

Bay Area Travel Writers

Member Handbook

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A Professional Organization of Travel Writers and Photographers

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BATW Quick Reference

Legal Name: Bay Area Travel Writers, Inc.

Address: P.O. Box 460222, San Francisco, CA 94146

Website: www.batw.org

Meetings: Generally held at 10 A.M. on the third Saturday of each month, except December. An occasional meeting may be held at other times (check batw.org for information).

Annual Calendar:

January	New Board term begins this month.
May	Credentialing open enrollment.
September	General Members declare their intent to run for Board of Directors.
October	Elections held for Board of Directors. Membership Renewal announcements e-mailed to members.
November	Election results announced. Credentialing open enrollment.
December	Holiday Party is usually held on the second Saturday of December. Rebecca Bruns Award is announced (in even-numbered years).

Social Media: BATW members have four social networking options: BATW on LinkedIn; BATW on Facebook; BATW Forum on Yahoo Groups; Social Community on Members-Only Section of the BATW Website.

BATW Membership Handbook
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1. Introduction

Bay Area Travel Writers, Inc., based in San Francisco, CA, is a not-for-profit association of travel writers and photographers, as well as other professionals in the travel, tourism, and hospitality industries.

BATW members travel and report locally and around the globe. Some specialize in specific destinations, others specialize in activities such as food and wine, active travel, travel for singles, families, or seniors, educational or ecotourism, while still others specialize in guidebooks or in photography. BATW writers or photographers seek to present the world in ways that enrich, inform, and fascinate, and to expose their readers to the people, culture, arts, and nature of each destination.

Aspiring journalists may affiliate with BATW and avail themselves of the educational benefits. Travel industry professionals are invited to join BATW as Associate Members.

Monthly meetings, held since 1985, provide a lively exchange of information among its widely traveled colleagues as well as a forum for travel industry representatives from regional and international tourist organizations to keep members abreast of changes in the travel industry. Speakers and panel discussions provide professional development opportunities on a wide range of topics, from marketing techniques to book publishing, technology, and other areas of interest.

BATW strives to promote high professional standards within the field of travel journalism.

2. Mission Statement and Goals

BATW is an organization of professional journalists committed to increasing opportunities for, and promoting excellence among, its members in the practice of responsible travel journalism.

With its various activities and programs, BATW strives to:

- 1) Support the development of members' professional skills;
- 2) Advance members' access to publication, career, and business opportunities;
- 3) Promote a love of travel along with respect for the cultural and environmental integrity of the places that members visit, write about, and photograph;
- 4) Provide a dynamic, collegial forum for members to exchange ideas and information;
- 5) Encourage the exchange of ideas and information between the traveling public and the providers of travel services and products.

3. Code of Professional Conduct

Bay Area Travel Writers aims for the highest standards in factual reporting and unbiased evaluation in travel journalism. Membership in BATW means acceptance of professional and ethical accountability.

- Members are expected to act in a professional, courteous, and considerate manner, and to show awareness of and sensitivity to the environment.
- Members should accept press trips only if they have a genuine professional interest in the destination and the prospect of subsequently publishing an article, book, or photo that includes the destination or event venue.
- In presenting an accurate and comprehensive picture of a destination, members realize their primary responsibility is to the public, not to their sponsors.
- A member's attendance at luncheons, receptions, and other hosted events carries an obligation to gather information and act in a professional manner.

Bay Area Travel Writers' Code of Professional Conduct is published on the website (<http://www.batw.org/about/professional-conduct-guidelines>). Failure to comply with this Code may result in loss of membership or other disciplinary action.

4. Organizational Structure

Legal Status—BATW is a not-for-profit corporation organized under California law. As a Mutual Benefit Corporation, BATW was formed solely for the benefit of its members.

Organizational Structure—BATW's governing body is the Board of Directors, which is elected by the General Members. The Board elects the officers of the corporation: President, Vice President, Secretary, and a Chief Financial Officer who is designated the Treasurer. The Board currently consists of nine elected and one appointed directors, but the number may be increased or decreased from time to time by resolution of the Board in accordance with the Bylaws. Board members receive no compensation.

Elections—Each General Member is entitled to one vote on each matter submitted to the membership for a vote. Associate, Provisional, and Honorary Affiliate Members are not entitled to vote. Voting at duly held meetings is by voice vote. Election of Directors is by ballot each fall, with one-half of the directors elected each year for a two-year term. The new Board begins its term in January each year.

Volunteers—As a volunteer organization, BATW requests that members provide at least three hours of their time to the organization each calendar year. Volunteer jobs include: supply refreshments to non-hosted meetings; help with special one-time projects; act as meeting greeters; proofread documents as needed; organize a monthly meeting program; take minutes at member meetings; and more. To volunteer, members should contact any Board member.

5. Membership

There are two categories of BATW membership: General and Associate. The yearly membership runs from January 1 of each year, with annual dues payable before that date. Applicants are required to submit a \$25 non-refundable application fee plus one year's dues with their application for membership.

Membership Categories and Requirements

General Member—General Members are practicing travel journalists (writers, broadcasters, photographers) who have met BATW publication requirements, agree to abide by the Code of Professional Conduct, and have been approved for membership.

Requirements for General Membership

During the 12 months immediately preceding application, new applicants for General Membership must have achieved publication under one of (or in a combination equivalent to) the following minimum criteria (recognizing the changing landscape of the media marketplace, BATW allows for publication in one or a combination of categories to qualify):

- Printed Consumer or Trade Publications: A minimum of 2,000 published words in any combination of short travel articles and/or longer travel features.
- Printed Travel Books: One published travel book or published travel book revision with a minimum of 25,000 words written by the applicant.
- E-books: One travel book with a minimum 25,000 words published as print-on-demand or digital form for viewing on an electronic reading device.
- Travel Apps: A published travel app with a minimum of 250 entries.
- Travel Broadcast: Host or correspondent on a minimum of 180 minutes of on-air time.
- Web Articles: A minimum of 2,000 published words in any combination of short travel articles and/or longer travel features. In addition:
 - 1) The published work must be editorial in nature.
 - 2) The website must maintain a minimum of 5,000 absolute unique visitors per month (AUVs). Unique visitors are defined as the total traffic to a website, counting each visitor only once within a monthly time frame.
- Self-Published Travel Websites: An applicant-owned travel website or blog will be considered if it:
 - 1) Consistently averages a minimum of 3,000 absolute unique visitors per month (AUVs) over one year.
 - 2) Contributes to the applicant's income, either directly or indirectly.
 - 3) Contains informative and independent editorial content that is clearly separate from advertising and advertorials.
- Travel Photography: Twelve photos published in at least four different editions of any of the above media, or in one travel book. A travel-themed exhibition in a full-time art gallery may qualify as one publication.

Note: In addition to the above criteria, the BATW Board recognizes that it is not always easy or sensible to quantify earnest, innovative, and quality efforts in travel publication. For that reason, the Board is willing to consider works in other existing media and forums, including teaching, public presentations, and exhibitions, as well as in any format that develops in the future.

Associate Member—Associate Membership is available to those who are professionally affiliated or represent public relations agencies, tourist boards, or the travel-related communication industry. Associate Members may attend regular meetings, are listed in and have access to BATW’s online membership directory, and may submit press releases to the Web Editor for posting on the BATW website (see guidelines at <http://www.batw.org/help/submission-guidelines>).

Affiliation with BATW—The Board has established two categories of affiliation with BATW: Honorary and Provisional.

Honorary—Distinguished travel journalists who have contributed significantly to the field of travel journalism may be invited by the Board to affiliate with BATW. Individuals who accept this invitation are granted Honorary Membership. Honorary Members are listed in the BATW directory and may attend all BATW monthly meetings and social events. Unlike General and Credentialed General Members, however, Honorary Members are not required to pay annual dues. Consequently, they neither attend press trips nor obtain a BATW press credential, and do not enjoy voting privileges of General and Credentialed General Membership.

Provisional—Applicants who aspire to General Membership and who intend to meet the above requirements for General Membership within a two-year period, but who do not yet do so, may apply for Provisional Member status. Applicants submit an application form and a 300-word travel essay as a gesture of good faith and to show suitable travel-writing skill. On acceptance, an individual with Provisional Member status receives a welcome letter and is invited to participate in BATW meetings and social events and may be listed in the directory. He or she does not enjoy the voting privileges of General Membership. No more than 15 individuals may be granted Provisional status at any one time. An application fee and annual dues equivalent to those of General Members are required of applicants for Provisional Status.

Individuals with Provisional status may become General Members immediately upon meeting the minimum requirements as listed for General Membership upon approval of the Membership Committee. At the end of a two-year period, an individual with Provisional status who has not met the minimum criteria to qualify for General Membership will be unable to continue affiliation with BATW, though they may apply in the future, should they then meet the requirements.

Membership Renewal Process

The Board of Directors administers the annual renewal process, which consists of the following:

- Membership renewal notices are e-mailed to eligible members each November. Payment of the membership fee (currently \$90 for General and Provisional Members, \$125 for Associate Members) and any other fees will be accepted only by credit card online.
- Yearly membership in BATW expires on December 31. Non-payment of yearly dues by announced deadlines will result in cancellation of the membership. A late fee of \$25 may be assessed for reinstatement.

Member Rights and Standing

All members may attend meetings, are listed in the BATW directory, and agree to abide by the BATW Code of Professional Conduct.

- Members who fail to abide by the Code of Professional Conduct (See Section 3) are subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the organization as outlined in the Code.
- Honorary, Provisional, and Associate members may not attend press trips.
- Honorary, Provisional, and Associate members are not eligible for a Press Credential.
- Only General Members may vote in the organization.

Members who join after mid-year may be eligible for a reduced rate for that year.

Membership Applications and Requirements may be found at

<http://www.batw.org/members-only/join-as-an-active-or-provisional-member>.

Member Responsibilities

General Members who participate in BATW Press Trips undertake an obligation to make every reasonable effort to publish stories and/or photos about these destinations. Clips and/or the web address from these published stories should be sent to the press trip host. They may also be sent to Carolyn Koenig, BATW Website Editor (webeditor@batw.org), for the monthly BATW website update.

6. Benefits of Membership

Monthly Meetings—As one of the benefits of membership, a regular monthly meeting is held, usually at 10 A.M. on the third Saturday of each month, except December (when the Holiday Party is held). These meetings take place at various locations around the San Francisco Bay Area. Meetings often include professional development panels and speakers on various subjects, sometimes tours of the venues, or hosted lunches.

Each month the meeting information is posted on the website www.batw.org. Official communication about the meeting comes in the form of a group e-mail to the membership. Details about the upcoming monthly membership meeting—location, time, guest policy, speaker, program, etc. are provided. This initial e-mail is followed by at least one e-mail reminder closer to the meeting day. Each member who plans to attend must RSVP via the instructions in the meeting announcement. Members will be sent an e-mail confirmation; these should be printed out or available via smartphone at the time of check-in. Members who find they cannot attend after leaving their RSVP should follow the EventBrite instructions for cancellations.

Directory—Each member is provided the opportunity to be listed in the BATW online member directory. The directory lists each member's contact information, publications, honors, travel and destination specialties, professional affiliations, and other pertinent information. Credentialed General Members will be identified in the online directory.

Press Credential—A Press Credential is offered for those General Members who demonstrate that they continue to meet the original membership criteria. (Since the credentialing requirements are the same as those for new membership, all new members will be credentialed.) All credentials will expire in approximately two years (the timing dependent upon when one qualified), requiring members to reapply at that time. There are two annual open enrollment/application periods, November and May, with the subsequent month allocated for vetting and approval. All applicants will be notified of their status at the end of the subsequent month. One month prior to the application period, members will be notified electronically of the Credentialing criteria, along with instructions for downloading the application form. Credentialed Members are identified on the BATW website.

A Credentialed Member may apply for a specially designed press card upon request and payment of the \$10 cost of production. These cards are used solely to identify BATW members as working members of the press. BATW press cards may not be used to request special treatment or freebies from hosts.

Press Trips and Hosted Events—Periodically, BATW arranges sponsored destination press trips or hosted meeting events for its members. Hosts may limit the number of attendees. Press trip hosts may be selective in their invitations.

As representatives of BATW, members should accept press trips only if they have a genuine professional interest in the destination and the prospect of subsequently publishing an article or photo. In presenting an accurate and comprehensive picture of a destination, members realize their primary responsibility is to the public, not to their

sponsors. A member's attendance at luncheons, receptions, and other hosted events carries an obligation to be courteous and act in a professional manner.

Programs—Many BATW monthly meetings offer professional development programs for members, including editor panels, experts on photography, website development, marketing, social media, and more. Some programs provide opportunities for sharing information among members. At others, members share readings of recent work.

Website—BATW's website is www.batw.org, which is updated on the 1st of each month. Here, BATW lists upcoming events, meeting programs, member news, awards, social media tips, and more. Member news announcements should be sent to Carolyn Koenig, Website Editor, by the 23rd of the month for inclusion in the next monthly update. Guidelines for announcements are published on the homepage (www.batw.org/help/submission-guidelines).

Official Communication—Official BATW communications are sent via e-mail from officers, committee chairpersons, or program liaisons. Members should follow the RSVP instructions in the official meeting e-mail, and read and respond to special announcements, as appropriate.

Social Media—BATW members have four social networking options. Please keep in mind that each of its organization's online sites exists for a specific purpose. For details, see the BATW Social Media Networking tips on the homepage (www.batw.org/help/batw-social-networking).

- **BATW on LinkedIn:** a network of professional “connections” where members of a professional group post updates of their bio and their work- and career-related activities, and offer information about professional development, and news relating to the travel writing and photography industries.
- **BATW on Facebook:** open to public view, a showcase of what's going on with fellow members and colleagues. Here members can promote themselves, their travels, events, photos, website(s), and blog(s) by submitting news and announcements.
- **BATW Forum on Yahoo Groups:** a conversation for BATW members only. Topics may be membership and industry issues, news and links about classes, lectures, press trips, and the like. This forum can be used to share info, leads, and opportunities; offer insight and opinions; ask and answer questions; and vent frustrations. Let members know what's happening in one's world—no holds barred (except no gossip, politics, or religion).
- **Social Community on Members-Only Section of the BATW Website:** MemberClicks, the company that hosts the Members-Only side of the BATW Website, now offers “Social Community” features. The Members-Only side of the BATW Website now lets members make “Connections” with other BATW members, upload photos into an album that other members can view, and more.

Networking—Monthly meetings provide an opportunity to meet and talk with other members during the 10-10:30 A.M. Meet and Greet time before the meeting agenda begins.

7. Guest Policy

Members may invite guests with an interest in travel writing or in becoming BATW members to attend a BATW monthly meeting UNLESS a host has restricted attendance to members only. If the host requires payment for guest meals, payment will be required by the guest with no exceptions. These restrictions will be reflected in the official meeting e-mail announcement and on the BATW website. The Holiday Luncheon in December often has host or space restrictions, as do several hosted meetings each year.

Members are required to RSVP for themselves and any guests via the instructions in the official meeting announcement and provide the names of guests so an attendance count can be made and name tags prepared.

Potential new members are welcome to attend monthly meetings. They should contact the Membership Chair (programs@batw.org) to arrange the invitation.

Please keep in mind that potential new members are viewed as guests until they receive official written acceptance into BATW from the Membership Chair. All guests and potential new members are required to pay for their meals when requested by a host. Hosts generally do not permit guests to participate in press trips.

8. Rebecca Bruns Award

This award began in 2005 when the Board of Directors voted unanimously to give an award for excellence and outstanding achievement in the name of one of BATW's founding members. Rebecca Bruns, a gifted and generous writer whose life and work inspired many, had her life cut tragically short by illness. When the Board of Directors bestows this award (in even numbered years, starting in 2014), the winner's name is announced at the Holiday Party in December.

9. BATW Anthology

In 2012 BATW published its first anthology, *Travel Stories from Around the Globe*, a juried collection of discoveries, insights, and adventures written by BATW members. We continue to market this well-received book at our events and on the individual writers' websites, published works, and communications. The book is available for purchase on

Amazon.com and as a Kindle e-book. A subsequent edition may be considered at a future date.

10. How to Get the Most out of BATW

Here are a few tips for getting the most out of one's BATW membership:

- Network at meetings: After all, one of the most important reasons a person joined BATW was to meet and learn from professional travel writers, photographers, public relations gurus, tourism hotshots, and others. A member should also feel free to bring their questions to any General or Associate members of BATW.
- Attend workshops and round tables: Some monthly meetings are given over to learning sessions of one kind or another. Even the most experienced members tend to find these get-togethers valuable.
- Read the BATW website each month: The monthly BATW update (which goes live on the 1st of each month; members receive an e-mail alert) showcases BATW news, upcoming BATW and industry events, and member news, plus tips and resources. Members should remember to send their announcements to the Website Editor, as the website is a useful promotional tool.
- Get involved: Members can volunteer to take minutes, set up the coffee at a meeting, be on a committee, or help out in other interesting ways. Those who get involved end up making friends, which is another benefit of BATW.