

AMWA Mid-America Chapter Meeting of September 3, 2024 — version with balances

Call to order: 4:32 pm

Attendees (alphabetical): Lisa Balbes, Rebecca Bigelow, Joanne McAndrews, Heather McNeill, Julia Moffitt, Diane Morton, Leslie Neistadt, Janaine Prata, Matt Sandbulte

Introductions

SLU Postdoc pharmaceutical student looking to enter medical writing, Janaine Prata, joined the call and is interested in pursuing medical writing, engaging with AMWA, and volunteering with chapter activities.

Approval of minutes

Minutes from the July 2024 meeting were reviewed and approved by the members attending. (Leslie gave motion to approve, and the attending members approved).

AREA REPORTS

Events in St. Louis

Reporting: Joanne McAndrews

- The next STL area meeting is Wednesday, September 11 at 11:30 a.m. Lisa Balbes will present on Artificial Intelligence and Scientific Publishing. 16 people plan to attend.

Upcoming 2024-2025 St. Louis Meeting Schedule

November 13 - Best and Worst Books of 2024, presented by Leslie Neistadt

2025 Events

January 10 – LinkedIn Platform Tour: Tips, Tools, and Trouble-Sparing, presented by Diane Morton

March 12 – Managing Workplace Stress, presented by James RW Linsin, PsyD, Clinical Psychologist

May 14 - The Third Age: How Tech Writers Plan and Enjoy Their Golden Years, presented by Dana Delibovi

July 9 - What Do Geeks Do For Fun Around Here?, presented by Alice Fugate

September 10 – TBD

November 12 – Best and Worst Books of 2025, presented by Leslie Neistadt

All meetings are held at Sunny Street Cafe, 11692 Manchester Road, Des Peres, MO from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm.

Events in Iowa

Reporting: Julia Moffitt

- Julia reported no events in the Iowa region recently, and her work schedule has prohibited planning any networking events in the near future.

Events in Kansas City

Reporting: Matt Sandbulte

- Matt reported that Taylor Overmiller will no longer be an event coordinator for the Kansas City region. He reported that a new member, Alycia Drummond, has planned a happy hour on Friday, Sept 13 for AMWA members in the Kansas City area (4-5 people have responded with interest). Matt perceives a potential for

more engagement in the Kansas City area after gathering on Sept 13. Matt will send the event details to Lisa Balbes to update on the website.

Events in Nebraska

Reporting: Rebecca Bigelow, Matt updated

- Matt and Rebecca held a networking event August 26 in Omaha, NE. Four members met for dinner at Charleston's Restaurant. They may plan another luncheon meeting later in October 2024.

Events in Kansas

Reporting: Matt Sandbulte

- Matt reported no activity in the Wichita region.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Reporting: Leslie Neistadt

Bank account balances as of September 2, were reported by Leslie.

Leslie just received the biannual funding (membership payment) from the national office and these funds can be used to support local events. Matt encouraged the group to use the funds to support member events that fulfill our chapter mission.

MEMBERSHIP

Reporting: Heather McNeill

Since the last report:

- Current active membership in the MidAmerica AMWA chapter is 108 members, with four new members.
- As reported in the August Chapter Advisory Council meeting, the Indiana Chapter has recently expanded to include Michigan. Members in Michigan who have previously been part of our membership because no chapter has existed for their area can now affiliate with the Indiana-Michigan chapter.
- Joanne has reached out to people on the Mid-America membership list who are from outside of our region, to see if they plan to attend the chapter dinner or to remind them to realign with chapters in their region.

CAC (Chapter Advisory Council)

Reporting: Leslie Neistadt

The last CAC meeting was held in August, but minutes aren't yet available. Registration for the annual meeting is now more than 600. She reported that DEIA work will continue, and an AI task force is being created. For 2024–2025, the AMWA Board will require at least 4 chapter events, 1 of which can be virtual. Leslie will forward minutes to the group when she receives them.

COMMUNICATIONS

Reporting: Jessica Kiser (absent)

Jessica was not able to attend the meeting but reported by email that she plans to prepare a fall newsletter. Please send her any updates to be included. Matt will ask her to remove Taylor Overmiller as the Kansas City events coordinator.

Lisa reminded everyone to share changes at the same time you update Jessica, and she will update the website.

Contact Jessica at any time if you have any chapter content that should be posted to LinkedIn.

OLD BUSINESS

Nothing from the previous meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Joanne requested that AMWA members have their lunch paid by the chapter for the September TechWrite luncheon on AI. Lunch is a more economical and convenient event because many venues do not have dinner options for the size of the STL group that offers free parking without extra fees for room rental, etc. Overall the luncheon fee is less costly for membership and offers the opportunity to encourage nonmembers to join AMWA so their lunch also will be covered by member dues.

TechWrite gives a \$50 honorarium to the non TechWrite STL speakers and pays for all speaker lunches.

Julia Moffitt shared that getting a meeting place at dinner time is difficult in the Iowa City area. Julia moved for members to approve that membership pay for lunch of members at one event per year.

Leslie Neistadt suggested that one event per year in each local area have lunch/dinner paid for by chapter funds.

Matt asked for a motion to approve that members receive their luncheon or dinner paid for at one event per year. The motion was approved.

October 24 Mid-America chapter dinner at annual conference in New Orleans

Joanne and Leslie are arranging details. RSVP if you plan to attend.

Engaging new AMWA members for chapter office or event leadership involvement

Matt suggested that the chapter follow best practices when bringing in a new person for involvement with the chapter, with sufficient training time before assuming a leadership role.

Leslie believes a new person should work with an existing member to learn what is involved and not be thrust into a role immediately without training or support. A current officer or member in a leadership role can provide the apprentice member with a shadow/helper opportunity so, if interested, the member is prepared and poised for taking on the leadership role when the position opens.

Lisa said that a new member or a member new to the role should act as an assistant working alongside the existing member for “on-the-job” learning.

Leslie recommended a volunteer work in tandem with the current officer and not take on responsibility for a role entirely at once.

Matt suggested an in-training officer volunteer to work alongside the current officer by indicating an interest when the chapter discusses officer positions at election time.

Joanne added that a veteran member working together with a new member should engage the new member for their new ideas.

Julia agreed that new members can bring new ideas for topics and perspective

Matt commented that our culture of volunteers in the Mid-America chapter stays with a position for a long time and doesn't have a history of just rotating out automatically after a set period. Institutional memory and momentum are preserved with officers who stay in the position past one year of service, but the interested officer-in-training allows new people to be involved without taking on the responsibility of the office with no/little training.

Leslie recommended that when members volunteer to help in any capacity, the officers need to act upon that offer immediately. A welcome offer of engagement will allow new people to engage at some level of their interest.

Lisa reminded that if someone offers to help, the officers should allow the volunteer to suggest what they wish to assist or do. Also, members and individual officers shouldn't assume that other officers wish to stay in their role; a good practice to ask each officer at election time if they want a change or wish to stay on another year.

Officers' plans for serving in 2025

Matt asked for thoughts on preparing for new officer elections, if needed, and when they might be discussed. Joanne said historically officer candidacy is discussed at the chapter dinner at the annual meeting, but definitely by the November chapter meeting.

Matt said Heather, the president elect, has been very helpful in working together with Matt on several items, which supports the idea of preparing new members for success at the time they assume the new office position. Matt has not decided for sure but is interested in retaining his role as president for another year.

Chapter-wide virtual event planning

Janaine said she appreciated having someone reach out to her, and she thought having an opportunity to train with someone who has more experience is ideal. She also thought that having an opportunity to share new ideas is a value of incorporating new members into the group.

Matt said the chapter survey indicates that there is not a lot of energy behind hosting a chapter-wide in-person event. More energy and interest were noted in support of local in-person events and virtual chapter-wide events.

Mini committee for event planning is talking about some ideas that include:

Virtual networking meeting in combination with AMWA Annual Conference recap from New Orleans (gems/highlights from annual meeting) (November)

Virtual meeting on career paths, including shifting to writing within a profession/field (Feb/March 2025)

Virtual knowledge/skills/issues training, similar to TechWrite STL meeting (summer 2025), with potential to find an expert outside of AMWA. Some of the skills workshops held by TechWrite STL could suggest good speaker candidates for a virtual event.

Rebecca shared some virtual networking pearls from previous events.

About 15 attended the virtual event, a presenter on imposter syndrome.

Diane offered to assist with setting up virtual meetings, in session together and then breaking into discussion groups.

Julia offered to assist with breakouts for career paths virtual meeting, including:
Lay writing
Regulatory writing
Grant writing
Writing for education

Next Chapter Meeting

Nov 5, 4:30 pm

Meeting adjourned at 5:29 p.m.