



2002 AWP Annual Report

The Association of Writers & Writing Programs



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The mission of the Association of Writers & Writing Programs is to foster literary talent and achievement, to advance the art of writing as essential to a good education, and to serve the makers, teachers, students, and readers of contemporary writing.

AWWP

THE
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& WRITING
PROGRAMS



Serving
Writers
Since
1967

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A Letter from the President of AWP

Dear fellow writers,

At our recent conference in Baltimore, I overheard two long-time AWP members mourning the good old days. “I liked it better when you got into an elevator and you knew everybody,” one said. The other replied, ‘Remember when you could attend all the sessions? Now there are too many and the crowds are so big, you can’t even get into some of them.’”



Susan Hubbard, AWP
President, 2002-03.

This year’s conference drew more than 2,800 people, and when you compare that crowd to the roughly 300 who attended the Denver conference in 1989 (my first AWP conference), you begin to understand the nostalgia. But was smaller really better?

In my four years of service on the AWP Board of Directors, I’ve seen consistent progress in the planning of the annual conference. True, it’s now harder than ever before for an AWP member to have a program proposal accepted, because standards are more rigorous and competition is intense—but the end result is a much stronger event, with far more diverse and substantive panels and presentations. Judging from the conference evaluation sheets that many of you completed, you agree that the conference has improved in quality and variety. And from what I saw in Baltimore, the conference remains writer-friendly. You might not have known everyone in the elevator, but that didn’t stop most of us from striking up conversations with old friends and strangers alike.

The AWP staff—in particular, David Fenza, the executive director—are responsible for making our organization innovative and vital. Even when the national economy is uncer-

tain, AWP remains financially strong, and the services it provides are ever more necessary. From placement files to professional advocacy to creative writing program assessments, AWP offers an array of tools to help you and your colleagues endure and prosper, even during hard times.

The AWP Board of Directors has given full support to Fenza and his crew as they’ve introduced and implemented changes in policy and procedure. Our expanded Web site is one of the most exciting innovations engineered by the staff, offering links to an array of professional resources. The AWP Board has taken on its own projects—among them, development of a new set of AWP guidelines for non-tenure-stream faculty. You may find those guidelines on our Web site: <www.awpwriter.org>.

In case you haven’t heard, AWP has endowed one of its annual competitions: the Donald Hall Prize for Poetry. Another prize will be endowed soon. I hope that many of you will pledge financial support to these prizes. At a time when the publishing industry is ignoring many fine books, it’s more important than ever before that AWP continue to foster literary talent.

In improving our services for writers, teachers, and readers, we are especially grateful for support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation as well as the continued support of George Mason University and the National Endowment for the Arts.

All in all, I’ve found it very satisfying to witness the growth in our organization, and I’m prouder than ever to be a member of AWP. Please let the board know your concerns so that AWP may continue to respond to the changing needs of its membership.

All good wishes,

Susan Hubbard
University of Central Florida

The Endowment for the Donald Hall Prize, 2002-03

This year, AWP will award the first Donald Hall Prize in Poetry. The award of \$4,000 plus publication will go to the best manuscript of poetry submitted in this year's Award Series competition. An endowment for the prize supports the honorarium as well as marketing of the winning book. The endowment and the prize are named after Donald Hall in honor of his outstanding contributions to literature as a poet, teacher, critic, and editor. AWP thanks the many generous people who have made this prize possible as well as those on this page and the next who have supported AWP and another special endowment whose namesake will be announced soon.



Donald Hall reading at the 2002 Annual Conference in New Orleans

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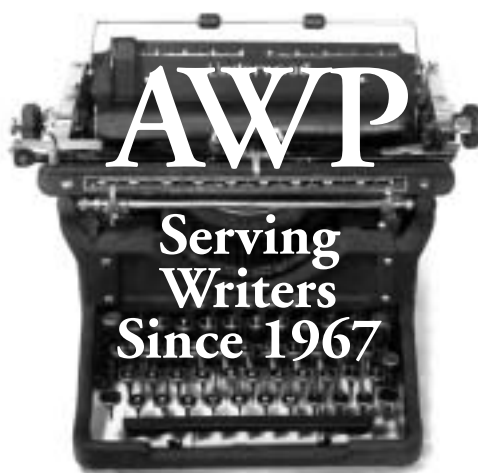
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Executive Director's Report: The Growth of Our Association

by D.W. Fenza

Many members of AWP worry about the professionalization of literature—the escalation of credentials, the academic job market, and the proliferation of programs, conferences, writers, students, and teachers. Those of us who have chosen to dedicate our lives to literature do so because we love literature, and literature seems most purely itself when it is pursued for love alone. Literature, like any art, seems sullied when the trappings of business encroach upon its playfulness, spirituality, and intellectual experimentation.

Since AWP serves as a professional association for writers and programs, our association resides in the worrisome muddle where business and art overlap. Many associations, of course, have members who question and criticize the direction of

pile of mere remarks, chatter, degrees, curricula vitae, etc.? The literary scene is confusing, and every year, at least one critic suggests that the national regard for literature had greater clarity in the past, when more writers were more esteemed by more of the public than they are today. The critics argue that literature was simpler and greater then; the center has not held.

Enabling Confusion

There are now many voices, many centers, many aesthetics, many dreams of the literary sublime, and a few of them appear mutually exclusive. Many writers and literary theorists have argued that the great literature of the past was not so great after all because it omitted so many kinds of human experience.

The supposed universal verities of books are not as universally applicable as previous generations believed. Similarly, in retrospect, it seems as though there was never any chance for the American Dream to succeed; there were just too many of them. We are less sure about who are the best two or three literary spokespersons of our culture; but we are certain that human experience is more madly multiple. Contemporary literature has evolved to embody that multiplicity.



AWP's new office building, Carty House after a snow storm this past winter.

their organization; but our ambivalence and anxieties about our business, I believe, are deeper because our intentions are more idealistic. Other associations work to make contributions towards market-shares, profitability, and the good of the commonwealth. AWP's members hope for something absurdly glorious: an enduring contribution to the literary sublime. Will ours be a legacy of brilliant works and critical discernment? Or a vast

Each generation of writers has its own special literary burden. For previous generations it was the burden of the Classics or the rift between monotheism and a promiscuous pantheon of devious gods. For other generations, it was a war. For many, it was oppression. The special burden of this literary moment may be confusion among a proliferation of aesthetic and political schools of thought.

AWP has contributed to that confusion. Its programs and writers have nurtured other programs and writers—the multiplicity of voices. I would

argue, of course, that this confusion is a good thing. Though we may be vexed by variety at times, we should concede that literature is now more accommodating to more kinds of human experience; literature belongs to more of us. AWP has helped to foster confusion in literature, and that confusion has been subversive, enabling, and fruitful.

The Old Days: Smaller, but Not Better

In helping to conduct assessments of writing programs and in making recommendations on how to build a better writing program, I have often explained to the administrators that a successful program promotes an *enabling confusion*. A student named Luna, for example, takes her first graduate workshop with a novelist who extols works of American realism, extending the tradition of writers like Theodore Dreiser and Sinclair Lewis. The next semester, Luna studies with a visiting writer from Trinidad, who favors

enjoys the inspiration of many irreconcilable influences, and each frees her and emboldens her to choose another way. This is enabling confusion.

In the 1970s and 1980s, AWP was a small, intimate organization, and its governance was informal. A few old-timers have joked to me that AWP's board and membership meetings were once "about a dozen guys sitting around in a hotel room and drinking beer and deciding what was next for AWP." There was no danger of art being overtaken by the ogre of business. AWP was proudly unbusiness-like in its operation; but it could afford to be so because most of its assets could be stuffed in a cigar box. The Annual Meeting, throughout the '70s and '80s, was limited to about 17 lectures, readings, and panel discussions, and about 100 to 400 people usually attended. It was a modest conference. It was small and friendly—a nice club. But did it offer enough enabling confusion? Was it representative of the growing variety of authors and works that comprise contemporary letters?

When I joined that staff of AWP in 1988, I served as the Publications Manager. *AWP Newsletter* was then published four times a year, and each issue was 16 to 24 pages. It reached 12,000 writers, teachers, and students at 170 programs. *AWP Newsletter*, too, was a modest, limited venue, far too small to convey the commotions of contemporary literature or the variety of concerns among our members. Unfortunately, there were no resources to improve or expand the newsletter quickly because the cost of AWP's proudly unbusiness-like operations had finally come due. AWP was still recovering from a deficit it had incurred in 1985. AWP's new Executive Director at that time, Liam Rector, implemented more professional methods of management. The new emphasis on board governance, business policies, earned revenues, and marketing created some strife within the organization. It was an unhappy marriage of art and commerce.

By relating this episode of AWP history, I wish to acknowledge that both the board and staff of AWP understand that commerce and art are agitated bedfellows. Our debates about AWP's busi-



PHOTO BY RICHARD ALLNUTT

E.L. Doctorow signing books after the keynote address.

magical realism and stories that dramatize the invasiveness of colonialism; at the same time, Luna is attending a seminar on feminist storytelling from Virginia Woolf to Jeannette Winterson. Luna becomes confused as to what makes the best form, elements, and themes for her storytelling. She has no choice but to make her own choices. Rather than falling under the spell of a single overwhelming aesthetic, she

ness and our literature will continue; but, at the same time, we have no wishes to turn back the clock and regress to a time when fewer writers had the opportunity to participate in our conference or when fewer writers had the chance to publish in our magazine. We are working hard to make AWP a more professional organization, and these efforts involve strategic planning, board development, fundraising, marketing, financial planning, and hard work. Although this is the work of any enterprising business, it is dedicated to the art of literature.

We have expanded and improved our services, *The AWP Official Guide to Writing Programs*, *The*

AWP Today

Our association now includes 340 colleges and universities in the U.S., Canada, and the U.K. *The Writer's Chronicle* is now published six times a year, with an average of 80 pages per issue; each issue reaches an average of 22,000 people. Our last annual conference was attended by 623 students. The attendance of students alone was twice the total attendance of any conference we held in the 1980s. Since AWP is



PHOTOS BY RICHARD ALLNUTT

2003 AWP Conference Attendees before the Tribute to Lucille Clifton (inset above).

Writer's Chronicle, and the Annual Conference especially; we have done this in order to participate more effectively in a field that has become much larger and more complex. You need a bigger hall to throw a bigger and better literary party. We have built a bigger hall, and the effort to do so has required that we improve our business practices. Although we may believe in confusion as an enabling phase in literary mentorship, study, and debate, we have come to insist on a certain clarity when it comes to AWP's business operations.

Please see our *Strategic Plan 2000-2010*, which is available for download as a PDF file at <www.awpwriter.org>. The board has just revisited and adjusted the plan, and the board and I will continue to do so. We welcome your suggestions.

all about one generation of students helping the next, the growing participation of students in our programs is especially a good thing. 2,800 people total attended our 2003 conference in Baltimore.

Now that most states of the U.S. have two or three MFA programs in creative writing, AWP has fulfilled at least one major part of its mission; it has made the practice and study of writing central to higher education. Having done so, AWP now has the obligation to make sure its good programs become better programs. The need for us to concentrate on improving the quality of our programs is very great because our programs are now so numerous and also because our culture offers so many other arts, media, and diversions by which it can enlighten or amuse us. As potent as some of the new media may be, our conscience and our ability to know and sympathize with

others is best exercised and strengthened by literature. Over the past few decades, the percentage of undergraduate students majoring in new vocational specialties has increased four-fold in many areas; but the percentage of majors in the humanities has declined. On PSATs, as few as 9% of college-bound students express an interest in the humanities. To keep literature a central part of higher education and our culture, it is important that we keep improving AWP and our programs.

Since 1997, the board, staff, and I have created a number of new documents to promote high standards among our programs. Our hallmarks of successful writing programs establish criteria by which creative writing programs may evaluate themselves; these hallmarks also facilitate external reviews. The hallmarks are available in *The Program Director's Handbook*, a PDF document available for download from our Web site.



Former AWP Board Member and Editor of *Intro*, George Garrett with Robert Bausch after the Tribute to George Garrett.

Farewell to Tallwood House

Improvements to our Web site will be facilitated by AWP's recent move to a new office building. Our old headquarters, Tallwood House, though it appeared regal from the outside, was a century-old building with an eroding foundation and extensive termite damage that had left it structurally unsound. The house was also far removed from any cable or Internet lines that could have provided our offices with relatively inexpensive broadband Web access. Our

PHOTO BY FRED VIEBAHN



Rita Dove, Peter Stitt, and Gerald Stern after *The Gettysburg Review's* 15th Anniversary Reading.

reliance on dial-up modems at Tallwood House made sophisticated Web design and databases impossible. On July 1, 2002, AWP moved from one side of the campus of George Mason University to the other side, from Tallwood House to Carty House. We accomplished this with no disruption to our services.

At Carty House, our new offices, we have excellent broadband access provided to us by George Mason University, and so we are now in a position to create Web services that would have previously remained too difficult or too expensive. Our new Web services will be called AWP eLink. We will be sending you more information soon.

The Association of Writers & Writing Programs

We have changed our name from the Associated Writing Programs to the Association of Writers & Writing Programs. Our acronym, AWP, remains the same. The membership of AWP voted overwhelmingly for this change. The new name is simply a better description of who we are. It acknowledges that individuals make literature's best work possible, in education, and in books.

AWP has grown a great deal over the past 35 years. In its growth, our association has matured to facilitate the education of more writers. Better than ever, AWP serves individual writers with more services, more discussions, more debates, and more enabling confusion.

Thank you for supporting AWP.

PHOTO BY RICHARD ALLNUTT

Sponsors of the 2003 Conference in Baltimore

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Carnegie Mellon University ❖ Washington College ❖ Miami University (Ohio) ❖ Prince George's Community College ❖ Rutgers University–Camden ❖ Virginia Commonwealth University ❖ Goddard College MFA in Writing Program ❖ Old Dominion University ❖ Hidden River Arts ❖ Randolph Macon Woman's College ❖ Farleigh Dickinson University ❖ Chatham College ❖ New York University Creative Writing Program ❖ Georgia College & State University ❖ *blue-collar books* ❖ Queens University of Charlotte ❖ Vermont College / Union Institute & University ❖ Towson University ❖ University of Baltimore ❖ Sarah Lawrence College

Carlow College ❖ Oregon State University English Department ❖ Lycoming College ❖ University of Utah ❖ Southern Illinois University–Carbondale ❖ University of Central Florida ❖ The Writing Seminars at Bennington College ❖ Columbia College Chicago, Fiction Writing Department ❖ *Shenandoah: The Washington & Lee Literary Review* ❖ The University of Arkansas Press ❖ Cleveland State University, Creative Writing Program ❖ Wick Poetry Program & Kent State University, Department of English

Financial Report

Revenue

	2002	2001
Publications	\$219,823	\$231,018
Membership Dues	\$240,557	\$240,898
Annual Conference	\$276,670	\$185,220
Services & Programs	\$49,769	\$57,825
NEA Support	\$50,000	\$42,696
Individual Contributions	\$23,880	\$28,002
Foundation Support	\$20,000	\$30,000
In-Kind Support	\$102,632	\$99,686
Interest and Reserve	\$31,046	\$44,715
Total Revenue	\$1,014,377	\$960,060

Expenses

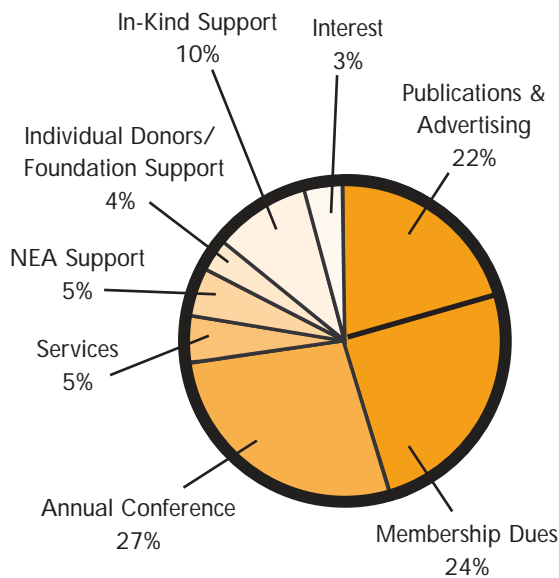
	2002	2001
Membership Services	\$175,221	\$192,770
Publications Services	\$151,980	\$183,697
Conference Services	\$259,927	\$142,612
Promotions	\$52,394	\$40,302
Development	\$13,242	\$30,426
Administrative	\$192,799	\$159,162
Total Expenses	\$845,563	\$748,969
Change in Net Assets	\$168,814	\$211,091
Net Assets,		
Beginning of Year	\$453,618	\$242,527
Net Assets		
End of Year	\$622,432	\$453,618

AWP enjoys the strongest financial position in its history. Its new resources have enabled the association to expand and improve its core services to writers, teachers, publishers, and readers.

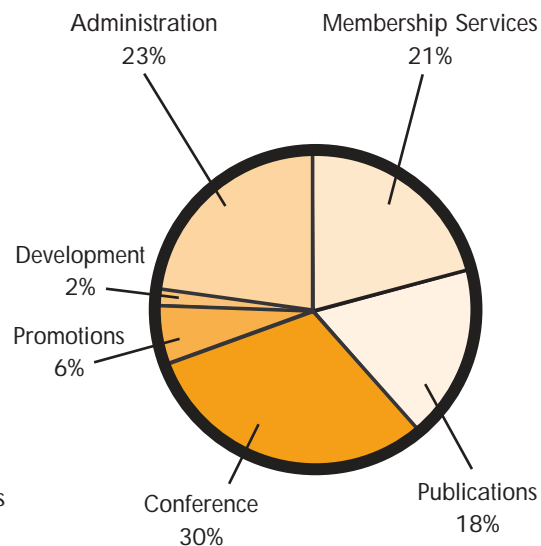
AWP has generated surpluses for the past two years. The surpluses have been invested in endowments and a cash reserve to ensure AWP's stability and to provide improved literary awards for writers. Some of the cash reserve will be used to pay for expenses related to AWP's relocation to Carty House. A deficit of \$20,000 is projected for the annual operating budget of FY 2003 due to the one-time costs for new computer networking, servers, and renovations of the building.

The accounting firm of Hoffman, Fitzgerald & Snyder conducted audits of AWP. The figures presented above are from those audits.

FY 2002 Sources of Income



FY 2002 Allocation of Expenses



AWP Member Institutions

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
ADELPHI UNIVERSITY
ALPENA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
ANTELOPE VALLEY COLLEGE
ANTIOCH UNIVERSITY AT LOS ANGELES
APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY
ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY
ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY
ARMSTRONG ATLANTIC STATE UNIVERSITY
ASHLAND UNIVERSITY
AUBURN UNIVERSITY
AUGUSBURG COLLEGE
BALL STATE UNIVERSITY
BAYLOR UNIVERSITY
BELOIT COLLEGE
BENNINGTON COLLEGE
BERRY COLLEGE
BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY
BLOOMSBURG UNIVERSITY
BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOSTON COLLEGE
BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY
BRADLEY UNIVERSITY
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY
BROOKLYN COLLEGE
BROWN UNIVERSITY ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
BUCKNELL UNIVERSITY
CAL ARTS
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
AT SACRAMENTO
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY AT CHICO
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY AT FRESNO
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
AT LONG BEACH
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
AT LOS ANGELES
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
AT NORTHRIDGE
CAMERON UNIVERSITY
CANISIUS COLLEGE
CARDINAL STRITCH UNIVERSITY
CARLOW COLLEGE
CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY
CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY
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CENTRAL CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY
CENTRAL MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
CENTRAL MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY
CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY
CHATHAM COLLEGE
CHICAGO STATE UNIVERSITY
CLACKAMAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON
COLLEGE OF ST. BENEDICT
COLORADO COLLEGE
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
COLUMBIA COLLEGE OF CHICAGO,
POETRY PROGRAM

COLUMBIA COLLEGE OF CHICAGO,
FICTION WRITING DEPARTMENT
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
CONCORDIA COLLEGE
CONNECTICUT COLLEGE
CONVERSE COLLEGE
CORNELL UNIVERSITY
CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY
DENISON UNIVERSITY
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DILLARD UNIVERSITY
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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
FRANKLIN & MARSHALL COLLEGE
GAINESVILLE COLLEGE
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
GEORGIA COLLEGE & STATE UNIVERSITY
GEORGIA PERIMETER COLLEGE
GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY
GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY
GETTYSBURG COLLEGE
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KENYON COLLEGE
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KNOX COLLEGE
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LONG BEACH CITY COLLEGE
LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY
LOYOLA COLLEGE
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