February 12: 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 12, at the Hilton Garden Inn, Waltham, Mass. This meeting will feature 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 late breakfast.

There are 10 roundtables on career-related topics. Choose the one that interests you most, give second and third choices if you have them, and note your choices on the registration form. Don’t delay, because seating at each roundtable 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.

ROUND TABLES

#1 SO YOU WANT TO BE A MEDICAL WRITER? (Chris McMorrow)
If you’re a bench scientist, technical writer, or marketing communications pro with strong writing skills and a keen interest in medicine and patient health, this table is for you. We will focus on novel approaches to help you successfully transition from allied fields to medical writing.

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

#3 NONREGULATORY WRITING IN THE PHARMACEUTICAL AND BIOTECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY (Kristin Stephan)
Not all medical writers in pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies work on regulatory documentation. Join this discussion to learn about nonregulatory writing jobs in the pharma/biotech industry – in medical education, medical information, scientific publications, sales training, consumer information, corporate communications, and other areas.

#4 PRIORITY MANAGEMENT: BEING A PROFESSIONAL AND A PARENT (Shanna McClennen)
Join a discussion for medical writers who either have children or are planning to have children. There is no “best practice” for achieving a balance, but finding a working solution for each family is a must. So bring your tips, strategies, questions, and concerns.

#5 SOLVING ETHICAL DILEMMAS IN THE WORKPLACE (Jill Shuman)
Join a discussion of ethical dilemmas that you’re likely to encounter in the workplace, such as issues related to copyright, authorship, acknowledgment, etc. This roundtable will offer some tools to help you think through these ethical situations and find a reasonable (and principled) solution. Real-life examples will be provided -- and feel free to bring your own!

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Chapter Calendar

The New England Chapter's year begins in mid-June, when the outgoing president hands over the gavel to the incoming president. There are no general activities during July and August.

Regular Meetings: The chapter holds six regular meetings from September through June. Four of these meetings are in the Greater Boston area, and two are in Connecticut. Typically, meetings start 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.

Special Events: In addition to the regular meetings, a writing competition, culminating in the Will Solimene Awards banquet, is held every other year. In the alternate years, the chapter holds the New England Conference, a full day of workshops on a Saturday in the spring.

Occasional Extras: Once in a while, informal events, such as networking meetings or tours, are scheduled.

March 6 – Informal Networking Lunch
Cambridge, Mass.
Join us for an informal networking lunch at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 6, at Chang Sho, 1712 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge (between Harvard Square and Porter Square). Meet colleagues, raise work-related questions, and share tips on medical writing. Take the Red Line to Harvard Square and walk to the restaurant, or park across the street in the Chang Sho lot. Cost is price of buffet lunch, plus your drink and tip.

You don’t have to pay in advance, but you do need to make a reservation. Please RSVP by Friday, March 2, to Francesca Coltrera at coltrera@comcast.net or 781-641-9872.

May 5 – Writing Awards Luncheon
Waltham, Mass.
The chapter will present the 2012 Will Solimene Awards for Excellence in Medical Communication at a special luncheon at the Embassy Suites Hotel, Waltham, Mass., on Saturday, May 5. All members, guests, and prospective members are invited to attend this festive biennial event, which will recognize outstanding articles, books, and other works published by New England medical writers during 2010 and 2011.

Featured speaker will be Dr. Tim Johnson, who will receive the New England Chapter’s 2012 Honors Award.

May – Dinner Meeting
Connecticut
The chapter will hold a dinner meeting in Connecticut in May.

June – Dinner Meeting
Greater Boston Area
The last meeting of the 2011-12 chapter year will take place in mid-June.

How to Register for February 12 Meeting
To register for the upcoming brunch meeting you have two payment options:

1. To pay by credit card, use the electronic registration form on the chapter website (www.amwa-ne.org). Fill it out and continue to the PayPal form, where you can enter your credit card information. (You do not have to have your own PayPal account, and you will not be charged a fee for the transaction.)

2. To pay by check, download the printable registration form from the chapter website (www.amwa-ne.org), print a copy, fill it out, and mail it with your check to the address on the form.

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

Whether you register online or by mail, you will not be assigned to a roundtable until your payment is received. Your seating assignment will be confirmed by e-mail at least 5 days ahead of time.

NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER NEWS, published 4 to 5 times a year for the New England members of the American Medical Writers Association (AMWA), is posted as a PDF on the New England Chapter’s website.

The newsletter welcomes reports about members’ professional activities and special achievements; notices of local meetings, conferences, and courses; and other items of potential interest to medical, biomedical, and health communicators in New England.

NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER
AMERICAN MEDICAL WRITERS ASSOCIATION
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WINTER WEATHER ALERT!

SHOULD SEVERE WINTER WEATHER REQUIRE POSTPONEMENT OF THE MEETING, KRISTIN STEPHAN WILL NOTIFY EVERYONE BY E-MAIL. IF DRIVING CONDITIONS LOOK REALLY BAD AND YOU ARE UNABLE TO ACCESS YOUR E-MAIL FOR ANY REASON, CALL JUDY LINN AT 508-358-7071 BEFORE YOU HEAD OUT—JUST TO BE SURE.
Other Upcoming Events in New England

March 29-31 – HMS Writing Workshop
Boston, Mass.
Harvard Medical School, Department of Continuing Education, is offering a 3-day program on “Improving Healthcare Leadership, Communication and Outcomes Through Writing and Publishing” at the Renaissance Boston Waterfront Hotel. AMWA member Julie Silver, MD, is course director. For information go to www.harvardwriters.com.

June 18-21 – BIO International Convention
Boston, Mass.
The Biotechnology Industry Organization will hold its 2012 convention at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center. For information go to http://convention.bio.org/2012.aspx.

June 20-23 – HeSCA Annual Meeting
Providence, R.I.
The Health and Science Communications Association will hold its 53rd International Conference in Providence. For information go to www.hesca.org.

2012 AMWA Annual Conference
AMWA’s 72nd Annual Conference will be held October 4-6 in Sacramento, California. For information, go to www.amwa.org.

2013 New England Conference
The 10th New England Conference—a full day of workshops, special sessions, roundtables, and networking—will take place at the Sturbridge Host Hotel & Conference Center in Sturbridge, Mass., on Saturday, April 6, 2013. Planning for the chapter conference, which is held every other year, will begin in late spring.

Personal Notes
Claire Standen, PhD, of Sutton, Mass., is now a science editor at the Journal of Visualized Experiments (JoVE).


Stephen Hynes, MS, has joined Vertex Pharmaceuticals, Cambridge, Mass., as senior manager, medical information. Steve was previously a medical/technical writer at Genzyme Corporation.


CHAPTER CHANGE: Hibo Mohamed, PhD, has moved to Cumming, Ga., and is now a member of the Southeast Chapter.

ROUNDTABLES continued from page 1

#6 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.

#7 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. Come learn what technical writers do in the medical device industry, what opportunities there are for employment or contract work, and what skills and background you need to break in and get ahead.

#8 GENERAL TIPS FOR MEDICAL WRITING (Andrea Gwosdow)
This roundtable will provide basic tips and tools to help writers produce clear and concise documents. Participants will gain an understanding of paragraph and sentence structure and the importance of the right word.

#9 BLOGGING FOR MEDICAL WRITERS (Nicky Parry)
Whether you’re new to medical writing or a seasoned writer thinking about starting a blog, join this discussion of the advantages of blogging, some of the dos and don’ts, and even how to get started if you’re feeling lost. If you are already a pro-blogger, please join us and share your blog address or the addresses of any other writers whom you find interesting or useful. All questions, tips, and comments welcomed!

#10 INFORMAL SOCIAL TABLE (Judy Linn)
Would you just like to get together with fellow medical writers for informal conversation? 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
By attending the chapter roundtable meeting on February 12, you can earn points toward an AMWA Professional Development Certificate. The PDC is a way of demonstrating your ongoing commitment to your career as a medical communicator. For details, please go to www.amwa.org/default.asp?id=252.

If you are already working on a certificate or if you think you might want to enroll in the certificate program in the near future, be sure to pick up an attendance voucher at the registration desk. Fill it out, and ask any officer to sign it.
September Meeting Report

Open Mic Night for Medical Writers

The chapter’s program year got off to a lively start in September with an ice cream social at Lizzy’s in Waltham, Mass. The meeting featured an open mic format, giving everyone a chance to share information or ask questions and then follow up in small groups or one on one.

This freewheeling session covered a lot of ground. One person asked if anyone knew of a good time-tracking and invoicing program and got immediate feedback: Time Tracker and Quickbooks. There was a lot of discussion about using recruiters to find both staff positions and contract work. One attendee took the mic to announce her plan to launch a medical writing newsletter. Others talked about their consulting business. There were even stories about really bad experiences in interviewing experts. One person told about an orthopedic surgeon who fell asleep during an interview (he’d just come back from a trip abroad). Another told about a telephone interview with the editor of a prestigious medical journal: At the moment, he was much more concerned about parking his car than talking about the future of academic medicine. The best “worst interview” story came from an attendee who, as a reporter, knocked on a door and was greeted by a man with a gun!

— From notes provided by Derek Dore & Nancy Knoblock Hunton

November Meeting Report

Connecticut Program Featured Speed Mentoring

At this year’s fall dinner meeting in Connecticut, held at Brazi’s Italian Restaurant in New Haven, four AMWA members shared their experiences in a speed mentoring format. The mentors were Scott Byer, scientific program director at QD Healthcare; Susan Gonsalves, freelance medical writer at Custom Learning Designs; Anna Marie Lane, associate director at Pfizer Global R&D; and Lynne Lederman, freelance medical writer.

Conversations began during the social hour and continued during dinner. After dinner, the participants visited each mentor for about 15 minutes for a small-group discussion. The mentors shared their career history, and the discussions covered various types of medical writing (e.g., regulatory documents, pharmaceutical sales force training materials, promotional writing) and ways to develop writing samples.

All the mentors stressed the importance of networking events and the opportunities for professional development provided by AMWA. Meet as many people as you can and let them know who you are, said Susan. Lynne said you should have business cards and a prepared elevator speech. Another tip was to tailor your résumé to the job description and be sure to specify your therapeutic areas. Starting with a position in a contract research organization is a good way to break into regulatory writing, according to Anna Marie. Scott recommended the University of Chicago’s Graham School for anyone interested in a certificate program in medical writing and editing.

Participants got to hear about some of the challenges and opportunities that have contributed to each mentor’s success and were able to ask questions. It was an evening of great conversation and tasty food.

—Manjula Puthenedam
Member, Connecticut Program Committee

December Meeting Report

Searching the Medical Literature


Mr. Javier began by telling us that the mission of the NN/LM is “to enhance access to health information for health professionals and the public.” In the New England Region, the University of Massachusetts Medical School library is currently under contract to carry out this mission. While explaining this, Mr. Javier showed us the organization’s websites.

He then moved on to an interactive demonstration of the nuts and bolts of literature searching, focusing on PubMed, a free database that provides access to the MEDLINE database. First, Mr. Javier polled the audience on who uses My NCBI (some) and who uses PubMed at least once a month (most). He demonstrated how to use PubMed by conducting a sample search and showing us how to narrow the results by using the Limits function. He said that automated term mapping in PubMed minimizes the need for users to be experts on MeSH (Medical Subject Headings) and noted that if you use MeSH terms to construct a search, prepublication citations won’t appear in the search results.

Mr. Javier also explained the “Send to” pull-down menu, which allows users to send search results to a file, collections, the clipboard, e-mail, or My Bibliography and further offers the option of ordering articles.

Mr. Javier noted that you can visit the Regional Medical Library at UMass Medical School in Worcester in person to get free full text of articles from journals to which the library subscribes. Audience members also mentioned that in some cities and towns a surprising number of journal articles are available at the public library.

To learn more about the National Network of Libraries of Medicine’s regional services, go to http://nnlm.gov/ner/.

—Margaret Lynch
Secretary
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:

Rita Aberbach, BA, MLS
Wayland, Massachusetts

Elizabeth Adams, MPH
Elizabeth Adams Consulting LLC
West Roxbury, Massachusetts

Martha L. Barron, MTPW
Bradford, New Hampshire

Amy P. Campbell, RD, CDE
Waltham, Massachusetts
Joslin Diabetes Center

Priti Chugh, PhD, MS
Ashland, Massachusetts

Christine M. Cleary
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute
Boston, Massachusetts

Ellen Clegg, BA
Brookline, Massachusetts
Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard

Catherine Cuddihee, MS
Medford, Massachusetts

John Curtis, MS
Yale School of Medicine
New Haven, Connecticut

Jennifer L. Darby, PhD
Darby Medical Communications
Dalton, Massachusetts

Madeline Drexler, BA
Cambridge, Massachusetts
Harvard Public Health Review

Samuel C. Falsetti, PhD
Cambridge Biomarketing
Cambridge, Massachusetts
[from Florida Chapter]

Marie Ficociello, MS
Weymouth, Massachusetts

Rodrigo Franco, PhD
Franco Consulting LLC
Westford, Massachusetts

Mary Beth Hollingworth
Haverhill, Massachusetts

Kristin L. Hood, PhD
Littleton, Massachusetts
Boston Scientific

Lenore A. Howe, BS, MS
Wellness Partners LLC
Canterbury, New Hampshire

Melissa Jezuit, MT(ASCP)
Andover, Massachusetts

Suzanne J. Koven, MD
Concord, Massachusetts
Massachusetts General Hospital

Raghavendra Kulkarni, MD
Cambridge, Massachusetts
WebMD

Katherine H. Lewis, MA
Cambridge, Massachusetts
Feinstein Kean Healthcare

Carole Ludwig, BS
Huntington, Connecticut

Cortney A. Mears
Bridgeport, Connecticut
WebMD

Pamela Mirsky, MD
Brookline, Massachusetts

Seth Mnookin, BA
MIT
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Karyn Myers, PhD
Burlington, Massachusetts
McLean Hospital/
Harvard Medical School

Sue E. Myers, MSc
Cambridge, Massachusetts
Complete Healthcare
Communications
[from Rocky Mountain Chapter]

Patricia S. Patrick, BS, MS
Patrick Associates LLC
Marblehead, Massachusetts

Madhuri Reddy, MD, MSc
Needham, Massachusetts

Marcella Sweet, BSc
Hulls Cove, Maine

Jaya Vatsyanyan, PhD, MSc
Lexington, Massachusetts
Vertex Pharmaceuticals Inc.
[From Ohio Valley Chapter]

Lynn M. Wachtman, DVM, MPH
Framingham, Massachusetts

Elisia Willette, MSN, CCRN
Framingham, Massachusetts
McKesson

Andrew N. Wilner, MD
Fall River, Massachusetts

New England E-News

President’s E-mails Keep You Informed

Take a minute to check those messages you occasionally get from our chapter president, Kristin Stephan. If you’re a member of the chapter, Kristin sends you the AMWA New England E-News whenever she receives information about a local job, 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.

Chapter LinkedIn Subgroup

Local Connections for New England AMWA Members

As a member of the New England Chapter, you can communicate with regional colleagues in our LinkedIn subgroup. To join the local online conversation, sign up for the main AMWA group if you haven’t already done so, then go to www.linkedin.com and follow the links to subgroups. If you have any questions, contact Laurie MacDougall at calicomedcomm@gmail.com.
Directions to February 12 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 (southbound) and Exit 27B (northbound). There is ample free parking.

Coming from points north:
Take Route 128/I-95 south to Exit 27A (Totten Pond Rd). At the end of the exit ramp bear right and merge onto Winter Street. Continue onto Totten Pond Road. The hotel is about one-quarter mile ahead on the right.

Coming from points south:
Take Route 128/I-95 north to exit 27B (Totten Pond Rd). Bear right at the fork to go onto Wyman Street. Continue onto Winter Street. Turn left onto Totten Pond Road. The hotel is about 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 and would like a ride, ask Judy Linn (judyhlinn@aol.com) whether there is someone from your area who might be able to give you a lift. Or call Joann Merriman (781-891-0028) to see if she can pick you up at a T station or some other mutually convenient location.

Executive Council to Meet on February 12

The chapter’s Executive Council convenes twice a year, in the early summer and again right after the midwinter Sunday brunch. These face-to-face meetings give chapter leaders a chance to discuss business matters, ideas for future events, new developments, unexpected problems, etc.

The next council meeting takes place on Sunday, February 12. Any chapter member is welcome to suggest an item for the agenda. If there is a topic or issue you feel should be addressed, whether it’s an idea for a future meeting, a complaint, or a suggestion for new or improved services, feel free to share your thoughts with our chapter president, Kristin Stephan, at kristin.stephan@gmail.com.

Membership Awards

Chapter Support for Novice Medical Writers

Since 2002, the New England Chapter’s competitive Judy Linn Membership Awards have provided support to medical and health communicators who are new to the field.

The award consists of a year’s membership in AMWA (paid for by the New England Chapter) and free registration for three regular chapter meetings during that year. In addition, the members of the Awards Committee are generally available to offer guidance or to put award recipients in touch with other chapter members who might be of help to them.

To be eligible for consideration, a candidate must reside and work in New England. There is no application fee, and an application may be submitted at any time.

For details, go to www.amwa-ne.org/awards. If you have any questions, please contact David Olle, membership awards director, at davidolle@comcast.net.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL 2011-12

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VICE PRESIDENT/CONNECTICUT: Michelle R. Horan
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Susan F. Gonsalves, Anita P. Kuan, Manjula Puthenedam
MEMBERSHIP: Judy Linn
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Francesca Coltrera, Nancy Knoblock Hunton, Jill M. Shuman, Debbie von Rechenberg
E-NEWS: Kristin Stephan
NEWSLETTER: Judy Linn
LINKEDIN SUBGROUP: Laurie A. MacDougall
James P. Gallant
WRITING AWARDS: Jill M. Shuman
Judy Linn (Administrative), Laurie A. MacDougall (Site Arrangements), Siobhan Gallagher & Debbie von Rechenberg (Judging Coordinators), Helen Osborne (Honors Award Selection)
NOMINATING COMMITTEE: Derek Dore
WEB SITE: Aaron Federman
Judy Linn, Jill Shuman

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Francesca Coltrera, James P. Gallant, Andrea Gwosdow, Laurie B. LaRusso, Shanna McClennen, Chris McMorrow, Joann H. Merriman, Debbie von Rechenberg

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