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## Enhancing the Profile of Writers

The WGAw Public Affairs Department is a full-service press office available 24/7 to print, electronic, and online media. In addition to providing the WGAw with a consistent, credible voice within the entertainment industry, the Public Affairs staff creates and produces a wide range of high-profile writer-centric events throughout the year, including the WGAw's annual Writers Guild Awards.

Fielding more than 1,000 press inquiries during the year, the Public Affairs office continues to work closely with a wide range of journalists and media outlets—pitching and placing numerous stories to help promote television and film writers, their craft, and their Guild. Further, the PA team continues to work with other Guild departments, such as Organizing, Employment Access, and Member Services, acting as primary liaison to the press on important issues such as reality television, product integration, diversity, and other topics that affect WGAw members.

Through the past year, the Public Affairs Department hosted several key press conferences for the media, focusing on such topics as the Guild's 2005 Hollywood Writers Report, an industry code-of-conduct "white paper" on product integration, and, most recently, a New York-based media event during this TV season's upfronts, featuring top TV showrunners who called for consultation and compensation regarding product integration, generating extensive press coverage in the process, including major outlets such as Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Variety, The Hollywood Reporter, Ad Age, and many more. During the Guild's upcoming 2007 MBA negotiations, the Public Affairs team will once again

take the lead on all WGAw press communications, both internal and external.

Throughout the year, the Public Affairs department produced numerous high-profile writer events that generated an increased media profile for writers no matter the genre, as well as increased press opportunities for members. In addition to working with the Guild's marketing team to host a launch party unveiling the 101 Greatest Screenplays as voted on by WGA members (and garnering major press coverage in the process), other Public Affairs-helmed events included last fall's Sublime Primetime (a special evening with Emmy-nominated writers), last winter's Beyond Words: The Writers Talk (a panel featuring WGA and Oscar-nominated writers) and a summer reception with print and broadcast journalists during the annual Television Critics Association press tour. Other events included a successful first-year the Write Influence diversity event, hosted in conjunction with the Guild's Employment Access department, a revamped Meet the Candidates night that saw increased attendance that overflowed onto three floors of WGAw headquarters, as well as a large-scale member holiday party hosted this past season at the House of Blues Sunset, which drew a record number of members.

### THE 58TH WRITERS GUILD AWARDS

Working in conjunction with executive producer Cort Casady, the Public Affairs office produced the 2006 Writers Guild Awards held at the historic Hollywood Palladium, which had sold-out attendance and unprecedented media coverage, including WGA-themed special issues in both Daily Variety and The

Hollywood Reporter. In addition, the department's Awards sponsorship program generated increased revenues for the Guild.

### WRITTEN BY MAGAZINE

*Written By*, the Guild's monthly magazine, continues to present timely coverage of the film, television and new media writing arenas. In 2005, a cover story on WGA writers in New Orleans during the Katrina hurricane appeared a month after the tragedy. The annual awards issue debuted the first *Written By* gatefold cover and served as the program guide at the Guild awards gala. Shonda Rhimes of *Grey's Anatomy* and Ali LeRoi of *Everybody Hates Chris* revealed secrets of their success. Cover portraits honored writers as celebrities, ranging from first-time screenwriters Margaret Nagle (*Warm Springs*) and Dan Futterman (*Capote*) to veterans Woody Allen, Larry McMurtry and Diana Osana. The popular summer "unproduced" issue concentrated on television scripts, with members submitting well more than 100 scripts in competition. And for the first time, *Written By* presented a series of WGA website-only DVD interviews, debuting with Futterman and John Milius. In recognition of its achievements, the magazine earned several nominations from the Western Publications Association.

### MEMBER NEWS/ MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS

Every month, Member News publishes the latest business, legal and legislative news affecting WGAw members, plus profiles of Guild committees and staff departments as well as information about Guild and member activities. The Member News is also available in pdf format at [www.wga.org](http://www.wga.org). During the last year, two special issues were published—one providing in-depth information about reality TV storytellers and the other profiling the Writ-

ers Guild Foundation's new Webb-Shavelson Library, built in the former bank space, which is now leased by the Foundation. A monthly events calendar is sent by e-mail to all members who have provided e-mail addresses—currently more than two-thirds of the Guild's active membership. The e-mail list is also used to inform members about updated news as needed.

### THE GUILD WEBSITE

WGA.org unveiled its completely redesigned website in October 2005. While much of the information on the site has been retained, it has been reorganized in a clean and intuitive new design. With its mix of publicly viewable and members-only pages, the new site greatly enhances methods of communication with both members and guests, making online tools and information more accessible. Services include online registration, residuals, agency and signatory lookup, Find a Writer, RSVP online and daily entertainment headlines as well as access to many of the Guild's publications in a .pdf format. Proposed new features include more interactive member polls, video and audio content, and the membership directory. The site continues to average about three million hits per month, and there are 13,000 subscribers to the free monthly e-newsletter, *Now Playing*.

