Please read carefully before casting your vote.

**CANDIDATES’ ELECTION STATEMENTS**

**Tim Tate**

I am the author of 18 published non-fiction books, and an award-winning investigative journalist and documentary filmmaker. My first book was published by Methuen in 1988; my most recent work was published by Transworld/Penguin in May this year. Several of my books have also been published internationally; one has been translated into 14 languages and is on bookshop shelves in 18 countries.

In the 33 years since I began writing publishing has changed radically. Today, with the absorption of previously independent imprints by major global publishing conglomerates, and with Amazon’s overwhelming domination of online sales, authors – the lifeblood on which this industry depends – need a strong trade union more than ever. Publishers sometimes exploit their power and impose unfair and unnecessary restrictions on authors’ ability to earn their livings. Royalty rates – especially in the growing audiobook sector – can vary wildly, and contracts all-too-frequently require authors to sign over international and other ancillary rights to the publisher, with no guarantee that these will ever be exploited and no automatic right of reversion if they are not.

In our need for collective strength, however, also lies a great opportunity. If elected, I would want the SoA to champion the adoption of an industry-wide Code of Practice, which would set out fundamental, baseline rights and responsibilities for both authors and publishers. (Nothing, of course, would prevent publishers going beyond this benchmark and offering more favourable terms.)

In the early years of the independent television market, the Producers Alliance for Cinema and Television (PACT) persuaded the UK broadcasting industry to sign up to exactly this sort of Code of Practice. In doing so it ensured that its members’ most important interests were safeguarded, and also cemented its position as an organisation whose input was vital in consultations over legislative and trade changes.

By midwifing a similar publishing industry Code of Practice, the Society would likewise protect its members, bring a measure of uniformity (as well as baseline standards) to the market, and re-entrench its vital role in the UK’s priceless cultural sector. The SoA’s imprimatur would provide, in essence, a ‘kitemark’ guarantee of a publisher’s compliance with basic standards.

As a member of the Management Committee I would bring to the table my lifetime of working with publishers, my lengthy track record as a successful author and my experience of conducting patient negotiations, earned over decades in the television industry, to bring about advances which benefit all parties.

Nominated by Andrew Lownie and Katharine Quarmby

**Mata Haggis-Burridge**

I have been a writer for video games and online/broadcast animations for over 20 years, including innovative mediums such as augmented reality and virtual production technologies, and I am in the submission process of my first novel. I have been active in both the SoA, presenting to the AGM in 2017 and writing for The Author, and in the WGGB’s [Writers’ Guild of Great Britain] video game committee.

I grew up in south London, but I now live in the Netherlands, where I am a professor at a Dutch university. I take part in several regional, national, and international organisations who promote culture and sustainable incomes for creatives, and I regularly speak at international conferences.

If you choose to elect me, I will bring knowledge of the underrepresented area of writing for video games to the SoA board. I am also an advocate for LGBTQ+ visibility (being bi/pansexual myself) and I try to apply a broader intersectional approach to inclusion, beyond queer communities, considering aspects of class, race, age, location, physical/neurodiversity, and more.

In my years as a member of the SoA, I’ve seen our wonderful work representing writers and would like to be a bigger part of this. In times of change, through epidemic and politics, institutions such as the SoA take on greater importance for providing support and stability for the workers who sustain culture.

While I hope to bring value and insight to the Management Committee, I am also interested to learn. I hope that being part of the committee will allow me to get a deeper look at the lives of other writers and the business of writing beyond my digital field. Through sharing our knowledge, we can become a stronger voice for change.

Nominated by Joanne Harris and Woodrow Phoenix

Photo credit: Jo Haggis-Burridge
The Society of Authors

Election to the Management Committee 2021

Charles Harris

I suspect that it’s always been an important time for authors, but never more important than now. Libraries are still being closed, or underfunded and stripped of books; newspapers are closing or shaving staff; free speech is under attack across the world, while at the same time we are becoming more and more aware of the effects of our words; and politicians are keeping us divided and angry. I hardly need add that Covid is not going anywhere soon.

Although we authors are a solitary lot, I believe we do best when we work together and the Society of Authors is the best place for us to do it.

Writers need supporting and defending. We have a crucial role in helping mend the world – or even just making the world a little better. Librarians are same time we are becoming more and more aware of the effects of the world around us; and politicians are keeping us divided and angry. I hardly need add that Covid is not going anywhere soon.

I have gained a great deal from the SoA’s services – from networking to contract advice. I’m also proud of the way the SoA stepped up to help authors during the pandemic. I would like – to use the old but true cliche – to give something back in my turn.

I am a full-time author. I have had two novels and three non-fiction books traditionally published, and have self-published a non-fiction book and a collection of short stories.

Before that, I worked in film and TV as script editor, screenwriter, director and producer, winning awards for my work.

I co-founded the London Screenwriters’ Workshop – which was the first screenwriters’ workshops in the world – now called Eurosprint, was on the board of directors of the New Producers’ Alliance, and served as co-chair for three years.

As for myself, I have gained a great deal from the SoA’s services – from networking to contract advice. I’m also proud of the way the SoA stepped up to help authors during the pandemic. I would like – to use the old but true cliche – to give something back in my turn.

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