spain LLC
Fairfield, Connecticut

**Carol C. Spelman, MS**
Longmeadow, Massachusetts

**Kimberly Sweeney, PharmD, MBA**
Simpson Healthcare Executives
Old Lyme, Connecticut

**Robert Tomaino**
Danbury, Connecticut

**Susan M. Tosswill**
Bedford, Massachusetts

**Kristy West-Norman, PhD**
Arlington, Massachusetts
*Custom Learning Design Inc.*

**Christina Whelton**
Logix Inc.
Waltham, Massachusetts

**Rongjun Zuo**
Auburndale, Massachusetts
Directions to February 5 Meeting
Sheraton Lexington Inn
727 Marrett Road (Route 2A)
Lexington, Massachusetts
781-862-8700

The hotel is just off Route I-95/128 at Exit 30B.

From the north:
Heading south on Route I-95/128, take Exit 30B to Route 2A. Hotel is first driveway on the right.

From the south:
Heading north on Route I-95/128, take Exit 30B, following sign to Route 2A West off access road. Hotel is first driveway on the right.

Need a ride to the meeting?
The Sheraton Lexington Inn is not accessible by public transportation. If you don't have a car, call Judy Linn (508-358-7071 or judyhlinn@aol.com) to find out if anyone from your area is driving to the meeting. Or call Joann Merriman (781-891-0028) to see if she can pick you up at a T station or another, mutually convenient location.

Professional Development Certificate
AMWA’s Professional Development Certificate allows you to validate “your continued commitment to professional development beyond the scope of your regular job.” For details, go to the AMWA Web site (www.amwa.org). (Note that the PDC is entirely different from the certificate earned by taking Core or Advanced Curriculum workshops.)

Because attendance at a regular chapter meeting earns points toward a PDC, we will have vouchers available at the meetings, whether in the Greater Boston area or in Connecticut.

If you need verification of your participation in one of the noncredit workshops at the 2005 New England Conference in Framingham, Mass. or your attendance at a regular chapter meeting, contact Judy Linn at judyhlinn@aol.com or 508-358-7071.

AMWA Annual Conference
October 26-28: Albuquerque, New Mexico
It’s not too soon to start planning for AMWA’s 66th Annual Conference, especially for those of you who need to submit travel budget requests early in the year. The AMWA staff can provide information about registration fees and hotel rates well ahead of time if you need it.

The annual convention, which attracts hundreds of members from around the U.S. and Canada, as well as other countries, offers an unparalleled educational program with workshops, lectures, panel presentations, and roundtables, as well as many opportunities to network and socialize.

The AMWA Web site (www.amwa.org) already has some conference information posted and will add details as the program develops over the next several months.

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