

Eastern Chapter Members
2016

Friday, December 2,

Dear Eastern Chapter Members:

Now that we've officially entered the holiday season, I'd like to take the opportunity to introduce myself as the new Chapter Chair, and to bring you up to speed on Chapter matters.

First, those introductions. Based in Philadelphia, I've been an SATW Active since 2009. I'm a full-time generalist and so my travel writing tends to lean on aspects of my other coverage — like design, architecture, history and science, and arts and culture. As Chair, I'm also a generalist, so please feel free to reach out to me anytime, with anything that's on your mind!

Now, a look at the rest of the newly-elected Board. Returning this year as First Vice Chair, Boston-based Kim Foley MacKinnon has been an Active since 2012 and specializes in New England. Besides serving as my sub when necessary, she handles matters related to meeting sites. Please contact her (kim@kfmwriter.com) with offers, suggestions, and ideas pertinent to that very challenging task. Our Second Vice Chair, Jason Frye, is a new Active ('15) and is maestro of all things North Carolinian. He is charged with dreaming up awesome Professional Development sessions and locating great speakers. Please contact him (jason@teakettlejunction.com) to lend a hand. Also new to this Board as Active-at-Large is Wilmington, DE-based Theresa Medoff. A member since 2006, she currently serves as Associate Editor of AAA Mid-Atlantic Magazine. Theresa is responsible for membership outreach as well as seeking sponsorship opportunities for the chapter meeting and would appreciate your feedback (tmedoff@aaamidatlantic.com) and help in those domains.

Rounding out the board are New York-based Associates Joan Brower ('85) of The Dilenschneider Group, Secretary; and Karyl Leigh Barnes ('04) of Development Counsellors International, Treasurer. Aaron Tuell ('08) is our new Associate Representative; he serves as public relations manager for the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau. Please reach out to Aaron (tuell@outerbanks.org) as he begins planning the annual meeting Marketplace for next June, and undertakes the particulars regarding our annual writing and photography contests. Bob Jenkins ('91) is now Ex-officio Chair.

Since October, your new Board has engaged in a series of lively and inspiring phone calls and emails and we also met recently in the Outer Banks —thanks again, Aaron! The minutes of that meeting are posted on the Chapter's page on satw.org. And, if you missed the national convention in China, feel free to review the minutes for the general Chapter meeting there, too. Going forward, we will be using this page as a go-to spot for Chapter info.

The goal of this Board is two-fold: to better engage and serve you, the membership, AND to help shine a spotlight on the organization as a whole so that we can attract and retain members.

Here are some of the moves we've been discussing. Regular happy hour get-togethers in key cities along the Seaboard so members can meet more frequently. In the following weeks, Theresa and I will be reaching out to you with further details — but for now the plan includes having members bring to these events non-members that they think would benefit from belonging to SATW. We're leaning toward a simple pay-as-you-go scenario at various restaurants or hotel bars; but if there are any associates who might be able to help with hosting, we wouldn't say no.

We're also batting around ideas on expanding our social media presence. Jason and I will be in contact with you all shortly to fill you in on our new Eastern Chapter Instagram account (@thevoiceoftravel) and other such developments. The idea is to prototype this for larger application within the entire organization and to hook into a stronger SATW social media presence. We'll be looking to form a committee of a few associates and actives with a passion for this stuff — let us know if that's you!

In the next months, we'd also appreciate your input on reconsidering how we run things. Two of special note: how can we hold better meetings? And how can we stage a more efficient, and exciting, writing contest? Everything's up in the air: do we get rid of dine-arounds, do we streamline awards categories, when is the best time for the awards event to be held during the course of the meeting? do we invite non-members (social media influencers, say, or members from other organizations such as Garden Writers, ASJA, etc) to come to meetings?

As you all know, our forthcoming chapter meeting is set for June 22-25 (core) in Sheridan, Wyoming. We've begun working out the specifics and have hired a professional web site designer who will get the registration site up soon. You will also be hearing shortly from our meeting planner, Cathy Kruzic.

Between now and when we all meet, we'd like to get some of the ambitious plans I've outlined off the ground. We hope you'll join us for the ride. It bears repeating that this is a volunteer Board and we need all the help you can offer. If you're new to the organization or have never been involved before, consider a New Year's resolution to make 2017 be the time you step forward.

In the meantime, happy holidays and best wishes for a healthy, fun, and productive New Year.

JoAnn

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