June 6: Dinner Meeting in Boston
Exploring the Science Behind Writer’s Block

The New England Chapter will end the 2006-07 year with a dinner meeting on Wednesday, June 6, at the Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston. If you can arrive a little early, you’ll have a chance to tour the hospital’s famous Ether Dome, where anesthesia was first used during surgery.

After the social hour and dinner, the program will open with a brief business meeting to introduce our chapter officers for the coming year and to recognize the 2007 recipients of the chapter’s Judy Linn Membership Awards.

Highlighting the evening will be a talk on “Exploring the Science Behind Writer’s Block.”

As a medical writer, have you ever wondered what drives you to write? Are you curious about the connection between your brain and your desire to communicate? Have you ever been working on a deadline when the words just wouldn’t come? Alice Flaherty, MD, PhD, neurologist and author of The Midnight Disease, will explore the science behind writer’s block and help you understand writing in medical terms.

Dr. Flaherty is a Harvard-educated neurologist on staff at Mass General and its affiliate, McLean Hospital. She sees patients regularly, teaches at Harvard Medical School and Mass General, lectures widely, does research, and specializes in the innovative technique of deep brain stimulators. She also has a passion for writing and is currently working on her fourth book.

Her second book, The Midnight Disease, published in 2004, plumbs the mysteries of literary creativity, including writer’s block and compulsive writing (known as hypergraphia). This book’s wide appeal stems from Dr. Flaherty’s ability to translate scientific information for a general audience; the stories of her own struggles with compulsive writing and writer’s block, as well as those of recognized writers; her unique perspective as both doctor and patient; and her practical advice for writers. The book has been the subject of numerous television and radio features and is required reading at many universities in the U.S. and Europe.

THE SCIENCE BEHIND WRITER’S BLOCK

DATE: Wednesday, June 6
TIME: Tour 5:30-6:00 p.m. Social hour (complimentary wine, beer, soft drinks) 6:00-7:00. Dinner 7:00-8:00. Program 8:00-9:00.
PLACE: East Garden Room, White Building, Massachusetts General Hospital (near the Main Entrance)
DIRECTIONS: See back page.
BUFFET MENU: Garden Salad • Assorted Rolls • Coq au Vin • Wild Mushroom Ravioli • Grilled Vegetables • Assorted Desserts
REGISTRATION: Please use the enclosed form to register. The registration fee is $26 for members, $30 for guests and prospective members.
DEADLINE: To guarantee dinner reservations, we must receive your payment by mail (checks only, no credit cards) no later than Monday, June 4. (Sorry, no refunds for cancellation after 2:00 p.m. that day.)

Don’t miss the opportunity to ask questions and engage in a discussion with Alice Flaherty when she shares her writing experiences, her research, and maybe even the secret to unlocking your writer’s block!

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

—Julie J. Martin
President Elect/Program Director

You can earn 5 points toward an AMWA Professional Development Certificate by attending this meeting. For information, go to the AMWA Web site (www.amwa.org) and click on Education/Certificates.
Chapter Calendar

The New England Chapter holds seven regular meetings a year, from September through June. Five meetings are in the Greater Boston area, and two are 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, a panel presentation, or roundtable discussions. A writing competition culminating in the Will Solimene Awards is held every other year, alternating with the New England Conference, an all-day program of workshops on a Saturday. Occasionally informal networking meetings or tours are scheduled.

May 29: Dinner Meeting in New Haven
Topic is Clinical Research

The spring Connecticut meeting on Tuesday, May 29, at Brazi’s Restaurant in New Haven will highlight the state-of-the-art clinical research unit that Pfizer operates in New Haven in conjunction with Yale University School of Medicine. Dr. Howard Uderman, medical director of the $35 million facility, will talk about the basics of the Phase I clinical trials performed at the unit, one of only four in the world operated by Pfizer.

The unit’s technology allows researchers to track exactly where study medicines work in the body and clinicians from around the world to monitor the progress of trials in real time. This permits researchers to identify the potential clinical value of new medicines, so research can focus on the most promising breakthroughs. The facility also includes a research pharmacy and sophisticated laboratories to perform safety and biomarker studies.

Pfizer is one of the few major pharmaceutical firms to own and operate its own clinical research units, rather than contracting out the research. This program is a rare opportunity to see behind the clinical studies that are the basis for so much of the medical literature writers and editors rely on.

Networking starts at 5:45 p.m., with a buffet Italian dinner at 6:30 p.m. and the program at 7:30 p.m. The cost is $29 for members, $32 for nonmembers. Registration forms have been sent to all Connecticut members; a form will be mailed to anyone else who provides a mailing address to Lynne Dodson (ldodson@snet.net or 203-377-8256).

Informal Networking

If an informal lunch in Cambridge, Mass., or any other informal networking meeting is scheduled over the summer, members will be notified via the chapter E-news. Others may visit the chapter Web site (www.amwa-ne.org) to find out if anything is happening.

Next Regular Meeting

The chapter does not hold regular meetings in July or August. The next dinner meeting and program will take place in September, some time after Labor Day. Watch for details in the September newsletter.

March Meeting Report

Members and guests network, discuss Groopman article

At an informal dinner meeting at the Yangtze River Restaurant in March, chapter members and guests divided into two groups, one of which discussed Dr. Jerome Groopman’s article, “What’s the Trouble? How Doctors Think,” published in the January 29, 2007, issue of The New Yorker.

According to Groopman, many mistakes come from the physician's inability to keep an open mind, reluctance to abandon first impressions, and willingness to ignore contradictory evidence. “It is a matter,” Groopman writes, “of juggling seemingly contradictory bits of data simultaneously in one’s mind and then seeking other information to make a decision, one way or another. This juggling . . . marks the expert physician—at the bedside or in a darkened radiology suite.” During a lively roundtable discussion, participants shared their own personal experiences as both patient and physician. As writers, we discussed Groopman’s eloquence and style.

The other group focused on how to find new work and shared names of contacts and networking resources.

Everyone seemed to enjoy the informal format, and the consensus was that we should have more events like this in the future.

—Adriane Bishko
Secretary
Chapter Officers
The New England Chapter’s officers for 2007-08 will be introduced at the final meeting of the 2006-07 year on Wednesday, June 6.

Delegates to AMWA Board of Directors
As one of the larger AMWA chapters, New England has two representatives on the association’s Board of Directors. In accordance with our chapter’s bylaws, these delegates are the President and the President-Elect, with the Immediate Past President and the Vice President for Connecticut serving as alternates.

Officers (automatic)
The chapter’s President is elected a year ahead of time. During the year as President-Elect, he or she serves as Program Director. After a year as President, he or she then serves the chapter for still another year as Immediate Past President.

PRESIDENT: Julie J. Martin
As communications manager for the Stoelckle Center for Primary Care Innovation at Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, Julie focuses on internal and external communications and development initiatives. She received her master's degree in health communication from Tufts University School of Medicine, and worked for several years in communication for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. She does occasional freelance writing on consumer health and patient education topics, and is pursuing an AMWA certificate in Editing/Writing. Julie has been an AMWA member since 2003.

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT: Lonnie K. Christiansen
Lonnie, an AMWA member since 2001, is a widely published medical science writer and a certified editor in the life sciences, with a BA in English and a certificate in biomedical sciences from Boston University School of Medicine. As principal of Keller Medical Communications in Newburyport, Mass., she specializes in translating medical science for lay audiences and communicating research discoveries to the scientific community. In 2006, she won a Will Solimene Award from the chapter for a white paper on PKC research; in 2005, she won the Eric W. Martin Award from national for a lay article on stem cell science. She writes for Harvard- and MIT-affiliated institutions as well as the pharmaceutical industry.

Nominees for Office
The Nominating Committee was chaired by President-Elect Julie J. Martin and included President Lonnie K. Christiansen (ex officio), Andrea Gwosdow, Nancy Knoblock Hunton, and Judy Linn. The committee has presented the following slate of officers to serve along with Julie and Lonnie in the coming year.

PRESIDENT-ELECT: Christine McMorrow
Chris recently relocated to Massachusetts from New Jersey, where she spent over 20 years in writing and marketing. She has held diverse senior copywriter and communications director positions in publishing, pharmacy benefits, medical education, and healthcare communications firms, including Merck-Medco Managed Care, Thomson Physicians World, and Bruce Leeb & Company Healthcare Advertising. Her writing specialties range from pharmaceutical promotion and marketing communications to public relations, patient education, and sales training, with a focus on managed care. Since 2004, she has been freelancing for clients in New Jersey, New York, California, Florida, and Massachusetts. She is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Smith College, where she majored in romance languages. Chris joined AMWA in 2004, and she is currently pursuing an AMWA multidisciplinary certificate in Public Relations/Advertising/Marketing and Editing/Writing.

VICE PRESIDENT FOR CONNECTICUT: Susan F. Gonsalves
Susan received her PhD in pharmacology from Dartmouth College. As a director in the Regulatory Analysis and Documentation group at Pfizer in New London, Susan has responsibilities ranging from writing components of registration dossiers to post-marketing safety analysis!A member of AMWA since 1988, she received a core certificate in the pharmaceutical specialty area in 1997. She has been a member of the Connecticut Planning Committee since 2005. She was also on the planning committee for the 2005 New England Chapter Conference and led a workshop there on “The Common Technical Document: Overview and Lessons Learned.”

SECRETARY: Adriane Bishko
Adriane, a member since 1998, is being nominated for a third term as Secretary. She has almost two decades in health care communications, and since launching her own company, Image Ink, in 1995, she has worked for such clients as Harvard Medical School, Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Massachusetts General Hospital, and Beth Israel Deaconess
Medical Center. In 2004, Adriane won a Will Solimene Award from the chapter. For almost 20 years she volunteered, teaching literacy skills to native-born Americans, while serving on the board of the Adult Literacy Program. She is a charter member of Boston Women Communicators. She holds degrees from Washington University in St. Louis and Michigan State University.

TREASURER: Jill Shuman
Jill, who was president of the chapter in 1995-96, is being nominated for a seventh term as Treasurer. She holds a master’s degree in communications/health sciences and is a certified editor in the life sciences. She has extensive experience as a writer, editor, teacher, and project manager in many areas of medical and scientific communication. A member since 1991, Jill was named an AMWA Fellow in 2003 in recognition of her professional achievements and her contributions to the association.

Chapter Web Site
In February, the New England Chapter launched a Web site at www.amwa-ne.org, and a bevy of well-deserved accolades ensued. Months of diligent planning and fastidious attention to detail by Lonnie Christiansen, Laurie LaRusso, and Jill Shuman, a Web-savvy Executive Council subcommittee, working with a local Web design firm paid off with an unusually attractive, easily navigated site.
Along with information about AMWA and our regional chapter, the site offers many useful links to valuable resources for medical writers and editors. With Lonnie serving as Web site director, information about chapter events is regularly updated.

In conjunction with our chapter E-news, sent to chapter members two or three times a month, the Web site is allowing us to communicate with members quickly and efficiently. For this reason, we are able to discontinue the time-consuming and expensive mailing of the chapter newsletter. New England Chapter News, beginning with the September 2007 issue, will be posted in PDF format on the Web site. Members will be notified via the E-news whenever a new issue becomes available. (Please be sure we have your current e-mail address.)
If you have any comments or suggestions about the Web site, please get in touch with Lonnie Christiansen (lonnie@kellermedical.com).

Personal Notes
Jill A. Wollins, PhD, has joined TransMedics Inc., Andover, Mass., as vice president of regulatory and clinical affairs and quality assurance.

Tom O’Connell, a freelance columnist on Cape Cod and publisher of www.sanctuary777.com, was invited by the Dedham (Mass.) Library to present highlights from his newest book, The O’Connell Boy: Educating ‘The Wolf Child’—An Irish-American Memoir (1932-1950). The book traces his formative years in a strict Irish widow’s group home in Norwood and then recounts his unrestrained adolescence with a lackadaisical Irish granny in Dedham. Tom is a past chapter president.

Gary Jasdzewski, PhD, is now a senior medical writer at Altus Pharmaceuticals, Cambridge, Mass. He was formerly a senior medical writer at Boston Scientific.

Paul J. Miller, MS, has joined Advanced Magnetics Inc., Cambridge, Mass., as director of medical writing. Paul was formerly associate director of medical writing at Sepracor.

Susanne M. Richardson, MSc, ELS, has joined Averion International Corporation, Southborough, Mass., as a senior medical writer II, medical affairs.

Two New England Chapter members are on the faculty of the Delaware Valley Chapter’s conference in Princeton, N.J., June 9. Tom Gegeny, MS, ELS, of Black Rock, Conn., a medical writer at Envision Pharma, will lead the core workshop on Effectively Searching Online Databases. Helen Osborne, MEd, OTR/L, president of Health Literacy Consulting, Natick, Mass., will lead a workshop on Health Literacy: Assessing Readability and Writing for Understanding.

Debra Ruder, MS, is this year’s winner of AMWA’s Eric W. Martin Award in the lay audience category for “Life Lessons,” an article in the January-February 2006 issue of Harvard Magazine. Debbie is associate director of publications at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston, and a freelance journalist who has written extensively about higher education and healthcare issues.

CHAPTER CHANGES: L. Lee Culvert, BS, has moved to Bartonville, Tex., and is now a member of the Southwest Chapter. Kenneth Goldstein, PhD, has moved to Great Neck, N.Y., and is now a member of the Empire State-Metro NY 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.

Becki Cameron
Concord, New Hampshire

Christine M. Carroll, RN, MBA
Newington, Connecticut

Dennis C. Chang, PhD
Natick, Massachusetts

Valerie English Cooper
VEC Medical Communications
Washington, Connecticut

Ronald E. Cotter, MS
Bridgewater, Massachusetts

Millennium Pharmaceuticals Inc.

Mary Curran
West Simsbury, Connecticut

David Danese, MA
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Emeritus Educational Sciences
[from Delaware Valley Chapter]

Jensen Lionel Denoyes
Brookton, Massachusetts

John Dobermiller
Biogen Idec Inc.
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Mrudula Donepudi, PhD
Brookline, Massachusetts

Kathleen Dorries, PhD
Advogent
Watertown, Massachusetts

Kati A. Enscoe, MS
HCPro
Marblehead, Massachusetts

Kathleen Ferguson
Charles River Laboratories
Worcester, Massachusetts

Mary-Ellen Giroux
Willison, Vermont

Vermont Center for Occupational Rehabilitation

Kara S. Gobron, PhD
Longmeadow, Massachusetts

Jessie Hanrahan, PhD
Boston, Massachusetts

Nina Hevey, MPH
Westbrook, Connecticut

The France Foundation

Jillian N. Ilsley, PhD
Genzyme Corporation
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Anita S. Infante, PhD
Branford, Connecticut

AMV Communications

Donna E. Jensen, PhD
Stratham, New Hampshire

Fusion Medical Education

Valerie D. King, BA, MA
Wallingford, Connecticut

Rob Kinslow
Seidler Bernstein Inc.
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Yuliya Kreychman, PharmD, RPh
Genzyme Corporation
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Mary Lanergan, BS
Attleboro, Massachusetts

Watson B. Laughton, PhD
Springfield, Massachusetts

Camargo Pharmaceutical Services LLC
[from North Central Chapter]

Christine Gallagher Marshall, PhD
Natick, Massachusetts

Peggy McClure, BA
Framingham, Massachusetts

Akanksha Mittal, PhD
Southborough, Massachusetts

Jodee L. Mosher, MD
Weare, New Hampshire

Catholic Medical Center

Martha W. Murphy
Narragansett, Rhode Island

Cynthia J. Nickerson, MA
Merrimac, Massachusetts

Eileen O’Gara-Kurtis
Silver Branch Communications LLC
Seekonk, Massachusetts

Diann Peterson, BA, BS
Trumbull, Connecticut

Ann M. Plasso
Sommerville, Massachusetts

Harvard Pilgrim Health Care

Beth D. Reh, MHS
Westborough, Massachusetts

Joy Remy
Dyax Corporation
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Larry J. Rosenberg, PhD
Translational Oncology
Southbury, Connecticut

Carolyn Roy-Bornstein, MD
Newburyport, Massachusetts

Hanna Schonthal, BS
Brookline, Massachusetts

Arlene D. Stark, PhD
Milford, Connecticut

Bristol-Myers Squibb Company

Eric J. Stevenson, PhD
Waltham, Massachusetts

Dana-Farber Cancer Institute

Mary E. Stone, MA
Joslin Diabetes Center
Boston, Massachusetts

E. Kelly Sullivan
KellySci Consulting
Arlington, Massachusetts

Eugenia Jennie Szekely
Biogen Idec Inc.
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Jennifer Tunnicliffe
Dyax Corporation
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Rose M. Udics, BS, MPA
Arlington, Massachusetts

Connie Villalba, PhD
Waltham, Massachusetts

Health Dialog Inc.

Robert Walton, RPh
Danbury, Connecticut

Cindy M. Warwick, BS
Boxborough, Massachusetts

Bristol-Myers Squibb Medical Imaging

Marilyn A. White, MPH
Clinical Research Solutions Inc.
Marshfield, Massachusetts

Jeanette Wilmanski, PhD
Brighton, Massachusetts

Cindy Wilson
Health Dialog Inc.
Boston, Massachusetts
Laurie LaRusso, doing double duty, arranged for some of the Conference Luncheon tables to be devoted to career-related topics. For generously sharing their expertise, we thank the table leaders: Lonnie Christiansen (On the Record: Ten Tips for Interviewing Researchers, Clinicians, and Patients), Andrea Gwosdow (From Bench Scientist to Medical Writer), Nancy Knoblock Hunton (Crafting Health Articles for Consumers and Patients), and—and also doing double duty—Jill Shuman (The Medical Writer’s Bookshelf: Reference Tools to Do the Job Well).

The 8th New England Conference will be held in the spring of 2009. We welcome suggestions from those of you who were at this year’s conference and from those of you who were not.

—Judy Linn
Conference Registrar

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL 2006-07

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT: Lonnie K. Christiansen
IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT: Andrea Gwosdow
PRESIDENT-ELECT: Julie J. Martin,
VICE PRESIDENT/CONNECTICUT: J. Lynne Dodson
SECRETARY: Adriane Joy Bishko
TREASURER: Jill M. Shuman

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MEMBERSHIP: Judy Linn
MEMBERSHIP AWARDS: David A. Olle, Robert E. Dunbar, Nancy Knoblock Hunton, Jill M. Shuman
E-MAIL: Lonnie K. Christiansen
NEWSLETTER: Judy Linn
NOMINATING COMMITTEE: Julie J. Martin
CHAPTER CONFERENCE: Siobhan E. Gallagher, Laurie LaRusso (Roundtables), Judy Linn (Registrar), Jill Shuman (Workshops)

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Aaron Federman, Nancy Knoblock Hunton, Laurie LaRusso, Michael J. Lasalandra, Joann H. Merriman, Helen Osborne

DELEGATES TO AMWA

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Lonnie K. Christiansen, Julie J. Martin
ALTERNATES: Andrea Gwosdow, J. Lynne Dodson

New England Conference Report
A Day of Professional Enrichment, Camaraderie

The 7th New England Conference, held Saturday, May 5, at the Sturbridge Host Hotel & Conference Center, Sturbridge, Mass., drew high praise on all counts, thanks in large part to careful planning and deft management by our conference director, Siobhan Gallagher, and workshop coordinator, Jill Shuman.

The program drew registrants from throughout New England, as well as from New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and the state of Washington. (We appreciated a postconference note from Kate Bracy Kalb, the Washington registrant, who also attended our 2005 conference: “You folks did a masterful job with the conference. I enjoyed it very much and, as usual, learned a great deal. Nice work.”)

All the workshops received excellent evaluations thanks to the outstanding faculty: Susan Aiello from the Ohio Valley Chapter (Effective Paragraphing and Essentials of Copyediting), Thea Chalow (The Writer’s Role in Video, CD-ROM, and Web-based Programs), Jennifer Fissekis from the Empire State-Metro New York Chapter (Tables and Graphs) Tom Gegeny (The Internet: How and Where to Find the Information You Seek), and Laurie LaRusso (Microsoft Office™ for Presentations: Creating Figures, Slides, and Posters).

The Conference Committee members are grateful to Heather Miniman, director of the chapter’s three previous conferences, who offered astute guidance during the planning stages and was on site the day of the conference to lend a hand.