2024 AMWA Southwest Chapter Conference
and John P. McGovern Award Lecture
Co-sponsored by The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
UTHealth Houston Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences
and the John P. McGovern Foundation

Saturday, April 27 | 9:00 AM–4:30 PM CDT

Basic Sciences Research Building (BSRB/Mitchell Building)
BSRB S3.8371 (Large classroom)
6767 Bertner Ave, Houston, TX 77030

Or join virtually!

On-site attendees may also attend a networking dinner after the conference.

REGISTRATION
Virtual (conference only): $25
In person: $75

PROGRAM AT A GLANCE
9:00 Breakfast at GSBS Large Classroom (in-person attendees)
9:30 Networking via Zoom (virtual attendees)
10:00 President’s Welcome and Southwest Chapter business meeting
10:15 Speed networking
11:00 Break
11:15 Effectively Searching PubMed
12:15 Lunch (in-person) or bio break (virtual)
12:45 McGovern Lecture keynote address: Mimi Swartz, Ticker and Me
1:45 Break
2:00 How Community Can Supercharge Your Medical Writing Career
3:00 Break
3:15 Developing Your Medical Writer Brand on LinkedIn
4:15 Closing remarks
4:30 Conference ends
6:00 Networking dinner
PROGRAM

9:00 – 10:00AM **Breakfast and informal networking**

Coffee and beverages will be available throughout the conference.

9:30 – 10:00AM **Networking via Zoom (virtual attendees only)**

10:00 – 10:15AM **President’s welcome, Southwest Chapter business meeting**

Erica Goodoff, ELS(D)
Houston, Texas

AMWA Southwest Chapter President Erica Goodoff will welcome conference attendees and lead the annual AMWA Southwest Chapter business meeting to share chapter news and upcoming events.

10:15 – 11:00AM **Speed Networking**

Meet your fellow attendees in a fun start to your day! In-person attendees will take turns introducing themselves and rotate every few minutes; virtual attendees will meet each other in randomly assigned and rotating breakout rooms. Work on your elevator pitch, chat about your hobbies, or bond over your dislike of mornings—however you want to spend your few minutes!

11:00 – 11:15AM **Break**


This session is conducted via live Internet and intended for those with moderate literature-searching experience using PubMed. The focus will be the effective use of PubMed, with a brief overview of several other databases and resources from the US National Library of Medicine. Topics include how to work with advanced search functions as well as specialized search tools using PubMed’s MeSH database, search builder, and clinical queries. Creating and using personalized settings and search filters in My NCBI will also be briefly covered. Interactive discussion and instruction-by-example will give participants an improved understanding of online search strategies and a helpful list of tools and resources to use in association with PubMed. If you usually search PubMed by typing in a few words into the search box, if you struggle with too many results, or if you are unsure if your search is complete enough, then this session is for you.
Thomas Gegeny, MS, ELS, MWC®, CMPP
Houston, Texas

Tom Gegeny has been a member of AMWA since 1998 and has 25 years of experience in medical communications. He holds a master's degree in biomedical sciences (neuroscience) from The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center UTHealth Houston Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS). Tom is a past president (2009–2010) and fellow of AMWA; he was honored with AMWA’s Golden Apple Award in 2015. He is employed with Prime, a global medical communications agency, as a Director of Scientific Strategy & Partnerships. At the start of his career, Tom was Publications Specialist with the Houston Academy of Medicine–Texas Medical Center Library from 1998 to 2000.

12:15 – 12:45PM Lunch

Lunch will be provided in the GSBS Large Classroom for in-person attendees. Virtual attendees will be able to take a break from Zoom during this time.

12:45 – 1:45PM McGovern Lecture Keynote Address: “Ticker and Me”

The 2024 AMWA Southwest Chapter John P. McGovern award winner, author Mimi Swartz, will talk about how she wrote a book about the making of the artificial heart without initially knowing anything about medicine. After the talk, Ms. Swartz will be presented with the John P. McGovern Award for Excellence in Biomedical Communication.

Mimi Swartz
Houston, Texas

Mimi Swartz is an executive editor of Texas Monthly. She is also the author of Power Failure, The Inside Story of the Collapse of Enron, with Sherron Watckins, and Ticker, the Quest to Create an Artificial Heart. Swartz has been a staff writer at Talk, from April 1999 to April 2001, and a staff writer at the New Yorker, from 1997 to 2001. Prior to joining the New Yorker, she worked at Texas Monthly for thirteen years. In 1996, Swartz was a finalist for two National Magazine Awards and won in the public interest category for “Not What the Doctor Ordered.” She was also a National Magazine Award finalist for her November 2005 issue story on tort reform, titled “Hurt? Injured? Need a Lawyer? Too Bad!” In 2013 she won her second National Magazine Award (again in the category of public interest), for “Mothers, Sisters, Daughters, Wives,” a compelling look at the state of women’s health care in Texas. Over the years, Swartz’s work has also appeared in Vanity Fair, Esquire, Slate, National Geographic, and the New York Times’ op-ed page and Sunday magazine. It has also been collected in Best American Political Writing and Best American Sportswriting.

1:45 – 2:00PM Break
2:00 – 3:00PM How Community Can Supercharge Your Medical Writing Career

You may have an idea that networking and mentorship could help your career. These are all forms of community, and this is a powerful tool to help you ensure you have a robust and fulfilling career. A strong and supportive professional community can provide a network for finding work, help with work-related challenges, and camaraderie to make work more fun. Most people don’t find community in only one place, and there is no one-size-fits all approach to building community. As your career develops, you can build community with a mix of formal, informal, in-person and virtual approaches. All types are valuable in their own way, and help you build a successful, fulfilling career. During this presentation, we will discuss the benefits of a strong community, how to build your own community, and differences between community, mentorship, and networking.

Abigale Miller, MSc
Toronto, Canada

Abigale Miller is an experienced medical writer and Host of The Anthill, a virtual coworking group for medical writers. After finishing her MSc in biochemistry, Abigale worked at medical writing agencies in Toronto and Shanghai. She started her freelance business in 2016 and has worked in therapy areas such as oncology, infectious disease, gastroenterology, and cosmetics. Abigale has hosted The Anthill since 2020, and loves learning from and supporting medical writers during their career journeys.

3:00 – 3:15PM Break

3:15 – 4:15PM Developing Your Medical Writer Brand on LinkedIn

LinkedIn is used for professional communication and networking beyond connecting job seekers and potential employers. Learn how to use LinkedIn effectively by developing your professional brand no matter where you are in your medical writing career—job seeker, entrepreneur, or employed. This session includes best practices for developing your brand on LinkedIn, including defining your brand vision, creating an engaging headline, writing a catchy About section, and leveraging your profile as a digital portfolio. Playing on your phone is allowed! Screenshots will walk you through updating your profile in real time.

Amanda Hendrix, MS
Houston, Texas

Amanda Hendrix is the Associate Director of Medical Writing for SystImmune, Inc., focused on immune-oncology biopharmaceuticals. Amanda holds a BS in mechanical engineering and first worked as an ExxonMobil pipeline engineer. She earned an MS in Translational Biology & Molecular Medicine from Baylor College of Medicine for her research in cancer immunotherapy. Amanda’s reputation for high-quality writing and editing at BCM led to her work at BioScience Writers, LLC, before starting her own business, Amanda Y. Hendrix Consulting. She also provided career coaching services with The Wilbanks Consulting Group. As a career coach, Amanda drew upon her broad background to help clients achieve success in their career transitions through resumes, LinkedIn profiles, and other written content. She then returned to medical writing on immune-oncology biopharmaceuticals at CARsgen Therapeutics before taking on her current role.
4:15 – 4:30PM **Closing remarks**

6:00PM **Networking dinner**
Location TBA, Houston, Texas

After the conference, join us at a nearby restaurant for a networking dinner. In-person registrants should RSVP for this event (see registration page for details).

**AMWA Southwest Chapter** [https://amwasw.org/](https://amwasw.org/)

**Parking:** The nearest parking location to BSRB is TMC Garage 15 (The McGovern Commons Garage), 6550 Bertner Ave, Houston, TX 77030. You can enter BSRB via either level 1 of the garage or the main building entrance on Bertner Avenue.

**Note:** BSRB has controlled access on the weekends. We recommend arriving no later than 9:50 am to avoid delays in entering the building.
ABOUT HOUSTON

Out-of-town guests may stay in various places around Houston—a car or access to rideshare is strongly recommended. Traffic from suburban areas is generally manageable on weekends (Pearland, to the south, is the closest suburb to the medical center but is mostly residential; Webster, to the southeast, has Space Center Houston; others are further out to the north and west), but if you wish to stay inside the city, these areas may be of interest (hotel options start around $150/night):

Medical Center
- closest to conference location
- limited non-academic events or activities in the area, especially on weekends

Museum District
- located just north of TMC and Rice University
- access to dining options and several museums (Houston Museum of Natural Science, Museum of Fine Arts) and Hermann Park

Upper Kirby/Greenway Plaza, West University/Rice Village, Montrose
- closest to dinner location
- mixed office and residential; good dining options, a few art museums nearby (Menil, Rothko Chapel)

Theatre District
- located downtown, north of conference location
- near local theaters, Toyota Center, and Discovery Green park
- some good dining options but generally less busy on weekends except for specific events

Galleria/Uptown
- located northwest of conference and west of dinner location
- popular destination outside of the Medical Center; busy on weekends, shopping and dining nearby

Houston’s METRORail Red Line runs from North 610/ Northside through the Theatre District, Museum District, and Medical Center: https://www.ridemetro.org/riding-metro/transit-services/metrorail