

## **NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER NEWS**

March 2020

## March 22: Sunday Brunch Meeting in Burlington, Mass. **Roundtable Discussions for Professional Development**

The New England Chapter will hold its annual Sunday brunch on March 22 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Burlington, Mass. This always popular event will feature lively roundtable discussions led by knowledgeable AMWA members-colleagues who will share their insights, offer valuable advice, and answer questions while we all enjoy a leisurely late breakfast.

There will be 10 roundtables 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 will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis upon receipt of payment.

As always, guests and prospective members are welcome.

#### **ROUNDTABLES**

#### Table #1 **BREAKING INTO MEDICAL WRITING** Leader: Sue Chow

This roundtable will help scientists and clinicians figure out how to use their skills in a career as a medical writer. Join colleagues to discuss how to make the transition. Explore the nuts and bolts of applying your skills to this new arena, including how to develop contacts and resources, how to get clips, and tips for finding a job.

#### Table #2

#### **REGULATORY WRITING IN THE** PHARMACEUTICAL/BIOTECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY

#### Leader: Jeanette Towles

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.

#### Table #3

#### NONREGULATORY WRITING IN THE DRUG INDUSTRY Leader: Olivier Morteau

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.

#### Table #4

#### WRITING TO ENGAGE AND EDUCATE PATIENTS

#### Leader: Nancy Knoblock Hunton

Join this discussion on writing about health care and medical research for a general audience. We'll talk about print and online publications, websites, blogs, and study recruitment materials. Come learn tips on turning complicated jargon into easy-tounderstand language, and share your own experiences.

#### DATE: Sunday, March 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 8)

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, \$40 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 8.)

**DEADLINE:** To guarantee brunch reservations, we must receive your payment by Tuesday, March 17. There will be no refunds for cancellation after that, but late registrations (online only) will be accepted on a space-available basis.

#### **ROUNDTABLES** continued on page 3.

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## **CHAPTER CALENDAR**

The New England Chapter's year begins on July 1, when a new slate of officers takes over. There are no general activities during July and August.

The chapter usually 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, most often in the winter), then an educational program with a speaker, panel presentation, or roundtables.

In addition to the regular meetings, the chapter occasionally schedules other events, such as informal networking lunches or evening meetups.

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

#### April 17 Networking Lunch Cambridge, Mass.

Everyone is invited to lunch at 12:30 p.m., Friday, April 17, at Changsho, 1712 Mass. Ave., Cambridge, MA (between Harvard Square and Porter Square). Meet colleagues, raise work-related questions, and share tips on medical writing. There is metered on-street parking, or you can take the T. Cost is the price of the buffet lunch, plus your drink and tip. Please RSVP by Monday, April 13, to Francesca Coltrera at coltrera@comcast.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.

NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER AMERICAN MEDICAL WRITERS ASSOCIATION

> Judy Linn, Newsletter Editor Phone: 508-358-7071 Email: judyhlinn@aol.com

> > www.amwa-ne.org

#### April 29 Evening Meetup Worcester, Mass.

Enjoy the company of other medical writers at the Greater Good Imperial Brewing Company, 55 Millbrook Street, Worcester on April 29, 6:00-7:30 p.m. We'll each pay for our own food and drink. Prospective members and guests are welcome. Preregistration is not required. For more information, contact Ellie Lin (ellie@LinLifeScience.com).

#### TBD Dinner Meeting Connecticut

Watch the AMWA New England E-News for information about the Chapter's spring meeting in Connecticut.

#### Other Events in New England

#### March 17 Editorial Freelancers Association Brown-bag Lunch Worcester, Mass.

EFA's Central Mass Chapter is holding a brown-bag lunch, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., featuring a presentation on "The Hire-Me Packet: How to Create Engaging Sales Slides That Grow Your Business." For more information, please go to https://www.the-efa.org/events/?chp=874.

#### April 16-17

#### Tufts University School of Medicine Plain Language Workshop Boston, Mass.

"Plain Language for Health," a two-day health literacy and plain language writing and design workshop, will be held on the Tufts Health Sciences Campus, Boston. For more information, go to https://publichealth.tufts.edu/graduate-programs/professionaldevelopment/hcom-professional-development/plain-languagehealth.

#### April 16-18 Harvard Medical School Writing and Publishing Course Boston, Mass.

Harvard Medical School's annual 3-day continuing education course on "Writing, Publishing, and Social Media for Healthcare Professionals" will be held at the Renaissance Boston Waterfront Hotel. For more information: https://wps.hmscme.com/.

### Save the Date!

The 2020 AMWA Medical Writing & Communication Conference will be held October 11-14 in Baltimore, Md.

# Table #5DEMYSTIFYING COPYRIGHT: EDUCATINGYOURSELF AND YOUR COLLABORATORSLeader: Jill Shuman

Copyright is fraught with misconceptions and misunderstandings. From sharing documents with a freelance writer to copying and pasting from the Internet, copyright affects anyone who produces content. This roundtable will focus on the basics: when it's okay to share print content with an internal or external colleague; how you can use open-access materials; reusing content for slides; putting together a course pack for teaching purposes; copyright and government-produced materials. Bring any questions you may have.

## Table #6WRITING PEER-REVIEWED MANUSCRIPTS

#### Leader: Laurie LaRusso

Would you like to learn more about writing research papers for submission to peer-reviewed journals? Come join a discussion of best practices, and pick up some tips and tools for selecting a journal, preparing the manuscript, and submitting online.

## Table #7 MEDICAL TRANSLATION

#### Leader: Stephen Volante

Almost all content that medical writers produce may need to be translated into other languages to reach the intended audience(s). Quality medical translation requires training, experience, and much more than the ability to speak a foreign language. This roundtable will discuss what quality translation is, how to identify capable translators, and how to work with them to produce the results you need.

#### Table #8

#### MONEY MATTERS IN THE FREELANCE WORLD Leader: Theresa Singleton

Even the best writers won't have financial success unless they know how to get what they're worth. Join a discussion on the essentials of setting and raising rates, assessing the benefits of hourly rates versus project rates, collecting your due, and negotiating contracts. Share your experiences and tap into those of your colleagues.

#### Table #9

#### **CONQUERING PROCRASTINATION**

#### Leader: Margaret Burke

Many of us procrastinate at least occasionally. For some, it's a chronic struggle that can affect work, home life, financial stability, and happiness. Whether you or someone you know struggles with procrastination, join this roundtable to discuss the theories of why people procrastinate and, more importantly, learn and share tips to fight this bad habit. This will be a safe space and you will NOT be asked to share your worst procrastination nightmare. Don't wait, register now!

#### Table #10

#### **OPEN TABLE FOR INFORMAL CONVERSATION** *Leader: Haifa Kassis*

Would you just like to get together with other medical writers? This is a chance for you to catch up with AMWA friends and make new professional acquaintances.

## September Meeting Report Practical Aspects of Regulatory Writing

At the chapter meeting in Waltham, Mass., in September, our colleague Debbie von Rechenberg and guest speaker Dr. Anu Gaur presented "Practical Aspects of Regulatory Writing: Stories From the Front Lines of Regulatory Submissions for Drugs and Medical Devices" to an eager audience of members and guests. Debbie has been preparing regulatory clinical documents for pharmaceutical companies for over two decades. Anu is a global regulatory affairs strategist and consultant in the pharmaceutical, biotechnology, and medical device industries.

They began with fundamentals of the regulatory landscape—and made sure not to lose the beginners in the room (for which we were very grateful!). They discussed the regulated and nonregulated markets around the world and presented a brief history of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, beginning with the Biologics Control Act of 1902.

Debbie then focused on regulatory submissions for pharmaceuticals. To bring a new drug to market, a pharmaceutical company must demonstrate clinical benefit with acceptable risk in a series of studies performed over a period of years in close communication with regulatory agencies. This process requires teamwork between medical writers, clinical specialists, scientists, statisticians, and others.

Then the company must submit a New Drug Application via the electronic Common Technical Document, developed by the International Council for Harmonisation of Technical Requirements for Pharmaceuticals for Human Use to satisfy the requirements of many regulatory agencies around the globe. This reduces the need for medical writers to reformat regulatory submissions for agencies in different parts of the world. The CTD includes sections on quality (chemistry, manufacturing, and controls), nonclinical studies, and clinical studies. Within the complex submission process, the role of the medical writer can include developing and managing timelines, keeping the team focused on content requirements, developing conclusions that reflect the purpose of the study, and designing effective data tables. After a drug is approved, the medical writer's role may evolve to include the label language, periodic reports, supplemental applications, and postmarketing studies.

Anu focused on regulatory affairs with regard to medical devices, which range from bandages to artificial joints and cardiac catheters. The FDA also recognizes some special groups of medical devices, such as in vitro diagnostics, which are devices that interact with specimens taken from the body, and humanitarian use devices, which treat or diagnose conditions that affect fewer than 8,000 individuals in the United States per year. Anu also gave examples of differences in regulatory requirements and clinical documentation between the FDA and the European Union's European Medicines Agency.

The speakers concluded with tips on how to land your first gig as a regulatory writer: Read information on the websites of the FDA, the European Medicines Agency, and the International Council for Harmonisation. Keep up with the evolving regulatory landscape. Learn about study design and statistics. Develop expertise in a therapeutic area. And join AMWA and other relevant organizations and take advantage of helpful workshops and presentations like this one!

-Ellie Lin, Secretary

## **November Meeting Report**

## Snapshots from San Diego

Many of the New England attendees at the 2019 AMWA Medical Writing & Communication Conference in San Diego, Calif., in November got together for dinner at Tom Ham's Lighthouse. Thanks to Margaret Burke and Andrea Gwosdow for arranging this event. And thanks to Theresa Singleton for sharing these photos.



## **December Meeting Report** *New England Chapter Holiday Party*

AMWA members and guests met at Hops N Scotch in Brookline, Mass., in December for an evening of food and drink and informal networking. Haifa Kassis, president-elect/program director, shared these photos.



Maureen Piotrowski, Patricia Fonseca, Haifa Kassis



On left, front to back: Geetha Godlove, Emanuela Zaharieva, Joyce O'Connell. On right, front to back: Lisa Paradis, Samantha Santangelo, Ashley Ogawa-Wong, Emily McMains.



Olivier Morteau, Neil Anderson, Ada Ao-Baslock, Kathleen Ahern Gould, Emily McMains

## **Personal Notes**

**Karina Gordin, MS**, is teaching a course on "Not Your English Teacher's Grammar: Essentials of Grammar" in the Lincoln-Sudbury (Mass.) Adult Education program this spring. Karina is a freelance writer and editor and a contributing editor at *Well Being Journal*.

**Chapter Changes: Meghna Rao** has joined Haymarket Media Inc. in New York City as editor of Rheumatology Advisor and is now a member of the Empire State-Metropolitan New York Chapter. **Molly Rodriguez, MPH**, has joined Premier Research Group in Research Triangle Park, N.C., and is now a member of the Carolinas Chapter.

### Obituary

**Joann H. Merriman**, New England Chapter president in 1997-98 and one of our chapter's most devoted members, died on September 9, 2019, at the age of 83.

A 1958 graduate of Agnes Scott College in Atlanta, with a major in journalism, Joann had a long career as a freelance writer and editor. She joined AMWA in 1986, when she decided to concentrate in the biomedical and health field. Over the years, along with freelancing, her career included fulltime stints as a staff editor at the Boston Floating Hospital and as a writer and editor at the Genetics Institute in Cambridge.

In 1988 she was asked to complete the term of our chapter secretary, who was unexpectedly transferred out of New England. The following year she was elected secretary and held that position for an unprecedented five full terms. After that she remained on the chapter's Board of Directors as a member-at-large for two years.

In 1996-97 she was president-elect and, in the role of program director, arranged some outstanding meetings in the Boston area—from an entertaining and surprisingly instructive evening with novelist Michael Palmer, MD, to a sell-out roundtable dinner on jobs for medical writers. When the AMWA annual conference was held in Boston in 1997, she arranged and moderated one of the most popular sessions, a special forum on "Mind/Body Medicine vs Alternative Medicine."

Joann was photographer and post-meeting publicity coordinator for the chapter's biennial writing awards competition starting in 1991. In the late 1990s—when an online AMWA member directory was still several years away—she compiled and distributed an enhanced (hardcopy) New England Chapter listing to supplement the limited information in the annual national directory.

Throughout her years as a New England Chapter member, she regularly volunteered to give people rides to chapter events often driving miles out of her way to accommodate a colleague who would otherwise not have been able to attend. For this and other contributions to the chapter and its members, she received the chapter's Good Sport Key Chain Award in 1995.

After her terms as president and immediate past president, Joann continued to serve on the chapter's Board of Directors as a member-at-large until 2017, when she moved from her home in Weston, Mass., to an assisted living facility.

Our AMWA chapter has lost a very good friend, and so have I.

-Judy Linn

## Linn Membership Award Goes to Christine Giraud

At the September chapter meeting, on behalf of the New England Chapter, I presented a Judy Linn Membership Award—a one-year free membership in AMWA—to Christine Giraud, who qualified for this award as a newcomer to the field of medical writing with excellent communications skills.



Nancy Knoblock Hunton (left) congratulates Linn Membership Award recipient Christine Giraud.

A graduate of McGill University with a B.A. in history, Christine earned a master's in communication and media studies from the College of Communications at the University of Texas at Austin. Her varied background includes working as a Peace Corps volunteer with the National Film and Television Institute in Ghana and co-organizing the Boston Palestine Film Festival here in Massachusetts.

Christine gained experience in the medical field working as a clinical research coordinator for five years at Boston Medical Center and Mass General Hospital. After that, she was a chart abstractor for four years with Flatiron Health.

Realizing that she missed creative work, in 2018 Christine decided to become a full-time writer. Her work focuses on public health, health technology, and the burgeoning field of cannabis.

We welcome Christine to AMWA and look forward to her participation and watching her career develop.

-Nancy Knoblock Hunton, Chair Linn Awards Committee

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.amwane.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.

#### Varun Agrawal, MD

University of Vermont College of Medicine South Burlington, Vermont

Andreea Ardelean, MD, MS, MBA Nuvasive, Inc Boston, Massachusetts

**Donna Belcinski, MLS** Greenwich Hospital Greenwich, Connecticut

**Osnat Ben-Shahar, PhD** Boston, Massachusetts

Mariah Boyd-Boffa, MPH Montpelier, Vermont

**Jacqueline Campbell, MS** Xenon Pharmaceuticals Burnaby, British Columbia Canada

Jean-Francois Caubet, MD Cambridge, Massachusetts

Rhoda Chang, PhD Waltham, Massachusetts

Susana Curley, MS Acumen Medical Communications Brookline, Massachusetts

**Rick Davis, MS, RPh** Auckland New Zealand

Melissa Derner, PhD EMD Serono Billerica, Massachusetts

Adrianne Gladden-Young Cambridge, Massachusetts

Margaret Haldeman, PhD i-Health Cromwell, Connecticut

Karen Hansen Write to Work Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts [from Delaware Valley Chapter]

Laura Hartrich, PhD, BCMAS Hartrich CRCS LLC Buffalo, New York

Vivian Hernandez, PhD Takeda Pharmaceuticals Cambridge, Massachusetts Nancy Hertig, MBA Snowy Owl Health Science Communications Scituate, Massachusetts

**Heidi Hirsch, MPH, ELS** IQVIA Parsippany, New Jersey

Matthew Hoctor, PharmD Saratoga Springs, New York

Kelly Jackson West Bethel, Maine

Aneta Kantcheva, PharmD Genzyme Cambridge, Massachusetts

Zachary Knecht, PhD Somerville, Massachusetts

**Judy Kotler, MA** Brandeis University Waltham, Massachusetts

**Geeta Kumari, PhD** Dana Farber Cancer Institute Boston, Massachusetts

Elizabeth Lavelle Tyngsboro, Massachusetts

Nicky Lowney, MA Groton, Massachusetts

Vincent Luc, PharmD Southborough, Massachusetts

Julie Martin, MS Charlestown, Massachusetts Massachusetts General Hospital

**Rebecca McEachern, MD** Pediatric Endocrinology of Rhode Island North Kingstown, Rhode Island

Emily McMains, PhD Waban, Maassachusetts

Jennifer Moorhouse, BS Becton Dickinson & Company Warwick, Rhode Island

**Prachi Morajkar** Boxboro, Massachusetts

Sarah Morin, BS, RPh Walgreens Coventry, Connecticut Allison Musick, PharmD Cambridge, Massachusetts

**Christina Nelson** New Haven, Connecticut Frank H. Netter School of Medicine at Quinnipiac University

Abby Norman Camden, Maine

Ashley Ogawa, PhD Brookline, Massachusetts

Caroline ORiordan, MA, RD, MPH Norwell, Massachusetts

**Anthony Palmieri, MPH** Parexel International Billerica, Massachusetts

Nancy Paz, MA Medford, Massachusetts

**Geeta Peverada, PhD** Dana Farber Cancer Institute Boston, Massachusetts

**Elizabeth Pratt, BSN, RN** Atrius Health Amesbury, Massachusetts

**David Rigby, PhD** Sanofi Genzyme Cambridge, Massachusetts

Susan Robles, BS Framingham, Massachusetts Informa Training Partners

Natalie Starling, PhD, LP, LBA, BCBA Starling Consultants PLLC Hamden, Connecticut

**Cheryl Tyszkiewicz, MA** Pfizer Groton, Connecticut

Linda Valsdottir, MS Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center Boston, Massachusetts

Ivana Viani, MD Brigham & Women's Hospital Boston, Massachusetts

Karen Wylie, BSc, BA, MSc This Editing Pen Westbrook, Connecticut

## How to Register for March 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 March 22 Meeting**

Hilton Garden Inn 5 Wheeler Road Burlington, Massachusetts 781-272-8800

The hotel is just off the Middlesex Turnpike, near Route 128/I-95.

From 128/I-95, heading north or south, take Exit 32B (Middlesex Turnpike). At the end of the ramp, at the traffic lights, turn left onto the Middlesex Turnpike. Then take the first left onto Wheeler Road. The hotel is less than a third of a mile ahead on the left.

There is ample free parking.

#### 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).

## LinkedIn AMWA New England Subgroup

Do you know that our chapter has its own LinkedIn subgroup? It's an easy way to connect with other medical writers here in our six-state region. Everyone—including prospective members—is welcome to participate in this local forum. All you have to do is go to www.linkedin.com, sign up for the main AMWA group, and then sign up for the New England Chapter subgroup.

## Nominating Committee Seeking Possible Candidates

In accordance with the New England Chapter's Bylaws, the Nominating Committee, chaired by President-Elect Haifa Kassis, invites members to suggest possible candidates for the offices of President-Elect, Secretary, and Treasurer for the 2020-21 chapter year, which begins July 1, 2020. Contact Haifa at haifa.kassis@crispwriting.com by March 15. The Nominating Committee will announce the slate in the June newsletter.

## **Chapter Leaders Welcome Comments**

Chapter officers and committee chairs are always willing to consider suggestions regarding chapter activities. Please feel free to contact any of the officers or committee chairs. They are all in the AMWA Member Directory at www.amwa.org.

## 2019-20 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### **OFFICERS**

PRESIDENT: Brian Head IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT: Deborah Ferguson PRESIDENT-ELECT: Haifa Kassis VICE PRESIDENT/CONNECTICUT: Margaret Burke SECRETARY: Ellie Lin TREASURER: Ana Bozas

#### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

- PROGRAMS: Haifa Kassis
- CONNECTICUT PROGRAMS: Margaret Burke
- GOVERNANCE: Deborah Ferguson
- MEMBERSHIP: Judy Linn
- MEMBERSHIP AWARDS: Nancy Knoblock Hunton
- E-NEWS: Brian Head
- NEWSLETTER: Judy Linn
- LINKEDIN SUBGROUP: Haifa Kassis
- LOCAL NETWORKING COORDINATORS: Andrea Gwosdow, Haifa Kassis, Ellie Lin
- NOMINATING COMMITTEE: Haifa Kassis
- WEBSITE: Aaron Federman

## MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Andrea Blotta, Dara Chadwick, Marisa Greenfield, Olivier Morteau, Jill Shuman, Theresa Singleton, Debbie von Rechenberg

### REPRESENTATIVE TO AMWA CHAPTER ADVISORY COUNCIL

Andrea Gwosdow