

Romance Writers of America  
Board Meeting Agenda  
May 22, 2021  
Virtual Meeting

**Saturday, May 22, 2021**

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**CALL TO ORDER:** President LaQuette called the meeting to order at 12 noon CT on Saturday, May 22, 2021.

**ROLL CALL/CERTIFICATION OF QUORUM:** President LaQuette directed Executive Director Leslie Scantlebury to call the roll in Secretary Chilove's absence. 10 board members were present: Officers LaQuette and Laura Alford were present. Secretary Chilove was excused. Directors-at-Large, Elf Ahearn, Clair Brett, Antonia Cyn, Veronica Forand, Seressia Glass, Siera London, Jacki Renee and Elizabeth Schechter were present. Advisor Nancy Weeks was present and Catherine Stuart was excused. RWA Staff members Executive Director Leslie Scantlebury, Erin Fry, Jackie Padilla and Ashley Wucher were present. With a majority of the Board members needed to establish a quorum, there were 10 voting board members present and the Chair declared a quorum.

**The following RWA member guests were in attendance:** Helen Aitken, Sarah Daniel, Win Day, Melanie Greene, Shari Heinrich, M.F. Hopkins, Mary Karlik, Cathay Matuszak, Patricia Mayfield, Shannon Moreau, Michelle Orloff, Linda Rice, Romy Sommer, and Christiana Tegethoff.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT** - LaQuette

Since our last meeting, we've engaged on a couple of projects, including:

- (1) Opening registration for the retreat that will be held in July;
- (2) Launching RAMP, currently in session. First cohort will be concluded in July;
- (3) Launching Pen to Paper program, which we will hear more about shortly; and
- (4) Creating Own Voices Pathways program

## SECRETARY'S REPORT – C. Chilove

### **Motion to Discontinue Print Version of the RWR**

*LaQuette moves to discontinue the print edition of the Romance Writers Report (with the April 2021 issue being the final print magazine) with a digital version to debut at a later date.*

The motion was adopted in an Action without Meeting on January 19 with 8 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 1 abstention.

### **Motion to Approve the November 2020 Board Meeting Minutes**

*LaQuette moves to approve the November 2020 Board Meeting minutes.*

The motion was adopted in an Action without Meeting on January 19 with 8 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 1 abstention.

### **Motion to Approve the December 2020 Board Meeting Minutes**

*LaQuette moves to approve the December 2020 Board Meeting minutes.*

The motion was adopted in an Action without Meeting on January 19 with 8 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 1 abstention.

### **Motion to Amend the Bylaws**

*LaQuette moves that the Board of Directors recommend the below proposed bylaws amendment to the membership for a vote:*

***Section 7.2. Composition.** The Board of Directors of RWA shall consist of the Officers of RWA and a minimum 6 or maximum of 12 Directors-at-Large.*

The motion was adopted in an Action without Meeting on January 21 with 7 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 2 abstention.

### **Motion to Update Conference Policy**

*LaQuette moves to amend policy as follows:*

*~~5.16.1.10. Recipients of the RWA Emma Merritt Service Award and the RWA Service Award. Recipients who have already earned comped Conferences shall not be required to spend any previously earned comped Conferences when attending Conference to receive these awards.~~*

*~~5.16.6. If the Librarian of the Year and the Bookseller of the Year are at the Conference, a plaque for each shall be presented there. RWA shall provide a comped Conference and pay expenses for the winner to attend, including airfare and a room at the Conference hotel. Expenses shall not exceed a predetermined maximum as approved by the Board.~~*

*~~5.17. Complimentary Rooms~~*

<b><i>Rooms Charged to Master Account</i></b>	<b><i># of nights</i></b>
<i>Board</i>	8
<i>Certain selected speakers</i>	5
<i>Librarians Day speaker</i>	5
<i>Awards Ceremony Emcee</i>	5
<i>PAN Keynote Speaker</i>	<i>per contract</i>
<i>PRO speaker</i>	2
<i>RWA LTA recipient</i>	5
<i>RWA Cathie Linz Librarian of the Year award recipient</i>	5
<i>RWA Steffie Walker Bookseller of the Year award recipient</i>	5
<i>Emma Merritt Service Award recipient</i>	2
<i>Vivian Stephens Industry award recipient</i>	2
<i>Conference workshop chairperson</i>	5
<i>Other hired speakers</i>	<i>per contract</i>
<i>Vendors</i>	<i>per contract</i>

<b><i>Reimbursable rooms</i></b>	<b><i># of nights</i></b>
<i>Literacy chairperson</i>	2
<i>Awards ceremony chairperson</i>	3
<i>Workshop committee chairperson</i>	5
<i>Workshop committee co chair</i>	<i>1/2 of 5 nights</i>
<i>Awards ceremony co chair</i>	<i>1/2 of 3 nights</i>

The motion was adopted in an Action without Meeting on January 21 with 7 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 2 abstention.

### **Motion to Update Awards Policy**

*LaQuette moves to amend policy as follows:*

*12.3. Emma Merritt Service Award*

*12.3.1. Formerly the National Service Award and the Golden Rose, this award is the highest honor awarded by RWA for volunteer service.*

*12.3.2. It may be presented annually to no more than one recipient.*

*12.3.3. Only RWA General or Honorary members are eligible.*

*12.3.4. This award is not for service to individual chapters, but is intended to honor repeated major commitments of service to RWA and is presented for the accumulated body of effort a volunteer may make during a lifetime.*

*12.3.5. A member may receive this award only once in a lifetime.*

*12.3.6. Prior recipients of the National Service Award or the Golden Rose are not eligible to receive the Emma Merritt Service Award.*

*12.3.7. Members of the Board are not eligible for this award during their tenure in office.*

*12.3.8. The Board shall vote on nominees for this award.*

~~*12.3.9. The Award is a plaque presented during the Conference. The President shall select the presenters for the awards. RWA shall provide a comped Conference and hotel accommodations for two nights at the Conference hotel to the recipient of the Emma Merritt Service Award.*~~

*12.4. Service Award*

*12.4.1. Formerly the Regional Service Award and the Silver Rose, this award may be presented annually to no more than a total of seven RWA General or Honorary members.*

*12.4.2. This award is not for service to individual chapters, but is intended to honor major commitments to service to RWA and is presented for cumulative efforts, not one specific individual act.*

*12.4.3. A member may receive this award only once in a lifetime.*

*12.4.4. Prior recipients of the Emma Merritt Service Award, National Service Award, the Golden Rose, the Regional Service Award, and the Silver Rose are not eligible for the RWA Service Award.*

*12.4.5. Members of the RWA Board are not eligible for this award during their tenure in office.*

*12.4.6. The Board shall vote on nominees for this award.*

~~*12.4.7. The Awards are plaques presented during the Conference. The President shall select the presenters for the awards. RWA shall provide a comped Conference to Service Award recipients.*~~

*12.5. Vivian Stephens Industry Professional Award*

*12.5.1. This award may be presented to one of more professionals in the romance-publishing industry, who is not a writer, who has contributed to the genre or to RWA in a significant and/or continuing manner.*

12.5.2. *The award is for an accumulated body of work and may not be given every year if no candidate is clearly identified as meeting the level of excellence established by past recipients of the Award.*

~~12.5.3. The award is a plaque and shall be presented during the Conference.~~

#### 12.6. Cathie Linz Librarian of the Year (LOY) Award

12.6.1. *This award may be given annually to a single librarian who demonstrates outstanding support of the romance genre.*

12.6.2. *The ED shall coordinate the award and nominations.*

12.6.3. *The winner is notified via a phone call from the RWA President.*

~~12.6.4. If the RWA LOY is at the conference, a plaque shall be presented there.~~

~~12.6.5. RWA shall provide a comped Conference and pay expenses for the winner to attend, including airfare and hotel accommodations for five nights at the Conference hotel.~~

~~12.6.6. If the RWA LOY does not attend the Conference, a plaque may be delivered by mail with an accompanying letter from the President, but the winner shall be announced at the Conference.~~

#### 12.7. RWA Lifetime Achievement Award (LTA)

12.7.1. *The LTA is an award of excellence that may be presented each year to an RWA member whose career in Romance Fiction spans a minimum of 15 years and who continues to support the genre.*

12.7.2. *Nominations for the award are submitted by the General membership via letter, fax, or e-mail.*

12.7.3. *The nominating letter shall list the reasons the nominee deserves the award and shall include the publication date and title of a book by the nominee with a copyright date at least 15 years prior to the current calendar year.*

12.7.4. *The ED shall determine verification of eligibility.*

12.7.5. *The winner shall be selected by the Board in Executive Session.*

12.7.6. *Qualifications for the award:*

12.7.7. *The author shall be living.*

12.7.8. *The author shall have a book published with a copyright date at least 15 years prior to the current year.*

12.7.9. *The author shall have demonstrated continued support of the genre through writing Romance Fiction and/or by teaching, lecturing and/or public speaking on Romance Fiction.*

12.7.10. *The LTA recipient's bio will be published in the July RWR.*

~~12.7.11. RWA shall provide a comped Conference and pay expenses for the winner to attend, including airfare and hotel accommodations for five nights at the Conference hotel.~~

~~12.7.12. The LTA recipient will be honored at the Conference with a table at the Literacy Autographing and other special recognition through the Conference, culminating in presentation of the award, a Vivian statuette, at the Awards Ceremony.~~

~~12.7.13. LTA recipients shall also receive a gold pin in the image of a Vivian. This pin may be presented at any time after the announcement of the recipient.~~

12.7.14. The recipient's picture and bio will be displayed alongside the Vivian finalists.

12.7.15. The names of all recipients shall be inscribed on the LTA plaque.

#### 12.8. Steffie Walker Bookseller of the Year (BOY) Award

12.8.1. This award may be given annually to one bookseller who provides outstanding service to romance readers and demonstrates notable support of romance authors and the romance genre.

~~12.8.2. A plaque shall be presented at the Conference.~~

~~12.8.3. RWA shall provide a comped Conference and pay expenses for the winner to attend, including airfare and accommodations for five nights at the Conference hotel.~~

#### 12.9. Veritas Award

12.9.1. This award may be given annually for the nonfiction work, in print or other mass medium, that best depicts the romance genre in a positive light.

12.9.2. The winner is notified via phone call from the ED and a letter signed by the President.

~~12.9.3. A plaque shall be presented at the Conference.~~

The motion was adopted in an Action without Meeting on January 21 with 7 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 2 abstention.

#### **Motion to Move Vivian Finalist Announcement Date**

*LaQuette moves to update the date of the finalists announcement for the Vivian contest as follows:*

The official list of finalists will be posted on RWA's website by 2:00 p.m. CT on ~~March 29, 2021~~ April 14, 2021. On ~~March 29, 2021~~ April 14, 2021, the RWA staff shall notify finalists via email.

The motion was adopted in an Action without Meeting on February 9 with 9 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 0 abstention.

#### **Motion to Amend the Bylaws**

*LaQuette moves that the Board of Directors recommend the below proposed bylaws amendments to the membership for a vote:*

***Section 7.2. Composition.** The Board of Directors of RWA shall consist of the Officers of RWA and no less than 6 ~~12~~ Directors-at-Large. The number of Directors-at-Large may*

increase or decrease per thousand RWA members with 6 as a minimum and a maximum of 12.

**Section 10.4. Resignation.** Any Officer, Director, or Advisor may resign at any time by sending written notice to the President ~~or~~ and Executive Director. Any such resignation shall be effective and binding upon receipt or, if a later time or date is specified in such resignation, at such later time or date.

**12.4.4. Inspection.** The list of voting members shall be available for inspection by voting members, or a voting member's agent or attorney, ~~at RWA's principal office~~ until the date of the meeting of members. The list of voting members shall be available for inspection by voting members at the annual conference location from the first to the last day of business during reasonable business hours and at all times during the annual general meeting of members.

~~**8.1.1. Chapter Board Advisor.** The RWA chapters shall elect a Chapter Board Advisor, who shall advise the Board on matters involving RWA chapters. Each chapter shall cast one vote in such election.~~

~~**8.1.2. Communities of Practice Advisors.** Each Community of Practice shall elect an Advisor, who shall advise the Board on matters specific to that community of practice.~~

**Section 11.1. Election Schedule.** Elections shall be conducted during the fourth quarter of RWA's fiscal year. Officers and Directors shall take office and Advisors shall begin serving on the first day of the new fiscal year, subject to any timely filed challenges. The Treasurer shall be elected in even-numbered years. The Secretary shall be elected in odd-numbered years. The terms of Directors-at-Large shall be staggered with ~~six~~ half of the Directors-at-Large being elected each year. The President-Elect shall be elected every year for an effective two-year term, which shall consist of one year as President-Elect and the subsequent year as President.

**Section 11.2. Qualifications.** In order to be eligible for a Board ~~or~~ Advisor position (whether elected or appointed), a candidate must: (1) have been a General member for a minimum of ~~five~~ three consecutive years, with any lapses in membership being less than six cumulative months in duration; (2) not have a material conflict of interest that would disqualify the person from holding the intended office; (3) not have been found to have violated the RWA Code of Ethics; (4) not be a publisher, acquiring editor, or agent who actively acquires romance fiction or actively offers representation to writers of romance fiction, as further described in RWA policy; (5) have completed DEIA training, as further described in RWA policy. An individual who has served a full term as President is no longer eligible to run for or hold any Board or Advisor positions. Candidates for specific positions must also have the following qualifications:

**11.2.1. President.** Candidates for President must: (1) have been General members for a minimum of five consecutive years immediately preceding filing for office, with any lapses in membership being less than six cumulative months in duration; (2) be the author or co-author of at least three romance novels published in the past five years as defined in RWA policy; (3) have published or contracted to publish at least one romance novel, as defined in RWA policy, within the two years immediately preceding filing for office; and (4) must have completed one full year of RWA Board service, but cannot have had more than ~~six~~ eight years of cumulative RWA Board and/or RWA Advisor service.

*Except in cases of a special election, the President must have served as President-Elect prior to assuming the presidency.*

**11.2.2. President-Elect.** *Candidates for President-Elect must: (1) have been General members for a minimum of five consecutive years immediately preceding filing for office, with any lapses in membership being less than six cumulative months in duration; (2) be the author or co-author of at least three romance novels published in the past five years as defined in RWA policy; (3) have published or contracted to publish at least one romance novel, as defined in RWA policy, within the two years immediately preceding filing for office; and (4) must have completed one full year of RWA Board service or at least three years of RWA chapter board service in one or more officer positions, one year of which was serving as chapter president, but cannot have had more than ~~six~~ eight years of cumulative RWA Board and/or RWA Advisor service.*

**11.2.4. Secretary.** *Candidates for Secretary must possess strong organizational, record keeping, and communication skills.*

**11.3.1. Directors-at-Large, Treasurer, and Secretary.** *The Directors-at-Large, Treasurer, and Secretary shall hold office for a two-year term. An individual may serve no more than two full terms in any such office. Nothing shall prohibit an individual from seeking a different office following two full terms in office, so long as the cumulative length of Board and Advisor service is no longer than ~~six~~ eight years (provided, however, that an individual with ~~six~~ eight years of cumulative Board and Advisor service shall not be disqualified from seeking the office of President-Elect and President).*

**11.3.2. Advisors.** *If serving, Advisors shall serve a two-year term. An individual may serve no more than two full terms in any such advisory position. An individual who has a cumulative length of Board and Advisor service of at least ~~six~~ eight years may not serve as an advisor.*

**12.2.6. Attendance by General Members.** *General members shall be allowed to attend all ~~in-person~~ meetings of the Board of Directors as observers but must vacate the Board Room during Executive Session. The cost of attendance shall be borne by the General member.*

The motion was adopted in an Action without Meeting on February 22 with 9 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 0 abstention.

### **Motion to Implement Membership Referral Program**

*Brett moves to implement a membership referral program where if a current members brings a new member into the membership the current member will receive \$10 off their next renewal price and the new member will receive \$10 off their first membership price. The program will end on March 31, 2022.*

The motion was adopted in an Action without Meeting on February 22 with 9 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 0 abstention.



**Motion to Approve an Own Voices Program Fund**

*LaQuette moves to create an Own Voices Fund to be used to enhance RWA's Own Voices Program and DEIA initiatives including but not limited to, education and advocacy.*

The motion was adopted in an Action without Meeting on February 22 with 9 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 0 abstention.

**Motion to Approve an Education Fund**

*LaQuette moves create an Education Fund to be used to enhance RWA's educational resources.*

The motion was adopted in an Action without Meeting on February 22 with 8 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 1 abstention.

**Motion to Approve the Awards Ceremony Emcee**

*LaQuette moves to approve Caraway Carter as the Awards Ceremony Emcee.*

The motion was adopted in an Action without Meeting on February 22 with 9 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 0 abstention.

**Motion to Approve Director-at-Large Nominations**

*LaQuette moves to nominate the following members to vacant director-at-large positions:*

- *Veronica Forand*
- *Jacki Renee.*

The motion was approved in Action Without Meeting on March 19, 2021 with 9 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 0 abstention.

**Motion to Approve a Silent Auction Fund**

*Ahearn moves to create a Silent Auction Fund of \$2,500 to be used to pay for an online auction platform as well as auction-related costs such as, but not limited to, postage for donated items.*

The motion was approved in Action Without Meeting on March 29, 2021 with 10 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 1 abstention.

**Motion to Approve Funding for Logo and Design Creation**

*Glass moves to appropriate \$400 for the creation of logos and slogans for the RWA merchandise storefront.*

The motion was approved in Action Without Meeting on March 29, 2021 with 10 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 1 abstention.

**Motion to Approve the Emma Merritt Award Recipient**

*LaQuette moves to approve Alyssa Day as the recipient of the Emma Merritt Service Award.*

The motion was approved in Action Without Meeting on March 29, 2021 with 9 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 2 abstention.

## **Motion to Approve the Service Award Recipient**

*LaQuette moves to approve Gail Chianese as the recipient of the Service Award.*

The motion was approved in Action Without Meeting on March 29, 2021 with 10 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 1 abstention.

## **Motion to Update AGM Policy**

*LaQuette moves to update the Annual General Meeting policy as follows:*

*1.4. "AGM" means the annual general meeting of members of RWA, held annually ~~in~~ conjunction with the Conference.*

### *9. Annual General Meeting of Members*

#### *9.1. General policy.*

*9.1.1. Should the AGM be held at the conference, adequate time and space for the AGM shall be allotted in the Conference schedule. No other function shall be scheduled during the AGM, except that Conference registration and the pressroom may remain open. The AGM shall be held virtually and not in conjunction with conference if needed.*

*9.1.2. Every member of RWA shall be entitled to attend the AGM. Each General member shall be entitled to one vote on each matter submitted to a vote, either in person or by proxy.*

*9.1.3. Staff shall determine the presence of a quorum.*

*9.1.4. Minutes of the AGM shall be approved by the Board at or before the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.*

#### *9.2. Standing Rules for ~~the~~ an in-person AGM.*

*~~9.2.1. Every member of RWA shall be entitled to attend the AGM. Each General member shall be entitled to one vote on each matter submitted to a vote, either in person or by proxy.~~*

*~~9.2.2. Staff, with assistance from volunteers, shall determine the presence of a quorum.~~*

*~~9.2.3.~~ 9.2.1. Any members wishing to speak shall go to a microphone and, after being recognized by the Chair, shall state their name.*

*~~9.2.4-9.2.2.~~ 9.2.2. No member may speak more than twice on an issue, each time limited to two minutes, and may not speak a second time until all who wish to speak have spoken once. Permission to suspend this rule may be granted by the Chair if deemed necessary.*

*~~9.2.5-9.2.3.~~ 9.2.3. The rules contained in Robert's Rules shall govern the conduct of the meeting in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the P&PM or RWA's Bylaws or any relevant provisions of the*

*Texas Non-Profit Corporation Act.*

~~9.2.6. Minutes of the AGM shall be approved by the Board at or before the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.~~

X.X. Standing Rules for a Virtual AGM

X.X.X.

The motion was approved in Action Without Meeting on March 29, 2021 with 9 votes in the affirmative, 1 against, and 1 abstention.

**Motion to Transition the Unpublished Member Benefits Task Force to a Standing Committee**

*Schechter moves that the Unpublished Member Benefits Task Force be transitioned to a standing committee dedicated to the development and implementation of the Pen to Paper (P2P) program. The motion was approved in Action Without Meeting on March 29, 2021 with 10 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 1 abstention.*

**Motion to Adopt Resolution to Update Bank Signers**

*Alford moves that pursuant to Section 3.15 of the Policy Manual that the signatories to the RWA bank accounts be revised to replace Megan Sloan with Erin Fry.*

The motion was approved in Action Without Meeting on March 29, 2021 The motion was approved in Action Without Meeting on March 29, 2021 with 10 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 1 abstention.

**Motion to Approve the Budget for the 2021-2022 Session of Pen to Paper: Guide to Romance Writing**

*Schechter moves that the Board approve the following budget for the 2021-2022 session of Pen to Paper: Guide to Romance Writing.*

<b>\$250 PAYMENT TO GUIDES</b>				
<b>EXPENSES</b>	<b>10 Guides</b>	<b>20 Guides</b>	<b>40 Guides</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Branding	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 1,200.00	
Marketing	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	
Video Editing	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	

Video Fees	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,000.00	
Transcription	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	
Session 1 - Guide Compensation	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$250 per guide per session
Session 2 - Guide Compensation	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	
Session 3 - Guide	\$	\$	\$	

Compensation	2,500.00	5,000.00	10,000.00	
Reward of comp membership	\$ 990.00	\$ 1,980.00	\$ 3,960.00	
Zoom rooms	\$ 525.00	\$ 1,050.00	\$ 2,120.00	\$105 per 2 guides
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	\$ <b>16,715.00</b>	\$ <b>25,730.00</b>	\$ <b>43,780.00</b>	
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>25 Participants</b>	<b>50 Participants</b>	<b>100 Participants</b>	
\$750 Early Bird	\$ 18,750.00	\$ 37,500.00	\$ 75,000.00	
<b>PROFIT</b>	\$ <b>2,035.00</b>	\$ <b>11,770.00</b>	\$ <b>31,220.00</b>	

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The motion was approved in Action Without Meeting on March 29, 2021 The motion was approved in Action Without Meeting on March 29, 2021 with 9 votes in the affirmative, 1 against, and 1 abstention.

**Motion to Update RWA Policy**

*Cyn moves to update the following policy:*

1.12 "Comped" is reference to Conference fees, means the attendee receives the Conference Registration, including meals, free of charge.

1.33 "Office" means the executive offices or headquarters of RWA, currently located at 14615 Benfer Road, 5315-B Cypress Creek Parkway #111, Houston, TX 77069

4.1.2.7. Must attend the entirety of, and actively participate in, the Board meetings set out in Section 3.1 and fully described in Section 3.15. As determined by and in accordance with the current budget availability, RWA may reimburse ~~covers~~ travel costs for Board meetings/conference and pay in compliance with IRS per diem guidelines per diem for meals and miscellaneous travel expenses for Board members and advisors

5.5. Board Meeting Expenses Travel; Room Assignments.

5.5.1. As determined by and in accordance with the current budget availability, RWA may reimburse Travel, accommodations and meal expenses for all Directors, professional consultants, and committee chairpersons invited to attend a Board meeting are ~~paid~~ reimbursed from the Board travel, food and lodging budget.

5.5.2. As determined by and in accordance with the current budget availability, RWA may reimburse Per diems ~~will be paid to the Board~~ in compliance with IRS per diem guidelines. When meals are furnished or otherwise arranged by RWA, no per diem shall be paid for those meals.

5.5.3. As determined by and in accordance with the current budget availability, RWA may reimburse expenses If the President requires a committee chairperson not on the Board to be present at a Board meeting, RWA ~~shall pay~~ may reimburse such individual's travel, accommodation, and meal expenses in the same manner it ~~pays~~ reimburses for Directors based on budget availability.

5.5.4. As determined by and in accordance with the current budget availability, RWA may reimburse expenses Accommodations and meal expenses during the Conference ~~are paid~~ may be reimbursed from the Conference budget. Travel and per diem expenses for Office staff and subcommittee chairpersons required to work at the Conference ~~shall~~ may also be paid reimbursed from the Conference budget.

5.5.5. As determined by and in accordance with the current budget availability, RWA may reimburse expenses after Directors ~~shall~~ travel on the least expensive carrier (in coach or comparable section) whenever possible.

5.5.6. As determined by and in accordance with the current budget availability, RWA may reimburse Other travel expenses incurred by Directors ~~shall be reimbursed~~ only if respective individual Director budgets allow.

5.5.7. As determined by and in accordance with the current budget availability, RWA may reimburse travel expenses ~~normally reimbursed are those~~ for visits to chapters, conferences, seminars, and workshops in the Director's capacity as an RWA spokesperson, and for official business.

5.5.8. As determined by and in accordance with the current budget availability, RWA may ~~For the purposes of expense reimbursement, RWA will pay or reimburse~~ reasonable round-trip travel expenses to board meetings. If a board member extends the stay for personal business or for leisure travel, then the board member will bear the additional costs of hotel, excess costs due to substantially more expensive airfare and any costs incurred due to that flight's cancellation or delay.

5.5.9. As determined by and in accordance with the current budget availability, RWA may reimburse Directors who use their own vehicles while on RWA business ~~shall be reimbursed~~ at the current IRS standard mileage rate plus parking expenses, but the total reimbursement shall not be more than the cost of flying to the same location. The cost of flying to the same location shall include a reasonable cost for airfare, the cost that would have been incurred for round-trip local transportation from the Director's home to the Director's local airport, the cost that would have been incurred for parking at the Director's local airport, and the cost that would have been incurred for round-trip transportation from the destination airport to the locale of the RWA business.

5.5.10. As determined by and in accordance with the current budget availability, RWA may reimburse Directors ~~shall have~~ private hotel rooms at all in-person Board meetings. The RWA staff shall make all room arrangements for Board meetings and Conference.

#### 5.16. Conference Registration Fees; Comped or Waived.

5.16.1. The following shall ~~receive a comped~~ have their Conference registration fee waived:

5.16.1.1. Directors and Office staff.

5.16.1.2. Certain selected speakers.

5.16.1.3. RWA cofounders.

5.16.1.4. Past Presidents whose terms commenced prior to 11/1/2007 are eligible to receive a comped conference registration each year.

5.16.1.5. Past Presidents whose terms commenced after 11/1/2007 will receive ten comped conference registration fees to be used at their discretion.

5.16.1.6. After completing their Board service, Directors will be comped one Conference registration for every two full years they served, but no Director can accrue more than three comped Conferences registrations. Comped Conferences registrations need not be taken in the successive years after service.

5.16.1.7. As determined by and in accordance with the budget, representatives from Qualifying Markets and Eligible Agents who spend two hours employed in any combination of workshop presentations and participation in conference sponsored attendee pitch activities will be granted a comped Conference registration fee. Agents and publishing house representatives canceling their

workshops or dropping below the minimum number of hours of appointments shall be billed for attending the Conference.

5.16.1.8. Up to three representatives of ProLiteracy International shall receive a comped luncheon at Conference, as determined by and in accordance with the budget, paid from the Literacy budget.

5.16.1.9. Others, as determined by and in accordance with the budget, if paid by their committees and approved by the President.

5.16.1.11. Recipients of the RWA Spectrum Grant.

5.16.2. The President, with approval by the Executive Committee, may grant waived or comped registration fees to RWA members in exchange for services rendered during the Conference that are of equal or greater monetary value, provided that the aggregate amount of comped and/or waived registration fees is within the amount allocated for that purpose in the budget and the action is immediately reported to the Board.

5.16.4. Fees and Honoraria for Speakers & Others

5.16.4.1. RWA General and Honorary members who participate as workshop speakers or “Chat With” speakers shall be recompensed with a specific discount or rebate of their conference registration fee as determined by and in accordance with the budget.

5.16.4.2. RWA General and Honorary members speaking at the PAN, PRO, or Chapter Leadership events shall be recompensed with a specific discount or rebate of their conference registration fee from the corresponding budget: PAN, PRO, or Chapter Leadership.

5.16.4.3. If member speakers take part in more than one workshop, including the PAN, PRO, or Chapter Leadership events, they shall not be granted more than the maximum rebate off the Conference registration fee.

5.16.4.4. Non-member writers and outside professionals who speak at the Conference may be offered an honorarium or stipend paid as determined by and in accordance with the Workshop budget.

5.16.4.5. Non-member writers and outside professionals who speak at the PAN, PRO, or Chapter Leadership events may be offered an honorarium or stipend paid as determined by and in accordance with the corresponding budget: PAN, PRO, or Chapter Leadership.

5.16.5. The expenses of the Conference Meeting Planner shall be paid as determined by and in accordance with the budget Conference budget.

5.16.7. Up to two recipients of the RWA Spectrum Grant shall receive a ~~\$1000~~ travel stipend to attend Conference, which shall be paid from available reserves as determined by and in accordance with the budget. If published in romance fiction, comped attendance at the Librarian's Day luncheon, which shall be paid from the Conference budget.

16.12.2. At the discretion of the ED, editors and agents who fail to meet their obligations may not be comped registration fees at the next Conference.

The motion was approved in Action Without Meeting on April 5, 2021 with 9 votes in the affirmative, 1 against, and 1 abstention.

**Motion to Withdraw Proposed Amendments to Article 8**

*LaQuette moves to withdraw the proposed amendments to Article 8 of the Bylaws.*

The motion was approved in Action Without Meeting on March 31, 2021, with 10 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 1 abstention.

**Motion to Accept Audit Report**

*Alford moves to accept the audit report and related financial statements issued by Blazek & Vetterling for the year September 1, 2019, through August 31, 2020.*

The motion was approved in Action Without Meeting on April 5, 2021, with 9 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 2 abstention.

**Motion to Approve Pen to Paper Tuition**

*Schechter moves that tuition be set for the Pen to Paper program as follows:*

	<b>Early Bird Tuition</b>	<b>Regular Tuition</b>
RWA Member	\$750	\$900
Non member	\$900	\$1050

The motion was approved in Action Without Meeting on April 5, 2021, with 8 votes in the affirmative, 1 against, and 2 abstention.

**Motion to Request Funds to Participate in Amicus Brief**

*Forand moves to request \$2,000 from the ACA fund to file an amicus brief with the Author's Guild on the SAS v. World Programming case.*

The motion was approved in Action Without Meeting on April 12, 2021, with 10 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 1 abstention.

**Motion to Approve Summer Retreat Budget**

*Alford moves that the budget for the Summer Retreat be approved.*

The motion was approved in Action Without Meeting on April 23, 2021, with 10 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 1 abstention.



**Motion to Add Members to the Awards Ceremony Committee**

*LaQuette moves to approve the following members for the Awards Ceremony Committee:*

- *Arianna James*
- *Elle Keen*

The motion was approved in Action Without Meeting on April 23, 2021 with 9 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 2 abstention.

**Motion to Amend the Conference Income Budget**

*Alford moves to amend the conference income budget of \$220,000 previously approved at the December Board meeting.*

The motion was adopted in Action Without Meeting on April 27, 2021, with 11 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 0 abstention.

**Motion to Approve Budget for May – August 2021**

*Alford moves that the budget for May 1, 2021 – August 31, 2021 be approved as presented.*

The motion was adopted in Action Without Meeting on April 27, 2021, with 10 votes in the affirmative, 1 against, and 0 abstention.

## TREASURER'S REPORT – L. Alford

### CASH POSITION

April	March	Difference
\$689,199.57	\$708,048.46	\$(18,848.89)

### NET INCOME (LOSS)

Monthly Net income for April is \$(20,475.75).

Fiscal Year-to-Date Net Income is **\$(159,022.79)**.

### MEMBERSHIP

Total General and Associate members as of 5-3-21 was 4,970, a decrease of 0.44% from March to April.

April Membership Data			
New	Reinstated	Lapsed	Renewed
42	27	132	277

Last year, at this time, our membership attrition rate was 6%.

The new member referral program has been launched and was announced in eNotes on 5-19-21.

### NOTES

- RWA begins monthly repayments on the EIDL loan in June.
- RWA began receiving monthly payments from the sale of the building in March.
- RWA received prorated refund checks for flood insurance and property & liability

### BUDGET VS ACTUALS

#### Revenue

- Dues income brought in \$1,448.50 more than budgeted (GL 3020).
- Deep Dives (GL 3130) and RWA U webinars (GL 3150) brought in \$960 more than budgeted.
- Interest from the building payment went into GL 3320.
- Audio Recordings brought in \$353 more than budgeted.
- Rent is N/A since RWA sold the building
- The Writer Services Listings has brought in a total of \$899 for March and April (GL 3420).

#### Expenses

- Association Technologies had an error with their billing and billed us \$4,245.10 to be paid in four installments which caused us to go over budget (GL 5550). The bill was originally over \$16k but was negotiated down.
- The printer will be returned at the end of May and RWA will no longer have an equipment rental fee (GL 5620).

insurance which were paid in full for an annual term prior to the building sale.

**Romance Writers Of America  
Balance Sheet  
As of April 30, 2021**

	<b>Total</b>
<b>ASSETS</b>	
<b>Current Assets</b>	
<b>Bank Accounts</b>	
1000 Cash	401,870.95
1100 Investment Accounts	287,328.62
<b>Total Bank Accounts</b>	<b>\$ 689,199.57</b>
<b>Other Current Assets</b>	
1300 Other Current Assets	1,540.00
1400 Prepaid Expenses	77,662.70
1500 Inventory Asset	5,310.00
<b>Total Other Current Assets</b>	<b>\$ 84,512.70</b>
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>\$ 773,712.27</b>
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	
1600 Land	0.00
1610 Building	0.00
1620 Building Improvements	0.00
1630 Furniture & Fixtures	0.00
1640 Computer Equipment	1,571.25
1650 Office Machines	0.00
1660 Software	103,725.87
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	<b>\$ 105,297.12</b>
<b>Other Assets</b>	
1700 Long-term Assets	485,441.13
<b>Total Other Assets</b>	<b>\$ 485,441.13</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$1,364,450.52</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>	
<b>Liabilities</b>	
<b>Current Liabilities</b>	
<b>Other Current Liabilities</b>	
2200 Other Current Liabilities	53,725.32
2700 Deferred Revenues	212,045.71
<b>Total Other Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 265,771.03</b>
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 265,771.03</b>
<b>Long-Term Liabilities</b>	
2300 Long Term Liabilities	296,424.00
<b>Total Long-Term Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 296,424.00</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 562,195.03</b>
<b>Equity</b>	
2800 Designated Funds	431,295.39
Opening Balance Equity	1,190,601.56
Retained Earnings	(660,618.67)
Net Income	(159,022.79)
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>\$ 802,255.49</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>	<b>\$1,364,450.52</b>

## **OFFICE REPORT – L. Scantlebury**

### **Staff**

Leslie Scantlebury, Executive Director  
Erin Fry, Senior Project Manager  
Jackie Padilla, Accountant  
Ashley Wucher, Chapter Relations Manager

### **RWA's New Address**

RWA has a new mailing address!

Romance Writers of America  
5315-B Cypress Creek Parkway, #111  
Houston, TX 77069

### **Membership Report**

Member Type	03/01/21	05/07/21	Change
Affiliate	42	40	-2
Associate	1269	1271	2
Charter	25	24	-1
Charter/Honorary	2	2	0
General	3625	3577	-48
General/Honorary	13	12	-1
Honorary	61	62	1
	<b>5037</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>-49</b>

### **The Vivian Contest**

The Board of Directors voted to move the date of the finalists announcement for the Vivian contest from March 29 to April 14 to allow more time for second round judges to score books. Finalists were posted to the RWA website on April 14, 2021.

Final round entries were sent to judges on Monday, April 26. The judges will have until June 25 to submit their scores. Winners of the inaugural contest will be announced at the virtual Awards Ceremony scheduled for July 31.

### **Summer Retreat**

The Summer Retreat is scheduled for July 14-17, 2021, in Nashville, TN. Registration for the event opened on May 4.

### **RAMP**

The Agent and Editor Showcase for RAMP will be held June 28-July 5, as originally scheduled. Agent and Editor registration has been open for some time and one-on-one outreach for the event has begun. The RAMP Indie Master Class that was originally scheduled for July 15-17 in Nashville will now be postponed slightly given the move from retreat to conference so that the class can be a standalone virtual event without interfering with retreat dates.

### **Chapter Report**

81 RWA Chapters:

- Chapter Affiliation Renewal invoices were sent to Chapters in April and are due back on May 11.
- Recently Disaffiliated/Dissolved/Merged Chapters (not included in above Chapter count)
  - o The Olympia Chapter voted to merge with the Greater Seattle Chapter in January
  - o Romance Authors of the Heartland dissolved in January
  - o Gothic Romance Writers voted to merge with Fantasy Futuristic and Paranormal Chapter in January
  - o Oklahoma RWA dissolved in February
  - o Carolina RWA dissolved in February
  - o Iowa Romance Novelists dissolved in February
  - o Passionate Ink disaffiliated in April
  - o Faith, Hope, and Love submitted its disaffiliation notice with an effective date in June

### **Communications**

The April 2021 RWR was the last print edition of the magazine. A digital version is pending Board approval.

**PAN ADVISOR/PAN ADVISORY/PAN STEERING REPORT – N. Weeks  
Charge:**

**Report: PAN sessions continue to be successful. Registration is still open.**

**Part I**

**Suggestions/Concerns from the PAN Community to the RWA Board**

A summary of the PAN community's comments/suggestions from the February - April Outreach Program emails.

- Provide clear guidance on the methodology for the required non-discrimination education for members renewing or joining.
- An automatic renewal system to eliminate the hassle to renew.
- A payment plan for yearly dues.
- If AG, SINC and ACFW offer free industry workshops via webinars or chats, why are RWA members required to pay?
- Can RWA offer a life-time membership category for long-time members who've invested in the organization a discount going forward?
- Can RWA offer authors who have retired and on a fixed income qualify for a discounted rate?
- Assistance with contracts which includes pointing out problem clauses and also offering alternative clauses in the correct legal language. Can our lawyer maybe come up a few red-flag clauses to avoid?

**Part II**

**New PAN Community Zoom Sessions-April 2021 – September 2021**

The PAN Community Zoom Sessions are going well. Siera London's presentation on April 24<sup>th</sup> was fantastic. Barnes and Noble representatives, Susan McCulloch, Senior Director, B&N Press and NOOK, Albert Wu, Director Product Manager, and Julie Braunschweiger, B&N Press Manager attended the May 4<sup>th</sup> zoom session, presented an excellent overview of B&N Press and its new advertising opportunities.

The zoom session's registration in April reached its maximum of 100. However, the sessions have been ranging between 40-50 attendees. To accommodate more members, we have open registration with a first-come-first-served policy. The sessions are taped and our wonderful RWA staff member Ashley Wucher has sent the recording links to all registered members.

A Google document link for comments and suggestions has been provided for our PAN members. So far, the comments are very positive. The list below are suggestions from the PAN members for future sessions.

Future suggestions for advertisement: Registered members are sent 2 emails with the date, time, and program. For future scheduled sessions, maybe we can add this information for both PAN and PRO sessions in RWA e-Notes. Suggestions for better advertising are welcomed.

## **The PAN Power UP Zoom Session Goals and Calendar for April - September**

**Goal:** An online alternative to the PAN / PRO forums that facilitates professional growth, education, and group cohesion.

### **Format**

- A quarterly calendar of planned events lead by a facilitator
- 45-minute Zoom sessions once weekly
  - 20-minute discussion facilitated by leader
  - 20-minute break-out session
  - 5-minute-follow-up questions/suggestions
- Each quarter should start with a Goal Night
- Participants can share Personal-Professional-Writing goals, and then decide which to Power Up during the quarter.
- Each quarter should end with a re-evaluation wrap-up and Ask Us Anything session
- PAN activities scheduled for 1st & 3rd weeks / month
- PRO activities scheduled for 2nd & 4th weeks / month
- Session will be open for all membership levels
- Start advertising Power Up in March
- First Quarter starts in April-Jun, Second Quarter July-Sept
- We will have 2 Power Up cycles before this board term ends

### Quarter 1 (April-June)

#### **April**

##### **April 6 2021, Tuesday**

8:00pm-EST 7:00pm-CST 6:00pm-MST 5:00pm- PST

Overview of zoom discussion and break-out session protocol

Discussion Topic 20-minutes TBA

20-minute Break-out Session

5-minute-follow-up questions/suggestions for next topic breakout session

##### **April 24 2021 Saturday**

12:00pm-EST 11:00am-CST 10:00am-MST 9:00am-PST

Overview of zoom discussion and break-out session protocol

Discussion Topic 20-minutes TBA

20-minute Break-out Session

5-minute-follow-up questions/suggestions for next topic breakout session



## **May**

### **May 4 2021, Tuesday**

8:00pm-EST 7:00pm-CST 6:00pm-MST 5:00pm-PST

Overview of zoom discussion and break-out session protocol

Discussion Topic 20-minutes TBA

Breakout Sessions

5-minute-follow-up questions/suggestions for next breakout session's top

### **May 22 2021, Saturday**

12:00pm-EST 11:00am-CST 10:00am-MST 9:00am-PST

Welcome: Overview of zoom discussion and break-out session protocol

Discussion Topic 20-minutes

Breakout Session

5-minute-follow-up questions/suggestions for next breakout session's top

## **June**

### **June 1 2021, Tuesday**

8:00pm-EST 7:00pm-CST 6:00pm-MST 5:00pm-PST

Overview of zoom discussion and break-out session protocol

Discussion Topic 20-minutes TBA

Breakout Sessions

5-minute-follow-up questions/suggestions for next breakout session's top

### **June 19 2021, Saturday**

12:00pm-EST 11:00am-CST 10:00am-MST 9:00am-PST

Overview of zoom discussion and break-out session protocol

Discussion Topic 20-minutes

Breakout Sessions

5-minute-follow-up questions/suggestions for next breakout session's top

## Quarter 2 (July-Sept)

## **July**

### **July 6 2021, Tuesday**

8:00pm-EST 7:00pm-CST 6:00pm-MST 5:00pm-PST

Overview of zoom discussion and break-out session protocol  
Discussion Topic 20-minutes  
Breakout Sessions  
5-minute-follow-up questions/suggestions for next breakout session's top

**July 24 2021, Saturday-TBA-**

Recovering from exceptional RWA Conference

**August**

**August 3 2021, Tuesday**

8:00pm-EST 7:00pm-CST 6:00pm-MST 5:00pm-PST

Overview of zoom discussion and break-out session protocol  
Discussion Topic 20-minutes TBA  
Goal Night-20-minutes session  
Breakout Sessions  
5-minute-follow-up questions/suggestions for next breakout session's top

**August 21, 2021 Saturday**

12:00pm-EST 11:00am-CST 10:00am-MST 9:00am-PST

Overview of zoom discussion and break-out session protocol  
Discussion Topic 20-minutes  
Breakout Sessions  
5-minute-follow-up questions/suggestions for next breakout session's top

**September**

**September 7 2021, Tuesday**

8:00pm-EST 7:00pm-CST 6:00pm-MST 5:00pm-PST

Overview of zoom discussion and break-out session protocol  
Discussion Topic 20-minutes  
Breakout Sessions  
5-minute-follow-up questions/suggestions for next breakout session's top

**September 25 2021, Saturday**

12:00pm-EST 11:00am-CST 10:00am-MST 9:00am-PST

Overview of zoom discussion and break-out session protocol  
Discussion Topic 20-minutes  
Breakout Sessions

5-minute-follow-up questions/suggestions for next breakout session's top

**Future Discussion Topics/Break-out Sessions**

National Book Festivals/Live and Zoom

National Salon Readings Live/Zoom

RWA support our Indie/Hybrid authors

Author's rights conversion

PAN community Bar Night: What publishers won't tell you.

Audio Books

Foreign Translations

Marketing Outside the USA

How To and Do They Work?

Facebook Ads

BookBub Ads

Amazon Ads

Barnes & Noble Ads

Agents

Editors

Virtual / Personal Assistants

Cover Design

Graphic Design

(Social Media)

(Screenwriting / Playwriting)

(Writer Education)

(Feature articles)

(News & Trends)

Nancy C. Weeks

RWA PAN Advisor

**Action Items:** None

**PRO ADVISOR'S REPORT AND PRO STEERING COMMITTEE REPORT** – C. Stuart  
**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.

The Committee will handle tasks assigned by the Board, including the organization of the PRO Retreat for the annual conference and the selection of the PRO Mentor of the Year.

**PRO Steering Committee Report:** The PRO Book Club continues to meet monthly, and the PRO Forum has seen an uptick in positive, professional participation.

The PRO Advisory Committee was charged to focus its work on the PRO Retreat for the upcoming conference.

**Plan for Conference: BUILDING COMMUNITY**

- After hours sessions sponsored by PRO
  - PRO-Pathway Debrief (programming designating in the program as PRO recommended)
    - Pajama
    - Black -tie Dress up
- Morning Sessions
  - Coffee & Unwind (Yoga) - Destress before the day starts
  - Write-ins
- Book Club Meeting - Writing Erotic Romance
- Pro-Mentor of the Year

The PRO Book Club has been ongoing here are the upcoming books:

May - The Heroine's Journey - Gail Carriger - Zoom- May 24th 8pm/ET

June - Story Genius - Lisa Cron -

July - Writing Naked - Jennifer Probst -

**Action Items:**

May need approval for funds for yoga instructor.

**PRO Advisor Report:** The PRO Power Up Zoom sessions began in April, and continue to meet twice monthly, discussing topics such as creating a business plan, websites for pre-published authors, writing category, and publishing via serialization.

**Action Items:** None

## **AWARDS CEREMONY COMMITTEE REPORT – LaQuette**

**Charge:** The Awards Ceremony Committee shall oversee the Awards Ceremony, including working with the emcee to write the script and provide input on the ceremony theme. The Awards Ceremony Committee shall select Award Presenters who are RWA general members while adhering to RWA’s foundational commitment to being diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible.

**Report:** The committee has been working on a timeline and script for the awards ceremony that will be held July 31. The committee is also currently discussing presenters and informing finalists of how the ceremony will proceed.

The next meeting will be held on May 26, and Seressia Glass will take over as board liaison.

The committee met 4/22, 4/29, & 5/7/2021 to discuss the timeline and best strategy for a virtual awards ceremony. Our desire is to make this ceremony although virtual—a wonderful experience for the viewers and the finalists. To that end, Alexis Roark and Jacquelin Thomas offered to sponsor chocolates (Ghirardelli) and a small bottle of sparkling cider to be shipped to each finalist. It is our understanding that each finalist will also receive a pin from the organization.

- Presenters, Finalists and Attendees will receive Virtual Swag Bags. The committee will meet on 5/13/2021 to discuss sponsors and what each category will receive in his or her swag bag.
- Before the ceremony, we will have a virtual red carpet and will ask finalists to take photos of themselves prepping and their finished look. We would like them to post and/or tweet using the following hashtags: #vivianpreshow, #vivianprep
- Elle Keen is designing the virtual background for the ceremony and for the finalists. Our intermission will consist of 2 stretch breaks guided by 2 yoga masters. There is no cost for this. The music for the ceremony is original and written by Alexis Roark’s spouse. There is no cost for this.
- We will host a minimum of 2 dress rehearsals with all participants before the actual event to address any issues or concerns.
- The committee also discussed hosting a virtual afterparty for everyone after the ceremony.
- We will be encouraging everyone to post and/or tweet throughout the event using the following hashtags: #vivianawards2021, #rwavivian2021, rwafinalists2021
- We confirmed the ceremony will start at 9:00 p.m. EST and estimate the event will last a minimum of 1½ hours but this depends on breaks and speeches.
- Questions & Concerns from the Committee:
  - Is there a pre-existing RWA form letter for requesting sponsored/donated items from companies?
  - Will sponsorship/donation requests be sent from RWA staff or the committee? If they're sent from RWA staff, will the staff member write the requests, or will the committee write them, and the staff member will send them on the committee's behalf?
  - Is there an official committee email address that we have access to and can use so that any emails we send or requests we make look official (as opposed to coming

from a committee member's personal email address)? If there isn't already an official committee email address, is it possible to create one?

- When will the presenters know who won? If they do not know ahead of time, you are depending on technology to work perfectly to let them see the slide and be able to read it. Delays happen, glasses might be needed, etc.
- If we (the committee) do not know ahead of time, how will we present the information? Who will be giving us that information and how? We will have to have a generic slide in the roll and again, how will the presenter know what to say?
- If we keep information from Caraway, we can text him the info as it happens, but **someone on the committee will still need to know**. If we text Caraway (or if he knows already) and he announces winners, then the presenter's portion can be recorded ahead of time. (which gives more flexibility to the presenters for their short intro and reading of finalist names)
- Does RWA have MailChimp or some other email program? I know they email us and eNotes has pictures included. (It is not responsive though – can't be viewed easily on phones.) This is for the virtual Swag bags.
- What exactly does Zoom include? Webinar – yes. Hosting for how many in a 'meeting'?
- Social Media announcements at the same time as the ceremony/leading up to the event. Who will be doing that? Will they give us control of Twitter for the evening or will a staff member be working with us to know what we expect/hope from the social media aspect.
- Do we have a Vivian logo? If so, we need a copy of the logo ASAP for invitations, slides, etc.

Action Items	Owner(s)	Deadline	Status
PowerPoint Presentation of Finalists	Arianna	5/7/2021	Draft presented to committee. In Progress.
Virtual Background for ceremony & Finalists	Elle	7/28/2021	More information is needed in order to complete per the questions noted above. In Progress.
Invitation Design for Virtual Pre-ceremony Party	Elle	5/13/2021	In Progress.

Music	Alexis	7/1/2021	In Progress.
Script for Ceremony	Jacque Arianna Caraway	6/15/2021	Drafts Completed. In Editing stage.
Tribute to Vivian Stephens	Alexis	6/15/2021	In Process.
Invitation to Presenters	Jacque	6/01/2021	Not Started.
Virtual Swag Bags	Alexis Arianna Jacque	7/01/2021	In Process.
VOG/Muses Participants	Alexis	6/15/2021	In Process.

**Action Items:** None

## **LIBRARIAN AND BOOKSELLER OUTREACH AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORT – C. Brett**

**Charge:** The Librarian and Bookseller Outreach Committee will work with RWA staff to establish dialogue with librarians and booksellers in order to form stronger alliances for the betterment of RWA members and the romance genre. In addition, the committee will work with staff to create virtual and in-person events, such as Meet the Author panels, involving librarians and booksellers that will promote members and the romance genre as well as make recommendations about events, programs or action RWA could take to make it easier for booksellers, librarians and RWA members to connect.

### **Report:**

The committee did not meet this month.

Pushed Summer Reading at local libraries via RWA Discussion Groups of CIMRWA, Pan and RWA Marketing Discussions.

Worked with CIMRWA to create a speakers bureau for #ownvoices and #diversity chats for Libraries.

Attended the Interracial Authors and Readers Expo in Daytona on April 28-May 1. Presented to a group of 125 on Summer Reader and partnering with local libraries for book clubs and Summer Reading Challenges.

Summer Reading Starts June 1<sup>st</sup>.

Adults look forward to summer as much as kids do. They can relax, take vacations, and catch up on reading, and that makes summer a great time to offer special programming for adults. You may catch some parents who are already coming to the library with their children, or hook some newly retired folks who have a little more leisure time, or even attract busy singles who just want to try something new.

Summer Reading is right around the corner. This is an ideal time to build a relationship with your local library. While many may still be in Phase 2 or 3 of reopening, you can easily find the sweet spot and establish a different relationship with your local library and Bookstores.

Adult summer reading programs can offer adults the opportunity to have fun, explore new interests, and interact with one another while also providing a good model for children enrolled in summer reading programs.

This year's theme is Tails and Tales. I can see a shifter book club in the making.

Here are a few ideas for getting your books on your local library shelves, as well as take part in Summer Reading.

- Donate 10 Books to your local branch and offer to host a virtual book chat.
- Teach a virtual workshop on writing and weaving a good "tale".



- Volunteer to do a virtual children's storytime and read from your favorite story with a "tail".
- Depending on the size of the library or the system, a library can have an Outreach Librarian, A Young Adult librarian, and a Children's Librarian. Larger libraries have a historian or a special collections manager. Find out which ones your library has and look for ways to partner your words with their programming.
- Please make sure to fill out your information in the [Speaker's Bureau](#).
- To find your local library, click [here](#).

**Action Items:** None

## **RWAU COMMITTEE REPORT – E. Ahearn**

**Charge:** The RWA University Committee shall work with RWA staff to provide 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.

**Report:**

The Committee has discussed the presentation Rebecca Hunter wants to make a presentation to the board in terms of programming and offering. As soon as they schedule the meeting then Rebecca will make the presentation.

**Action Items:** None

## CONFERENCE WORKSHOP COMMITTEE REPORT – C. Brett

**Charge:** The Conference Workshop Committee shall coordinate, plan, and oversee the annual Conference workshops.

**Report:** The Committee met recently and finalized workshop offerings for the retreat. The Committee is excited about it, and once finalized then will jump into November conference.

The Committee has reached out to Sarra Cannon to see if she is available to teach an interactive session. This would be broken up over the course of 2-3 days, depending on Sarra's topic and preference. At this point in time, she is interested, but is asking if we can comp her room and/or travel. I'm waiting for word from the Staff on this.

We have also reached out to motivational speaker, Hailey Hoffman Smith. Our committee member, Linda Bond (Hurtado) is speaking with Hailey's manager this week. At that time we will know her speaker fee and requirements and if she's a good fit. If not, I do have a backup speaker or two that I can check with.

A call for Retreat proposals was sent out in the eNotes. Erin will let us know when we have submissions and add them to our spreadsheet. Closing date is May 7 and the committee has a deadline of May 14 to make their selections for sessions. Our goal is not to fill up every hour with sessions/workshops as that would make this event a conference and not a retreat. However, we would like 2-3 a day in addition to our special speakers. Claire also put a note up on the forums for those that submitted for the conference to let her know if they'd like to be considered for the Retreat and Erin followed up via email with those proposals. We have a few that would make great retreat topics.

The staff is working with the hotel event planner to locate a local yoga instructor to come in each day and run a yoga session. Claire also talked about us setting up a morning "walk" around the hotel grounds to get some cardio in.

Claire has been working on finding out information on a Mammogram Van, but at this time, it doesn't look like that will be a possibility due to cost.

**Schedule:** We have a tentative schedule worked up. We plan to reserve one room for the full time of the retreat for writing only. Attendees can come and go as they please and write in a dedicated quiet space with others.

We've also talked about adding sessions throughout the week for plot brainstorming sessions, marketing sessions where attendees can share what is working and not for them, as well as how to make your planner productive.

**Conference:**

We've received a total of 44 proposals.

1 has been recalled

24 have stated they only want those considered for the virtual conference

13 have stated they want their proposal considered for both events

2 are for the retreat only

4 have not responded

At this time, we have pushed all conference planning to the back burner until we have the retreat planning finished. The portal for conference proposals is not open right now.

**Action items:** None

## **UNPUBLISHED MEMBER BENEFITS TASK FORCE REPORT (PEN TO PAPER PROGRAM) – E. Schechter**

**Charge:** This task force will be charged with identifying, researching and recommending member benefits that will help our unpublished members. This task force chair should coordinate with the other benefits task force chairs to be efficient and productive in areas where there may be overlap. The task force shall utilize board feedback on this topic from the task force thread and other board information in creating a list of benefits.

### **Report:**

Guide recruitment began on May 3. The program has 14 guide applications as of now. Three applicants volunteered for all three sessions.

### **Program Management**

Pen to Paper was transitioned from a Task Force to a standing committee via AWM. The committee has not yet been populated, but a motion has been submitted to do so.

### **Branding, Marketing, and Communication**

- Pen to Paper has engaged a graphic designer and a videographer.
  - The videographer will be editing our recordings into succinct 6-minute or less topics.
  - The graphic designer delivered a logo as seen below based upon input from the Pen to Paper Task Force. All formats and the style guide have been delivered to the RWA office, for use in marketing and branding this program.
    - Recommend that we keep Anna Volkin's contact information in the RWA files for future graphic work – she is very professional, efficient, and fast.
- The marketing launch for Pen to Paper started on 4/28/2021 in eNotes, and with a dedicated email on 4/30/21.
- Guide recruitment will begin 5/3/2021. The draft of the application has been given to Erin Fry.
- Participant recruitment will begin 6/28/2021. The draft of the application has been given to Erin Fry.

### **Program Video Creation**

- Work is underway for our expert videos and for our subgenre chapter videos, and the creation of those videos has started. We have video release forms for both subgenre and expert videos approved by legal. At this time we are identifying and scheduling authors and experts for videos. We are working with RWA subgenre chapter leaders to create videos to use at the beginning of the program. These videos will be used by these chapters on their web pages to recruit new members. Currently we have chapters engaged for Contemporary Romance, Romantic Suspense, Historical Romance, Young Adult, and Speculative Romance. For the subgenres where we do not have an active chapter to participate, we are creating PowerPoint slides with recorded audio to cover the same information. The subgenres currently planned to be explained through PowerPoint recordings are Romance with Religious or Spiritual Elements and Erotic Romance.

- We will be reaching out to the Vivian finalists for short (20-30 second) videos answering the question “What is Romance?” This video will be used primarily to market Pen to Paper and inspire our participants, while having the potential to be used by RWA in its own marketing.

The project team recommends scheduling video interviews at the July retreat. This allows us to capture videos with Board members and other experts that we will use throughout the program.

### **Curriculum Development**

- Units 1-6 have been drafted and are in final review and revisions before development testing. Videos are underway and will be completed by July 31.
- Units 7-12 are in process.
- Development Testing of content and activities with unpublished authors begins mid-May. We are recruiting five to six unpublished members to try out selected sections of the curriculum units and provide feedback. This is a quality assurance measure that will be used to determine any revisions required before go live, such as clarifications to instructions and accurate timing of activities.

### **MOTION TO POPULATE THE PEN TO PAPER COMMITTEE.**

Schechter moved that the following members be approved for the Pen to Paper Committee

#### **P2P Project Manager**

Elizabeth Schechter

#### **P2P Implementation Manager**

Shree Aier

#### **Board Liaison**

Veronica Forand

#### **Guide Liaison**

Erin Novotny

#### **Participant Liaison**

Catherine Stuart

#### **RWA University Liaison**

Rebecca Hunter

#### **Resource Liaison**

Erin Novotny and Susan Guest

#### **Curriculum and Evaluation Expert**

Leslie Lighton

*The motion was adopted by general consent*

**ARI TASK FORCE REPORT** – E. Ahearn

**Report:** Ashley Wucher will send a letter on behalf of the task force asking for Writers Services Listing testimonials in the coming week.

**Action Item:** Staff to send letter.

## **DEIA TASK FORCE – C. Chilove**

**Charge:** This task force will be charged with reviewing the DEIA training modules being created for RWA, recommend an implementation process for members at renewal and otherwise, election to a leadership/committee position at the chapter or national level, forum violations, ethics violations, etc. Also, this task force will be charged with creating a process for access violations at the chapter and national level to be reported and addressed as well as ways that RWA can help chapters meet access challenges, such as help with transcription services.

### **Report:**

The task force is working with a designer to create a logo for the RWA DEIA initiatives that accurately represents the program. Completion of the DEIA training modules will be required for anyone running for national or Chapter office and voluntary for all other members. Those will be live at the end of May, at which time we will send out an all-member communication with instructions for accessing the modules.

**Action Items:** None



## **VIVIAN CONTEST TASK FORCE – J. Renée**

### **Report:**

The Vivian Task Force is asked to deconstruct the 2021 Vivian contest and answer two questions:

- (1) How to get more marginalized authors to enter?
- (2) What, if any, changes are needed for future contests?

The task force will examine the 2021 contest in two phases.

### Phase I – Assessment

The assessment period involves obtaining general information relevant to the activities of the contest. This assessment will include the consensus from emails submitted to the RWA Board of Directors expressing concerns and suggestions regarding the 2021 Vivian contest. Results from the assessment will be used to write a Strategic Plan with goals for addressing the first question and a written Action Plan with measurable activities and timelines for the 2022 Vivian contest.

#### Specific Areas under Assessment

- Pre-contest activities, advertising, marketing, promotion, and outreach
- Identification of categories with significantly low entries from marginalized authors

### Phase II – Evaluation

Postmortem awards ceremony, the task force will evaluate the 2021 Vivian contest from the perspective of the contest entrants, judges, and RWA staff. The evaluation will also include comments, concerns, and suggestions from emails submitted to the RWA Board of Directors regarding the contest. To the extent permissible by law, specific information and data will be collected and reviewed for the purpose of sustaining and/or improving the process for the Vivian contest. The outcomes from the evaluation will result in a written Strategic Plan with goals for identified areas and an Action Plan with measurable objectives for the 2022 Vivian contest period.

Strategic Plans and Action Plans will be submitted to the RWA Board of Directors for review and discussion.

**Action Items:** None

## **POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT - V. Forand**

**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.

**Report:** Alana Albertson has agreed to be assistant chair of this committee. We ask that the RWA board approve her for this role.

We are also in the process of searching for a new member to replace Veronica Forand. We will propose a selection soon.

### **SAS Brief:**

I reported that the Board had approved the \$2000 budget to join in with the Authors' Guild and other groups on the brief to the court expressing concerns about the recent SAS ruling. I also emailed Mary Rasenberger at the Author's Guild to inform her, at which point I directed her to Leslie Scantlebury for further coordination.

### **Audible:**

Although Amazon made a public announcement about changing its returns and exchange policy and did, on paper, slightly modify the same, apparently there are still problems. The seven-day return window is too long, allowing readers to abuse it. Also, apparently the Amazon call-in customer service reps are encouraging readers to return/swap the audio books (this was documented by authors posing as readers to see how Amazon reps were advising people with return questions). Apparently, authors are starting to pull their books from the Audible program because their incomes have dropped or the returns have ended up "costing" them money.

We think RWA should poll current members to find out who (a) is experiencing this problem and (b) is willing to provide accurate data (before and after). Once that data is compiled, RWA can use it to continue discussions with Amazon regarding this problematic "swap" policy. I will also raise this issue at the next ACA meeting to see what other groups are doing and whether there is a collective action that can be taken as well.

### **Diversion Books/Ever After:**

Diversion Books/Ever After has been withholding royalty statements and payments since at least 2018/2019. RWA was notified of this problem by multiple authors, including committee member Alana Albertson, in 2019. Carol Ritter didn't respond immediately, but in early July 2019 sent an email saying she spoke with Scott Waxman and he said that all royalties were paid, etc. No further investigation was made by RWA. However, authors like Penny Reid, Corrine Michaels, and CD Reiss continued to pursue claims for unpaid royalties (to this day Penny is still fighting for royalties).

Alana noted that she and Penny Reid were given "identical" royalty statements one period during which Penny had released a book that hit the NYT list while Alana's did not. Both authors were

told they sold 241 print copies during that period, which is impossible on many levels (given the number of copies Penny's book would've needed to have sold to hit the NYT list). Also, Alana says that, although she got her rights back to her books, the company is still selling them on line and in bookstores.

RWA needs to poll current members who are embroiled in this situation and obtain specific data (such as Alana demonstrated above). Once those facts are aggregated, RWA should approach Diversion/Ever After with them and demand more transparency and to cease selling books once the rights have been reverted to the author. We also think RWA might want to pull Scott Waxman's literary agency off its qualified agent list until this situation is resolved.

I will also raise this issue with the ACA group (the thriller writers have gotten involved according to this Writer Beware post: <https://accrispin.blogspot.com/2021/04/publisher-storm-warnings-diversion-books.html>) to see how they are handling this issue and whether there is an opportunity for partnering with them to apply pressure on behalf of all affected authors. .

Radish:

In recent years, many writers have been making money on this platform with their serialized work. They signed contracts that included a fixed payment structure (a royalty rate of \$.042 per coin used by readers) when they joined the platform. Recently, Radish notified all authors of a change to the payment structure. Authors assumed the change would be immaterial (a change to the way they received their payments rather than a change to how those payments are calculated). Unfortunately they were wrong. Basically, Radish has moved to a KU-type royalty plan where money will be pooled and then divided. It is likely to have a chilling effect on the authors' incomes. Some authors were making five-figures per month there, so this is not an insignificant issue. The change went into effect on April 1<sup>st</sup>, so authors won't have hard data on how their income is affected until June.

One major issue we note is that, typically, material terms of contracts cannot be unilaterally amended (unless somewhere buried in the fine print that right was granted to Radish). The calculation/structure of royalty payments is clearly material.

We think RWA should address this issue with the membership to see how many members might be affected. RWA could also review the original Radish contract to determine whether there is, in fact, a legal claim that the affected authors have to push back against this major change. In either case, RWA should monitor the situation on behalf of members.

## **MOTION TO APPROVE ALANA ALBERTSON AS CO-CHAIR OF THE POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Forand moved that Alana Albertson be approved as Co-Chair of the Policy Advisory Committee.

*The motion was adopted by general consent*

**Action Items:** None

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **MOTION TO ESTABLISH SCHOLARSHIP FUND FOR PEN TO PAPER**

Schechter moved that \$10,000 (ten thousand dollars) from the Author Coalition fund be allocated for scholarships for the Pen to Paper program.

*The motion was adopted on a roll call vote with 10 ayes: LaQuette, Alford, Ahearn, Brett, Cyn, Glass, London, Schechter; 0 nays and 0 abstention.*

London updated that we have moved forward with 11 designs for T-shirts from different designers for the RWA merchandise store. Will post in board forum next week.

**ADJOURN:** President LaQuette adjourned the meeting at 12:28 p.m. CT.