

Writers' Guild of Alberta
Annual General Meeting

November 22, 2021

7:00 – 9:00 pm

Virtual AGM

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes: AGM, September 17, 2020
4. President's Welcome & Report
5. Executive Director's Report
6. Treasurer's Report
7. Committee Reports
 - i. Youth Committee
8. Bylaw Review
9. Appointment of Auditors
10. Elections of WGA Executive and Board for 2021 / 2022
11. Other Business
12. Adjournment

Candidates and Incumbents
 Writers' Guild of Alberta
 Executive and Board 2021/2022

Position	2019/2020	Nominations
President Carol Parchewsky, Calgary Completed second year of second term	Vacant	
Vice President Theresa Uchechi Ezeuko, Calgary Completed first year of first term	Filled	Theresa Ezeuko, Calgary, will be entering second year of first term
Secretary Lori Hahnel, Calgary Appointed by board after AGM	Vacant	Lori Hahnel, Calgary, appointed midterm, running for election
Treasurer Nicolas Brown, Westlock Appointed by board after AGM	Vacant	
Member at Large Kim Fraser, Sherwood Park Completed second year of first term	Vacant	Kim Fraser, Sherwood Park, running for first year of second term
Member at Large Teresa Wouters, Grande Prairie Appointed by board after AGM	Vacant	Teresa Wouters, Grande Prairie, appointed mid-term, running for election
Member at Large	Vacant	Nicole Hill, Edmonton
Member at Large	Vacant	Moorea Gray, Springbank
Member at Large (Youth Representative) Sophie Pinkoski, Edmonton Completed first year of second term	Filled	Sophie Pinkoski, Edmonton, will be entering second year of second term
Past President Vacant	Filled	Carol Parchewsky, Calgary

- Each Board member is voted in for a term of two years and limited to a maximum of two terms for a total of four years, except in the case of the past president who may hold office during the term of his/her successor.
 - In rare circumstances by unanimous, anonymous vote by the board an individual board member will be permitted to stand for election for a third two-year term based on the needs of the board, the extension of the third term to be ratified at the Annual General Meeting.
 - Under no circumstances can this term be extended. The additional year as past president is outside of these terms.
- There shall be no more than three members of the board who reside in the same centre.
- Board members need to be elected into Executive positions. If a member is nominated mid-term for an Executive position but fails to be elected, that member reverts back to their original position to finish their two-year term
- Written nominations for the Board of Directors may be made in advance of the AGM, signed by the candidate and two members of the Guild who are in good standing. Additionally, nominations and seconding motions may be put forth at the AGM by Guild members who are in good standing with the consent of the nominee.
- Board members are elected by the majority vote of members present or, under Robert's Rules of Order, if there is no opposition there is no need for a formal vote. The matter is decided by "acclamation" or by "unanimous consent."

Current Board members appointed mid-term seeking election to the Executive

Secretary

Lori Hahnel is the author of the novels *Love Minus Zero* and *After You've Gone*, and two story collections; *Nothing Sacred*, which shortlisted for an Alberta Literary Award, and *Vermin: Stories*. Her work has appeared widely in journals including *The Fiddlehead*, *Joyland* and *The Saturday Evening Post*, and broadcast on CBC Radio. She recently served as Calgary Public Library's 2020 Author-in-Residence.

Current Board members appointed mid-term seeking election to Member at Large

Member at Large

Teresa Wouters is a returning WGA board member with years of experience on a variety of boards. She is the second place winner of the 2021 Kemosa Scholarship for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Mothers Who Write. As well, Teresa hosts the Otâcimow Indigenous Writers Circle. Teresa lives in Grande Prairie as a teacher, author, musician, actress and television personality, and entrepreneur. Her goals, as an author, are to entertain, educate, and inspire.

Current Board members seeking re-election to Member at Large

Member at Large

Dr. Kimberly Fraser, an author with an MFA in Creative Nonfiction, has extensive clinical practice and leadership in nursing and health care. A nurse entrepreneur, Kim owned a successful home care company and vocational school with her husband for 25 years.

Her research program and her writing focus on family caregiving and home care using innovative and arts-based approaches. She recently retired from her full time role as a professor (University of Alberta) and Clinician Scientist (Alberta Health Services). Kim uses applied research to incite public conversations and inform policy for better outcomes for home care clients and family caregivers. Kim published over 90 peer reviewed journal articles, two book chapters, and several academic reports. She is represented by Rob Firing of Transatlantic Literary Agency and her book, *The Accidental Caregiver: Challenges and Triumphs of Intimate Family Caregivers* will be published in 2022 by Sutherland House. She does contract teaching in the Faculty of Health Studies at Athabasca University.

Current Board members not requiring election

Past President

Carol Parchewsky - Carol has been an active member of the WGA for over four years. She received her Master of Fine Arts, Creative Writing from Queens University of Charlotte, her Bachelor of Science, Mechanical Engineering, from the University of Saskatchewan, and her Postgraduate Certificates in Professional Management—PEG, e-Learning, and Creative Writing from the University of Calgary. She is a knowledgeable senior leader with experience in government organizations, civic organizations, and in the private sector. Currently, she is Operations Director of Legend Grafix, an all-inclusive graphic design house and wide-format printer based in Calgary, Alberta. Carol also teaches ESL classes and writing classes. Carol writes picture books, middle grade, adult fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction. She is working on a novel and a collection of short stories.

Vice President

Theresa Uchechi Ezeuko is a Canada (Calgary Alberta) based creative writer and author of five lovely books, “Storytales For Little Minds “, “Jasmine the Ladybird “, “Kachi the handyman”, “Betty’s Desire. and “Sọchima awakening of the gods”.

She obtained a bachelor’s degree in theatre arts from Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Nigeria. A master’s degree in International marketing from the University of West of Scotland, United Kingdom. A specialization in Creative writing from Wesleyan University Connecticut in the United States of America and a specialization in coaching skills for managers from University of California Davis.

She is an active member of the writer’s alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador and a one-time member of the writer’s guild of Newfoundland and Labrador Canada. Theresa was a jury for the Newfoundland and Labrador 2018 young adults/children’s book award. She also served as a member of the board for St. John’s public library and the writer’s guild of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Member at Large (Youth Rep.)

Sophie Pinkoski has been active on the board since October 2017 and is the current chair of the WGA Youth Committee. She received a Bachelor of Arts in English from the University of Victoria, and a Master of Science in Publishing from Edinburgh Napier University. She is a dark fantasy novelist in both the adult and young adult age brackets and offers marketing and editorial services through Pinkoski Consulting. While completing her Master's, she took on a Managing Editor role at Merchiston Publishing and Features Editor role for Buzz Magazine, as well as working in the Children's Marketing and Publicity office at Penguin Random House London. Her experience in the UK has given her opportunities to work closely alongside agents, publishers, and authors alike.

Members seeking election to Member at Large

Member at Large

Nicole Hill - I'm Nicole Hill, a lifelong Albertan living in Edmonton with my partner, two kids, and two dogs. From a young age I've loved writing and reading anything I could get my hands on. I hope to bring this love, as well as a passion for progressive works that enrich and challenge our ways of thinking and doing, to contribute to the WGA. My background is in academia, having completed a Master of Arts in integrated studies and a PhD (ABD) in sociology. I've authored and co-authored an array of academic and public-facing works, most recently co-editing a book exploring obstetric violence. I have previous experience in several board and not-for-profit capacities, including serving as Co-Editor and board member of the Journal of Integrated Studies, Counsellor and Vice President-Academic of the Athabasca University Graduate Students' Association, Co-President of the University of Alberta Sociology Graduate Students' Association, and President of the MaternityCare Consumers of Alberta. My committee work in these organizations included adjudicating essays and applications for awards, evaluating programs, creating strategic plans, as well as advocacy work. I would love to bring my experience to the WGA to support the organization and contribute to Alberta's writing community.

Nominator: Falon Fayant

Nominator: Brad Fehr

Member at Large

Moorea Gray - As an active member of the WGA since 2004, I have participated in workshops, attended Alberta Literary Awards events, and have written for WestWord. The WGA has provided me with many long-lasting opportunities, and it is my turn to give back to this important writing organization.

I have great interest and involvement in Alberta literature—both past and present. In 2019, I published an anthology containing the works of Icelandic-Canadian writer Stephan G. Stephansson. I am vice-president of the Calgary Women's Literary Club and secretary for the Leif Eriksson Iceland Club. In June 2021, I completed a two-year term as a committee member with the Calgary Distinguished Writers' Program at the University of Calgary. I hold an Education Degree and a Master's Degree in English Literature. Substitute teaching for children in kindergarten to grade six is a highlight of my school year: teaching offers me the opportunity to read and share my love of literature to a captive audience.

Nominator: Carol Parchewsky

Nominator: Stephan Benediktson

Annual General Meeting 2020 Minutes and Transcript
(recorded by Mike M., WGA staff)
September 17, 2020
Meeting Start: 19:03
Meeting Finish: 20:27

Board Members in Attendance: Leslie Chivers, Alison Clarke, Sophie Pinkoski, Carol Parchewski, Susan Carpenter, Kevin Thornton, Therese Greenwood

WGA Staff in attendance: Carol Holmes, Jason Norman, Samantha Warwick, Sadie M, Ellen Kartz, Mike Maguire

Total Attendees: 51 (including 5 staff, as of start of meeting)

1. Meeting Start @7:03

Leslie Chivers opened the meeting with board attendance and a thank you to the staff. Leslie gave the land acknowledgement that we are meeting on Treaty Lands. Leslie took a moment to ask that everyone reflect on the members of the writing community who have passed in this past year and their contributions.

2. Jason Norman went over housekeeping

3. Leslie explained that when a motion was called for he will put it forth and people can use the Raise Hand to second. Meeting was called to order at 19:09.

4 Approval of Agenda: Susan Carpenter motioned to approve the minutes and Joanne seconded. MOTION PASSES by attendee vote.

5 Approval of Minutes from 2019 AGM. Rona motioned, Alice seconded to accept the minutes. 31 votes to approve. MOTION PASSED.

6. Leslie Chivers: President's report

From the 2019 AGM, there was a motion put forward by a member to review the policies and procedures for the awards. The board met in October of 2019 for a face to face meeting regarding the strategic plan and this was brought up as a discussion at that agenda. After discussing it: and the following points were approved:

- juries will be anonymous,
- conflicts of interest will be addressed,
- the Executive Director will look for other ways to celebrate the finalists.

A new vision and mission was approved by the board at that meeting. These statements were chosen with the focus of making the Alberta Government aware that writers contribute to the economy.

The Strategic Plan was approved, but a new board after the AGM should review it and make any adjustments they deem needed.

The board reviewed governance documents. Including updating roles and responsibilities. There were not many changes; a few areas were removed and some were reworded for increased clarity.

The board approved a fund development task force and will be sending an invite to WGA members to sit on the task force. Two board members are on the task force, and the board will be looking for people with fundraising experience

Leslie thanked Lisa and Leanne for their contributions to the board, and also thanked the board as a whole for their contributions. Leslie again thanked the WGA staff as well for their work in adapting to the changes of the past year.

Questions came up; Leslie requested to take questions at the end.

7. Carol Holmes: ED Report

Carol thanked everyone for coming.

This is the 40th anniversary of the guild and the first ever virtual AGM. Carol provided her report in the Annual Report and will take questions at the end. Some highlights:

- Mentorship Program took place, but the public reading did not due to COVID. Carol was privileged to be part of the conversation with participants at the wrap up meeting. Mentors and mentees expressed how much they got out of the program. RBC will fund the program again this year and applications will open soon.
- The WGA has been working to increase online options, which was accelerated in response to COVID. This included webinars, workshops, an online awards celebration, and moving WordsWorth to Circuit Tree. Carol thanked the staff for their work.
- Read Alberta Books: this is done in cooperation with BPAA. The program is on hold due to the library closures, but we are looking at ways to promote the work of Alberta publishers and writers online.
- Write Nights in Edmonton were introduced this past year. This was a great success pre-COVID and we look forward to it moving forward in some form in the future.
- Coffee Sleeve program: Jason worked on this to promote with the work of Albert
- Regional facilitators: 4 facilitators were hired (Vivien Hanson Doroth Bentley , Michelle Grayson, and Sue Farrell Holler) to extend programming to their areas. This adapted to a province-wide programming due to going online with COVID.
- Future planning is being adapted as things develop. Currently we are looking at the possibility of small gatherings as well as continuing to increase our online programming.

- A survey will be sent out shortly as part of the Digital Strategies initiative which will be helpful to the WGA in planning.
- After 10+ years, the Calgary office is moving to a new (and in some ways old) building returning to its previous location. The setup in Edmonton remains uncertain; due to the staff size and office design there are additional considerations which continue to be monitored.
- In addition to COVID related changes there have also been staff changes. Giorgia is on a one-year maternity leave, and Samantha (after 15 ½ years) will be moving on to work on her writing. Sam will be missed.
- Thanks are due to many people; Carol mentioned them in her report including Leslie Greentree and the online workshop trial participants, the WordBridge, Susan Calder, Barb Howard, and a big thank to the sponsors, donors, and funders (see p. 25 of the annual report)

8. Susan – Treasurer's Report

This was Susan's first year on the board and it's been an adventure.

The WGA has had to adapt to changes in expenses (including events that had been already paid that had to be moved online or postponed).

The conference was canceled due to COVID, and the Literary Awards Gala, and summer camp were hosted online.

Amber Bowerman Foundation and an anonymous donor helped move the Wordsworth Summer Camp to an online program, Circuit Tree.

The staff were again thanked for their work adapting to changes.

As many grants as possible were applied for.

Canada Council funding and AFA operating funding were confirmed (AFA funding is contingent on any changes to the provincial funding to AFA). Some emergency funds were also received. Rosza Foundation supported many programs including the Online Reading Series.

Thanks to RBC for funding the Mentorship Program.

Thanks to supporters of the Alberta Literary Awards and City Book Prizes. Fundraising must be a focus moving forward.

A full list of donors is in the annual report.

9. Sophie Pinkoski – Youth Committee Report

Sophie briefly explained the role of the Youth Committee.

The Youth Committee had some transitions as members dropped from 5 to 2 as members of the committee moved on to other work.

A new recruitment scheme is being established; age restrictions have been relaxed from 18-30 to 18-35. The committee is also keen to encourage rural engagement outside of Edmonton and Calgary.

The committee looks forward to increased partnership with universities and colleges.

In 2019, the conference brought Renee Meloche onto the committee and she has been a great addition.

Before COVID hit, the committee was working closely with EPL on write nights. The committee has also been looking at increased partnerships, such as with YEG Writes and NanoWrimo Edmonton and other local initiatives.

The rise of Black Lives Matter in recent months has challenged the publishing industry to address how authors of colour are treated and their stories are told.

The committee hopes to use the Writers Hub for Youth channels to help authors promote their stories to the youth audience (more info will be appearing in WriteClick and the social media contacts are in Sophie's report)

10. Questions

Leslie Chivers outlined the process for asking a question for the online meeting. Questions on reports were asked for first.

Rona Altrows: Thanked the board and staff for their hard work and all they've been able to do under such difficult conditions.

Q: In the annual report in the report names, there was a typo about the City Book Prize winners. The Calgary and Edmonton Book Prize winners were switched.

A: This can be corrected.

Anne Logan: Echoed thanks to the board and staff for their hard work.

Q: Worry that fund development is falling to the wayside without an actual committee. One of the objectives in the plan was a sponsorship plan (originally timetabled for April 2020) – was such a plan available for members to review? Are there activities going on to promote fund development with the board and membership?

A: When the board met, it was acknowledged that fund development was critical and that fundraising is an ongoing issue. One of the goals was to find corporate sponsors for gala and conference. The goals of the fundraising plan have not changed; one of the things moving forward for the new task force once it is fully formed that will be important is to put things in

place that will be sustainable for the organization. There have been lots of good ideas, but the momentum was often lost when the board member championing it left. Sustainability for both funding and the organization and stewardship of supporters and government support will be other important areas; other opportunities to build relationships with corporate sponsors for long-term sustainability are also being looked at.

Susan followed up by urging board involvement in fundraising due to limitations on availability of staff time. The task force is a great idea, but the responsibility will be on the board to lead fund development and tell the members how they can help.

Shaun Hunger:

Q: How are things going with the hiring for the Calgary office?

A (Carol): There have been 16 applications and a short list is being made as we speak. The goal is to have someone in place before Sam leaves.

Alice Major:

Q: Asked about the impact of casino funding on the Guild in light of changes to that funding and COVID.

A: Casinos are reopening in stages; stage one did not allow for non-profit volunteers. Tables are now reopening and non-profits will be allowed (in smaller numbers). Leslie's understanding is that casinos that were scheduled will be shifted timewise, maintaining the order but pushing the dates forward from the time of closure.

Carol: Acknowledged this is a big concern (\$75000 funding for two-year period); the casino report for this term is being turned in now, but we don't know our dates for next year yet. There are many uncertainties for the budget, including casino, provincial budget (quarterly payments this year and next year are contingent on government funding) among other factors. Funds in the future may be unpredictable.

Jason: mentioned chat comments are valuable, but if you want a comment made on record he can acknowledge people so they can speak (Leslie asked if the chat can be saved as a file – Jason believes that can be done afterwards).

Jane: Had no further questions beyond what was already asked, but expressed her appreciation for all that had been able to happen this past year.

Dustin:

Q/Comments: Thankathon was looked at but past data suggested that it didn't do much to increase contributions, though it did make people feel good it may not be a good fund development technique in itself.

Board by design is a policy board; they do not necessarily take actions themselves for things like fund development. Modifications to the bylaws might be required to allow them to take more action.

Anne: Acknowledged that this is the point of the task forces/committees, but then the committee was disbanded because fund development was something to be done monthly. Instead of a Thank-a-thon, what else might be done?

A (Leslie): Thank-a-thon is a tool/tactic. What is being talked about at a higher level is stewardship of supporters (how do we get, treat, and retain donors?) How do we achieve the goals we are trying to achieve? The task force will be determining the answers to these and other questions.

Carol: Carol has not seen a non-profit board that is not responsible for the financial wellbeing of the organization, be they policy board or not (Leslie concurred).

Barb Howard:

Q: Echoed Anne's comments and the dates from the Strategic Plan (have these been amended due to the pandemic? Have the dates been met? Examples included Advocacy Plan, Social Return on Investment, Succession Planning (Carol is an excellent ED, but succession planning is standard to have).

A (Leslie): Leslie gathered 8 years of past documentation on fundraising, minutes, etc. and the Strategic Plan and realistically accomplishing those outcomes will be a big question for the next iteration of the board. E.g. If increasing membership is a goal, what is being put into place by the Board to be able to do this?

Barb and Leslie acknowledged the dates originally selected may have been "a bit aggressive."

Theresa Ezeuko:

Q/Comments: People behind government and corporate sponsorship want to see what we do and how we monetize what we do. What do we bring to them? The example given was Writers' Rights, what it does. When one company provides some funding, this can be taken to another company and used to pitch to them for why they should also support the organization or project; this in turn could be taken (e.g. to City of Calgary) to see if they will match that funding. Social media can be tapped into as a tool to get the WGA known both in Alberta and beyond.

A (Leslie): Went back to the point that the Task Force will need to establish how these goals and stewardship could be reached. It's important that the Task Force get together, gel, and act quickly.

Leslie Greentree:

Q: Sponsorship is being looked for 4 awards. What are they? What are the questions/goals around that?

A (Leslie): Couldn't remember the specific awards off hand, but the goal would be to have multi-year sponsorship agreements and the donor would be recognized throughout that term (3 to 5 years), and then asked to continue on.

Anne Logan:

Comments: Corporate sponsorship may not be worth pursuing due to the current recession; individual donors are probably a better bet. One step for the committee might be to contact lapsed donors we have had past relationships with. Currently corporations are inundated with asks, including from other non-profits (many larger than the WGA).

Question period concluded at 20:08, board will review the chat comments as well.

11. Leslie: Requested a motion to accept the reports as sources of information. Motion made by Alison and seconded by Elizabeth. MOTION PASSED (28 votes in favour).

12. Appointment of Auditors

Leslie asked Blaine to make the motion, as he did last year. Blaine moved for Bergon and Company to be the auditors for the 2020/2021, seconded by Bob Stallworthy and Rona Altrows. MOTION PASSED (31 votes in favour).

13. Board Elections

President, Vice President, Youth Committee, Member at Large

If the vote is not through acclamation (no other name put forward), voting can be done anonymously by Jason using the polling system in Zoom. Show of hands can also be used unless a poll vote is required to choose a name.

A. President

Leslie called for nominations from the floor.

Leslie made a second call for nominations.

No nominations were put forward.

Leslie's name had been put forward; as he has served three years, so Leslie put forth that the most he could stay on the board would be for one more term (one year) so there would need to be another election next year.

Carol commented that terms are two years; Leslie was not *elected* to the board for his first term (he was appointed) – he was elected in 2018, so it would be a two-year term again.

With no other names put forward, Leslie is president by acclamation.

B. Vice President

Leslie asked for nominations from the floor.

Theresa Ezeuko's name had been put forward; with no other nominations Theresa is the new WGA Board vice president. She has past experience on the board of other organizations, and recently moved back to Calgary and is happy to be a part of the WGA and back home in Alberta. Theresa expressed her thanks for being accepted as Vice President.

C. Youth Representation

Sophie is currently in this role and at the end of her term so is running for re-election.

Leslie called for nominations from the floor. With no other nominations, Sophie remains the Youth Representative by acclamation.

D. Member-at-Large

Leslie mentioned there is a geographic limitation on the board, and with the current board membership no further board members can be from Edmonton or Calgary.

If no one is nominated at the meeting, the board can look for someone to fill the position afterwards.

Jason asked on behalf of a member question for a bit of an explanation on what is involved for the member at large and being on the board.

Leslie explained that the board meeting requirements are being adapted to a virtual environment. A big part of the board's work is figuring out how the goals of the Strategic Plan can be achieved. Board meetings will be 1.5 to 2 hours long, plus committee work for some board members as committees and task forces are formed (the fund development task force already has its board members).

Leslie called again for nominations from the floor. No nominations were put forward, so this topic was closed for this meeting to move on to other discussion points.

14. Other Business

Leslie commented that Alberta's pandemic numbers are rising and the year ahead will require ongoing adaptation.

Bob Stallworthy: Made a motion to thank the board members, both those who are staying and those who are leaving. This was considered approved by way of resounding response from the attendees.

Elizabeth McLachlan: Expressed thanks to the WGA for transitioning so beautifully when we were hit with COVID and having to adjust to a pandemic situation, moving to online programming and webinars so quickly. Speaking from Lethbridge, it has been nice to have access to so many events outside of Edmonton and Calgary.

Leslie thanked everyone for showing up tonight and expressed how great it was to see everyone and asked for a motion to adjourn.

Alice Major and Bob Stallworthy motioned to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 20:27.

Thanks from Leslie and Bob to the technical team for the meeting.