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Newsletter



NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER OF THE HEALTH PHYSICS SOCIETY

**Volume XXXVII No. 3
November 2000**

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December Meeting Announcement

VENDOR NIGHT AND HOLIDAY SOCIAL

Thursday, December 7, 2000
Albert's Restaurant,
217 Washington Street
Stoughton, Massachusetts

Come meet your chapter Affiliate members and win prizes!!!

Festivities begin at **3:30 pm** with vendor displays and cash bar.

Dress casual and bring your business cards.

Stop by each vendor, drop off a business card and be eligible to win prizes.

Buffet at 5:00 pm.

Soup & salad; roast sirloin of beef; chicken stir-fry; lasagna; meatballs & sausage; ziti; potato & vegetable; baked stuffed filet of sole; hot fudge sundae.

Vendor raffles will follow dinner

Cost for members is \$15, Students \$10, Guests \$20

Directions: From **128** North or South –

Take route 138 south (Stoughton/Canton exit)
Follow Route 138 for about 4 miles
Albert's Restaurant is on the right side (217 Washington Street)

Registration Deadline is *December 4, 2000.*

Mail registration (with check to NECHPS) to:

New England Chapter of the Health Physics Society (NECHPS)
c/o Radiation Control Program
174 Portland Street, 5th Floor
Boston, MA 02114

OR call Ron Thurlow at 603.773.7438
fax 603.773.7303

OR email Ron at: thurlrm@naesco.com

OR Register online at www.nechps.org and you can pay at the door.

Two heart radiation devices approved by U.S.

WASHINGTON, Nov 3 (Reuters) - Two novel devices that use radiation delivered inside the heart to help keep surgically opened arteries from clogging again won U.S approval on Friday, the makers said.

The products are designed to treat a complication of angioplasty that occurs in about 100,000 Americans each year.

Healthcare products giant Johnson & Johnson (JNJ.N) said the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) cleared its Checkmate system, and Georgia-based medical device maker Novoste Corp (NOVT.O) said it won approval for its product, the Beta-Cath System.

Both work similarly but use different types of radiation.

Each year, U.S. doctors perform hundreds of thousands of angioplasty procedures, in which a balloon-tipped catheter is deployed to clear blocked arteries.

In many cases, physicians follow angioplasty by placing a stent, a tiny tube to prop an artery open. In about one-quarter of those patients, tissue growth around the stent creates a new blockage. That condition is called in-stent restenosis.

"Until now, no development has been able to overcome the obstacle of recurrent blockages," said Dr. Paul Teirstein, an investigator on tests of the Checkmate device.

With the new devices, physicians use a catheter that delivers radioactive seeds to the blockage.

Novoste's device uses what is known as beta radiation, a localised type of energy that allows medical personnel to stay in the room with the patient. The treatment takes about 10 minutes.

A clinical trial of 476 patients showed that incidence of restenosis was 36 percent to 66 percent lower in patients treated with treated with beta radiation rather than a placebo, Novoste said in a press release.

Johnson & Johnson's device, made by unit Cordis Corp., employs gamma radiation, a type that requires doctors to leave the room to avoid exposure. It also takes somewhat longer to deliver the radiation, but the company says the total procedure time is similar to the Beta-Cath.

Cordis also noted that the Checkmate can reach long lesions and small blood vessels that are common among diabetics.

Industry analysts estimate the market for the products could range from \$500 million to \$1.5 billion a year. But they note the market could be eclipsed in a few years by drug-coated stents now in development.

ABHP Re-engineers the Part II Certification Exam

*Edward F. Maher, Sc.D., CHP
Chair, American Board of Health
Physics*

On September 6, 2000, the American Board of Health Physics approved several motions that will transition Part II of the ABHP Certification Exam from an essay question format to one that is completely machine-scored question (MSQ) format.

The decision to re-engineer the Part II exam followed a comprehensive review of practices and procedures used by similar certification boards and historical trends in the Part II examination process. The Board expects that the re-engineering process and associated exam format change will require 3-4 years to implement.

The MSQ format is expected to improve year-to-year pass-rate consistency, reduce exam preparation resource requirements, cut exam grading time, and provide an accurate *a priori* validation of individual question and overall test performance.

The ABHP is in the process of appointing an ad hoc Part II Panel of Examiners to construct a closed question bank for the new Part II exam format. The ad hoc Part II Panel's job will be to populate the question bank with at least 500 questions that are validated and pre-tested.

Academy members are urged to help support this effort by submitting draft MSQs of the types mentioned herein. In turn, the Academy will award the author with recertification CECs.

More to follow as we continue the journey to re-engineer the ABHP Part II exam. Your comments and suggestions are always welcomed. Please send them to efmaher@dukeengineering.com.

CHAPTER UPDATE

We need your feedback....

William A. Lorenzen

It is hard to believe it is already November 2000 and this years activities are in full swing. I wanted to let you all know of our goals for this year and in doing so get your feedback in several important areas of the NECHPS's operating practices. When I addressed the Chapter at the annual meeting in June I had presented three main points of emphasis for this year.

1. *To continue documenting and organizing the Chapter's operations:* In this area we are proceeding to resurrect the SOP's that we have on the books and update them to be consistent with today's processes. We have made all our committee assignments and thus have key individuals to aid in the revision of the SOP's. This will happen behind the scenes and thus of not much interest to the general membership, however, it is important to maintain consistency in Chapter operations from one year to the next. We will be strengthening our financial and records management system through this process as well.

2. *Enhance communication:* In addition to increasing our communications with the national HPS, our sister/brother Chapters and other organizations, we would like to make better use of electronic distribution of information. In particular, we would like to use e-mail and our website (WWW.NECHPS.ORG) to notify, distribute, and provide information to the membership. Initially we have discussed sending the newsletter as an e-mail attachment rather than through snail mail. Our desire is two fold. One, it will reduce operating costs (no Xeroxing or stamps to buy) and second, it would be quicker and more efficient. We have also discussed putting the newsletter on the Web Page and alerting the membership via e-mail when a newsletter has been posted for viewing and/or downloading. This is where we need your feedback.

3. *Promote Radiation Safety through education:* We have made progress in this area already. We have just completed our first Science Teacher Workshop thanks to Margaret McCarthy. It was held at the Mohawk Trail Regional High School on November 3rd. It was an all day session with six teachers signing up for the class. We are also working with the Public Education Committee (PEC) to establish a science

textbook review process that involves the HPS as a peer review vehicle for the textbooks. This project is in its early stages and has hit a number of hurdles. If you know of anyone in the book publication business please let me know. Any "inside" help and direction would be helpful and welcome. We have also been working on expanding the website. We hope to enhance the information and usefulness of the site for our membership. If you have any ideas or suggestions please bring them forward to any of the Board members.

What do we need from you? We need your opinions! Please answer the following questions and send them to me by mail, e-mail, phone or fax:

- a) ***Would you like to receive this newsletter by e-mail?***
- b) ***Would you like an e-mail reminder about upcoming events?***
- c) ***Do you access the web page now? If so, what for?***
- d) ***How else would you like to see e-mail or the web page used?***

Thanks and please send your responses to WILLIAM A. LORENZEN, lorenzen_w@hub.tch.harvard.edu.

Affiliates!!

The Vendor Night/Holiday Social is quickly approaching. Any affiliate members who have not registered for a table, contact Ron Thurlow at 603.773.7438 or e-mail thurlrm@naesco.com.

G'day, Mate!

NECHPS says farewell to Margaret McCarthy for a while

Just a few short days ago, Margaret McCarthy, Secretary and ever-enthusiastic member of the Chapter, announced that she will be taking a sabbatical in Australia starting in November. Here is a note from Margaret detailing her final tasks and a bit of her future endeavor:

“Please note that MEM's email was stopped at the end of September and all email from the 9th of September was deleted. Heads rolled. The email was re-established around the 18th of October. I sent out the secretary's report and do not know what corrections were approved nor what feedback was sent.

On Friday 03 November, Margaret will present her workshop to the teachers at Mohawk Trail Regional School. A report will follow the evaluation of the all day presentation. Then I am invited to speak at the Western Massachusetts Radiologic Technology Society to deliver an instructional session on Radiation Protection. I have been informed that the coordinator was worried that I would by-pass the event as 80+ techs have signed up for the earth shattering lecture.

Next on the roster is an appointment at the College of Engineering, Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia, as the coordinator for the Women in Engineering Program, which begins within in the next two weeks. I'll be gone at least until April.”

We wish Margaret the best of luck with her new assignment and will miss her immensely.

For the Fashion Conscious

The New England Chapter is selling T-shirts and golf shirts with the yellow and magenta NECHPS logo. They are available at all Chapter meetings as well as by mail; proceeds directly fund the Student Awards. Contact Bob Gallagher at robert.gallagher@state.ma.us or call 617.727.6214. For more information see www.nechps.org.

Reminder to Students – Travel Funds Available

Students who submit a paper for presentation at the National HPS Annual meeting are eligible for consideration of a travel award funded by the New England Chapter.

The travel award will go to a student whose paper has been accepted for presentation at the National HPS meeting, which is in Cleveland next June. The student will present the paper both at the NECHPS annual meeting and at the National meeting. NECHPS will contribute \$500 to the travel costs of the student.

For more information contact Tom O'Connell, Awards Committee Chairman, at 617.983.6891 or e-mail toconnel@world.std.com.

Membership Dues

Members are reminded that they should pay their dues as soon as possible to assure inclusion in the Chapter Year 2001 membership handbook. You may check your dues status by looking at the mailing label attached to this newsletter - the label will have a statement in the upper right corner: “Paid thru July 2000”, for example.

Remember that the current By-Laws state that dues are \$10.00 per year, however, a payment of \$40.00 will get a member 5 years of Chapter membership.

Please send your payment to Robert L. Gallagher, Treasurer, at the MA Radiation Control Program, 174 Portland St. 5th Floor, Boston, MA 02114. Dues are always accepted and payable at the Chapter's technical meetings.

Science Teacher Workshop Recap

by Margaret McCarthy

The first workshop went well, based on student enthusiasm. The 15 page handout was distributed, and Margaret McCarthy spoke from 9:00 am to 11:30 on the electromagnetic spectrum and particles. Specific questions relating to suntan booths, lasers, and mammograms were answered. After lunch the topic was dose units, and then William Lorenzen demonstrated radioactivity by using common radioactive materials such as Fiesta Ware, dentures, vaseline glass, etc. The teachers were instructed on how to insert batteries, zero the meter, and detect radioactivity. The source was a sealed, license exempt 137-cesium. The program coordinator for the entire workshop, Dot Lyman, attended the classroom for 15 minutes to evaluate the interaction of the teachers with Margaret and William. The teachers completed a laboratory based on radioactive decay and submitted them to Margaret. Program ended at 3:00 pm. The teachers then spent time on an evaluation of the workshop for the program supervisor.

Meeting Calendar 2000-2001

NECHPS MEETING SCHEDULE 2000

November 14 - 17, 2000 NERHC Meeting

November 15 - Banquet

**Speaker: Dr. Linda Strausbaugh
Mystic ,CT**

December 7, 2000

Vendor Night -

Albert's Restaurant, Stoughton, MA

TENTATIVE MEETING SCHEDULE 2001

January 25, 2001 – Joint meeting with ANS
TBD

March 14, 2001 – Joint meeting with AAPM
TBD

June 5, 2001 --Annual Meeting
TBD

Letter to the Editor

To the Editor:

A few years ago it was thought that putting all the old records of NECHPS into an archive would be a good idea. There was talk about using one of the university libraries in Boston as the place of repository. This is a good project for the History Committee, but it hasn't happened yet. When Bernie Olsen was President-Elect, he published a list of officers, another list of directors, and a list of meeting locations and topics, going back to the beginning of the chapter. The lists of officers and directors are still up-to-date, while the list of meetings is about 2 years behind. But I think we should have a single place where all the old newsletters, photographs, annual reports, board minutes, treasurer's reports and other documents relevant to the chapter are archived. It was a good idea when it was proposed a few years ago, and I think it still is a good idea. I hope it happens.

Yours truly,
Bob Scott

How You Can Attend A Chapter Meeting For Free

Just submit an article for publication in the Newsletter! A free ticket to attend an evening NECHPS meeting will be issued to Chapter members who submit articles of interest to the membership. The deadline for submission for publication in the December/January Newsletter is November 29, 2000.

The ticket is valid for one year from the date of issue and is not valid for the Annual Meeting.

Send all articles to the Editor:
tara.bandini@rcp.dph.state.ma.us.