

Global pandemic causes unprecedented changes for WWA Convention postponed to September 3-7

The COVID-19 global pandemic has interrupted schools, businesses, organizations, community programs and all manner of activities due to federal, state and local restrictions on meetings,



CANDY MOULTON

gatherings, travel and businesses. These requirements led WWA's board of directors to postpone the annual convention from June 17-20 to September 3-7 in Rapid City, South Dakota.

That action complies with Article V, Section 1 of the WWA constitution and bylaws, which allows for conventions at another time of the year than the regular June meeting.

To conduct business in a timely manner for the good of the organization – and to comply with constitutional requirements in Article VII of the WWA constitution and bylaws – the board in April approved a resolution to proceed with installation of duly elected board members and the convening of 2020 annual board meetings in June as is normal procedure. The action was taken as a means to continue the general operations of the organization with the least impact possible during a global pandemic that is beyond the control of WWA.

On June 17, the date of the originally scheduled board meeting, the current board is scheduled to convene via video

teleconference to conduct business as identified by the constitution and bylaws. Immediately after the conclusion of the first board meeting, the newly elected members of the WWA board, vice president Phil Mills Jr., secretary-treasurer Candy Moulton and board member Rocky Gibbons, take their positions during a second scheduled board teleconference, as also provided in the WWA bylaws. At this second meeting, Chris Enss assumes her duties as WWA president.

A word about the convention

Anyone who attended our last convention in Rapid City in 1999 has a story to tell – mostly related to the fact that the venue where we met was under construction. This year's convention in Rapid City is already making history as we have changed from a June meeting to a gathering in September.

While the timing has changed, for the most part the program is the same. For myself, and I suspect many of you, this year may be more about having a chance to be together than the educational and business opportunities provided by the annual convention.

The new deadline to register for the convention is July 20. All reservations for hotel rooms must be made no later than August 3, although I urge you to reserve your room now – if you have not already done so.

Online Library: Potential theft of your work

As if we writers don't have enough

to worry about with the pandemic, an egregious attack on literary creators has been brought to light by the members of the Authors Coalition of America, to which WWA belongs.

In April, Internet Archive announced that it was making millions of in-copyright books freely available online without restriction on its Open Library site. Internet Archive claimed it was necessary as a National Emergency Library. This library includes hundreds – perhaps thousands – of books by WWA members that are still protected by copyright. The inclusion of these books on the library, done without permission, is theft of intellectual property pure and simple.

As soon as this came to light, I immediately e-mailed all WWA members to alert you to the situation. That message encouraged members to sign an open letter organized by The Authors Guild and urged authors to check the IA National Emergency Library, then to write letters to demand their books be removed. The WWA board continues to monitor this situation and will take other steps as necessary to support our members. But I urge all of you to be vigilant as well.

As I write this in late April, I urge you to please stay safely in your writing bunkers and, if you need help, apply for funding and unemployment benefits, available to independent contractors through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

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