Roundtable Discussions for Professional Development

The New England Chapter’s traditional midwinter brunch will be held on Sunday, February 24, at the Hilton Garden Inn in Burlington, 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 tables on career-related topics and, as usual, an open table for informal conversation. Choose the table 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 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.

ROUND TABLES

#1 FROM BENCH SCIENCE AND CLINICAL PRACTICE TO MEDICAL WRITING
Leader: Andrea Gwosdow
This roundtable will help scientists and clinicians discover how to use their skills in a career as a medical writer. Join colleagues to discuss how to make the transition. Explore the nuts and bolts of applying your skills to this new arena, including how to develop contacts and resources, how to get clips, and tips for finding a job.

#2 SO YOU WANT TO BE A MEDICAL WRITER?
Leader: Chris McMorrow
If you’re a technical writer, a journalist, 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.

#3 REGULATORY WRITING IN THE PHARMACEUTICAL AND BIOTECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY
Leader: 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 writer.

#4 NONREGULATORY WRITING IN THE PHARMACEUTICAL AND BIOTECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY
Leader: 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.

INDEX
2 Chapter Calendar 2 AMWA PDC 4 November Report 4 Personal Notes 5 Writing Competition
2 How to Register 3 Fellowships 4 Chapter E-News 4 New Members 5 Membership Awards
2 Snow Alert 3 Other Meetings 4 LinkedIn Subgroup 5 Directions to Meeting 5 Executive Council
Chapter Calendar

The New England Chapter’s year begins in mid-June, when the new slate of officers takes over. The officers and other members of the chapter’s Executive Council meet during the summer, but 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, these 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, the chapter holds one special event each year. A writing competition, culminating in presentation of the Will Solimene Awards for Excellence in Medical Communication, 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, an informal event, such as a networking lunch or a tour, is scheduled.

March 5 – Informal Networking Lunch
Cambridge, Mass.
Everyone is invited to an informal networking lunch at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 5, at Changsho, 1712 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, Mass. (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 Changsho lot. Cost is the price of buffet lunch, plus your drink and tip. Please RSVP by Sunday, March 3, to Francesca Coltrera at coltrera@comcast.net or 781-641-9872.

April 6 – New England Conference
Sturbridge, Mass.
The 10th New England Conference—a full day of AMWA credit workshops, special sessions, luncheon roundtables, and informal networking—will be held at the Sturbridge Host Hotel & Conference Center in Sturbridge, Mass., on Saturday, April 6.

Workshops offering credit toward an AMWA education certificate will cover Elements of Medical Terminology, Tables and Graphs, Essential Ethics for Medical Communicators, and Writing Abstracts. The special sessions will address two topics members frequently ask about: transitioning into medical communication and working as a freelance writer or editor.

The conference registration brochure will be available soon. If you have any questions, contact the conference registrar, Judy Linn, at judyhlinn@aol.com.

April or May – Dinner Meeting
Connecticut
The New England Chapter will hold a meeting in Connecticut in the spring. If you have any questions or comments about our Connecticut meetings, please contact Michelle Horan, vice president for Connecticut, at michelle.r.horan@pfizer.com.

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

How to Register for February 24 Meeting
To register for the upcoming Sunday 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 need a 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.

Snow Alert!
SHOULD SEVERE WINTER WEATHER REQUIRE POSTPONEMENT OF THE MEETING, DEREK DORE WILL NOTIFY EVERYONE BY E-MAIL. IF THE WEATHER LOOKS REALLY BAD, AND YOU ARE UNABLE TO ACCESS YOUR E-MAIL, CALL JUDY LINN AT 508-358-7071 BEFORE YOU HEAD OUT—JUST TO BE SURE.

AMWA Professional Development Certificate
The roundtable meeting on February 24 is worth 5 points toward a Professional Development Certificate (PDC). For information about this certificate, you can go to amwa.org/default.asp?id=252.

If you are working on a certificate, or if you think you might want to enroll in the PDC 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.

NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER NEWS, published 4 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
37 FORTY ACRES DRIVE
WAYLAND, MASSACHUSETTS 01778

Judy Linn, Newsletter Editor
Phone: 508-358-7071
Fax: 508-358-7081
E-mail: judyhlinn@aol.com

www.amwa-ne.org
#5 WRITING FOR MEDICAL EDUCATION AND MEDICAL COMMUNICATION COMPANIES  
Leader: 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 successfully with an agency.

#6 MONEY MATTERS IN THE FREELANCE WORLD  
Leader: Jill Shuman  
Even the best writers won’t have financial success unless they know how to get what they’re worth. Whether you are currently freelancing or just considering it, here’s a primer of essentials about setting and raising rates, assessing the benefits of hourly rates vs. project rates, collecting your due, and negotiating contracts. Share your experiences and tap into those of your colleagues.

#7 NO PORTFOLIO? NO PROBLEM!  
Leader: Cheryl Lathrop  
Create an instant medical writing portfolio out of thin air! Learn how to repurpose what you already have lying 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.

#8 SECRETS TO WRITING A BUSINESS PLAN AND MEETING YOUR GOALS  
Leader: Helen Osborne  
Yes, you really do need a business plan. This is the single best way to stay “on track,” not just making decisions based on your latest query. There’s no rule that writing business plans must be tedious or boring. Learn the secrets for doing it in ways that are helpful, effective, and even fun.

#9 BLOGGING FOR MEDICAL WRITERS  
Leader: 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 and learn some of the dos and don'ts. 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 TWITTER IS NOT JUST FOR TWEETING (OR... HOW TO STAY INFORMED IN 15 MINUTES A DAY)  
Leader: Siobhan Gallagher  
Social media tools are changing and breeding, but it looks like Twitter is here to stay. Come to this roundtable to understand its value as a newsfeed and, if applicable to your work, a way to connect with others. To learn more before the meeting, hop onto Twitter and follow me @sgall or search for #AMWA: I will experiment by tweeting info to give you a head start on the meeting.

#11 INFORMAL SOCIAL TABLE  
Leader: 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.

Journalism Fellowships

May 15-24  
Biomedical Hands-On Laboratory Course for Writers  
Marine Biological Laboratory  
Woods Hole, Mass.  
Every year, the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, Mass., offers fellowships for science and health journalists to study there for 10 days during the spring. This year’s application deadline is March 1. For information go to www.mbl.edu/sjp.

Other Meetings in New England

February 14-18  
AAAS Annual Meeting  
Boston, Mass.  
The 2013 meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science will be held in Boston. For information: www.aaas.org/meetings.

March 14-16  
Harvard Medical School Writing Workshop  
Cambridge, Mass.  
The Department of Continuing Education at Harvard Medical School will hold its annual 3-day program on “Achieving Healthcare Leadership & Outcomes Through Writing and Publishing” at the Marriott Hotel in Cambridge, Mass. For information: www.harvardwriters.com.

March 14-17  
Association of Health Care Journalists Annual Conference  
Boston, Mass.  
November Meeting Report
Medical Video Scripting
At the chapter’s meeting in New Haven in November, Nick Sidorovich, MSeD, owner of Rolling Hill Media LLC and a freelance medical writer, discussed the importance of video scripting in medical communication.

A versatile writer, Nick co-wrote a screenplay, “The Miracle of Santa Rosa,” with Hollywood director Frank Rainone, and he has taught screenwriting at Fairleigh Dickinson University. A member of AMWA and the Delaware Valley Chapter since 2009, he also teaches the “Writing for Video” credit workshop for the AMWA certificate program.

Nick shared his prediction that medical writing will continue to integrate new technology, specifically video production. But why is video a preferred medium when we have many other technological options? This talented “medical imagineer” is certain that video writing will be a hot attraction for future generations of medical writers because, for starters, it is readily accessible to most people, simulates live situations, and has the ability to demonstrate complex procedures. Furthermore, video is learner-paced, interactive, and cost-effective, and it can captivate and motivate the audience through sound and motion. He went on to discuss four skill sets—“conceptual, visual, behavioral, and structural thinking”—which he considers essential in video writing.

Nick’s talk included many video clips that grabbed our attention—tremendous examples of sound and motion that kept us wanting more. He left us with a touching quote from the author and poet Maya Angelou that related to the topic at hand: “I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

—Katherine Daneault
Katherine Daneault, who is considering a career in medical writing, is an undergraduate student at Southern Connecticut State University.

AMWA New England E-News
Brief Messages About Local Activities and Jobs
Watch for e-mail from President Derek Dore—it will come from derek.dorerx@gmail.com with “AMWA New England E-News” in the subject line. These occasional brief messages let you know about a local job opening, freelance opportunity, upcoming chapter meeting, or other event of possible interest to you.

The E-News is sent only to chapter members, but others are welcome to submit items to Derek for consideration.

There is no charge for job postings, but they must conform to the submission guidelines, which can be downloaded as a 1-page PDF from the chapter website (http://www.amwa-ne.org/jobs).

Chapter LinkedIn Subgroup
Social Networking with a Local Focus
As a member of the New England Chapter, you can connect with regional colleagues in our LinkedIn subgroup, providing you have already signed up for the main AMWA group. To join the local online conversation, go to www.linkedin.com and follow the links to subgroups.

If you have any questions, please contact Laurie MacDougall, LinkedIn subgroup manager, at calicomedcomm@gmail.com.

Personal Notes
In the fall, Elizabeth Coons, MA, MTPW, ELS, joined the staff of DiagnosisOne in Lowell, Mass., as a medical writer and editor. She had previously worked there for several months as a contract writer.

Karyn Myers, PhD, is now a senior scientific writer at Biogen Idec Inc.

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:

Daniel Bahcheli, MSc
Boston, Massachusetts
[From Canada Chapter]

Patricia M. Boone, PhD, ELS
South Hadley, Massachusetts

Wendy Chao, PhD
Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary
Boston, Massachusetts

Deborah A. Church, MD
CE3 Inc.
Guilford, Connecticut

Mark F. Fielding, PhD
Biogen Idec
Cambridge, Massachusetts
[from Michigan Chapter]

David Friedman, PhD
Madison, Connecticut

Marjorie Layman, BS
Keene, New Hampshire

Danielle McLean, PhD
Burlington, Vermont
[from Florida Chapter]

Eugenie Olson, BFA
MeYou Health
Boston, Massachusetts

Lyn A. Raghai, MEd
Dedham, Massachusetts

Millennium Pharmaceuticals

Jeff Rose, MS
Chelmsford, Massachusetts

Carla S. Rotheaus, MD
Brookline, Massachusetts

Jack Thorndike, MS
Boston, Massachusetts

Dorothy van Lingen
Net-Translators
Marlborough, Massachusetts

Hao Zeng, PhD, MD
Marlborough, Massachusetts
Directions to February 24 Meeting
Hilton Garden Inn
5 Wheeler Road
Burlington, Massachusetts
781-272-8800

The hotel is just off the Middlesex Turnpike, not far from Route 128/I-95. There is ample free parking.

Heading north or south on Route 128/I-95:
Take Exit 32B (Middlesex Turnpike). Turn left onto the Middlesex Turnpike. Then take a left onto Wheeler Road. The hotel is just ahead on the left.

For detailed driving directions from your location, go to: http://national.citysearch.com/profile/4653368/burlington_ma/hilton_garden_inn.html.

Need a ride to the meeting?
The Burlington Hilton Garden Inn is not accessible by public transportation. If you don’t have a car, ask Judy Linn (judyhlinn@aol.com) whether there is someone from your area who might be able to give you a lift.

2014 Chapter Writing Competition
Solimene Awards Recognize Excellence
The New England Chapter’s biennial competition for the Will Solimene Awards for Excellence in Medical Communication offers a singular opportunity for you to get recognition from your peers. As the year progresses, think about recent or forthcoming publications that you’re especially proud of and plan to enter them in the 2014 competition, which will recognize outstanding work published by New England medical writers in 2012 or 2013.

If you’d like to check out the winning submissions in the chapter’s last competition, you can download the 2012 Writing Awards Luncheon program brochure from the chapter website (www.amwa-ne.org/awards).

Membership Awards
New Medical Writers Invited to Apply
The New England Chapter’s competitive Judy Linn Membership Awards provide support for up to three new medical writers at a time. The award covers the cost of a year’s membership in AMWA (dues includes chapter membership) as well as the registration fees for the regular chapter meetings in Massachusetts and Connecticut during that time. The chapter members who serve on the awards committee, along with other experienced biomedical and health communicators, are available to provide guidance in their various areas of expertise.

To learn more, go to www.amwa-ne.org and click on Awards. If you have questions, please contact David Olle, membership awards director, at davidolle@comcast.net.

Executive Council Meeting on February 24
The chapter’s governing board, the Executive Council, meets twice a year, first in the early summer (the chapter year begins in mid-June) and again in the winter, right after the traditional Sunday brunch program. These meetings give chapter leaders a chance to get together in person to discuss business matters, unexpected problems, ideas for future events, etc.

The next council meeting takes place on Sunday, February 24. 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 President Derek Dore at derek.dorerx@gmail.com.