

President Steve Bouchard started the year off by discussing goals and expectations of each Board member, as well as some over-arching goals for the association as a whole. These goals were in support of The NRWA's mission, as well as ensuring the association's operational and financial health, as the membership continues to grow. Some of the goals identified included top-line growth, while also reducing expenses, increasing the visibility and public image of The NRWA to grow membership, and continuing to enhance the value of our training and education programs. The year is focused on organizing, systemizing, and planning for the future of the organization, which will make future Board transitions even more efficient.

In the first month, Katrina Brittingham was selected to serve as conference logistics chair and a contract was signed with Norine Dagilano to develop an 11-module training program, The NRWA Writing Excellence Program.

Our treasurer Pat Criscito worked with Steve to present the 2016 budget to the board. During the budget process, the Board identified significant increases in operational expenses in a number of areas and acknowledged that steps would need to be taken in 2016 to ensure financial health of the association. Pat also has been interviewing candidates for the association's open bookkeeping position.

We (The NRWA) have faced a number of challenges with regards to technology, systems that must be updated and new technology leveraged to take advantage of automation, which will lower administrative costs and also provide a better user experience for our members. Past President Shauna Bryce and Technology Chair Jada Willis have been working diligently on the website modernization project which should be ready for testing soon. In the first quarter, the board engaged an answering service to field member calls and direct callers to the appropriate board member or admin at a lower rate in hopes of offloading call volume from our paid administrative assistant.

The annual conference in September, of course, has been a major focus during the first quarter. Conference Program Chair Dawn Rasmussen, along with Conference Logistics Chair Katrina Brittingham, has planned both an educational and fun-filled event. Affiliate Relations Chair Lorraine Beaman has worked with Treasurer Pat Criscito to establish a broad range conference sponsorship levels and is beginning to contact potential sponsors.

Here, too, the association is streamlining by reducing number of conference registration payment options and replacing bulky and costly conference binders with thumb drives. Dawn and Katrina have also been looking to the future, implementing systems, processes, and a conference program manual to provide a helpful resource and planning tool for future conferences.

President Elect Michelle Dumas was selected to lead the new Public Image Committee, comprised of several members of The NRWA, in response to a post on the e-list. Michelle is focused on improving the profession's public image and creating broader appeal to job seekers. A second project will reformulate the online training materials for ease of member access.

Membership Chair Carol Camerino and the directors of industry are planning a membership drive and incentive program for member referrals. During the first quarter, Education Chair Beth Colley and Marketing Chair Brenda Bernstein have been streamlining their activities for optimal efficiency and effectiveness. Beth continues to offer us quality educational opportunities through webinars and is always looking for fresh topics / speakers. Brenda and her marketing team have strengthened their outreach through email and social media, as well as supporting the conference targeted promotions.

Your NRWA Board strives to bring continued value to the members and the career-services industry.