

SSAWW

Society for the Study of American Women Writers

September 13, 2021

Dear SSAWW Members,

It is my pleasure to announce that we will be holding our 2021 conference in-person, as planned, from Nov. 4 to 7 at the Royal Sonesta Hotel in Baltimore. As you know, our conference theme is “American Women Writers: Ecologies, Survival, Change.” The theme seemed generative when we developed it two years ago and is even more so now. Our wonderful program addresses many ways in which the theme matters as well as many other subjects of interest.

The SSAWW Planning Committee has been monitoring health guidelines in Maryland and in the city of Baltimore and is pleased to report that both, especially the city, are requiring best health practices. You can access Baltimore’s Covid dashboard here:

<https://ssawwnew.wordpress.com/2021/09/13/2021-ssaww-conference-baltimore-md-covid-19-dashboard/>. The conference hotel is also being scrupulous. SSAWW too is taking measures to assure that our conference is as safe as possible. To that end we have developed a Covid Conduct Statement which is available here <https://ssawwnew.wordpress.com/2021/09/13/2021-ssaww-triennial-conference-covid-19-code-of-conduct/>

We do understand that some of you will not be able to attend the conference in-person. In keeping with SSAWW’s tradition of inclusiveness and community-engagement, we will accommodate some virtual presentations on Whova, the app we have adopted for the conference. Whova is a flexible and easily navigated app that can be used either from a desktop/laptop computer or from a mobile device, which will allow all attendees to connect and communicate with one another, check the conference program and keep abreast of changes, link to virtual panel sessions, share presentation materials, set up in-person and online meetups, and more. The app will be made available to registered attendees by October.

Your panel or roundtable chairs will be contacting you to confer about your preferences regarding options for presenting at the conference.

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I want to stress, though, that the conference will not take a fully hybrid form. It is, at its core, an in-person conference. One reason is financial: SSAWW is locked into hotel, AV, and other costs, and is incurring additional costs to support safety measures in Baltimore and limited virtual access. Thus the cost of holding a hybrid conference would be prohibitive. Additionally, the cost of holding it in the form we have planned are such that we must maintain the full registration rate for all attendees, whether you are present in-person or virtually.

If you have not already paid your dues or registered for the conference, we ask that you please do so. The link to join/renew your membership is <https://ssawwnew.wordpress.com/membership/join-renew-membership/>. The link to register for the conference is <https://ssawwnew.wordpress.com/2021-ssaww-triennial-conference/2021-triennial-conference-registration/>. Thank you to those who have already paid.

In addition to finances, the other reason for holding an in-person conference is our commitment to the community spirit of SSAWW. We've heard from many of you that you are eager to see each other, to exchange ideas and develop new ones, to present your own scholarship and to learn about others', to develop new collaborations, to attend major events such as the keynote address and awards ceremony, and to be sustained by the community affirmation and community building that are so fundamental to SSAWW. For those of you who cannot be physically present at the conference, we hope our virtual accommodations will facilitate some element of that connection and community. You will be able to attend virtual sessions and participate in asynchronous online interactions using Whova's messaging and chat feature, even though you will not have access to all aspects of the conference.

I hope that you and yours are well and remain so. I very much look forward to seeing many of you in Baltimore this November.

With warm regards,
Sandy

Sandra A, Zagarell, SSAWW President (2018-2021)