New England Chapter of the AAPM (NEAAPM)

Notable NEAAPM Events

- 1964 1st NEAAPM Constitution
- 1975 Constitution Revised, NEAAPM merges with two older groups: NERPO and BMPG
- 1981 AAPM Annual meeting held in Boston. First Physics ‘Phun Run’ held!
- 1987 Connecticut declares independence!

CAMP’s Chapter formed. Some members maintain ties to both groups.

- 1995 AAPM Annual Meeting held in Boston

A few of the Physicists from the early days of the NEAAPM

Edward (Ted) Webster
AAPM President 1965-1966

Bengt Bj?rjesson
AAPM Board 1959-77
Edward (Ned) Sternick
AAPM President 1974-1975

Joseph Blinick
NEAAPM President 1966-1967

Saul Aronow, NEAAPM President 1976-1977, with Prof Gordon Brownell and an early position brand scanner, MDH, circa 1955

Scenes from the 1981 AAPM Annual Meeting held in Boston, Massachusetts

1964 1st NEAAPM Constitution

New England has a history of professional medical physics activities going the very early days of the AAPM. The greater Boston area, in particular, is home to a number of medical schools and affiliated teaching hospitals with a strong tradition of being at the forefront of technological innovation.

The details of the very early origins are somewhat fragmented, though the original constitution which created the New England Chapter (NEAAPM) in January 1964, stated that the Chapter would include the states of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. It was signed on March 3rd, 1964 by their first President, Bengt Bj?rjesson. Originally from England, Ted was also from the Boston Area. He came to MIT in 1948 for graduate work in nuclear physics and engineering and during this time became involved in 2-B's cancer treatment program with Boston's Lahey Clinic. Ted later joined the staff of the department of Radiology at Massachusetts General Hospital and was appointed Professor of Medical Physics in 1962. He was a well known physicist and research laboratory director Gordon Brownell. By 1969 William Ellett had left Boston for the Medical Physics Department of the Royal Photographic Society in London. In 1959 Ellett earned a medical degree. He still appears to have been primarily nearby physics. After earning his PhD, he returned to the U.S. where he tenured, he gave his attention to the National Research Council. Washington, D.C.

After 1964, no records for the New England Chapter have surfaced which detail any activities or board members for almost a decade. However, two other New England medical physics groups were well known to exist at this time: the Boston Medical Physics Group (BMG) and the New England Radiological Physics Organization (NERPO). The relationship between these groups has never been made explicit, but the BMG was organized in 1956 and its stated purpose was "to increase the professional effectiveness of the medical physicist for the benefit of the patient in the community". The NERPO was founded in 1964 as a collaborative venture inspired by an effort by the NE governors to facilitate regional collaboration. NERPO was best remembered for organizing a program of didactic comparisons between Boston area hospitals as well as those in New Hampshire and Maine.

A prominent physicist from this time, Bengt Bj?rjesson, recalls that one reason NERPO was formed to follow the model of the regional group for radiation oncology, the New England Society for Radiation Oncologists (NERSO). At the time there were no medical physicists in the physics community, there were still concerns about the political and professional Bonapartism of NERPO as well; perhaps even stronger as he remembered his initial enticement to NE AAPM. As a result, NERPO was formed.

In the meantime, the BMG was making changes to better serve the larger region. Monthly meetings with a single speaker at the MIT Faculty Club were replaced with less frequent but longer sessions to make attendance more worthwhile for those further outside the Boston area. In the early 70's more comprehensive organizational changes began to take place under the leadership of Ned Sternick.

One of the tasks before the 1974-1975 NEAAPM board was to update the original constitution. Ahead from Ned Sternick to the members dated March 5, 1975 states the hard work of fantastique, Joe Blinick, and Ren Wright at revising the constitution to make it "more responsive to the professional, scientific, and educational needs of New England physicists." He then calls for a meeting, for a full discussion, in May 76 to follow (as usual) at the MIT Faculty Club. As Ned notes, while "no letter on an official NEAAPM newsletter first appeared, a letter about the new NERPO board publication appeared a month later in the New England Physics News."

Upon its founding, the constitution described the role of the NEAAPM as being "the representative body of medical physicists and radiation therapists in the New England states representing the educational and professional interests of medical physicists in the region."

In an undated letter to the membership, NEAAPM president Joe Blinick (76'-77') states that NERPO has officially disbanded leaving New England AAPM as the "only organization in the area to serve the scientific, educational, and professional interests of medical physicists." He then acknowledges the need to move new concepts due to the introduction of technological such as CT scanners and ultrasound. In addition, it noted that due to the high cost of postage and reproduction membership dues will be set at $25 but student membership will continue to be free.

The NEAAPM Today

As of 2012 the NEAAPM has 284 total members, 247 of which list the NEAAPM as their primary chapter. The chapter holds four major meetings a year of scientific and professional talks. The winter and fall meetings are half day and the summer meeting is a full day. These meetings all feature invited speakers from both inside and outside New England. Our Spring meeting is a young investigators symposium. Some more information about our members, past meetings, and current officers is shown below.

2013 NEAAPM Officers

Jared Weil President
David Gergis President-elect
Joseph Klima Secretary/Treasurer

The NEAAPM Board - 2013