

# AMWA MID-AMERICA

**Spring 2017**



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# A Note from the Editor

Magdalena Berry, MA

Dear Chapter Members,

Spring is here, and I'm mostly thinking about flowers...(those are grape hyacinths on the cover).

This issue of our chapter newsletter includes a report on the St. Louis Freelance luncheon series and our semi-annual chapter report. We also have a brief biography of our new Membership Chair, Heather McNeill,

You can find more information about the chapter and some other resources for writers at our chapter web site: [www.amwa-midamerica.org](http://www.amwa-midamerica.org)

As always, feel free to send me any suggestions or contributions for this newsletter.

Magdalena Berry

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## Chapter Officers

**President:** Rona Clair Grunspan, MD

**Treasurer:** Leslie Neistadt, ELS

**Secretary:** Linda Landon, PhD

**Membership chair:** Heather McNeill, MA

**Kansas City events coordinator**

**Newsletter chair:** Magdalena Berry, MA

**Webmaster:** Lisa M. Balbes, PhD

**St. Louis Freelance Luncheon Coordinators:**

Lisa M. Balbes, PhD, Joanne M. McAndrews,  
PhD

# St. Louis-area Freelance Luncheon Series: TechWrite STL

Joanne McAndrews, PhD

Lisa Balbes, PhD



The TechWrite STL group continues to hold bi-monthly meetings. At most meetings, a topic of

interest to freelance medical and technical writers is presented by a member and discussed by the group, usually over lunch at a local restaurant.

Mary Jo Blackwood outlined strategies for obtaining interviews with busy subject matter experts at the January luncheon. She noted that persistence and flexibility are keys to success. Mary Jo's handout from this event is available on the chapter website, within the History tab (<http://www.amwa-midamerica.org/assets/data/Getting%20Those%20Difficult%20Interviews.pdf>).

On February 28th, John Mussman, a financial advisor with Edward Jones, led an informative session about planning for retirement. Retirement options for self-

employed people, small business owners, and employees were presented. The pros, cons, and tax implications of the various options were discussed.

Upcoming luncheon plans include a tour of the Helix Center biotech incubator in May, "Writing for Television" in July, a dinner with a presentation about mindfulness meditation in September, and "Best (and Worst) Books of 2017" in November.

Lisa Balbes and Joanne McAndrews have been co-organizing the group since September 2006, when it was formed as a merger of the local AMWA and STC-CIC groups. A schedule of upcoming luncheons can be found on our chapter website (<http://www.amwa-midamerica.org/index.html>). A complete list of past topics, as well as handouts, is available on the History tab on that website.

# AMWA Mid-America Semi-Annual Report February 15, 2017

Here, for your information, is a concise version of the Chapter Report submitted to AMWA headquarters. Thanks to Linda Landon for her work on this!

## **Chapter Name and Current Membership Count**

Mid-America/14

Membership: 101 members as of January 2017

## **Chapter Incumbent and Elected Officers:**

**President:** Rona Claire Grunspan, MD, CPI, April 2016 to April 2017

•**President-elect** N/A

**Secretary:** Linda A. Landon, PhD, ELS, April 2016 to April 2017

**Treasurer:** Leslie Neistadt, ELS, April 2016 to April 2017

**Chapter Leadership Transition Date** (ie, when new leaders take office): April

## **Chapter Delegate(s) to the AMWA Board of Directors:**

Rona Claire Grunspan, President, one-year term as delegate to the AMWA Board of Directors.

## **Chapter Committees:**

a) *St. Louis-area Freelance Luncheon Series*; co-chaired by Lisa Balbes, PhD and Joanne McAndrews, PhD; the goal of this group is to meet six times a year to discuss topics of interest to freelance medical/technical writers and editors in the St. Louis, MO area.

b) *Kansas City Area events*: Rona Claire Grunspan and Laura Long. A networking event has been held. The KC event committee is planning three additional educational and/or networking events in 2017. Events are planned for February (networking), May (webinar), August (presentation) and mid-November (networking/social event).

## **Financial Position:**

Assets as of January 31, 2017:  
\$21,800.89

Checking--\$1000.90

Money Market--\$20,799.99

The Chapter's 2016 tax information have been submitted to the accountant for filing. The cost for the accountant's services will be approximately \$250. Our other major expense will be the chapter delegate's travel to the April Board meeting, for which we have budgeted \$1100.

**Summary of Activities** (since the last report)

- **Governance and leadership:** Officers are nominated. Officers are elected by vote of the Chapter Board of Directors, which includes all officers and committee chairs.

- **Networking and education events:** The TechWrite STL Freelance group organizes the St. Louis-area Freelance Luncheon Series every other month to discuss topics of interest to freelance medical/technical writers and editors in the St. Louis, MO area. Speakers on a number

# AMWA Mid-America Semi-Annual Report February 15, 2017

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of interesting and useful topics present at each meeting. In 2017 luncheons have been held or are planned for January, March, May, July, and November. A dinner with a speaker is planned for September. Lisa Balbes and Joanne McAndrews have been co-organizing the group since its founding in 2006. A schedule of upcoming luncheons can be found on our chapter website (<http://www.amwa-midamerica.org/index.html>) and a list of past topics is available on the History page.

Kansas City area events are being planned by a new partnership between Rona Claire Grunspan and Lora Long. A networking event has been held. Future events are being planned.

- **Communications:**

Magdalena Berry, newsletter chair, publishes a quarterly electronic chapter

newsletter that is sent to all chapter members. The newsletter contains information on chapter events, important accomplishments of chapter members, interesting information, and announcements of upcoming events. The newsletter is also published on the chapter website.

Lisa Balbes maintains the chapter website. The website is updated on a regular basis by adding newsletters, meeting information, and other information of interest to members.

Rona Claire Grunspan, acting chapter membership chair, sends a welcome e-mail to each new member and to AMWA headquarters with a link to our chapter website. Questions about AMWA from a few interested potential members have been answered.

# Welcome New Member Chair, Heather McNeill

Heather McNeill, MA, ELS, is Senior Editor at the Medical Writing Center of Children's Mercy Hospital. She also works as a scientific editor for the University of Kansas Medical Center (KUMC). Heather received an M.A. in English literature from the University of Kansas, and is professionally certified as a scientific editor by the Board of Editors in the Life Sciences. She joined the American Medical Writers Association in 2016. Heather's interest in medical writing and editing began just after college, when she worked as an editorial assistant for the family practice journal American

Family Physician. After that experience, she worked as a scientific editor at the Writing Consult Center at KUMC for eight years, and as a freelance feature writer for magazines and online publications. In her current role at Children's Mercy, she conducts writing consultations, and edits manuscripts, grant proposals, and other scholarly work for faculty. Heather lives in Kansas City with her husband Paul, their two young children Owen and Sage, and a lovable Irish wolfhound mix named Dolly.

# An Opportunity to Get Involved!

The Mid-America Chapter is seeking someone to serve as President. While the job is important, it is not very time/labor intensive. We have a friendly, responsive group of officers, so you'd find a warm welcome!

Please consider this valuable contribution to AMWA. A description of the position follows.

If you'd like more information, contact our our current President, Rona Grunspan, MD, at [ronaclaire@gmail.com](mailto:ronaclaire@gmail.com).

## ***General Duties:***

- Serves as chairperson of the Executive Committee and as an ex officio member of all other committees
- Presides at executive board meetings of the chapter as coordinator of all chapter projects
- Attends monthly AMWA Chapter Leader Teleconference calls or delegates a representative
- Delegates duties not specifically assigned to other executive board members
- Appoints standing and temporary committees

## ***Reporting Responsibilities:***

- Submits chapter semi-annual reports in March and September
- Informs headquarters of chapter delegate to Spring and Fall BOD meetings