

# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

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SD...

STRAW DOG WRITERS GUILD

[www.strawdogwriters.org](http://www.strawdogwriters.org)

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

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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This year begins the 15th anniversary of Straw Dog Writers Guild, and looking back it's amazing to see what we've accomplished. Last year's accomplishments continue to build the reputation---and grow the Guild in new directions.

2024 had two firsts for Straw Dog; the Write*Angles* Conference and the hiring of an Executive Consultant, Patricia Pin.

Straw Dog was approached by the Write*Angles* organization asking us to take over and present the conference after a 3-year hiatus. The Committee, spearheaded by Ellen Meeropol, held pop-up events to learn what writers wanted the Conference to be, and did an incredible job of fundraising to make this event happen. The Write/*Angles* Conference was an incredible success and has paved the way for this to become an annual event. Watch for information about this year's conference.

Patricia Pin, who has joined us as Executive Consultant, brings her years of experience at The Mount to Straw Dog to help us improve and refine our organization. A Strategic Planning Committee is working on ways to continue to grow Straw Dog; a newly formed Development Committee will be working to raise funds and seek sponsorships to help Straw Dog continue to grow and serve the writing community.

Here's to 2025!

**Mary Ann  
Scognamiglio**

PRESIDENT

## Some of the highlights of 2024 include:

### Grants. - Grants for WA

- We received \$13000 from the Community Foundation of Western MA, which we were awarded in 2023.
- We received \$4440 reimbursement from the ARPA funds that we were awarded in 2023.

This was our second year collaborating with Smith Vocational High School, helping them to launch their literary magazine **The Viking Runestone**. Along with Forbes Library, we celebrated the publication of the magazine, and offered them financial support.

### WriteAngles.

The WriteAngles Writers Conference was held on April 6, 2024, at the Northampton Center for the Arts. A one-day program, it featured a keynote address by Shanta Lee, who was presented with the second Abel Meeropol Social Justice Writing Award, and twelve sessions, including panels, roundtable discussions, and participatory workshops.

The Conference was organized and run by a Committee of about twenty volunteers with the help of a part-time Administration Assistant. The Conference website went live in October.

### Retreats.

Working retreats were held in January and July. The annual member meeting and celebration was held in September at R. Michelson Galleries. Over 45 members attended the event.



# PROGRAMMING

1606 community members attended one or more of our events during 2024.

10 Craft workshops totaling 202 participants took place online and/or in person. SDWG hosts included: Athol Public Library, Forbes Library, Northampton Center for the Arts, and Lilly Library.

- Chapbooks: Crafting a Collection
- Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Writing a Query Letter
- Writing Inside the Body
- Dazzle an Agent: Pro Tips to Put the Polish on Your Manuscript
- The Smell of Fear: Building Suspense & Tension with Subtext
- Promoting Your Work as an Indie Author
- What Poems Want: Reading & Revising with Care
- Surprising Readers (& Ourselves): Playing with (Hermit) Crab Essays, Poems & Stories
- Translation: Reading the World
- Historical Fiction – Dean Cycon,



SDWG is strengthened by community partnerships. We continue to work with area libraries, nonprofits, and businesses to host our events and programs.

	<b>11th Annual Straw Dog Writers Author Showcase</b>	
	January 26, 2024 2:30 - 4:00 pm Northampton Friends Meeting 43 Center Street, Suite 202 Northampton, MA and on Zoom*	
	Brief readings from new books by members of Straw Dog Writers Guild	
	William Mailler windflower Rebecca Daniels Ed Orzechowski Libby Maxey Elaine Reardon Sarah Ritter Trudy Knowles Jendi Reiter D.K. McCutchen Janet MacFadyen Jim Brosnan	
	Emceed by Chris O'Carroll	
	<a href="#">Register Here</a> for the Zoom link*	

\* We hope that most people will choose to attend in person. That is helpful to register for the Zoom link just in case of inclement weather. This way, we'll be able to email everyone about the change of venue to Zoom.

**11th Annual Author Showcase**, showcasing readings from SDWG members with a new book published in 2024. This event was MCed by Chris O'Carroll. Authors included Bill Mailler, D.K. McCutchen, Ed Orzechowski, Elaine Reardon, Janet MacFadyen, Jendi Reiter, Jim Brosnan, Libby Maxey, Rebecca Daniels, Sarah Ritter, Straw Dog Writers Guild, Trudy Knowles, windflower. 47 people attended.

**A Writer's Night**, met monthly at the Longmeadow Adult Center.

15 people attended this monthly event, meeting 12x, equaling 180 participants. Readers included: Celia Jeffries, Cherryl Jensen, Richard Michelson, Christopher Boucher, Linda Bratcher Wlodyka, Chris O'Carroll, Doug Anderson, Susan Sensemann, and Jovonna Van Pelt.


**Viking Runestone Literary Magazine:** we continued our support of Smith Vocational High School, helping them to launch their literary magazine, The Viking Runestone. Along with Forbes Library, we celebrated the publication of the journal and offered them financial support. Poet Gail Thomas was the MC.

**Poetry Critique Meet-up**, co-sponsored by the Northampton Center for the Arts and hosted by Michael Goldman, continued virtually. This program met 2x monthly with a total of 80 poets.

**Poetry Share**, a seasonal program co-sponsored with Belding Memorial Library in Ashfield and facilitated by poet and our former Administrative Director Arianna Alexandra Collins, through her business Offerings for Community Building. This program met 4 times with 6-11 participants and a total of 37 participants.

**Straw Dog Writes**, a weekly online meet-up continued this year, meeting 50 times, with a total of 200 participants over the course of the year.

**Writers-in-Residence Reading**, in collaboration with The Mount: Edith Wharton's Home in Lenox, 42 people attended a reading on Zoom with the Writers-in-Residence.




**A Writer's Night**  
with Susan Sensemann



**Thursday**  
**November 21**  
**6:45-7:30pm**

The Longmeadow Adult Center  
211 Maple Road, Longmeadow  
Register by calling 413-565-4150, option 1.

**Sponsored by: The Longmeadow Adult Center & Straw Dogs Writers Guild**



**Writers-in-Residence Reading**  
Sunday, October 1, 4-5:15pm via Zoom



**THE MOUNT** SD...  
EDITH WHARTON'S HOME

The 2023 Writers-in-Residence include Cat Wei, Emily Atkinson, Emily Kiernan, Katherine Easer, Keeonna Harris, Lindsay Rockwell, Mario Giannone, Martha Pham, Parvati Ramchandani, and Emerging Writer Fellow Regine Jackson.



**Writers-in-Residence**, in collaboration with The Mount in Lenox, SDWG continues our residency program for emerging writers, funded in part by an anonymous SDWG donor. Nine writers were selected and announced in January 2024: Camila Sanmiguel Anaya, Eleanor Fuller, Jason Prokowiec, Jenn Alandy Trahan, Julia Thacker, Mariah Rigg, Mistinguette Smith, Stevie Billow, and Whitney Scharer.




**Writers Night Out**, offered on the first Tuesday of each month, is held in the Coolidge Room of Forbes Library. Ten readers are randomly selected to read for up to 5 minutes, after which, a Featured Reader shares their work and discusses the life of writing and publishing. 25-30 people participate in this monthly event, 364 total. Featured readers included: Alexis Johnson, Diana Whitney, Doug Anderson, Jessica Jopp, Cherryl Jensen, Linda Wlodyka, Dina Friedman, Dean Cycon, Steve Bernstein, and Deborah Gorlin. Numerous friendships and writing groups have formed through Writers Night Out.

**WRITERS NIGHT OUT**  
at Forbes Library

**TUESDAY**  
**OCTOBER 1**  
**6-8PM**

20 West St., Northampton MA  
Parking is available at the Library.




Featured Reader:  
**Dean Cycon**

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Forbes Library  
[www.strawdogwriters.org](http://www.strawdogwriters.org)

**WRITERS NIGHT OUT**  
at Forbes Library

**TUESDAY**  
**JUNE 4**  
**6-8PM**

20 West St., Northampton MA  
Parking is available at the Library.



Featured Reader:  
**Jessica Jopp**

SD... Straw Dog Writers Guild  
Forbes Library  
[www.strawdogwriters.org](http://www.strawdogwriters.org)



**STRAW DOG WRITERS GUILD CONFERENCE**

WRITEANGLES CONFERENCE

For writers,  
by writers

LEARN. CONNECT. GROW.

Twelve exciting panels, roundtables, and workshops to choose from, including:

- *Writing the Urgent Now*
- *Beyond the Book*
- *Using Stories to Enliven Nonfiction*
- *The Hard Reality of Speculative Fiction and more...*

APRIL  
6, 2024

SATURDAY

KEYNOTE SPEAKER  
Shanta Lee

WRITE

AGENT MEETINGS

NETWORKING

COMMUNITY

**Presenters:**

- Courtney Andree
- Yasmine Ameli
- Mary-Kim Arnold
- Lynn Bechtel
- DeMisty D. Beiswenger
- Chelsey Catherine
- Leigh Hoyer Cullen
- Maria Lilia Arroyo
- Chazada Nataranga (Baba)
- Dasagotto Lyrical Faith
- Mary J. Fiala
- Tricia Gover
- Jody Holmes
- Audrey Weil Huang
- Melissa Jackson
- Regine Jackson
- Jennifer Jacobson
- Sh. Jazmine
- Shira Levine
- Shira Levine
- Patricia Lee Lewis
- Nicole M. Young-Martin
- Lynn McOlar
- Renee Moore
- Nerissa Neels
- Bethany Powell
- Julie Wiles Schlock
- Julia Schlock
- Christopher J. Sparks
- Liseke Van Riel-Dux

NORTHAMPTON CENTER FOR THE ARTS

33 HAWLEY ST, NORTHAMPTON, MA

WWW.WRITEANGLESCONFERENCE.COM


A STRAW DOG WRITERS GUILD  
CONFERENCE

The WriteAngles Writers Conference was held on April 6, 2024, at the Northampton Center for the Arts. A one-day program, it featured a keynote address by Shanta Lee, who was presented with the second Abel Meeropol Social Justice Writing Award, and twelve sessions, including panels, roundtable discussions, and participatory workshops. The conference was organized and run by a committee of about twenty volunteers with the help of a part-time administration assistant.



Some important points about WriteAngles:

- Conference registration sold out; 150 people attended, including 31 presenters, of whom 45% were people of color.
- About 25% of attendees received scholarships.
- Individual zoom meetings with literary agents were offered in the week leading up to the conference.
- Sponsorships, grants, and partnerships with local arts organizations and businesses kept the conference affordable. The conference ended up with a \$35,000 surplus.
- Other benefits to participants included the opportunity to publish work in the WriteAngles Journal, to win a Book and Writing Bundle, ASL interpreters, and the Daisy Mathias Memorial Scholarship, given to a graduating high school senior interested in creative writing.




**SD...**  
Straw Dog Writers Guild


# GIVING TUESDAY

Please consider Straw Dog Writers Guild in your year end giving.

Community gratitude:

"I really appreciate you providing interpreters for me. This is the first time a writing conference provided me with accommodations. Thank you!"  
~ Jessica Tanner





Straw Dog Writers Guild

**Donate to SDWG!**  
<https://strawdogwriters.org/fund-drive>

WRITE

Angles

## a Straw Dog Writers Guild Conference

Saturday, April 6, 2024  
Northampton Center for the Arts

for writers, by writers



# 2024 FINANCES



## Income

Our operating account income for 2024 was \$20,923. The bulk of our income came from memberships and grants. Our restricted funds income was \$55,416. This included grants, sponsorships, and registration fees for the WriteAngles Conference, contributions to support the Writers-in-Residence program, a grant for the Emerging Writer Fellowship, and underwriting for Writers Night Out. The combined total income of the operating account and our restricted funds was \$76,339.

## Expenses

Our operating account expenses for 2024 were \$31,996. The bulk of expenses are independent contractor fees; followed by “Other Expenses” which include insurance, Chamber of Commerce membership, PayPal fees, web hosting, QuickBooks and Zoom subscriptions; as well as fees paid to featured readers and presenters.

Our restricted funds expenses were \$22,815, most of which were for the WriteAngles conference. We did not spend money on the Writers-in-Resident Program because we paid 2024 fees at the end of 2023.

The combined total of operating and restricted funds expenses was \$54,811.



**Account Balances:** As of December 31st, our operating account balance was \$12,573. Our restricted funds balance was \$69,859.01, totaling \$82,432.

## **Social Media**

Our e-newsletter goes out to over 1800 subscribers 2x per month with an average open rate of 38-40%. We maintain and post regularly to our Facebook page (1,300 followers) and on Instagram (654 followers) accounts:

<https://www.facebook.com/strawdogwriters>

<https://www.instagram.com/strawdogwriters/>

## **Steering Committee**

### **Board of Directors:**

Alexis Johnson, Rick Paar, Mary Ann Scognamiglio, Macci Schmidt, Lynn Bechtel, Ed Orzechowski

### **Officers**

President: Mary Ann Scognamiglio

Clerk: Macci Schmidt

Treasurer (ex officio): Becky Jones

### **Steering Committee Members:**

Lynn Bechtel, Ellen Meeropol, Ed Orzechowski, Mary Ann Scognamiglio, Becky Jones, Alexis Johnson, William Mailler, Rick Paar, Macci Schmidt, Stephanie Shaffran, Jacqueline Sheehan

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 the spring and the other in the fall. 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 celebration took place in September at Michaelson's Gallery and was open to all SDWG members.

## **Advisory Board:**

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

## **Staff:**

We have 3 paid contractors.

This year we hired Patricia Pin as an Executive Consultant:

Pin was hired as an Executive Consultant on September 1st, and is contracted until the end of FY25 to support the organization in strategic planning, organizational development, and coordination of the 2025 WriteAngles Conference.

Arianna Alexandra Collins, Administrative Director, updates our webpage [www.strawdogwriters.com](http://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 over 1800 subscribers.



# MEMBER PUBLICATIONS

Steven D. Brewer, "Always a Destroyer" in anthology "Romancing the Rainbow", June 2024

Carrington, Grant, "The Chair", Dreamforge, 2024.

Collins, Arianna Alexandra, "Why I Use 'Ki' as a Pronoun for All My Non-Human Neighbors", The Ashfield News, January 2024

Collins, Arianna Alexandra, "When Those Things that Go Bump in the Night are...Bats", The Ashfield News, March 2024

Collins, Arianna Alexandra, "Cooking with 2 May Wild Edibles: Yellow Morels and Ostrich Fern Fiddleheads", The Ashfield News, May 2024

Collins, Arianna Alexandra, "Wait I can eat that? Flowers People Are Surprised They Can Eat", The Ashfield News, July 2024

Collins, Arianna Alexandra, "Medicine and Food Underfoot: Getting to know Plantain and Sunroot", The Ashfield News, September 2024

Collins, Arianna Alexandra, "Summer's End and Sacrifice", The Ashfield News, November 2024

Daniels, Rebecca. That Day And What Came After: Finding and Losing the Love of my Life in Six Short Years, Sunbury Press, Mechanicsburg, PA, 2024.

Friedman, D. Dina, Here in Sanctuary--Whirling, Querencia Press, 2024

Gambaro, Marianne, "Worm Moon" and "Scattering Jay," Frost Meadow Review, Patrick Stanton and Jackie Matthews, editors; Puffling Press, LLC; Volume 12, 2024; pages 50 & 51

Gambaro, Marianne, "Polar Vortex," Bronze Bird Review, David Pring-Mill, editor; November 2024; pages 194-4

Gambaro, Marianne, "The Orange Car, Paterson, NJ," WayWords Literary Journal, The Writer's Workout; Issue 15, 2024; pages 47-48

Gambaro, Marianne, "All She Needs" and "Flightless Cormorant— Phalacrocorax harrisi," Thriving: An Anthology, Rhonda Rosenheck, editor; Exsolutas Press; 2024; pages 50 & 128

Gambaro, Marianne, "The Unicorn Escapes," Gyroscope Review, Constance Brewer, editor; page 10

Gambaro, Marianne, "The Lighthouse Keeper," Bookends Review, Jordan Blum, editor-in-chief; electronic journal; June 28, 2024; <https://thebookendsreview.com/?s=The+Lighthouse+Keeper>

Gambaro, Marianne, "Ode to the Hummingbird Moth," Skipjack Review; Issue 2, Spring 2024; page 15

Gambaro, Marianne, "According to Aunt Rose" and "She Died When I Was 2," Synkroniciti, Katherine McDaniel, editor; electronic publication; Volume 6, No. 1, Winter 2024; pages 50 & 51

Gambaro, Marianne, "Tithonia," "Requiem for Aqua Vita Ristorante," and "Inconvenience (Aqua Vita II); Meat for Tea, Elizabeth MacDuffie, editor-in-chief; Volume 18, Issue 1, March 2024; pages 114-116

Gambaro, Marianne, "A Dream Deferred," Halfway Down the Stairs, Jeannie E. Roberts and Phillip Watts Brown, poetry editors; electronic publication; March 1, 2024

Goldman, Michael Favala, *We Are More Than Just This*, [cyberwit.net](http://cyberwit.net), September, 2024 (poetry collection)

O'Carroll, Chris, *Quantum Creed*, Human Error Publishing, June, 2024

Reiter, Jendi. *Origin Story*, Saddle Road Press, 2024.

Shafran, Stephanie, *Readers Write: "Misunderstandings,"* The Sun Magazine, September 2024

Shafran, Stephanie. "One Out of Ten," published in *The Bluebird Word*, Online Literary Journal, Editor, MK Keffer, May 1, 2024

Sheehan, Morgan, "On the mats," *Yellow Arrow Journal: ELEVATE*, Vol. IX, No. 1, Spring 2024  
<https://www.yellowarrowpublishing.com/store/p/yellow-arrow-journal-elevate-paperback>

Sheehan, Morgan, "MassHealth Saved Karl's Life," *NEPM* September 10, 2024

<https://www.nepm.org/commentary/2024-09-10/masshealth-saved-karls-life-with-insurance-illness-brings-lots-of-problems-but-not-medical-debt>

Sheehan, Morgan, "We need community care, not self-care" *Greenfield Recorder and the Daily Gazette* December 6, 2024 <https://www.recorder.com/Guest-columnist-Sheehan-58326427>

Spear, Duston, "Writing About Art", *Higher Education and the Carceral State*, Annie Buckley, editor, Routledge Press, 2024, Page 117-122

Townley, windflower, *Age Brings Them Home to Me*, Finishing Line Press, March 2024

<https://www.finishinglinepress.com/product/age-brings-them-home-to-me-by-windflower/>

Townley, windflower, "A Day in the Life" and "Leave me Like a Raindrop", *Transitions*, Anthology, Writers of the Mendocino Coast, 2024

Townley, windflower, "France", *Persimmon Tree*, June 2024

Townley, windflower, "A Beginning with no End" and "She Said", *Sinister Wisdom-Common Lives/Lesbian Lives*, 2024

Townley, windflower, "We had been lovers for a week", Anthology, *Redwood Writers*, 2024

Townley, windflower, "blessed day", *Persimmon Tree*, September 2024

Zadick, Madelaine, "Grief," *Mud Season Review*, Creative Nonfiction Issue #73, April 25, 2024

<https://mudseasonreview.com/2024/04/creative-nonfiction-issue-73/>

Zadick, Madelaine, An Interview with Madelaine Zadik by Andrew Miller, *Mud Season Review*, Creative Nonfiction Editor, May 25, 2024

<https://mudseasonreview.com/2024/05/an-interview-with-madelaine-zadik-by-andrew-miller-mud-season-review-creative-nonfiction-editor/>