

# MID-AMERICA CHAPTER NEWS

## American Medical Writers Association

Spring 2019



The Blue Beryl—Tree of Diagnosis  
(Tibet, 17<sup>th</sup> century)

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## President's Letter

Rebecca Bigelow, PhD

Welcome spring! A new season of growth is a great opportunity to pursue growth in your own career.

Our chapter has many networking and educational opportunities planned for you throughout the upcoming year, and I encourage you to take the step of becoming involved in one of our Local Networking Groups. Given our large geographic size, representatives from each of our member states have been actively planning events for those people in the immediate areas. We have events ongoing in Iowa, Nebraska, Missouri and Kansas. These events will be updated on a regular basis on our website (<http://www.amwa-midamerica.org/>) and announced through email. Getting together with fellow medical writers is a great opportunity to improve our writing, share concerns and experiences, and learn from others. I hope to see you at the next event!

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## Chapter Officers

**President:** Rebecca Bigelow, PhD

**Treasurer:** Leslie Neistadt, ELS

**Secretary:** Karry Smith, PhD, MPH

**Membership Chair:** Heather McNeill, MA

**President Elect:** Natalie DeWitt, PhD

**Newsletter Chair:** Susan Sunderman, MLS

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

**St. Louis Luncheon Coordinators:**

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

**Nebraska Event Coordinator:**

Rebecca Bigelow, PhD

**Kansas City Event Coordinator:**

Swarna Mandali, PhD, RDN, CSSD, LDN

**Iowa Event Coordinator:** Natalie DeWitt, 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, usually over lunch at a local restaurant.

To kick off the New Year, the January meeting was presented by guest speaker Brian Lunt, who talked about “Life and Business Design.” A record 18 attendees listed to Brian Lunt talk about how to determine what your time is worth, and ways to create demand for that time.

In March, Alice Fugate led a spirited discussion entitled “BYOB(P): Bring Your Own Business Problem” to a group of 14. This group included one new member so inspired by our last meeting that he left his job that afternoon, and two new members who were meeting for the first time in person, after knowing each other online for years. Lively discussion ensued.

Future meetings are planned for May 7th (Speed Networking) July (date TBD; Desktop Publishing); our annual dinner on September 5th (The Battle for Quality Medical Journalism with guest speaker, Samantha Liss); and Best and Worst Books of 2019 (November 13th).

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.htm>). 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](http://www.communication-central.com).

## Nebraska Area Events

We plan on having an upcoming meeting in Lincoln within the next month. Please reach out to Rebecca Bigelow at: [rebecca@epionmedcom.com](mailto:rebecca@epionmedcom.com) for more information about this group.

## Iowa Networking Group

The Iowa Networking Group will be visiting the Des Moines Botanical Garden on March 31 from 1-3 pm. We will meet in the cafe, have a bite to eat, and then tour the gardens. The entrance fee and lunch (with exception of alcoholic beverages) will be free to members of the Iowa Networking Group.

For any Mid America member who will be attending the AMWA Indianapolis Chapter AMWA Annual Meeting (<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2019-american-medical-writers-association-indiana-chapter-conference-tickets-54157676067>) from April 5-7, a three-bedroom 1-bathroom house close to the conference center in the historic Bates-Hendricks neighborhood has been rented, and two rooms are available for rent. Each room will be approximately \$35-60 per night depending on how many rooms are booked. Contact Natalie DeWitt if you are interested. [natalie.dewitt49@gmail.com](mailto:natalie.dewitt49@gmail.com).

## Kansas City Chapter

The Kansas City Chapter hosted two webinars on the “The Art of Blogging” by Dr. Carol Atkinson on March 13th, 2019. The webinar can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9U2GLdc9DRI>

“Writing Across the Media: Why We Should Tweet This Not That” on November 14, 2018. The webinar can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GeAcc3t4tXM>

### Speaker’s Bio:

Carol Atkinson has a bachelor's in English, a master's in journalism, and a doctorate in journalism and First Amendment law. She's been teaching journalism and magazine design at UCM for about 28 years, growing her breadth of knowledge through teaching more than 30 different courses. In her tenure at UCM, Carol served as the student newspaper adviser, the director of women's studies, and for the past 10 years, as the graduate coordinator for her department's graduate program. She advised an award-winning UCM student magazine for four years through her magazine design class. The students wrote, edited, designed, and sold advertising for the full-color publication. Carol taught in the Honors College for more than 10 years and was named the first Honors Fellow on the UCM campus. She has published more than 50 academic papers, directed more than 40 graduate theses, and advised nearly 100 graduate research papers. Carol's professional experience includes newspaper writing and editing (specializing in police and school news), non-profit public relations at the University of Kansas, sports photography, a brief stint in radio, and as a copy editor for scientific journals. Carol served on the Kansas City Press Club Board of Directors for several years and as the secretary of the International Communication Association's Law Division.

## AMWA Notes

- 2019 Medical Communication Compensation Survey deadline is April 8, 2019

This is the only compensation survey that focuses specifically on medical writing, editing, and communication professionals. If you have any questions regarding how to complete the survey, please contact Association Research, Inc. (ARI), by email ([info@associationresearch.com](mailto:info@associationresearch.com)) or by telephone (240.268.1262). [https://www.amwa.org/page/Salary Survey FAQs](https://www.amwa.org/page/Salary_Survey_FAQs)

- AMWA 2019 Membership Renewal deadline is March 31, 2019

### MEMBERSHIP TYPES & DUES

Professional: \$195

Professional + Freelance Package: \$270 [https://www.amwa.org/page/freelance package](https://www.amwa.org/page/freelance_package)

Student: \$75 [https://www.amwa.org/page/student membership](https://www.amwa.org/page/student_membership)

- Medical Writing & Communication Conference, San Diego, CA | November 6 - 9, 2019

Trends and Opportunities for Medical Communicators— It's not too early to start planning for the annual conference!

- Open Access: A Primer for Medical Writers Online Webinar

Wednesday, April 3, 2019, 12:00 - 1:00 PM EST. Complimentary webinar sponsored by Medical Publishing Insights & Practices (MPIP) for medical writers of all experience levels who work with authors to develop manuscripts for submission to peer-reviewed medical journals. Contact [webinars@amwa.org](mailto:webinars@amwa.org), 240-238-0940.

- Medical Communication News/AMWA RESOURCES Knowledge and Insights

Medical Communication News provides an executive summary of noteworthy articles pertaining to the medical communication industry. Distributed twice a month, this e-newsletter is an exclusive resource for AMWA members. AMWA has partnered with SmithBucklin Content to create Medical Communication News. SmithBucklin's editorial staff monitors nearly 12,000 print and digital publications for news, research, and trends in the field of medical communication in a timely and easy to read summary. All active AMWA members are automatically signed up to receive this email and access the archive. [https://www.amwa.org/page/Med Comm News](https://www.amwa.org/page/Med_Comm_News)

*In medical writing, there is no danger in being too precise—only in being imprecise.*

—Edie Schwager