

Romance Writers of America
Board Meeting Minutes
May 16, 2024
7:00 p.m. CST
Virtual Meeting

Thursday, May 16, 2024

CALL TO ORDER - President Clair Brett called the meeting to order at 7:03pm Central Time on Thursday, May 16, 2024.

ROLL CALL/CERTIFICATION OF QUORUM: Secretary Jacki Renée called the roll. Eight members were present: Officers Clair Brett, Jacki Renée, and Brooke Wills; Directors-at-Large Mary Karlik, Ursula Renee, and Alexis-Morgan Roark; PAN Advisor Danica Winters; Director-at-Large Marian H. Griffin and Anita Learned, and Advisor Antonia Cyn were excused. PRO Advisor Robin Hillyer-Miles logged in after roll call. AMC Source team member Patty Anderson was present. With a majority of the Board members needed to establish a quorum, there were 7 voting members present, the Chair declared a quorum.

The following RWA member guests were in attendance: Dawn Bravata, Shayne Huxtable, Tina McCright, Samantha Netzbund, Kimberly Wesley, and Lara Zielinsky.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT - C. BRETT

Third quarter continued to be active in RWA. Following the Indie Author Weekend with a record number of attendees, we were thrilled to host our Traditional Author Weekend with similar attendance records. PAN powerups continue to give value to our members monthly with members only powerup sessions. Our committees were at work. Pen 2 Paper and our new Paper to Polished is midway through and impacting the attendees with directly informing either the drafting of a romance or the editing and revising. RAMP committee is working hard to get ready for another year, and the contest committee has announced their call for judges for our two brand new contests the published author's Diamond Heart and our much beloved unpublished author's Golden Heart.

The RWA team is hard at work finishing our transition from our old platform to the new Memberclicks platform which will have more to offer our members.

The board continues to work toward our goals of bringing member value, and also advocating for the romance author, genre, and writers as a group by signing on to two amicus briefs as suggested by the Policy Committee since the year began: Internet Archive V. Hachette Amicus Brief (March 2024) and In March 2024, we also agreed to participate in the distribution of a survey to our membership from the Author's Guild Text Collective Licensing Committee to get input from authors to assist the committee with developing the licensing initiative.

Both our new chapters are moving forward with plans to accept new members. And all other chapters are at the time of this writing, to file their affiliation paperwork for the year, getting us back on track to our yearly updates with the national organization.

Looking forward to the next quarter, the board will be looking to the next fiscal year, by updating our policy, committee charges, and we will be populating all our committees for the upcoming new year and replacing or filling chair and co-chair positions as needed. I encourage all members to consider volunteering on a national committee, RWA is always looking for new voices and perspectives to help inform the programs and resources we offer to our members.

The next quarter also opens candidate declarations for the RWA national board. If you are eligible, I encourage you to throw your hat in and help be the voice of the next chapter.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the current RWA board for their hard work and dedication to the organization and its members. This organization is where it is today, because of the tenacity and determination of people who were willing to step up and do the work. Without them, I would not be drafting this report.

And, also, thank you to all the members that have put their trust in this board and past boards to make the best fiduciary decisions for the betterment of the organization. Your commitment is in every decision I make concerning this organization.

Clair Brett

SECRETARY'S REPORT — J. RENÉE

Motion to Approve February 2024 Board Meeting Minutes

Brett moved to approve the minutes of the February 2024 Board of Directors Meeting

This motion was adopted in an Action Without Meeting on March 18, 2024, with 9 votes in the affirmative and 0 abstentions.

Motion to Approve RWA Signing the Internet Archive v. Hachette Amicus Brief

Brett moved to approve RWA signing the amicus brief The Authors Guild is filing with the Second Circuit in Internet Archive v. Hachette, the copyright case challenging the Internet Archive's infringing Open Library program. The brief will be filed on Friday, March 22, 2024.

This motion was adopted in an Action Without Meeting on March 18, 2024, with 9 votes in the affirmative and 0 abstentions.

Motion to Approve RWA Distributing a Survey to the Membership

Karlik moved to approve RWA to distribute a survey to the membership created by The Author's Guild Text Collective Licensing Committee to get input from authors to assist the committee with developing the licensing initiative.

This motion was adopted in an Action Without Meeting on March 27, 2024, with 8 votes in the affirmative and 1 abstention.

Motion to Approve Revisions to the Contest Administration Rules

Renée moved to approve the revisions to the Contests Administration Rules

This motion was adopted in an Action Without Meeting on April 29, 2024, with 7 votes in the affirmative and 2 abstentions.

Motion to Approve Revisions to the Policies for Handling Objectionable Material and Rescindment Manual

Renée moved to approve the revisions to the Policies for Handling Objectionable Material and Rescindment Manual for the Golden Heart Awards and Diamond Heart Awards

This motion was adopted in an Action Without Meeting on April 29, 2024, with 7 votes in the affirmative and 2 abstentions.

Motion to Approve the 2023/2024 Contests Budget

Renée moved to approve the 2023/2024 Contests Budget.

This motion was adopted in an Action Without Meeting on April 29, 2024, with 7 votes in the affirmative and 2 abstentions.

Motion to Approve Contests Registration Fees

Renée moved to approve the registration fees:

Diamond Heart Award Contest

- First Entry: RWA member entrants will pay \$65 for the first book entered
- Second Entry: RWA member entrants will pay \$85 for the second book entered
- Non members will pay \$195 for first book entered; and \$195 for second book entered

Golden Heart Award Contest

- The entry fee for the Golden Heart contest is \$55 per entry.

This motion was adopted in an Action Without Meeting on April 29, 2024, with 7 votes in the affirmative and 2 abstentions.

Romance Writers of America, Inc.
Executive Summary
September 2023 - March 2024

CASH POSITION

Total cash as of March 31st, 2024 is \$436K, down from \$499K on September 1st, 2023. Unrestricted cash (funds used for operating expenses) is \$79K, and restricted funds (funds held for specific purposes) is \$357K.

NET INCOME (LOSS)

Net loss through March 31st, 2024 is at \$14K. The net loss this time last year was \$396K, so we are seeing a significant improvement to date.

OTHER UPDATES

2024-2025 Budget: With the assistance of committee chairs, the Audit & Finance committee and the RWA team, the preparation of the 2024-2025 will commence in May and continue throughout June and July. Final approval is scheduled for August to be ready for the start of the new fiscal year on September 1st.

Romance Writers of America Statement of Financial Position

As of March 31, 2024

ASSETS

Current Assets

Cash

Unrestricted Cash 78,754

Restricted Cash 357,229

Total Cash 435,982

Other Current Assets

Other Current Assets 1,912

Prepaid Expenses 2,047

Inventory 2,916

Total Other Current Assets 6,875

TOTAL ASSETS 442,857

LIABILITIES AND EQUITY

Liabilities

Current Liabilities 35,049

Deferred Revenues 67,413

Long Term Liability: EIDL Loan Payable 145,052

Total Liabilities 247,513

Equity

Designated Funds 602,759

Opening Balance Equity 1,190,602

Retained Earnings (1,584,479)

Net Revenue (13,538)

Total Equity 195,344

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY 442,857

Unaudited

Romance Writers of America
Statement of Activity
September 2023 - March 2024

Revenue	
Dues	119,695
Conferences / Meetings / Events	55,295
Other Regular Revenues	13,600
UBI Revenues	3,280
Donations	45
Total Revenue	191,914
Gross Profit	191,914
Expenditures	
Salary Expenses	6,861
Depreciation & Amortization	14,011
Insurance Expenses	4,511
Property Expenses	64
Information Technology	24,972
Office Expenses & Supplies	29,198
Advertising & Marketing PR	11,951
Awards	500
Bank & Credit Cards Fees	4,520
Professional Fees	35,886
Shipping	2,907
Management Fees	70,072
Total Expenditures	205,453
Net Operating Revenue	(13,538)
Net Revenue	(13,538)

Unaudited

OFFICE REPORT – L. CAPUTO

Staff:

Rebekah Arnits - Membership Coordinator

Laura Caputo - Executive Director

Greg Foreman - Tech Lead

Bailey Nolting - Virtual Events

Rosie Rivera - Administrative

Rachel Sheffer - Marketing Coordinator

Member Type	02/22/2024	05/03/2024	Change
Affiliate	20	20	0
Associate	596	593	-3
Charter	18	18	0
Charter Honorary	2	2	0
General	1440	1184	-256
General Honorary	3	3	0
Honorary	71	71	0
	2150	1891	-259

Chapter Affiliation Update

Of RWA's 28 chapters, 18 have completed or nearly completed all of their affiliation requirements by the due date of April, 30, 2024. The RWA Team is working with those chapters that are still completing their requirements.

Traditional Author Weekend 2024 (TAW)

The second iteration of TAW took place the weekend of April 6-7, 2024. The original event hosted 50 attendees whereas the 2024 event hosted 221, a 342% increase in attendance. TAW offered 39 speakers and 26 sessions. Event feedback has been overwhelmingly positive with a current rating of 4.7%.

MemberClicks Transition

The RWA team is in the process of finalizing the transition from iMIS to MemberClicks association management system. The current system, iMIS, has limited the team's ability to communicate with RWA's membership, resulting in a reduced quantity and quality of member messaging. We expect to finalize the transition to the new system before the May 16th board meeting.

AUDIT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

BOARD LIAISON – B. WILLS

Committee Charge: The Audit & Finance Committee, chaired by the Treasurer, shall be responsible for selecting an independent CPA firm to conduct the annual audit, for reviewing the annual audited financial statements and any associated management letter detailing deficiencies, and for reviewing the related tax returns before all materials are presented to the Board, and shall assist the Treasurer as requested on financial and budgetary matters.

Committee Report: The committee is reviewing the audit report and tax returns during May. Also we are starting budget preparation for the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

Successes/Action items Completed: N/A

Summary of Action Items In-Progress/Pending: In Quarter 4, the committee will be reviewing the audit and completed tax return and working with the RWA team and RWA committee chairs to develop the 2024-2025 budget.

Current Challenges: None at this time.

Recognition: As treasurer, I very much appreciate how responsive the committee always is.

Name and Title of Committee Member Completing the Report: Brooke Wills, Treasurer

What Quarter Does This Report Cover?: Q3 (March - May)

Does This Report Require Board Action?: No

What type of Board action is required?: N/A

CONFERENCE WORKSHOP COMMITTEE

BOARD LIAISON – J. RENÉE

Committee Charge: The Conference Workshop Committee shall coordinate, plan, and oversee the selection and scheduling for workshops for the RWA Annual Conference, Indie Author Weekend (2-day virtual mini conference), and Traditional Author Weekend (2-day virtual mini conference). The Conference Workshop Committee shall ensure that the conferences' programs reflect RWA's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access—including, but not limited to, the speakers chosen, and the topics covered in the workshops.

Committee Report: Over the last quarter we have finalized the speakers and presenters for the Traditional Author Weekend, scheduled the event and brought it to fruition. The weekend was a huge success. The feedback has been very positive from attendees and presenters. Industry professionals were in attendance.

The committee has been sent the link to the Workshop Proposal for the National Conference with a request to revise and make it more relevant so that it will be ready to go for when the conference is ready to be announced.

Successes/Action items Completed: Traditional Author Weekend – completed and a success

Summary of Action Items In-Progress/Pending: Review of RWA Annual Conference workshop proposal form.

Current Challenges: Waiting on board to give permission as to when we can start accepting workshop proposals for the RWA annual conference so that the committee has ample time to review, select, and notify speakers in time for event.

Recognition: My thanks to Toni Jackson, Dawn Reed-Staton, and Jacki Renee for their hard work and stepping up to help find speakers and volunteering to moderate as well as the other board members and committee members.

Name and Title of Committee Member Completing the Report: Gail Chianese, Chair

What Quarter Does This Report Cover?: Q3 (March - May)

Does This Report Require Board Action?: Yes

What type of Board action is required?:

If the action requires a vote, the Board liaison must complete and submit a Motion Form; otherwise, describe the item(s) that require Board action:

Committee report discussion included the following statement from the President: We thank the Conference Workshop Committee for their hard work. Rest assured that as soon as RWA has information to announce, we will do so as quickly as possible.

CONTEST COMMITTEE

BOARD LIAISON – J. RENÉE

Committee Charge: The Contest Committee shall assist the Executive Director with the establishment and overall planning and operation of all RWA national contests; and under the direction of the Executive Director, shall handle any contest result challenges pursuant to the Contest Policy outlined in Section 17. Each Contest's period, the Contest Committee shall establish actionable goals that measure the progress of RWA national contests in accordance with the intended benefit of the Contest. A Board liaison shall be assigned to this committee.

Committee Report: The committee meets weekly to discuss the progress of the 2024 iterations of the Golden Heart and Diamond Heart Awards.

Successes/Action items Completed: Over the last quarter, we were able to get several things off our plate.

- We have new logos for the Golden Heart and Diamond Heart Awards.
- We created a style book for both awards to ensure consistency of the design and layout of the awards going forward.
- The logos (and the newly created Diamond Heart Award) are currently in the process of being trademarked.
- We have a new website for the contest (<https://rwacontest.org/>) that is currently accepting judge applications.

Summary of Action Items In-Progress/Pending: We have several action items that are in progress:

- Trademarking the new Diamond Heart Award (ongoing)
- Creation and implementation of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility training for judges. We hope to have this up and running within the next week.
- Continued improvements to the contest website. Currently, the site is barebones as we get it up and running. We see this as a continuing process for improvements as we progress.
- We have opened the website for judge recruitment. Emails and social media posts recruiting judges are underway.
- Opening the website for submissions. Our goal is still to start accepting submissions in June.

Current Challenges: Our number one challenge right now is waiting for updates to our timeline. We're also waiting for broader input and revising of the diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and social justice training for judges. We hope to get this finished soon so we can have this ready to go before we recruit judges.

We're also discussing and exploring ways of recruiting a broader range of romance authors and judges. When we start the push for recruitment, we'll need any help possible to get this information out to a diverse array of people.

Recognition: I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to each member of our committee for their unwavering commitment and understanding during the process. Their continued contributions have been invaluable.

Name and Title of Committee Member Completing the Report: Jason Wrench, Chair

What Quarter Does This Report Cover?: Q3 (March - May)

Does This Report Require Board Action?: No

The following was added to the report during the meeting: The Contest Committee received approval of updates on the contest timeline, revisions of the contest administration rules, and revisions of the policies for objectionable materials and rescindment of awards. The DEIA section of the training for judges has been updated and uploaded to the training website. Also, the committee has extended the deadline for judge sign ups and completion of judge training in hope of recruiting a larger number of judges for the contests.

The committee report discussion included a suggestion to reach out to RNA to recruit judges and prospective contest entrants. The Board and members attending the meeting were encouraged to share the postings on social media.

DIVERSITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

BOARD LIAISON – C. BRETT

Committee Charge: The Diversity Advisory Committee shall make recommendations and provide information and materials to the Board on diversity, inclusion, and access issues that impact RWA and its members.

Committee Report:

- The Committee discussed a DAC Complaint presented regarding a section of the Pen-to-Paper program.
- The Committee reviewed a complaint from the Traditional Author Weekend.
- The Committee discussed articles concerning the increased diversity in Romance novels.
- The Committee read an article concerning Tracey Livesay's input with the Sense and Sensibility Hallmark movie project.
- The Committee did not meet in April 2024.
- Upcoming (May Meeting)
- Discuss ensuring inclusive language is a part of RWA's DEI efforts.
- Discuss creation of a DEI success measurements

Successes/Action items Completed: N/A

Summary of Action Items In-Progress/Pending:

- Contact P2P Committee regarding Pen-to-Paper training and suggest references to creation of diverse secondary characters be removed from this section; also recommend DAC reviews all future projects/updates before they are instituted. (In Progress)
- Discussed increase in diverse novels traditionally published by LGBTQ+, Asian and Hispanic authors, but the lack of increase with African American authors. Consideration of ways to help increase these numbers. (Pending)

Current Challenges: N/A

Recognitions: N/A

Name and Title of Committee Member Completing the Report: Toni Jackson-Goins

What Quarter Does This Report Cover?: Q3 (March - May)

Does This Report Require Board Action?: No

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

BOARD LIAISON – MARIAN H. GRIFFIN

Committee Charge: The Leadership Development Committee shall create a process to identify potential future RWA leaders within membership, get those people involved at the chapter level and at the national committee level, and help them to grow in their leadership skills. In addition, the committee shall solicit the general membership for at least two candidates for each open board position, assist the President-Elect in making choices for assistant chairs per section.

Committee Report: [No report submitted]

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

BOARD LIAISON – URSULA RENEE

Committee Charge: Membership Outreach Committee. The Membership Outreach Committee shall be tasked with membership outreach and member support by creating initiatives and materials to help retain current membership and to increase membership.

- Plan, bring to the Board for approval, and execute a bi-yearly membership drive.
- Create a yearly membership survey based on current topics and industry norms, to gauge the direction the membership would like to see the organization and what member benefits are most desired.
- Maintain and update the onboarding and off boarding email sequences to make sure they are the most effective in either helping members feel welcome and give them the most important information or to help make members choose to remain members.
- Study and research current membership retention and acquisition practices within the non-profit sector and similar groups to RWA and report back to the Board on any information that may prove helpful.
- Assist with creation of promotional materials/ads/copy/images/Social media posts/ etc. and work with staff and any RWA consultants in charge of marketing to regularly post about becoming a member or RWA points of interest for our current members.
- Assist staff with emails and marketing to go out to all non-member attendees of all events no more than 7 days after any given event to attempt to convert them to membership.
- Work with staff to create an easy path to national conference non-member attendees to register for membership on site at the conference.

Committee Report: The Membership Outreach Committee has worked with Rebekah Arnits from AMC Source to update the welcome emails for newly joined members. Once the move from IMIS to Memberclicks is completed, new members will receive emails highlighting the various programs offered by RWA.

The committee is also working on a survey to get feedback on what members would like RWA to offer.

Finally, we are discussing the various events we can offer during a membership drive.

Successes/Action items Completed: Volunteers from the Membership Outreach Committee created a video for Traditional Author Weekend that highlighted the various benefits of RWA. We also participated in a Q&A Session with RWA President, Clair Brett.

Summary of Action Items In-Progress/Pending:

- Complete survey to learn what members want from RWA.
- Research how other organizations similar to RWA recruit members

Current Challenges: The Membership Outreach Committee needs more volunteers. We will post an ad in the RWR to recruit more members.

Recognition: Thank you to Sadye Storey who has works hard in finding ways to recruit and retain members.

Name and Title of Committee Member Completing the Report: Ursula Renee, Board Liaison

What Quarter Does This Report Cover?: Q3 (March - May)

Does this report require Board action?: No

Committee report discussion included posting a call for volunteers in eNotes, direct emails to members, and including all committees in the RWR with a hyperlink to each committee's charge/description on the website. The PAN and PRO Advisors will post an announcement in their community forums.

PAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

BOARD LIAISON – D. WINTERS

Committee Charge: The PAN Advisory Committee shall make recommendations and provide information to the Board regarding ways to protect the interests of published romance writers, enhance the channels of communication between romance authors and publishing industry professionals, and coordinate activities by and for PAN members.

Committee Report: *[The following report was omitted from the agenda]*

- *The next PAN Power Up class is slated to take place as scheduled.*
- *We have been actively looking for sponsors in order to help cover the speaker's honorariums until there is room in the RWA's budget to cover the cost of these events. So far, we have found a sponsor, Danica is/has contacted the president in order to get sponsorships up and running.*
- *If anyone knows of companies or individuals willing to sponsor the PAN/Pro Power Ups, please let us know. We would love to expand marketing efforts.*
- *Robin, Nancy, Danica and their teams have been meeting to coordinate efforts.*
- *In the near future, I would like to set up a forum for published authors to have a heavily moderated chat/forum where they can ask questions and swap marketing opportunities with other participants within RWA.*

The PAN Advisor also added that the PAN Community forum on groupsio is live. We've had a tremendous outpouring of support from PAN members and we've had a huge influx of membership on the forum today. I've created letters to everybody that joined us. Our classes and power ups have been going very very well. We've discussed doing the sponsorships. We're working on a budget for this fall and everything's on track for moving forward.

PEN TO PAPER COMMITTEE

BOARD LIAISON – CLAIR BRETT

BOARD LIAISON – MARIAN H. GRIFFIN

Committee Charge: The Pen to Paper Committee shall coordinate, plan, and along with the Executive Director and Board of Directors, oversee the annual program. The Pen to Paper Committee shall ensure that the program reflects RWA's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access.

Committee Report: In Q3, the Pen to Paper Committee continued overseeing the participants in the 2023-2024 P2P Program. Multiple new workshops were created and existing workshops from the prior year were extended to the participants. P2P hosted a genre gathering in March, with a potential second gathering being planned. P2P started on January 8, 2024, and as of April 28, we are currently in the middle of lesson two of course two. The PSq Program started on January 14, 2024, and graduation is scheduled for June 1. We continue to handle any participant questions and concerns with the programs. We have set up critique groups for participants and sprints continue to be held.

Successes/Action items Completed: Onboarded 43 people (two have dropped) in P2P Program. Onboarded thirty people in the PSq program (two have dropped). There are six critique groups. Several additional workshops (outside the curriculum) have been held for both programs.

Summary of Action Items In-Progress/Pending: Diplomas and graduations are being planned. Sprint groups continue. Weekly meetings held for all programs. Program continues to move forward as expected.

Current Challenges: Timing of Vimeo files; potential workshops.

Name and Title of Committee Member Completing the Report: Sally Murphy, Chair

What Quarter Does This Report Cover?: Q3 (March - May)

Does This Report Require Board Action?: No

Committee report discussion included a clarification of the challenges related to the timing of Vimeo Videos. Suggestions for obtaining workshop speakers included creating a central place where committees can share speaker information.

POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

BOARD LIAISON – M. KARLIK

Committee Charge: The Policy Advisory Committee shall monitor public policy and legislation as well as public events that have the potential to impact RWA members, the romance writing industry, and writers, in general. The committee shall make recommendations to the Board regarding actions the Board may undertake regarding policy and legislation.

Committee Report: The AI situation is ongoing. The suit filed through the Author's Guild, to require AI developers to compensate creators for ingested information is one of the first to receive and actual date to go to court - January of 2025. Parties are in the process of submitting disclosures at this time.

The Author's Guild is also in the process of working out a collective license agreement that RWA would be a part of that would compensate creators for work ingested going forward. Authors have the right to allow their work to be ingested, an opt in, and then to be compensated for it's use. The collective license agreement will determine how writers would be compensated. The Author's Guild is currently in conversation with publishers as it's believed that the way to get this done is to work together, with the intention that author's receive a larger split of proceeds than their publishers who hold the rights to their works. At this time, the license is intended to apply to all books that have registered copyrights.

The board asked the that committee review agent and publisher recognition standards. (Old term, I know.) As far agent regulations we have this to add:

Instead of the "Industry Code" we code state that the agent has to adhere to the Code of Ethics as set by the AALA? We don't feel that it's appropriate to require an agent to join another trade organization, but we can require that they follow the professional ethics of such an agency.

One other big change in the industry is that many agents freelance edit, offer coaching services and/or also receive compensation for attending conferences, speaking and taking pitches. Do we need to address any other these other revenue streams? Maybe we require that if they are offering additional services (editing/coaching) they need to have a clearly defined contract that does not guarantee publication/representation by performing those services?

And for the publisher standards, these are our thoughts: The current standards seem appropriate, with some additional things for the board to think about:

Some of this might already be in the boilerplate contract that the publisher should submit but it might be easier to ask it right up front rather than have someone dig through the contract.

1. Do you charge authors for any services and if so, please provide a list of those services along with the prices for same?
2. Do you apply for the copyright on behalf of the author?
3. Do you retain any intellectual property rights to the work created, i.e. the series name, cover copy, or edits made to the original work?
4. Upon reversion of rights, do you permit the author to purchase the final formatted version of the work?
5. Do you provide author's copies and if so, is there any charge for the author copies?

6. Do you provide marketing support to authors and if so, please provide a few examples of the nature of marketing support, i.e., paid promotions and social media ads.

Successes/Action items Completed: See above

Summary of Action Items In-Progress/Pending: Ongoing conversation as things happen in the industry. AI.

Current Challenges: None. This is a great committee filled with eager to help industry professionals.

Recognition: N/A

Name and Title of Committee Member Completing the Report: Tara Taylor Quinn

What Quarter Does This Report Cover?: Q2 (December - February)

Does This Report Require Board Action?: Yes

What type of Board action is required?: Review

If the action requires a vote, the Board liaison must complete and submit a Motion Form; otherwise, describe the item(s) that require Board action: Suggestions for Agent and Publisher Standards.

The following was added to the report during the meeting: Last November we voted to contribute funds to the Amicus brief. As a reminder: The question before the court in this instance, will be whether copyright plaintiffs can recover for damages incurred more than three years before the lawsuit was filed. The Supreme Court's decision was there is no separate 3-year limit on the damages a copyright plaintiff can recover under the Copyright Act. If you find out that your copyrighted work has been plagiarized, and it's been more than 3 years since the event occurred, you can file a court case.

The committee report discussion included a clarification of the request for board action on agent and publisher standards. The committee is recommending that if agents are freelance editor or offer coaching services that somehow they have a statement that separates them from their agenting so that it doesn't look like they're being paid to agent. Also, that the agent adheres to the industry code of ethics.

A suggestion was made for the committee to come up with recommendations for updates to the policy manual's sections related to agents and editors. Another suggestion was made that the update includes that industry professionals also have a DEIA statement.

PRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE

BOARD LIAISON – R. HILLYER-MILES

Committee Charge: The PRO Advisory Committee shall make recommendations and provide information to the Board regarding ways to support and promote unpublished writers in the areas between manuscript completion and publication, enhance the channels of communication between those romance writers and publishing industry professionals, and coordinate activities by and for PRO members.

Committee Report: [*The following report was submitted during the meeting*]

Our next PRO meeting is on the 21st which is Tuesday, and I will post something on the PRO forum and in the main forum probably tomorrow

ROMANCE AUTHOR MENTORSHIP PROGRAM (RAMP) COMMITTEE

BOARD LIAISON – L. TURNER

BOARD LIAISON – J. RENÉE

Committee Charge: The Romance Author Mentorship Program (RAMP) Committee shall coordinate, plan, and along with the Executive Director and Staff, oversee the annual program. The Romance Author Mentorship (RAMP) Committee shall ensure that the program reflects RWA's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access.

Committee Report: The committee completed the revisions of the information to be published on the website. The 2024 RAMP schedule has been created and is included in this report. Board Member, Laina Turner will take the lead on the implementation of the 2024 offering of RAMP.

Successes/Action items Completed: Revised information on RAMP. Creation of 2024 RAMP schedule.

2024 Schedule

June 3 - Mentor applications open

June 28 - Mentor applications close

July 3 - Mentors announced

July 8 - Mentee applications open

August 2 - Mentee applications close

August 9 - Applicants notified of application status

August 26 - RAMP 2024 Mentees notified

August 28 - Mentees announced/Mentor/Mentee Zoom Meetup

September 3 - Mentor/Mentee 16-weeks begin

December 13 - Mentor/Mentee 16-weeks end

January 2025 - Mentees attend Indie Author Weekend

April 2025 - Mentees attend Traditional Author Weekend/RAMP Pitch Day

Summary of Action Items In-Progress/Pending: Promotion of RAMP 2024. Review of mentor and mentee application. Establish communication with chapter leaders to assist with getting more published members to volunteer as RAMP Mentors.

Current Challenges: N/A

Recognition: I would like to thank Lara Zielinsky (2023 RAMP Mentor) and Samantha Netzband (2023 RAMP Mentee) for volunteering to serve on the committee.

Name and Title of Committee Member Completing the Report: Jacki Renée, Board Liaison

What Quarter Does This Report Cover?: Q3 (March - May)

Does This Report Require Board Action?: Yes

If the action requires a vote, the Board liaison must complete and submit a Motion Form; otherwise, describe the item(s) that require Board action: Review 2024 RAMP Schedule

Board review of committee's report included a question about the 2024 RAMP Schedule running into observed holiday events in December. Co-Board liaison J. Renée responded that mentors and mentees set their own schedules during the 16 week manuscript review process. Co-Advisor L. Turner confirmed that the website will be updated soon.

RWA UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE

BOARD LIAISON – A.M. ROARK

Committee Charge: The RWA University Committee provides classes and other online educational resources to members and help to ensure that the RWA University reflects RWA's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access—including, but not limited to, the speakers whose work is featured and the topics covered in the educational resources.

Committee Report: *[The following report was submitted during the meeting]*

Ursula Renee and I met because I still was uncertain about my role and then the overall committee. She helped me to understand the committee. I sent a long e-mail to Laura. Laura was able to get some feedback from Jacki Renée and Claire and they addressed a couple of our issues. One of the things that we talked about was the need for some kind of collaboration with PAN and PRO Advisors and possibly RWR Committee to create synergistic or some synergy in some of these committees so that share speaker information. I've mentioned repeatedly a shared calendar and that was addressed. RWA isn't the organization it was a year ago. The process that was in place then, we simply cannot do now. We were given advice on revising the process. In addition, we want to come up some kind of a guide for managing or navigating all of the different offerings that we have. Moreover, updating the pages on the website and creating digital bundles.

The committee report discussion included reaching out to the AMC Source marketing team to collaborate on communications related to committee events happening in the organization.

RWR CONTENT COMMITTEE

BOARD LIAISON – A. LEARNED

Committee Charge: The *RWR* Content Committee will work with RWA staff to develop content for the *RWR*, solicit authors for article, review articles upon submission and prior to publication, and help to ensure the *RWR* reflects RWA’s commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access—including, but not limited to, the authors whose work is featured and the sources who are quoted within the articles.

Committee Report: The *RWR* Content Committee continues to meet on a monthly basis to discuss the acquisition of articles for the magazine.

The committee has identified monthly themes and are having some success with this. Non-members have been the greatest source of articles to date.

The committee remains open to feedback from its membership, as well as the members of RWA and the board, for directions on the future of the magazine. We are still pursuing the ability to create a steady influx of articles to support the monthly publication as we feel this provides the greatest support to RWA members.

Successes/Action items Completed: We have updated the Pitchbox to include months, themes and a deadline for submissions, which has given the committee more time to review the articles. Because of some committee members confusion with the files section of groups.io, we are posting the articles for review in pdf format on a google drive along with a google form for their response.

Summary of Action Items In-Progress/Pending: We are working on how we can encourage our members to submit articles.

Current Challenges: What is the best way to line and copy edit articles.

Name and Title of Committee Member Completing the Report: Anita Learned, Director-At-Large, RWR Committee Board Liaison

What Quarter Does This Report Cover?: Q3 (March - May)

Does This Report Require Board Action?: No

The committee report discussion include a suggestion for the creation of an editorial calendar to help streamline each article through acceptance, line and/or copy edits, to published. It was also suggested that the committee offer freelance editors an exchange: three months of editing for an ad in the RWR.

MOTION #1: TO APPROVE RWR COMMITTEE MEMBER

Learned moved to approval the following members to serve on the RWR Content Committee:

Christine Ashworth
Patricia Anne Pierce-Garcia Schaack

The motion was adopted by general consent.

NEW BUSINESS

ADJOURN President Brett adjourned the meeting at 7:51 p.m. central time