June 10: Awards Banquet in Waltham, Mass.

Honors Address by Dr. Harris Berman
Presentation of Will Solimene Awards of Excellence

You don’t want to miss the last event of the year—the New England Chapter’s 14th Awards Banquet, Thursday, June 10, at the Westin Hotel, Waltham, Mass. You’ll enjoy a festive evening, with interesting and congenial dinner companions, a timely address by a pioneer in managed health care, and a chance to congratulate the winners of the 2010 Will Solimene Awards for Excellence in Medical Communication.

New Officers
President Debbie von Rechenberg will introduce the new president, Laurie MacDougall, and the other officers for the 2010-11 year, which begins on June 10.

Honors Address
Harris A. Berman, MD, dean ad interim for Tufts University School of Medicine, will give the 2010 Honors Address: “From Communist to Capitalist to Socialist—All in One Professional Career.”

For the past 40 years, Dr. Berman has been a leader in health care quality, management, and reform. In 1971, as a way to help people struggling with high-cost insurance, he co-founded one of the country’s first managed health care plans and he was called a communist. When he took over as chief executive officer of Tufts Health Plan in 1986, it was a tiny insurance plan. When he left, in 2003, it was one of the most innovative, successful, and largest... and he was called a capitalist.

Now, as sweeping health insurance reform takes effect, from his administrative perch at the medical school, Dr. Berman—who also spent two years as chief medical officer of the Peace Corps in India—will give us the benefit of his engaging perspective on the opportunities and challenges of health care in the United States.

Writing Awards
Highlighting the evening will be the presentation of Will Solimene Awards of Excellence, which recognize outstanding work in medical and health communication by members of AMWA’s New England Chapter

The award-winning publications will be on display during the social hour and for the rest of the evening, so everyone will have a chance to look over the top-rated entries in the competition—books, articles, brochures, manuals, and more, in print and online, for professionals, patients, and general readers.

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Everyone is Invited!
During the social hour and dinner, you can catch up with friends and acquaintances—and make new professional contacts. Come greet the chapter officers, and give the award winners the applause they well deserve. And remember, this is your last chance until after Labor Day to get together with other medical writers at a chapter event.

Guests and prospective members are welcome, as always.
Chapter Calendar

The New England Chapter holds six regular meetings a year, from September through June. Four of these 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. In addition, 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.

Summer Executive Council Meeting
TBD
The Executive Council—the chapter’s officers, committee directors, and council members-at-large—will be meeting soon to begin planning the 2010-11 chapter year.
If there is anything you feel should be addressed by the chapter leadership, whether an idea for a meeting or a suggestion for new or improved services, please feel free to share your thoughts with the incoming president, Laurie MacDougall. Any chapter member is welcome to suggest an item for the council meeting agenda. Send a note to Laurie at calicomediocomm@earthlink.net.

Chapter Greet & Go
at AMWA Annual Conference
in Milwaukee, Wis.
November 11
Arrangements for the 70th AMWA Annual Conference are nearly complete. To check out the details (including fees), go to www.amwa.org. The registration brochure will be posted the first week of July, and registration will open July 26.
If you are attending the conference, don’t forget to sign up for the Chapter Greet & Go on Thursday, November 11. This is a great time to hook up with other New England members, and it’s free!

How to Register for June Awards Banquet

Online registration is required for this event in Waltham, Mass., on Thursday, June 10. For a link to the registration form, simply go to the chapter website at www.amwa-ne.org and click in the Upcoming Events box on the home page.
Please note that if you are bringing guests, you must fill out a separate form for each person.
When you have completed the registration form, you will have two options:
(1) You may use PayPal to pay with a credit card. You do not have to have your own PayPal account, and you will not be charged a fee for the transaction.
(2) You may follow up by putting a check in the mail, in which case we will consider your registration tentative until we have actually received your check.

April Meeting Report

Epidemiologist Julie Buring Explains How to Make Sense of Scientific Findings

At the chapter dinner meeting in Burlington, Mass., in April, Julie E. Buring, ScD, professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School and professor of epidemiology at the Harvard School of Public Health, discussed her work on the Women’s Health Initiative (WHI) with regard to hormone replacement therapy, the recent U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommendations for mammography, and other current studies. She offered four “take home” messages.
First, epidemiology and medical research have become increasingly complex. When penicillin was discovered, for example, mortality from pneumonia went from 85% down to 15% with treatment. Today, we are looking at changes in outcomes of 10% or less, and a small change can make a big difference in a disease affecting large populations. Also, there is more emphasis on prevention than treatment now.
Second, we must evaluate the totality of evidence and not just the results of only one study. Dr. Buring discussed the WHI, which was based on many earlier studies suggesting strong heart

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and bone benefits in women using hormones. Because these were observational studies, Congress mandated the WHI as a randomized prospective study. The results showed that there are benefits for primary prevention of fractures and colon cancer, but these are outweighed by the risks of increased strokes, heart disease, blood clots, and breast cancer.

Third, we must look for alternative explanations for research results. She said we must ask, “But what about…?” A follow-up of the WHI is being planned, because most of the women enrolled in the study didn’t start hormone therapy until ten years after menopause. A new study beginning treatment immediately after menopause might explain why the WHI found an increase in cardiovascular events, because those women’s arteries had already been without estrogen for a decade before treatment began.

Finally, when writing about research results, we must ask, “Who is the message for?” To illustrate her point, Dr. Buring discussed the USPSTF recommendations about not using mammography to screen for breast cancer in women under 50. The task force had good epidemiological data, and although we know that breast cancer in younger women is either extremely benign or extremely aggressive, we cannot easily identify those two groups. Further, to save one life, we would have to screen 1,900 women in their 40s for ten years, 1,300 women in their 50s, and only 377 women in their 60s. As we found out, it was very difficult to interpret these results and communicate them to the politicians and general public. She suggested that the researchers themselves could be very helpful in putting such findings into context.

Dr. Buring also discussed the increased public recognition of epidemiology and the increased emphasis on prevention instead of treatment. She noted that with the growing complexity of scientific studies, our task as medical communicators is to work together with the epidemiologists to get the right message to the right target audience.

—Jerome Lang, Secretary

Personal Notes

During the semester beginning May 24, Jill Shuman, MS, ELS, will be teaching a course on Regulatory Documentation Processes in the Northeastern University online Masters in Technical Communication program. (For information about the program, go to www.cps.neu.edu/techcom.)

Lori A. Martell, PhD, of Lexington, Mass., has recently joined Generation Health Inc.

Tom O’Connell, MA, has published his 9th book, Power, Politics and Propaganda: Observations of a Curious Contrarian (Sanctuary Unlimited). Tom, a freelance writer and speaker on Cape Cod, is a past president of the New England Chapter.

CHAPTER CHANGE: Kate Matthews, MA, ELS, is now a member of the Empire State-Metro New York Chapter.

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:

Alison Arnold-Rife, PhD
Belmont, Massachusetts

Meg G. Begley
Harwinton, Connecticut

Donna L. Carrillo-Lopez, BA, RN
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Lonnek K. Christiansen, ELS
Newburyport, Massachusetts

Kaylee R. DeGrace, MS
Hyannis, Massachusetts

Kelli Edwards-Malone, PharmD
Reading, Massachusetts

Audrey Eisen-Vandervelde, PhD
Winchester, Massachusetts

Richard C. Frank, MD
Fairfield, Connecticut
Norwalk Hospital
[from Empire State Chapter]

Rita Gelman, MS
Brookline, Massachusetts

Nicole P. Grant, BS
Grants Research & Consulting Services LLC
Wolcott, Connecticut

Phillis S.V. Gubala, PhD
Waltham, Massachusetts

Lauren Halloran, BS
Quincy, Massachusetts
Perceptive Informatics

Nicola D. Hanson, PhD
Boston, Massachusetts
Emory University

Martino Joseph, BS
Watertown, Connecticut
Boehringer Ingelheim

Lisa J. McGonigal, MD, MPH
Woodbridge, Connecticut

Akanksha Mittal, PhD
Southborough, Massachusetts

Khanh-Hau Moss, BS
Oakdale, Connecticut

Robin L. Orr, MPA
Colchester, Vermont

Zehra Rizvi, MS
Providence, Rhode Island
Boston University

Aashita Shekhar
Nashua, New Hampshire

Angela J. Smith, MS, PC-A
Hartford, Connecticut
Peplin
[from Australia]

Phuong Anh Stephan, PhD
Durham, Connecticut
Bristol-Meyers Squibb

Karen L. Walton-Bowen, MSc, CStat
Abt Bio-Pharma Solutions Inc.
Lexington, Massachusetts
Chapter Officers
New England Chapter officers for 2010-11 will be introduced at the final meeting of the 2009-10 year on June 10.

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: Laurie MacDougall
Laurie, an AMWA member since 2006, has a bachelor’s degree in biology from Boston College, a master’s in epidemiology from the UMass Amherst School of Public Health, a master’s in gerontology from UMass Boston, and a certificate in book publishing from Boston University. She is currently working on her AMWA core certificate in editing/writing. Laurie works as a freelance editor and grant writer for the Massachusetts Cancer Registry and other public health organizations. She also works as a cancer coordinator at St. Elizabeth’s Medical Center, where she is training to be a certified tumor registrar.

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT: Deborah von Rechenberg
Debbie recently started as associate director, medical writing at Genzyme Corporation after almost 18 years at Eli Lilly and Company, the last 11 of those as a regulatory writer supporting clinical oncology research. In her new role, she will oversee regulatory document development for one of Genzyme’s investigational compounds. Debbie earned a BS in biology from Purdue University in Indiana and, before becoming a medical writer, worked in various research laboratories, including during her first 7 years at Lilly. An AMWA member since 2000, Debbie was active in the Hoosier and Rocky Mountain chapters of AMWA before moving to Massachusetts in 2006. She is a certified editor in the life sciences, and last year earned an AMWA core certificate.

Nominees for Office
The Nominating Committee was chaired by President-Elect Laurie MacDougall and included President Debbie von Rechenberg (ex officio), Susan F. Gonsalves, Nancy Knoblock Hunton, and Laurie B. LaRusso. The committee has presented the following slate of officers to serve along with Laurie MacDonald and Debbie von Rechenberg in the coming year.

PRESIDENT-ELECT: Kristen Stephan
Kristin, who joined AMWA last year, has a bachelor’s degree in molecular biology/physiology with a minor in chemistry from Marshall University. She earned a PhD in immunology from Tufts Medical School and did postdoctoral research in transplantation at Harvard Medical School. She freelanced for over two years before starting her current position as a medical writer at Vertex Pharmaceuticals.

VICE PRESIDENT FOR CONNECTICUT: Michelle Horan
Michelle joined AMWA in 2000 and has been a member of the Connecticut Programs Committee since 2008. She has a bachelor’s degree in zoology from Michigan State University and a master’s in chemistry from Saint Joseph College, and she earned an AMWA core certificate in 2004. Michelle has worked for Pfizer Inc. for 22 years, initially as a bench scientist in pharmacokinetics and drug metabolism, and for the past 10 years, as a medical writer. She has authored a wide array of regulatory documents including clinical study reports; clinical summaries of efficacy, safety and clinical pharmacology; periodic safety update reports; and regulatory responses. More recently she has also conducted and documented pharmacovigilance for marketed products.

SECRETARY: Margaret Lynch
After earning a BA in biology from Williams College and a PhD in cell biology from the University of Colorado at Boulder, Margaret did postdoctoral research at the University of California, San Francisco, School of Medicine and at the University of California, Davis. For the next 12 years she taught and advised undergraduate biology majors and premedical students at Tufts University, and she is currently working as a science and medical writer. Margaret joined AMWA last year.

TREASURER: Jill Shuman
Jill, who was president of the chapter in 1995-96, is being nominated for another term as treasurer. She holds a master’s degree in communications/nutrition and is certified as an editor, 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 numerous contributions to AMWA and the New England Chapter.
Directions to June 10 Meeting

Westin Hotel
70 Third Avenue
Waltham, Mass.
781-290-5600

The hotel is just off Route I-95/128, Exit 27A. There is ample free parking. (For detailed driving directions, go to MapQuest or Google Maps.)

Heading south on I-95/128
Take Exit 27A towards Totten Pond Rd./Wyman St. Go straight on Totten Pond Rd. Bear right onto Winter St. Turn right onto Third Ave. The hotel is on the left.

Heading north on I-95/128
At Exit 27A, turn right onto the ramp towards Totten Pond Rd./Waltham. Keep right to stay on the ramp towards Third Ave. Bear right onto Third Ave. The hotel is on the left.

Need a ride to the meeting?
If you don't have a car, contact Judy Linn (judyhlinn@aol.com) to find out whether there’s someone from your area who might be able to give you a ride to the meeting. 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.

How to Share Job Leads
When you hear about a job or a freelance assignment that you yourself are not interested in, why not share the information with other AMWA members who might be? There are two easy ways to do this.

If the position is in New England, or if the work can be done off site, you can tell the recruiter about the New England E-News, our chapter e-mail newsletter, which includes free one-time job postings. To download a PDF of the submission guidelines, go to www.amwa-ne.org/jobs and scroll down to “Finding Jobs.”

If the job is outside of our region, you can suggest placing an ad in Jobs Online, a members-only section of the national AMWA website. For details, go to www.amwa.org.

New England E-News
Check those e-mails you occasionally get from our chapter president before you delete them. If you’re a member of the chapter, Debbie von Rechenberg sends you the AMWA New England E-News whenever she receives information about an employment opportunity, when something relevant to medical writing is happening here in New England, or 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.

A highlight of next year’s programming will be the 9th New England Conference, a full day of credit workshops, special seminars, and a luncheon with roundtables, on Saturday, April 11. Although planning will not begin until fall, the chapter has once again contracted to hold this popular biennial event at the Sturbridge Host Hotel, a conference center in central New England.

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
Susan F. Gonsalves, Nancy Knobblock Hunton, Laurie LaRusso, Debbie von Rechenberg (ex officio)
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, Cherie 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