Report by Jim Tritten

Bob, this email will update you on the Facebook tasking assigned to John Cathcart and myself at our 9 September 2017 board meeting in San Antonio. I have replied to the entire board and copied Val since she assisted John and I with thinking through how to handle the tasking.

For the new board members, the tasking was contained in the minutes and is reprinted next [there appears to be some words missing at the end of the sentence]

By 1 February, Tritten and Cathcart will improve the MWSA identity and recognition on Facebook. They will coordinate with Maria Edwards who changed the Military Writers Facebook page to

Obviously we did not meet the deadline of 1 February. The good news is that we finished our tasking.

**There were two existing main MWSA-related Facebook presences:**

<https://www.facebook.com/Military-Writers-Society-of-America-583493185007637/>

This first presence is an official Facebook Page. It is clearly listed as both Military Writers Society of America and MWSA on the page. However, if you search on Facebook for MWSA it does not take you to this page – so this should be fixed. In order to search Facebook and find this page, you must search for Military Writers Society of America (fully spelled out) to be offered this page as an option. The page has 309 followers and 303 likes. There are only a few posts on this page and the last posting by an administrator was in 2013. I am unable to post anything to this page. Joyce Faulkner was queried by me personally and Maria Edwards was queried by John. Neither claims ownership or management of this page. There is no administrator listed, there is no way to send a message to the owner/manager, and if you try to report it to Facebook you need to find one of their approved reasons. The closest reason is the page is masquerading as another organization. Problem is the page links to the correct MWSA web site – so it is not masquerading and the other options do not apply. I have reported the problem to Facebook anyway and got a boilerplate reply that did not say they were going to fix it. I also asked for help on the community help site. Based upon past experience with Facebook, they may not respond with anything that will allow us to use this page. If they do not, and we cannot use the page, then we are faced with a Facebook page that does nothing for us other than steer viewers to the MWSA web site. Fingers crossed the Facebook gods will eventually reply and release the page to the actual MWSA organization. If not, then we will just have to ignore this page.

There is a second “MWSA” Facebook presence.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/MilitaryWriters/>

This presence is not a Facebook page but rather an open Facebook group. There is a slight distinction in what pages and groups are able to do on Facebook. This group is indeed owned and managed by Maria Edwards. She has total control over what appears on this page and who can join. I have personally posted there often and never had a problem with getting Maria’s approval for the posting. The problems with this page are:

(1) it is not identified anywhere as a MWSA page – instead it is listed as “Military Writers, Poets, Visual & Performing Artists;”

(2) if you search Facebook for MWSA or Military Writers Society of America, you are not taken to this page – you have to know the name in order to find it;

(3) there are events under this group that have nothing to do with MWSA;

(4) there are sporadic posting of MWSA documents and *Dispatches* in the Files section;

(5) there are MWSA videos in the Videos section;

(6) Maria Edwards and John Cathcart are administrators;

(7) the About This Group section does not mention MWSA nor link the group to the MWSA web site; and

(8) the group is a public group that anyone can join but Maria Edwards must approve.

This group has been useful but is not under the control or management of MWSA and is in fact used by many others who are writers, artists, or visual and performing artists. There are 1,048 members of the group.

**There is a third MWSA presence:** MWSA Fort Smith Point Of View Writer’s Seminar - a closed group.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/263332304493903/>

This group was set up by Joyce Faulkner and she plans to keep the group active and run a new event in 2020. It is a closed group meaning that the administrator has to approve anyone to join it. The group page itself says there are no admins or moderators but Joyce says she is the administrator. There are currently 19 members. The use of a Facebook group to manage a MWSA event like this one was, and is, an excellent idea and one that will be addressed later below. This group should be left alone since it has a purpose and someone who wants to continue to use it.

**What have we learned?**

1. The MWSA board has no ownership or management of any of these MWSA or MWSA-related Facebook presences.
2. Having an MWSA page is in the best interests of our organization and can be used as a significant management tool for MWSA events like conferences.
3. Creation of an MWSA page under control of the MWSA board is a necessary first step.
4. Due to the presence of these existing pages/groups, it will likely be necessary to create an alternate Facebook presence under the management of the MWSA board.
5. The Military Writers, Poets, Visual & Performing Artists group is not an MWSA group and can exist with no direct participation by MWSA. Maria Edwards can choose to post things she sees and MWSA members can continue to advertise their successes on this page – all without any involvement of the MWSA board.

**The way ahead:**

1. Jim Tritten will continue efforts to identify the owners/managers of the existing MWSA page in order to either eliminate it from Facebook or gain control over it for the MWSA board. The worst that will happen is it will remain there without anyone’s ability to use.
2. Assuming the inability to gain control over the existing MWSA Facebook page, John Cathcart created a new page associated with and owned by MWSA: MWSA Public Page. John and I are both admins and Rob is an editor. Eventually all board members will have privileges but not until things are set up better.

<https://www.facebook.com/MWSA.MembersPublic/>

1. John created an event for the joint MWSA/SWW conference – the name and details will be fixed by Jim. Jim will also create a separate event for the VA class. Others can add in additional events, like Joyce, for her MWSA-sanctioned classes.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/378767359543298/>

1. Once these events are created, Jim will invite any MWSA member who is on Facebook and his ‘friend” to these events and encourage all to invite, in turn, any other MWSA members or military writers who are their “friends” in order to advertise these events and hopefully increase attendance. Tasks have already been created on the conference checklist to create these Facebook events and will be marked completed when done.
2. MWSA uses the new Facebook page (or the old one if we ever get control) to post MWSA items of interest to its members. This would include subordinate pages where items of general interest can be shared and events where items specific to the event reside.
3. MWSA leaves alone both Maria Edwards group Military Writers, Poets, Visual & Performing Artists and Joyce Faulkner’s group MWSA Fort Smith Point Of View Writer’s Seminar. The MWSA board should not use these groups to post MWSA information or events since neither groups are MWSA groups and the board has no oversight. Joyce will be encouraged to create her MWSA-approved events underneath the new MWSA page.
4. At the 2017 conference, Jeanette Vaughan volunteered to work on social media issues. John sent her an email once in the past but received no reply. Perhaps she will again be interested once she sees the new MWSA page. Val volunteered to contact her again and is encouraged to forward this email to Jeannette for her consideration.
5. A Facebook Page Management Policy folder will be created and this email filed inside the folder so that another multi-year, multi-person investigative team need not be formed to figure all of this out again.

Jim Tritten

Member, Board of Directors