



## 2022 WISCONSIN WRITERS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REPORT

### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

It's a privilege to offer WWA's 2022 Annual Report. While we haven't done this for quite a while, and we're now in the midst of 2023, our 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year, we're very pleased to share with our members and the public an overview of WWA's activities and initiatives of 2022.

It was a busy and even groundbreaking year. WWA remained fiscally solid as we provided our writer members many opportunities for growth and success. WWA Press launched its debut book and *Creative Wisconsin Magazine* continued to thrive. The 2022 Annual Conference was a smashing success. Our Board of Directors provided able leadership, and our Vision Team was charged with making recommendations to help steer the future of the organization. We bid a fond farewell to Julia Nusbaum as Director of Operations, and welcomed Ken Humphrey to that role, in which he has already advanced many updates and innovations for the association.

Have a look at the year's highlights on the following pages. I invite your comments and I thank you for your membership. Help us spread the word of what a vital and energy-charged organization we are, and encourage your fellow writers and friends to join us.

With thanks,

*Barry*

Barry Wightman  
President

### YEAR IN REVIEW

#### Events Committee

Thanks to great planning by the Events Committee, WWA members had a multitude of workshops and events to choose from in 2022. Attendance steadily rose in 2022, with 20 – 80 participants enrolled in each offering. Opportunities included Zoom events each month, free to WWA members, and

- A first-time screenwriting workshop.
- A nature-writing contest, coupled with a workshop.
- Three open mic events where members had the opportunity to read their work.

In addition, WWA provided stipends to 15 Wisconsin writers for their presentations, and collaborative sponsorships were arranged with Shake Rag Alley in conjunction with Chippewa Valley Writers Guild. A sub-committee produced a successful 2022 Annual Conference, and another was formed to plan the WWA 2023 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Annual Conference. Read on for highlights of the 2022 Jade Ring Contest.

### **Events Committee**

Christy Wopat, chair  
Heidi Blanke  
Nicholas Chiarkas  
Kenneth Humphrey  
Debra King  
Laurie Scheer  
Barry Wightman

### **WWA Annual Conference**

*The Craft of Writing – Celebrating Northland Diversity and Nature* was held in Superior at Barker's Island Resort and Conference Center on September 30 and October 1. It was the first time in 74 years that WWA hosted its largest event in the true Northland, and it was a great success with more than 150 participants from around the region attending.

Under the leadership of event Director Debra Raye King, St. Croix Writers and Lake Superior Writers formed an event subcommittee to plan the event which featured 18 presenters from the region representing all genres. The program garnered kudos from the participants: "Great variety of speakers"; "Excellent format and breadth of experience"; "Networking with Wisconsin and Minnesota authors and writers was wonderful." In a survey distributed to attendees, 67 percent gave the highest ranking saying the conference was a valuable experience. More than half said skills gained would improve their writing.

An author exhibition hall, silent auction and fine food and beverages rounded out the event. Sponsors and donors were generous contributors to help make the event a fiscal success, too. Notably, the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation supported the event with a generous grant that helped make the event affordable and accessible.

In recognition of the event and all that WWA contributes to the cultural fabric of Wisconsin, Governor Tony Evers and Superior Mayor Jim Paine issued proclamations declaring September 1, 2022 as Wisconsin Writers Association Day.

Planning is already underway for the landmark [75<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference](#), to be held in the Milwaukee area on October 6 and 7.

### **Jade Ring Contest**

In August, WWA announced the winners of its historic 73<sup>rd</sup> Jade Ring writing contest. According to WWA President Barry Wightman, "The number of high quality entries was amazing." First place awards in each category were \$200, the Jade Ring, and a writer's retreat at Shake Rag Alley. Prizes were also awarded to those who achieved second place, third place and honorable mention. A virtual gala event that included readings of the winning works was held on September 22.

### **Fiction**

First Place – Nancy Jesse, for *Notes to the New Facilitator of the Reminiscence Writing Group at Sunnyvale Retirement Community*

Second Place – Steve Fox, for *Larmet Lunker*

Third Place – Sherry Lee Feig, for *Chapter Three: An Avatar is Born*

Honorable Mention – Silvia Acevedo, for *Two's a Crowd* and Ryan David Fleming, for *Come Ye Wanderin' Goats*

### **Non-fiction**

First place – Adrianna Lewis McCollum, for *Mormon Girl and the Styrofoam Harem*

Second place – RJ Kinderman, for *A Message in a Cyber Bottle*

Third place – Ann Zindler, for *Snow Over Grass*

Honorable Mention – Aleta L. Chossek, for *Intricate Pattern*; Nancy Jesse for *Water Sprites*; and Victoria Lynn Smith, for *The Dummy Never Showed Up*

### **Poetry**

First place – Yvette Viets Flaten, for *Reflections of a Poet as a Young Girl 1969*

Second place – Sylvia Cavanaugh for *ALICE Drill*

Third place – Lynn Aprill, for *Love*

Honorable Mention – Sara Sarna, for *Missing*; R.B. Simon, for *Letter to My Mother in Winter*; and Lynne Shaner for *Marriage*.

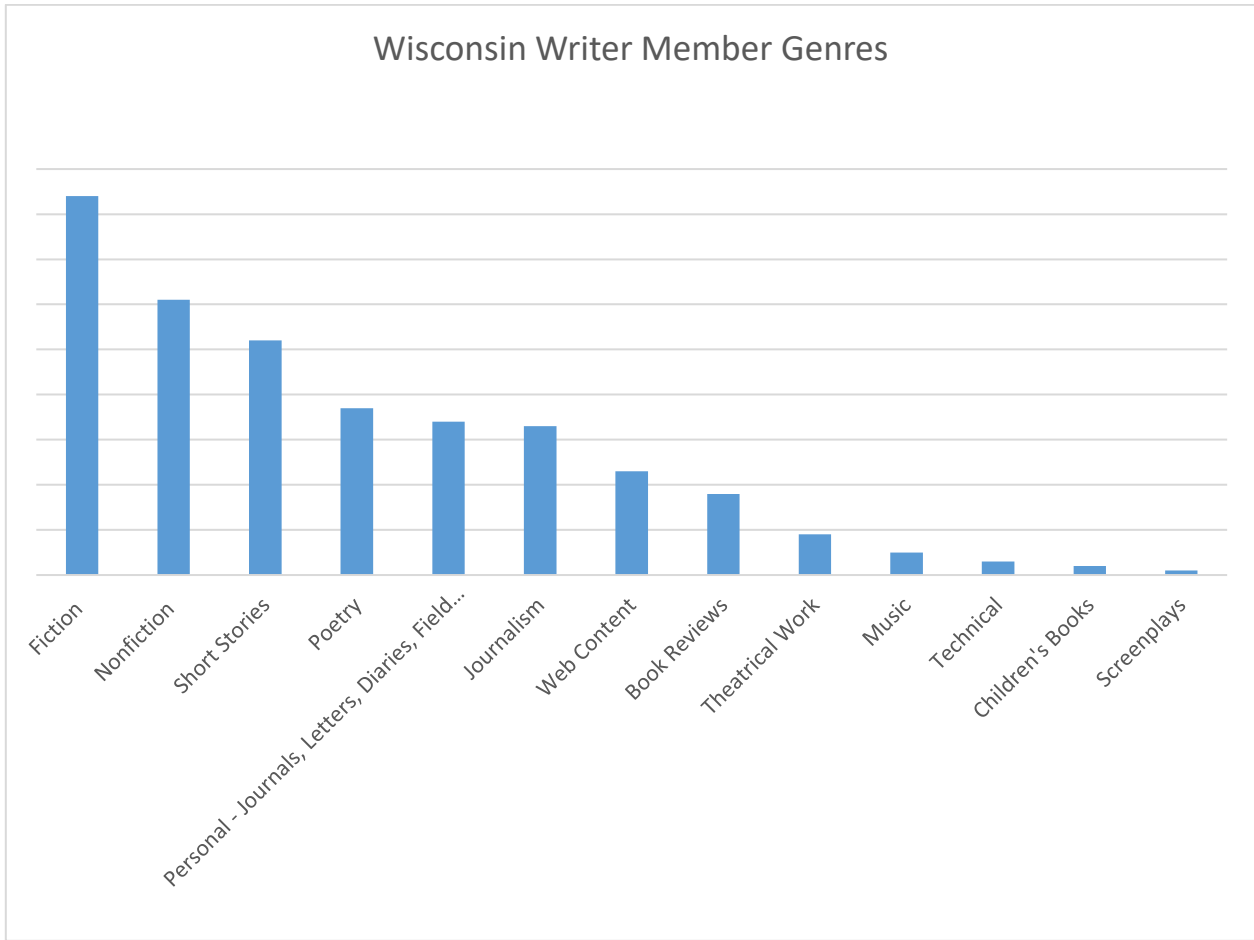
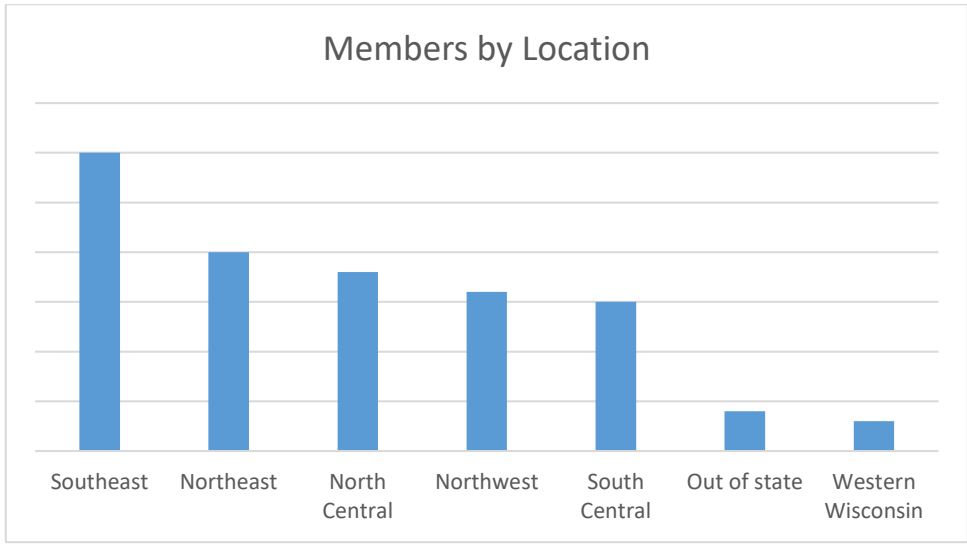
Judges for the contest were: Fiction - Author, editor, and former WWA president and journalist David J. Rank; Nonfiction – Orange Hat Publishing editors Sean Malone and Kaeley Dunteman; and Poetry - Bruce Dethlefsen, Wisconsin Poet Laureate (2011-2012).

The first Jade Ring Contest took place in 1949. Heavily involved in its inception was J. L. Kraft of Kraft Foods, a businessman and poet who had a deep interest in collecting semi-precious stones. He designed the jade ring, the sought after first-place award of the contest. While the design of the ring has evolved over the years, the desire of Wisconsin writers to share their work through this forum has remained constant.

## **Membership Committee**

A new membership committee was formed in 2022, chaired by Catherine Lanser. The committee worked diligently to revamp renewal letters to members. In 2022, WWA membership grew to more than 500, a more than 10 percent increase over 2021.

Our members hail from communities across the state and beyond. They write across nearly every genre.  
*(Information self-reported by WWA members.)*



A big thanks to these volunteer committee members:

- Catherine Gove, chair
- Deborah Cook
- Beckie Gaskill
- Julie Shea

## **New: WWA Virtual Critique Groups**

In October of 2022 the WWA Board voted to go forth with a virtual critique group for fiction and non-fiction writers. An ad-hoc committee met to determine the ideal way to trial test the idea. Informational meetings were held in November during which members could find out more about how the virtual groups would work. Board member and pro writing coach Laurie Scheer was engaged to facilitate the initial trial group. Registration opened at once for the first group, and filled up fast. With interest so keen, expanded groups – fiction, non-fiction and poetry – were scheduled for 2023.

## **Operations Report**

Thanks to Operations Director Kenneth Humphrey, several initiatives underway in 2022 helped improve the website and flow of information to our members. These improvements are in addition to the work of facilitating meetings, ensuring timely website updates, etc., and are ongoing.

**Member map/visual directory** – Members relayed positive feedback on this new feature that gives a clear picture on where our members live, giving others an opportunity to reach out and connect.

**Member event calendar** – This new calendar supplements awareness of events of interest to members, and partners well with the monthly email News Brief to members.

**WWA homepage revisions** – Incremental improvements to the website will improve overall navigation and more thoughtfully showcase WWA's primary messages and announcements.

## **Vision Team**

In 2021, the Vision Team was charged with advancing recommendations that would set the course of WWA for its future endeavors. Throughout 2022 the team reviewed and made extensive updates to WWA's bylaws and studied the current mission in order to craft a vision statement and establish core values for the association's consideration. Their work continues into 2023 and will conclude within the year, providing a foundation upon which WWA will build its priorities upon for years to come.

Thanks to Julia Nusbaum, Kenneth Humphrey and these Vision Team members for embarking upon this important work.

Valerie Biehl  
Thomas W. King  
Debra R. King  
Russ Klingaman  
Laurie Scheer  
Rebecca H. Swanson

## Financial Snapshot

### 2022 Sources of Revenue

Memberships	\$15,405
Education & Outreach	\$15,236
Grants	\$6,858
Donations	\$5,151
Writing Contests	\$4,855
Other	\$130

### 2022 Expenses

Education & Outreach	\$21,877
Admin & Operations	\$14,693
Writing Contests	\$3,985
Memberships	\$2,129
WWA Press	\$1,995

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Total Revenue: \$47,635

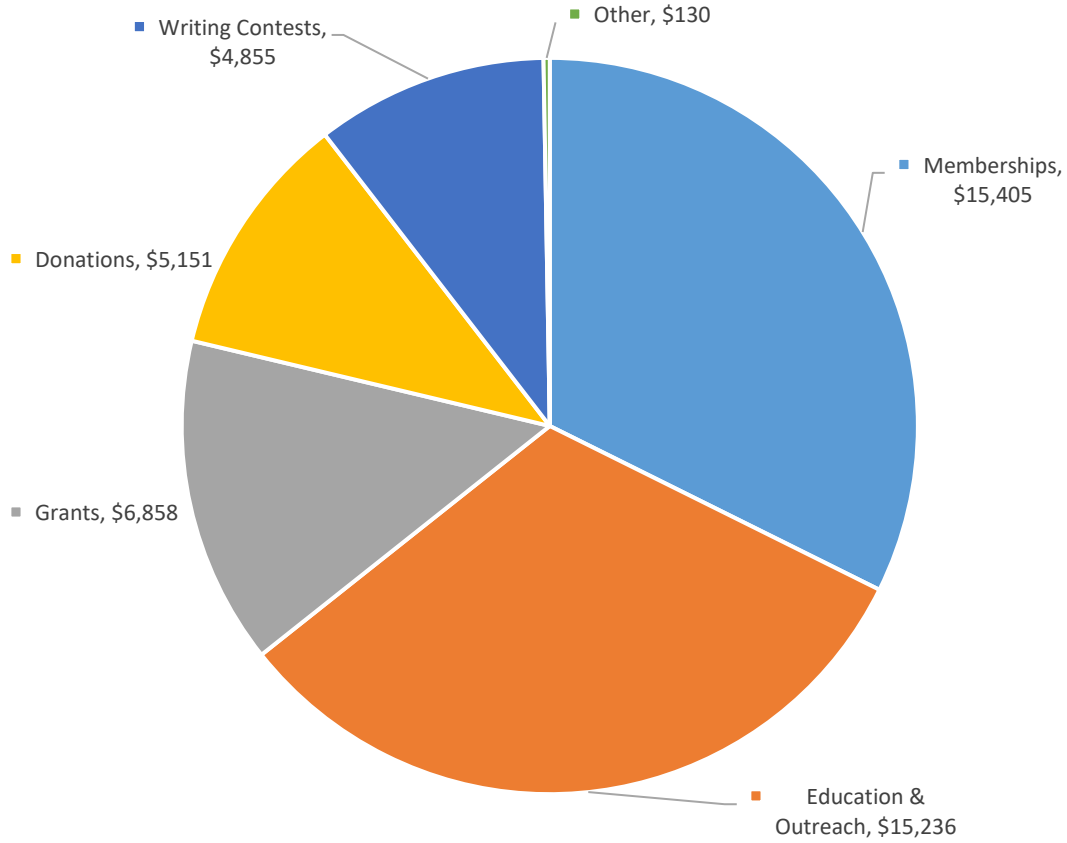
Total Expenses: \$44,679

Net Profit: \$2,956

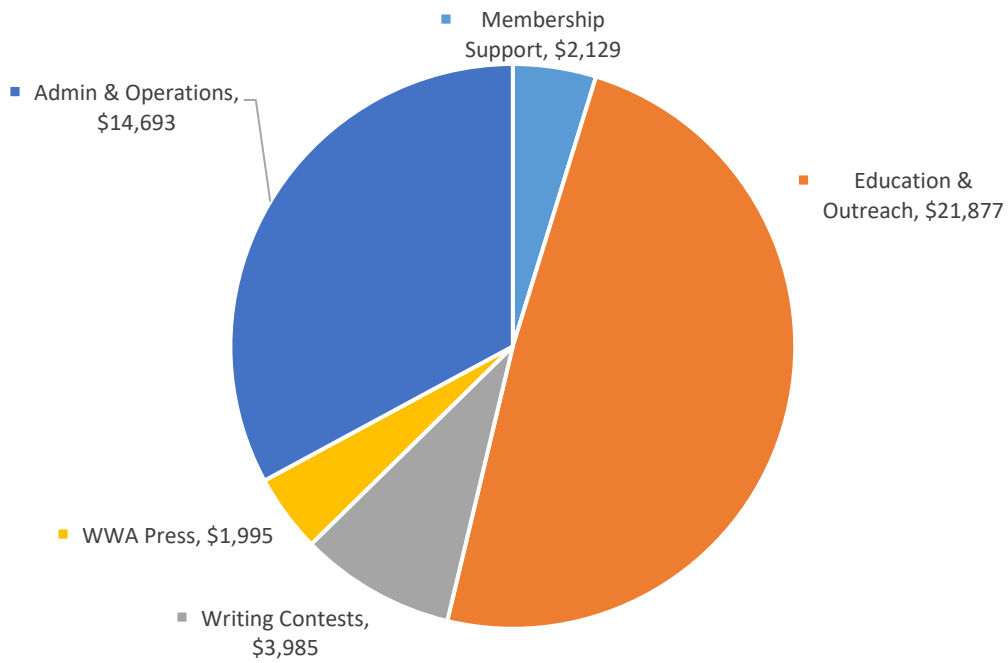
Administrative expenses as percentage of revenue: 31%

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### 2022 Sources of Revenue



### 2022 Expenses



## WWA Member Book Reviews

Book reviews by fellow authors are a top benefit for WWA members. In 2022, 14 volunteer reviewers completed 28 reviews of members' published works. The reviews are posted on the WWA website and various other channels. Thanks to Kathleen Waldvogel who facilitated the book reviews and served as liaison between authors and reviewers.

## WWA Press Launches Debut Book

In November 2022, after months of planning and all of the intense work it takes to publish a book, WWA Press was thrilled to introduce its debut publication: *Gravedigger's Daughter – Growing Up Rural*, a memoir by Debra Raye King. The publishing endeavor was handled by Lisa Lickel, the Press's director. Events surrounding the launch included author readings in Superior and Eau Claire. The memoir, based on King's rural upbringing in Wisconsin, is available on Amazon, assorted book stores and museums. The book has received numerous accolades, and promotion efforts continue.

A second book under the WWA Press imprimatur, *Red Road Redemption* by P.J.A. Fullerton, was contracted July 2022 for release in spring 2023.

## WWA Board of Directors

[2022 Board of Directors list](#)

## Looking Forward

WWA reaches a landmark year in 2023 – our 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. It is already a year of innovation and exciting new programming. The pinnacle of our celebration is our annual fall conference, this year in the Milwaukee area. Please visit [www.wiwrite.org](http://www.wiwrite.org) for all the particulars, including registration. You won't want to miss this exciting event, featuring a stable of outstanding speakers, sessions and events that will inspire and motivate your writing aspirations. Your member benefits and more learning opportunities will round out the year – do take advantage of all that your WWA membership has to offer. We're happy to be part of your literary journey!

## A Note of Appreciation

WWA wishes to acknowledge the many donors, sponsors, volunteers and members who wholeheartedly gave their time and resources to keep our association a vital and respected resource for all the writers, authors and aspiring authors in our region. You are the lifeblood of the organization and without you we would not exist. We are grateful.

We invite all who want to learn more about us to explore our [website](#) or send an email to [hello@wiwrite.org](mailto:hello@wiwrite.org). Those who wish to do so may [join](#) or [donate here](#).



