

History of the Northeast Section, AACC¹

The American Association of Clinical Chemists (AACC) was founded by nine charter members on December 15, 1948 (1), in New York City.²

The following spring a group of clinical chemists working in laboratories in the Boston area met together informally to discuss the formation of a Boston Section, similar to that formed in the New York area.

Joseph Benotti, who has been and still is a moving force in the Northeast Section, had attended some of the organizational meetings in New York that led to the formation of the New York Section and, indeed, of the AACC itself. He invited Dr. Max Friedman of New York to come to Boston to speak to this interested group about forming a Boston Section. Shortly thereafter, the Boston Section was formed, in the early spring of 1949, as the second section of the AACC.

In "Some Reminiscences of a Charter Member" (2), Joseph Benotti describes more fully the steps and events leading up to the actual formation of the Boston Section.

The first formal meeting of the Boston Section was held on Wednesday evening, November 16, 1949, at the New England Medical Center Hospital in Boston. The first officers of the Boston Section were elected that evening as follows: Chairman: Joseph Benotti, Pratt Diagnostic Clinic, Boston (now retired but still active with AACC and living in Weston, MA); Vice-Chairman: Harry Ziskind, U.S. Veterans's Hospital, West Roxbury (now at Norwood Clinical Laboratory, Norwood, MA); and Secretary: Esther E. Thomas, Pratt Diagnostic Clinic, Boston (now Emeritus, retired and living in Lynnfield, MA). There was no office of treasurer for the first nine years, the secretary's position being a combination of secretary and treasurer; it was not until 1958-59 that a treasurer was elected. The scheduled speaker for this first meeting was unable to attend, owing to illness, so Joseph Benotti gave a talk on cholesterol determinations.

During this first year, 1949, the Boston Section had 20 members (Table 1). By comparison the total AACC membership as of June 30, 1949, was 122. Of the 20 members shown in Table 1, three are known to be still active in the Section, six are Emeritus, one is retired, and one is deceased, Annette Matthews (December 1977).

In 1961, the name of the section was changed from Boston Section to Northeast Section. The Section includes all of the New England states except Connecticut. Although most of the members do reside within 50 to 75 miles of the Boston area, there are members in all of the New England states, except Connecticut, and a few members in the Eastern Provinces of Canada.

In the early years, the membership increased gradually but slowly, with an increased rate beginning in the early 1960s. From then on, the Section has grown steadily, roughly par-

alleling the rate of growth nationwide. Each 10 years the total number of members has more than doubled. Starting in 1949 with a total of 20 members, in 1959 the total was 49, in 1969 it was 115, and as of November 28, 1978, it was 312, which included 293 members, 11 Emeritus, and eight students. Since 1962, the membership total of the Northeast Section has represented between 6.5 and 7.5% of the national total. In 1949, it was 16% of the national total.

Table 2 lists officers of the Northeast Section of the AACC from 1949 through 1979. (In 1971, a by-law change altered the fiscal year to the calendar year, so that officers in 1970-71 served an extra three months to the end of the year.)

Two members of the Northeast Section have served as officers at the national level. Joseph Benotti was national treasurer from 1965 through 1971, and on the board of directors from 1972 through 1974. Joseph Annino served on the board of directors from 1968 through 1971, and was national treasurer from 1972 through 1976. In addition, he served as chairman of the Committee on Nominations in 1978 and Joseph Benotti served on the committee in charge of AACC's Boston Museum of Science exhibit in 1978. Other members of the Northeast Section have also served on various national committees.

The Northeast Section has been most fortunate to have in its area many hospitals, schools, and colleges, so there is a wealth of speaker material available, as well as locations for meetings, especially near Boston.

In the early years, many of the meetings were held at the New England Medical Center Hospital, with occasional meetings at the colleges in the area as well as at some local hospitals, where the meeting was followed by a tour of the laboratories. Meetings were scheduled for 8 p.m. and a dinner meeting was held once or twice a year. Preceding the evening meeting, a group of members would have dinner together informally, usually at the Athens Olympia, which was close by the New England Medical Center Hospital. Before long, the entire membership was invited to have dinner together before the meeting, but not many attended the dinners. Now this trend has been completely reversed, with most everyone going to the dinner and meeting and very few coming in only for the 8 p.m. meeting.

Most of the speakers in the early years were members of the Section or were from the local area, but in recent years, the speakers have also come from all over the United States, as well as some from overseas.

The Northeast Section now holds a monthly dinner meeting, except in July and August, with an average attendance of from 80 to 100. In recent years it has been customary to hold most of the dinners and meetings at one of the motels on Route 128 on the outskirts of Boston at a location equidistant to the Boston, Worcester, and Rhode Island areas, from which most of the members come.

The Northeast Section has participated in joint meetings with several groups who have related interests. A joint meeting

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² In January 1976 the name was changed to the American Association for Clinical Chemistry.

Table 1. Northeast Section Members, June 30, 1949

Bennett, Irma	New England Hosp. for Women and Children, Roxbury, MA
Benotti, Joseph	Pratt Diagnostic Clinic, Boston, MA
Benotti, Norbert	Wellesley Hills, MA
Bixby, Emily May	Wrentham State School, Wrentham, MA
Boddie, Joane	St. Luke's Hospital, New Bedford, MA
Brown, Charlotte S.	George F. Baker Clinic, Boston, MA
Carney, Miriam	Deaconess Hospital, Boston, MA
Duffy, Anne E.	Holy Ghost Hospital, Cambridge, MA
Grassi, Laura	Lahey Clinic, Boston, MA
Hokanson, Martha H.	New England Hospital for Women & Children, Roxbury, MA
Johnson, Edith C.	Lahey Clinic, Boston, MA
Lewis, Sarah	New England Hospital for Women & Children, Roxbury, MA
Matthews, Annette	Eastern Maine General Hospital, Bangor, ME
McKechnie, Elva A.	Boston, MA
Perkin, Harold J.	Lahey Clinic, Boston, MA
Rice, Elizabeth	Pratt Diagnostic Clinic, Boston, MA
Rizzo, Rita	Pratt Diagnostic Clinic, Boston, MA
Thomas, Esther E.	Pratt Diagnostic Clinic, Boston, MA
Vassell, Malidona	Pratt Diagnostic Clinic, Boston, MA
Ziskind, Harry H.	United States Veteran's Hospital, West Roxbury, MA

with the American Chemical Society has been held several times over the years. Many of the early AACC members were also members of ACS.

Since the early 1960's, the Northeast Section and the Connecticut Valley Section have met together at a location "half-way" between the two sections, usually at Sturbridge, MA. These meetings have become a yearly custom and usually have been held in May or June when the traveling is good and spring is "bursting out all over." Some of the featured presentations at these meetings have been scientific in nature, but some are in a lighter vein because spouses are usually invited, thus making it more of a social event.

Since the early 1970's, the Northeast Section has sponsored a joint scientific meeting with the Greater Boston Medical Technologists Association, held in the Boston area during January. Alternately, one group is responsible for obtaining the speaker, the other group for the meeting place. This is also true of the joint meetings with the Connecticut Valley Section.

Two national AACC meetings, the 3rd (in 1951) and the 16th (in 1964), have been held in Boston, with the Boston Section or the Northeast Section as host. The 32nd national meeting is to be held in Boston, this time jointly with the Canadian Society of Clinical Chemists, in July 1980. Co-chairmen for this meeting are Harvey George and Joseph Annino, both from Boston.

The third annual national meeting of the AACC was held April 2-3, 1951, in Boston, in conjunction with the 119th meeting of the American Chemical Society. Joseph Benotti, at that time the chairman of the Boston Section, was in charge

of all the AACC arrangements for the meeting. There was a dinner meeting of the Executive Committee on April 2. On the morning of April 3, papers that were of interest to clinical chemists were presented at the sessions of the Division of Biological Chemistry of the American Chemical Society. In the afternoon, the Division of Analytical Chemistry of the ACS and the AACC jointly sponsored a symposium on "Newer Analytical Techniques in Clinical Chemistry," with Bernard L. Oser, Ph.D., as the chairman. This was followed by a business meeting for AACC members. In the evening, the third annual dinner was held in Parlor A of the Hotel Statler. At this dinner, Harry Sobotka, then president of AACC, presented the second honorary membership in the AACC to Donald D. Van Slyke, assistant director in charge of biology and medicine at the Brookhaven National Laboratory, Brookhaven, NY. Dr. Van Slyke was presented a membership scroll by President Sobotka. The featured speaker was A. B. Hastings, professor of biochemistry at Harvard University Medical School, who was a former associate of Dr. Van Slyke at the Rockefeller Institute in New York. His topic was "Highlights in the Career of D. D. Van Slyke, Dean of Clinical Chemists."

In 1964, the 16th national meeting of the AACC was held in Boston, August 17-20, at the Statler-Hilton Hotel. Norbert Benotti, the general chairman, was assisted by several committees. A total of 829 persons (500 members, 179 non-members, 150 guests, press, exhibitors) attended the meeting and participated in the symposia, papers, and exhibits, and enjoyed the social events and the many historical sites in the area. This meeting was organized by the Northeast Section, which made practically all the arrangements for scientific sessions, exhibits, hotels, and social functions. This is quite a contrast to the 1980 meeting, where many of the basic arrangements have been made at the national office.

At this 16th meeting, Dr. Donald D. Van Slyke was the recipient of the 1964 Ames Award. The medal, scroll, and honorarium were presented to him by Dr. Julius Sendroy, President of AACC and a former associate of Dr. Van Slyke, and by Dr. Alfred Free, then Director of the Ames Research Laboratories, in recognition of the many years of continuing active participation in the area of clinical chemistry and his numerous outstanding scientific contributions.

A highlight in the history of the Northeast Section was the opening of AACC's exhibit "Body Chemistry at Work" at the Museum of Science in Boston, the first exhibit of its kind in the U.S. Over 200 persons attended the official opening on Monday evening, March 14, 1977. This was a regular dinner meeting of the Northeast Section, held in the Skylight Room at the top of the Museum of Science. Norbert Tietz, AACC President, addressed the group on "The Future Directions of AACC." Other national officials attending included Nathan Gochman, then president-elect; William Campbell, executive director; and Royden Rand, past-president. This meeting received live TV and press coverage of the exhibit dedication. Special thanks were given to Northeast Section members Donald McGlory, Harvey George, Joseph Annino, and Joseph Benotti for their active roles in making this exhibit a reality. The exhibit, located on the Museum's second floor in the center of the Hall of Medical Sciences, is a combination demonstration laboratory and three-panel diagrammatic display. Instruments and working materials were donated by industry. Demonstrations take place several days a week and the instruments are manned by volunteers from the local area. Joseph Benotti is in charge of scheduling the volunteers.

In addition to the regular monthly meetings, the Northeast Section has sponsored over the years a number of open forums, seminars, workshops, and symposia. These programs vary in length of time from half-day to full day to two days; some have charged a tuition fee, others none. Attendance has varied from

Table 2. Officers of Northeast Section AACC, 1949-79

Year	Chairman	Vice-chairman or chairman-elect	Secretary	Treasurer
1949-50	Joseph Benotti	Harry Ziskind	Esther Thomas	
1950-51	Joseph Benotti	Helen Connors	Esther Thomas	
1951-52	Harry Ziskind	Joane Boddie	Esther Thomas	
1952-53	Norbert Benotti	Arthur DeTore	Esther Thomas	
1953-54	Arthur DeTore	Joseph Annino	Esther Thomas	
1954-55	Joseph Annino	Eli Dubinsky	Esther Thomas	
1955-56	Eli Dubinsky	William Cohen	Esther Thomas	
1956-57	William Cohen	Moira Reynolds	Marion Sherman	
1957-58	Moira Reynolds	Esther Thomas	Joseph Benotti	
1958-59	Esther Thomas	Murray Golub	James Barlow	Joseph Benotti
1959-60	Murray Golub	Margaret Rourke	James Barlow	Joseph Benotti
1960-61	James Barlow	Frank Ronan	Norbert Benotti	Esther Thomas
1961-62	Frank Ronan	Joseph Benotti	John DiGiorgio	Joane Boddie
1962-63	Joseph Benotti	John DiGiorgio	Arthur DeTore	Joane Boddie
1963-64	John DiGiorgio	Louis Williams	Helen Lichwell	Joane Boddie
1964-65	Louis Williams	Eli Dubinsky	Harold Reinstein	Joane Boddie
1965-66	Eli Dubinsky	Harold Reinstein	William Glennon	Kirsten Hviid
1966-67	Harold Reinstein	William Glennon	Delbert Kimball	Christine Bilmazes
1967-68	Joseph Annino	Adam Knobelsdorff	Edward Roseland	Christine Bilmazes
1968-69	Adam Knobelsdorff	Benson Kane	Edward Roseland	Sidney Green
1969-70	Norbert Benotti	Sidney Green	Edward Roseland	Beatrice Bazol
1970-71 ^a	Sidney Green	Richard Harding	Thomas Giovaniello	Mary Massod ^b
1972	Richard Harding	Murray Golub	Thomas Giovaniello	Mary Massod ^b
1973	Murray Golub	Stanley Elfbaum	Harry Clemson	Mary Massod ^b
1974	Stanley Elfbaum	Harvey George	Harry Clemson	Edith Choate
1975	Harvey George	Thomas Barry	Louis Amoruso	Edith Choate
1976	Thomas A. Barry	Harry Clemson	Louis Amoruso	David O'Bryan
1977	Harry Clemson	Kathleen Sargent	Nancy Ridley	Ann Warner
1978	Kathleen Sargent	Louis Williams	Nancy Ridley	Joseph Musto
1979	Louis Williams	Louis Amoruso	William Griffith	Christine Bilmazes

^a Because by-law changed fiscal year to calendar year, these officers served to end of year.

^b Deceased 1978.

25 to 100 registrants. The faculty and instructors have included members of the section, as well as invited speakers from the local hospitals and schools, and other specialists in the particular subject offered.

Some recent topics featured as part of the Continuing Education Program under the Committee on Education are as follows:

- Oct. 22-23, 1974 Diagnostic Immunology Workshop
- May 14, 1975 Seminar on Analysis of Serum Glucose
- June 18, 1975 Analysis of Cholesterol and Triglycerides
- May 12, 1976 Symposium on Safety in the Clinical Laboratory
- June 23, 1976 Symposium entitled Clinical Enzymology (Theory and application of diagnostic techniques)
- Oct. 20, 1976 Symposium on Microcytic and Macrocytic Anemias
- Nov. 11, 1976 Acidity and Basicity in the Clinical Laboratory
- Sept. 21, 1977 Symposium on Antiepileptic Drugs
- May 25, 1978 Management Development Seminar

Sept. 20, 1978 Seminar on Complement

Oct. 23, 1978 Fluorescence Microscopy Workshop

The Safety Symposium was repeated on October 14, 1976, in Augusta, ME, where it was co-sponsored by the Maine Medical Technologists and Maine Public Health, with 100 in attendance.

Several members of the Northeast Section have received national honors. In 1964, at the 16th national meeting of the AACC, in Boston, Dr. John DiGiorgio, then a member of the Northeast Section (now in the Northern California Section) received a postdoctoral training grant in Clinical Chemistry awarded by the Biochemical Training Division of the National Institutes of Health. This was the first time that a trainee was selected from the Northeast Section of AACC for this postdoctoral program.

In 1967, at the 19th national meeting in Philadelphia, Joseph Annino received the John Gunther Reinhold Award of the Philadelphia Section of the AACC for having furthered the standards of clinical chemistry and developing methodology. He is the author of *Methods of Clinical Chemistry*, a book of principles and procedures, and has written many papers on methodology.

Two members of the Northeast Section—Joseph Benotti in 1974, and Joseph Annino in 1978—have received the Award

for Outstanding Contributions through Service to 'Clinical Chemistry as a Profession, sponsored by Fisher Scientific Company. Joseph Benotti has been well documented in "Profiles of Clinical Chemists," written by Wendell T. Caraway in *Clinical Chemistry News* (3).

At the AACC's 29th national meeting (1977, in Chicago), Joseph Annino was the first of two recipients of a Presidential Citation. This award was established for the first time by the Board of Directors, who wished to honor two AACC members who helped the Association grow and develop.

In February 1975, the first issue of a one-page Newsletter was mailed to the membership of the Northeast Section. The Newsletter was initiated by Harvey George, then Chairman of the Northeast Section, who was assisted by the then-secretary, Louis Amoruso. This Newsletter is still continuing and at times has been increased to two or three pages, which are sent out with the monthly meetings notice. Items included in the Newsletter are: notices of future meetings, workshops, seminars, national meetings; employment opportunities; news of members, list of new members, reclassification of membership status, information on awards and fellowship applications, news from the national office, and other information pertinent at the time.

In 1976, under the leadership of Joseph Benotti, an AACC Retired Persons group was formed. At present there are 15 retired members of the Northeast Section in the group, which for the past three years has held an annual luncheon meeting at the Pillar House in Newton, MA. The luncheon has been

followed by a talk by a guest speaker, a younger and active member of AACC, who gives the retirees a chance to learn and to keep up with what is going on in the Association, both locally and nationally. We believe that this is the first such retired-persons group to meet. One member of the group is recently deceased (December 1977): Annette Matthews, a charter member of the section.

The Northeast Section looks forward to celebrating its 30th anniversary in 1979, and to the 32nd national meeting to be held in Boston in 1980. The Section looks to the future with anticipation of continued steady growth and great accomplishment.

I wish to acknowledge the help of many members of the Northeast Section in putting this article together.

References

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3. Caraway, W. T., Profiles of clinical chemists: Joseph Benotti. *Clin. Chem. News* 4, 9 (March 1978).

Edith Johnson Choate

Lahey Clinic Foundation, Boston, MA 1934-1974
Present address: 429 West St., Reading, MA 01867