February 27: Dinner Meeting in Lexington, Mass.

Productivity Hacks for Medical Writers

The New England Chapter will meet on Monday, February 27, at Yangtze River Restaurant in Lexington, Mass., for dinner and a panel presentation by four seasoned medical writers who will discuss the tactics and tools they use to maximize their productivity. The panelists’ varied backgrounds range from scientific publications to leading a regulatory writing department in biotech (and nearly everything in between). Regardless of your position, you will benefit from their collective experience with time-management, project management, overseeing staff and contractors, and meeting best practices.

Panelists

Marisa Greenfield, MS, transitioned from bench chemistry to medical writing in 1999, when she joined AMWA. After working as an in-house regulatory writer at DuPont and Genzyme, she started consulting in 2010. Her favorite productivity tips are: 1) eat right and exercise to keep your energy level up and manage stress, and 2) tackle the toughest task of the day first, before you’re tempted to procrastinate.

Shanna McClennen, PhD, worked as an in-house medical writer for six years before venturing out on her own in 2006. Finding productivity hacks that worked has contributed to her success as a freelance writer. Her best productivity tip is to schedule your to-do list into your calendar—whether it be professional or personal; then stick to the schedule.

Theresa Singleton, PhD, has worked as a medical writer for six years and is currently principal scientific writer at Singleton Science, where she specializes in writing and editing biomedical research manuscripts for biotech/pharma clients. Previously, she had transitioned from an academic postdoc to a scientific writing role in industry. Productivity has played a major role in her career changes. Among her favorite productivity hacks is Toggle for tracking project time.

Debbie von Rechenberg, ELS, has been a medical writer since 1999, with in-house, leadership, and consulting roles writing regulatory documents for Lilly, Genzyme, ARIAD, and Tesaro. She has experience responding creatively and urgently when best-laid plans go awry. She also has had to shoehorn unruly stories into regulatory templates, leading to her motto: Read the directions; then do what makes sense. Above all, she can’t imagine working without a two-screen display.

Please join us on February 27. Come early to network with friendly colleagues. Then enjoy the plentiful Chinese buffet, followed by a panel discussion that will give you valuable tips to supercharge your productivity as a medical writer. Time permitting, share your own productivity tips as well.

As always, guests and prospective members are welcome.

—Shawn Watson
President-Elect/Program Director

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NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER NEWS
February 2017

PRODUCTIVITY HACKS FOR MEDICAL WRITERS

DATE: Monday, February 27

TIME: Social Hour (cash bar)—6:00 to 7:00 p.m.
Dinner—7:00 to 8:00 p.m.  Program—8:00 to 9:00 p.m.

PLACE: Yangtze River Restaurant, 25 Depot Square, Lexington, Massachusetts. (DIRECTIONS on page 6)

BUFFET MENU: Ravioli • Beef Teriyaki • Crab Rangoon • Chicken Wings • Egg Rolls • West Lake Beef Soup • Loquat-Flavored Crispy Duck • Shanghai Crispy Beef • Crispy Shrimp Roll with Tofu Skin • Mandarin Pork Chops in Tomato Sauce • Stuffed Eggplant with Minced Shrimp • Shanghai Bok Choy with Garlic • General Gao’s Chicken • Steamed Rice (NOTE: Vegetarian and gluten-free options will be available on request.)

REGISTRATION: The registration fee is $27.00 for members, $34.00 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 reservations, we must receive your payment no later than 5:00 p.m., Friday, February 24. There will be no refunds for cancellations after that, but late registrations (online only) will be accepted on a space-available basis.

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—Shawn Watson
President-Elect/Program Director
CHAPTER CALENDAR
The New England Chapter’s year begins in mid-June, when a new slate of officers takes over. The chapter’s Executive Council meets during the summer, but there are no general activities during July and August.

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.

In addition to the regular meetings, the chapter occasionally schedules other events, ranging from informal networking lunches or evening meetups to workshop programs.

Every fall, at AMWA’s national meeting, attendees from New England get together for an informal dinner at a restaurant near the conference site.

March 29
Networking Lunch
Cambridge, Mass.
Everyone is invited to lunch at 12:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 29, at Changsho, 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 Changsho lot. Cost is the price of buffet lunch, plus your drink and tip. Please RSVP by Tuesday, March 28, to Francesca Coltrera at coltrera@comcast.net or 781-641-9872.

TBD
Connecticut Meeting
The next Connecticut meeting will be in April or May. We’d like to increase attendance at these events, so the Program Planning Committee would appreciate feedback on what would compel you to participate. Vary the night? Vary the location? If you have any suggestions for topics or venues, please contact Margaret Burke, vice president for Connecticut, at mburkepharmd@cox.net.

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.

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Other Upcoming Events in New England
If you are involved with or know about a forthcoming professional meeting, educational program, or other activity that might be of interest to New England AMWA members, please send the information to Judy Linn at judyhlinn@aol.com. We are happy to publicize such events in the chapter newsletter and/or via the AMWA New England E-News.

February 16-20
AAAS Annual Meeting
Boston
The program will take place at the Hynes Convention Center. For information, go to http://meetings.aaas.org/program/.

March 30 - April 1, 2017
Writing, Publishing, and Social Media Course
Boston
Harvard Medical School’s annual CME course for “healthcare professionals who want to advance their communication skills or get published” will be held at the Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel. For information, go to http://wps.hmscmce.com/.

May 31-June 2
SSP Annual Meeting
Boston
The 39th annual meeting of the Society for Scholarly Publishing will be held in Boston at the Westin Waterfront Hotel. For details, go to https://www.sspnet.org/.

2017 AMWA Conference
Call for Session Proposals
AMWA members will convene in Orlando, Fla., November 1-4, for this year’s Medical Writing & Communication Conference. Anyone interested in contributing to the program may submit a proposal for a session. Submission deadline is February 20. For guidelines, go to http://www.amwa.org/callforproposals.

Fellowship Opportunity at MBL
10-Day Science Journalism Program
The Logan Science Journalism Program of the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, Mass., provides fellowships for science and health writers and editors to study there for 10 days. Room, board, lab fees, and travel are covered. This year’s program takes place from May 30 to June 8. Application deadline is March 1. For information, go to http://www.mbl.edu/sjp/.

Linn Award for New Medical Writers
Free AMWA Membership for Qualified Candidates
Are you just starting your career? If you have no more than three years of full-time experience as a medical writer or editor, and you live and work in New England, you may be eligible for the New England Chapter’s Linn Membership Award. This award covers the cost of national AMWA dues for one year, with full membership benefits, and also allows the recipient to register for the chapter’s regular meetings at no charge. There is no application fee, and an application may be submitted at any time. For more information, please go to www.amwa-ne.org/awards.
September Meeting Report
DIY Graphics for Medical Writers

At the New England Chapter’s dinner meeting in Lexington, Mass., in September, we learned about enhancing our writing projects by designing and producing our own high-quality graphics. Laurie LaRusso, MS, ELS, an AMWA member and freelance medical writer, expertly walked us through the basics of graphic design, choosing the most appropriate type of graphic, and best practices for generating clear and compelling figures and tables.

Laurie began her presentation by defining graphic design as the art of visual communication through the use of text, images, and symbols. She went on to explain that the three aspects of graphic design include layout, color, and typography; however, she noted that typography is not emphasized in medical writing. When designing a graphic, six main principles should be kept in mind: balance, proximity, alignment, repetition, contrast, and white space. Laurie explained that balance provides structure and stability to the design, whereas alignment and proximity provide a visual connection between the elements and create a focal point. Repetition creates association and consistency, and contrast (using opposing colors or orientation) can highlight certain elements.

She advised keeping it simple when creating graphics by sticking to the main point, reducing the number of objects and colors, removing superfluous information, and providing order and clarity.

Publications, posters, and presentations all benefit from the use of graphics such as tables, graphs, charts, and simple diagrams. Graphics can clearly illustrate data trends and highlight important information that may not be easily captured by text alone. Laurie discussed how to determine whether a table or a graph would be more appropriate for certain types of data. For example, a table may be helpful for classifying information and for easier scanning of text. In contrast, graphs may be more useful for comparing treatment groups and for showing individual patient information.

Laurie then convinced us that a medical writer could create tables and figures using Excel and PowerPoint, without the help of a graphic designer. She explained the advantages of creating graphs in Excel or PowerPoint and how to transfer the graphs between programs (eg, PowerPoint to Word). She also noted that in some cases it may be preferable to create higher resolution PDFs or image files (JPEG, TIF).

Slide presentations and posters typically contain many graphical elements. When creating slides, Laurie recommends converting as much text as possible into tables, graphs, charts, and diagrams. There should be a non-text slide at least every third slide and the text slides should consist of short bullets, with no more than 2 bullet levels. Slide animations should be used selectively—only to help the audience follow the data or to highlight important trends. Posters can be created in PowerPoint by setting a custom page size (typically 48 x 84 inches, although the size can vary). Client templates should be used when available, otherwise, one main color and two coordinating accent colors should be selected. The title of the poster, authors, and affiliations are placed across the top of the poster, and the remainder is divided into sections (eg, background, methods, results, conclusions). The results section is typically the largest and the size of the other sections can be adjusted to provide balance to the poster.

Laurie concluded her very informative presentation by showing us some before-and-after examples of posters and slides that she had worked on. She described some of the changes she had made to rebalance the text and images and to improve the color schemes. She followed this with a live demonstration of how to insert a new chart in PowerPoint and how to change various features of the graphic. Finally, Laurie encouraged us to deconstruct graphics that we like, so we can learn to make them ourselves.

For those who would like even more information on DIY graphics, Laurie recommended the book slide:ology: The Art and Science of Creating Great Presentations by Nancy Duarte and the graphic design website Canva.com.

—Deborah Ferguson
Secretary

November Meeting Report
Medical Writing Certification

The New England Chapter’s fall meeting in Connecticut was held in November at Thali restaurant in New Haven, where Thomas Genegy, MS, ELS, MWC, a past president of AMWA and the current president of the Board of Editors in the Life Sciences, gave an informative presentation on “Looking Beyond the Test: What Medical Writing Certification Means for Our Profession.” This is a topic Tom knows well because he also served as a chair of the AMWA Commission for Medical Writing Certification. He provided not only the what, why, who, and how of obtaining the Medical Writer Certified (MWC) designation but the back story and timeline of how the certification developed.

Tom also shared with the group ten ways he believes the MWC designation will advance the medical writing profession. The discussion was very enlightening, even for those who are not considering taking the certification exam at this time.

—Margaret Burke
Vice President for Connecticut
Personal Notes

At AMWA’s annual conference in October Jill Shuman, MS, ELS, was honored with the Golden Apple Award for excellence in workshop teaching. For nearly two decades Jill has led highly rated workshops at national and regional AMWA conferences. An exceptionally versatile health and biomedical communicator, Jill has extensive experience as a writer, editor, project manager, and teacher. She is currently director of library and information services at Shire Pharmaceuticals. She is a past president and former long-time treasurer of the New England Chapter, and she is an AMWA fellow.

Golden Apple Award recipient Jill Shuman (center) at the 2016 AMWA conference in Denver with New England Chapter colleagues Nancy Knoblock Hunton, Shawn Watson, Theresa Singleton, and Andrea Gwosdow. Photo courtesy of Donald Hunton.

Diane Shannon, MD, MPH, is coauthor with Paul DeChant, MD, MBA, of Preventing Physician Burnout: Curing the Chaos and Returning Joy to the Practice of Medicine—A Handbook for Physicians and Health Care Leaders, published in December and available on Amazon. A former practicing internist, Diane is an award-winning freelance healthcare writer and video producer in Brookline, Mass., with a special interest in performance improvement in health care.

In January, Andrea Gwosdow, PhD, co-led an AMWA webinar on “5 Easy Steps to Making the Ethical RIGHT Choice.” The educational presentation is now available on the AMWA website as an on-demand video. Andrea is president of Gwosdow Associates Science Consultants, a science and medical communications firm in Arlington, Mass. She is a past president of the New England Chapter and is a frequent presenter at local and national meetings.

CHAPTER CHANGE: Amy Behrens, MS, has moved to the Washington, DC, area and is now a member of the Mid-Atlantic Chapter. Ronald I. Trust, PhD, MBA, has joined Miami-based OPKO Health Inc. as vice president of regulatory affairs and is now a member of the Florida Chapter.

Theresa Singleton, PhD, a past president of the New England Chapter, is currently serving as the member-at-large on AMWA’s Executive Committee. Theresa is owner of Singleton Science LLC in Beverly, Mass., specializing in manuscripts for biotechnology, pharmaceutical, and academic clients.

Shirley Louise-May, PhD, of Guilford, Conn., has joined Envision Pharma Group as an associate medical writer.

Kelly Crowley has attained certification as a medical writer (MWC). She is associate editor of patient education for UpToDate, an online resource of Wolters Kluwer Health, Waltham, Mass.

Heather Kolpa, PhD, has joined Custom Learning Design, Belmont, Mass., as a senior medical writer. In 2015, while a doctoral candidate in cell and developmental biology at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, Heather won the AMWA Student Scholarship to attend the annual conference in San Antonio, Tex.

Connect Locally on LinkedIn

Have you signed up for the AMWA New England subgroup on LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com)? This open forum for questions and comments about local matters provides an easy way for you to connect with other medical writers and editors here in our region. Everyone—including prospective members—is welcome to participate.

To discuss—or just keep abreast of—professional issues of general interest, you can also sign up for AMWA Engage, the national online forum for AMWA members (http://engage.amwa.org/home).

Keep Up to Date with ‘AMWA New England E-News’

Watch for email from “President@amwa-ne.org” with “AMWA New England E-News” in the subject line. A few times a month, chapter president Olivier Morteau sends an email to New England Chapter members to announce a job opening, an upcoming chapter meeting, or some other local event. Be sure to take a quick glance at these brief messages so you don’t miss something of possible interest to you.
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.

Kamna Aggarwal, PhD
Acton, Massachusetts
*Vertex Pharmaceuticals Inc.*

Jyoti Assudani, MBBS
Medford, Massachusetts
*Health Innovators*

Peter Black, MD, PhD
Somerville, Massachusetts

Anjana Bose, PhD
Waltham, Massachusetts

Erin Bove-Fenderson
Boston University
Boston, Massachusetts

Carol Carrigan, MHA
Topsham, Maine

Tahmeena Chowdhury
Somerville, Massachusetts

Kunwei Cole
Groton, Connecticut

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

Rudra Dubey
Guilford, Connecticut

Sherri Ann Frank, BFA
Wakefield, Massachusetts
*Healthwise*

Sandra J. Gordon, BA
Sandra Gordon Writing LLC
Weston, Connecticut

Phyllis M. Hanlon, BS
Charlton, Massachusetts

Jill Henion, PhD
Danvers, Massachusetts

Lisa Herman, RPh, PharmD, MS
Natick, Massachusetts

Krista Hook, BS
Londonderry, New Hampshire

Molly Harris Jenkins, PhD
Maynard, Massachusetts

Julie Jirousek
Beverly, Massachusetts

Margaret A. Kelley
Attleboro, Massachusetts

John Christian Keogh, MWC, ELS
Keogh Medical Writing
Guilford, Connecticut

Christine LaSala, MD
Avon, Connecticut
*Hartford Hospital*
*UConn School of Medicine*

Allison M. Lauze, PharmD, RPh
Lebanon, New Hampshire

Cathy Leamy, MS
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Jennifer Leavitt, BS
Bethel, Connecticut
*Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai*

Beth A. Marchese, BA
Waltham, Massachusetts
*Sanofi Genzyme*

Cristina Vasquez Mateo, PhD
EMD Serono
Billerica, Massachusetts

Jenny Meyer
Foxboro, Massachusetts

Irina Mordukhovich, PhD
Brighton, Massachusetts

Carolyn E. Peluso, PhD
Gloucester, Massachusetts
*Cell Signaling Technology*

Leena Philominathan, PhD
Cheshire, Connecticut
*Alexion Pharmaceuticals*

Lori Regis, MS
Hudson, Massachusetts
*AbbVie*

Emma Borrego-Diaz Reyes, PhD
Eurofins Lancaster Laboratories
Andover, Massachusetts
[from Mid-America Chapter]

Maria Roser Rovira Riera, CHI
Natick, Massachusetts

Rufus Robertson, MSc
Everett, Massachusetts

Lauren Schwartz, RPh, PharmD
Cheshire, Connecticut
*Rite Aid Pharmacy*

Jessica Solodar
Newton, Massachusetts

Manyee Tang, MS, CMI, CHI
Wayland, Massachusetts

Nicole Taveras, BS, MA
Behavioral Nutrition Inc.
Quincy, Massachusetts

Melissa Jane Teixeira
Wrentham, Massachusetts

Barbara M. Thomson, MS, MPH
Alnylam Pharmaceuticals
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Rachel West, PhD
Norris Cotton Cancer Center
Lebanon, New Hampshire

Diane Wonsey
Concord, Massachusetts
How to Register for February 27 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 27 Meeting

Yangtze River Restaurant
21 Depot Square (off Mass. Ave.)
Lexington, Massachusetts
781-861-6030

Depot Square is a three-sided block directly off Mass. Ave., which is the main street in Lexington Center. The Depot Square roadway begins and ends on Mass. Ave.

There is on-street parking as well as parking in municipal lots in back of Depot Square.

To get there:

- **From Route 128/I-95**: Take Exit 31A East to Routes 4/225, which is Bedford Street. Follow the signs into Lexington Center past the Minute Man statue, where Bedford Street joins Mass. Ave. Go straight ahead and take the third left into Depot Square.
- **From Route 2**: Take Exit 54 to Waltham St/Waltham. Follow the signs for Lexington Center to the traffic lights at the end of Waltham Street. Turn left onto Mass. Ave. and stay in the right lane. Depot Square is on the right, about 100 yards beyond the traffic lights.
- **From Cambridge/Arlington**: Follow Mass. Ave. north to Lexington Center. Depot Square is on the right, about 100 yards beyond the traffic lights.

For detailed driving directions from your location, go to: www.citysearch.com/profile/4788404/lexington_ma/yangtze_river_restaurant.html.

Need a ride to the meeting?

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. You can also use the chapter’s LinkedIn page to ask for a ride (or offer one).

Executive Council Winter Meeting

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.

Any chapter member can suggest an item for the agenda. If there is a topic or issue you feel should be addressed at the winter council meeting, please write to the president, Olivier Morteau, at olivier.morteau@gmail.com.

**EXECUTIVE COUNCIL 2016-17**

**OFFICERS**

- PRESIDENT: Olivier Morteau
- IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT: Marisa Greenfield
- PRESIDENT-ELECT: Shawn Watson
- VICE PRESIDENT/CONNECTICUT: Margaret Burke
- SECRETARY: Debbie Ferguson
- TREASURER: Ana Bozas

**DIRECTORS / COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

- PROGRAMS: Shawn Watson
- CONNECTICUT PROGRAMS: Margaret Burke
- Agnella Matic, Jill Max
- MEMBERSHIP: Judy Linn
- MEMBERSHIP AWARDS: Nancy Knoblock Hunton Francesca Coltrera, David Olle, Jill Shuman, Debbie von Rechenberg
- E-NEWS: Olivier Morteau
- NEWSLETTER: Judy Linn
- LINKEDIN SUBGROUP: Laurie MacDougal
- NOMINATING COMMITTEE: Shawn Watson
- WEB SITE: Aaron Federman
  - Judy Linn

**MEMBERS-AT-LARGE**

Susan Chow, Francesca Coltrera, Andrea Gwosdow, Laurie LaRusso, Shanna McClennen, Joann Merriman, Jill Shuman, Theresa Singleton, Debbie von Rechenberg

**DELEGATES TO AMWA BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Olivier Morteau, Shawn Watson

ALTERNATES: Marisa Greenfield, Margaret Burke