



# AMWA Mid-America Newsletter

American Medical Writers Association  
Summer 2011

# Mid-America Chapter News

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## President's Letter

By Rona Claire Grunspan, MD

Dear Chapter Members,  
I would encourage you to complete a short 10-question survey in regards to our chapter and programs for the future. Once you complete the survey, you have the opportunity to enter the \$25.00 gift card drawing. The survey will be open from July 25<sup>th</sup> to August 25<sup>th</sup>, and the winner will be announced in our next

newsletter. Please help our chapter by completing the survey.

Link to survey:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/6GPTSB9>

Best wish,  
Rona

## Mid-America Chapter Dinner in Jacksonville

Chapter members attending the AMWA annual conference in Jacksonville, FL in October are invited to attend our chapter dinner on Thursday October 20. We will be dining at a restaurant to be determined, with participants paying for their own food and drink.

Chapter members have gathered for dinner at previous AMWA annual conferences in Pittsburgh, Albuquerque, Atlanta, Louisville, Dallas, and Milwaukee and have had a wonderful time. Hope you can join us—stay tuned for more details!

This gathering is being organized by Kathi Whitman and Joanne McAndrews.



### Chapter officers

President: Rona Claire Grunspan, MD  
Treasurer: Carol J. Sonderman, MA, ELS  
Secretary: Larenda Mielke, MA  
Membership chair: VACANT  
Newsletter chair: Magdalena Berry, MA  
Webmaster: Carol J. Sonderman, MA, ELS

St. Louis Freelance Luncheon  
Coordinators: Lisa M. Balbes, PhD &  
Joanne M. McAndrews, PhD

## Membership

Welcome to new member, Rhizza Adams, MPH MBA, who is a laboratory scientist with the Springfield, MO Health Department!

## Chapter newsletter/Web site

Our chapter publishes a newsletter several times a year that is posted to our web site as well as e-mailed to each

member. The web site also features announcements about current and future chapter activities, including the St. Louis area AMWA/STC freelance luncheon series, get-together dinners at the AMWA annual conferences, and information about our annual chapter conferences. Here's the url: <http://www.amwa-midamerica.org>



## St. Louis Area Freelance Luncheon from Joanne McAndrews, PhD and Lisa Balbes, PhD

St. Louis-area freelance Mid-America chapter members have been holding bi-monthly luncheons with St. Louis-area Society for Technical Communication (STC) Consultants and Independent Contractors (CIC) since September 2006. A different topic of interest to freelance medical/technical writers is discussed at each meeting, usually over lunch at a local restaurant.

Our May 2011 luncheon topic, "Following Up With Your Prospects", was presented by Jan Niehaus. Jan presented many unique strategies for following up with current and potential clients. One handout that she distributed was a list of ways to follow up on leads from author C.J. Hayden, author of *Get Clients Now*. Jan also presented some methods and tools that she uses in her business to stay in touch with clients.

Our next luncheon will be a panel discussion in August about "The Future of the Book".

Lisa Balbes will talk about the iPad; Mary Jo Blackwood will tell us about her Nook; Joanne McAndrews will discuss the features of the Kindle; and Rob Saigh will highlight the classic format, traditional paper books.

There will also be a special dinner on September 27th to commemorate five years of group meetings. Our speaker that evening will be Dana Delibovi, who will talk about "Writing for Mobile Devices." More details and an E-vite for this event will be sent to luncheon group members in early August.

Lisa Balbes and Joanne McAndrews are the co organizers of this group. Please contact them at [lisa@balbes.com](mailto:lisa@balbes.com) and [jmmcandrews@earthlink.net](mailto:jmmcandrews@earthlink.net) to be added to the mailing list for this group—

new members are welcome, as are suggestions for future luncheon topics and volunteer presenters. Past and

upcoming dates and topics can be found online at:

<http://www.stc-stlouis.org/cicsig.html>

## Job Opportunities

From time to time, chapter members are contacted with information on job openings and would like to share the

information. Given the need to pass along job news in a timely fashion, we will be posting these opportunities on our Web site.

## Mid-America Members Present Workshops

At least two of our Mid-America Chapter members will be presenting at the annual AMWA conference in Jacksonville. In addition, one of my colleagues at Missouri State, Lyn Gattis (she lives in Arkansas so she's not in this chapter), will be offering a workshop as well. Here's a list:

**Joanne M. McAndrews, PhD**  
**WS-19: Introduction to the Endocrine System.** This is a new workshop.

**Larenda M. Mielke, MA**  
**OS-4: Working with Non-English speakers**  
As part of this panel, Larenda will discuss *Tips for Working With ESL Authors*

**Lyn F. Gattis, PhD**  
**WS-100: Using Design to Improve the Readability of Medical Documents**

*Congratulations to all of you and thanks for your contribution to AMWA's educational programs.*

*Magdalena Berry*

## Report from China: Teaching Research Writing by Larenda Mielke

In my role as an instructor of biomedical research writing at Washington University in St. Louis, I specialize in teaching to nonnative speakers of English. Fortunately, nonnative speakers in great abundance study and do research at Washington University. Through various connections on campus, I have developed

a relationship with Zhejiang University Medical School in Hangzhou, China, and went there again to lecture this year. The leadership of AMWA Mid-America asked me to give a brief report about the trip, and this report follows.

Zhejiang University has been chosen by the Chinese government as a "model



university” and is currently ranked #1 in China for number of publications it has produced this year: over 800 papers. Much money is flowing into the labs there from the government.

Each morning while at Zhejiang University as I lectured for two hours, the students were surprised at first to experience my American style of teaching, which involves more give-and-take between the lecturer and the students. However, they quickly adapted, especially because their papers must be submitted in English and they realize their need to improve. I began with an overview of the IMRAD style and moved quickly to cover the content and style of the introduction of a paper. We also worked in a smaller, seminar style, on the discussion section, probably the most difficult to write. The lectures included the expected content of each section as well as the grammar structures which might be useful, including appropriate verb tenses, problem-process structures, the repetition of key terms, and stress positions in sentences.

Besides lecturing on the IMRAD format and conducting workshops, I had time to go with small groups of students to visit local sights and go shopping. Hangzhou is known for West Lake, a popular tourist stop for Chinese people and people from around the world. The lake is beautiful, but it is also very crowded! The shopping in Hangzhou focuses around silk, and I had been tasked by friends and colleagues bring back silk scarves from the market for them. I did notice that inflation had hit China—the scarves were about 50% more expensive after hard bargaining, and the students at the university mentioned that their lunches at the dining hall had increased in price from 3 RMB to 5 or 6

RMB in the past two years. However, the silk scarves still cost about \$7 each, and the lunches, after inflation, are a little under \$1.

In the end, although biomedical research writing is not commonly thought of in the context of cultural exchanges, the two seem to work well together on my trips to China. Each time I go, I am able to understand more of the Chinese culture overall, and of the university research culture there in particular.

Lastly, being a student of language, I will end this report with a few photos of funny sayings I noticed during the trip to China. I hope you will enjoy seeing them as much as I did.



