February 21: Sunday Brunch Meeting in Waltham, Mass.

Roundtable Discussions for Professional Development

The New England Chapter’s traditional midwinter brunch will be held on Sunday, February 21, at the Hilton Garden Inn, Waltham, Mass. Join us for lively roundtable discussions led by knowledgeable AMWA members—colleagues who will share their insights, offer valuable advice, and answer your questions while we all enjoy a leisurely breakfast.

There are 10 roundtables on career-related topics. Choose the topic that interests you most, give second and third choices if you have them, and note your choices on the online registration form. Don’t delay, because seating at each table is limited and will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis upon receipt of payment.

As always, guests and prospective members are welcome.

**ROUNDTABLES**

**#1 TECHNICAL WRITING FOR THE MEDICAL DEVICE INDUSTRY** (Aaron Federman)
Medical device companies provide opportunities for technical writers to produce a wide variety of product documentation. Learn how technical writers work closely with engineering, regulatory, and marketing throughout the development process to produce documentation for using, testing, and servicing medical products.

**#2 WRITING FOR CONSUMERS AND PATIENTS** (Nancy Knoblock Hunton)
Discuss how to communicate effectively about medical topics. Get tips on readability, style, and graphics. Talk about the shift from newspapers and magazines to websites and online publications. Share your experiences and ask questions.

**#3 IMPROVING YOUR NETWORKING QUOTIENT** (Laurie LaRusso)
Now more than ever, networking is essential to professional success. And the face of networking is changing as much of it moves online (e.g., LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter). Join a discussion of networking strategies from the tried-and-true to the uncharted territory of social media sites. Bring not only your questions but also your thoughts, experiences, concerns, and success stories.

**#4 GETTING FROM HERE TO THERE: TRANSITIONING TO NEW WRITING FORMATS** (Chris McMorrow)
Learn how to remain marketable in a changing job market from someone who has had to transition into new writing areas more often than she expected. Discuss how to research where the hottest writing areas are through networking, position yourself for new writing roles, parlay your existing skills into new opportunities, expand your technical repertoire, and deal with the inevitable hurdles that arise along the way.

**#5 NO PORTFOLIO? NO PROBLEM!** (Cheryl Lathrop)
Create an instant medical writing portfolio out of thin air! Learn how to repurpose what you already have laying around the house and office, how to create new medical writing samples instantly in an afternoon, how to get people to let you write for them and thus get a sample, and how to make all your new writing samples look polished and professional. This table is for beginning medical writers.

**#6 ESSENTIAL PRINT AND ELECTRONIC RESOURCES FOR TODAY’S SUCCESSFUL MEDICAL WRITER** (Jill Shuman)
From style guides to medical dictionaries, medical writers today have a vast number of print and electronic reference materials from which to choose. This roundtable will collaboratively assemble a list of indispensable references available for purchase or free on the Web, with a goal of spending less than $200 a year.

**ROUNDTABLES continued on page 3**

INDEX

2 Chapter Calendar 3 Awards Competition 3 Education Certificates 5 Personal Notes 6 Directions to Meeting
2 How to Register 3 Networking Meetings 4 November Meeting 5 Membership Awards 6 Council Meeting
2 Other Events 3 Professional Development 4 December Meeting 5 New Members 6 New England E-News

**BUFFET MENU**

- Scrambled Eggs • Bacon, Breakfast Sausages
- Hash Browns • Melon, Fruit, Berries • Fruit Juices • Vanilla and Low-Fat Fruit Yogurts with Granola • Assorted Bagels with Cream Cheese • Muffins, Danish Pastries, Croissants with Sweet Cream Butter, Honey, Preserves • Coffee, Decaf, Herbal Teas

**DEADLINE:** To guarantee brunch reservations, we must receive your payment by mail (check) or via PayPal (credit card) no later than **Tuesday, February 16.** (After 2:00 p.m. that day, there are no refunds for cancellation.)
Chapter Calendar
The New England Chapter holds six regular meetings a year, from September through June. Four of the meetings are in the Greater Boston area, and two are in Connecticut. Typically, meetings begin with a social hour, followed by dinner (except for a Sunday brunch in midwinter), then a program with a speaker, a panel presentation, or roundtable discussions. A writing competition, culminating in the Will Solimene Awards banquet, is held every other year, alternating with the New England Conference, a full day of workshops on a Saturday in the spring. Occasionally, informal events, such as networking meetings or tours, are scheduled.

April Dinner Meeting
in Greater Boston Area
TBD

Spring Dinner Meeting
in Connecticut
TBD

June 10: Awards Banquet
in Waltham, Mass.
The chapter’s 14th Awards Banquet, the last meeting of the year, will be held at the Westin Hotel, Waltham, Mass., on Thursday, June 10. After a brief introduction of the new officers for the 2010-11 chapter year, this festive event will feature the Honors Award Speaker and presentation of the 2010 Will Solimene Awards for Excellence in Medical Communication.

How to Register for Roundtables

**Online registration is required for our roundtable meeting on Sunday, February 21.** Simply go to the chapter website at www.amwa-ne.org and click in the Upcoming Events box on the home page. The link will display instructions for registering.

Please note that if you are bringing a guest, you must fill out a separate form for each person.

When you have completed the registration form, you will have two options: You may use PayPal to pay with a credit card, or you may follow up by putting a check in the mail.

**Using PayPal**
You do not need your own PayPal account, just a valid credit card, and you will not be charged anything for the transaction.

**Paying by Check**
If you opt to send a check by regular mail, don’t delay, because you will not be assigned to a roundtable until we actually receive the check.

**Confirmation of Table Assignment**
If none of your choices is available, you will be notified promptly by e-mail and you will receive a full refund. Otherwise, your table assignment will be confirmed by e-mail about a week before the meeting.

**Other Upcoming Events**

**June 2-5**
Annual Meeting of BCA, ABCD, HeSCA
in Boston, Mass.
“Revolutionary Ideas in BioCommunications” is the theme of the 2010 joint annual meeting of the BioCommunications Association, the Association of Biomedical Communications Directors, and the Health and Science Communications Association, being held in Boston, June 2-5. For information, go to www.bioconf.org.

**November 11-13**
AMWA Annual Conference
in Milwaukee, Wis.
Mark your calendar and start planning now to attend the association’s 70th Annual Conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, November 11-13.
As always, you can expect this 3-day event to be jam packed with educational programs, face-to-face networking opportunities, and a chance to enjoy the company of medical writing colleagues from around the country and beyond.
Keep an eye on the monthly e-mail newsletter, AMWA Update, which will keep you apprised of developments as the program continues to take shape. (If you’re not yet a member, you won’t get the e-mail alerts, but you can check out the AMWA website at www.amwa.org for information.)
Solimene Awards Competition
A Chance to Have Your Best Work Recognized

The Call for Entries for the New England Chapter’s 2010 Will Solimene Awards of Excellence in Medical Communication is now available. To download the submission guidelines and an entry form, go to www.amwa-ne.org and click in the Newsflash box on the home page.

Work published by chapter members during the last two years—whether written independently or in collaboration with others—is eligible for consideration.

Since 1990, this independent awards program, which is held once every two years, has offered recognition for outstanding work in medical and health communication. The 2010 competition will culminate with the presentation of awards at a celebratory dinner meeting at the Westin Hotel in Waltham, Mass., on June 10.

If you have any questions, contact Jill Shuman, awards director, at writersgroup@comcast.net.

To see the list of award-winning entries in the last competition, you can download the 2008 Awards Banquet Program. Go to www.amwa-ne.org and click on Awards, then click on “brochure” in the first paragraph under New England Awards.

Your entry must be postmarked by February 8. Don’t miss this opportunity to have your very best work publicly recognized!

Informal Networking Meetings
Expanding Your Professional Contacts

Regular chapter meetings offer the best opportunities for face-to-face professional networking with a large, diversified, congenial group of medical writers. But some people, because of distance from central meeting locations or personal schedule conflicts, find it difficult or impossible to attend these meetings even occasionally. And others would just like to get together more often.

The chapter program directors are not responsible for arranging informal meetings at other times or in outlying areas. But chapter leaders are willing to assist in any effort on the part of any member to set up a casual get-together and will gladly notify members about it through the AMWA New England E-News.

Are you interested in organizing an informal lunch, dinner, or other type of small gathering—either in your own neck of the woods or in some central location? If so, get in touch with Judy Linn (judylinn@aol.com), who can provide you with names of other chapter members in your area, or with Francesca Coltrera (coltrera@comcast.net), who can advise you on how to set the meeting up.

ROUNDTABLES continued from page 1

#7 WRITING FOR MEDICAL EDUCATION AND MEDICAL COMMUNICATION COMPANIES (Kevin Flynn)
Learn about medical education and medical communication companies and the types of writing skills they seek. Also learn the key factors for working with an agency successfully.

#8 REGULATORY WRITING (Linda Wood)
Find out all about one of the hottest fields in medical writing: helping pharmaceutical firms prepare new drug applications and other regulatory documents for the FDA. Good regulatory writers are always in demand. Learn about opportunities as a freelance or staff regulatory writer.

#9 PHARMACEUTICAL CLINICAL RESEARCH: FROM STUDY DESIGN TO REGULATORY APPROVAL (Debbie von Rechenberg)
Medical writers who help report pharmaceutical clinical research to regulatory agencies need to know how their work fits into the research. Learn the steps of pharmaceutical research, from lab bench to regulatory approval and marketing, and learn about the documents that support each step. You will gain an understanding of the research process, learn the alphabet-soup of initializations used in the regulatory world, and leave with a handy set of references.

#10 INFORMAL SOCIAL TABLE (Judy Linn)
Are you at a point in your career where you’re not looking for change but would just like to get together for informal conversation with fellow medical writers? This is a chance to network and talk shop (or not), catch up with old friends, and make new acquaintances while you relax and enjoy brunch.

AMWA Professional Development Certificate

Participating in professional activities outside your regular job reflects a serious, ongoing commitment to your career as a biomedical communicator, and you can document this commitment with a Professional Development Certificate (PDC) from AMWA. If you are working toward a PDC, you can earn points by attending the chapter meeting on February 21.

For information about the PDC program, go to www.amwa.org. Click on Education/Certificates, then Professional Development Certificate.

AMWA Education Certificates
Credit Workshops Reorganized and Expanded

AMWA has instituted major changes in the education certificate programs. For information about the five new tracks (Essential Skills, Business, Composition and Publication, Concepts in Science and Medicine, and Regulatory and Research) and detailed explanation of the new requirements, go to www.amwa.org and click on Education/Certificates.

If you are already en route to a Core, Science Fundamentals, or Advanced certificate, don’t be concerned. You may continue to pursue your certificate as planned.
November Meeting Report

To Tweet or Not to Tweet?
Are you building a professional network online? If not, why not?

At the chapter’s fall dinner meeting in New Haven, Laurie LaRusso led an engaging and dynamic discussion on the relevance, opportunities, and strategies of online networking. Laurie, a past president of the chapter, has been writing about health and medicine for various audiences and in various formats for more than a dozen years. Though she claims non-expert status, she has found online networking a useful tool, producing valuable connections. Over an Italian meal of chicken francese and eggplant rollatini, she shared her knowledge with more than thirty future Twitterers.

We’ve all heard the buzz words—blogs, tweets, Facebook. And although the majority of attendees were already on LinkedIn, few of us had truly explored its potential. Why network online for your career? Why spend time posting your profile online for public exposure?

For starters, it makes it simple and easy for people to find you—people such as prospective clients, collaborators, and potential employers. As Laurie pointed out, it can also generate exposure for your business, increase traffic to your website/profile/blog, and expand your knowledge base through access to news/discussions/publications about your field, potential clients, trends, and new market segments. Online networking can help you build and maintain relationships and find and share information.

One major site is LinkedIn, a business-oriented networking site used mainly for professional networking. It’s a sophisticated search engine (some say it will soon overtake Monster) and as attendee Tom Gegény indicated, it comes up high in a Google search. Laurie emphasized that a good profile is imperative, so keep it professional and appropriately detailed, similar to a good résumé or CV. You can also direct people to your website, your blog, or your publications in PubMed. Attendee Phil Krasney added that groups and their discussions/posts can sometimes produce good leads for those on the job hunt.

Though often used for social purposes, Facebook and Twitter are good ways to gain credibility, exposure, and a huge audience for your professional blog. This is an instance of “give a little, get a little”; you’ll have more to gain when you share more.

Maintain a professional demeanor and think about keeping your professional and social networks separate. Remember that what you post online may be seen by friends, colleagues, your boss, or potential clients! Check your privacy settings carefully and regularly (apparently, Facebook’s parameters for measuring privacy settings are ever changing).

Meet you in the medium.

—Anita P. Kuan
Member, Connecticut Program Committee

December Meeting Report

All You Wanted to Know About Building Your Own Website, and Chinese Food, Too!

Because of the wintry mix in New England on the day of our meeting in December, some of our far-flung members sensibly opted to stay safe at home that evening. But more than thirty closer-in members gathered at Yangtze River Restaurant in Lexington, Mass., to learn how to build a professional website without breaking the bank.

The meeting began, as usual, with a cocktail hour, which was, as usual, warm and lively, with plenty of mingling. Yangtze River took good care of us with a sumptuous private buffet table, which supported more than a few return trips during the dinner hour (and even some takeout afterward).

Two successful, veteran freelance writers and longtime AMWA members, Andrea Gwosdow, PhD, and Jill Shuman, MS, ELS, gave a thought-provoking presentation on all aspects of setting up a website. They asked us first to think about why we wanted a website: To market services? Display writing samples? Give insight into our personality? Link to resources? Link to a blog?

Then they went through the logical steps to creating a website: obtaining a domain name, deciding whether to do it on your own or engage a designer, deciding what to include, establishing a consistent “voice,” and gathering and organizing your content. They then reviewed website-building services they had tried, and provided an abundance of helpful resources. Finally, they walked us through their own websites to illustrate some of the similarities and differences between the two. Their presentation provided a clear way forward for anyone who had been considering a website but felt daunted, and gave those who hadn’t considered it something to think about.

Those of you who didn’t register for the meeting—or cancelled because of the weather—missed out on the delicious food and live presentation. But you don’t have to miss out on the content and terrific resources, because Andrea and Jill agreed to make their very thorough slides available to everyone. To download the presentation slides and to take a look at their websites, go to www.amwa-ne.org and follow the links on the home page.

Let’s hope for more clement weather for our next chapter meeting on February 21. I look forward to seeing you there!

—Debbie von Rechenberg
President
Personal Notes

Carla Tardi, MFA, of Brookline, Mass., has joined the Research Informatics Group at Pfizer Inc., Groton, Conn., as a communications manager/editor at Summer Street Research Partners, Boston. In 2007, Carla was a recipient of the New England Chapter's Judy Linn Membership Award, and she is currently a member of the Membership Awards Committee.

A 2008 recipient of the Judy Linn Membership Award, Yvonna L. Fisher-Jeffes, MSc, PhD, formerly Yvonna Reekie, is now a medical writer at Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston. Her previous experience in medical communication included a stint as a reporter for Harvard Medical School.

In December, Tod F. Forman, MD, of Marshfield, Mass., a Boston history buff and longtime volunteer guide for Boston by Foot, gave a presentation on “Legacies in Stone: Some Statues of Boston” at the Massachusetts Historical Society. Tod is a past president of the New England Chapter, a fellow of AMWA, and the 1997 recipient of the association’s highest honor, the Swanberg Award.

D. Milton Stokes, MPH, RD, of Wethersfield, Conn., is coauthor with Liz Vaccariello of Flat Belly Diet! for Men, recently published by Rodale. Milton is the owner of Stamford-based One Source Nutrition LLC, a counseling practice specializing in weight management and eating disorders.

CHAPTER CHANGE: Alan R. Haggler, MS, MSc, is now a member of the Indiana Chapter.

Chapter Membership Awards

Do You Qualify?

Are you just starting out as a medical writer or editor? If you live and work in New England, are fairly new to the field (no more than three years of full-time experience), and are committed to a career in medical communication, you may be qualified for a Judy Linn Membership Award.

The awards committee will determine recipients on the basis of the quality of their writing and publishing, work-years in the field, and their involvement in the association. Written applications are due May 1.

There is no application fee, and an application may be submitted at any time.

For details and an application form, go to www.amwa-ne.org and click on Awards. The information is in the second paragraph under New England Awards. If you have questions, contact David Olle, membership awards director, at davidolle@comcast.net.

New Members

The New England Chapter 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:

Christopher C. Dant, MA, PhD
Norris Cotton Cancer Center
Lebanon, New Hampshire
[from Northern California Chapter]

Leah DiPlacido, PhD
Avon, Connecticut

Amos Esty
Dartmouth Medicine
Lebanon, New Hampshire

Deborah A. Ferguson, PhD
Waltham, Massachusetts
Reata Pharmaceuticals
[from Delaware Valley Chapter]

Dustin M. Grinnell, MS
Eaton, New Hampshire

Nadene K. Hausmann, BS
Worcester, Massachusetts

Noel Hawke, PhD
Hanover, New Hampshire
Allyon Solutions

Mayuka Hosoi
Brookline, Massachusetts

Kevin Kelly, MS
Scientific Exchange Associates
Centerbrook, Connecticut

Brenda Lawrence, MD
Manchester, New Hampshire

Stephen J. Marcus, BSEE, PhD
Newton, Massachusetts

Jean Morrone, BA
Watertown, Massachusetts

Connie J. Orcutt, DVM
Brookline, Massachusetts

Christina Powell, PhD
Reading, Massachusetts

Sherry Reisner, BA
Arlington, Massachusetts

Jane Sherwin, MA, MBA
WordDrive Communications
Belmont, Massachusetts

Rian J. Stockbower
Methuen, Massachusetts

Kate Sutton, MA, ELS
Millbury, Massachusetts

Lee A. Witters, MD
Dartmouth Medical School
& Dartmouth College
Hanover, New Hampshire
Directions to February 21 Meeting

Hilton Garden Inn
420 Totten Pond Road
Waltham, Massachusetts
781-890-0100

The hotel is a short distance from Route 128/I-95 via Exit 27A. There is ample free parking.

Coming from points north:
Take Route 128/I-95 south to Exit 27A (Totten Pond Road). At the end of the exit ramp bear right onto Totten Pond Road and cross over Route 128/I-95. Continue straight through the traffic lights. The hotel is one-quarter mile ahead on the right.

Coming from points south:
Take Route 128/I-95 north to exit 27A (Totten Pond Road). At the end of the exit ramp follow the sign directing you through the traffic lights to Totten Pond Road. The hotel is one-quarter mile ahead on the right.

Need a ride to the meeting?
The Hilton Garden Inn is not accessible by public transportation. If you don't have a car, Judy Linn, meeting registrar, can tell you whether there's someone from your area who may be able to give you a ride to the meeting or someone who could meet you at a mutually convenient T stop. Contact Judy at judyhlinn@aol.com.

Winter Weather Alert!
SHOULD SEVERE WINTER WEATHER REQUIRE POSTPONEMENT OF THE MEETING, DEBBIE VON RECHENBERG WILL NOTIFY EVERYONE BY E-MAIL. IF THE WEATHER LOOKS REALLY BAD AND YOU ARE UNABLE TO ACCESS YOUR E-MAIL ON THE WEEKEND, CALL JUDY LINN AT 508-358-7071 BEFORE YOU GO — JUST TO BE SURE.

Executive Council to Meet February 21

The Executive Council—the chapter officers, committee directors, and members-at-large—convenes twice a year, in the early summer and again immediately following the midwinter Sunday brunch. These meetings give chapter leaders a chance to discuss business matters, ideas for future events, new developments, unexpected problems, and so on, in detail and depth.

If there is an issue you feel should be addressed by the chapter leadership, whether a complaint, an idea for a future meeting, or a suggestion for new or improved services, feel free to share your thoughts with President Debbie von Rechenberg (dvonrech@yahoo.com). The next council meeting takes place on February 21. Any member is welcome to suggest an item for the agenda.

New England E-News
President’s E-Mails Keep You Informed

Take a minute to check those brief e-mails you occasionally get from our chapter president, Debbie von Rechenberg. If you’re a member of the chapter, Debbie sends you the AMWA New England E-News whenever she receives information about a job opening, contract work, or a freelance assignment, when something relevant to medical writing is happening here in New England, and when a chapter event has been scheduled. Items are kept as short as possible, with a link to more information if you want to follow up.

The E-News is a benefit of chapter membership and is not sent to nonmembers, no exceptions.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL 2009-10

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT: Debbie von Rechenberg
IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT: Chris McMorrow
PRESIDENT-ELECT: Laurie A. MacDougall
VICE PRESIDENT/CONNECTICUT: Susan F. Gonsalves
SECRETARY: Jerome Lang
TREASURER: Jill M. Shuman

DIRECTORS / COMMITTEE MEMBERS

PROGRAMS: Laurie A. MacDougall
CONNECTICUT PROGRAMS: Susan F. Gonsalves
Cynthia Arons, J. Lynne Dodson, Michelle R. Horan, Anita P. Kuan
MEMBERSHIP: Judy Linn
MEMBERSHIP AWARDS: David A. Olle
Robert E. Dunbar, Nancy Knoblock Hunton, Jill M. Shuman, Carla Tardi
E-NEWS: Debbie von Rechenberg
NEWSLETTER: Judy Linn
NOMINATING COMMITTEE: Laurie A. MacDougall
WRITING AWARDS: Jill Shuman
Honors Award: Siobhan E. Gallagher
Judging Managers: Francesca Coltrera, Andrea Gwosdow
WEBSITE: Aaron Federman
Jill Shuman

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Adriane Bishko, Francesca Coltrera, Cerie A. Dewar, Andrea Gwosdow, Nancy B. Hertig, Laurie B. LaRusso, Julie J. Martin, Joann H. Merriman

DELEGATES TO AMWA
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Debbie von Rechenberg, Laurie MacDougall
ALTERNATES: Chris McMorrow, Susan F. Gonsalves