

Romance Writers of America  
Board Meeting Minutes  
November 19, 2022  
12:00 p.m. CST  
Virtual Meeting

**Saturday, November 19, 2022**

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**CALL TO ORDER:** President Clair Brett called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. CT on Saturday, November 19, 2022.

**ROLL CALL/CERTIFICATIONS OF QUORUM:** Secretary Jacki Renee called the roll. Nine Board members were present: Officers Clair Brett, Jacki Renee, and Brooke Wills; Directors-at-Large Louisa Cornell, Marian H. Griffin, Mary Karlik, Anita Learned, Ursula Renee; Chapter Advisor Antonia Cyn. RWA Staff members Leslie Scantlebury, Erin Fry, and Jackie Padilla were present. With a majority of the Board members needed to establish a quorum, there were 8 voting members present, the Chair declared a quorum.

**The RWA Mission Statement and Anti-Trust Statement were read into the record.**

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT - C. Brett**

It is hard to believe that we are well into the first quarter of the RWA board year. Since the Quarter 4 board meeting, we have completed a successful National conference in National Harbor Maryland and seated a newly elected board. Since then, we have appointed a PRO advisor, welcome Judith Bastin. We are still looking to seat a PAN advisor; however, our continually active PAN committee is making sure that PAN members continue to benefit from the ongoing programs. The board has also approved, chairs and committee members for many of our committees. We are still looking to populate the Leadership Committee, so please reach out if this is something you are interested in.

Our 2022 RAMP class has finished the program, with much success, and culminated with mentee pitches to agents and editors. Plans are already in the works for RAMP 2023, which is slated to begin much earlier.

As part of the RAMP program, the mentors were given free entry to the RWA PR Marketing masterclass and Mentees were given free entry to the Indie Author Weekend. Both events were held in October, and both were wildly successful. We are looking forward to the upcoming Traditional Author Weekend in January, with registration opening early November. Pen2Paper applications have been rolling in, and we have gotten a great response for possible guides.

The board has voted on 15 AWM since being seated on September 1, 2022. These vary from approving committee members or chairs to policy changes, adding a new Contest Committee, streamlining the Audit and Finance committee into one, rewriting charges for existing committees to bring the charges up to date with the work of the committee, create a new scholarship process, and to approve funds for the perseverance fund.

The board and staff continue to work with our business consultant from SC Ventures to guide us in restructuring the organization to better reflect those people we serve. We also continue to work with the social media company Big Buzz to further use our social media to our advantage. The RWR has been reaching our members email box monthly, as well as our weekly newsletter e-Notes. Both periodicals have valuable information for members about the publishing industry, career building, and internal RWA news.

RWA has been running a membership campaign since the beginning of September. The finishing touches are being put on the RWR toolkit, which will go out free to any member who referred a member by Sept. 30, and those new members who took advantage of our membership drive link. And we are now offering a new incentive for current members who refer a new or reinstating member to join between Oct. 1 and Dec. 31. The referring member with the most referred members joining will be in the running to win a FREE RWA2023 conference registration, plus three hotels' nights at the conference hotel: a value of \$1400.00. You must refer at least 7 new members to be eligible.

RWA also conducted a chapter contest this fall. The chapter to bring in the most new members would get a \$500.00 grant from national. This was a wildly successful event and we ended up with 2-chapter winners. Congratulations to Valley of the Sun Chapter and Fantasy Futuristic and Paranormal Chapter for winning!

As you can see there has been a lot happening in the last two and a half months, with much more in the works as the board settles into the work of bringing all aspects of our organization into alignment with our mission to advocate and help all romance authors in their career pursuits. We are always looking for fresh ideas, and energy. If you have ideas or want to be part of this recharging of RWA please go to the website and fill out a volunteer form or let a board member know you want to help. Our organization will only be successful by the enthusiasm and commitment of its members.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT – J. Renee**

**MOTION TO ADOPT RESOLUTION TO UPDATE BANK SIGNORS**

*Brett moved that pursuant to section 5.8.2 of the Policy Manual that Brooke Wills be added as a signor on all RWA accounts.*

The motion was adopted in an Action Without Meeting on October 3 with 9 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 0 abstentions.

**MOTION TO ACCEPT ELECTION RESULTS**

*Brett moved that the Board certify the election results prepared by Survey and Ballot Systems. The motion was adopted in an Action Without Meeting on October 3 with 9 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 0 abstentions.*

**MOTION TO TRANSFER FUNDS TO THE PERSEVERANCE FUND**

*Wills moved to transfer \$10,000 of designated funds to the Perseverance Fund.*

The motion was adopted in an Action Without Meeting on October 3 with 9 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 0 abstentions.

**MOTION TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 2022 BOARD MEETING MINUTES** *Brett moved to approve the minutes of the August 2022 Board of Directors Meeting. The motion was adopted in an Action Without Meeting on October 3 with 9 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 0 abstentions.*

**MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE 2022 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

*Brett moved to approve the minutes of the 2022 Annual General Meeting.*

The motion was adopted in an Action Without Meeting on October 3 with 9 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 0 abstentions.

**MOTION TO APPROVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

*Brett moved to approve the following committee members:*

***PRO Advisory Committee:***

*Judith Bastin*

***Diversity Advisory Committee Chair:***

*Paula McGhee*

***Diversity Advisory Committee Members:***

*Laura Haller*

*Toni Jackson*

*Molly Maka*

*Tinia Montford*

***Membership Outreach Committee chair:***

*Athena Hernandez*

***Policy Committee Members:***

*Tara Taylor*  
*Moni Boyce*  
*Jennifer Gosselin*  
*William Cowie*  
*Kristine Charles*  
*Regina Mize*

***RWA U Chair:***

*Tinia Montford*

***RWA U Committee Members:***

*Jennifer Gosselin*  
*Zareen Khan*  
*Toni Jackson*  
*Terri Patrick*

***Audit & Finance Committee members:***

*Diane Kelly*  
*Ruby Hill*  
*William Cowie*  
*Claudia Severin*

***Conference Workshop Committee Members:***

*Zareen Khan*  
*Toni Jackson*  
*Molly Maka*

***RWR Content Committee Chair:***

*Kathleen Watson*

***Unpublished Members Benefits Committee Assistant Chair:***

*Patty Blount*

The motion was adopted in an Action Without Meeting on October 10 with 9 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 0 abstentions.

**MOTION TO APPROVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

*Cornell moved to approve the following committee members:*

***Unpublished Members Benefits Committee***

*Members:*

*Joi Jackson*  
*Nicole Johnson*

The motion was adopted in an Action Without Meeting on October 17 with 9 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 0 abstentions.

## **MOTION TO TERMINATE THE ROMANCE EDUCATION INITIATIVE COMMITTEE**

*Brett moved to terminate the REI committee.*

The motion was adopted in an Action Without Meeting on October 17 with 9 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 0 abstentions.

## **MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONTEST COMMITTEE POLICY**

*Renee moved to add the following policy:*

10.2.13. Contest Committee. 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 intent benefit of the Contest. A Board liaison shall not be assigned to this committee.

10.2.13.1. The Contest Committee chairperson, assistant chairperson, and committee members must sign a confidentiality agreement form, conflict of interest form, and nondisclosure agreement form once board approved to serve on the committee.

10.2.13.1.1. The Contest Committee chairperson, assistant chairperson, and committee members shall serve a two-year term and shall not enter any RWA national contest during their term of service; chapter contests are excluded.

10.2.13.1.2. In the event the chairperson, assistant chairperson, or a committee member, step down before completion of the two-year term, they will remain ineligible to enter any RWA national contest for that contest period.

The motion was adopted in an Action Without Meeting on October 17 with 9 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 0 abstentions.

## **MOTION TO APPROVE SCHOLARSHIP POLICY**

*Brett moved to add the following policy:*

10.2.14. Staff shall determine the scholarship application deadline based on the event. 10.2.1.5 A scholarship review panel, consisting of the Board Liaison, the Executive Director, the Diversity Advisory Committee Chairperson, and, if possible, the Chairperson and Assistant Chairperson from the committee for which the scholarship application was submitted, will convene two weeks before the end of the scholarship application deadline.

10.2.1.5.1 The President, Executive Director, and Committee Chairperson(s) can appoint another member of the Board, Staff, or Committee(s) to take their place on the panel.

10.2.15.6 After all identifying information is removed, the panel shall begin the review process.

10.2.15.7 The panel shall select scholarship recipients by majority vote; Record of the selection process must be submitted to the Board for review and then filed by the Office in case of any disputes. 10.2.15.8 Upon final review from the Board, scholarship notifications shall be sent to recipients

The motion was adopted in an Action Without Meeting on October 17 with 9 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 0 abstentions.

**MOTION TO APPROVE THE MEMBERSHIP OUTREACH COMMITTEE POLICY** *Brett moved to approve the Membership Outreach Committee Policy.*

10.2.9.1 Plan, bring to the board for approval and execute a bi-yearly membership drive

10.2.9.2 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 the most desired.

10.2.9.3 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 as members

10.2.9.4 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.

10.2.9.5 Assist with creation 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

10.2.9.6 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 10.2.9.7 Work with staff to create an easy path to national conference non-member attendees to register for membership on site at the conference

The motion was adopted in an Action Without Meeting on October 17 with 9 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 0 abstentions.

### **MOTION TO MERGE THE AUDIT COMMITTEE AND THE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

*Wills moved to merge the Audit and Finance Committee as a Standing Committee.* The motion was adopted in an Action Without Meeting on October 17 with 9 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 0 abstentions.

**MOTION TO AMEND POLICY FOR THE AUDIT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE** *Wills moved to amend the following policy.*

10.2.1. Audit & Finance Committee: The Audit & Finance Committee, chaired by the Treasurer, shall be responsible for: 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.

10.2.1.1. The committee will be tasked with reviewing RWA's budget quarterly and making recommendations to the Board about how RWA could more efficiently to ensure the organization stays financially viable.

10.2.7.2. There shall not be an assistant chairperson for this committee.

10.2.7.3. The chairperson will make reasonable efforts to ensure the members have financial expertise in accounting or a similar field.

The motion was adopted in an Action Without Meeting on October 17 with 9 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 0 abstentions.

### **MOTION TO AMEND POLICY**

*Brett moved to amend the following sections of policy:*

10.1.1.4. The board Liaison for this committee shall be either the President or President Elect of the current board.

10.2.8. Leadership Development Committee. 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 10.2, revise and update the candidate questionnaire, and organize opportunities for the general members to interact with and question board candidates prior to the national election. The committee will work with the Diversity Advisory Committee to identify and recruit potential candidates for leadership positions at the chapter, committee, and national level. Create social media content to engage, and inform, our members via our social media accounts and various other communications resources of opportunities. 10.2.8.1. The committee will work with staff and other committees to help create leadership training opportunities at both the national level and chapter level yearly

10.2.8.2. This committee shall be chaired by co-chairs (the chapter advisor, and a current chapter leader of an active affiliate chapter) and populated by a majority of members who are current or former chapter leaders

10.2.5. RWA University Committee. The RWA University Committee is a subcommittee under the Romance Education Initiative Committee (REI) to 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.

10.2.5.1 The committee will also be responsible for creating promotional materials including copy and suggested images to assist in the promotion of educational events planned by the committee.

10.2.12 The Unpublished Member Benefits Committee is a subcommittee under the Romance Education Initiative Committee (REI) that will identify, research, and recommend benefits to help unpublished members. The committee head will coordinate with the other REI committee heads to be efficient and productive in areas where there may be overlap.

3.14.5.1. The itinerary shall include but not be limited to: Strategic Planning, yearly review of all committee charges and policy by the EC, with suggested updates, terminations, changes to said committees, approval of committee chairs, approval of assistant committee chairs (for committees with assistant chairs), approval of the committee rosters, and discussion of Executive Director Review. 17.5. A proposed Contest Committee must be submitted submit proposed new Contest to the Executive Director for review.

17.10. For each Contest the Board approves, the Executive Director will request Staff direct the Contest Committee to create and maintain all rules, including but not limited to Contest Administration Rules, Contest Entry Rules, and Contest Judging Rules.

17.11. Contest Assessment Report. Within two Two months prior to of the Contest's conclusion, the Executive Director shall convene the ad hoc committees, independent of the Contest Committee, for the purpose of a full Contest review and will provide the Board with a Contest Assessment Report. Ad hoc committee members must sign a confidentiality agreement form, conflict of interest form, and nondisclosure agreement form once approved to serve on the committee. Board members and contest entrants are ineligible to serve on the ad hoc committee. The Executive Director and Contest Committee shall give full access to data and information necessary for the ad hoc committee to complete a Contest Assessment Report. The Contest Assessment Report should provide:

17.12. The Executive Director will ask Staff the Contest Committee to use the Contest Assessment Report, Contest statistics, and other data to prepare any proposed rule changes. The motion was adopted in an Action Without Meeting on October 17 with 9 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 0 abstentions.

**MOTION TO APPOINT PRO ADVISOR**

*Brett moved to appoint Judith Bastin to the vacant PRO Advisor position.*

The motion was adopted in an Action Without Meeting on October 21 with 9 votes in the affirmative, 0 against, and 0 abstentions.



# TREASURER'S REPORT - B. Wills

## Romance Writers of America

### Executive Summary

September 2021 - August 2022

CASH POSITION		
Aug 2022	Aug 2021	Difference
\$935,772	\$765,170	\$170,602

**NET INCOME (LOSS)**

Net income/loss as of 8-31-22 is (\$276,812).

MEMBERSHIP			
YE 2021 vs YE 2022 Membership Data			
Total General and Associate Members			
2022	2021	Difference	% Change
2,593	4,351	(1,758)	-40%

Note: RWA fiscal year is Sept 1 - Aug 31

NOTES
RWA sold the note on the building, which had been seller financed, for \$400,000.
The SBA has extended the EIDL loan repayment deferment; the payments are now anticipated to begin in December 2022.

BUDGET VS ACTUALS SUMMARY
Total income for the year was below budget by \$26,337, and expenses exceeded budget by approximately \$10K.
Though dues and conference revenue were down, other income streams (programs, education, etc.) were highlights.
Also noted, that while income for conferences was lower than projected, expenses were lower as well resulting in profits for both events.
Expenses are tightly monitored.
Focus for the current fiscal year (2022-2023) will be on increasing income with new member campaigns, current member retention, educational programs and offerings and two conferences (virtual in November and in-person in Anaheim, CA in July). Expenses will continue to be actively controlled.

**Romance Writers of America**  
**Balance Sheet**  
As of August 31, 2022

		Total
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Current Assets		
Bank Accounts		
1000 Cash		498,756
1100 Investment Accounts		437,016
Total Bank Accounts	\$	935,772
Other Current Assets		
1300 Other Current Assets		1,117
1400 Prepaid Expenses		17,474
1500 Inventory Asset		2,916
Total Other Current Assets	\$	21,507
Total Current Assets	\$	957,279
Fixed Assets		
1600 Land		0
1610 Building		0
1620 Building Improvements		0
1630 Furniture & Fixtures		0
1640 Computer Equipment		473
1650 Office Machines		0
1660 Software		52,686
Total Fixed Assets	\$	53,159
Other Assets		
1700 Long-term Assets		0
Total Other Assets	\$	0
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,010,438</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>		
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Other Current Liabilities		
2200 Other Current Liabilities		77,082
2700 Deferred Revenues		107,056
Total Other Current Liabilities	\$	184,138
Total Current Liabilities	\$	184,138
Long-Term Liabilities		149,900
Total Long-Term Liabilities	\$	149,900
Total Liabilities	\$	334,038
Equity		
2800 Designated Funds		566,916
Opening Balance Equity		1,190,602
Retained Earnings	\$	(824,305.92)
Net Income	\$	(276,811.77)
Total Equity	\$	676,400
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,010,438</b>

Unaudited

## Romance Writers of America

### Actuals vs. Budget

September 2021 - August 2022

	Actual	Total	Budget
<b>Income</b>			
3000 Dues	340,478		378,320
3100 Conferences / Meetings / Events	134,111		245,850
3300 Other Regular Revenues	111,873		45,710
3400 UBI Revenues	4,861		3,210
3500 Donations	55,230		0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 646,553</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$ 672,890</b>
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>\$ 646,553</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$ 672,890</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
5000 Salary Expenses	281,076		301,340
5100 Payroll Tax & Benefits	40,591		44,304
<b>5200 Depreciation &amp; Amortization</b>	<b>38,381</b>		<b>38,381</b>
5300 Insurance Expenses	5,168		9,820
5400 Property Expenses	0		0
5500 Information Technology	120,417		130,293
5600 Office Expenses & Supplies	7,214		10,813
5700 Telephone & Internet	3,125		3,870
6000 Advertising & Marketing PR	14,415		10,870
6100 Audio Visual	24,289		29,823
6200 Awards	17,947		16,075
6300 Bank & Credit Cards Fees	13,030		24,850
6400 Catering	35,060		30,308
6500 Other Exhibit & Meeting Costs	60,300		13,300
6600 Professional Fees	205,422		190,500
6700 Shipping	512		3,000
6800 Travel	14,401		14,311
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 881,348</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$ 871,658</b>
<b>Net Operating Income</b>	<b>\$ (234,796)</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$ (198,768)</b>
<b>Other Expenses</b>			
7000 Other Miscellaneous Expense	42,016		0
<b>Total Other Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 42,016</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$ (276,812)</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$ (198,768)</b>

Accrual Basis - Unaudited

**OFFICE REPORT - L. Scantlebury**

**Staff:**

Erin Fry – Senior Project Manager

Jackie Padilla – Accountant

Leslie Scantlebury – Executive Director

<b>Member Type</b>	<b>08/01/2022</b>	<b>11/01/2022</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>Affiliate</b>	28	24	-4
<b>Associate</b>	909	844	-65
<b>Charter</b>	19	19	0
<b>Charter Honorary</b>	2	2	0
<b>General</b>	1782	1774	-8
<b>General Honorary</b>	5	5	0
<b>Honorary</b>	69	69	0
	<b>2814</b>	<b>2737</b>	<b>-77</b>

## **UNPUBLISHED MEMBERS BENEFITS COMMITTEE – L.Cornell**

### **UMBC Membership and Pen to Paper Program Assignments:**

- Katherine Smits, Chair & Pen to Paper Program Manager
- Patty Blount, Assistant Chair & Pen to Paper Instructional Designer
- Louisa Cornell, Board Liaison
- Jacki Renee, Board Liaison
- Romy Sommer, REIA Liaison & Pen to Paper Instructional Design Assistant ● Aparna Devershetty, Project Manager
- Joi Jackson, Technical Liaison
- Renee Wildes, Pen to Paper Guide Liaison
- Jennifer Althiser, Pen to Paper Participant Liaison
- Nicole Johnson, Pen to Paper Participant Liaison Assistant
- Kelsey Bonacker, Instructional Design Assistant
- Erin Novotny, Adviser
- Susan Guest, Adviser

### **Accomplishments Since Last Report:**

1. Ongoing weekly meetings.
2. All open committee positions filled.
3. Revision of the Pen to Paper page on the RWA website completed.
4. Contracts for video, audio, and print editing of Pen to Paper materials in place. 5. Testimonial “infomercial” created for use in marketing Pen to Paper this year and in the future.
6. Webinar for potential Participants to provide in-depth information about the program held and recorded for future use.
7. Technology Infrastructure Complete. (For more information see Expanded Discussion items below.)
8. Writing Sprints initiated for Nanowrimo.
9. Guide interviews and selection complete.
10. Scholarship process established and recipients selected.
11. Guide and Participant Onboarding curriculum revision complete.
12. Guide onboarding began 10/23/22 with 16 Guides.
13. Participant onboarding begins 11/6/22 with 47+ participants (including 15 Scholarship recipients).
14. Partner Circle selection process revised. (For more information, see Expanded Discussion items below.)

### **Expanded Discussion of Items Listed Above:**

1. Technology infrastructure evaluation was completed with the decision to use Groups IO instead of Facebook due to better functionality of the platform. In addition to Groups IO, Pen to Paper will continue to use Zoom for Partner Circle meetings. A Technical Liaison was approved by the board and added to the UMBC. She is working with committee members, Pen to Paper Guides, and Pen to Paper Participants on both Zoom and Groups IO.
2. The UMBC has revised the process for establishing Partner Circles. As a result of evaluations from last year, the committee will now provide a Survey Monkey form to Participants with information regarding Guide pairs including subgenre of their books, heat level, publisher type (traditional vs. indie or both), writing process (plotter, discovery or both) and meeting times

(selected by the Guide pairs). This will allow the Participants to select Guides and Partner Circles where they will feel most comfortable. The Survey Monkey is in progress with a target completion date of 11/12/23. Participants will indicate their first three choices of Partner Circles and Pen to Paper staff will match them accordingly.

### **In Progress:**

1. Due to extensive additions to the onboarding process, curriculum revisions are still in progress. The three courses are:
  - Course 1 Creating Character Driven Romances (1/2/23 to 3/25/23)
  - Course 2 Writing the First Draft (3/26/23 to 6/24/23)
  - Course 3 Writing Sexual Tension and the HEA (6/25/23 to 8/31/23)
2. Course 4, Revising and Editing is in the drafting stage. This course is designed to be offered separately from the Pen to Paper program as an additional opportunity for romance writers who complete a first draft and want assistance with revising and editing before either enrolling in the Ramp program or submission to an agent or editor.\*
3. Creation of Survey Monkey for Partner Circle selection (For more information see Expanded Discussion items.)

### **Recommendations and Suggestions:**

1. In addition to providing Participants who complete the program with certificates, the UMBC recommends providing recognition by printing their names in the RWR.\*
2. UMBC recommends that Pen to Paper offer a presentation or have a table at the next RWA conference in July 2023. This would aid in both recruitment of Guides and discoverability of the program for potential Participants.\*
3. Approved vendors may be interested in offering discounts to Pen to Paper program Participants. These might include editors, cover designers, formatters, etc. Since RWA maintains a Writer Services List, these businesses could be approached regarding their interest.\*
4. UMBC members work extremely hard for the committee and with the Pen to Paper program. It would be desirable to thank them in some tangible ways including recognition in the RWR, certificates, and pins. This would require board approval with a small budget for certificates. Pins might be sponsored by an individual or group if approved by the board.\*

#### **\*Open Issues Requiring Board Action:**

1. Approval of Course 4 Revising and Editing (See attached draft).
2. If approval is granted to continue developing Course 4, decision by board regarding whether this would be a free or paid course.
3. Approval of Quarterly Budget
4. Board approval to print names of Participants who complete the Pen to Paper program in the RWR.
5. Board approval of recognition for UMBC members and assistance with identifying a sponsor or sponsors for pins. approval for a Pen to Paper presentation or table at the RWA conference in July 2023.
6. Board discussion and approval or rejection of the idea of approaching businesses on the Writers Services List about possible discounts for Pen to Paper participants (with an ad for their services).

7.

Pen to Paper 2022-2023 Project Plan: [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Dqqp\\_a\\_VCA4J4g0qwdG0LlsjpDXQUIX6wguwf2LvMzM/edit#gid=1956071421](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Dqqp_a_VCA4J4g0qwdG0LlsjpDXQUIX6wguwf2LvMzM/edit#gid=1956071421)

## **AUDIT & FINANCE COMMITTEE – B. Wills**

Members of the 2022-2023 Audit & Finance Committee are:

Returning: Diane Kelly  
Ruby Hill  
Brooke Wills, Chair

New: William Cowie  
Claudia Severin

Other members: Clair Brett, RWA President  
Jackie Padilla, RWA Accountant  
Leslie Scantlebury, RWA Executive Director

The merger of the finance committee and the audit committee into the Audit & Finance Committee was approved by the board of directors and the policy manual has been updated. The charges for the committee remains the same.

The annual audit of RWA's financial statements will again be performed by Blazek & Vetterling, starting November 8, 2022.

The committee is looking forward to a productive 2022-2023 term.

## **POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT – M. Karlik**

### **PAC Mission Statement:**

The Policy Advisory Committee shall monitor public policy and legislation that has 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.

### **NFTs/Crypto Currency**

Ingram Backs Book.io, an NFT Book Marketplace (by Trish Edwards)

“Book.io describes itself as “an NFT marketplace for buying, reading, and selling ebooks and audiobooks” (though, thus far, it has only published e-books). The blockchain infra structure enables a broad range of benefits for authors (and by extension publishers), book buyers, and, to a lesser extent, readers.... The Ingram investment is tied, in part, to another unique Book.io feature, dubbed Mint & Print—a print-on-demand service for digital books bought on Book.io and delivered via Ingram’s vast international infrastructure. In commenting on the investment, Ingram Content Group president and CEO Shawn Morin said Books.io “naturally aligns with the global reach of our business and our mission to provide the infrastructure and services necessary to help content reach its destination, from content creators to consumers.”

**Recommendation:** Note, this signifies positive movement in NFTs, but we are still skeptical about being in full support of them. Again, we ask the Board to be cautious with NFTs and Crypto-Currency.

<https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/bookselling/article/90625-ingram-backs-book-io-a-nft-book-marketplace.html>

### **Print Sales Improved in the Third Quarter**

Through the first three quarters of 2022, NPD Bookscan reports that measured print book sales reached 543 million units, still the second-best result in years. The sales comp actually improved during the third quarter, when sales were just 1.9 percent or 3.4 million units below the same period in 2021.

**Recommendation:** None. Information only.

<https://lunch.publishersmarketplace.com/2022/10/print-sales-improved-in-the-third-quarter/>

### **DOJ v. Penguin Random House Antitrust Trial**

If you want to watch the roundtable discussion with Jane Friedman and others about this case, click on the link below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aPvN2CcusnQ>

This case is also offered in digital/ebook format.



<https://lunch.publishersmarketplace.com/2022/10/buy-or-borrow-the-trial-for-libraries/>

**Recommendation:** We hold Jane Friedman in high regard and would like the Board to ask Jane to conduct a Zoom meeting/seminar, free of charge, to our members. We would like her to speak on: **Hybrid Publishing**.

### **Bertelsmann Sees Multiple Deals in Trouble**

Bertelsmann's recent international managers' meeting focused on plans to invest from €5 billion to €7 billion euros across the company by 2025 — but as the FT under scores, right now the company's ambition to acquire is facing multiple obstacles.

Besides the Simon & Schuster acquisition, now in doubt pending the verdict of Judge Florence Pan, a plan to merge their French television business M6 with the larger TF1 was dropped in September after a hearing before the country's competition authority, which had "significant problems." The same month, customer services provider Marjorel — half owned by Bertelsmann — and call center operator Sitel Group called off merger discussions.

Bertelsmann is a German company that owns Random House. Due to the domino effect these multiple deals could have on our writers, we have growing concerns about job and publishing opportunities if this company streamlines.

**Recommendation:** We know this is a big *if*, but if this company's investment ventures collapse, a lot of writers will be left behind. We recommend the Board reach out to our writers to gain insight as to how many are in the middle of publishing contracts with Random House/Simon & Schuster, and be ready to address problems if it becomes an issue in the near future.

<https://lunch.publishersmarketplace.com/2022/10/bertelsmann-sees-multiple-deals-in-trouble/>

### **Publishing Activities:**

#### **Hallmark Publishing Confirms Closure**

A spokesperson for Hallmark Media said, "We are exiting the Hallmark Publishing business to focus our resources on other areas of the company that we believe will drive our future growth." The closure follows the departure of executive editor Stacey Donovan in late September, who founded the publishing division.

**Recommendation:** (1) The Board follow-through with communications with Hallmark to determine cause and duration of closure; (2) reach out to Hallmark to make sure our writers retain their money and keep their rights; and (3) along with PAC, keep an eye on Stacey Breen Donovan's Twitter account for a better explanation for her departure.

<https://lunch.publishersmarketplace.com/2022/10/hallmark-publishing-confirms-closure/>  
<https://heavy.com/entertainment/hallmark/major-hallmark-division-shut-down/>

#### **HarperCollins Institutes Layoffs, Hiring Freeze due to "Cost Pressures"**

HarperCollins has eliminated positions and paused hiring due to financial pressures, the company confirmed to PL (Publishers Lunch) on Thursday. They shared the following

statement: “The business is facing continued cost pressures, including price increases related to printing, production, freight and distribution, and we are taking decisive steps to operate as efficiently as possible. As part of this process, we have made some difficult decisions and a small number of positions have been eliminated as teams restructure.”

Sources tell us that an estimated 12 people have been let go across departments in both the children’s and adult divisions.

**Recommendation:** None. Information only.

<https://lunch.publishersmarketplace.com/2022/10/harpercollins-institutes-layoffs-hiring-freeze-due-to-cost-pressures/>

**Beware of DISREPUTABLE PUBLISHERS** (by Debra Winkler) 1. Beware Disreputable Publishers (<https://writerbeware.blog/category/small-press/>)

- a. BBB Publishings. A paid anthology/boxed set publisher
- b. Parliament House Press/
- c. Immortal Ink Publishing/Rebecca Hamilton/Shana Raywood
- d. Genius Media Inc/Kairos Phoenix Company/Wid Bastian a.k.a. Widtsoe T Bastian (he’s filed multiple bankruptcies then immediately opens up another publishing company)
- e. Eli Bear Company/Wid Bastian, a/k/a Widtsoe T. Bastian
- f. Filles Vertes Publishing/Star Alley Press/Myra Fiacco

**Recommendation:** On the RWA website, there used to be a PULL-DOWN MENU with something similar to “Buyer’s Beware” listed as an item of interest. We ask the Board to reinstitute this DROP-DOWN MENU and title it “Disreputable Publishers/Vanity Presses/Scams.”

1. Scam Alert

- a. Scammers Impersonating Acorn TV via Twitter – Tom Handy/Kate Lyne/Deborah O’Tootle/Loujis McCall/Melissa Rea  
(<https://writerbeware.blog/2022/09/09/scam-alert-scammers-impersonating-acorn-tv/#:~:text=Scam%20Alert%3A%20Scammers%20Impersonating%20Acorn%20TV%20POSTED%20BY,of%20commercial-free%20UK%20made%20mysteries%2C%20dramas%2C%20comedies%2C%20and%20documentaries>)
  - b. Scam Publishers & Editors (<https://justpublishingadvice.com/publishing-companies-to-avoid-and-nasty-new-author-scams/>)
    - i. Author Solutions (vanity press)
    - ii. Page Publishing (vanity press)
  - iii. Called and Editor in Thief – individual poses as editor you pay for & then publishes your book under their name on Amazon Kindle Unlimited so author loses money & their book rights
2. Changes
- a. Parliament House Press – Old Parliament House has been dissolved along with all contracts dissolved – Under new management, new contracts will not be offered to all authors (<https://writerbeware.blog/2022/08/26/complaints-and-changes-at-parliament-house-press/>)
  - b. Hallmark Publishing to Close  
(<https://lunch.publishersmarketplace.com/2022/10/hallmark-publishing-to-close/#:~:text=Hallmark%20Publishing%20to%20Close%20October%2012%2C%202022%20By,they%20were%20informed%20by%20email%20of%20th>)

e%20development)

### 3. Small Publishers I've Investigated

- a. Gibbs Smith – Layton Utah – Traditional publisher of textbooks, children's books, non-fiction with emphasis on interior design, architecture, children's, cookbooks, outdoors, arts and crafts, western humor, general humor, and gift books (<https://www.gibbs-smith.com/submissions>)
- b. The Wild Rose Press – Adams Basin, New York – Traditional Publisher of contemporary, paranormal, historical, erotic romance & mainstream fiction as well as offering A La Carte Book Publishing Services listing a variety of amenities for authors (<https://wildrosepress.com/>)

#### **Hybrid Publishers** (by Tara Taylor Quinn)

The traditional publishing model assumes no financial risk for the author. The publisher pays an [advance to the author](#) to publish their work, then proceeds to prepare that work for publishing.<sup>[3]</sup>

The publisher pays for all the editorial including the authors advance, production, marketing, sales, distribution, and wholesale costs and does not begin to recoup their investment in the book until the book is on the market and begins to sell.

The hybrid publisher follows this same model except the author is the one to assume the financial risk for their book. Rather than paying an author an advance, the hybrid publisher charges the author a fee for their publishing services.<sup>[1]</sup> The author stills receives royalties on their book sales, as with the traditional method, but they must pay the fee for publishers services to get their book to market. Another qualification of the hybrid model is that the royalties for authors who elect to publish with the hybrid method should be higher than with the traditional publishing standard.<sup>[1]</sup> In some cases the publisher also bears a portion of the cost for production, printing, or other publishing related services—such as marketing or sales, since both the author and publisher share in the profits.<sup>[4]</sup>

All the functions of a traditional press including evaluating submissions, editorial reviews (including substantive, developmental and stylistic editing), copywriting, design, proofreading, and print production are all part of the services that a hybrid publisher must also offer.<sup>[1]</sup>

As hybrid publishing has become more popular over the years,<sup>[5]</sup> the definition has become more clear, especially with standards put forward by the [Independent Book Publishers Association \(IBPA\)](#) in 2018 for hybrid publishers to follow. The IBPA lists the following nine standards that should be followed by hybrid publishers:<sup>[1]</sup>

- Hybrid publishers must set forth a vision to follow for their company.
- Submissions must be reviewed and vetted to not be classified as a [vanity press](#).
- The publisher must publish as its own defined imprint and request its own ISBNs.
- Hybrid publishers must meet the standards and best practices set out by the [publishing industry](#).
- The quality of the production (design and printing) and editorial services must [be](#) up to industry standards.
- The hybrid publisher must manage the rights of the works they publish as well [as](#) any subsequent rights that are acquired and work to find additional rights to sell for their authors.
- Hybrid publishers must manage distribution services or hire a distributor for [their](#) authors' works.
- Hybrid publishers need to report reputable sales on the titles they publish.
- Authors who sign with hybrid publishers must be paid a higher royalty than [that](#) of standard traditional publisher rates (see [Royalty payment](#)).

Hybrid publishers often have their own specialties, such as Page Two Strategies, which is a publisher that primarily focuses on non-fiction books in the business category.<sup>[6]</sup> Hybrid publishers also often find success working with authors who have established audience bases such as an author who has become an expert in their field and wants to publish a book about

their practice, garnering them more credibility.

<https://www.ibpa-online.org/?>

**Recommendation:** We recommend the Board provide a way for RWA to promote these standards and to list the hybrid publishers who adhere to them.

It would also serve our RWA members to at least know of these standards, but even better, if RWA adopted them, then RWA could post a list of hybrid publishers that adhere to these standards. With the plethora of scammers and publishers out there, this would be a huge membership value to many of our members. This could be a part of the new DROP-DOWN MENU mentioned earlier.

### **Imprints:**

#### **UID Reorganization Results in Turpin Layoffs**

The “managed exit” of Turpin Distribution from UK-distributor United Independent Distributors (which has been owned by Independent Publishers Group since last year) will result in layoffs, UID global ceo Joe Matthews told The Bookseller, though he didn’t give a number. Turpin has about 100 employees.

**Recommendation:** None. Information only.

<https://lunch.publishersmarketplace.com/2022/10/uid-reorganization-results-in-turpin-layoffs/>

### **United Kingdom:**

The UK & World publishing arenas have been quiet. It's that time of year when the various UK writers' organizations hold their elections for new board members, as well as awards season in both the UK and Australian romance literary circles. There has been no "chatter" or any issues that would affect RWA members.

**Waterstones**, one of the largest bookstore chains in the UK, had distribution supply chain issues since July, resulting in low stocks in many stores. However, [it appears these distribution issues have now been resolved](#).

**Recommendation:** None. Information only.

#### **Oliver Rhodes Launches Storm Publishing**

Bookouture founder and former ceo Oliver Rhodes has launched Storm Publishing, a new digital publishing company that will “publish adult commercial fiction in ebook, audio and print-on-demand paperback globally,” looking to buy world English rights at a minimum. It plans to pay “an author royalty of 50% of net receipts on both ebook and audio formats,” though they do not pay advances. Their standard contract term is 10 years. Hachette UK acquired Bookouture in 2017.

Rhodes said, “My reason for starting Storm is that I believe it’s possible to take digital publishing to another level. The current rate of technological change offers so many more opportunities for publishers to add value to authors and readers. It is vital to keep learning and

innovating at speed, which is key to the vision at Storm.”

**Recommendation:** None. Information only.

<https://lunch.publishersmarketplace.com/2022/10/imprints-oliver-rhodes-launches-storm-publishing/>

## **DIVERSITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE – C. Brett**

The initial meeting of the Diversity committee commenced October 6, 2022. It consisted of introductions of the five members Paula McGhee, Toni Jackson, Molly Maka, Laura Haller, and Tinia Montford. (Ms. Montford has since left the committee citing time conflicts.)

Since most of the members were new to RWA, Toni Jackson and Molly Maka discussed previous diversity challenges and why so many members left RWA.

After conversations in the October and November meetings, the following breakdown was created to identify the overall responsibilities of the committee and next steps.

### **Goals**

- Provide guidance on diversity best practices and compliance to RWA which includes the Board, chapters, and members.
- Examine current writer programs and opportunities, recommending improvements to avoid possible DEI issues.
- Construct diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs for RWA members.
- Create strategies to promote a diverse environment for RWA membership.

### **Roles**

- Our roles are based on our expertise. This will strengthen RWA to professionally and expertly handle complaints, questions and issues.
- Act as consultants on DEI issues for the RWA Board and members.

### **Responsibilities**

- Regularly research laws and factors influencing existing DEI programs for implementation within RWA.
- Provide oversight of forums and boards (i.e. DEI Listening Board) to identify upcoming or ongoing DEI issues.

### **Strategy**

- Develop creative solutions to identified issues.
- Head off possible diversity problems before they escalate.
- Maintain confidentiality of reported issues until a decision is reached between the committee and the Board.

**Motion #1: Approve Committee Members**

Renee moves to approve the following committee members:

Conference Workshop Committee:

Debby Lee

RWR Content Committee:

Aparna Dever

*The motion was adopted by general consent.*

**Adjourn:** President Brett adjourned the meeting at 12:17 p.m. CT.