

Mid-America Chapter News

AMERICAN MEDICAL WRITERS ASSOCIATION
MID-AMERICA CHAPTER

JUNE 2008

Welcome

By Donna Coffman, MD

Summertime is outdoors time for many of us and I hope you are enjoying the sunshine. We have lots of news to share in this issue about the chapter conference, our officers, and the chapter plans for the coming year.

At the excellent suggestion of Kristin Povilonis, MAC past-president, I am reintroducing member profiles to the Newsletter. This feature was a part of past issues of the Newsletter and was a useful and fun way for members to get to know each other. In this issue, I profile chapter officers. In each issue in the future, I hope to profile two or three members, so please consider putting together a short bio about where you are, what your work interests and hobbies are, and a photo and then send those to me.

Have You Heard?

AMWA is now sponsoring Webinars. Webinars are interactive seminars that are presented live on the Internet. You can hear and see the presenter and you can send questions to the presenter via the Internet connection. The first webinar, called Dear Edie Live, was sponsored by AMWA and was presented by Edie Schwager on May 29th. As part of that seminar, Edie gave a presentation about language usage and how language changes.

If anyone in the chapter attended this particular Webinar, we would like to hear about your experience!

President's Letter

by Joanne McAndrews, PhD

Hope that everyone's summer is off to a great start!

Looking ahead to the fall, to those of you attending the AMWA annual conference in Louisville in October, please plan to attend our chapter dinner on Thursday, October 23rd. We will meet for dinner at a restaurant within walking distance of the conference hotel at 6 PM. Kathi Whitman and I will be organizing this--stay tuned for more details. Chapter members have gathered for dinner at previous AMWA conferences in Pittsburgh, Albuquerque, and Atlanta, and have had a wonderful time.

Chapter officers for the 2008-2009 term were elected at our recent chapter conference in the Kansas City area.

The new chapter officers are:

President: Joanne McAndrews, PhD

Treasurer: Carol Sonderman, MA, ELS

Secretary: VACANT

Membership Chair: Rona Claire Grunspan, MD

Newsletter Chair: Donna Coffman, MD

Webmaster: Carol Sonderman, MA, ELS

If you are interested in being our chapter secretary

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St. Louis Area AMWA-STC Freelancers Luncheon

St. Louis area AMWA and Society for Technical Communication (STC) freelancers continue to meet six times a year for lunch and interesting discussion topics. This group is coordinated by Lisa Balbes, an STC member, and Joanne McAndrews.

Lisa Balbes led our March 2008 discussion about advances in technologies including social networking web sites, blogs, online collaborative tools, tags, and other trends. Her handout had links to more information.

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President's Letter

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this year, please contact me. The main duty of the chapter secretary is to write up the minutes at our annual chapter business meeting, which usually takes place at our annual chapter conference.

Many thanks to our outgoing chapter officers for all their hard work: Donna Coffman (President), Christine Frank (President-Elect), Kristin Povilonis (Secretary), and Tad Coles (Newsletter Chair). Special thanks to Tad Coles for reviving our chapter newsletter!

Please contact me at any time with concerns, suggestions, etc.

Seasonal

THOSE LITTLE BLOOD-SUCKERS ARE BACK!

It's mosquito season. Even though Missourians who are staying home don't have to worry about catching Malaria or Dengue Fever, there are good reasons to consider using mosquito-repellent: St. Louis Encephalitis and West Nile Fever (and Eastern Equine Encephalitis, if you're travelling east). Staying indoors between dusk and dawn reduces your exposure to mosquitoes, but when you are outdoors your choices are limited to not exhaling carbon dioxide and keeping your skin well-covered or using a repellent. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommend N,N-Diethyl-meta-toluamide (DEET) as an effective repellent that is safe, even for use on children. Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus is an alternative that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found to be comparable in strength to low concentrations of DEET. Natural products that have been touted to repel mosquitoes also include citronella oil, rosemary oil, peppermint oil, and cedar (none of these is endorsed by the CDC or EPA). I've also heard that indigenous peoples rub thick layers of mud on their skin to protect themselves against mosquitoes, but it's likely that only young children would find that desirable. For more information on using repellents safely and effectively, see <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/mosquitorepellent.htm>.

St. Louis Area AMWA-STC Freelancers Luncheon

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In May 2008, members gathered to reminisce about interesting vacations they had taken. Carol Sonderman, our chapter treasurer and webmaster, talked about her study trip to Ireland in the summer of 2007. She will be returning to Ireland for another trip this summer. Lisa Balbes brought stunning pictures of a recent vacation to Costa Rica, and Alice Fugate talked about her recent trip to Ireland and showed beautiful photos of the landscape and ancient architecture.

We will meet in July for lunch and a discussion about visual communication led by Barb Vogel, an STC member.

Please contact Joanne McAndrews at jmmcandrews@earthlink.net to be placed on the mailing list for this group.

Joanne McAndrews, PhD

Member Profile: Rona Claire Grunspan, MD

Rona is our new Membership Chair for 2008-2009.

Rona is located in the Quintiles, QOPK office offering her unique blend of medical knowledge and creative strengths. She was drawn to clinical research where she has the ability to synthesize new information and explain concepts clearly.

Since the start of her career in 2005, she has worked on a variety of clinical research studies in different therapeutic areas including endocrine, cardiovascular, cardiopulmonary, gastrointestinal and central nervous system, and Parkinson's disease.



Rona moved into the Medical Writing Department from Project Management in December 2007. Since then she has been working on patient narratives and gaining knowledge. She is known for her ability to work with Project Management on global studies including liaison with both the customer and third party contractors, as well the coordination of the following service lines: Study Start-Up, Regulatory Affairs, and Clinical Monitoring.

Rona was born and raised in the United States, with a Romanian heritage through her mother. Being fluent in the language, she sought and earned her MD degree from Carol Davila School of Medicine and Pharmacology in Bucharest, Romania, where she graduated with honors and received honors for her senior thesis in Orthopedic Devices.

Rona completed a clerkship in Orthopedic and Trauma Surgery and is a licensed physician in the European Union. She is a member of the Physician's College in Bucharest, Romania, and the American Medical Writer Association. She resides in Leawood, Kansas.

Member Profile: Joanne McAndrews, PhD

Joanne McAndrews is a self-employed medical writer. She received a B.S. degree in biology from Union College in Schenectady, NY, an M.S. degree in physiology from Penn State University in State College, PA, and a Ph.D. in neurobiology and physiology from Northwestern University in Evanston, IL. Joanne completed a postdoctoral fellowship in breast cancer research at Northwestern University Medical School in Chicago, IL, and then was a Senior Scientist at Monsanto in St. Louis, MO in the Nutrition

& Consumer sector. She has worked as a freelance medical writer since 2000. Joanne specializes in preparing regulatory documents, manuscripts for peer-reviewed medical journals, literature reviews, and other technical documents for biotech and pharmaceutical companies. She developed the AMWA core curriculum workshop, "Effectively Searching Online Databases" with Tom Gegeny, and also has presented "Top 10 Free Web Sites for Medical Writers" as a breakfast roundtable at several AMWA conferences. In her spare time, she enjoys family bike rides, playing tennis, vegetable and herb gardening, cooking, watching movies, and doing science activities with children. She lives in the St. Louis area with her husband Larry and their daughters Sarah and Katie.



Next Issue: Summary of Minutes from the MAC-AMWA conference in Kansas City.
Member Profiles
Details for the MAC Members Dinner at the October National AMWA conference
Update on Chapter plans for future MAC chapter meetings