



2021 Annual Report

Our 2021 Annual Report highlights Straw Dog Writers Guild (SDWG) during the calendar year of January 1 to December 31, 2021. Under the direction of President, Christopher Sparks, and Administrative Director, Arianna Collins, both new to the job, despite the constraints of the pandemic, we continued to provide support and new programs to writers in Western Massachusetts. In 2020 pandemic restrictions made SDWG nimble in switching from in-person to Zoom for all SD-related programming. And still in 2021, nearly all of our programs were on-line.

Straw Dog Writers Guild (SDWG), founded in 2010, is a membership guild. We have nearly 300 members. Our programs are also open to the community. One of our foundational beliefs is that writers should be compensated for their work. All of our workshop leaders and featured readers are offered compensation, however small. Irrespective of the amount paid to them, their gratitude at being paid was humbling.

We have three paid contractors:

- Arianna Collins updates our webpage (www.strawdogwriters.com), creates graphics for social media platforms, hosts our Zoom meetings with our Steering Committee, and performs countless other tasks.
- Robin Glenn creates our e-newsletter with 1800 subscribers.
- Sam McClellan hosts our website <https://www.strawdogwriters.org/> and provides tech support.

Our Board of Directors and our Steering Committee provide guidance and continuity. We are a volunteer-run 501(c)3 organization. Steering Committee members act as liaisons to the plethora of sub-committees, attending to the specifics of social justice, programming, publicity, development, and finance. The Steering Committee meets monthly to provide oversight and continuity.

We have two retreats per year, one in July and the other in January. Both of these retreats are open to members who serve on sub-committees. These working meetings help the Steering Committee with yearly program planning and focus. In addition, our annual meeting took place in November which was open to all SDWG members.

Straw Dog Writers Guild, 43 Fairview Ave, Northampton, MA 01060

Programming

A total of 1503 community members attended our events during 2021.

We offered 11 workshops with a total of 329 participants. They included:

- ♦ **How to Speak in Public**, Nicole M. Young
- ♦ **Premise, Plot, Poetry: Three Keys to the Novel**, Debra Jo Immergut
- ♦ **Poetry Writing: Strategies for Finding Voice Through Life Experience**, Ron Welburn
- ♦ **Jump-Start a Story: Sisters in Crime Workshop**, Lisa Lieberman, Carolyn Marie Wilkins, Sharon Healy Yang
- ♦ **How to Injure your Characters**, Dr. Dave Page
- ♦ **Writing About Politics and Current Events: Opportunities and Obstacles**, John Sheirer
- ♦ **An Exploration of Flash Fiction & Flash Memoir**, Joy Baglio
- ♦ **7th Annual Author Showcase**, Straw Dog Writers Guild members
- ♦ **Darling, You're Making a Scene**, Aine Greaney
- ♦ **Exploring Some Japanese Poetry Forms: Writing Haiku and Tanka**, Eileen P. Kennedy
- ♦ ***Craft in the Real World Book Discussion***, led by Liz Bedell and Becky Jones

In addition, we offered several ongoing programs. They included:

- ♦ **Writers Night Out.** This event was offered on the first Tuesday of each month. For the Open Mic portion of WNO, Total annual attendance was 360 people with 12 featured readers at this monthly event. These events were entirely online, run by Jacqueline Sheehan, Rick Paar, emcee, and Beth Filson, technical advisor.
- ♦ **Writers Read/Hilltown** in Ashfield included Open Mics and Featured Readers. The final event was in December. We greatly appreciate the fine work of Jane Roy Brown who organized the program. There were a total of 120 participants with 12 featured readers at this monthly event.
- ♦ **The Poetry Critique Meet-up**, co-sponsored by the Northampton Center for the Arts and hosted by Michael Goldman, continued virtually. 24 Poetry Critique Meet-ups with a total of 177 participants
- ♦ **The Prose Meet-up**, hosted by Celia Jeffries, joined the regular monthly offerings. 3 Short-Prose Meet-ups with a total of 8 participants
- ♦ **Black Writers Read with Valley Society**, 5 Black Writers Read events with a total of 822 views between streaming and recorded. Readers included: Aprell May, Margo Gabriel, Shannon Luders-Manuel, Note: this program, though ongoing, will no longer be part of SDWG.

And special events:

- ♦ **Voices for Resistance**, co-sponsored by **Forbes Library**, featured reader Amina Jordan Mendez, and invited guests Andrea Hairston, Andrea Lawlor, Charles Coe, Desmond Peeples, and Shanta Lee Gander
- ♦ **Poetry Ritual**, a celebration of poets from the Poetry Critique Meet-ups from the last three years (co-sponsored with the Northampton Center for the Arts)



New Programs

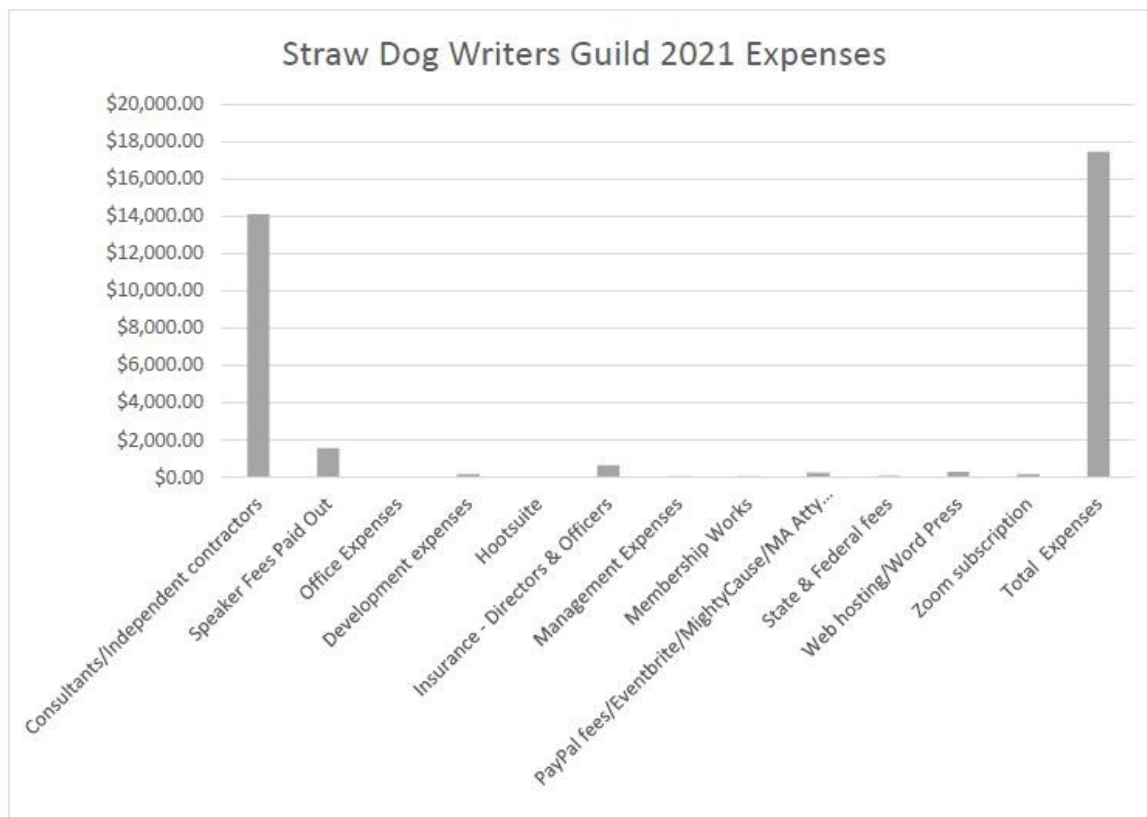
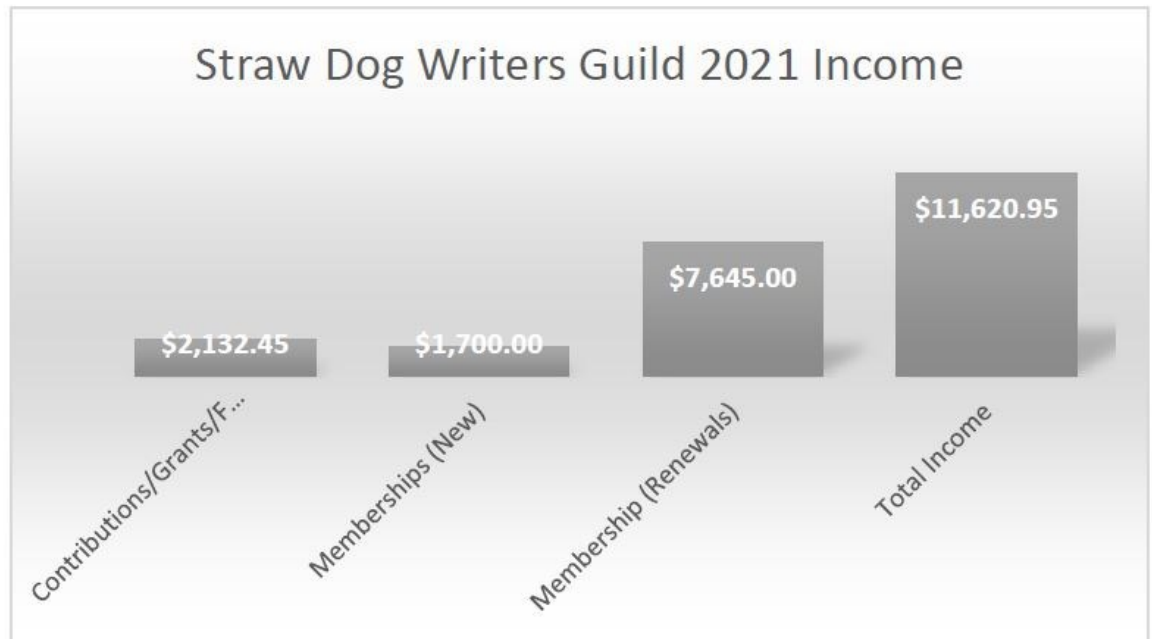
SDWG collaborated with Edith Wharton's The Mount in Lenox, to establish writing residencies for emerging writers, beginning in March 2022. Applications closed on November 1, 2021. With the help of 17 volunteer readers, we judged 329 applications. Nine winning winners were selected and announced in January 2022.



The Social Justice Writing Committee became the Emerging Writer Fellowship Committee (Liz Bedell, Fungai Tichawangana, Macci Schmidt, Ellen Meeropol), who developed guidelines for the 2022-23 Emerging Writer Fellowship, offered in fiction. Applications closed December 31; the announcement of the Fellow was made on March 1, 2022. The Fellow's term will be May 2022 - May 2023.

Finances

Currently, our total expenses were \$18,970 and income was \$26,657, with a net income of \$7,687. Administrative contractor fees make up the majority of the expenses while Patchwork Residency support, Emerging Writer Fellowship, and memberships make up the majority of the income. Residency and Fellowship support are designated for The Edith Wharton - Straw Dog Writers-in-Residence, and The Emerging Writer Fellowship respectively.



Steering Committee

- ♦ Board of Directors: Alexis Johnson, Rick Paar, Mary Ann Scognamiglio, Macci Schmidt, Stephanie Shafran, Christopher Sparks (ex officio), Becky Jones (ex officio)
- ♦ Officers
 - President: Christopher Sparks
 - Clerk: Macci Schmidt
 - Treasurer (ex officio): Becky Jones
- ♦ Committee Members: Jacqueline Sheehan, Ellen Meeropol

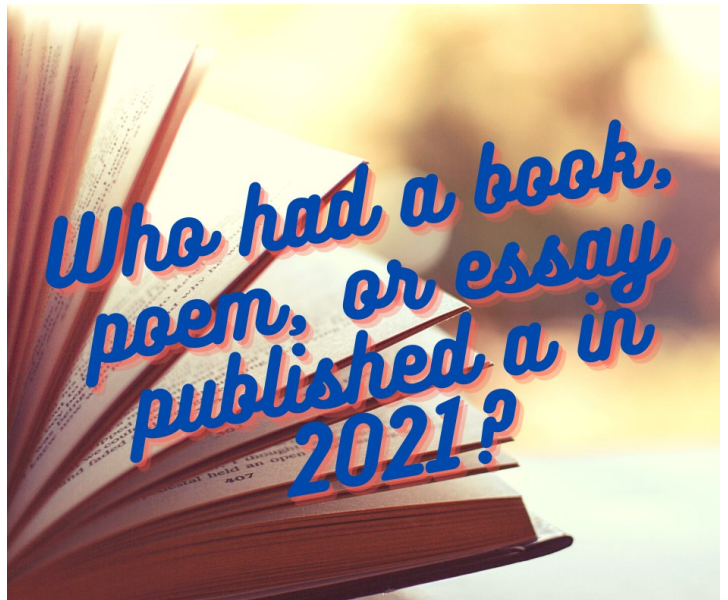
Advisory Board

Carol Connare, Patricia Lee Lewis, Richard Michelson. Bill Newman. Jane Yolen, Leslea Newman

SDWG members who published in 2021

30 member authors published their work in 2021 (based on requests for response)

- ♦ Sally Bellerose, *Fishwives*
- ♦ Steven D. Brewer, *The Third Time's the Charm, Book One of Revin's Heart*
- ♦ Arianna Alexsandra Collins (natural science articles and poetry in area publications)
- ♦ Nina Dabek, *My Father's Wife and My Daughter's Emu*
- ♦ Justine Dymond, *The Emigrant & Other Stories*
- ♦ Howie Faerstein, *Out of Order*
- ♦ Cheryl J Fish, *The Sauna is Full of Maids, Poems and Photos*
- ♦ Michael Goldman (books of poetry and translation)
- ♦ Ellen Evert Hopman, *The Druid Isle (The Druid Trilogy Book 2)*
- ♦ Ellen Evert Hopman, *Priestess of the Fire Temple: A Druid's Tale (The Druid Trilogy Book 3)*
- ♦ Richard Horton, *Ballet for Murderers*
- ♦ Celia Jeffries, *Blue Desert*
- ♦ Eileen P. Kennedy, *Touch My Head Softly*
- ♦ Ellen M. Levy, *Chosen Family*
- ♦ Mark Luebbers, "Flat Light"



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- ♦ Ellen Meeropol, *Success and the Late Blooming Author with Celeste Gainey, Sandra Gail Lambert, and Cynthia Robinson Young*
- ♦ Ellen Meeropol, Review of *Blue Desert* by Celia Jeffries, Mom Egg Review
- ♦ Ellen Meeropol, "Ethel and Me", Lilith Magazine
- ♦ Ellen Meeropol, "Authors Rally to Promote Sinking Islands", *Shelf Awareness*
- ♦ Dusty Miller, *Danger Within*
- ♦ Chris O'Carroll, *Abracadabratude*
- ♦ Lesléa Newman, *I Wish My Father*
- ♦ Lesléa Newman, *As Babies Dream*
- ♦ Lesléa Newman, *1-2-3 Cats*
- ♦ Lesléa Newman, *A-B-C Cats*
- ♦ Rebecca Hart Olander, *Uncertain Acrobats*
- ♦ Rebecca Hart Olander, "Our Edges Away" with Elizabeth Paul, *Tiny Spoon Issue 7: "Collaboration"*
- ♦ Rebecca Hart Olander, "Fifteen" and "As Bees", *Jet Fuel Review spring issue*
- ♦ Rebecca Hart Olander, "Wellfleet", *Wayfinding: Poetry Celebrating America's Parks and Public Lands Anthology*
- ♦ Suzanne Rancourt, *Old Stones New Road*
- ♦ Julie Wittes Schlack, *Burning and Dodging*
- ♦ Stephanie Shafran, *Awakening*
- ♦ Stephanie Shafran, "After 'Story' by Richard Blanco"
- ♦ Jacqueline Sheehan, Hooves at the Precipice, in Tulip Tree Review
- ♦ John Sheirer, *Stumbling Through Adulthood: Linked Stories*
- ♦ Maureen Smith, *Grace Street: A Sister's Memoir of Grief & Grace*
- ♦ Jessica B. Sokol, "The Green River Festival: Wherever Is Your Heart I Call Home"
- ♦ Lanette Sweeney, *What I Should Have Said: A Poetry Memoir about Losing a Child to Addiction*
- ♦ Adin Thayer, *The Close World*
- ♦ Julie Wittes Schlack, *Burning and Dodging*
- ♦ Julie Wittes Schlack, "Try Harder," September 2021 *BioStories*



www.strawdogwriters.org

SDWG supports the writing community by strengthening, engaging, and connecting writers at all levels of development.