February 27: Sunday Brunch Meeting in Waltham, Mass.

Roundtable Discussions for Professional Development

The New England Chapter’s traditional midwinter brunch will be held on Sunday, February 27, at the Hilton Garden Inn, Waltham, 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 breakfast.

There are 10 roundtables on career-related topics. Choose the one 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 roundtable is limited and will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis upon receipt of payment.

As always, guests and prospective members are welcome.

ROUNDTABLES

#1 WRITING FOR PATIENTS AND CONSUMERS ON THE INTERNET (Nancy Knoblock Hunton & Connie Villalba)
Discuss how to communicate effectively to healthcare consumers who turn to the Internet for medical information. Get tips on readability, style, and graphics. Learn about writing for patient websites, including how to select keywords, links, and search engine optimization terms. Hear about personal experiences in writing for top Web-based multimedia sites, such as Health Dialog and UpToDate.

#2 WRITING FOR MEDICAL EDUCATION AND MEDICAL COMMUNICATION COMPANIES (Kevin Flynn)
Learn about medical education and medical communication companies and the types of writing skills they seek. Also learn the key factors for working with an agency successfully.

#3 TECHNICAL WRITING FOR THE MEDICAL DEVICE INDUSTRY (Aaron Federman)
Medical device companies provide opportunities for technical writers to produce a wide variety of product documentation. Learn how technical writers work closely with engineering, regulatory, and marketing throughout the R&D process to produce the documentation for using, testing, and servicing medical products.

#4 NO PORTFOLIO? NO PROBLEM! (Cheryl Lathrop)
Create an instant medical writing portfolio out of thin air! Learn how to repurpose what you already have lying around the house and office, how to create new medical writing samples instantly in an afternoon, how to get people to let you write for them and thus get a sample, and how to make all your new writing samples look polished and professional.

#5 CREDENTIALS FOR MEDICAL WRITERS (Jill Shuman)
What credentials do prospective employers and clients look for or value? Learn about academic programs available locally and/or online, professional certifications (such as ELS, RAC, CCMEP), AMWA education certificates, the AMWA Professional Development Certificate, etc., that can enhance your professional skills and credibility.

#6 LANDING A NEW JOB IN MEDICAL COMMUNICATIONS (Stephen Provost)
Learn battle-tested methods for landing your first, or next, job in medical communications. Get tips on writing a winning résumé and advice on interviewing.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

DATE: Sunday, February 27
TIME: Social Hour (Coffee/Tea/ Juice) starts at 11:00 a.m. Brunch & Discussions from 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m.
PLACE: Hilton Garden Inn, 420 Totten Pond Road, Waltham, Massachusetts. (DIRECTIONS ON PAGE 6.)
BUFFET MENU: Fresh Fruit • Scrambled Eggs • Bacon, Breakfast Sausages, Hash Browns • Vanilla and Low-Fat Fruit Yogurts with Granola • Assorted Bagels with Cream Cheese • Muffins, Danish Pastries, Croissants with Sweet Cream Butter, Honey, Preserves • Coffee, Decaf, Herbal Teas
REGISTRATION: The registration fee is $28 for members, $33 for guests and prospective members. Please use the online form to register electronically.(SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON PAGE 2.)
DEADLINE: To guarantee brunch reservations, we must receive your payment by mail (check) or via PayPal (credit card) no later than Tuesday, February 22. (After 2:00 p.m. that day, there are no refunds for cancelation.)
Chapter Calendar

The New England Chapter’s year begins in mid-June, when the outgoing president hands over the gavel to the incoming president. 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, 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, a writing competition, culminating in the Will Solimene Awards banquet, 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: Once in a while, informal events, such as networking meetings or tours, are scheduled.


Don’t miss this opportunity to take AMWA workshops for credit toward a certificate or participate in special classes—one on transitioning into medical writing, another on building and sustaining a freelance career. At the conference luncheon, join a roundtable discussion on a career-related topic or use the time to network and socialize. For program details and to register for the 9th New England Conference, go to www.amwa-ne.org.

Connecticut Spring Dinner Meeting

TBD

In late April or May, the chapter will hold a regular meeting in Connecticut. If you have a suggestion for a program topic, a particular speaker, or a meeting location, please share it with Michelle Horan (michelle.r.horan@pfizer.com).

A few weeks ahead of time, program details and an online registration form will be posted on the chapter website and members will be alerted via the AMWA New England E-News.

Everyone is welcome.

June Dinner Meeting

TBD

The chapter’s last regular meeting of the 2010-11 year will be held in the greater Boston area in mid-June.

NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER NEWS, published 4 to 5 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
37 FORTY ACRES DRIVE
WAYLAND, MASSACHUSETTS 01778

Judy Linn, Newsletter Editor
Phone: 508-358-7071
Fax: 508-358-7081
E-mail: judylinn@aol.com
www.amwa-ne.org

How to Register for February 27 Meeting

Online registration is required for this event. For a link to the registration form, go to the chapter website at www.amwa-ne.org and click in the Upcoming Events box on the home page.

Please note that if you are bringing guests, you must fill out a separate form for each person.

When you complete the registration form, you will have two options:
(1) You may use PayPal to pay with a credit card or e-check. (You do not have to have your own PayPal account, and you will not be charged a fee for the transaction.)
(2) You may follow up by putting a check in the mail.

Whichever way you choose to pay—either electronically or by mailing a check—you will not be assigned to a roundtable until your payment is received. Your seating assignment will then be confirmed by e-mail.

WINTER WEATHER ALERT!

SHOULD SEVERE WINTER WEATHER REQUIRE POSTPONEMENT OF THE FEBRUARY 27 BRUNCH MEETING, LAURIE MACDOUGALL WILL NOTIFY EVERYONE BY E-MAIL. IF THE WEATHER LOOKS REALLY BAD AND YOU ARE UNABLE TO ACCESS YOUR E-MAIL FOR ANY REASON, CALL JUDY LINN AT 508-358-7071 BEFORE YOU HEAD OUT—JUST TO BE SURE.

Other Upcoming Events in New England

April 28-30

American Society for Indexing
Annual Conference
in Providence, R.I.
For information go to www.asindexing.org.

May 18-27

Marine Biological Laboratory
Biomedical Course for Writers
in Woods Hole, Mass.
The Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, Mass., offers fellowships for science and health journalists to study there for 10 days. This year’s application deadline is March 1. For information go to www.mbl.edu/sjp.
Linkedln Chapter Subgroup
A New Chapter Benefit

The New England Chapter now has its own subgroup on LinkedIn, providing an online forum for New England AMWA members to network and post questions and comments.

If you are an AMWA member in good standing, have a LinkedIn account, and are in the main AMWA subgroup, you can join the chapter subgroup via the main AMWA LinkedIn page at http://www.linkedin.com/groups?mostPopular=&gid=55526. From there, click on “More” and “Subgroups,” and you’ll see the chapter listed.

If you have any questions or encounter any problems, contact Laurie MacDougall (calicomedcomm@earthlink.net).

October Meeting Report
Advice for Those Seeking Freelance or Contract Assignments

Members and guests gathered at the New England Chapter’s dinner meeting in New Haven in October to glean insight from a panel that included a pharmaceutical industry recruiter, a trade publications hiring manager, and a freelance medical writer.

Dora Pereda has been working in the pharmaceutical staffing industry for 10 years. She is a senior recruiter at On Assignment Clinical Research, based in the Philadelphia area. Ms. Pereda said she believes in face-to-face networking and advises building and maintaining relationships. The referrals and recommendations she relies on are from in-person or “live” connections. A key question that she asks is, “Would you rehire [that person]?”

Mary Tierney, editorial director at TriMed Media Group, a trade publisher in Providence, R.I., has been in the medical writing and publishing field for 19 years. She said she values initiative in a potential hire, particularly favoring those who are “intellectually curious.” Those who “go the extra mile” and show a high level of dedication are the ones she hires. She believes in the motto, “You’ve got to love what you do.” She advises applicants to be personal and specific to the job in question: Send targeted material, keeping it professional and appropriately detailed. For those trying to break into the field, Ms Tierney recommends casting a wide net. If you “talk to enough people, something will click,” she said.

Sally Laden, a meeting attendee, graciously stepped in at the last minute for a panelist who could not be there. Ms. Laden has 27 years of experience in the medical communications field, the last seven as a freelancer, doing business as MSE Communications LLC in Cheshire, Conn. She was trained as a pharmacist, which she said is a perfect starting point for a career in medical writing. She remarked that she enjoys the freedom, quality of life, and professional satisfaction that are possible with freelancing; and she also stressed the importance of building relationships and networking (in her experience, cold calls rarely bring in clients). While noting that writing samples are important, she emphasized the need to maintain client confidentiality, which shows that you value and respect your obligations.

—Anita P. Kuan
Member, Connecticut Planning Committee

AMWA New England E-News
President’s Messages Keep You Informed

Take a minute to glance at those e-mails you occasionally get from Laurie MacDougall, chapter president. If you are a member of the chapter, Laurie sends you the AMWA New England E-News when she receives information about a local job opening or freelance assignment and when a chapter event has been scheduled. The E-News is a benefit of chapter membership and is not sent to outsiders.

AMWA Professional Development Certificate
Get PDC Points for Attending Chapter Meeting

Participating in professional activities outside your regular job reflects a serious, ongoing commitment to your career as a biomedical communicator, and you can document this commitment with a Professional Development Certificate (PDC) from AMWA. If you are working toward a PDC or would like to begin the process, you can earn some points just by attending the chapter brunch meeting on February 27.

For information about the PDC program, go to www.amwa.org. Click on Education/Certificates, then Professional Development Certificate.

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December Meeting Report
Nonregulatory Writing for Pharma/Biotech Industry

At the chapter’s dinner meeting in Lexington, Mass., in December, a panel of medical writers fielded questions from an exceptionally large audience of members and guests who were interested in learning about “Nonregulatory Writing Opportunities in the Pharmaceutical and Biotechnology Industry.” A panel of five speakers, with remarkably diverse educational backgrounds and working experience, dispelled the notion that in this industry, medical writers work on regulatory documentation and little else.

Derek Dore, PharmD, is a freelancer whose business focuses on continuing medical education, consumer-oriented medical writing, and manuscript writing. Jenna Hollenstein, MS, RD, ELS, an associate director of medical writing at Genzyme Corporation, focuses on scientific and clinical publications. Alexis Khalil, MPH, ELS, is a manager of scientific editing at Millennium: The Takeda Oncology Company. Kate Lewis, MA is an associate director, scientific communications, at Genzyme, where she specializes in corporate communications. Dianne Pena, MEd, is a freelancer who specializes in pharmaceutical sales training and instructional design. After speaking briefly about their respective backgrounds and experience, the panelists answered questions about medical writing. The following are a few examples.

What kind of background does one need to become a medical writer? The panelists themselves—with undergraduate and graduate degrees in pharmacy, dietetics, public health, English literature, and instructional design—illustrated the wide range of educational backgrounds that people bring to the medical writing field.

What are the best ways to find medical writing opportunities? The panelists recommended strategies such as networking, reviewing job listings on the AMWA website, advertising in the AMWA Freelance Directory, and joining publications management organizations. They also advised applying for positions that interest you even if you do not meet 100% of the stated job requirements, preparing a spiel on your transferable skills, and using language familiar to the hiring manager.

How can I build a freelance business? Panelists suggested networking to find clients and maintain working relationships. They recommended developing a few reliable clients and seeking both short-term and long-term projects. One panelist had worked for a company that later became a client when she started a freelance business. Another panelist said that cold-calling and asking for work may lead to new clients.

Can you share some general advice?
• Be willing to work two jobs at once to get where you want to go.
• Keep acquiring new skills.
• Have a thick skin and be able to accept criticism and assimilate it into your work.
• Remember that medical writers are often “in the middle” and need to keep people with differing priorities happy.

—Margaret Lynch
Secretary

Personal Notes

Kimberly M. Cushing of Brookline, Mass., is now a scientist at Biogen Idec Inc. She was formerly a medical information specialist at Serono Inc.

Susan A. Chow, PhD, a freelance scientific editor and writer in Hooksett, N.H., has attained certification as an editor in the life sciences (ELS).

Chris Jennings is the author of “HIV/AIDS: The Jennings Report – Redefining the Size, Scope, and Scale of the AIDS Epidemic by Forensic Review of the Medical Literature,” published in December by Health Alert Communications and available from MarketResearch.com and ResearchAndMarkets.com. Chris has previously published two AIDS books, both adopted as reference texts in hospitals, schools, and agencies; and he provides writing services to the pharmaceutical, medical, and diagnostic industries.

The current issue of the AMWA Journal includes an article by Helen Osborne, MEd, OTR/L: “Writing in Plain Language: A Quick Guide from Start to Finish.” The recipient of a 2006 Will Solimene Award for Excellence for Health Literacy from A to Z: Practical Ways to Communicate Your Message (Jones and Bartlett, 2005), Helen has been a speaker, roundtable leader, and workshop leader at New England Chapter events. She is president of Health Literacy Consulting in Natick, Mass.

Lynne A. Munno (formerly DiCorato), MA, MS, of Chelsea, Mass., has joined AVEA Pharmaceuticals as a medical writer. She was formerly an associate medical writer at Quantitate.

CHAPTER CHANGES: Donna Bryant, MPH, has transferred to the Ohio Valley Chapter; Dennis C. Chang, PhD, to the Empire State-Metro New York Chapter; Helene W. Marion to the Mid-Atlantic Chapter; Margaret J. Uprichard, PharmD, to the Michigan Chapter.

Obituary

Lonnie Keller Christiansen

Lonnie Keller Christiansen, an award-winning medical writer, died of cancer at her home in Newburyport, Mass., on December 2. She was 64.

Lonnie joined AMWA in 2001. In 2006-07 she served as president of the New England Chapter and during that time oversaw the development of the chapter’s first website—an attractively designed and easily navigated site, which was soon featured in the AMWA Journal as a model for other AMWA chapters. In 2008, the chapter gave Lonnie a special award commending her for “her guidance and leadership in establishing the New England AMWA website and her dedication while serving as the first chapter webmaster.”

With a degree in English from Northeastern University and 15 years of working as a marketing technical writer in the corporate

OBITUARY continued next page
OBITUARY continued from page 4

world, Lonnie moved into the medical field by completing a one-year program in biomedical sciences at Boston University School of Medicine. In 2005, she attained certification as an editor in the life sciences (ELS).

Through her business, Keller Medical Communications, she specialized in writing feature articles, investigator profiles, white papers, and other science-based materials for multiple audiences. In 2005, she won AMWA’s Eric W. Martin Award for Excellence in Medical Writing, and she was a two-time recipient—in 2006 and 2008—of the New England Chapter’s Will Solimene Award for Excellence in Medical Writing.

In 2005, she filled in as a last-minute substitute for an absent table leader at a chapter roundtable meeting and subsequently led roundtables on new topics at both chapter meetings and the AMWA annual conference.

For the New England Chapter, our stylish website—which has undergone only minor changes over time—stands as an ongoing tribute to the memory of our friend Lonnie Keller Christiansen, a medical writer with exceptionally high standards and a flair for elegance.

—JL

New Members

The New England Chapter welcomes those from our six-state region who have recently joined AMWA, reestablished their affiliation with the association, or moved here from another chapter area:

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<tr>
<th>Diane L. Atwood</th>
<th>Jennifer Leslie</th>
<th>Laura A. Roesler, BA, MFA</th>
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<td>Gorham, Maine</td>
<td>Medford, Massachusetts</td>
<td>Providence, Rhode Island</td>
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<td>Dorothea L. Degutis, MD</td>
<td>Massachusetts Institute</td>
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<td>Brattleboro Retreat</td>
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<td>Brattleboro, Vermont</td>
<td>Anatasia Leyden</td>
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<td>[from North Central Chapter]</td>
<td>Millennium Pharmaceuticals</td>
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<td>Ute G. Geigenmuller, PhD</td>
<td>Cambridge, Massachusetts</td>
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<td>Wellesley, Massachusetts</td>
<td>Tricia L. Lobo, BS</td>
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<td>Kathy Grams, PharmD</td>
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<td>Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences</td>
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<td>Boston, Massachusetts</td>
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<td>Jayne Grossman, PharmD</td>
<td>Leslee Masten</td>
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<td>Burlington, Massachusetts</td>
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<td>Jinna S. Halperin, MPH</td>
<td>David McNeel</td>
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<td>Arlington, Massachusetts</td>
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<td>Dirk Huehner, MD</td>
<td>Michael E. Morgan, BA</td>
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<td>Cambridge, Massachusetts</td>
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<td>Yasha Ibikunle MacDonald, BA, MS</td>
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<td>Brandeis University</td>
<td>Regeneron Pharmaceuticals</td>
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<td>Alex Jablokow, MS</td>
<td>Maira M. Rieger, MBA, BS</td>
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NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER NEWS  February 2011  5
Directions to February 27 Meeting

Hilton Garden Inn
420 Totten Pond Road
Waltham, Massachusetts
781-890-0100

The hotel is a short distance from Route 128/I-95 via Exit 27A. There is ample free parking.

Coming from points north:
Take Route 128/I-95 south to Exit 27A (Totten Pond Road). At the end of the exit ramp bear right onto Totten Pond Road and cross over Route 128/I-95. Continue straight through the traffic lights. The hotel is one-quarter mile ahead on the right.

Coming from points south:
Take Route 128/I-95 north to exit 27A (Totten Pond Road). At the end of the exit ramp follow the sign directing you through the traffic lights to Totten Pond Road. The hotel is one-quarter mile ahead on the right.

Need a ride to the meeting?
The Hilton Garden Inn is not accessible by public transportation. If you don’t have a car, you can contact Judy Linn, meeting registrar, at judylinn@aol.com to find out whether there is someone from your area who might be able to give you a ride to the meeting. Or call Joann Merriman (781-891-0028) to see if she can pick you up at a T station or some other mutually convenient location.

Chapter Membership Awards
Support for New Medical Writers

Do you know a medical writer who is just starting out? Are you yourself at an early stage of a career in medical communications? The New England Chapter’s Judy Linn Membership Awards pay for a year’s membership in AMWA for promising beginners who are committed to this field. Up to three of these one-year awards may be given at any time. There is no application fee, and while nomination by a chapter member is welcome, it is not required.

If you think you may qualify, or you know someone who merits consideration, go to www.amwa-ne.org, click on Awards, and download a PDF of the application form. If you have any questions, please contact David Olle, membership awards director (davidolle@comcast.net).

Executive Council to Meet on February 27

The New England Chapter’s Executive Council convenes twice a year, in the early summer and again right after the midwinter Sunday brunch. These meetings give chapter leaders a chance to discuss business matters, ideas for future events, new developments, unexpected problems, and so on.

The next council meeting takes place on Sunday, February 27. Any member is welcome to suggest an item for the agenda. If there is a topic or issue you feel should be addressed by the chapter leadership, whether an idea for a future meeting, a complaint, or a suggestion for new or improved services, feel free to share your thoughts with Laurie MacDougall, chapter president (calicomedcomm@earthlink.net).

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL 2010-11

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT: Laurie A. MacDougall
IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT: Debbie von Rechenberg
PRESIDENT-ELECT: Kristin Stephan
VICE PRESIDENT/CONNECTICUT: Michelle R. Horan
SECRETARY: Margaret Lynch
TREASURER: Jill M. Shuman

DIRECTORS/COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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