

## **Board Of Directors**

### **2020 Annual Report**

*Association. Education. Publication.*

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*Come write with us!*

January 22, 2021

## *President's Message*

2020 was South Carolina Writers Association's 30th anniversary, a year that we intended to spend with our members, to celebrate our past and to set in motion an exciting agenda. The pandemic produced never-before-seen challenges to our members, our board members and how we operated the organization. We grieve the losses our members experienced and keep their family and friends in our hearts.

Writing proved to be a solace for many. SCWA rose to the challenge, adapted how we deliver our programs and services, and tried our best to support our members in a different environment.

I am indebted to our members and volunteer board members who proved their resilience, used their creativity and worked extremely hard to make 2020 a successful year. It is with great pride that I summarize, on behalf of the board, the SCWA accomplishments of 2020.

Mike Lee  
President  
SCWA Board of Directors  
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## **SCWA Operations**

### ***Membership/Chapter Liaison:***

We began the year with 325 members and our sights set on growing to 400, something we were rapidly approaching in the first quarter. We planned our programs and services accordingly. However, despite keeping our fees unchanged at \$52, our membership renewals dropped by a staggering 50% as the pandemic set in. With the leadership of our chapter liaisons, chapter leaders and membership chair, we refocused our efforts on understanding our member needs and pivoted to offer virtual services. By obtaining funding grants, we were able to offer free programs and improve services, and by offering reduced fees to end the calendar year, finished 2020 at the membership level we began, albeit with lower revenue.

We conducted two membership surveys in 2020; one to understand our demographics and a second to help us plan our conference. We thank all of the members for their support and participation. Chapters, unable to meet in person, were offered operating support to cover costs of using virtual services. We recognized the benefits of going virtual and by year-end had designed four new genre-based virtual chapters to start up in 2021. We hope these new virtual chapters not only will better serve those who are not affiliated with our 20 local chapters but also will better serve members who wish to align with other writers in the same genre.

### ***Publications/Contests:***

2020 brought the successful return of SCWA's original print anthology, Catfish Stew. This members-only publication proved to be a popular member benefit with the opportunity to have their work competitively judged and published.

Our popular digital journal, The Petrigu Review, received over 550 submissions, of which 25 were accepted for publication which took place in December. Check it out at <https://thepetigrureview.com>.

SCWA co-sponsored, with the South Carolina Academy of Writers, the McCray Nickens Fellowship in Poetry and the Coker Fellowship in Fiction. We are proud to collaborate on these contests for South Carolina writers.

We congratulate those writers selected for publication and hope the experience benefited all who submitted. We tip our hat to our publications team who produced the high-quality SCWA trademark publications. The team also established new processes and procedures for future publication success.

## ***Events & Education:***

### Conference

SCWA's in-person conference scheduled for April 2020 in Columbia, S.C., had to be canceled due to the pandemic. A replacement conference scheduled for 2021, again in Columbia, also had to be canceled as health conditions had not improved by year end. SCWA incurred losses for facility deposits, however, all other costs were avoided.

The basic program and faculty of the latter conference were retained for a new virtual conference to be held from April 16 to 18, 2021.

### Workshops

Four 2020 workshops under development with local chapters had to be canceled. As an alternative 18 new workshops were developed and presented as virtual events that ran from June through December. SCWA's *Summer Series* consisted of 12 free events, open to the public, held over the lunch period. These mini-workshops covered a broad set of writing topics featuring a combination of in-house and external hosts. An additional six free *Member-Pro* evening craft workshops featured SCWA's in-house experts. The sessions, recorded for ongoing access by members, had an attendance of over 200 participants.

The developers, producers and hosts creatively provided high-value programming to SCWA members and served as the basis for new programming that is being offered in 2021.

### ***Other Operating Highlights***

- Branding – A branding strategy was developed that included new SCWA logos and a tagline ***Come write with us***. SCWA established its three primary member services as:

#### ***Association. Education. Publication.***

- Website – A new SCWA website, **myscwa.org**, was developed and introduced in June and featured enhanced member service areas and greater brand appeal.
- A major partnership project was initiated during the fourth calendar quarter in which SCWA is taking the lead role in the South Carolina Literary Arts Project to identify writing organizations across the state and determine opportunities to collaborate. A steering team with representation from external advisers and co-sponsored with the Pat Conroy Literary Center and the South Carolina Academy of Authors will oversee the project. A project manager was hired for phase 1 of the project, which will conclude in Q1 2021.
- SCWA hired its first staff member, a part-time administrative assistant. This position supports the board in membership management, communications and other administrative activities.

## **Financials**

### **Financial Summary:**

SCWA met the challenge of reduced membership and conference revenue by avoiding costs wherever possible and focusing on alternate sources of revenue. We are very grateful for the emergency relief grants provided by the South Carolina Humanities and the South Carolina Arts Commission, which allowed us to maintain operations.

A total of \$14,119 in grants were received, only \$3,000 of which were for 2020 operations as the majority is for 2021 projects and programs.

Net income was positive at \$16,706 on a cash basis. After adjustments for accrual accounting the net income was approximately \$5,000. Cash reserves at year end were \$40,000.

## **Board Membership**

- **Board member changes:**

The board expanded its capability during 2020 with efforts to diversify in writing and technical expertise as well as demographics to align better with the writing community.

We were grateful for the services of board members who left: Josie Olsvig, Rick Koethe, Ann Chaney, Dana Ridenour, Martha Thwaite Weeks, Bettie Williams, Vicki Wilkerson and Past President Carol-Ann Rudy.

SCWA welcomed the addition of directors: Susan Zurenda, Gail DePriest, Paul Davis, Nancy Allen-Mastro, Sara Lea Thornhill, Dorree Lynn and Dan Mooney. Additional advisors are: Art Turfa, Yvette Murray and Bill Bruehl.

The following stepped down as directors to become advisors: Past President Amber Wheeler Bacon and First VP Mary Sturgill.

Our accomplishments would not have been possible without the dedication of all of our board members.

- **Partnerships:**

SCWA was grateful for the opportunity to partner with the following organizations: One Columbia for Arts and Culture, The South Carolina Academy of Authors and The Pat Conroy Literary Center.