

Dear Mid-America Chapter,

It's been an eventful spring and summer, and we have so much to look forward to this fall (including the upcoming AMWA conference):

- Our chapter's 2024 elections are coming up! Stay tuned for more information. In the meantime, consider volunteering for an office. For the list of current officers, see the [chapter website](#), and please reach out if you have any questions and/or are interested in any role. Each office is what you make it and has very little time commitment (although it does require current AMWA membership).
- The various regions in our chapter are meeting up to learn and network. Check out the attached summaries for the TechWrite STL events since the last update, and see upcoming events across the chapter [here](#).
- Important links:
 - Chapter LinkedIn Group: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12517224>
 - Chapter Website: <https://www.amwa-midamerica.org/index.html>

May you have a wonderful Fall and happy (early) holidays!

Sincerely,

Jessica Kiser, PharmD

2023 Communications Chair, Mid-America Chapter

TechWrite STL Event Summaries

September 2023 dinner (12 attendees, including 8 AMWA members)

At the annual dinner meeting, members Joanne McAndrews and Ruth Thaler-Carter led a discussion on “The Wonderful World of Subcontracting.” They outlined the pros and cons of subcontracting, from the perspective of both the entity providing the work and the person performing the work, as well as how to create a good working relationship. Attendees who had experience with subcontracting contributed to the discussion. A [handout](#) of their material is available on the Mid-America chapter website.



July 2023 luncheon (14 attendees, including 8 AMWA members)

This entertaining and well-attended meeting consisted of Elizabeth Donald talking about common grammar conundrums and writing traps. Using internet memes and memorable examples, she shared best (and worst) practices for ensuring that one’s own writing is as error-free and understandable as possible. A lively discussion followed, including input on knowing what the rules are, so you know when to break them, as well as mnemonics and other tricks for verifying commonly confused words.

May 2023 luncheon (14 attendees, including 6 AMWA members)

TechWrite STL members Patrick Dorsey and Veronika Redmann presented “Preparation of Requests for Proposals (RFPs)” and “A writer's tasks assisting clients with grant-writing” at our May 16th event. Patrick has expertise in the preparation of RFPs and Veronika has written many grant proposals for her clients. They discussed what types of clients need their services and the scope of the work that they do (including writing, formatting, verifying references, interacting with subject matter experts,

etc.). A brief summary of how to gain these specific skills through workshops and classes was discussed. A [handout](#) of their material is available on the Mid-America chapter website.

March 2023 luncheon (24 attendees, including 20 AMWA members)-- 100th meeting of TechWrite STL!

Tom Lang of Tom Lang Communications presented a webinar entitled “Statistical Errors Even You Can Find (No, Really). Over lunch, he discussed the most common types of statistical errors, how to recognize them, and how to make sure they are addressed before the paper is submitted. Best practices, and worst practices (cherry picking and lemon dropping) were also covered. Discussions of p values, t-tests, confidence intervals, and more ensued during a question and answer session. A [handout](#) of the slides, including references for more information, is available.

January 2023 luncheon (24 attendees, including 20 AMWA members)

This event was a webinar and a joint meeting with both AMWA Mid-America chapter members and TechWrite STL members in attendance. Stacy Christiansen (Managing Editor, JAMA and Chair, AMA Manual of Style) and Tracy Frey (Deputy Managing Editor, JAMA Network) spoke about “Updates to Inclusive Language: Guidance for Scientific Publishing”. Information was provided regarding current, recommended terminology with respect to race, ethnicity, sex, gender, age, socioeconomic status, abilities, disabilities and more. The presenters noted that the new guidelines are a work in progress, and that updates will be provided as appropriate. The [slides from their presentation](#) are available on the AMWA Mid-America chapter website.

November 2022 luncheon (4 attendees, 3 AMWA members)

In the traditional November meeting, TechWrite STL members gathered at a local restaurant to enjoy lunch and discuss books they have loved or hated over the past year. Leslie Neistadt collected members’ lists and opinions in advance, and led the discussion. In addition to specific books, general genres and the merits of paper vs. digital reading were debated. A handout with the recommended and panned books is available on the Mid-America chapter [website](#).

September 2022 dinner (9 attendees, 5 AMWA members)

At the annual dinner meeting at CJ Muggs, award-winning journalist Cara Anthony spoke on "Covering Health, Gun Violence and Racial Trauma in the Midwest." Cara Anthony is a Midwest correspondent for Kaiser Health News, a native of East St. Louis, Ill., and has been published by The New York Times, Time Magazine and National Public Radio. She engaged the audience with her stories of reporting at the intersection of diversity and health, including kidney transplants (<https://khn.org/news/article/race-medical-shorthand-kidney-care-transplant/> and <https://khn.org/news/article/black-kidney-patients-racial-health-disparities/>) and changing funeral customs (<https://khn.org/news/article/custom-caskets-for-kids-look-like-something-you-would-see-in-a-childs-room/>). A lively discussion ensued on using race as a shorthand for more complex factors,

microaggressions and how they affect healthcare, the importance of localization in news stories, and behind the scenes insights in podcasting.

July 2022 luncheon

The TechWrite STL July meeting was held in person on Thursday, July 14th. Six attendees (5 AMWA members) ate lunch together at the Scout Shelter at Kirkwood Park while listening to member Veronika Redmann discuss healthcare options for freelancers. Veronika detailed what factors to consider when evaluating healthcare plans, including pre-existing conditions and the potential need for coverage for a partner or dependent children. She noted that for many people, lack of employer-provided health insurance is the single biggest factor preventing them from starting freelancing. All in attendance shared their experiences with COBRA, shopping for healthcare plans and more. The slides from this presentation are available on the Mid-America chapter [website](#).

May 2022 luncheon

The TechWrite STL May meeting was held on Wednesday May 18th. Seven attendees (4 of them AMWA members) ate lunch together at the Scout Shelter at Kirkwood Park while listening to member Ruth Thaler-Carter present "Be a Better Writer or Editor!" Ruth offered specific suggestions for the writing process, including making an outline, asking the client about important details prior to interviewing and writing, sending interview questions ahead of time, tricks for using spell check, and working well ahead of any deadline. She presented a comprehensive list of how to make editing go more smoothly, including taking your time, asking the client about their preference for a style guide, defining what a "page" means with the client, and techniques for editing on paper and in Microsoft Word. Ruth prepared a handout (available on the Mid-America chapter [website](#)) that included resources such as websites, specific editing tools, and recommended books.

March 2022 luncheon

The TechWrite STL March meeting was held virtually on Thursday, March 10th. Twelve attendees (9 of them AMWA members) joined a Zoom to eat lunch and discuss "How to use the reference tool Mendeley." Member Diane Morton presented a live demo, and led a discussion of the capabilities and features of this tool. A lively discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of various tools and strategies for managing references ensued, and much was learned by all. A handout summarizing this presentation is available on the Mid-America chapter [website](#).

January 2022 luncheon

Our first event of 2022 was held on January 11th over Zoom—member Sunali Wadehra presented "Beyond Resolutions: A Guide to Achieving Your Goals for the New Year." Twenty attendees, including 13 AMWA members, attended this session. She discussed how to develop achievable but ambitious goals, and some strategies for making sure you reach them. Many members shared successful goals from past years, their tentative goals for the upcoming year, and others provided feedback and encouragement. A handout summarizing this presentation is available on the Mid-America chapter [website](#).