

MID-AMERICA CHAPTER NEWS

American Medical Writers Association

Fall 2019



Personifications of Medicine, Pharmacy, and Surgery
Oil painting (after engraver Nicolas de Larmessin II, 1638-1694)
Wellcome Collection Museum and Library

A physician representing Medicine stands on the dais wearing academic dress, his gown composed of some of the ancient and medieval books in which traditional Western medicine has been transmitted. Elevated by his learning, which ranges over the entire spectrum of medical subjects, the physician gives 6 instructions to the subordinate figures, an apothecary and a surgeon, whose qualifications cover a narrower range. The first 3 commands (clysters, bloodletting, cupping) are directions to the surgeon, the second 3 (laxatives, juleps, emetics) to the apothecary. Bags of oil of lilies and oil of bay cover the apothecary's chest, and various ointments, creams, and syrups form other parts of his body. His hat is an alembic or distilling flask. Surgical instruments cover the surgeon's body. Trusses hang from his right forearm, tourniquets from his left, and saws, knives, and drills, hang from his waist. His hat is a cranial elevator (for removing pieces of bone).

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President's Letter

Rebecca Bigelow, PhD

I hope that everyone had a great summer! It's that time of year again to be considering an investment in your professional career development by attending the AMWA national conference! San Diego in November – you can't go wrong! There are many opportunities at the conference to improve your knowledge on the latest in regulatory writing, leadership, freelancing, or technology, to name a few. If you decide to attend, please remember to join us at the chapter dinner on Thursday evening. We hope to see you there!

We would also like to encourage you to update your AMWA profile. AMWA knows that our members are busy, so we want to make sure we're sending you the most relevant information based on your interests. Our short profile form can be completed in just two minutes. Using your answers, we can deliver content specific to your work setting and areas of focus.

[Update Your Profile](#)

Thank you for taking the time to help us serve your needs as a medical communicator and AMWA member.



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, usually over lunch at a local restaurant.

Suzanne Broussard presented a well-researched information session about Desktop Publishing Software on July 15th. This event was held at J. Greene’s Pub in Warson Woods, MO with 11 people in attendance (6 AMWA members; 5 nonmembers). Suzanne discussed word processing software including Microsoft Office, Google Docs, Open Source programs such as Open Office, LibreOffice, LaTeX, software “add-ins” including Grammarly, EndNote, Zotero, and I Should Be Writing, and some of the advantages and features of dictation software. Some Artificial Intelligence features of current technology such as word/grammar/presentation suggestions and conditional formatting were also discussed. Attendees all agreed that word processing programs have come a long way since the early days of WordPerfect.

On September 5th we had our annual dinner at CJ Muggs in Webster Groves with guest speaker Samantha Liss, who presented “The Battle for Quality Medical Journalism.” Twenty people attended, 13 of them AMWA members. A delicious dinner was followed by the presentation on how medical journalism really works, including who actually comes up with story ideas (hint: it’s not the editors), how stories develop, what makes for a good source, and what medical/technical writers can do to help create quality journalism (hint: engage with reporters). A lively, but friendly, discussion of the current state of medical reporting ensued (photograph courtesy of Lisa Balbes).



On November 13th we will have a discussion of the best and worst books read by our members in 2019, moderated by Leslie Neistadt; and January 2020 will be IT Security for Your Home Office presented by Ruth Thaler-Carter.

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.

- **Be a Better Freelancer Conference – October 2019**

Communication Central, a business owned by March TechWHRL luncheon attendee Ruth E. Thaler-Carter, will host its 14th annual national “Be a Better Freelancer”® in partnership with the National Association of Independent Writers and Editors (NAIWE) right here in St. Louis for the first time, Oct. 11-13, 2019, at the Chase-Park Plaza Hotel. Registration and program details will be available soon at www.communication-central.com.

Nebraska Area Events

An event will be planned for the fall. Please reach out to Rebecca Bigelow at: rebecca@epionmedcom.com for more information about this group.

Kansas City Chapter

Events are currently being planned for the fall, with details to follow.

Iowa Networking Group

Events are currently being planned for the fall, with details to follow.

AMWA Notes

It's not too late!

- The 2019 AMWA Medical Writing & Communication Conference

Trends and Opportunities for Medical Communicators, San Diego, CA / November 6 - 9, 2019

Discover the value of the AMWA conference! In the latest post on the AMWA Blog (<http://blog.amwa.org/reinvigorate-yourself-professionally-and-personally>), 2019 AMWA Conference Chair R. Michelle Sauer asks us to consider the importance of the time spent attending the conference in reinvigorating ourselves professionally and personally. A template memo describing the conference's key selling points, a cost breakdown, and other details that demonstrate its value is included in the post to help you gain support from your employer.

Mid-America Chapter Dinner at the 2019 AMWA Conference

By Joanne M. McAndrews, PhD, and Leslie E. Neistadt, ELS

Joanne McAndrews and Leslie Neistadt are coordinating our chapter's dinner at AMWA's Medical Writing and Communication Conference. Participants will pay for their own food and drink. Attendees will be dining at Pomodoro Ristorante Italiano (2833 Avenida de Portugal, San Diego, CA 92106; <https://pomodorosd.com>) on Thursday November 7th.

Please RSVP to Leslie at leslie.neistadt@health.slu.edu by Friday October 18th if you plan to attend.

...Meaning 'by way of the anus'. 'Per Annum', with two n's, means 'yearly'. The correct answer to the question, 'What is the birthrate per anum?' is zero (one hopes).

— Mary Roach, *Gulp: Adventures on the Alimentary Canal*. Roach is a best-selling American author specializing in popular science and humor, and recipient of AMWA's annual Alvarez Award to honor excellence in communicating health care developments and concepts to the public at the 2012 Medical Writing & Communication Conference.