

 ^{THE} Authors Guild

Annual Report

2024

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Dear Members,

I'm delighted to share our 2024 Annual Report highlighting the impact of our work during a time of significant challenges and opportunities for writers. From artificial intelligence to book-banning efforts, authors faced unprecedented pressures that demanded both immediate action and long-term strategic thinking from our organization.

We reached a major membership milestone in September 2024, surpassing 15,000 members with a renewal rate of 90 percent. Our collaborative novel *Fourteen Days*, a unique project co-edited by Margaret Atwood and Douglas Preston and written by 36 contributors, was published in February and received extensive national media coverage while generating proceeds to support our advocacy work.

AI advocacy dominated our agenda in 2024. We continued our class action copyright lawsuit against OpenAI and Microsoft, consulted on and endorsed key pieces of AI legislation, and met with more than 60 congressional offices. We also launched practical solutions for authors, including our AI guidelines for authors, our Human Authored certification mark, and a partnership with the Created by Humans licensing platform.

Our fight against book bans expanded as we joined legal challenges in Colorado, filed an amicus brief supporting publishers' lawsuit in Florida, and secured victories in Texas and Arkansas. We also advocated for freelancers' rights, leading to statewide protections in New York and California, and celebrated the Second Circuit's ruling affirming that the Internet Archive's wholesale copying of books is not fair use.

The Guild's media presence grew substantially across print, digital, and broadcast channels. We published several op-eds in major outlets including *The Washington Post* and the *Los Angeles Times*, while our staff appeared on numerous podcasts, radio programs, and television shows discussing our advocacy work, lawsuits, and expansive programming.

Our legal team handled 1,612 matters for members, providing critical assistance with contracts, copyright questions, and reversion of rights. We began transitioning to a new cloud-based member database that will improve our efficiency and help us better understand our membership. We also enhanced Sitebuilder, our proprietary website platform, with improved accessibility features and additional functionality.

The Authors Guild Foundation raised \$2.6 million in FY 2023-24, including nearly \$1.1 million for our capacity building campaign. Our annual gala raised \$520,000, exceeding the previous year by \$45,000. The Foundation's literary programming flourished with our third annual WIT Festival, the Pascal Hall Authors Series in Maine, and new online literary seminars. We also launched "AGF Presents," a series of conversations in bookshops and other venues featuring prominent authors.

The following pages detail these accomplishments and many more from an extraordinary year of advocacy and service. I hope you'll take pride, as I do, in what we've achieved together for authors and the literary community. Your continued engagement makes all this possible. We thank you for your membership and your support of authors' rights and the writing profession for generations to come.

As always, please feel free to reach out to me at mary@authorsguild.org.

Onwards...



Mary Rasenberger
CEO

Advocacy & Legal

Artificial Intelligence

Copyright Lawsuit Against OpenAI and Microsoft

The Guild’s advocacy team continued its work on our class action copyright lawsuit against OpenAI and Microsoft in 2024. We are working closely with attorneys for both the fiction and nonfiction class lawsuits against OpenAI and Microsoft. The two cases have been consolidated for pretrial purposes, and the lawyers for both have entered into a cooperation agreement with counsel for the class action lawsuits on behalf of authors in California. Discovery in our case is currently scheduled to run through this spring.

Our legal staff is still immersed in discovery as well as developing our arguments in support of our main legal position in the case: that the mass copying of copyrighted books without permission for AI “training” purposes does not qualify as fair use. Under the court’s current schedule, the parties will likely be submitting written briefs on this issue in mid-2025, though the timeframe is subject to change.

In February 2024, a law firm representing plaintiffs in several other AI cases in California attempted an unusual procedural move in an effort to give itself control of all the class action cases nationwide. It asked the court in our case to allow the California plaintiffs to intervene as parties so that they could ask the court to either dismiss the case, put it on hold, or transfer it to the court in California. Fortunately, the district court denied the motion, noting that there are significant differences between the California cases and ours. The law firms have since entered into an agreement to cooperate.

AI Legislation

Throughout 2024, the Guild consulted on and endorsed several key pieces of legislation around AI. Among the bills we endorsed were:

- The **AI Foundation Model Transparency Act**, which requires AI developers to disclose training data and development processes;
- The **AI Labeling Act of 2023**, which mandates disclosure of AI-generated content;
- The **No AI Fraud Act**, which establishes individual property rights over likeness and voice, with the Guild advocating for additional protections for authors;
- The **No FAKES Act**, which holds companies and platforms accountable for unauthorized digital replicas in performances while balancing free speech protections;
- The **Generative AI Copyright Disclosure Act**, which requires AI developers to disclose copyrighted works used in training datasets, including retroactively for previously released models; and
- The **No Section 230 Immunity for AI Act**, which ensures AI companies can be held accountable for harmful or infringing content.

Altogether, we met with more than 60 congressional offices regarding AI, with several of the meetings taking place under the flag of the AG-led broad creator coalition.

Human Authored Certification Mark

In late 2024, we introduced a “Human Authored” certification mark and logo that authors and publishers can use to notify the public that a work is human authored and not generated by AI. We are registering the logo with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office as a certification mark—a type of trademark used to show consumers that particular goods or services (or their providers) have met certain standards. An author who registers and agrees to the license terms will be granted a license to use the mark on and in connection with their work, provided that the text of the book was indeed written by a human and not created or significantly modified by generative AI.

We launched the program for Authors Guild members in January 2025 and will roll it out to publishers and authors who are not Guild members in the next few months.

Created by Humans Licensing Platform

We launched a partnership with Created by Humans, a platform that enables authors to license their works to AI developers. As part of the partnership, we were invited to advise on the author agreement, our CEO was invited to join Created by Humans’ advisory board, and we jointly released informational materials and webinars that clearly explain the license terms and fees. The Guild also released a comprehensive FAQ about AI licensing as an educational resource for authors.

Model Clauses, Resources, and Webinars

We drafted model clauses for authors to use in their contracts and reservation of rights clauses to use in their books, both of which were widely applauded by authors and the industry.

Throughout the year, we released educational resources to help authors navigate the disruptions caused by AI. We also released FAQs on AI advocacy and licensing and produced several webinars and members-only “Ask the AG” sessions.

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Spotify

We advocated on behalf of authors to change overbroad terms of use for the Spotify-owned audiobook producer Findaway Voices. If they had taken effect, these terms would have allowed Spotify and Findaway to “translate, modify, [and] create derivative works” from submitted audiobooks. They further stipulated that Spotify could use audiobooks (termed “user content”) in “training” and “modeling” in connection with Spotify services.

We reached out to our contacts at Spotify to discuss this concerning language and advised members who contacted us about the new terms not to accept them. Spotify representatives explained that the intent behind the language was not to grab rights, train AI, or generate new content, but to allow the use of audiobooks to improve discoverability and implement technical protocols against fraud. They agreed that the language in the new terms was overbroad, however, and agreed to revise it, releasing updated terms on the same day.

Amazon and Audible

The Guild continued to work with Amazon and Audible, particularly around AI. We met with top Kindle executives to discuss our concerns about the proliferation of AI-generated books, the need for AI labeling, and other AI issues. Among other things, we requested that Amazon make the disclosures it requires from authors who use AI in their work publicly available.

We escalated several complaints of AI-generated books to Amazon, including some on behalf of high-profile authors. AI-generated books that were taken down as a result of our work included unauthorized biographies, low quality summary books, fake books attributed to real authors, and infringing books. This was in addition to our usual Amazon escalation process, where we regularly help authors resolve issues.

We also engaged with Audible over changes to their payment terms in order to ensure transparency for authors. We also helped authors remove AI-generated audiobooks from Audible and escalated other matters.

Internet Archive

The Guild played a key role in conclusively defeating the Internet Archive’s (IA) blatantly unlawful effort to make digital copies of books available for free on the open internet. Following a federal district court’s March 2023 ruling that its actions did not qualify as fair use, the Internet Archive filed an appeal with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. In March 2024, the Guild mobilized more than a dozen creator groups to file a “friend of the court” brief urging the court to uphold the district court’s decision.

In September 2024, the court of appeals did just that, issuing an opinion squarely rejecting the

Internet Archive’s fair use argument. The court noted that “IA asks this Court to bless the large scale copying and distribution of copyrighted books without permission from or payment to the Publishers or authors. Such a holding would allow for widescale copying that deprives creators of compensation and diminishes the incentive to produce new works. This may be what IA and its [supporters] prefer, but it is not an approach that the Copyright Act permits.”

In December, the deadline for petitioning the Supreme Court to review the case expired without action from the Internet Archive. This means that the Second Circuit’s ruling is now finalized and will stand as a significant precedent in copyright law.

Legislative Initiatives

In addition to the AI bills mentioned earlier, we backed the **Creative Workforce Investment Act**, which establishes a \$300 million grant program to support public creative projects, and the **Federal Writers Project**, which funds unemployed and underemployed writers to document the American experience. We also endorsed the **Foreign Anti-Digital Piracy Act**, introduced by Rep. Zoe Lofgren (CA-18), which targets large-scale foreign-based digital piracy sites by allowing copyright owners to obtain court orders requiring internet service providers and DNS providers to block access to foreign piracy websites. The bill is one of the most comprehensive pieces of anti-piracy legislation introduced in recent years.

Moral Rights and Publicity Rights

The Guild developed a legislative proposal to protect creators' right of attribution with respect to AI use. The right of attribution is one of the protections known as "moral rights" that the United States is required to provide creators under an international copyright treaty. Our proposal recommends expanding the right of attribution under the Copyright Act—which currently applies only to certain types of visual artwork—to cover other types of copyrightable works when they are used in AI-generated materials. The need for attribution has taken on greater urgency with the rise of generative AI, which allows the mass-scale creation of materials that are based on authors' works without providing appropriate credit. The proposal was approved by the Intellectual Property Law Section of the American Bar Association.

We also worked to support legislation to provide a federal right of publicity. Right of publicity laws (which currently exist only at the state level) allow individuals to prevent the exploitation of their name, image, or likeness for commercial purposes. We drafted legislative language and lobbied Congress in support of bills that would protect a person's name, image, and voice from being used by generative AI without their consent.

Labor Protections and Freelancer Advocacy

The Guild continues to support progressive labor and antitrust policies that enhance the bargaining power of freelance creators. In 2024, we submitted comments to the FTC in response to its rulemaking to ban non-compete agreements. Our comments discussed how non-competes are used in writing

agreements and underscored the negative impact they have not only on author incomes but also on the ability for authors to publish the works they want to write. Ahead of the comments, we surveyed authors to better understand the impact of non-competes on their careers. The results showed that authors generally feel hindered by the restrictive nature of non-compete clauses. The FTC voted to adopt the rule in April 2024, though its future remains uncertain given the current administration's stance on labor and related issues.

We took part in an FTC roundtable titled "Creative Economy and Generative AI," which brought together professionals from a broad range of creative fields to discuss how AI tools are reshaping the creative industries. Authors Guild Director of Advocacy & Policy Umair Kazi delivered remarks explaining how AI developers copied millions of copyrighted works without permission, embedded them into language models, and generated competing derivative works without creators' consent, compensation, or credit. He reiterated the Guild's call for laws, regulations, and policies that ensure consent, compensation, credit, transparency, and labeling of AI-generated content.

We continued to talk to the FTC about the need for collective action rights for creators. After years of advocacy, our efforts recently paid off when the FTC issued a policy statement in January 2025 stating that independent contractors, including gig workers, are shielded from antitrust liability when engaging in protected bargaining and organizing activities—such as seeking better compensation and job conditions.

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The Guild has a good relationship with the House Small Business Committee, which invited us to participate in a discussion on the impact of generative AI on independent creators who own small businesses. The committee later released a report titled “Bots Over Brushes: The Looming Competition Between Generative AI and Small Content Creators,” based largely on information we provided.

We also continued to work with coalition partners to advance freelancer rights nationwide. As a result of these efforts, statewide freelancer protection laws were passed in New York and California.

Coalitions

The Guild continues to lead and convene coalitions of creator organizations to work together on policy matters and lobbying, including an AI group, a collective bargaining group, and a general copyright advocacy group. These coalitions are designed to fill the gap between the advocacy and policy resources of our peer organizations and to project a unified voice of creators. In addition to monthly meetings, coalition members hold fly-ins and meetings with lawmakers, the Copyright Office, and other policymakers.

AI Survey

We conducted two surveys to gauge authors’ concerns about the impact of artificial intelligence on the writing profession. Among other insights, the first survey found that 90 percent of authors agreed that they should be compensated when their works are used to train artificial intelligence models. The results highlighted widespread concern over AI companies using books without permission or payment, raising alarms about the future of authorship and fair compensation. The second survey found that authors overwhelmingly support a consent-based framework for AI training, emphasizing the need for transparency and control over how their works are used. Respondents expressed frustration over the unauthorized use of their books to develop AI models, with many voicing concerns that this practice threatens their livelihoods.

Throughout the year, we leveraged these survey results in our legal advocacy, efforts to build coalitions, and direct engagement with lawmakers to push for policies that protect authors’ rights in the AI era.

Piracy

We continued our anti-piracy work by raising awareness of the scale of ebook piracy and lobbying for laws that would create strong obligations on internet service providers (ISPs) to take action against known pirate sites. Rep. Zoe Lofgren (CA-18) introduced a bill we consulted on and lobbied for, which allows rights holders to obtain enforceable site-blocking orders from courts that would require ISPs to block large-scale foreign piracy sites. We also continued to help our members send abuse and takedown notices to providers of intermediary services to notorious pirate sites.

Scams

Efforts to defraud authors continue to increase. We publish scam alerts in our newsletter, on our website, and on social media, and ask authors to let us know about any scams they encounter. We also notify other parties (such as publishers, agencies, film producers, and industry figures) when their names are fraudulently misused so they can take their own action against the scammers, and we attempt to address these situations ourselves where able.

This past year, we assisted an FBI investigation of PageTurner Press, which we warned authors about in a September 2023 scam alert. After sharing that alert, we received reports of other authors who had been similarly defrauded. The FBI subsequently approached Authors Guild General Counsel Cheryl Davis and asked us to support its investigation. We shared information we had received from members and others as well as contacts at publishing houses and other organizations who might have helpful information. We're pleased to report that the investigation resulted in the arrest of three individuals behind the scam in December.

Anti-Book Banning Initiatives

We continue to expand our efforts to fight attempts to ban books or prohibit the teaching of certain ideas related to race, racism, antisemitism, gender orientation, sexual identity, and reproductive rights. We also challenge unconstitutional laws that violate the First Amendment rights of authors.

Fayetteville Public Library v. Crawford County (Arkansas)

In 2023, along with the Central Arkansas Library System, five Little Rock residents, and a coalition

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of other organizations, we brought a lawsuit in the District Court of Arkansas asking the court to declare portions of an Arkansas law unconstitutional for violating plaintiffs' rights to disseminate, receive, and read constitutionally protected books and other media. One section of the law imposed criminal penalties for providing minors with materials considered "harmful to minors." Another provision made it possible for any person in Arkansas to demand the removal of a book from a public library, which would give any individual control over the content of library collections.

The court issued a preliminary injunction enjoining enforcement of sections 1 and 5 of the law on July 29, 2023. On December 23, 2024, the court upheld its preliminary injunction and issued a summary judgment in the plaintiffs' favor. In its ruling, the court emphasized the law's fundamental constitutional flaws, stating: "If the General Assembly's purpose in passing Section 1 was to protect younger minors from accessing inappropriate sexual content in libraries and bookstores, the law will only achieve that end at the expense of everyone else's First Amendment rights. The law deputizes librarians and booksellers as the agents of censorship; when motivated by the fear of jail time, it is likely they will shelve only books fit for young children and segregate

or discard the rest.” The court also held that the law’s vague language around terms like “appropriateness” failed to provide clear guidance for enforcement while forcing libraries and bookstores to either create restricted “adults only” sections or remove materials entirely. Furthermore, the law lacked adequate procedural safeguards and judicial review for removal decisions, effectively allowing viewpoint-based discrimination.

Book People v. Wong (Texas)

In July 2023, along with a coalition of bookstores, national booksellers, and publishers, we brought a case defending the right to free expression in Texas and of local communities to set and implement standards for school materials. The state’s ironically named READER Act violates the First Amendment by compelling speech and imposing content-based restrictions. It requires any entity that wants to sell books to Texas schools to rate millions of books and library materials for sexual content and rate them as “sexually explicit” or “sexually relevant.” These definitions are particularly problematic as they lack clarity and have no basis in existing law.

The court preliminarily enjoined enforcement of the law, and in late 2024, after conducting discovery (including a deposition of Authors Guild CEO Mary Rasenberger), both sides moved for summary judgment. We await the court’s opinion and will advise our members accordingly once it is issued.

GLBT Youth in IA Schools v. Reynolds and Penguin Random House v. Robbins (Iowa)

In April 2024, we joined the fight against Iowa Senate File 496, filing an *amicus curiae* (“friend of the court”) brief with the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals along with eight other organizations. This brief supported the plaintiffs in *GLBT Youth in IA Schools v. Reynolds* and *Penguin Random House v. Robbins*, which challenged far-reaching book banning provisions

enacted in Iowa in May 2023. SF 496 prohibits books containing any description or depiction of a “sex act,” regardless of context, in Iowa school and classroom libraries, affecting students through twelfth grade. The law also bans books relating to gender identity or sexual orientation from school and classroom libraries for students through sixth grade, encompassing both fiction and nonfiction works.

In August, the Eighth Circuit issued a mixed ruling in which it disappointingly reversed a lower court’s preliminary injunction that had temporarily halted book removals from school libraries. It also made a crucial determination in the plaintiffs’ favor, however, holding that the act of removing books from public school libraries is not “government speech” but a government action subject to First Amendment scrutiny. The “government speech” argument has been made in a number of book banning cases, and the court’s rejection of this argument provides a very helpful precedent.

Finally, in October, we joined the lawsuit as a plaintiff, at which time the plaintiffs filed an amended complaint and a renewed motion for preliminary injunction. The defendants also filed a motion to dismiss the amended complaint. A hearing took place on February 6, 2025, and we will share further updates as they happen.

Penguin Random House et al. v. Gibson (Florida)

In August, we joined publishers Penguin Random House, Hachette Book Group, HarperCollins Publishers, Macmillan Publishers, Simon & Schuster, and Sourcebooks, authors Julia Alvarez, Laurie Halse Anderson, John Green, Jodi Picoult, and Angie Thomas, and two students and two parents in *Penguin Random House et al. v. Gibson*, challenging the book removal provisions contained in Florida’s HB 1069. This law allows for the indiscriminate removal of books based on vague and overbroad criteria and poses a grave threat to intellectual freedom and the

right to read. Florida school librarians are required to review and remove all books that contain anything that can be construed as “describing or depicting sexual conduct,” with no consideration of the educational value of the work as a whole.

The law’s vagueness is exacerbated by the fact that Florida’s training materials repeatedly encourage the media specialists tasked with reviewing the books to “err on the side of caution” in removing books from school libraries, and educators are subject to felony charges for failing to comply with the law. This atmosphere of fear means that books are likely to be removed for extended periods without due consideration of whether they violate the law. The defendants have filed a motion to dismiss, and the court has set a March 4 deadline to move for summary judgment.

Crookshanks et al. v. the Elizabeth School District (Colorado)

In December, along with the NAACP and individual plaintiffs, we filed a federal lawsuit against a school district in Colorado for removing books from school libraries based on their content and viewpoints. *Crookshanks et al. v. the Elizabeth School District* challenges the school board’s decision to permanently ban 19 books, many of which are highly acclaimed and widely taught across the country. Their actions stigmatized books by and about BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ people by labeling them as inappropriate or dangerous, creating an environment where parents and teachers feel afraid to disagree with or challenge these policies publicly. The board’s actions appear politically motivated rather than educationally justified, with board members explicitly stating they were acting to impose “conservative values.”

The lawsuit argues that the board’s actions violate students’ First Amendment rights by restricting access to books based solely on the board members’ personal political views. The plaintiffs seek an

injunction to restore the banned books to libraries and prevent future removals based on viewpoint discrimination.

Other Efforts

In April, we joined forces with the National Coalition Against Censorship, the Fashion Law Institute, and several other free speech organizations to file an *amicus curiae* (“friend of the court”) brief in *Woodlands Pride v. Paxton*, arguing for the Fifth Circuit to uphold a permanent injunction against enforcement of a drag ban in Texas. The state legislature enacted a drag ban law in 2023 that prohibited cities and municipalities from authorizing performances deemed “sexually oriented” on public property or in the presence of an individual under 18 years of age. The law, if permitted to go into effect, would establish a system of prior restraint that requires performances to be pre-cleared and allow government entities to interpret what constitutes a “sexually oriented” performance and censor artists accordingly. This could impact a diverse array of artistic expressions, from theatrical plays and musical acts to public readings and beyond. In addition to censoring many performances that do not meet the constitutional standard for obscenity, the vagueness and uncertainty of the law would have a chilling effect on artistic expression in general. A lower court in Texas found the law to be unconstitutional before that decision was appealed to the Fifth Circuit.

In addition to our litigation efforts, we also made a number of presentations on book bans, including an appearance by Guild General Counsel Cheryl Davis on Guild member Gloria Browne-Marshall’s WBAI radio program, *Law of the Land with Gloria J. Browne-Marshall*. The episode was entitled “Book Bans: Impact on Readers, Writers and Civil Liberties.”

Davis also took part in an American Bar Association (ABA) Intellectual Property Law Section conversation on U.S. book bans with Jeff Trexler of the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund, which was so

well received that the organizers were asked to offer it again at the ABA Forum on the Entertainment and Sports Industries Annual Meeting in Las Vegas in October. In that later panel, entitled “Books! Banned!,” Davis and Trexler appeared with Neal McCluskey of the Cato Institute, and Davis presented on the Guild’s current book ban litigations.

For Right to Read Day in April, Davis joined representatives from Unite Against Book Bans to provide an update on the state of book ban legislation in 2024. The talk covered right to read bills, legislative efforts to criminalize librarians and educators, and age verification laws.

For Banned Books Week in September, Davis took part in a panel hosted by BookPeople in Austin, Texas, and we hosted an “Ask the Authors Guild” meeting on book bans in which our staff answered questions from members and presented on the history of book bans, the Guild’s efforts, and what authors can do to combat them. Davis also presented on a panel hosted by Freedom to Learn Advocates entitled “Banned Books and Libraries Under Attack: The Fight for Intellectual Freedom in Our Communities.”

International Work

The Guild works with other writer organizations around the world on shared issues, including copyright matters, collective licensing, improved contract terms, and artificial intelligence.

In April 2024, we hosted the Annual General Meeting of the International Authors Forum in New York. Discussions largely centered around the threat to the writing profession posed by generative AI. Following the meeting, members of the Society of Authors, our counterpart organization in the United Kingdom, joined us on a lobbying trip to Washington, D.C. We visited multiple congressional offices to explain the urgent need for legislation to protect authors from the unauthorized use of their works to train AI systems.

In October, CEO Mary Rasenberger and Chief Legal Officer Kevin Amer attended the 2024 General Assembly and World Congress of the International Federation of Reproduction Rights Organisations (IFRRO) in Quebec City, Canada. IFRRO is a membership association that facilitates the collective management of rights in text- and image-based works. Amer provided an update on the status of our copyright suit against OpenAI and Microsoft.

We continued to collaborate with other organizations to advocate publicly on issues of international concern. In October, we joined an effort organized by Ed Newton-Rex, CEO of Fairly Trained, to issue a short statement opposing the unlicensed use of creative works for training generative AI, noting that it is a major, unjust threat to the livelihoods of the people behind those works. To date, more than 37,000 people have signed onto the statement, including many high-profile authors, musicians, and other creators in more than 30 countries. We also followed up on our 2023 comments to the European Union by working with our counterpart organizations overseas on policy proposals requiring AI companies to be transparent about their training materials.

Also in October, we submitted written comments to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in response to its Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights’ study on public lending rights. Public lending rights systems allow authors to receive remuneration when their works are lent out by libraries. Our comments expressed support for adoption of public lending rights in the United States and urged the committee to continue its work on these issues.

DEIA Initiatives

The Guild continues to collaborate with the Association of American Literary Agents (AALA) and Literary Agents of Change to provide our members with the opportunity to meet with BIPOC agents and agents who are seeking to diversify their client base.

Our DEIA Board Committee is working to create programs that focus on various aspects of publishing (such as marketing, working with editors, etc.) and how those activities can best serve the needs of BIPOC authors specifically.

Letters and Briefs

Amicus Briefs

In 2024, the Guild took part in submitting two *amicus curiae* (“friend of the court”) briefs before the Supreme Court of the United States in *Warner Chappell Music, Inc. v. Nealy* and *Free Speech Coalition v. Paxton*.

In *Warner Chappell Music, Inc. v. Nealy*, we organized an amicus brief with a coalition that included the Dramatists Legal Defense Fund, the Graphic Artists Guild, Romance Writers of America, the Songwriters Guild of America, and the Textbook & Academic Authors Association. Our brief encouraged the Supreme Court to uphold the Eleventh Circuit’s decision allowing copyright holders (one of whom was imprisoned during part of the period in which the work was infringed) to recover damages for infringements that occurred more than three years before the lawsuit was filed. The ability to collect such damages is vital to the ability of authors and other copyright holders to bring copyright infringement suits. The Supreme Court issued a decision on May 9, 2024, that agreed with our position that damages

should not be limited to the three-year period, strengthening copyright protections for writers and other creators.

In *Free Speech Coalition v. Paxton*, we joined with American Booksellers for Free Expression, the Association of American Publishers, the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund, and the Freedom to Read Foundation to ask the Supreme Court to hear a case in which the Fifth Circuit had analyzed a content-based restriction on First Amendment-protected materials using an inappropriate standard. The circuit court reviewed the legislation in question using the “rational basis test” rather than the “strict scrutiny” standard as the case law clearly required. Allowing this incorrect standard would have far-reaching implications for bookstores, libraries, mainstream media, websites, and more, which is why the Authors Guild and others asked the Supreme Court to hear the case.

We also organized an *amicus* brief in *Hachette v. Internet Archive* and filed it with 15 other creator groups in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. As described earlier, this suit was brought by four major publishers to stop the Internet Archive’s infringing Open Library program. Our brief urged the court to uphold the district court’s decision in full, explaining that the Internet Archive “has created a vast, unauthorized online database of literary works that anyone in the world can access for free, which differs from the most flagrantly illegal pirate websites only by reason of its residing in a U.S. not-for-profit.” In September, the Second Circuit affirmed the lower court’s ruling that the Internet Archive’s wholesale illegal copying of books is not transformative fair use.

NCAC Letters

We signed on to 11 letters from the National Coalition Against Censorship to school boards around the country, urging them to reconsider their decisions to remove such books from school library shelves without due process.

- January 3: Letter to Elkhorn Area School District Re: More than 400 books challenged and removed from school libraries while under consideration
- January 19: Letter to Rockingham County Public Schools Re: 57 books challenged and removed from school libraries while under consideration
- February 16: Letter to PS 55 The Henry M. Boehm School (New York) Re: Improper removal of hundreds of books
- March 5: Letter to St. Johns County School District (Florida) Re: Order to remove books with sexual content from district libraries
- March 26: Letter to Roane County School District (Tennessee) Re: Board policy requiring temporary removal of books during challenge process
- May 14: Letter to Rutherford County Schools (Tennessee) Re: Removal of 18 books from school libraries
- June 13: Letter to Cameron R-1 School District (Missouri) Re: Review and restriction of dozens of school library books
- June 20: Letter to Greenville County School District (South Carolina) Re: Removal of Ellen Hopkins' *Perfect* and *Tilt* and Sarah J. Maas' *Empire of Storms*
- July 19: Letter to Indian River School District (Florida) Re: Removal of Alan Gratz's *Ban This Book*
- August 27: Letter to Elizabeth School District (Florida) Re: Removal of 19 books in accordance with new "Sensitive Content Catalogs" policy
- September 4: Letter to Brevard County Schools (Colorado) Re: Removal of Shō Harusono's *Sasaki and Miyano Vol. 1*

Membership & Outreach

We reached a major milestone on September 13, 2024, when our total membership count surpassed 15,000. In fiscal year 2024 (October 1, 2023–September 30, 2024), we had 14,493 members in good standing—more than double our FY 2015—with a renewal rate of 90 percent.

In the 2023 calendar year, we saw an astonishing 32 percent increase in new members joining the Guild, driven largely by media coverage and social media attention around our open letter to AI companies and our class-action lawsuit against OpenAI and Microsoft. The number of new members returned to a more typical level in 2024, while still higher than 2021 and 2022, with 2,203 new members joining the Guild.

As of February 19, 2025, we had a total of 15,388 members, 801 more than at the same time last year, with 12,229 members signed up for auto renewal. Auto renewal helps keep our retention rate high and makes payment processing smoother for our staff.

Recruitment

We continue to work toward building a larger, more diverse membership. This effort includes expanding our outreach to writers of different genres and backgrounds, including younger and more diverse writers, and enhancing our services and community-building experiences to better engage our members and make membership more compelling.

Below is a summary of new recruitment efforts we tried in 2024, in addition to our regular ongoing efforts.

Rejoin Form and Campaign

Last summer, at the suggestion of some members, we implemented a new rejoin form on our website to make it easier for former members to return to the Guild. Previously, former members had to fill out and submit a new application, which makes the process harder and less likely to be completed. It also takes more time on our end, as we must re-review applications that were previously approved.

The rejoin form is accessible via the main menu of our website, and former members are automatically redirected to it when they try to log in to their member dashboard. We followed this up with an email

campaign to members who hadn't renewed in the previous 18 months, sharing updates on our advocacy and member services and encouraging them to rejoin the Guild. A total of 67 former members have rejoined the Guild this way since we rolled it out.

Facebook and Instagram Ads

In the fall, we placed four ads on Facebook and Instagram promoting the fact that new members can have our staff build them a website for free using our proprietary Sitebuilder platform. A total of 23 authors applied for membership and signed up for Sitebuilder as a result, and we also saw an increase in applicants citing web services as their reason for joining. We plan to build on the success of this campaign and run more regular ads for Sitebuilder and for Guild membership going forward.

Partnerships

We continued to partner with the Latinx Kidlit Book Festival, the Alliance of Independent Authors (ALLi), Literary Agents of Change, Horror Writers Association, and other writing organizations, especially those that support underserved communities, in 2024.

This past fall we also worked with some of our regional chapter ambassadors to have a presence at local conferences such as the Writers of Mesopotamia Conference in Detroit and the Griot & Grey Owl Black Southern Writers Conference in Raleigh-Durham. We will continue to work closely with our regional ambassadors to discover ways we can have more of a presence outside of the New York City area.

New Benefits and Perks

Launchpad: Marketing and Publicity Resources

For years, marketing help has been the #1 request we've received from members. In 2024, we greatly expanded our marketing and publicity resources through a second pilot series of our Launchpad program, producing eight webinars for authors of children's books—including picture books, chapter books, middle grade, and young adult. These webinars took place in the spring, followed by an additional pair of webinars on promoting self-published books in partnership with ALLi. Members now have access to a trove of Launchpad resources: recordings of past webinars; a robust checklist and workbook for book promotion; a directory of links to service providers, recommended reading, and other educational materials; and more content to come.

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After concluding the pilot series and evaluating how Launchpad can best serve authors, the clear priority is to facilitate direct access to free or low-cost personalized advice. We will soon begin a new round of virtual events for 2025 featuring notable book publicists hosting Q&A sessions on topics such as branding, platform, and media outreach. Dana Kaye of

Kaye Publicity and Leah Paulos of Press Shop PR are the primary speakers for this year. Low-priced tickets will provide high value, allowing authors to get their most pressing questions answered without facing the large expense of retaining a freelance publicist. We will also host online social meetings for authors with forthcoming books to network and share advice, as well as offering a dedicated group on our community forum.

Self-Publishing Resources

We're excited to offer our members more resources for self-published authors through our partnership with the Alliance of Independent Authors (ALLi).

ALLi helped develop some of our recent webinars on self-publishing topics, covering platform building, marketing and promotion, the pros and cons of indie authorship, and self-publishing after rights reversion. Guild members also have access to some of ALLi's most popular member resources, including a guidebook on self-publishing and a directory of vetted service providers. A list of available resources is below.

Webinars

- Authors Guild Launchpad: Platform Building for Self-Publishing Authors
- Authors Guild Launchpad: Marketing and Promoting Self-Published Books
- Business Bootcamps for Writers: Indie vs. Trad: Pros & Cons of the Publishing Paths
- Business Bootcamps for Writers: Rights Reversion & Self-Publishing

ALLi Member Resources Available to AG Members

- *The Craft of Self-Publishing: A Practical Guide*, by Orna Ross
- Self-Publishing Services Directory 2025
- AskALLi: Access to submit questions to ALLi's monthly podcast

- *The Indie Author Magazine*
- *Self-Publishing (Almost) for Free: A Checklist*

Legal Services

The volume of legal services we perform for members remains high as our membership grows along with awareness of what we can do to help writers. Our legal department handled a total of 1,612 matters for members in FY 2023–24, a slight decrease from FY 2022–23, when we handled 1750 matters. We anticipate to equal or exceed this workload in FY 2024–25.

FY 2023–24 Scorecard (10/1/23–9/30/24)

- 383 book contract reviews
- 111 agency contract reviews
- 47 reversion of rights inquiries
- 135 inquiries on copyright law, including infringement, registration, duration, and fair use
- 25 inquiries regarding securing permissions and privacy releases
- 41 First Amendment queries
- 870 other inquiries, including electronic rights, literary estates, contract disputes, contract questions, translation contract reviews, translation contract queries, periodical and multimedia contracts, movie and television options, internet piracy, liability insurance, finding an agent, and attorney referrals

Bad Actor Publishers

A significant amount of legal staff time this year was spent targeting bad actor publishers who were not paying their authors, reverting rights, or otherwise abiding by their contracts. We expect this work to continue in the next fiscal year as an increasing number of small publishers find themselves in financial trouble.

What follows is an overview of our key publisher dealings in 2024.

Adelaide Books

We have received complaints about Adelaide Books and its owner and editor, Stevan Nikolic, for several years now. These complaints include numerous failures of Adelaide to adhere to its contractual obligations concerning advertising and promotion of its authors' works, failure to provide contractually mandated royalty statements and payments, and failure to provide prepaid copies of books that authors were obligated to purchase before signing a contract with Adelaide.

Our legal department attempted to resolve these issues with Mr. Nikolic on behalf of affected Guild members for some time, but he continuously failed to adhere to the deadlines he set and became largely unresponsive. He reverted rights and sent files to some but not all of our members who were contracted with him and did not address outstanding royalty payments, royalty statements, or unfulfilled pre-purchase book reimbursement payments. We were finally able to get in contact with Mr. Nikolic again in December 2024, when he assured us that he was closing down Adelaide Books and would continue to revert rights to all authors, but he made no mention of repayment. He has since taken down the Adelaide Books website and begun reverting rights to additional authors.

Unfortunately, we believe Mr. Nikolic is currently in Portugal, which complicates the matter as far as bringing any type of litigation against Adelaide. We will continue to monitor the situation and do what we can to work towards a final resolution.

TouchPoint Press

In early 2023, the legal department started receiving a large number of complaints about TouchPoint Press. All of the complaints involved similar issues including missing royalty payments, lack of communication

from owner Sheri Williams, failure to publish in a timely fashion, and failure to respond to termination requests. After multiple attempts to contact Ms. Williams, we were finally able to get in contact with a senior editor at TouchPoint who informed us that Ms. Williams had been in and out of the hospital.

At this point, Ms. Williams has shut down TouchPoint Press and is in the process of reverting rights back to our members and the other authors who were contracted with TouchPoint. She has also agreed to set aside a portion of her monthly income in a separate bank account, which will be used to pay back the money owed to TouchPoint authors. We continue to monitor the situation, including how to best proceed with repayment.

DX Varos

DX Varos was owned by one person until he passed away in July 2023. Despite a good start with the new owner and operator, Karen Morrisey, complaints began to trickle in concerning non-payment of royalties, failure to provide tax documents, limited communications, and the refusal to acknowledge or fix mistakes.

We have advised our members that their contracts allow them to terminate their agreements if DX Varos has defaulted upon the delivery of quarterly royalty payments or statements. Affected authors are afforded the opportunity to cancel the contract by sending a 30-day cure notice, which, if not resolved, results in automatic contract termination. We are still working on resolving the issues concerning monetary payments and tax documents.

Web Services

In 2024, 2,404 members subscribed to one or more of our website services. We currently host or manage 2,045 websites, 3,149 domain names, and 1,069 email accounts. We activated 204 new author websites last year and built 221 Site Express websites.

The core of our web services offerings is Sitebuilder, our low-cost, easy-to-use platform that allows members to quickly and easily create author websites. Sitebuilder users can simply fill out a form and have a member of the Guild's web services team build a website for them to review and approve, or they can opt to build their own website using one of 77 templates and color palettes. Whichever method they choose, they can edit and update their sites at any time without the need to learn HTML or hire a designer.

Based on feedback from users, we made some major improvements to Sitebuilder in 2024. These included:

- Adding more menu pages to Sitebuilder, so that members can expand their websites further.
- Additional accessibility fixes to underlying code to conform with accessibility standards.
- Adding SSL certificates to all Sitebuilder websites, including those websites without a custom domain or whose domains are not managed with Sitebuilder DNS.
- The ability to add or remove DNS records for domains using Sitebuilder DNS, allowing for improved DNS customization.
- Various bug fixes and maintenance improvements.

For any questions about these improvements, please contact us at webservices@authorsguild.org.

Regional Chapters

We were excited to launch a new regional chapter in Austin, Texas, in the summer of 2024. We also saw a notable increase in the number of chapter events, with each active chapter hosting at least one and as many as six events. The chapters hosted a mix of in-person and Zoom events, and we hope to see this hybrid approach continue.

We currently have 16 chapters in the following metro areas:

- Phoenix, Arizona
- Los Angeles, California
- San Diego, California
- San Francisco Bay Area, California
- Washington, D.C.
- St. Petersburg/Tampa, Florida
- Chicago, Illinois
- Boston, Massachusetts
- Detroit, Michigan
- Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina
- Las Vegas, Nevada
- New York, New York
- Portland, Oregon
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Austin, Texas
- Seattle, Washington

We are currently searching for new ambassadors in Austin, Seattle, and Washington, D.C. If you'd like more information about getting involved in your local chapter, or you'd like to help start a chapter in an area that's not listed, please email chapters@authorsguild.org.

2024 Chapter Events

- January 20 – New Year's Resolution Session (Detroit)
- January 24 – Zoom Meetup (Las Vegas)
- March 5 – Grants and Fellowships for Writers of Color (Bay Area)
- March 24 – Marketing 101: Tips on Promoting and Publicizing Self-Published and Traditionally Published Titles (Raleigh-Durham)
- April 10 – Marketing Tips for Self-Published and Indie Authors (Las Vegas, with Los Angeles and Phoenix)

- April 17 – Get-Together (San Diego)
- April 21 – LA Festival of Books Meetup (Los Angeles)
- May 2 – How to Get Your Books Placed in Bookstores (Philadelphia)
- May 14 – Get-Together (Portland)
- May 16 – Legal Protection for Fictional Characters (Phoenix, with Las Vegas and Los Angeles)
- May 23 – Get-Together (St. Petersburg/Tampa)
- May 23 – Mixer and Q&A on Artificial Intelligence (New York City)
- June 11 – The Allure of Self-Publishing (Boston)
- June 30 – Happy Hour Get-Together (Los Angeles)
- August 14 – Adventures in the Book-to-Screen Trade (Los Angeles)
- August 25 – Model Trade Book Contract (Raleigh-Durham)
- September 10: Tampa Tuesdays: A Monthly Writers' Social (St. Petersburg/Tampa)
- September 11: Monthly Writing Ritual (Detroit)
- September 12 – Post-Reading Get-Together (Los Angeles)
- September 22 – Let's Toast Falling into Autumn Together! (Los Angeles)
- October 1 – Ghostwriting: For fun, and for profit. Especially for profit (Chicago)
- October 9 – Monthly Writing Ritual (Detroit)
- October 20 – Literary Walking Tour of Greenwich Village (New York City)
- November 10 – The Business of Being a Writer: A Mini Conference (Raleigh-Durham)
- November 11 – Do It Yourself Book Marketing (Chicago)
- November 12 – Tampa Tuesdays: A Monthly Writers' Social (St. Petersburg/Tampa)
- November 13 – Monthly Writing Ritual (Detroit)
- November 16 – End-of-Year Writer Recalibration (Bay Area)
- December 8 – Holiday Get-Together (Los Angeles)
- December 10 – Tampa Tuesdays: A Monthly Writers' Social (St. Petersburg/Tampa)
- December 10 – Holiday Zoom Meet n Greet (Chicago)
- December 11 – Post-Reading Meet n Greet (New York City)
- December 11 – Monthly Writing Ritual (Detroit)
- December 11 – Holiday Happy Hour (San Diego)

Member Technology Updates

We are excited to have begun transitioning from our longtime member database, 4D, to a cloud-based member data platform called Wicket. We expect to complete this process in summer 2025.

While 4D has served our needs for more than 30 years, using and managing it is time-consuming and expensive. Wicket will make our work much more efficient, freeing up our staff's time to even better serve our members. It will also integrate with existing systems and pull data from all of them into one place, giving us a more holistic view of our membership. This will allow us to see in one place how our members utilize our many services and benefits—from legal requests and Sitebuilder websites to email and member forum engagement, educational and chapter events, and more. This overview will help us analyze and improve our member offerings going forward.

Our technology development team also played a fundamental role in implementing the rejoin form for former members (described in Membership) and the Human Authored certification (described in Advocacy).

Finally, we constantly improve our backend infrastructure to keep up with industry standards and maintain a secure environment for member data. A significant update of this sort in 2024 was moving member images and files for Sitebuilder websites, member profiles, and the Writers Marketplace from physical servers to a cloud-based solution using best-in-practice encryption and security tools. This move will make future server upgrades easier, freeing up important time for our staff.

Communications

Website

We made a number of improvements to our website in 2024, including better organization of tables, a new home page carousel, full sized video displays on all videos on the website, and the introduction of more mega menus to help users better find the content they are looking for.

Home Page Carousel

We updated the header section of our home page in the fall, replacing the singular “hero” image and headline that we’d featured since the site launched in October 2022 with a carousel. This allows us to highlight multiple pages at once and makes it easier for visitors to find important updates such as the Human Authored certification mark or flagship events such as the Foundation Gala and the WIT Festival.

Navigation and Search

We continue to work towards making it as easy as possible for visitors to find information on our website. With the rollout of literary programming in 2024, this included updating the Events submenu with new options for those looking for details about our author events and literary seminars. We also updated the Membership submenu with an option for former members returning to the Guild and made some general improvements to optimize search results for certain popular keywords.

New Text Resources

In the fall, the legal team undertook an extensive project to add to and update the legal and practical advice sections in our website’s resource library. We are creating landing pages on a variety of essential topics for authors such as copyright basics, fair use, libel and defamation, publishing and literary agreements, and much more. This new and refreshed content will complement our existing model agreements, articles, and webinars, giving authors a variety of ways to find important information in our areas of expertise and bringing in new traffic from search engines. We have completed drafts of most of this new content and will be rolling it out over the coming months.

Member Service Pages

We launched a new landing page for our Sitebuilder website software to better showcase the product for members and non-members alike. The new page features a short video showing how easy it is to create a website, much more detail about the software features, and a gallery of real author websites created with Sitebuilder. We plan to update other member service pages with a similar format.

Style Updates

We made a number of style updates to various website elements, giving a more refined look and feel to tables, page sidebar menus, certain links, and more.

Visual Content Refresh

In late 2024, we began working with a designer to refresh some of the imagery on our website. This includes replacing many of the stock photos on our home page and key internal pages with photos of real people and events where possible, refreshing some of our iconography, and creating header templates for member service and advocacy pages.

Media Coverage

The Authors Guild maintained a powerful and diverse media presence throughout 2024, with coverage spanning national newspapers, trade publications, legal press, broadcast media, and online platforms. We secured 188 significant media placements across all channels, with a particularly strong broadcast presence that included national television appearances, radio interviews, and podcast features.

Notable highlights included CEO Mary Rasenberger’s op-ed in the *Los Angeles Times* addressing AI’s impact on creative artists, *Wired’s* investigation of book scams, an extensive report in *The Atlantic* about AI and copyright challenges, and appearances on influential podcasts such as *The Wall Street Journal’s* “Artificial” podcast, SiriusXM’s “The Perri Peltz Show,” and NPR’s “Marketplace” podcast.

Coverage centered on three major initiatives that positioned the Authors Guild at the forefront of critical industry issues: the fight against book bans, particularly landmark legal action alongside major publishers in Florida and major victories in Texas and Arkansas; strategic advocacy around AI, including the Created by Humans licensing partnership, our Human Authored certification mark, and our ongoing litigation against OpenAI and Microsoft; and the highly successful national publicity campaign for *Fourteen Days*, the collaborative novel project that brought together 36 authors and demonstrated our ability to mobilize creative forces even during challenging times.

The following is a summary of some of the major coverage themes in 2024. Find links to articles at authorsguild.org/about/ag-in-the-news.

Fighting Book Bans and Censorship

Our opposition to book-banning legislation received significant media attention, particularly around lawsuits in Florida and other states:

Florida Lawsuit

- The *Washington Post* reported on the landmark lawsuit filed by the Authors Guild and major publishers against Florida’s book banning legislation
- *Publishers Weekly* detailed the legal arguments in “Major Publishers, Authors Guild Sue Over New Florida Book Banning Law”
- *The Hill* covered the national implications in “Major publishers sue Florida over ‘unconstitutional’ book ban law”
- *The Daytona Beach News-Journal* localized the story with “Nation’s top publishers sue Volusia County, Orange County schools over Florida book bans”
- The *Florida Phoenix* examined the legislative impact in “Book publishers file lawsuit, say book ban law is unconstitutional”
- *School Library Journal* analyzed educational implications in “Publishers, Authors, Parents Sue Florida Over Book Ban Law”

Other Book Ban Coverage

- *The Texas Observer* highlighted our advocacy in “A Small-Town Texas Librarian’s Big Stand Against Book Bans”
- *Publishing Perspectives* reported on “Censorship: Texas ‘Book Rating’ Law Is Blocked on Appeal”
- DoSomething.org spotlighted our work in “UNCENSORED: Banned Books By Black Authors”

- ABC 27 News examined economic implications in “Pennsylvania libraries complain of same e-book sticker shock as other library systems nationally”
- Gloria Browne-Marshall’s WBAI radio program, *Law of the Land with Gloria J. Browne-Marshall*, featured Authors Guild General Counsel Cheryl Davis on how to fight book bans

Artificial Intelligence and Authors’ Rights

The Guild’s leadership on AI issues generated extensive coverage:

Copyright Litigation

- Reuters reported on “Authors suing OpenAI ask California court to block competing New York cases”
- *The Verge* covered “Sarah Silverman’s lawsuit against OpenAI partially dismissed”
- *Bloomberg* featured the Guild’s perspective in “AI Lawsuits to Watch: *Elon Musk v. OpenAI*, *The New York Times v. Microsoft*, More”
- *Publishers Weekly* analyzed the California lawsuits in “Court Trims Authors’ Copyright Lawsuit Against OpenAI”
- TechTarget published “AI lawsuits explained: Who’s getting sued?” featuring Authors Guild leadership
- Courthouse News Service detailed “OpenAI sued by Center for Investigative Reporting over AI plagiarism”
- *The Atlantic* published a deep dive into AI and copyright

Created by Humans AI Licensing Partnership

- The *New York Times* highlighted the Guild’s innovative approach in “Can a Start-Up Help Authors Get Paid by A.I. Companies?”

- *Publishers Weekly* covered our partnership in “Created by Humans Partners with the Authors Guild”

Human Authored Certification Mark

- NPR’s “Marketplace” podcast reported “Exclusive: Authors Guild to offer ‘Human Authored’ label on books to compete with AI”
- Inc.com analyzed industry impact in “Here’s Why ‘Human Authored’ Will Become the ‘Artisanally Crafted’ Pitch of the AI Age”

AI’s Impact on Publishing

- TODAY warned consumers in “AI-Generated Books Scam: How To Avoid Buying Fake Books Online”
- *Wired* published “Scammy AI-Generated Book Rewrites Are Flooding Amazon” with Guild expert commentary
- NPR asked “AI is contentious among authors. So why are some feeding it their own writing?” featuring Guild perspectives
- The *Los Angeles Times* published CEO Mary Raseneberger’s opinion piece “As AI is embraced, what happens to the artists whose work was stolen to build it?”
- *The Washington Post* cited the Guild’s advice in its investigation of AI-generated books on Amazon and in an analysis of AI data usage protests
- SiriusXM’s The Perri Peltz Show highlighted authors’ rights
- *The Wall Street Journal*’s “Artificial” podcast explored the implications of AI on writing



Fourteen Days: The Collaborative Novel Project

The Guild's collaborative novel project received extensive coverage across print, broadcast, and digital media:

National Media Recognition

- *The New York Times Book Review* featured a positive review of *Fourteen Days*
- *The Guardian* published a review highlighting the collaborative elements
- NPR's book critic highlighted it as "a time capsule of people's efforts to connect during the pandemic"
- CNN explored the unique collaborative process in "36 literary giants publish a 'collaborative' novel — but who wrote what?"
- The *Los Angeles Times* wrote about how "In the dark days of the pandemic, 36 famous authors found light in a collaborative novel"
- The Associated Press distributed the review "New Collaborative Novel 'Fourteen Days' Proves the Pandemic Couldn't Curb Creativity"

Broadcast Coverage

- CBS News selected *Fourteen Days* as "a bonus read for the CBS New York Book Club"
- WGBH (PBS) Boston interviewed Celeste Ng about the collaborative process
- WFSB-TV "Great Day Connecticut" featured Douglas Preston and Diana Gabaldon discussing the novel and its significance
- Maine Public Radio's "Maine Calling" hosted Douglas Preston, Tess Gerritsen, and Roxana Robinson
- NPR affiliates including WFCU Florida featured the book on their Book Club programs

- Writer's Voice Podcast interviewed Douglas Preston and Emma Donnoghue about the collaborative writing process

International Reach

Media outlets in Europe, Canada, and Australia were often interested in the Guild's initiatives:

- British media coverage of collaborations with the U.K. Society of Authors
- Australian coverage of U.S. book ban challenges
- Canadian press coverage of *Fourteen Days*
- Global analysis of AI implications in various international publications and writing projects.

Moving forward, we plan to implement dedicated media monitoring services to identify coverage gaps, expand our database of press contacts, and track emerging coverage trends. These enhanced capabilities will allow us to fine-tune our messaging and build awareness.

Press Releases

We strategically issued press releases throughout the year to mark significant organizational developments and initiatives. The year began with announcements of new executive staff and an ambitious \$10 million capacity-building campaign, followed by the launch of the collaborative novel *Fourteen Days* in February. Major cultural initiatives covered in releases included the return of the Pascal Hall Authors Series, celebrating James Baldwin's centennial through the Banned Books Club, and announcing our partnership with the Created by Humans AI licensing platform. We also highlighted our commitment to celebrating literary excellence through announcements about the 32nd Annual Gala.

- January 18, 2024: [Authors Guild Foundation Welcomes New Executive Leadership: Deborah Wilson and Bernard Schwartz](#)

- January 24, 2024: [Authors Guild Foundation Announces \\$10m Capacity Building Campaign](#)
- February 6, 2024: [Order Fourteen Days, a Collaborative Novel by Margaret Atwood, Doug Preston, John Grisham, Dave Eggers, Celeste Ng, Tommy Orange, and Many Others](#)
- March 25, 2024: [LeVar Burton, Ken Burns, and Walter Mosley to Present at Authors Guild's 32nd Annual Gala Honoring Jesmyn Ward, Heather Cox Richardson, and W. Paul Coates](#)
- June 4, 2024: [Pascal Hall Authors Series Returns for Third Season](#)
- June 5, 2024: [Authors Guild Foundation Celebrates Writers and Champions of Free Expression at 32nd Annual Gala](#)
- September 25, 2024: [Authors Guild Relaunches Banned Books Club, Celebrates James Baldwin's Centennial with Go Tell It on the Mountain](#)
- October 9, 2024: [Authors Guild Partners with Created by Humans to Empower Authors in the AI Era](#)

2025 plans include expanding our presence on these platforms as well as on our YouTube channel, where we will begin turning our trove of educational resources into bite-size content for social channels. We will also have more consistent posts about business concerns and opportunities for writers, including submission alerts, scam alerts, roundups, workshop strategies, writing tips, and more.

Top Social Media Posts

- [Instagram post sharing our deep concerns over licensing deals made by academic, educational, magazine, and newspaper publishers with AI companies without consulting their authors](#)
- [Instagram post highlighting our statement on authors, not publishers, owning AI rights](#)
- [LinkedIn post featuring photos from our 32nd Annual Gala](#)
- [LinkedIn post announcing our Florida book banning lawsuit with authors and publishers](#)
- [X post supporting California Rep. Adam Schiff's Generative AI Copyright Disclosure Act](#)

Social Media

Our social media audience continued to grow in 2024, despite seismic shifts as authors and the literary community abandoned X (formerly Twitter) for other platforms. Our total number of followers on Instagram, Threads, Bluesky, X, LinkedIn, and Facebook grew 2.2 percent, and we totaled 2.9 million impressions across all platforms.

Our follower gains on individual platforms reflected the overall shift away from X: 1,728 new followers on Instagram, 4,417 on Bluesky, 1,439 on Threads, and 879 on LinkedIn. Instagram and LinkedIn in particular had huge jumps in engagement, with 188 percent more impressions on Instagram and 270 percent more on LinkedIn.

The Authors Guild Foundation

The Authors Guild Foundation grew significantly in 2024. We welcomed new executive leadership in early 2024, with Deborah Wilson taking over as executive director and Bernard Schwartz joining in the new role of executive producer of literary programs. To support our ambitious fundraising goals for 2025, the Foundation also promoted Nikki Maniscalco to development manager and hired staff to fill two new positions: Eric Taylor as a full-time database administrator and events coordinator and Elaine Long as a part-time foundation and grants manager.

The Foundation ended FY 2023–24 on September 30, raising a total of \$2,625,352 to support the Foundation’s educational and literary programming and the Guild’s advocacy efforts. Of this, nearly \$1.1 million was raised for the capacity building campaign. New revenue sources include grants for literary programs, tickets sales from the WIT Festival and online literary programming, and proceeds from *Fourteen Days*.

Annual Gala

Our largest fundraising event, the annual gala, succeeded in raising \$520,000, \$45,000 more than in 2023. We sold more tables than the previous year, and Spotify joined for the first time with a \$40,000 sponsorship covering the after-party. Honorees and presenters included Texas librarian Suzette Baker, Ken Burns, LeVar Burton, W. Paul Coates, George M. Johnson, Walter Mosley, Heather Cox Richardson, and Jesmyn Ward. Adriana Trigiani, who is joining the Authors Guild Council this year, hosted the event.

Educational Programs and Conferences

The Authors Guild Foundation produces educational programs that are open to the public as part of its mission to equip writers from all backgrounds with the professional knowledge and tools they need to succeed and earn a livelihood. Our events are developed to provide foundational information about the publishing industry and authorhood, while also responding to trending topics and our audience’s needs.

Our virtual events reached an average live attendance of 344 writers in 2024, with some niche topics serving smaller crowds and other more popular topics serving up to 1,000. Recordings are always

available for Guild members on our site, and most events are also shared freely with the public.

Additionally, the Authors Guild legal staff frequently spoke at conferences and seminars about artificial intelligence, book bans, and other advocacy issues, raising awareness and emphasizing the importance of authors' rights and free expression. We often share recaps of these events in our biweekly newsletter and on our website.

The following is a summary of educational programs in 2024.

Agent Talks

We concluded the first season of a new series, Agent Talks, produced in collaboration with the Association of American Literary Agents (AALA) and Literary Agents of Change. Literary agents presented on specific areas of their expertise and fielded audience questions about the agents' perspectives and the industry today.

- March 4, 2024: Book Contracts 101 with Rebecca Matte and moderator Tamara Kawar
- April 15, 2024: Hidden Gems of Subrights with Jenissa Graham and moderator Sarah Khalil

Authors Guild Launchpad

A second pilot session of Launchpad focused on children's literature and covered the fundamentals of marketing and publicity with an emphasis on connecting with schools and libraries. Webinars were available to all interested authors, while a cohort of nearly 100 authors met separately to discuss promoting their forthcoming books. We also held a two-part Launchpad session on promoting self-published books in collaboration with the Alliance of Independent Authors (ALLi).

- March 5, 2024: Publicity for Children's Books with Shanta Newlin, Jamie Tan, and moderator Dr. Rose Brock

- March 19, 2024: Getting Reviews for Young Adult Books with Laura Reiko Simeon, K. Imani Tennyson, and moderator Cassie Malmö
- March 29, 2024: Getting Reviews for Middle Grade Books with Mahnaz Dar and Jennifer Baker
- April 1, 2024: Getting Reviews for Picture Books with Bianca Schulze and Kwame Mbalia
- April 11, 2024: Kid Lit Coverage: Essays, Op-Eds, & Q&As with Betsy Bird (*School Library Journal*), Robert Brewer (*Writer's Digest*), author Alyssa Reynoso-Morris, and Sarah Burnes
- April 26, 2024: Working with Freelance Publicists with Elena Stokes of Wunderkind PR and Lupita Aquino of Lupita Reads
- May 2, 2024: At Home & On the Road: The Role of Events & School Visits with Maggie Parish & Amy Andrews of East City Bookshop and Justin A. Reynolds
- May 8, 2024: School & Library Marketing: What Authors Should Know with Jenny Choy (Lee & Low), Patty Rosati (HarperCollins), and moderator Megan Labrise (Kirkus)
- July 23, 2024: Platform Building for Self-Publishing Authors with Matty Dalrymple, Michael La Ronn, and Jane Friedman
- July 30, 2024: Marketing and Promoting Self-Published Books with Matty Dalrymple, Michael La Ronn, and Jane Friedman

Business Bootcamps for Writers

Since 2018, Business Bootcamps for Writers has covered the fundamentals of publishing, marketing, career growth, and a variety of deep-dive lessons. We held fewer Bootcamps events in 2024 than prior years due to a reduction in funding, but the series is returning with a more robust lineup in the spring of 2025.

Many events in the Bootcamps series are developed in partnership with other organizations, including the Asian American Writers' Workshop, Blue Stoop, the Broadleaf Writers Association, the Carnegie Center for Literacy & Learning, the Institute of American Indian Arts, Las Musas, and Literary Agents of Change. These collaborations allow us to cover more angles and reach new audiences.

- September 20, 2024: What Agents Want from Querying Authors with Jane Chun, Chelsea Hensley, Ismita Hussain, and moderator Jemiscoe Chambers-Black
- December 9, 2024: Indie vs. Trad: Pros & Cons of the Publishing Paths with Matty Dalrymple
- January 14, 2025: Rights Reversion & Self-Publishing with Katlyn Duncan and Michael Gross

Educational Webinars

We produced educational seminars on copyright, AI, book banning, and more to address pressing concerns and timely developments in the industry.

- May 1, 2024: Copyright Basics with RightsClick with David Newhoff and Steven Tepp
- September 25, 2024: Ask the Authors Guild: How to Fight Book Bans with Kevin Amer and Cheryl Davis
- October 8, 2024: The Black List: Info Session for Fiction Writers with Franklin Leonard and Randy Winston
- October 29, 2024: Copyright Clearance Center Info Session: AI & Collective Licensing with Roy Kaufman, Emily Sheahan, and Mary Rasenberger
- January 15, 2025: Created by Humans: AI Rights Licensing with Trip Adler and Mary Rasenberger

Festival & Conference Partnerships

Literary events around the country offer an excellent opportunity to advertise the Guild and raise awareness of the Foundation. Our sponsorships and

partnerships typically involve educational events about business and legal issues and are often aimed at audiences of emerging writers.

In 2024, our friends at the Latinx Kidlit Book Festival launched a new Latinx Storytellers Conference for aspiring authors. Guild staff attended to host a lunch and meet with attendees.

We also served as a literary partner for the AWP Conference & Book Fair in Kansas City, Missouri, in February 2024, and will do so again in Los Angeles in March 2025. Guild and Foundation staff attend AWP annually to meet with writers at the trade show and to host educational panels, featured readings, and a reception for Guild members.

- March 2024: New Mexico Press Women 75th Anniversary Conference
- August 2024: The Highlights Foundation: Black Women Writers: A Retreat in Gratitude
- September 13, 2024: The LKBF Latinx Storytellers Conference: The Authors Guild Lunch and Learn: Finding the Right Agent for You and Your Career, with Linda Camacho, Saritza Hernandez, Eva Scalzo, and moderator Umair Kazi
- September 20, 2024: Latinx Kidlit Book Festival: Mistakes Were Made: Publishing Lessons Learned, with Aaron Aceves, Yamile Saied Méndez, Jessica Parra, and moderator Jonny Garza Villa
- March 27, 2025: AWP Featured Event: Rich Benjamin and Sloane Crosley in Conversation with Amelia Possanza
- March 28, 2025: AWP Panel: Writing & Publishing in the AI Era, with Rich Benjamin, Umair Kazi, Vauhini Vara, and moderator Mary Rasenberger
- March 29, 2025: AWP Panel: Book-to-Screen: The Legal & Creative Sides of Film Adaptation, with Caitlin DiMotta, Franklin Leonard, Graham Moore, and moderator Cheryl Davis

From Manuscript to Marketplace

As case studies on the path to publication, From Manuscript to Marketplace events feature authors of recent books in conversation with members of their publishing teams. We most recently covered works of fiction, short fiction, and poetry from publishers of various sizes. Authors, agents, and editors discussed the agent relationship, the editorial process, and the experience of launching and promoting a book in the current landscape.

- August 27, 2024: *Ninetails* with Sally Wen Mao with Nidhi Pugalia, Clare Mao, and moderator Lily Philpott
- September 17, 2024: *Toward Eternity* with Anton Hur, Safae El-Ouahabi, Tara Parsons, and moderator Lily Philpott
- October 16, 2024: *Exposure* with Ramona Emerson, Nick Whitney, and moderator Lily Philpott
- December 4, 2024: *The Book of Wounded Sparrows* with Octavio Quintanilla and J. Bruce Fuller

Money Matters

Since 2021, we have partnered with Erin Lowry (author of the Broke Millennial series) to host Money Matters: The Road to Financial Literacy. These events cover the basics of personal finance for authors and freelance writers, as well as discussions on monetizing writing and budgeting for promotion.

- March 18, 2024: Q&A: Tax Tips for Authors 2024 with Robert Pesce and Erin Lowry
- April 18, 2024: Paying Yourself a Salary on a Variable Income with Erin Lowry
- May 2, 2024: Publicist or Marketing Partner: Who Should You Hire? with Mackenzie Newcomb and Erin Lowry

- November 18, 2024: Tackling Your Finances: What Authors Actually Need to Know with Erin Lowry
- January 17, 2025: Investing and Retirement Planning on a Variable Income with Erin Lowry
- January 29, 2025: Q&A: Tax Tips for Authors 2025 with Robert Pesce and Erin Lowry

Literary Programs

WIT Literary Festival

The third annual WIT: Words, Ideas, and Thinkers Literary Festival took place in the Berkshires in late September 2024. With a theme of “The Power of Words: Why Writers Matter,” this year’s festival featured the following pairs of authors in dialogue with one another and the community across a variety of topics such as renewal in classical literature, civil rights and higher education, the perils of American democracy, food writing, and “Latinolands”:

- Jennifer Egan & Joseph O’Neill
- Stephen Greenblatt & Emily Wilson
- Tony Kushner & Rachel Maddow
- Sherrilyn Ifill & Ruth Simmons
- Cathy Park Hong & Sayed Kashua
- Jamaica Kincaid & Sandra Guzmán
- Ruth Reichl & Monique Truong
- Marie Arana & Luis Alberto Urrea

The Kushner/Maddow event was also livestreamed for a virtual audience of more than 1,000 people from across the country.

In addition to the main slate of WIT programs, the 2024 festival saw participants engage the wider community in different ways. At Berkshire Community College in Pittsfield, Jamaica Kincaid and actor Ato Blankson-Wood talked with students about the life and legacy of James Baldwin. At

Drury High School in North Adams, Luis Alberto Urrea led a school-wide assembly and a small-group poetry writing workshop. At Festival Latino in Great Barrington, Sandra Guzmán presented a reading from her anthology, *The Daughters of Latin America*. At the public library in Stockbridge, Mary Pope Osborne, author of the *Magic Tree House* series, did a Sunday-morning program for families.

Pascal Hall Authors Series

In partnership with the Leshner Family Foundation and Maine Media Workshops + College, we hosted a third season of the summer authors series at Pascal Hall in Rockport, Maine, featuring four in-person events with award-winning writers. This season included bestselling novelist and journalist Elliot Ackerman discussing *2054*, his latest work of fiction; Pulitzer Prize winner Andrew Sean Greer talking about his novels *Less* and *Less Is Lost*; Emily St. John Mandel discussing *Sea of Tranquility*, her latest bestseller; and essayist Jia Tolentino on her collection, *Trick Mirror*.

“AGF Presents”

We initiated a new series of public conversations and performances in bookshops and other venues meant to foster literary community and raise awareness of the role of authors in public discourse, as well as the Foundation’s advocacy efforts:

- April 4: Michael Ondaatje and Jordan Pavlin (Rizzoli, NYC)
- May 13: Hanif Abdurraqib and Jennifer Wilson (McNally Jackson, NYC)
- June 12: Leslie Jamison and Zoe Kazan (McNally Jackson, NYC)
- June 19: James Shapiro and Ayad Akhtar (McNally Jackson, NYC)
- June 20: A reading of Ilya Kaminsky’s “Conversations in Air-Raid Sirens” with Theater of War Productions and actors John Turturro, Mare Winningham, Anthony Edwards, and Ato Blankson-Wood (WNYC’s Greene Space, NYC)
- September 9: Sarah Smarsh (The Strand, NYC)
- September 12: Garth Greenwell and Colm Toibin (Skylight Books, Los Angeles)
- September 19: Xochitl Gonzalez and Claire Jimenez (McNally Jackson, NYC)
- November 12: Edwidge Danticat and Michele Stephenson (McNally Jackson, NYC)
- December 11: James Baldwin at 100: A reading by Chukwudi Iwuji (McNally Jackson, NYC)

Online Literary Seminars

We added literary seminars to our slate of online events in 2024. The first, entitled “Chance Meetings” after the group biography that inspired it (Rachel Cohen’s *A Chance Meeting*), featured eight monthly talks by contemporary writer-scholars on classics of American literature:

- May 22: Rachel Cohen—An Introduction
- June 10: Colm Tóibín on Henry James’s “A Jolly Corner”
- July 10: Brenda Wineapple on Walt Whitman’s “Song of Myself”
- August 8: Merve Emre on Willa Cather’s *The Professor’s House*
- September 5: Saidiya Hartman on W.E.B. Du Bois’s *Darkwater*
- October 17: Daphne Brooks on Zora Neale Hurston’s *Essays*
- November 13: Langdon Hammer on Elizabeth Bishop’s *North & South*
- December 11: Rachel Cohen—A Conclusion

The Chance Meetings series is followed in 2025 by a new seminar series entitled “Reading James Baldwin”:

- February 26: Jesse McCarthy: James Baldwin and Henry James
- March 18: Colm Toibin: *Go Tell It on the Mountain*
- April 24: Imani Perry: “Sonny’s Blues” / “The Uses of the Blues”
- May 21: W. Ralph Eubanks and Eddie Glaude, Jr.: *Notes of a Native Son*
- June 26: Viet Thanh Nguyen: *No Name in the Street*
- July 24: Rachel Cohen: Baldwin and Delaney
- August 21: Vinson Cunningham: *Another Country*
- September 18: Ayana Mathis: *The Fire Next Time*

Fourteen Days Book Launch and Tour

February 2024 saw the Author Guild Foundation’s release of *Fourteen Days* (HarperCollins), a collaborative novel co-written by 36 authors, set during the initial days of the COVID-19 lockdown in New York City. Conceived by Douglas Preston, bestselling thriller author and past president of the Authors Guild, and co-edited by Margaret Atwood, *Fourteen Days* chronicles the connection-in-isolation between quarantined storytellers sheltering in place to survive a surreal chapter of history together.

Starting in February, many contributors participated in events across the country to support the launch of the book and discuss the advocacy work of the Guild and the Foundation. These included Preston and Diana Gabaldon at The Poisoned Pen in Arizona; Luis Alberto Urrea at Anderson’s Bookshop outside Chicago; Celeste Ng and Chris Castellani at the Harvard Bookstore in Boston; Sylvia Day at the Barnes and Noble in Las Vegas; Dave Eggers, Ishmael Reed, Charlie Jane Anders, and Joseph Cassara at Book Passage in San Francisco; Mary Pope Osborne, Roxana Robinson, and Rachel Vail at The Bookstore

in Lenox, MA; and the NYC launch at the 53rd Street branch of the New York Public Library featuring R.L. Stine, Mira Jacob, and Angie Cruz.

The novel’s unique format as a collaborative novel omits bylines until the end of the book, emphasizing the collective over the individual and challenging traditional concepts of authorship. Preston and the Guild’s Anthology Committee conceived of the project as a fundraising vehicle to support the Authors Guild Foundation’s advocacy and educational work. Proceeds from sales of the book will continue to fund the Guild’s educational programming and advocacy work in Washington, D.C., and beyond.

The Authors Registry & The Authors League Fund

The Authors Registry

The Authors Registry was created in 1995 to distribute fees and royalties collected in foreign jurisdictions on behalf of U.S.-taxpaying authors for photocopying and electronic use in educational, business, and governmental institutions, as well as for library lending payments which had not previously been paid out to U.S.-taxpaying authors and their beneficiaries.

These funds arrive from a variety of sources, with most currently coming from the U.K.'s Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society, which collects fees for secondary uses of copyrighted work, such as photocopies, cable retransmissions, digital reproductions, and educational recordings, throughout the U.K. In addition, the Authors Registry disburses fees collected by Lira, which sends the Authors Registry royalties for U.S. authors from libraries under the Netherland's Public Lending Right.

In 2024, the Authors Registry distributed \$2.5 million to more than 6,500 payees. To date, the Registry has distributed more than \$47.1 million to American authors and their beneficiaries.

The Authors League Fund

The Authors League Fund was founded in 1917 to help authors, journalists, poets, and dramatists during financial emergencies. The Fund provides direct aid for urgent needs, such as rent or mortgage payments, utilities, groceries, and medical bills. In 2024, the Fund gave \$510,000 to 123 writers.

The Authors League Fund is a sister organization to the Authors Guild and it encourages Guild members to apply for support if needed and to spread the word about its assistance to fellow writers. The Authors League Fund helps any writer living in the U.S. and American writers living abroad. Authors Guild membership is not required. Apply online at www.authorsleaguefund.org.

The Authors Guild
31 East 32nd Street, Suite 901, New York, NY 10016