



INSPIRING TRAVEL  
THROUGH RESPONSIBLE JOURNALISM



# 2023-24 ANNUAL REPORT

## SATW Mission & Values

In fulfilling our mission to inspire travel through responsible journalism, we hold high these values:

- PROFESSIONAL ETHICAL STANDARDS
- DIVERSITY
- RESPECT FOR INDIVIDUALS
- RESPECT FOR CULTURE
- SUSTAINABILITY

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## FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

As I reflect on the past year, I'm filled with pride for what we've accomplished as an organization. We've continued to make strides in key areas that will strengthen our community and support the growth of our members. One of the most significant achievements was securing funding for our DEAI audit, an essential step in fulfilling our commitment to the Travel Industry Association's DEI Pledge. This initiative underscores our dedication to fostering a more diverse and inclusive environment within the travel media industry.

In addition, we brought on a talented developer for phase one of a much-needed website revamp. This refresh will enhance the online experience for members, help us attract new members, and provide greater access to resources and opportunities.

We also launched new initiatives to support the next generation of travel professionals. The first cohort of the SATW Academy is in the planning stages, offering fresh talent the tools they need to build successful careers. Our inaugural Virtual Meet the Editors event further connected our members with key industry leaders, opening doors to collaboration and growth.

On a personal note, I had the pleasure of meeting many of you in person throughout the year—at IMM in New York, during visits with Central States and Eastern Chapter members at New River Gorge, WV, and with our Western Chapter members in Cody, Wyoming. These gatherings reminded me of the strength of our community and the shared passion that unites us all.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the SATW. Together, we are shaping the future of travel storytelling.

Sincerely,

**Lydia Schrandt**  
President, SATW

## LEADERSHIP & STAFF

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Lydia Schrandt**, *President*  
**Chez Chesak**, *President-Elect*  
**Kim Foley MacKinnon**,  
*Immediate Past-President*  
**Beverly Hurley**, *Secretary*  
**Carol Waller**,  
*Treasurer (and Parliamentarian)*  
**Kirsten Maxwell**,  
*Membership Officer*  
**Joyce Kiehl**, *Associate-at-Large*  
**Vickie Ashford-Thompson**,  
*Associate-at-Large*  
**Jim Byers**, *Active-at-Large*  
**Maureen Littlejohn**,  
*Active-at-Large*  
**Terri Colby**, *Active-at-Large*  
**Meryl Pearlstein**,  
*Active-at-Large*

### COUNCIL CHAIRS

Associates Council  
**Kay Maghan**  
Digital Publishers Council  
**Lina Stock**  
Editors Council  
**Melissa McGibbon**  
Freelance Council  
**Bea Broda**

### CHAPTER CHAIRS

Canadian Chapter  
**Carolyn Ray**  
Central States Chapter  
**Jill Robbins**  
Eastern Chapter  
**Caroline Eubanks**  
Western Chapter  
**David Lang**

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

**Benefits** – **Beverly Hurley**  
**DEAI** – **Lavanya Sunkara**  
**First-Timers** – **Kylie Robertson & America Segura**  
**History** – **Beverly Hurley**  
**Muster Awards** – **Sandra Foyt**  
**Phoenix Awards** – **Toby Saltzman & Tonya Fitzpatrick**  
**Photography** – **Kerrick James**  
**Professional Development** –  
**Keryn Means & Terri Colby**  
**Site Selection** – **Chez Chesak**  
**Sponsorships** – **Fran Golden**  
**Volunteers** – **Annita Thomas & Meryl Pearlstein**

### KEY STAFF/KELLEN

**Erin Erickson**  
*Executive Director*  
**Macy Murray**  
*Account Manager*  
**Ashlee Jones**  
*Account Coordinator*  
**Missy Green**  
*Meetings Manager*  
**Hana Nguyen**  
*Communications Manager*  
**Rachel Celentano**  
*Sales Director*  
**Rachel Carter**  
*Controller*

# SATW 2024-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

SATW's overarching principles are Professionalism, DEAL (Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion), and Innovation.

## Strategic Plan Objectives:

Each of these objectives has a corresponding tactical plan for implementation.

### OBJECTIVE #1

#### Increase Membership:

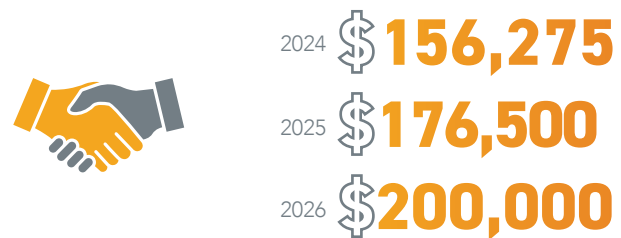
To improve the value proposition for all membership types and achieve 1,000 members annually by 2026.



### OBJECTIVE #2

#### Ensure Long Time Financial Stability:

To achieve \$200,000 in non-dues revenue streams with the intent to subsidize costs by 2026.



### OBJECTIVE #3

#### Improve the Volunteer Experience:

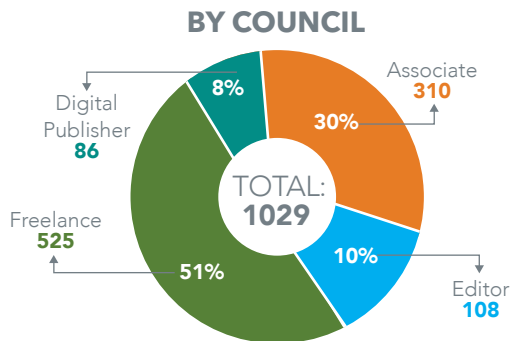
To increase the number of new volunteers engaging in SATW by 10% annually through better defining processes and creating role clarity.



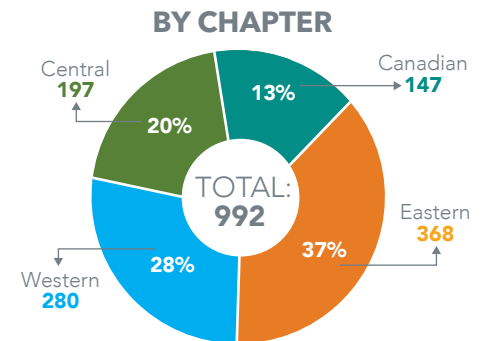




## 2023 SATW MEMBERSHIP STATS & 2024 SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS



### MEMBERSHIP STATS



In May 2024, SATW members were invited to participate in an online survey to help the SATW Board and management learn about what is most important about SATW to members and get their suggestions for future improvements. Thanks to all who took the time to share your thoughts. Your SATW Board is already working to implement your ideas and address your concerns.

#### Who Responded:

**362**

RESPONDED,  
REPRESENTING

**40%**

OF TOTAL  
MEMBERSHIP.

**275**

ACTIVE

**60**

ASSOCIATES

**27**

EMERITUS

#### Length of Membership:

53% of respondents have been members for 11+ years, 17% for 6-10 years, 30% less than 5 years. Since our last member survey, SATW has increased its new member base by 15%.

#### Top Three Reasons Members Joined SATW:

- Annual Convention & Chapter/Council meetings including networking opportunities and professional development.
- Industry information and knowledge sharing.
- SATW professional development and education opportunities; high qualification standards.

#### SATW Membership Value/Benefits

- 63% of respondents rated their membership value as very good or excellent.
- 11% of respondents found their membership to be more valuable than last year. 54% found their membership equally valuable.
- 90% of respondents are at least somewhat likely to renew their membership, while 41% are extremely likely to renew.

# SATW 2023 FINANCIAL REPORT

REVENUE	
Membership	\$202,694
Convention	\$313,895
Awards/Competitions	\$20,316
Directory	\$23,380
Other Revenue	\$135,086
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$695,371</b>
EXPENSES	
Admin/Operations	\$337,787
Convention	\$256,942
Awards/Competitions	\$15,215
Board/Committees	\$30,484
Other Expenses	\$1,860
<b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>	<b>\$642,288</b>
<b>NET INCOME (LOSS)</b>	<b>53,083</b>
<b>SATW YE Net Assets (as of 12/31/23)</b>	<b>\$771,099</b>
<b>Society Restricted History Fund Net Assets (as of 12/31/23)</b>	<b>\$2,161</b>

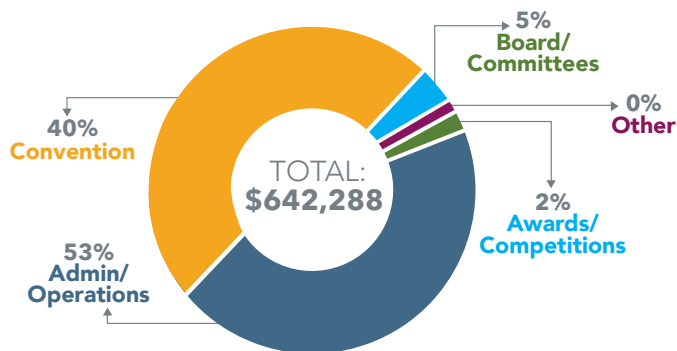
## FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS:

SATW remains in a very solid financial position, with a 2023 year-end net assets of \$771,099, and a positive annual net income of \$53,083. The SATW board has continued to make financial decisions to benefit our members, while focusing on increasing revenues through sponsorships and other streams and reducing expenses where feasible. We did well with generating new sponsorship revenue in 2023 and are on track to exceed our goal for 2024, thanks to the efforts of the Sponsorship Committee and dedicated Kellen staff. In 2023 our revenues were also strengthened through increased income on our investments due to a robust stock market and strong Puerto Rico convention attendance.

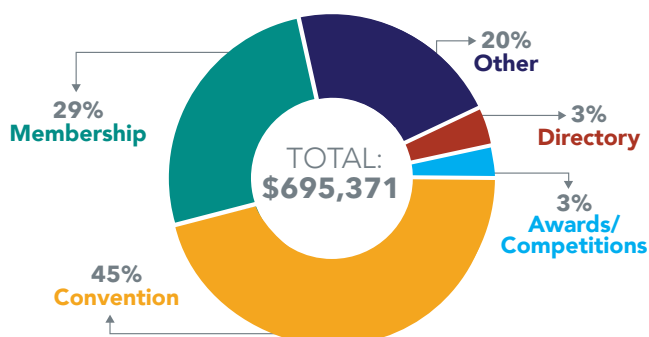
While administration costs for any nonprofit organization like ours are always a major portion of the budget, the amount we pay to Kellen for their expert management is only 62% of our overall administrative expense. And Kellen did the job for no increase in fees in 2023 to help us hold the line on costs.

**Chapters & Councils** also remain in strong financial shape, with total 2023 YE net assets of \$286,887. While Chapter & Council funds legally belong to SATW, those funds are independently managed by each C&C and are not included in the SATW financial P&L report below. SATW does, however, pay for the ongoing C&C accounting work done by Kellen as part of our overall management contract.

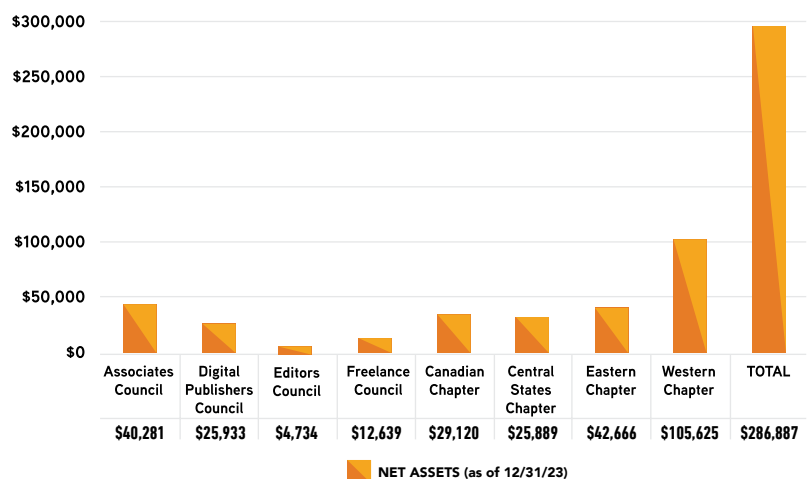
## SATW 2023 EXPENSES



## SATW 2023 REVENUE



## CHAPTER AND COUNCIL FUND BALANCE



# 2023/2024 CONVENTION & MEETING SUMMARY



**256**  
TOTAL

## 2023 ATTENDANCE

**108**  
ACTIVE

**6**  
EMERITUS

**114**  
ASSOCIATES

**28**  
GUESTS



**254**  
TOTAL

## 2024 ATTENDANCE

**132**  
ACTIVE

**5**  
EMERITUS

**62**  
ASSOCIATES

**55**  
GUESTS

## THANK YOU TO OUR 2024 SPONSORS



## 2024 Chapter & Council meetings

### ASSOCIATES COUNCIL:

PRSA Travel & Tourism Conference, June 2024

### DIGITAL PUBLISHERS COUNCIL:

Virtual Meeting, October 2024

### FREELANCE COUNCIL:

Virtual

### EDITORS COUNCIL:

Palm Springs, California, September 2024

### EASTERN CHAPTER &

### CENTRAL STATES CHAPTER:

Adventures on the Gorge, WV, May 2024

### WESTERN CHAPTER:

Cody, Wyoming, May 2024

### CANADIAN CHAPTER:

Seville, Spain, April 2024





## 2023-2024 SATW KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

SATW has much to be proud of – we have successfully navigated through several challenging years, and have created new innovative programs to benefit our members. Today, our membership is growing again. Immediate Past President Kim Foley MacKinnon and her predecessors kept the Society moving forward, and your current Board of Directors continues the progress. Here are some of the past year's most notable accomplishments.

- **2023 SATW Convention in Puerto Rico**, held in September 2023 welcomed more than 250 members and guests. The meeting, co-chaired by Caroline Eubanks and Suzanne Wenz included more than two dozen professional development sessions.
- A **new Strategic Plan** was developed by the board to guide SATW for the next three years. Highlights of the plan are included in this annual report.
- As part of our ongoing commitment to fostering diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion (DEAI) within our organization, SATW partnered with Travel Unity to conduct **a comprehensive DEI audit**, which included a survey of our members.
- The **first Virtual Meet the Editors event** was held in October 2024, chaired by Cheryl Maguire and Sheeka Sanahori. This inaugural event brought together more than 80 SATW members, creating connections with a range of editors.
- Following completion of a website audit and RFP process, the Board of Directors approved the **awarding of the web development contract**. A preliminary review has been completed and work continues.
- SATW participated in **TravMedia's NYC International Media Marketplace (IMM)**, in January 2024. Kellen staff, along with SATW President Lydia Schrandt worked the SATW table at the **IMM Summit** and recruited several new members.
- The robust **SATW Awards** program continued with Bill Muster Photo Awards, Phoenix Awards, Chapter writing & photography awards and partnering with the SATW Foundation's Lowell Thomas Travel Journalism Awards. Click links to see list of recent winners. [satw.org/awards/](https://satw.org/awards/)



- With more than 250 attendees to date and a dynamic program of PD, tours, and networking opportunities, the **2024 Annual Convention in İstanbul, Türkiye** in November, promises to be spectacular, thanks to co-chairs Ann-Rebecca Laschever and Christine Loomis and their team. We look forward to seeing many of you there!



- **Professional Development (PD) Committee**, co-chaired by Keryn Means & Terri Colby, has overseen 20+ well received webinars. Under the Writers Development Program, the Hobbs & Hamm team (Anna Hobbs and Catharine Hamm), has offered free to members: one-on-one writing coaching by SATW editors and others, The Write Stuff monthly eNewsletter and bi-monthly webinars.

- **DEAI (Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion) Committee**, under the direction of Lavanya Sunkara, provided thought-provoking webinars/discussions on topics including how to organize an inclusive event and how to survive the media facing an 'extinction-level' event, and provided PD ideas for the annual conventions.

- **Site Selection Committee** Chair Chez Chesak and his team reviewed and updated SATW's Convention RFP, and are actively pursuing future convention destinations.



- **Volunteers Committee** Co-chairs Annita Thomas and Meryl Pearlstein helped launch the new Navigators program, which matches new members with experienced ones for one year, to welcome them to SATW and help them understand the organization. They also continue to create and update PDFs providing information about SATW's volunteer committees, which can be found [here](#).



- **Sponsorships Committee** secured new and returning sponsors for both Puerto Rico and the Annual Sponsorships, including Title Sponsor, Cruise Lines International Association along with Florida's Historic Coast- St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra & The Beaches Visitors & Convention Bureau, Kazakh Tourism, Condor, Louisiana Office of Tourism, TravMedia, Visit Corpus Christi, and Allianz Partners. Working closely with staff, sponsorship chair Fran Golden secured 2024 annual partnerships, including our Pioneer Partner, UnTours, Gold Partner, Windstar Cruises, Silver Partner, St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra & The Beaches Visitors & Convention Bureau and Ottawa Toursim and Bronze Partner, Allianz Partners. In addition, the team has secured 2024 convention sponsorships including Celebrity Cruises, TravMedia, Princess Cruises, Delta Hotels by Marriott, CLIA, Allianz Partners, Jamestown-Yorktown, and SteamClip. Our team has expanded our sponsorship offerings by developing professional development webinar sponsorship packages. Sponsorship information can be found [here](#):
- **Benefits Committee** Chair Beverly Hurley continued to pursue new benefits to add to the list of 20 special benefits and discounts available to members – see full list [here](#).
- **History Committee** Chair Beverly Hurley has secured several donations from Nori Muster to hire a writer to bring SATW's written history up to date from the mid-1980s to present, and also continued her annual visit to update the SATW archives housed at the National Press Club in Washington, DC.
- **Photography Committee**, under the direction of Chair Kerrick James, garnered input from photographer members and sent PD suggestions to the Puerto Rico and Istanbul Conventions team, and webinar ideas to the Board.
- **First-Timers Committee**, co-chaired by Juliana Broste and Jennifer Weatherhead Harrington, organized a successful welcome event to introduce 54 new SATW convention 'first-timers' in Puerto Rico. Co-chairs Kylie Robertson and America Segura will welcome more first-timers in Istanbul.





## CONTACT US

Email: [info@satw.org](mailto:info@satw.org)

Website: [satw.org](http://satw.org)

 **7,668** FOLLOWERS

 **9,784** FOLLOWERS

 **2,828** FOLLOWERS

 **2,828** FOLLOWERS



Members are encouraged to join the private Facebook page [here](#).

### PHOTO CREDITS

Page 1, Image 1 – Eric Lindberg

Page 1, Image 2 – Mark Downey

Page 1, Image 3 – Cory Lee

Page 3, Image 1 – Anna McManus

Page 3, Image 2 – Caroline Eubanks

Page 6, Image 1 – Meryl Pearlstein

Page 6, Image 2 – Joan Brower

Page 6, Image 3 – Emele Hibdon

Page 6, Image 4 – Rob Gard

Page 7, Image 1 – Kim Foley MacKinnon

Page 7, Image 2 – Kirsten Schmidt

Page 7, Image 3 – Terri Guthrie

Page 8, Image 1 – Laura Watilo Blake

Page 8, Image 2 – Laura Watilo Blake

Page 8, Image 3 – Lavanya Sunkara

Page 9, Image 1 – Melissa McGibbon

Page 9, Image 2 – Rich Grant

Page 10, Image 1 – Elliot Gillies