Roundtable Discussions for Professional Development

The New England Chapter’s traditional winter brunch will be held on Sunday, February 22, 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 will be 10 tables in all—9 on career-related topics, plus a 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-served basis upon receipt of payment. As always, guests and prospective members are welcome.

**ROUNDTABLES**

**#1 SUBSTANTIVE EDITING**
**Leader: Karen Williams**
Learn what substantive editing really is, as well as the common misperceptions clients have about the role of editors. See how to assess the quality of a document quickly and how to work effectively with content-matter experts. A veteran editor shares tips and techniques for working more efficiently and meeting the expectations of both managers and clients.

**#2 MEDICAL JOURNAL ARTICLES**
**Leader: Theresa Singleton**
Do you write research papers for submission to peer-reviewed journals? Or would you like to learn more about this kind of writing and how to find work in this area? Join a discussion of best practices and pick up some tips and tools for working with multiple authors, selecting a journal, preparing the manuscript, and submitting online.

**#3 TWITTER IS NOT JUST FOR TWEETING**
**Leader: Siobhan Gallagher**
Social media tools are changing and breeding, but Twitter has become a mainstay for many communicators with limited time to stay abreast. Join this discussion to understand its value as a newsfeed as well as a way to connect with others. To learn more before the meeting, start an account and follow @AmMedWriters, @CScienceEditors, @EFAFreelancers, @BELS_editors, @WHO, @kevinmd, and @GrammarGirl.

**#4 REGULATORY WRITING IN THE PHARMACEUTICAL/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.

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**BUFFET MENU**

**DATE:** Sunday, February 22

**TIME:** Social Hour (Juice, Coffee, Tea) starts at 11:00 a.m. Brunch & Discussions are from 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m.

**PLACE:** Hilton Garden Inn, 5 Wheeler Road, Burlington, Massachusetts (DIRECTIONS on page 6)

**BUFFET MENU:** Scrambled Eggs ● Bacon ● Breakfast Potatoes ● Fruit Juices ● Sliced Seasonal Fruit ● Vanilla & Low-Fat Fruit-Flavored Yogurts with Granola ● Assorted Bagels with Cream Cheese ● Muffins, Danish Pastries & Croissants with Butter, Honey & Preserves ● Coffee, Decaf, Herbal & Breakfast Teas

**REGISTRATION:** The registration fee is $33 for members, $39 for guests and prospective members. You can pay online with a credit card or by mail with a check. (See HOW TO REGISTER on page 6.)

**DEADLINE:** To guarantee brunch reservations, we must receive your payment by Tuesday, February 17. (After 5:00 p.m. that day, there will be no refunds for cancellation.)

**ROUNDTABLES #5, #6, #7, #8, #9, #10** are on page 3.
Chapter Calendar

The New England Chapter’s year begins in mid-June, when a 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: A few times a year, the chapter schedules an informal event, such as a networking lunch.

AMWA Annual Conference “Greet & Go”: Every fall, at the national meeting, attendees from New England get together for an informal dinner at a restaurant near the conference site.

Next Chapter Event

March 19
Informal Networking Lunch
Cambridge, Mass.

Everyone is invited to lunch at 12:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 19, at Chang Sho, 1712 Mass. Ave., 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 Chang Sho lot. Cost is the price of buffet lunch, plus your drink and tip. Please RSVP by Wednesday, March 18, to Francesca Coltrera at coltrera@comcast.net or 781-641-9872.

Other Upcoming Events in New England

January 31
Editorial Freelancers Association
Central Mass. Meeting
Stowe, Mass.

Local EFA members will meet at the Randall Library in Stowe, Mass., at 10:30 a.m., Saturday, January 31, for a presentation on “summer writing workshops in beautiful locations with prize-winning faculty and aspiring writers in various genres.” Prospective members and guests are welcome. For information, contact Eileen Kramer at chap_mass@the-efa.org.

March 27-28
STC New England Chapter
Interchange Conference
Lowell, Mass.

The 2015 Interchange Conference of the New England Chapter, Society for Technical Communication, will be held at the UMass Lowell Inn and Conference Center. For program details, go to http://stcnewengland.org/event-1808413.

April 9-11
Harvard Medical School
Writing Course
Boston, Mass.

This annual 3-day continuing education program for healthcare professionals who want to advance their communication skills or get published will take place at the Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel. For information, go to http://leadership.hmscme.com/.

2015 AMWA Annual Conference
Biomedical Communicators Will Convene in San Antonio, Texas, September 30-October 3

In the fall, medical writers from around the country and beyond will head to San Antonio for AMWA’s 75th Annual Conference. As always, the program will offer an abundance of educational workshops, practical sessions, thought-provoking presentations, and opportunities to network with friendly colleagues. For those seeking formal credentialing as a medical writer, AMWA’s new certification exam will be given for the first time.

For program details as they become available, keep an eye out for the AMWA 2015 Conference Connector, sent to members periodically by email. If you are not yet an AMWA member, you can check out the information posted at www.amwa.org/events_annual_conference.

If you’ve never attended a national AMWA meeting, look at last year’s conference brochure for an idea of what to expect (www.amwa.org/files/Events/AC2014/AMWARegistrationBrochure2014.pdf).
ROUND TABLES continued from page 1

#5 NONREGULATORY WRITING IN THE PHARMACEUTICAL/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.

#6 MARKETING WRITING
Leader: Sue Chow
Professional writers are needed in marketing departments of companies that sell products and services for medical and scientific research. This discussion will cover the basics of the job, the type of marketing collateral we work on, personal characteristics needed for this work, and how to look for marketing writing jobs/potential employers.

#7 REPORTING FROM MEDICAL CONFERENCES
Leader: Jill Shuman
The Internet, social media, and the increasing number of medical conferences taking place around the world each year have created a new employment market for medical writers. Learn about the burgeoning opportunities in this area, the skills required to become a successful conference reporter, and the tools required to do the job well.

#8 WRITING FOR CONSUMERS AND PATIENTS
Leader: 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.

#9 MONEY MATTERS IN THE FREELANCE WORLD
Leader: Francesca Coltrera
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, you’ll get 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.

#10 INFORMAL CONVERSATION
Leader: Judy Linn
Would you just like to get together with other medical writers? This is a chance to catch up with AMWA friends and make new professional acquaintances.

Medical Writers Can Use LinkedIn for Local Connections
Have you signed up for the AMWA New England Chapter subgroup on LinkedIn, our locally oriented online forum? It’s a place to connect with some of your New England colleagues, ask questions, express your opinions, share information, and find out what’s going on. Everyone is welcome to participate, prospective members included. The only requirement is that you must be signed up for the main AMWA LinkedIn group before you can join our subgroup. To get started, go to www.linkedin.com.

Chapter’s Linn Membership Awards Support Novice Medical Writers
The New England Chapter’s Judy Linn Membership Awards offer free membership in AMWA to as many as three beginners at a time. This competitive award covers AMWA dues for one year (chapter membership is automatically included) and allows the recipient to attend the regular chapter meetings during that year at no charge. There is no application fee, and an application may be submitted for consideration at any time.

If you know someone who may be qualified for this award—or if you would like to apply yourself—please go to http://www.amwa-ne.org/awards.html for more details.
November Meeting Report
Taking the Work Out of Networking

In November, members and guests gathered for the New England Chapter’s fall meeting in Connecticut, held at the Thali restaurant in New Haven, to learn how to connect with colleagues more effectively.

After mingling over drinks and enjoying Thali’s Indian cuisine, the group listened to AMWA member Candice Hughes, PhD, MBA, principal and founder of Hughes BioPharma Advisors, a successful serial entrepreneur who networks on a daily basis. Candice acknowledged that networking doesn’t come easily to her, but since it is a necessity she has developed strategies for handling it.

She urged us to stop thinking of networking as a sales transaction and to focus instead on such goals as finding common ground and connecting to others on a human level, which makes the encounter more memorable. She noted that many writers are introverts who find it challenging to network, in which case she suggested trying different kinds of events and practicing staying longer each time to build tolerance. These events don’t have to be limited to conferences; places where people like to spend their spare time or meet friends are also good networking spots. The point is to make networking part of one’s everyday life.

Online networking offers a host of possibilities that can quickly become time-consuming, so Candice suggested homing in on a few sites and interacting with others by commenting and participating in discussions instead of just observing. Providing something of value, such as links to articles, is a good way to connect with colleagues in an online community.

It can also be helpful to target networking efforts, both online and in person. At conferences, she suggested seeking out speakers or attendees who have either sparked your curiosity or have similar interests. Online, spend time observing others and try posting a well-timed reply to a discussion thread. Also, being recommended by someone can serve as a warm introduction that can go a long way.

Candice ended her presentation by asking us to spend a few minutes putting into practice what she had discussed. It was a welcome opportunity to get to know one another, especially since the networking period at the beginning of the evening passed all too quickly, as usual. Judging from the conversations taking place around the room, members had no difficulty employing Candice’s strategies.

Candice also handed out a list of networking resources, including these three:

- “7 Networking Tips for Introverts, Extroverts and the Socially Awkward” (www.inc.com/christina-desmarais/7-networking-tips-for-introverts-extroverts-and-the-socially-awkward.html)
- “The Rules of Engagement: 5 Ways to Connect on Social Media” (www.entrepreneur.com/article/235995)

—Jill Max
Vice President/Connecticut

December Meeting Report
Learning to Manage Stress

In December, at Yangtze River Restaurant in Lexington, Mass., after enjoying an endless parade of Chinese dishes served banquet style, we learned about stress and stress management from Gauri Desai-Ackerman, an occupational therapist, formerly at Spaulding Rehabilitation and now with Partners Healthcare at Home. Ms. Desai-Ackerman focuses on helping patients manage chronic pain by a variety of techniques, including stress management, since pain and stress affect the body in similar ways, and one can cause the other.

She began by asking how many felt stressed. About half raised their hands. A few felt overwhelmed, and only one or two felt like they never had time for themselves. Perhaps we’re already good at managing stress, or perhaps it was postprandial bliss induced by the endless parade of Chinese dishes.

She then discussed the neurology behind the way we evolved to respond to stress. The stress response comes from the primitive brain, which reacts reflexively to stressors. Characteristics of the stress response include increased adrenal hormone levels, muscle tension, faster heart and respiration rates, suppression of the immune system, increased blood clotting, elevated blood pressure, and reduced rational thinking. These reactions are very useful in helping us get out of life-threatening jams, such as being chased by a saber-toothed tiger.

But many of the stressors in our lives today are chronic, constant, and not life-threatening: being stuck in traffic, meeting a tight deadline, or managing the whole family’s schedule. Our primitive brain is not nearly as helpful in these situations. If you’re not running away from that saber-toothed tiger, you’re just sitting there, likely at your desk, with increased heart rate and blood pressure. The manifestations of chronic stress are well-known, including pain, anxiety, depression, digestive problems, heart disease, sleep problems, weight gain, and impairment of memory and concentration.

Strategies many of us use to alleviate stress are actually not helpful, for example, alcohol, denial, passivity, avoidance or procrastination, and turning to so-called comfort food (so much for postprandial bliss). These may make a person feel better in the moment, but do not reverse the effects of chronic stress and in fact make us feel worse in the long run.

Useful strategies mainly involve engaging the executive brain to override the reflexive primitive brain. The primitive (stressed) brain reacts; the executive (relaxed) brain analyzes and responds. The trick, then, is accessing the relaxed brain.

Useful strategies can be undertaken at the moment we are feeling stress, afterward to address a particular situation, or at any time. In the moment you are feeling stress, you can do a number of things such as relaxation breathing, cognitive restructuring, or jotting down the problem. Afterward, you can work to solve the problem, for example, by setting limits or addressing and resolving conflict. At any time, you can set up your life so you will be able to resist stressful situations when they crop up. You can practice relaxation techniques and mindfulness; balance your life with family, friends, and hobbies; and get up from your desk frequently.

December Report continued on page 5
Ms. Desai-Ackerman gave us some personal examples. As she was stuck in traffic between visits to patients, her primitive brain generalized (“I’m always late!”) and catastrophized (“The next patient is going to kill me!”). Realizing that both statements were false (particularly the one about the killing), she reframed her thoughts (cognitive restructuring). The one thing she could control was her reaction, and modifying it helped her relax.

In another example, she and her parents found themselves squabbling at the weekly dinner they had after she moved out on her own. After several weeks, they realized that they were all simply tired, because the dinner was on a weeknight. Moving the dinner to Sunday solved the problem completely.

She then described methods of relaxation. She asked an attendee to demonstrate relaxation breathing, which is breathing deeply into the abdomen and back. We then all practiced (as best we could with full bellies). With time running out, Ms. Desai-Ackerman told us briefly about meditation, yoga, and tai chi—emphasizing the benefit of movement in the latter two. To provide us with tools to use at home, she referred us to guided visual imagery videos on YouTube.

We were certainly given plenty of food for thought—and yet more actual food, in the form of leftovers to take home! Since the meeting, I’ve been reflecting on this talk and practicing some of the techniques. It really is a journey, complete with wrong turns and detours—there’s a reason they say you practice mindfulness! But I’ve found that everyday activities seem more joyful, and I’m trying to reframe life’s little annoyances into opportunities for grace. And the next time we meet at the Yangtze River Restaurant, I am going to take some relaxation breaths, override my primitive (hungry) brain, and pace myself!

—Debbie von Rechenberg
Secretary

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. We are also happy to welcome AMWA members from outside of New England who are planning to move here in the near future or have personal or professional ties here.

Gaelen Phyfe Adam, MLIS
South Dartmouth, Massachusetts
Brown University

Suchitra Chari, MS
Chennai, Tamilnadu
India

Alisa Cohen
Lexington, Massachusetts

Laura Fink, BA
Institute for Healthcare Improvement
Arlington, Massachusetts

Michelle C. Fong, BA
Michelle Fong Consulting Inc.
Hope, Maine

Dale L. Goad, DVM, PhD
Andover, Massachusetts
Millennium Pharmaceuticals

Leslie Ingraham, MSN
Portland, Maine

Lori D. MacCausland
Lori MacCausland Consulting LLC
Essex, Massachusetts

Patricia O'Shea, MD, MPH
Medfield, Massachusetts
Hyde Square Task Force

Connie Orcutt, BFA, DVM
Brookline, Massachusetts

Karen N. Peart, MS, JD
Yale University
New Haven, Connecticut

Peter Stein, DC
Roslinlade, Massachusetts
Boston University

John Wilkinson IV, PhD
Marshall University
School of Medicine
Huntington, West Virginia

Personal Notes

The latest issue of the AMWA Journal (Winter 2014) includes an article by Roshawn Watson, PharmD, PhD, a Science Series feature providing “An Overview of Nonconvulsive Electrographic Seizures and Nonconvulsive Status Epilepticus.” Shawn is a senior regulatory writer at Synchrogenix Information Strategies in Cambridge, Mass. He is a member-at-large of the chapter’s Executive Council this year.

The Winter 2014 AMWA Journal also includes a report by Southeast Chapter member Katherine Venmar on a presentation at the AMWA conference last fall by Geoff Kane, MD, MPH: “Make Your Message Memorable: The Power of Story.” Geoff is chief of addiction services at the Brattleboro Retreat in Brattleboro, Vt.

Alison Adams, PhD, has joined Infusion Communications, Haddam, Conn., as an associate medical writer. She was previously a postdoctoral fellow at Yale University.
How to Register for February 22 Meeting

You can register for this event either online or by mail, depending on how you wish to pay.

- **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 don’t need a PayPal account, and you will not be charged a fee for the transaction.)
- **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.

Directions to February 22 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 less than a third of a mile 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.

WINTER WEATHER ALERT!

IF WE HAVE TO POSTPONE THE MEETING BECAUSE OF SEVERE WINTER WEATHER, OUR CHAPTER PRESIDENT WILL NOTIFY EVERYONE BY EMAIL. IF DRIVING CONDITIONS LOOK REALLY BAD AND YOU ARE UNABLE TO ACCESS YOUR EMAIL, CALL JUDY LINN AT 508-358-7071 BEFORE YOU HEAD OUT—JUST TO BE SURE.

Executive Council Will Meet February 22

The Executive Council, the chapter’s governing board, meets twice a year, first in the early summer (the chapter year begins in mid-June) and again in the winter. These meetings give chapter leaders a chance to get together in person to talk about business matters, unexpected problems, ideas for future events, etc.

The winter council meeting is schedule for 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, February 22, right after the roundtable discussions.

Any chapter member can 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 services, our chapter president, Theresa Singleton, would be glad to hear from you. You can write to her at theresa@singletonscience.com.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL 2014-15

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<th>OFFICERS</th>
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<td>PRESIDENT: Theresa Singleton</td>
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<td>IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT: Shanna McClennen</td>
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<td>PRESIDENT-ELECT: Marisa Greenfield</td>
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<td>VICE PRESIDENT/CONNECTICUT: Jill Max</td>
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<td>SECRETARY: Debbie von Rechenberg</td>
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<td>TREASURER: Jill Shuman</td>
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<td>PROGRAMS: Marisa Greenfield</td>
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<td>CONNECTICUT PROGRAMS: Jill Max</td>
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<td>Margi Goldstein, Anita Kuan, Suzanne Sobel</td>
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<td>MEMBERSHIP: Judy Linn</td>
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<td>MEMBERSHIP AWARDS: Nancy Knoblock Hunton</td>
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<td>Francesca Coltrera, David Olle, Jill Shuman, Debbie von Rechenberg</td>
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<td>E-NEWS: Theresa Singleton</td>
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<td>NEWSLETTER: Judy Linn</td>
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<td>LINKEDIN SUBGROUP: Olivier Morteau</td>
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<td>NOMINATING COMMITTEE: Marisa Greenfield</td>
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<td>WEB SITE: Aaron Federman</td>
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<td>Judy Linn, Jill Shuman</td>
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<td>Susan Chow, Francesca Coltrera, Derek Dore, Andrea Gwosdow, Laurie LaRusso, Laurie MacDougall, Joann Merriman, Kristin Stephan, Roshawn Watson</td>
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<td>Theresa Singleton, Marisa Greenfield</td>
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