

# AMWA MID-AMERICA

Winter 2013



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# Mid-America Chapter Update

**Magdalena Berry**

There's been a lot of activity over the past year in the Mid-America Chapter. The officers have been meeting regularly via teleconference in an effort to coordinate chapter governance more smoothly and develop activities that would be of interest to chapter members.

This year, we've

- Updated the web site
- Update and clarified our financial procedures

We're now in the process of

- Creating an "officers manual"
- Reviewing chapter by-laws

Joanne McAndrews has also made some inquiries to the national organization about the process of transferring membership between chapters. Currently, each member is responsible for selecting his or her preferred chapter. In the past, chapters were automatically assigned to members according to their location. So, you may move to Seattle, but unless you change your chapter affiliation on your profile, you'll still be on the Mid-America roster.

So, we're moving along! Why don't you consider getting more involved. Here are some easy ways:

- e-mail us with your suggestions,
- participate in chapter governance, and
- think about attending the national conference!

Our best wishes to you for the new year! May it be peaceful and profitable in all ways!

## Chapter Officers

**President:** Rona Clair Grunspan, MD

**Treasurer:** Joanne M. McAndrews, PhD

**Secretary:** VACANT

**Membership Liaison:** Rona Clair Grunspan,  
MD

**Newsletter Chair:** Magdalena Berry, MA

**Webmaster:** Lisa 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 its bi-monthly lunch meetings. At each meeting, 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.

In September, Dana Delibovi led a discussion entitled “Reinventing Yourself for today’s economic realities”. She spoke about many of the trends affecting today’s economic markets, and how she has changed her own business to respond to them. A lively discussion ensued, with many members sharing their own perceptions, adjustments, and predictions for future market changes. Several members commented that they felt better about their businesses knowing that others were experiencing the same things, and that there was something they could do about it.

“Lessons Learned from Self-Publishing” was presented by Pat Dorsey in



November. Pat recently started his own publishing company, and shared the highs and lows as he explored the best ways to turn both text and graphics into printed books, and then promote those books to potential customers. He talked about a number of online tools and services, and which ones were best under which conditions. Attendees appreciated learning from his long, but educational, journey from author to publisher.

Lisa Balbes and Joanne McAndrews have been co-organizing the group since its founding in 2006. Please contact them at lisa at balbes dot com or joanne at joannemcandrews dot com, respectively, to be added to the mailing list for this group—new members and ideas for presentation topics are always welcome.

A listing of upcoming luncheons can be found on our chapter website ( <http://www.amwa-midamerica.org/index.html> ) and [list of past topics is](#)

## Chapter Website

The Mid-America Chapter has a website on which you can find

- archived newsletters
- information about future events
- listing of previous St. Louis area meeting topics

- Officers and contact information.

***Bookmark it now!***

<http://www.amwa-midamerica.org>

# Report on AMWA Fall Board of Directors Meeting

Joanne McAndrews, PhD

I attended the AMWA Fall Board of Directors meeting and the Chapter Delegates session at the AMWA annual conference on November 6, 2013, representing the Mid-America chapter.

**Review of the Year.** The outgoing AMWA President, Doug Haneline, outlined the accomplishments of the organization in the past year. In order to improve AMWA's technology infrastructure, a new Association Management System (AMS) and a new website was developed and implemented. In addition, a new Learning Management System (LMS) has been implemented, with new webinar capabilities.

Throughout the past year, AMWA has fostered relationships with sister organizations including AAMC, DIA, ISMPP, and STC.

**New Forums.** When the new AMS system was deployed, the former AMWA email listserves were retired. In their place are password-protected online forums available via the new AMWA website. There was a group discussion regarding the functionality of the new forums. It was agreed that the forums would be evaluated in one year's time.

**Certification.** AMWA is developing a medical writing certification exam. Members of this subcommittee reported on their activities over the past year, which have included the drafting of sample exam questions and the development of eligibility requirements. The committee anticipates that the medical writing certification exam will be administered for the first time at the AMWA annual conference in the fall of 2015.

**Local Chapters.** The Chapter Delegates session included a group discussion regarding the benefits of AMWA membership, and the importance of local chapters. Many chapter delegates commented that frequent, in-person meetings at the chapter level are invaluable.

Some chapter delegates expressed their frustration regarding recruiting and retaining chapter officers.

**Spring Meeting.** The next meeting of the AMWA Board of Directors will be held on April 11-12th in the Washington, DC area.

## Reflections on the Annual Conference

Magdalena Berry

Opa! We had a great time in Columbus at the Happy Greek Restaurant. Our annual chapter dinners are a great opportunity to catch up with other,

make new friends, and, of course, eat some good food.

I look forward to more than a great dinner, though, when I travel to the

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annual AMWA Conference. We all need to keep current with the what's happening in the field, and as you can tell from the offerings displayed on the AMWA Web site, you can benefit from the expertise of specialists in everything from CME to datagraphics to ireadability. Beyond the excellent and well-presented educational

offerings (and many are free), the conference is the best place to network and expand your business. It's absolutely worth the time and money.

Look forward to seeing you at the Conference in Memphis!