



AMWA Mid-America Newsletter

**American Medical Writers Association
Fall 2011**

Mid-America Chapter News

President's Letter

by Rona Claire Grunspan, MD

Dear Chapter Members,
We have a winner!
Congratulations to Sandra Nimmo; you
are the winner of a \$25.00 gift card.

Thanks to all who participated in our
survey.

Best wishes,
Rona

Mid-America Chapter Dinner in Jacksonville

Kathi Whitman and Joanne McAndrews
did an excellent job in selecting the
restaurant for our dinner – Indochine – a
Thai restaurant. We walked the few
blocks in beautiful, balmy weather and
enjoyed some good food and good

company. We hope to gather with more
chapter members at our next dinner at
the 2012 Conference in Sacramento. I'm
looking forward to it!

Magdalena



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

Welcome to, Lyn Gattis, Ph.D., a transfer
from the Southwest Chapter, who teaches
technical writing at Missouri State
University. Lyn gave a non-credit
workshop on document design at the
recent AMWA Conference.

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

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

Membership

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 by 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 August 2011 luncheon topic, “The Evolution of the Book”, was a lively panel discussion. Rob Saigh highlighted the classic format, traditional paper books; Joanne McAndrews discussed and demonstrated the features of the Kindle; Mary Jo Blackwood told us about the features of the Nook; and Lisa Balbes demonstrated the ease of reading on the iPad. Several presenters also brought articles about from the mainstream media about eReaders, the future of printed reading materials, and reading comprehension when using eReaders.

A special dinner was held on September 27th to commemorate five years of group meetings. Our speaker that evening was

Dana Delibovi, who gave an excellent presentation about “Writing for Mobile Devices”. Dana discussed the opportunities for freelance writers in this area, as well as the challenges of writing for this format.

Upcoming luncheon topics include “Writing Sharper Than a Laser” to be presented by Rob Saigh; a discussion about “Protecting Your Intellectual Property” to be led by Betsy Frick and “Dictation Software” to be presented by Alice Fugate.

Lisa Balbes and Joanne McAndrews are the co-organizers of this group. Please contact them at lisa@balbes.com and 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.

Reflections on the AMWA Conference by Magdalena Berry

I'm a technical writer by training, and we have a particular fondness for bullet lists, so here's one. The annual AMWA Conference

- gives a lot of "bang for the buck"
- provides a fantastic opportunity to network with potential clients and employers
- offers an extraordinary range of free informational sessions where you can keep up with issues and ideas in our field
- supplies free food drink! For example, we were offered the "Serial Comma" (something with orange juice and vodka involved) and sushi at receptions (and there was chocolate, too!)
- is very welcoming to new members. All the ones I've spoken to remark on the warmth and generosity of AMWA members
- helps you maintain and add to your skills through course offerings leading to AMWA certificates

- encourages and sustains pride in the excellent work of our membership through numerous awards and recognitions.

This year I was particularly impressed with the keynote speaker, Paul Roote Wolpe, an ethicist, who spoke on advances at the intersection of biology and technology, and with the Alvarez Luncheon speaker, Perri Klass, MD. Dr. Klass, a pediatrician, noted that her writing (both fiction and non-fiction) and her medical practice were integral to each other, and indeed, greatly enhanced her work in both fields. For me, these presentations were the highlights of the conference.

Of course, I also enjoyed a lot of great conversation and food, and the scenery (as on this issue's cover) was lovely. The real benefits of the AMWA Conference, though, are professional development and education. We encourage as many of you as are able to meet with us next year in Sacramento!

