



Association of
American Literary Agents

**ANNUAL
REPORT**

May 2024

Since its founding in 1991, the Association of American Literary Agents has been a leading force in furthering the interests of agents, authors, and other rights holders. Through regular educational programming, community-building initiatives, and advocating for agents and authors alike, the volunteer-run organization is dedicated to helping our members maintain and broaden their professional skills in a fast-changing publishing environment. Recognizing the historically exclusive nature of publishing, the AALA is committed to engendering a more diverse, equitable, participatory, and inclusive publishing community. Members of the AALA must agree to adhere to its widely respected Canon of Ethics, thus ensuring that our membership maintains the highest standards of ethics and integrity in dealings with and on behalf of our clients and our publishing colleagues.

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OPENING REMARKS

Enclosed is the AALA Annual Report for 2023-2024. In it you will find a brief summary of our achievements as an organization, this year's Treasurer's financial report, The Secretary's membership report and each committee's impressive report.

I encourage you to read it through (it's shorter this year!). Be sure to reach out to the many volunteers listed by name throughout and thank them for their incredible work this past year.

Our stellar and impressive achievements are outstanding for a fully volunteer organization. We are fueled by a giving community that has discovered deep connections with others in our membership and the satisfaction of great achievement.

JENNIFER WELTZ, PRESIDENT

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2023-2024

OFFICERS

JENNIFER WELTZ, PRESIDENT

KERRY D'AGOSTINO, co-VICE-PRESIDENT

LAUREN MACLEOD, co-VICE PRESIDENT

SAM STOLOFF, TREASURER

LESLIE ZAMPETTI, SECRETARY

BOARD MEMBERS

SONALI CHANCHANI

PRIYA DORASWAMY

LYNN JOHNSTON

PAMELA MALPAS

SOUMEYA BENDIMERAD ROBERTS

KELLY SONNACK

MONIKA WOODS

KENT WOLF

STAFF

JAIME WOLF, LEGAL COUNSEL

JAZMIA YOUNG, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

BOARD ANNUAL REPORT

WITH OUR SECOND AALA ANNUAL REPORT, WE CONTINUE OUR MISSION TO INCREASE TRANSPARENCY THROUGHOUT OUR ORGANIZATION AND PROVIDE MODELS FOR THE AALA TO MOVE FORWARD IN THE COMING YEARS.

With a membership over 500 strong and over one fifth of the membership volunteering in the AALA committees and as mentees; many of them working hard in multiple roles, the AALA's achievements this past year have been truly astounding and a credit to everyone who has participated and contributed to move it forward.

BYLAWS AND BEST PRACTICES

The Board was able to present and pass a set of [new Bylaws](#) for the AALA that addresses the needs of the organization of today and hopefully provides the tools to grow and evolve in the future.

We have established Best Practices guidelines for our committees clarifying procedures and expectations and unifying our goals moving forward. We have also continued our work to facilitate collaboration between committees as well as outside industry organizations.

OUTREACH

We have expanded our reach to the industry as a whole, working with the Authors Guild, Book Industry Study Group, IBPG, SCBWI and more as well as reaching out to publishers to address the growing concerns around AI, editor response time, contract completion speed and networking; effectuating real improvements and changes in this area. There is, of course, more work to be done.

Publicly, the AALA has signed on and submitted comments to numerous important policies that could impact our industry. These actions include the following:

- Commented on the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) AI Accountability Policy (June 2023)
- Commented on the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) National Priorities for AI (July 2023)
- Added our name to the Freedom To Read statement at United Against Book Bans
- Added our name to Authors' Guild amicus brief in Hachette vs Internet Archive (March 2024)
- Commented on the NISO (National Information Standards Organization) re their recently released draft "Recommended Practice on Controlled Digital Lending (CDL) (April 2024)

COLLABORATION

While you will be able to read what each of our committees have individually accomplished this year, below are some of the many accomplishments they have worked together to achieve:

- We now have clear membership procedures for both admittance & renewals through both our Membership Committee and the backend website work of our Communication Committee.

- Our Programming Committee has expanded events by coordinating clear expectations and deliverables from our committees.
- Our Programming and Communications committees have continued to bring us together throughout the year with our varied mixers.
- Our AALA Member Newsletter has become the go to place for vital information for our careers, businesses and connections and it continues to innovate and improve every month.
- Through a collaboration between our Copyright, Contracts and MDI committees, we have a very active AI Working Group that has brought our membership vital updates on this growing issue in our industry.
- Our DEI Committee has not only continued our essential Mentoring and Fellowship Program with help from the Literary Agents of Change (LAOC), but with “The Power and Impact of the Comp Title,” the first installment of its new “In Conversation...” series, presented our most well-attended panel of all time. This panel was also notable in that it was the first AALA panel offered industry-wide. It has also done important work to make sure our Board remains focused on striving to make this as inclusive an organization in all our endeavors.
- Our committees, such as the Contracts and Royalties, are always working to provide and improve ways our members can communicate concerns and issues to them that work within the parameters of AALA’s guidelines.
- Our International Committee has expanded opportunities for members to win places at exciting international book fairs.
- We have been kept informed of vital developments that impact our businesses through the Small Business Committee.
- We have formed a new Governance Committee that immediately took over finding exciting candidates to fill our upcoming Board and new president positions.
- We also have our newest but much needed committee focusing on representation of Illustrators.
- Our USBS Committee has outdone itself this year resulting in a sold out conference for this year and plans for a 2 day Publishing conference in 2025. It looks like this will become THE way for our industry to come together to share ideas and connect for years to come!

As you can see, this has been a year of collaboration amongst our committees and community building for our membership. We hope to see this work continue and, as the Board, to help encourage and facilitate its growth in the future.

TREASURER'S REPORT

THE AALA ENDS THE 2023-24 FISCAL YEAR IN A STRONG FINANCIAL POSITION, WITH INCOME FROM DUES AND OTHER SOURCES MORE THAN ADEQUATE TO COVER REGULAR EXPENSES, A PROJECTED BUDGET SURPLUS IN THE CURRENT CALENDAR YEAR, AND A SUBSTANTIAL RESERVE TO COVER EXTRAORDINARY EXPENSES.

INCOME

The work of the AALA is mostly supported by member dues. In 2023, the organization's gross income was \$96,198, of which more than 80% came from member dues, with the balance coming from the organization's collaboration with Publishers Weekly to host the new US Book Show.

Revenue from member dues in 2024 is expected to be approximately \$75,000, and it is anticipated that the AALA will again see significant income from the 2024 US Book Show.

EXPENSES

Outside of some paid administrative support, the vast majority of work to support the organization—all of the programming, participation in committees, organization of meetings and events, and board service—is volunteer work performed by AALA members. It is the ongoing commitment to the organization from members, both old and new, that makes AALA's work possible.

The AALA incurs modest ongoing operating expenses including the work of a part-time paid administrative assistant, professional fees for accounting and legal services, insurance, and technology costs for managing dues collection, financial recordkeeping, and administrative work (such as cloud-based file-sharing and online balloting for elections). The other main category of expense is delivering member services, including maintenance of the website (and its associated data storage costs), announcements and newsletters, programming, and events such as town halls and the annual meeting. Most of these expenditures are in the form of ongoing software subscriptions (e.g., videoconferencing software to host online webinars and panels, email software for member alerts and communications), but programming is supplied by volunteer speakers and materials produced by committee volunteers.

Total expenses in 2023 were approximately \$63,000, while expenses in 2024 are currently projected to be approximately \$72,500.

FINANCIAL POSITION AND OUTLOOK

At the time of this report's drafting, AALA is on budget to cover annual expenses for the 2024 calendar year and retain a reserve for future operating expenses. Expenses for 2024 are projected to be approximately \$72,500, against revenue from member dues of \$75,000, with an additional potential boost to revenue from the AALA's share of US Book Show ticket sales.

As of the date of this report, the organization has cash on hand of \$130,000, a figure that in part represents surplus carried forward from previous years, and in part the fact that the bulk of member dues are paid early in the year, while expenses are paid out more gradually over the course of the year. Excluding any revenue from this year's US Book Show, the year-end cash on hand is projected to be approximately \$125,000. The Board is engaged in active conversation about the opportunities presented by this significant reserve, including making enhanced DEI training available to members, expanding paid administrative support for the association's programming and other activities, and the promotion of the association's work throughout the publishing community.

2023-2024 MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

NUMBER OF MEMBERS PER CATEGORY AND STATUS:

According to the Membership Database created in the fall of 2023, AALA currently has 560 members total, including those members due to renew in June through December 2022**.

Of this, 337 members are active. 221 members are due to renew May through December 2024, and 18 members were recently approved as new members.

BREAKING THESE NUMBERS OUT BY MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY, WE HAVE:

- 406 active members with over 5 years' experience;
- 91 active members with less than 5 years' experience;
- 35 educational members.

NEW MEMBERS TO DATE:

In 2023, we added 21 educational members, 39 members with less than 5 years' experience, and 42 members with over 5 years' experience, for a total of 102 new members.

In 2024, we will have added 8 educational members, 21 members with less than 5 years' experience, and 26 members with greater than 5 years' experience, for a total of 55 new members from January through May 2024.

If membership applications continue at the same pace, that would be a 54% increase in new member applications! From the data, we can see that the largest increase in applications is from members with over 5 years' experience as an agent, meaning that potential members perceive joining the AALA to have value that they did not perceive previously (or were unaware of the Association).

Thank you to the Membership Committee for their hard work in recruiting new members, processing applications, and creating & maintaining the membership database!

***PLEASE NOTE THAT NOT ALL MEMBERS LISTED HAVE COMPLETE RECORDS DUE TO INCOMPLETE INFORMATION; PLEASE MAKE SURE TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP WHEN YOUR RENEWAL IS DUE*

AALA COMMITTEE REPORTS | 2023-2024

CONTRACTS COMMITTEE

Committee Chair: Ginger Clark

Members: Priya Doraswamy, Nicole Eisenbraun, Mary Evans, Jenni Ferrari-Adler, Lynn Johnston, Gina Maccoby, Lauren MacLeod, Adam Schear, Kirsten Wolf, Leigh Eisenman, Miriam Altshuler

Contact: contracts@aalitagents.org

Over the past year, the Contracts Committee focused on updating and providing resources for members as well as addressing consistent member concerns regarding contract delays.

CONTRACT DELAYS

Another major priority for the Committee was its continued monitoring of contract delays throughout the industry. The Contract Delay form was created, circulated to the membership, and checked regularly for updates.

Two publishers were noted as having multiple complaints, and The Committee reached out with the official complaint letter. Delays seem to have improved since then.

The committee encourages members to continue reporting contract delays at <https://aalitagents.org/resources/contract-delay-reporting-form/> or concerns about new boilerplate language to contracts@aalitagents.org.

CHECKLISTS

The Committee also took the opportunity to update its Basic Contracts Checklist this year. In addition to the concerns about AI, the Committee noted changes to advance splits, NFTs, Schedule A, and more.

The new checklist is now available [on the AALA website](#).

EVENTS & PROGRAMMING

The Committee hosted two panels in April 2023 – titled Deal Memo 101: What Authors Should Know and Negotiate Before Accepting a Deal – which was co-hosted with the Authors Guild.

Going forward, the Committee will now host events every November and June, with the next one focusing on understanding “Legalese.”

AI

Like many in the publishing industry, a primary focus for the Committee was monitoring the changing landscape of AI and, more specifically, its impact on contract negotiations surrounding the following concerns:

- AI generated audiobook narration, translations, and cover designs
- Other AI creations
- AI training with client materials

The Committee has spent the last year monitoring what contract language, if any, publishers have been willing to accept. Currently, there are no industry standards.

The Committee decided to add minimal AI guidance to the Contracts Checklist – noting the continuous changes to AI and suggesting members consider outside factor around AI and consult the Authors Guild guidelines.

The Committee also has multiple members who are actively involved in the AI Working Group. This group is led by Pamela Malpas, Tess Callero, and Ginger Clark.

FUTURE PLANS

As we look ahead the Contracts Committee remains committed to the following:

- Creating a Merchandising checklist, which is being done with the help of the newly formed Illustration Committee and will be ready for the membership later this year.
- Continue researching AI and the issues it raises

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Committee Co-Chairs: Regina Brooks & Lauren MacLeod

Newsletter Editor: Eva Scalzo

Members: Alexandra Franklin, Lauren Spieller, Leslie Zampetti, Paige Terlip, Elana Roth Parker, Bridget Smith, Lizz Nagle

Contact: communications@aalitagents.org , newsletter@aalitagents.org

Our function includes both external communication with the industry at large, seeking to enhance AALA's reputation and influence, and internal communication with and within the membership.

IN YOUR INBOX

Internally, our goal was to continue to streamline communications with members. This year we put a lot of effort into making the monthly newsletter more useful, visually appealing, and dynamic.

And **our newsletter engagement has continued to rise—our average newsletter open rate is now a jaw-dropping 75%!**

MIXERS

We partnered with Programming on monthly virtual AALA mixers designed to foster even more connections in this often solitary profession. In addition to the mixers aimed at genres and experience-levels, we had great attendance and feedback on the mixers targeting caregivers and a membership wide mixer and will be re-running both again this coming year.

OUTREACH

We continue to raise awareness about our organization and our mission. In addition to the [great coverage](#) of the US Book Show, this year we facilitated the release of the results of our 2023 Membership survey, which was reported on in [Publishers Weekly](#), [The Bookseller](#), [Publishers Marketplace](#), and [Publishing Perspectives](#).

THE ROAD AHEAD

Our ongoing goal as a committee is to continue to position AALA as a leading voice and valuable resource for all literary agents, while constantly improving how we, and all AALA committees, communicate with the membership.

GET INVOLVED

In the coming year we hope to add a few more committee members to serve on the website-focused subcommittee, so if you are interested in becoming involved in AALA and are familiar with WordPress or willing to learn, [we'd love to hear from you](#).

NEW WEBSITE FEATURES

- The Events Page: We've worked with Programming to streamline the events registration process to help limit the number of emails members get from AALA. The Events Page is both a calendar for upcoming events as well as your one-stop destination for instantly registering for panels.
- Newsletter Archive: Missed a newsletter or need to reference a previous alert? You can now find both in the online newsletter archive.
- Post-program handouts, slides and recordings can now be found all together in the Video Library.
- Simplified Contact: Our new email directory makes reaching out to committees a breeze.
- We have more website additions planned for this next year, so keep an eye out!

COPYRIGHT COMMITTEE

Committee Chair: Pamela Malpas
Members: Ginger Clark, Lauren MacLeod, Natalie Lakosil, Jennifer Unter, Barbara Hogenson, Ari Solotoff (committee's advising attorney)
Contact: copyright@aalitagents.org

The Copyright Committee focuses on informing AALA members about vital copyright developments and their impact on authors and agents.

COPYRIGHT COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS 2023-2024

- Alert to membership circulated in January 2024 newsletter reminding members to check copyright registration status
- Membership survey about Copyright and AI
- Hosted a panel in October 2023 entitled What to Do When an Author Dies, with follow-up resource document available on AALA website
- Hosted panel in February 2024 about Copyright and AI: What Agents Need to Know
- Assisted AALA response to NISO proposed “Recommended Practice” for Controlled Digital Lending
- Ongoing participation in AI Working group
- Added two members to the committee

PLANS FOR 2024-2025:

- Developing and hosting a panel on Real-Life Experiences with Copyright Infringement
- Transitioning Natalie Lakosil to become new chair of the committee
- Adding new members to the committee
- Hosting an open meeting (membership-wide) with special guest and topic to lift the lid on how committee works and encourage new interest
- Alert on updated copyright termination dates

GET INVOLVED

In the coming year we hope to add a few more committee members, so if you are interested in becoming involved in AALA and are familiar with copyright or willing to learn, we'd love to hear from you.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

Committee Co-Chairs: Kelly Sonnack & Farley Chase

Members: Kurestin Armada, Lauren Bajek, Regina Brooks, Danielle Bukowski, Jemiscoe Chambers-Black, Sonali Chanchani, Farley Chase, Samantha Fabien, Serene Hakim, Chelsea Hensley, Daniele Hunter, Tamara Kavar, Sarah Khalil, Katie Kotchman, Caroline Miranda, Stefanie Molina, Ayesha Pande, Rebecca Podos, Dani Segelbaum, Laura Zats

Contact: dei@aalitagents.org

The DEI Committee's goal is to promote commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the AALA organization and literary agenting community. Our ongoing goal as a committee is to position AALA as an anti-racist organization that is continuously working to create a more equitable and just agenting community.

PROGRAMS

This year the DEI committee launched a new "In Conversation" program series, sponsored by Literary Agents of Change. These webinars are open to anyone in the publishing industry and are meant to be ways to engage the larger community in conversations about change, growth, and learning. Our first event on comp titles was very successful, drawing 355 registrants.

Additionally, the DEI Committee co-administers the following programs in concert with Literary Agents of Change:

- [The Fellowship Program](#) is a summer program that matches college students from historically underrepresented groups with a literary agency and AALA member. LAOC provides a grant directly to the student for their participation. Over 10 weeks (June-Aug), these fellows learn the inner workings of the industry and receive direct support from a supervisor to understand the role a literary agent plays in the publishing process and develop the skills that will help them succeed. AALA and LAOC create a robust slate of programming over the course of the summer to further fellows' access to networking, mentorship, and educational panels that cover the publishing industry as a whole. This year, we are again supporting six fellows.
- [The Mentorship Program](#) is a one-year program that seeks to increase retention and promotion of people in the business from historically underrepresented groups, particularly people of color. Mentees are literary agents from historically underrepresented backgrounds and they are matched with two literary agent mentors from AALA, each of whom provide at least one hour, each month, of mentoring. LAOC provides a business development grant to each mentee. AALA works closely with LAOC in building, growing, and running this program. This year, our third cycle of the program, we again had a class of 12 mentees. Our fourth cycle starts in October 2024 and will be opening for applications in mid-June. Our mentee network, comprised of mentees from previous years, has 38 people in it.

These programs have been hugely successful. In three full years the Fellowship program has served 15 young people, 3 of whom are now working in our business. The Mentorship program has served 40 mentees with this year's program having a 100% retention rate. Based on a survey conducted last fall, our most recent cohort of mentees collectively closed 19 deals. In total, mentees who participated in the survey across all program years have collectively closed 226 deals. And 9 of our former mentees are now either mentors in the program, members of the DEI Committee, directors of the Mentorship Program, and/or on the Boards of LAOC and the AALA.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

The DEI Committee is continuing to build working relationships with other organizations focused on DEI initiatives within the literary community. In addition to partnerships established last year, we have expanded our partnerships with the following organizations:

We Need Diverse Books (WNDB) - The mentorship committee organized the first mixer event between current and past mentees and alumni of the WNDB grant program, who work in all sectors of publishing. We hope to continue these mixers.

Author's Guild - A five-part series featuring mentees from this year's mentorship cycle was launched this year to rave reviews.

FURTHERING DEI EDUCATION

The DEI Committee also organizes initiatives around education within AALA and will be organizing a DEI workshop for committee members in the second half of 2024.

ETHICS COMMITTEE

Committee Chairs: Vicky Bijur & Gina Maccoby

Members: Gail Hochman, Wendy Strothman, Farley Chase, Lynn Johnston, Susanna Einstein, Jaime Wolf, Legal Counsel

Contact: ethics@aalitagents.org

The principal role of the AALA Ethics Committee is to address complaints against AALA members alleging violations of the AALA [Canon of Ethics](#). A complaint must identify the member in question and state both the specific factual basis for the allegation and the provision of the Canon that was allegedly violated.

In addition, the Ethics Committee “shall promote the observance of the Canon, and shall forward to the Board of Directors for the Board’s approval such revisions to the Canon and such measures to enforce them as the Committee may recommend.”

THE COMMITTEE RECEIVES A RANGE OF EMAILS, INCLUDING:

- complaints about members
- requests for advice
- requests for the Committee to mediate when there is no formal complaint
- complaints about non-member agents, editors, and clients
- requests for help interpreting aspects of the Canon of Ethics

PROCESS

The Chair responds to all letters after consulting with the AALA lawyer and the President.

Upon receipt of a complaint about an AALA member, the Chair informs the complainant that his/her/their letter will be sent to the AALA member against whom the complaint is lodged requesting that the AALA member provide the Chair with a detailed, factual response to the assertions made in the complaint.

Once the Chair has received that response, it considers the merits of the complaint in

discussion with the AALA lawyer and the President.

If the allegation is not resolved by correspondence, the Chair convenes the Ethics Committee who meet with the AALA lawyer to discuss what recommendations to make to the Board. The Ethics Committee may decide there has been no violation of the Canon. Or, per the Bylaws, the Ethics Committee can recommend that the Board reprimand, censure, suspend, or expel the member, in which case the Chair sends a letter to the Board with the Committee’s recommendation.

If the Board decides to reprimand, censure, suspend, or expel the member, the Board offers the member, per the Bylaws, the chance to appear before the Board. Once the Board has made a decision based on the recommendations of the Ethics Committee, the Chair writes to the complainant and advises the complainant of the Board’s decision.

In some cases, the Chair may point out that it is beyond the role, function, and capability of the AALA Ethics Committee to respond to specific questions, for example, about how agents conduct their separate businesses. In other cases, the Chair might advise the complainant to seek the services of a lawyer or to call the Authors Guild.

PROGRAMMING

The Ethics Committee participated in AALA's panel THE FINE PRINT: ETHICS, COPYRIGHT, AND CONTRACTS at the 2023 US Book Show.

To help members better understand the legal and ethical duty to put the client's interests first, the committee presented Fiduciary 101: What AALA Members Can Learn from Stormy Daniels.

A recording of the program is available to members online at the AALA website: [Fiduciary 101: What AALA Members Can Learn from Stormy Daniels \(2024\)](#)

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Committee co-Chairs: Mina Hamed, Roma Panganiban
Members: Monika Woods, Ayesha Pande, James McGowan, Elizabeth Harding
Contact: governance@aalitagents.org

The Governance Committee is an advisory committee that formed in December 2023 to replace the previous Nominations Committee.

It is responsible for ensuring that the organization utilizes effective, ethical governance practices; that individual board members are each actively invested in sharing the responsibility of governance; that the organization commits to an ongoing pursuit of antiracist practices; and that the board as a whole is fulfilling its obligations as a steward of the organization's assets, reputation, financial and human resources, and mission, all in accordance with the AALA Bylaws and Canon of Ethics.

2024-2025 AALA ELECTION

This year so far, the Governance Committee's main objective has been to identify and screen a range of potential Board candidates for the seats expected to become available for the coming term, along with nominating a replacement for Jennifer Weltz as AALA President. The Committee successfully enlisted Regina Brooks from Serendipity Literary Agency to run for the role of President. Additionally, Tess Callero of Europa Content, Jemiscoe Chambers-Black from the Andrea Brown Literary Agency, and Caroline Eisenmann of Frances Goldin Literary Agency were all recruited to run for their first board term.

FUTURE GOALS

In the long term, the Governance Committee intends to review previous election procedures and offer recommendations to revise the process of identifying candidates, educating membership

on the roles and responsibilities of officers and general board members, and running truly democratic elections that offer voting members a choice between multiple candidates for available positions.

In looking forward to a more progressive and inclusive AALA, we believe it is paramount for members to have a real say in their leadership, including the opportunity to decide between more than one person for any given role. This will require a proactive effort to foster interest in leadership among members who may not yet be as engaged in the organization, beginning with the encouragement to join a committee and contribute their voice in that capacity.

This bottom-up, rather than top-down, approach is the most promising means of ensuring a robust pool of diverse future candidates for the board and the presidency.

ILLUSTRATION COMMITTEE

Committee Chair: Molly O’Neill

Members: Adriana Dominguez, Lori Kilkelly, Jessica Saint Jean, Kathleen Ortiz, Jen Rofé, Kelly Sonnack (Board liaison) and Lori Steel

Contact: illustration@aalitagents.org

The Illustration Committee is AALA’s most newly-formed committee, launched in spring 2024. The Committee is dedicated to sharing and educating our membership and the wider industry about the particular needs and opportunities for agents whose client lists include artists who create visual media for books.

These creators earn income by making, licensing, and selling visual media and underlying subrights as intellectual property for usage across a wide range of literary genres and categories, including but not limited to: picture books, illustrated novels; jackets/covers, graphic novels, comic books, IP work; book-and-artist-brand-based merchandise and commercial licensing. Illustrated literary works offer unique negotiation and representation challenges and considerations for agents.

TOOLBOX ITEM

In April, the committee took on the job of completing a Merchandising Best Practices document first initiated by the Contracts Committee. Soon to be available to AALA members on the website, this tool offers considerations to members evaluating merchandising opportunities for their clients.

GOALS FOR NEXT YEAR

Our committee looks forward to creating educational programming for our members and to establishing our committee’s role and identity within the larger framework of AALA while we determine our initial scope of work. We also plan to poll the full AALA membership in coming months to learn more about which members our committee’s work will be most directly supporting.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

Committee Chair: Diana Finch

Members: Chris Lotts, Cheryl Pientka, Sandy Hodgman, Marianne Merola, Tamar Rydzinski, Valerie Borchardt, Nicole Eisenbraun, Abigail Koons, Karin Schulze, Allison Malecha

Contact: international@aalitagents.org

The International Committee is excited to have welcomed 3 new members since May 2023: Abigail Koons of Park Fine, and new AALA members Karin Schulze of Curtis Brown Ltd., and, most recently, Allison Malecha of Trellis Literary.

We have also said a fond farewell to our invaluable Board Liaison Soumeya Roberts of HG Literary as she moves on from the world of foreign rights, and our children's publishing expert, Sarah Perillo, formerly of Curtis Brown, as she left agenting for a post at Publishers Lunch.

PROJECTS

The International Committee undertook two major projects this year: relaunching our Book Fair Raffles with Bologna, BolognaBookPlus, and London Book Fair after a pandemic pause, and undertaking a full update of the foreign tax exemption chart, along with a webinar presentation on how to obtain 6166 tax exemption certifications.

We are looking to continue all three raffles in the coming year, and to liaise with the annual Frankfurt Fellowship program so that AALA members are informed about how and when to apply. We are also undertaking a review of the major international book fairs and festivals, including the most prominent ones, such as Sharjah, that offer fellowships to agents and that invite foreign authors to present. Finally, we continue to give feedback to the major book fairs from our attending members, both informally and

formally such as on the London Book Fair Advisory Board.

We will be keeping tabs on the tax exemption chart for occasional changes in procedures in various territories. We are currently working with our members' co-agents and with Riky Stock, US Business Development Director of the Frankfurt Book Fair, to review and better understand the new procedures and requirements for exemption recently put in place by the German government.

We are preparing for our second presentation of the year, in July, an Intro to Foreign Rights panel, for everyone new to foreign rights: from experienced agents starting their own agencies and newly in a position to handling their own foreign rights, to new agency staffers and interns. We are planning to have panelists from a scouting agency, a publisher's rights department, and a rights agency, as well as an agent who handles foreign rights.

Lastly, we continue to monitor important developments, market trends, and issues that arise in the world of foreign rights, and concerns brought to the committee by the AALA membership. During the past year these have included new co-agents, particularly in the Arabic-speaking territories; the continuing rise of audio publishing; navigating the Russian sanctions, particularly as the sanctions concern banks and payments (book publishing companies are not currently under sanction by the US or UK governments), and the rise of AI, including its use in translation.

MEDIA & DIGITAL INNOVATIONS COMMITTEE

Committee Chair: Tess Callero

Members: Sarah Gerton (Secretary), Jeff Kleinman, Kent Wolf, Lucy Carson, Tara Gelsomino, and Mark Tauber

Contact: MDI@aalitagents.org

The Media and Digital Innovations Committee initiates discussion, educates, and explores opportunities with companies outside of traditional print publishing, such as the rapidly growing audio space, Film/TV, digital marketing, social media, podcasts, new publishing opportunities and potential disruptors, including AI.

PROGRAMS

We also create programs to help AALA members negotiate the changing world of selling rights to our clients' work, such as

- Meet the Audio Publishers series
- Our recorded Coursework series available on the AALA website,
- The AI Scraping alert

GOAL

Our goal is to discover, discuss, and share emerging technologies and ventures with the AALA membership.

2023-2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

We began 2023 with a "101" panel about Marketing & Publicity, where we discussed the roles and responsibilities of each, as well as best practices from the perspective of a marketer, publicist, and author/agent.

We also began our monthly series last May – "Meet the Audio Publishers" – in which we introduced the audio teams at independents and the Big 5 to the membership, including Podium Audio, S&S Audio, Macmillan Audio, and held a more comprehensive panel

called "The Future of Audio," where we heard from the audio industry's leading voices about audio's latest innovations, including AI narration, enhanced audio, and audio originals.

Speaking of AI, we wrapped up 2023 and began 2024 by working on our [Scraping alert](#). The goal was to build on the AI Working Group's earlier alert about the topic and offer additional context regarding scraping practices and steps authors and agents can take to potentially limit the use of copyrighted works within large language models (LLMs) and other artificial intelligence technology or machine learning systems.

2024 INITIATIVES

AI remains a standing topic on our monthly committee agenda. We will continue to work closely with the AI Working Group to monitor developments in the AI/web3 space, including Chat GPT, NFTs, AI narration, and we look forward to providing the membership with resources and information about these innovations.

Looking ahead, we are planning two TikTok-centric panels, the first being a deep dive into BookTok co-hosted with the Programming Committee, and a fall panel introducing the membership to ByteDance's new publishing arm, 8th Note Press. We also look forward to sharing more about a panel we're brainstorming that will provide an inside look at the acquisitions process.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Committee Chair: Holly Root

Members: Caitlin Blasdel, Danielle Burby, Sonali Chanchani, Cherise Fisher, Bethany Fulk, James McGowan, Kristin Terrette, Ayla Zuraw-Friedland

Contact: membership@aalitagents.org

Our function is to serve as the first point of contact for potential members, and to provide new and existing members with the access and information necessary to become active members of the Organization.

Over the past year, the Membership Committee has been focused on our core mission of outreach, admission, and connection for the organization.

A FOCUS ON MEMBERSHIP GROWTH:

- In 2023, we added 21 educational members, 39 members under 5 years' experience, and 42 members with over 5 years' experience, for a total of 102 members, in 2023;
- In 2024 year to date, we have added 8 Educational members, 21 members under 5 years' experience, 26 members with over 5 years' experience, plus recommending an additional 17 members for approval.
- At four months into the year, we are already over halfway to our goal of adding 100 new members.
- Created a definitive database of members, streamlining admissions, providing a resource for the Board and other committees to confirm membership status, and generating accurate data for reporting statistics on membership. (Many thanks to James McGowan, whose work on this project was invaluable.)
- Refined the committee matchmaking system to solicit additional feedback on committee needs and continued to look for opportunities and strategies to expand committee membership access to more of our membership

OUR WORK INCLUDED:

- Hosted the third annual new member welcome event.
- Added DEI + LAOC-specific information and outreach to the onboarding process for new members
- Transitioned Membership's collaborative monthly affinity mixers to Programming

- Expanded our recruitment and direct outreach efforts, including targeting active agents as reported in Publishers Marketplace.

GOAL

Our ongoing goal as a committee is to work with other committees to continue to refine the process of increasing membership and retention of member agents, and to continue creating opportunities for deeper connection for existing members and recruitment of potential members.

ROYALTIES COMMITTEE

Committee Chair: Karen Kenyon

Members: Vicki Bijur, Deborah Schneider, Gina Maccoby, Ariana Philips, Cathy Gleason, Susan Graham, Sam Stoloff

Contact: royalties@aalitagents.org

The mission of the Royalties Committee is to explore trends and address issues stemming from publisher royalty reporting; to educate our members on basic royalty structures; and to make recommendations to publishers to generally improve royalty statements and payment processes for the agent and author community.

2023-2024

In 2023 the Royalties Committee added two new members Cathy Gleason and Susan Graham, and a new liaison to the Board Sam Stoloff.

We workshopped and posted our updated Royalty Statement wish list on the AALA website very recently. The wish list is available to membership to view and download at the top of the Resources page: <https://aalitagents.org/resources/>

We invited Steve Potash from Overdrive to give a marvelous presentation to the AALA about Library digital book distribution and data and statistics. The recording and slide deck are available on AALA's website as:

[A Presentation from OverDrive's CEO Steve Potash – Insight into Library and School Digital Licensing \(2023\)](#) and [Steve Potash's Slide Deck](#).

We are preparing our June programming for Members, an introductory panel on How to Read a Royalty Statement 101.

As usual we had several terrific conversations/i.e. monthly meetings discussing various publisher royalty statements, reporting practices and concerns that affect our agent and author community. We have reopened our dialog with HarperCollins.

GOALS FOR 2024/25 INCLUDE:

Continuing to work out an improved method for AALA Members to ask our committee questions. In addition, we are exploring ways to clarify what the committee can and can not do for membership. We will discuss additional programming ideas after the June 2024 panel. As always, we will continue to look for ways to open or renew dialog with publishers whose statements, portals and reporting might be improved for agents and authors.

SMALL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Committee Chairs: Jennifer Carlson, Susanna Einstein

Members: Michelle Brower, Lynn Johnston, Holly Root, Kent Wolf, Monika Woods, Newsletter Liaison: Markus Hoffman

Contact: sb@aalitagents.org

Small Business is a vibrant, energized committee that will continue to offer the membership of the AALA resources and information relevant to the needs of our industry and agencies' unique business structures, opportunities, and challenges.

PROVIDING RELEVANT CONTENT TO MEMBERSHIP:

We presented a pair of panels for managers and employees: one in November in conjunction with the Mentorship Program focused on rising agency employees and the challenges of "managing up", and one in April directed at managers on the challenges of leadership.

Work has begun on our next panel, which will be September 2024; most likely, this will be an updated "Succession/Mergers" panel as this is an evergreen, oft-requested topic.

We added a newsletter liaison position to our committee, to ensure new legal and procedural questions raised in our committee are messaged appropriately to the wider membership.

Additional resources we are working on generating include a range of small business-specific checklists and roadmaps, including more resources about starting up an agency. Another high-priority goal is finding a way to offer a small business service provider resource guide. We are also investigating the possibilities for additional

LEADERSHIP

We re-structured how committee leadership will function: Susanna Einstein will step back from committee chair in June 2024. We will be led by co-chairs who serve for a year each with staggered terms (Jen and Susanna through June; then Jen and Michelle through Dec 2024; then Michelle and another member through June 2025).

membership education, such as access to classes or training for common small business software services.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

This year we established a committee onramp for people interested in joining the SBC. Anyone interested in committee membership should email their answers to the following questions for consideration by the committee:

1. How would you describe your experience and interests with regard to small business ownership or operation?
2. What do you hope to gain from being part of the SBC?

Our hope is to create a pool of qualified and interested agents to rotate into the committee as our focus and the committee's needs evolve. We are presently particularly seeking members who work on the back-office or operations aspects of an agency.

PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE

Committee Chair: Caroline Eisenmann

Members: Kerry D'Agostino, Jazmia Young, Leslie Zampetti, Maria Vincente, Najla Mamou

Contact: program@aalitagents.org

Over the last year, the Programming Committee has facilitated an aggressive expansion in the number of programs from the AALA and developed a new set of procedures and structures to support that programming.

In the 2023 Annual Report, we had helped facilitate 25 programs from 7 different committees in the 16 months between January 2022-May 2023. Since putting this new scheduling commitment and system into effect, we have now supported 17 programs from 11 different committees in the 7 months between October 2023-May 2024.

On average, between 80-100 members register for each panel-style program and between 30-40 members attend the panels live—with the notable exception in January of the LAOC/DEI Committee sponsored “The Power and Impact of the Comp Title” panel which saw over 300 registrants and about 150 attendees.

Over the past year, we have also implemented an archive of all program recordings to the AALA website, where members can watch and/or revisit all past panels at any time.

This growth has been both exciting and challenging for the committee. We have developed new tracking systems, timelines, and procedures to manage the various moving parts of a program. We have worked on dividing labor between members of the committees, aiming to make sure that all committee members can manage a program holistically, and that no one member is overburdened.

NEW PROGRAMMING SCHEDULE:

The last year saw a transition from a volunteer-based system of programming (in which committees would contact the Programming Committee when and if they had an idea for a program) to a system in which committees are expected to contribute 1-2 programs per year. This has meant a real surge in programming, but also allowed for us to develop standardized timelines and procedures around upcoming programming commitments. We are in touch with committees 2-3 months before their scheduled commitment, and throughout the process to help make sure the event is advertised to the membership and executed smoothly.

Our efforts to manage this influx of programming internally included new comprehensive spreadsheet tracking of event preparation, monthly meeting check ins on specific event progress, a streamlining of the registration

process, and the development of new training documents.

MIXERS:

Alongside the Communications Committee, we have helped run a monthly series of mixers for members. We're proud of the success of this series, though are looking forward to continually refining these events with the hopes of providing a digital social space where our membership can meet and network.

COMMITTEE GOALS:

Last year's big expansion has largely meant that our focus has been on infrastructure, but we're now engaging in high level conversations about how we can be more involved in shaping the overall programming offered by the AALA, as well as generating original programming within the committee.

We are particularly interested in the possibility of taking ownership of AALA's long popular "Meet the Editor" panel series and anticipate debuting this series in the summer ahead.

In the coming year we hope to add a few more committee members, so if you are interested in becoming involved with Programming, we'd love to hear from you.

We see Programming as a true core capacity of the AALA, one that showcases the expertise and reach of our membership, and facilitates connections between agents, as well as those outside panelists who we're always grateful to meet and welcome to the community. As a committee we would like to strive to make each program, as well as our slate of programming in its entirety, successful and vital feeling. We'd also like to continue to develop ways to connect our members with each other through continually iterating on the mixer series.

PROGRAMS 2023-2024

RECORDINGS OF ALL PROGRAMMING AND ASSOCIATED HANDOUTS, EXCEPTING THE VIRTUAL MIXERS, WHICH ARE NOT RECORDED, HERE:

[HTTPS://AALITAGENTS.ORG/RESOURCES/VIDEO-LIBRARY/](https://aalitagents.org/resources/video-library/)

VIEW THE SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING EVENTS AND REGISTER HERE:

[HTTPS://AALITAGENTS.ORG/EVENTS/](https://aalitagents.org/events/)

- Meet the Editors: AAPI Editors, Adult Market (DEI)
- What To Do When an Author Dies (Copyright)
- AALA Virtual Mixer: SFF/Horror (Programming/ Communications)
- Meet the Audio Publisher, S&S Audio (MDI)
- A Presentation from Overdrive's CEO Steve Potash - Insight into Library and School Digital Licensing (Royalties)
- On Managing Up, A Panel for Rising Agency Employees (SBC, Mentorship)
- Meet the Audio Publishers: Macmillan Audio (MDI)
- Tax Exemption Forms 101 (International)
- The Power and Impact of the Comp Title (DEI, LAoC)
- Fiduciary 101: What AALA Members Can Learn from Stormy Daniels (Ethics)
- Meet the Audio Publisher, Podium Audio (MDI)
- Copyright and AI: What Agents Need to Know (Copyright)
- New Member Mixer (Membership)
- AALA Virtual Mixer: Memoir and Narrative Nonfiction (Programming/ Communications)
- Managing a Team: Prioritize, Communicate, and Motivate (SBC)
- Let's Get Lit(erary): Unlocking the Secrets of BookTok (MDI) *Not recorded.*

The Communications and Programming Committees also partnered to offer ten virtual mixers to AALA members over the course of the year. The mixers were organized by topics including: Members outside of NYC; YA & MG; Subsidiary Rights; Mid-Level Agents (5+ Years); SFF/Horror; Caregivers; Romance; Memoir & Narrative Nonfiction; and one mixer welcoming all AALA members. A mixer focused on Illustration is upcoming on May 29.

The DEI Committee and Literary Agents of Change additionally offered a four-part series for LAOC fellows and any other summer interns in members' offices with topics including: Introduction to Editorial; Introduction to Production & Design; Introduction to Marketing, Publicity & Sales; and Introduction to Subsidiary Rights.

The Board of Directors of the AALA presented the Fall 2023 Town Hall, the Spring AALA Annual Meeting, and would like to thank the hardworking members of the USBS working group for all of their efforts in bringing together the 2024 USBS Publishing Conference.

WORKING GROUPS

US BOOK SHOW WORKING GROUP

Chairs: Regina Brooks, Lynn Johnston

Members 2023: Regina Brooks, Caroline Eisenmann, Cherise Fisher, Alexandra Franklin, Lynn Johnston, Eva Scalzo, Leslie Zampetti

Members 2024: Regina Brooks, Susanna Einstein, Alexandra Franklin, Heather Jackson, Lynn Johnston, Najla Mamou, Eva Scalzo, Leslie Zampetti

Contact: usbs@aalitagents.org

The US Book Show Committee was formed in early 2023 after discussions between AALA and Publishers Weekly about offering agent-oriented programming as part of the US Book Show. AALA Day at the US Book Show combined the association’s annual meeting with a full day of continuing education. Meanwhile, the focus of the event expanded to include not only agents but also editors and other publishing professionals.

2023 US BOOK SHOW

On May 23, 2023, the event at the Kimmel Center of New York University included a keynote address by James Daunt, CEO of Barnes & Noble and nine panels addressing topics such as the use of data in acquisitions, developments in contracts and copyright, industry burnout, marketing innovations and a crowd-pleasing panel on auctions.

A total of 435 people attended AALA Day, with 355 paid registrants. Of the paid registrants, 46.5% were AALA members, 38.9% attended virtually, and 15.2% came from publishing houses. The event generated a net income of \$20,000 for AALA.

While other book-related conferences exist, the core concept of bringing those who work in book publishing together for the sole purpose of professional development and networking is unique in our industry. Having demonstrated the proof of concept, AALA and PW agreed to a partnership to re-imagine the entire 2024 US Book Show as a professional development conference – essentially an expanded version of AALA Day.

The US Book Show committee reconstituted to organize this year’s US Book Show, scheduled for May 22, 2024.

2024 OBJECTIVES

- Increase sponsorship income to keep ticket prices affordable to encourage participation of the target market. The goal was to generate at least \$50K in sponsorships. Actual sponsorship revenue will be almost double that amount with Spotify as the lead sponsor.
- Increase participation of editors and employees of publishing

companies. We met with the CEOs of HarperCollins, Simon & Schuster, Macmillan and Hachette. Each pledged to group registrations of at least 50 people each. A month from the conference, attendees from publishing houses make up more than half of the registration list.

- Expand the reach and reputation of the conference to fuel future growth. Speakers confirmed for the event include some of the

most respected and knowledgeable figures in the industry, including the CEOs of Simon & Schuster, CEO of Scholastic, Publisher of Knopf, Publisher of Little Brown, President of Putnam, Dutton & Berkeley, Publisher of Flatiron, SVP of Sales of HarperCollins, Co-CEO of Aevitas Creative Management, to name a few. As of this report, registrations are SOLD OUT.

- Generate net income. In 2023, we received a flat fee of \$7,500 from PW and \$11,263 from a 50% split with PW on registrations generated by AALA, for a total of \$18,763. In 2024, we agreed to a 50-50 split with PW on all income and expenses, forgoing a guarantee. We currently are on track to generate a net profit from the event, with AALA's share higher than it was last year.

LOOKING AHEAD

Looking ahead, we plan to expand the conference to a two-day event in 2025 in a venue that can accommodate a bigger attendance and support our growth goals. We will expand outreach to larger independent publishers and continue to increase participation of rank-and-file publishing staff, as well as agents, both members and non-members. As we build the audience, we will be better positioned to attract non-publishing entities such as Adobe, Docu-Sign, Word, Canva and others that serve our community, for sponsorship and other support.

While the PW side is made up of paid staff, AALA's significant contributions came entirely from volunteers who took the event from conception to reality and growth. We salute the enormous energy, effort and ideas of all involved and look forward to the event becoming the "must attend" conference for anyone who works in book publishing.

AI WORKING GROUP

Members: Pamela Malpas (chair, Copyright Committee); Ginger Clark (chair, Contracts Committee); Tess Callero (chair, MDI Committee); Molly O’Neill (chair, Illustration Committee); Adam Shear; Kelly Sonnack; Natalie Lakosil; Jennifer Unter; Stefanie Sanchez van Borstel; Lauren MacLeod; Lauren Bajek; Hannah Bowman

The AI working group was formed in July 2023 as a cross-committee group (incorporating members of Contracts, Copyright, Media & Digital Innovations, and Illustration committees and other interested AALA members) working to monitor developments and applications of AI in publishing and propose responses from AALA.

THE GROUP WORKS TO DELIVER THE FOLLOWING:

- Aggregation = working with peer organizations (UK and Australian agents’ and authors’ groups) and other third parties (Human Artistry Campaign, etc.) to aggregate knowledge and ideas
- Advocacy = speaking to publishers and other parts of the publishing community to support agents’ and authors’ needs
- Education = providing guidance and resources to AALA board and membership for how and where they should be directing attention to AI (whether in contracts, copyright, or innovations that may benefit their clients)

SINCE ITS ESTABLISHMENT THE GROUP’S WORK HAS INCLUDED:

- Issuing alerts to the membership on AI-related concerns in Contracts, Resources for Authors, and Scraping
- A series of conversations with stakeholders (including the Authors Guild, publishers, and developers of AI tools)
- Defining a position statement for AALA on generative AI
- Assisting AALA in public comment for legislation on AI (e.g., response to National Telecommunications and Information Administration’s Request for Comment on AI Accountability Policy)
- Ongoing collaboration with AAA (UK agents association) and ALAA (Australian agents associations)

- Public speaking representing agent concerns with AI (e.g., PubWest 2024’s “AI: Friend and Foe?”)

FOR 2024/2025 THE WORKING GROUP WILL BE WORKING ON:

- Examination of forthcoming licensing models for AI
- Conversations with publishers about internal uses of AI within the publishing workflow (including editorial, marketing, subsidiary rights, etc.)
- Continuing to inform AALA board and membership about developments affecting agents and authors
- Potential panels/workshops on innovations that could aid efficiency in agent workflow.

AALA EMAIL DIRECTORY

COMMITTEES

Communications@aalitagents.org

Contracts@aalitagents.org

Copyright@aalitagents.org

DEI@aalitagents.org

Ethics@aalitagents.org

Governance@aalitagents.org

International@aalitagents.org

Illustration@aalitagents.org

MDI@aalitagents.org (Media, Digital and Innovations)

Membership@aalitagents.org

Program@aalitagents.org

Royalties@aalitagents.org

SBcomm@aalitagents.org (Small Business)

OFFICERS

President@aalitagents.org

VicePresident@aalitagents.org

Treasurer@aalitagents.org

Secretary@aalitagents.org

Assistant@aalitagents.org – Jazmia Young

NEWSLETTER

Committees wishing to submit to the AALA newsletter may do so by emailing newsletter@aalitagents.org.

WEBSITE

For all website-related questions or issues, please reach out to the Communications Committee via AALAwbsite@aalitagents.org

CLOSING NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The AALA has experienced and embraced a tremendous amount of change in the way we conduct business, how active we have been in the controversies and discourses around publishing, our leadership roles in industry changing conferences of ideas, our proactive efforts to bring people in our organization and industry together, our sophistication in how we communicate both with our membership and with the industry at large, our inclusiveness in welcoming members and growing opportunities for them to be active participants in the organization and our willingness to evolve and ratify new guiding principles such as our Bylaws and our newly minted Best Practices.

To continue this exciting path, we, as an organization, need to be open to new ideas and visions, to challenge them when necessary and embrace them when warranted. To succeed in this endeavor, we need active participation. When surveys go out, we need to take the few minutes to fill them out. When panels and mixers pertain to our interests, we need to show up and participate. When there are Committee openings we need to volunteer, and when there are leadership roles available in those committees, we need to step up. When we are approached to join the board, we need to say yes or, even better, volunteer before asked, and when officer roles are needed, we need to step in. Ultimately, when we need new presidents, we need to be ready to serve.

All of us need to step up and step into these roles. Ask any of us who have and you'll discover that we have gained community, friends, a sense of purpose and accomplishment beyond ourselves, greater knowledge about our industry and the visibility that helps to grow careers. Yes, there is work – but there are also rewards to be reaped. We are here because we care about words and ideas and because we care about people who care about words and ideas. We are people that help to push boundaries. Let's be that way in how we engage with the AALA and profit from the amazing wealth of talent within our membership.

It has been a privilege to serve among such a vibrant, innovative and smart community, and I am so excited to see where we all journey together next.

Jennifer Weltz, AALA 2023-2024 President