June 21: Dinner in Waltham, Mass.

Health Literacy Basics for Medical Writers

Writers are often advised to know their audience. As medical writers, our audiences may range from clinicians and scientists to patients and the public. Clearly communicating medical information to our target audience can be challenging. In that vein, at the New England Chapter’s next dinner meeting, on Thursday, June 21, our AMWA colleague Helen Osborne will be speaking to us about “Health Literacy: What It Is, Why It Matters, Ways Medical Writers Can Help.”

Helen will define health literacy and provide examples that illustrate why health information may be difficult to understand. She will also discuss the various ways medical writers can help improve health communication.

President of Health Literacy Consulting in Natick, Mass., Helen holds a Master of Education from Boston University and is a registered and licensed occupational therapist (OTR/L). She is the founder of Health Literacy Month, an annual worldwide initiative since 1998, and the producer and host of the podcast interview series Health Literacy Out Loud. The second edition of her award-winning guidebook, Health Literacy from A to Z: Practical Ways to Communicate Your Health Message, originally published by Jones & Bartlett Learning, was recently released by Aviva Publishing.

In 2017, Helen was the recipient of AMWA’s prestigious Walter C. Alvarez Award, which honors excellence in communicating health care developments and concepts to the public.

This will be the New England Chapter’s last meeting until fall, so come join your colleagues before the summer hiatus. There will be plenty of time to network during the social hour and dinner. And no matter who your audience, you will gain insight from Helen Osborne as to the importance of considering their needs.

Since this is also our Annual Member Meeting, we will be announcing the officers for our chapter’s 2018-19 program year (see page 6).

As always, guests and prospective members are welcome.

—Debbie Ferguson
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 Board of Directors 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, usually in the winter), then a program with a speaker, panel presentation, or roundtables.

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

November 1
Chapter Networking Dinner
AMWA Annual Conference
Washington, D.C.

If you’re attending the 2018 AMWA Medical Writing & Communication Conference in Washington this fall, plan to join your New England colleagues for a private dinner at a nearby restaurant on Thursday, November 1.

The chapter dinner at the national conference is a longstanding tradition. It is always a popular event that gives New England AMWA members a chance to spend some time together. No other conference events are scheduled for that evening.

Watch the AMWA New England E-News for details.

Board of Directors Meeting

The New England Chapter’s Board of Directors, which comprises the officers, committee heads, and members-at-large, will meet during the summer to begin planning the coming program year. If you have any suggestions for a program topic, speakers, or a meeting venue, please share them with Brian Head at brihead@gmail.com.

Other Events in New England

June 24-28
DIA
Global Annual Meeting
Boston, Mass.
The Drug Information Association’s 2018 Global Annual Meeting will take place at the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center. For information: www.diaglobal.org/en/flagship/dia-2018.

October 26-27
STC New England
InterChange 2018
Lowell, Mass.
InterChange, the annual technical communication conference of the New England Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication, will be held on Friday, October 26 and Saturday, October 27, at the UMass Lowell Inn and Conference Center in Lowell, Mass. For information: http://stcnewengland.org/interchange.

AMWA Annual Conference

The 2018 AMWA Medical Writing & Communication Conference conference will be held in Washington, D.C., from Wednesday, October 31 through Saturday, November 3. For all the details and registration information: https://www.amwa.org/page/conference.
May Meeting Reports

AMWA Movie Night
At the Capitol Theatre in Arlington, Mass., in May, New England chapter members and guests enjoyed a private screening of the HBO film adaptation of *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by science writer Rebecca Skloot. The movie tells the story of the woman whose cancerous cells were the source of the HeLa cell line, which is still used by many biomedical research labs more than 60 years after her death. Prior to the publication of Skloot’s book, few people knew who donated the original cells.

The cells, taken from a tumor in Ms. Lacks’s cervix without her knowledge or permission, had an unprecedented ability to replicate rapidly and survive in the laboratory – hence the term “immortal.” The cells were commercialized and sold to laboratories worldwide. Their availability has allowed major progress in genetic research and development of widely used vaccines and drugs.

Ms. Lacks’s husband and children were never informed that researchers were using her cells and, therefore, never granted consent for their commercial sale and use. They didn’t learn that the cells had been commercialized until they read about it more than 20 years after her death. The family, which struggled financially, was never compensated. And in another act of deception, Ms. Lacks’s children were told they were being tested for cancer when researchers were in fact obtaining their cell samples for more research that would be published without their permission.

The movie focuses on how the Lacks family was affected by grief and anger at being kept in the dark. It also covers some of the challenges Rebecca Skloot faced while researching the book.

—Jessica Solodar

Speaker Gives Tips for Medical Writing Success

*The wind began to switch, the house began to pitch, and suddenly the hinges started to unhitch.*

—“The Wizard of Oz,” 1939

On Tuesday, May 15, at 6:00 p.m., the New England Chapter’s spring meeting in Connecticut was at held at Ola Restaurant in Wallingford. Unfortunately, at about the same time, severe thunderstorms and four confirmed tornadoes rolled through the state! Luckily, our speaker, Andrea Gwosdow, PhD, had arrived earlier in the day and the restaurant fared well in the storm. It is no surprise, however, that the weather reduced attendance.

Andrea, a medical writer and scientific consultant in Arlington, Mass., and a long-time AMWA member, gave an interactive presentation on “How to Avoid Rejection: Tips for Medical Writing Success.” She showed how the order in which a person reads a scientific manuscript differs from the order in which a writer writes it, and she cited common reasons why journal articles are rejected for publication. Attendees then participated in an exercise to identify these problems in examples from the literature. Andrea finished her presentation by providing several tips for developing a sound writing process to avoid these common pitfalls.

Everyone enjoyed Ola, which specializes in New World Latin cuisine. The restaurant—a new venue for us—is centrally located in the state, close to several major highways, and has free parking. We hope to go back there for our next Connecticut meeting in late September or early October.

If you have suggestions for topics or speakers for future Connecticut dinner meetings, which are held twice a year, please share them with me (mburkepharmd@cox.net).

—Margaret Burke
Vice President for Connecticut
In February, the Harvard Medical Postdoctoral Association invited four of our AMWA colleagues to speak on “Careers in Medical Writing.” The panelists were Andrea Gwosdow, PhD, president of Gwosdow Associates Science Consultants LLC; Olivier Morteau, PhD, associate director, scientific communications at MedDay Pharmaceuticals; Tithi Dutta Roy, PhD, a regulatory medical writer for the medical device industry; and Debbie von Rechenberg, ELS, a regulatory medical writer for the pharmaceutical/biotechnology industry. Andrea, Olivier, and Debbie are all past presidents of the New England Chapter.

In April, in a Health Literacy Out Loud podcast titled “Talking About Ticks and Other Environmental Health Concerns,” Helen Osborne, MED, OTR/L—who will be the speaker at our next meeting—interviewed Aaron Frechette. Mr. Frechette, a public health promotion specialist with the Rhode Island Department of Health, was the guest speaker at our chapter meeting in December, where Helen had the opportunity to meet him. You can listen to this or any other of Helen’s podcasts at http://www.healthliteracyoutloud.com/.

This spring Nancy Knoblock Hunton, MS, freelance health and science writer in Acton, Mass., participated in the Discovery Museum’s Science Communication Fellowship program, speaking to kids about nutrition. (Also participating in the program was her husband, Donald Hunton, a retired rocket scientist, who explained how GPS works.) Nancy is a past president of the New England Chapter.

New England AMWA members are contributing to the 2018 national conference in Washington, D.C., in November.

Dwyen DeSilver, BS, of Bethany, Conn., and Maureen Piotrowski, MBA, of Needham, Mass., will have a poster on display: “Best Practices for Creating a Home Office, and Time Management Tips for Working from Home.” Dwyen is also leading a roundtable on “The Transition From ‘Bench to Desk’: Successfully Navigating a Career Transition From Drug Discovery Research into Medical Writing.” Dwyen and Maureen are both medical writers and consultants at Whitsell Innovations, Inc.

Christine Quagan, senior medical writer at PROMETRIKA LLC, Cambridge, Mass., is coleading an education session: “From Protocol to Package Insert - A Data Journey.” Chris is also leading a roundtable on “Numbers, Meet Letters: CDISC for Medical Writers.”

In March, I had the pleasure of presenting the Linn Award—a one-year free membership in AMWA—to Dr. Lori Newman, compliments of the New England Chapter. Lori qualifies for this award as a newcomer to the field of medical writing with an impressive list of accomplishments.

She graduated magna cum laude from Brown University with a BS in biochemistry and a BA in French in 1998. She went on to earn a master’s in linguistics from the University of California in San Diego in 2003. Then, in 2013, she received a doctorate of veterinary medicine and a certificate in international veterinary medicine from the Tufts Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine.

Using her varied skills, she has worked as a Chinese language analyst for the U.S. government and contractors as well as a veterinarian at a pet hospital.

In addition to English, Lori is fluent in Chinese, French, and Spanish. Since 2013, she has worked as a freelance translator—translating medical, scientific, and veterinary documents into English, and serving as the Chinese language lead in quality control for a large pharmaceutical company. She has published translations of Small Animal Emergency Care: Quick Reference Guide and Quick Guidebook to Canine and Feline Ophthalmology. And she spoke at the American Translators Association conferences in 2015 and 2017.

Lori is now eager to branch out into medical writing, build a professional network, and contribute to AMWA.

—Nancy Knoblock Hunton, President, New England Chapter

**Editor’s note:** The competitive Linn Membership Awards provide support for up to three new medical writers at a time. For each recipient, the New England Chapter covers the cost of one year’s professional membership dues in AMWA. The chapter also waives registration fees for all the regular chapter meetings during the award year. To learn more about this award and how to apply for it, go to www.amwa-ne.org/awards.html.
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.

Amy Behrens, MS
Biogen
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Peris Bentley
Boston, Massachusetts
Harvard University

Nicole Bowens, PhD
New Haven, Connecticut

Christine Briggs, PhD
Somerville, Massachusetts

Danielle Brindisi, BS, RPh
Medford, Massachusetts

Ian Broome, BA
Somerville, Massachusetts

Robert Cooper, MD
Springfield, Massachusetts

Briana Dunn, PhD
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Nicole Eckerson, MS
Warwick, Rhode Island

Aine M. Ellrott, MA
Newburyport, Massachusetts

Nicole Enman, PhD
Pear Therapeutics
Boston, Massachusetts

Daniel Fields, BA
New England Journal of Medicine
Boston, Massachusetts

Hannah Fox
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Jessica Golden, MPH, CHES
UMass Medical School
Worcester, Massachusetts

Marianne Grant, PhD
Acton, Massachusetts

Sherry Guardiano, DO
Cheshire Medical Center
Dartmouth-Hitchcock
Keene, New Hampshire

Branwen Hall, PhD
Somerville, Massachusetts

Lori King
Salem, Massachusetts

Jennifer Limongiello, PhD, RN, FNP-BC
Lahey Clinic Medical Center
Burlington, Massachusetts

Mangadhara Madineedi, MD, MSA
VA Boston Healthcare System
Brockton, Massachusetts

Jaleh Mansouri
EMD Serono Inc.
Billerica, Massachusetts

Joanne Mason
Westfield, Massachusetts

Patricia Meehan, MS, APRN
Boston, Massachusetts

Shobha Menon, BSc(OT)
Newton, Massachusetts

Kelly Naegelin, BA
Vertex Pharmaceuticals Inc.
Boston, Massachusetts

Radha Narayan, PhD, CCMP
Rias Medical Publications
Belmont, Massachusetts

Michelle Preston, PharmD, RPh
Boston, Massachusetts

Shelley Reinhardt, BA
Boston Massachusetts

Colin Riessen, BA
Apellis
Waltham, Massachusetts

Dianali Rivera, BA, MS
Bioverativ
Waltham, Massachusetts

Merle Roesler
Biogen
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Carolyn Roy-Bornstein
Newburyport, Massachusetts

Rebecca Scholz, PhD
Boston Children’s Hospital
Boston, Massachusetts

Jennifer Secula, MPW
PAREXEL
Billerica, Massachusetts

Susan Smith
North Andover, Massachusetts

Anastasia Sparks
Needham, Massachusetts

Jane Stephenson, PhD, MBA
Cara Therapeutics
Stamford, Connecticut

Tyler Stahl, MS
Warwick, Rhode Island

Youg Thaker, PhD
Harvard Medical School
Boston, Massachusetts
Chapter Officers
The New England Chapter’s officers for the 2018-19 year will be introduced at the last meeting of the 2018-19 year on June 21. Their one-year term begins at that time.

Officers (Automatic)
In accordance with our bylaws, the President is elected a year ahead of time to ensure continuity. During the year as President-Elect, he or she serves as Program Director. Then, after a year as President, he or she serves for still another year as Immediate Past President. In the coming year, Debbie Ferguson will be President and Shawn Watson will be Immediate Past President.

PRESIDENT: Debbie Ferguson
Debbie has a PhD in experimental medicine from McGill University. Following postdoctoral studies at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, she joined a start-up company, Reata Pharmaceuticals, as a scientist. Her responsibilities grew along with the company and she currently holds the position of associate vice president, scientific affairs. She joined AMWA in 2004 and has been a member of the New England Chapter since 2009. For 3 years, from 2014 to 2016, she arranged the chapter’s dinner meeting at the AMWA national conference. In 2015-16 she served on the chapter’s Board of Directors as a member-at-large. She was Secretary in 2016-17, and during that time she was the lead in establishing the chapter as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation in Massachusetts.

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT: Shawn Watson
Shawn is a licensed pharmacist and holds a PhD in pharmaceutical sciences from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a PharmD from St. Louis College of Pharmacy. He is an associate director of medical writing at Alexion Pharmaceuticals, where he authors and oversees the development of study- and submission-level regulatory documents across four clinical development programs. Prior to Alexion, he was an associate principal regulatory writer at Synchrogenix Information Strategies and before that, a medical writer at PRA International. He has been an AMWA member since 2012. He served on the chapter’s Board of Directors as a member-at-large in 2014-15.

Nominees for Office
The Nominating Committee, chaired by President-Elect Debbie Ferguson, has presented the following slate of officers to serve along with her and Shawn in the coming year.

PRESIDENT-ELECT: Brian Head
Brian is a scientific communications manager at MedDay Pharmaceuticals. Prior to joining MedDay, he was a medical writer in the Market Access Communications group at Evidera Inc., a HEOR-focused agency, where he developed value dossiers, landscape reports, and white papers on various biopharmaceutical products and therapeutic areas. Before that, he was a postdoctoral research fellow in the Department of Molecular Genetics and Microbiology at Duke University. During his time at Duke, he was also a member of the Journal of Clinical Investigation editorial staff. Brian has a BS in from the University of California, Santa Barbara and a PhD in biochemistry from the University of California, Los Angeles. He joined AMWA in 2017.

VICE PRESIDENT/CONNECTICUT: Margaret Burke
Margaret is nominated for a third term in this position. She received a BS in pharmacy and a PharmD from the State University of New York at Buffalo, followed by a pediatric specialty residency and a pediatric pharmacotherapy fellowship at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She is a board certified pediatric pharmacotherapy specialist, with a certificate in core public health competency from the University of Connecticut. She was a pediatric clinical pharmacy specialist at Hartford Hospital and Connecticut Children’s Medical Center for a combined total of 19 years and continues to serve as a member of CT Children’s IRB. In 2013, she started Precision Medical Writing LLC, which provides medical writing services to a variety of clients. She has been a member of AMWA since 2012.

TREASURER: Ana Bozaz
Ana is nominated for a third term as Treasurer. After graduating from the University of Utah with a PhD in biochemistry, she conducted research on adult stem cells at the Boston Biomedical Research Institute. Moving away from the bench, she spent 2 years as a social media manager at MASS AWIS in Cambridge, Mass. In 2013 she joined Analysis Group in Boston, where she worked as a medical writer focusing on HEOR publications. For the past 2 years, she has been managing the publication needs of Akebia Therapeutics. She has been an AMWA member since 2014, when she received a Linn Membership Award from the New England Chapter. In 2016 she attained certification as a medical publication professional (CMPP).

SECRETARY: Ellie Lin
Ellie is nominated for a second term as Secretary. She is a freelance medical editor in Worcester, Mass., specializing in manuscripts and educational and marketing materials. She has a BA in journalism from the University of Massachusetts Amherst and an MS in environmental science with a research focus on soil microbiology from the University of California Riverside. She is coordinator of the Central Massachusetts Chapter of the Editorial Freelancers Association. She has been an AMWA member since 2016. She arranged the New England Chapter’s dinner meeting at the 2017 AMWA conference. Last year she attained certification as an editor in the life sciences (ELS).
How to Register for June 21 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 June 21 Meeting

Copper House Tavern
at the Best Western Plus Hotel
380 Winter Street
Waltham, Massachusetts
781-890-7800

The hotel is east of Route 128/I-95, a short drive from the highway. Heading south on Route 128/I-95, take exit 27A. Heading north, take exit 27A-B.

There is ample free parking.

Need a ride to the meeting?

The hotel 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.

You can also use the chapter’s LinkedIn page to ask for a ride (or offer one). If you haven’t already signed up for the New England Chapter LinkedIn subgroup, you can do so at www.linkedin.com.

Chapter Email Blasts

Keep Members Up to Date

Watch for the occasional email from “President@amwa-ne.org” with “AMWA New England E-News” in the subject line.

A few times a month, our chapter president sends an email to all members of the New England Chapter to announce a job opening or to let you know about an upcoming chapter meeting or some other regional event. The messages are usually brief, with just enough information for you to follow up if you wish. Be sure to glance at them so you don’t miss something of possible interest to you.

Please note that we do not send these notices to AMWA members who have not included the New England Chapter in their AMWA Member Profile. Chapter membership doesn’t cost anything, but you do have to sign up for it. To become part of our collegial regional network, you can update your Member Profile on the AMWA website (www.amwa.org). It will only take a minute.

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**2017-18 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**OFFICERS**

PRESIDENT: Shawn Watson
IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT: Olivier Morteau
PRESIDENT-ELECT: Deborah Ferguson
VICE PRESIDENT/CONNECTICUT: Margaret Burke
SECRETARY: Ellie Lin
TREASURER: Ana Bozas

**DIRECTORS / COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

- PROGRAMS: Deborah Ferguson
- CONNECTICUT PROGRAMS: Margaret Burke
- MEMBERSHIP: Judy Linn
- MEMBERSHIP AWARDS: Nancy Knoblock Hunton
  Francesca Coltrera, David Olle, Jill Shuman, Debbie von Rechenberg
- E-NEWS: Shawn Watson
- NEWSLETTER: Judy Linn
- LINKEDIN SUBGROUP: Laurie MacDougall
- NOMINATING COMMITTEE: Deborah Ferguson
  Andrea Gwosdow, Ellie Lin, Olivier Morteau, Shawn Watson (ex officio)
- WEB SITE: Aaron Federman
  Judy Linn

**MEMBERS-AT-LARGE**

Dara Chadwick, Susan Chow, Francesca Coltrera, Marisa Greenfield, Laurie LaRusso, Shanna McClennen, Jill Shuman, Theresa Singleton, Debbie von Rechenberg

**REPRESENTATIVE TO AMWA CHAPTER ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Andrea Gwosdow