In this issue:

St. Louis Freelance Luncheon Series  2
Nebraska Networking Group  7
From the Newsletter Editor  7
TechWriteSTL January Luncheon  7
Chapter Conference Dinner  8
As 2018 comes to an end, we are able to look back on the year and assess how our chapter performed. I am happy to say, that despite being a very large geographic chapter, we strive to continually offer opportunities to our members to network and grow professionally. With chapter events being held regularly in St. Louis and Kansas City, and most recently in Nebraska and Iowa, we don't let our large area be a detriment to our programs.

We recently offered a webinar on “Writing Across the Media”, presented by Carol Atkinson, PhD. A big thank you to Swarna Mandali for all of her hard work organizing the event. To those who missed the webinar, you can still access the content online. Dr. Atkinson will be presenting 2 more webinars during the upcoming year, so please be on the lookout for those announcements. I encourage you to regularly check our website for any additional events (http://www.amwa-midamerica.org/). We are always interested in hearing new ideas for programs. You can share these ideas with me at: rebecca@epionmedcom.com.

I would also like to take the opportunity to welcome Susan Sunderman to the board as our newsletter chair. Susan recently took over the position from Magdalena Berry, who graciously served as our newsletter chair for many years. Thank you to both of them for their willingness to volunteer and help our chapter.

I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season! And may you all have a successful 2019!

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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 Freelance Luncheon Coordinators:**  
Lisa M. Balbes, PhD, Joanne M. McAndrews, PhD  

**Nebraska Event Coordinator:** Rebecca Bigelow, PhD  

**Kansas City Event Coordinator:** Swarna Mandal, PhD, RDN, CSSD, LDN  

**Iowa Event Coordinator:** Natalie DeWitt, PhD
Every year, the TechWrite STL group submits suggestions for this list, which has now reached 17 pages! It’s divided into categories, ranging from “Thought Provoking” to “Not Necessarily Literature to Stand the Test of Time But Fun Reads Nonetheless.” Leslie Neistadt compiles the list, complete with cover art for the books, bibliographic information, and the name of the recommenders with their comments. It’s an enjoyable read, in and of itself!

Here’s a sample:

**Best and Worst Books Read in 2018**

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<th>Category: Thought provoking</th>
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<td><strong>Cover</strong></td>
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And here’s more from the list:

Suzanne Broussard: “Very insightful on the lessons learned and strategies to avoid in the fight to solve world hunger from a farming philanthropist’s perspective”

**Carreyrou J. Bad Blood: Secrets and Lies in a Silicon Valley Startup.** New York, NY: Knopf; 2018.
Carrie Clark: “For showing how autocratic personalities/work structures can destroy a medical mission”

Carrie Clark: “For exploring the social causes of depression”

**Albertine A. Clothes, Clothes, Clothes, Music, Music, Music, Boys, Boys, Boys.**
Susan Duhig: “Witty, direct, astonishingly sincere, and I found it a great example of how to look back at youth from the perspective of middle age.”

Joanne McAndrews: “If you knew when you were going to die, how would it affect your life?”

**Doerr A. All the Light We Cannot See.** New York, NY: Scribner; 2014.
Joanne McAndrews: “Not just another book about the Holocaust; this is a masterpiece”

Joanne McAndrews: “An inspiring book about how to make all gatherings, from casual hangouts to work meetings and conferences memorable and valuable events for all”

Leslie Neistadt: “An unflinchingly honest memoir by a woman who was diagnosed with dementia at age 58”

Leslie Neistadt: “Inspiring tales from the former head of Planned Parenthood”

Pranali Pathare

Veronika Redmann: “A profound read”
Lisa Balbes: “Excellent story of how power/money corrupts”

Lisa Balbes: “Story of Galileo’s life, told through letters to his daughter, the nun”

Roseann Benson: “It’s a book about foam rolling, and the author created a 21-day program that I’ve been cycling through since June. Each day has between 5 and 10 minutes of exercises. The program helped me relieve the pain from a nagging muscle injury and improve my posture. (The book is poorly edited; however, if the user knows that before beginning the program, she will be less distracted by the inconsistencies within the text.) **You will need a foam roller.**”

Suzanne Broussard: “Documents Dean’s passion for founding Tough Mudder, a physically and mentally challenging extreme obstacle course. The course requires cooperation and is the model for many obstacle course races in our communities.”

Suzanne Broussard: “This murder mystery cleverly turns the reader into the detection—going from a comfortable read to unpredictable.”

Carrie Clark: “A kind of primer on evidence-based medicine for the general public, with lots of amusing takedowns of people who hid poor methodology behind a veneer of ‘science-y-ness’”

Betsy Engle: "Highlighted the importance of education and the opportunity to learn from different viewpoints"

Joanne McAndrews: “This book delves into the research-based evidence of why being in nature is relaxing. Even just reading this soothing book is relaxing!”

Leslie Neistadt: “A physician’s life-threatening illness changes the way she interacts with her patients”

Leslie Neistadt: “You’ll want to hop the next flight to France”

Leslie Neistadt: “During a visit to the U.S., a Brit tries to understand his grown daughters”

Pranali Pathare

Ginger Peschke: “I’m still reading this one, but the book seems to flesh out ideas from his newsletters/blogs, which I follow and have productively implemented.”

Bob Saigh: “Written well”

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Bob Saigh: “Written well”

Bob Saigh: “Lots of fun”

Bob Saigh

Bob Saigh

Susan Sunderman: “I have been hooked on Finnegan’s writing since I read his 2-part series “Playing Doc’s Games” about the surfing physician Mark Renneker in the New Yorker. Even if you don’t like or know nothing about surfing, this autobiography (winner of the 2016 Pulitzer Prize in biography) is a good read!”
Susan Sunderland: “David Sedaris is one of my favorite authors! His beach house in North Carolina is where we go every year, and I grew up going there as well.”

**Category: Sob Inducing**

Leslie Neistadt: “A vet describes some of her most memorable patients…and their families”

**Category: Annoying or Disappointing**

Lisa Balbes: “Good premise, poorly executed”

Leslie Neistadt: “An educated, wealthy, attractive, and very bitter young woman decides she needs a year off from her oh-so-difficult life for a drug-induced sleep. This is getting all kinds of rave reviews, but it’s self-indulgent to the nth degree.”

Ginger Peschke: “Ostensibly a Hercule Poirot novel, this book doesn’t come close (IMO) to Christie’s originals”

Bob Saigh: “Badly written”

Bob Saigh: “Badly written”

**Category: Not Necessarily Literature to Stand the Test of Time But Fun Reads Nonetheless**

Leslie Neistadt: “If you liked the ‘Shopaholic’ books, you’ll like this one about a long-married couple who think they know everything about each other.”

Leslie Neistadt “Fast-paced tale of a 20-something trying to navigate life in the tech world”
We met for lunch in Omaha on November 29th at Shucks. We plan on having an upcoming meeting in Lincoln within the next couple months. Please reach out to Rebecca Bigelow at: rebecca@epionmedcom.com for more information about this group.

From the Newsletter Editor

Susan Sunderman, MLS

As incoming newsletter coordinator, I would like to thank Magdalena Berry for her years of service in editing the AMWA Mid-America Chapter News. Magdalena’s fine editorial skills, reliability, and diligence were much appreciated, as well as her beautiful photographs! I also want to thank her for her generosity in guiding my transition for the coming year.

Although her sunny and wise presence at the annual chapter dinner will be missed, as she leaves AMWA to move toward retirement (photography, gardening, and more!) I am confident that she will find the same success and fulfillment that she experienced in her career as Senior Instructor, Professional and Technical Writing, at Missouri State University.

TechWrite STL January 2019 luncheon

Wednesday, January 2, 2019 11:30 am
McAlister's Deli 12101-A Manchester Road Des Peres, MO 63131

Life and Business Design, presented by Brian Lunt
As the self-employed and entrepreneurs, our most valuable resource is also our most finite -- time. Join Brian Lunt of Seed Level Creativity Lab as he shares and explains his system and strategies for making effective use of your professional time while still maintaining the balance you need to enjoy your business and your life.

Unable to attend a luncheon? Many of the handouts from past luncheons are available for download on the American Medical Writers Association Mid-America Chapter website: http://www.amwa-midamerica.org.
Mid-America Chapter Dinner at the 2018 AMWA Medical Writing & Communication Conference

By Joanne M. McAndrews, PhD and Heather McNeill, MA

For the past thirteen years, Mid-America chapter members have gathered for dinner on Thursday evenings during the AMWA Medical Writing & Communication Conference. Our 2018 dinner was held at Circa Bistro in Washington, DC on November 1st. Attendees enjoyed meeting each other and learning about members’ different backgrounds and work environments while enjoying a delicious dinner.

Chapter dinner attendees (L to R): Leslie Neistadt, Suzanne Miller, Natalie DeWitt, Jennifer Barr, Joanne McAndrews, Anna Boyum, Carrie Clark, Kaci Durbin, Tom Wolf, and Heather McNeill