



# Table of Contents





# ABOUT THE WRITERS' GUILD OF ALBERTA

m \* m

The Writers' Guild of Alberta (WGA) was formed in October 1980 on SAIT campus to provide a meeting ground and collective voice for all the writers of the province. Our members write in every genre at every level of expertise.

The WGA helps give Alberta writers a sense of unity and community and is the largest provincial writers' organization in Canada.

### VISION

A thriving writing community that is diverse, valued, and celebrated.

### **MISSION**

We support and advocate for writers at all stages of their writing life, providing opportunities to connect and grow.

### **CORE VALUES**

- Community
- Advocacy
- Relationship Building
- Growth & Development
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

### **GUIDING BELIEFS**

- The literary arts are essential to the wellbeing of all individuals and communities and contribute to the economy and quality of life in Alberta.
- Networking and collaboration are beneficial to innovation and the creative process.
- A safe and welcoming environment, one that respects and invites diversity and inclusion, is essential for writers to pursue their craft.
- Knowledge and ongoing development are fundamental to creative growth.



# President's Report

m \* m

The 2023/2024 year saw significant turnover at the Board level, with a host of new Executive and Members at Large on the Board. Collectively, they brought great experience to the Board and helped the WGA maintain its longstanding health and resilience. As membership and event attendance and registrations rebounded and even increased over some pre-pandemic numbers, the Board did an effective job of providing direction for the Guild and ensuring its long-term stability in support of Alberta's writers.

The fiscal landscape has changed since 2019 and not for the better. Persistent high inflation has created new pressures on the Guild as we strove to keep our level of engagement at high levels while also absorbing higher costs for nearly all supplies and labour. Some tools and resources, such as staff computers, needed replacing in 2023/2024, and software licences continue to rise in cost at levels well above the average rate of inflation. The Board has passed a budget for the coming year that reflects awareness of these factors and offers a conservative fiscal vision that should prove resistant to financial shocks. As noted in Giorgia Severini's Executive Director report, "rising costs continue to be a concern, for both arts organizations and the public as we notice in the continued rise in requests for bursaries for our programs." With these pressures in mind, we encourage members who can to donate to the funds, such as the W.O. Mitchell Scholarship Fund, that help offset costs and provide programming bursaries for members who face financial hardship.

Lower interest in online and hybrid programming means that, moving forward, we need to closely consider the cost:access ratio for remote programming, a concern that will particularly impact our members located outside of the Edmonton and Calgary centres. Members for whom the ease and access of remote programming matter are strongly encouraged to support such programming to demonstrate its continued need. Speaking of regional centres, while some continued programming in Edmonton has seen robust and even increasing attendance, it has not kept pace with Calgary in terms of overall and youth programming; a trend reflected in Board membership. We are thrilled with how robust the events and community are in Calgary and hope the coming year sees a spread of this energy to other regions.

2023 saw a return of a Youth Director to the Executive of the Board, and Kendall Bistretzan has had a busy year initiating events and engaging with youth writers and groups across the province. We are delighted with her work in the role and look forward to another year of increasing youth (under 30) engagement in 2024/2025. Members under 30 who want to get involved are encouraged to reach out to the Board and Kendall or to visit the website to learn more about events in their areas. We also invite them to get involved with the WGA as volunteers.

Other key committees and initiatives include the work of the Membership Committee which, under the direction of former President Blaine Newton, has done extensive work reviewing bylaws and Terms of Reference for the Guild, with recommendations to the Board to revise how we create awards committees and juries in ways that increase transparency, reduce conflicts of interest, and ensure relevant skill levels in jurors. The Committee has also crafted a member survey that will be sent out this summer to help the Guild focus its services and programming on what members need and want from us. The Equity Committee, chaired by Colin Martin, worked to address the key concerns raised in last year's Board retreat and built into our Strategic Plan to increase equity, access, and representation. Board members now offer a Land Acknowledgement at every meeting, and the WGA nears finalization on Acknowledgements to be used for all Guild activities and communications. Injuries and absences from key members in 2024 curtailed some of the Committee's activities, and we look forward to renewed activity in the 2024/2025 year with a particular focus on decolonizing our annual conference.

The Board this year decided to reschedule our annual strategic planning retreat for the fall rather than the spring so that such plans get developed by the Board responsible for their execution. At this time, we thus remain directed by the initiatives to increase equity, access, and sustainability covered at the 2023 Board retreat. Many members of this year's Board will, if elected, return to continue that work and lend their experience to planning the future direction of the Guild. Finally, we draw notice to key members who will not be returning to the Board, including Vice President Dorothy Bentley and former President Blaine Newton, who provided invaluable work, knowledge, and experience to Board activities this year. They will be dearly missed in the coming year, even as we excitedly welcome those who join us at the AGM and find election to the WGA Board.

In Solidarity,

Colin Martin President

# **Executive Director's Report**

m \* m

During the 2023/2024 year, we continued to see many successes among the Alberta writing community, as well as within our organization, a notable one being that our membership numbers recovered from the dip they took during the pandemic. We saw an increase in all membership categories and can confidently say we are back to pre-pandemic levels, with over 1000 members. We're happy to welcome many new members, but also grateful to long-term members who stuck with us, or returned after temporary absences.

I hesitate to declare everything is back to "normal," or that we should accept a vision of the literary sector that is exactly the same as 2019. Some of our favourite venues have shut down or have faced changes, such as the Banff Centre, which at this time is unable to support the return of the winter writing retreat we held there for decades. Rising costs continue to be a concern, for both arts organizations and the public, as we see in the continued rise in requests for bursaries for our programs. We want to continue accessibility of our programs by offering online and hybrid options for members unable to attend in-person events, but we have noticed waning interest. Less interest isn't zero, and it doesn't mean we should offer fewer online programs, but we have to take a closer look at what member needs are and how we can best meet them. I encourage members to be in touch with me, or other staff and board, to let us know if you liked or didn't like a particular program or its format, or if there is anything specific you would like to see.

Most of our programs this year did very well, often selling out and sustaining themselves. Our Controversy @ Noon online panel series is a notable success, bringing in high attendance and engaging discussion on issues important to writers. We have several recurring popular events in Calgary, including the Poetry Parlour at Pachamama Soul Café, which has been described as a staple of the community. Attendance at our Edmonton events is increasing while we host them at a consistent venue, the Rooster Kitchen. WordsWorth, our summer youth writing camp, is on track to recovering from the pandemic as well. Our registrations to date, with two months to go, are just shy of the total from last year. For more information on all our activities this year, please see our Report on Activities on page 07.

Keeping programs sustainable remains a challenge. Many granting agencies offer one-time funding for programs with the expectation they will go on to sustain themselves. Yet some of our key programs, such as the Horizons Writers Circle for emerging BIPOC writers, do not generate revenue because they need to be accessible to participants. We are continuing to build our main endowment fund, as well as other funds started by donors to fund initiatives in perpetuity. We have a goal to raise \$10,000 for one such fund, the W.O. Mitchell Scholarship Fund to support emerging writers, within three years of its launch in November 2022, and thanks to several very generous donations, we are on track to meet the goal. Donations to our endowment funds, or directly to our programs or bursary fund, are always enormously helpful and appreciated.

I want to thank outgoing board members Blaine Newton, Dorothy Bentley, and Nicolas Brown. They have been a tremendous help this year and I'll miss their presence on the board.

Our strong staff team continues to drive our success with ambitious ideas and unwavering dedication. This year, we welcomed Christyn Carter, our new Communications Coordinator, who started in November 2023 and immediately made huge strides in refining our communications and promotions strategies. We also welcomed Sydney Pietsch for the summer as Summer Programs and Digital Media Assistant, and she was an instant help with both content and administration.

We are happy for the role we play in helping Alberta's writing community to thrive, and hope we can keep up the momentum in the coming year.

Giorgia Severini Executive Director

# **Report on Activities**



# Advocacy

The WGA is a member of the Edmonton Arts Council, PEN Canada, and Access Copyright. We are represented on the Alberta Partners for Arts and Culture (APAC) Coalition, the Calgary Distinguished Writers Program, Calgary's When Words Collide, the Canadian Writers' Foundation, Canadian Copyright Institute, and the Cultural Human Resources Council. We work collaboratively with Calgary's Wordfest, the Edmonton Stroll of Poets, LitFest (Edmonton's Nonfiction festival), as well as writing organizations, such as Alexandra Writers' Centre Society (AWCS) in Calgary, across the country.

News and articles of interest are posted regularly in *WestWord* and *WriteClick* and through the WGA social media channels.

# Alberta Culture Days

Alberta Culture Days is an opportunity for communities across Alberta to celebrate arts and culture through local events and activities. For Alberta Culture Days, the WGA hosted an in-person poetry workshop in Edmonton hosted by Shima Robinson, and an in-person memoir workshop in Calgary hosted by paolo da costa. The theme of our events was: A Vocation to Write: Sharing Your Words, Your SELF, with Community.

Participants of the poetry workshop explored the meanings of the words in the workshop title: "What is Voice?", "What is Vocality?", and "What is Vocation?" The workshop encouraged discussion of the collective and individual interpretations of these aspects of human ingenuity, and time was provided for writing and reflection as well as group discussion. Participants in the memoir workshop examined how much one should reveal about personal history and inner feelings when writing in this genre. Truth, kindness, and revelation were key components the facilitator discussed during the event.

Both events took place on September 23, 2023.

# Alberta Literary Awards and Gala

The WGA Alberta Literary Awards currently presents \$12,600 in prizes for the following awards:

- Georges Bugnet Award for Fiction (fiction book)
- Wilfrid Eggleston Award for Nonfiction (nonfiction book)
- Stephan G. Stephannson Award for Poetry (poetry book)
- Gwen Pharis Ringwood Award for Drama (published or produced play)
- R. Ross Annett Award for Children's Literature (alternates between picture book and chapter book)
- Memoir Award
- Howard O'Hagan Award for Short Story (published short story)
- Short Story Collection Award (presented every second year)
- James H. Gray Award for Short Nonfiction (published short nonfiction)
- Jon Whyte Memorial Essay Award (unpublished essay)
- Golden Pen Award (lifetime achievement)

The WGA was grateful to hold the 2023 gala in person at Fort Calgary on June 3rd, 2023, during our annual conference. The keynote speakers were Shane Onyou, drag performer and 2SLGBTQIA+ activist, and Naomi Davis, senior literary agent at BookEnds Literary Agency. The Golden Pen Award was presented to Joan Crate. Readings with the 2023 finalists were held at Audreys Books in Edmonton on April 23rd, 2023, and at Shelf Life Books in Calgary on April 25th, 2023.

The 2024 gala will be held in person at Coast Edmonton Plaza on June 8th, 2024. The keynote speaker will be Juleus Ghunta.

See page 17 for this year's finalists.

#### Annual Conference

The theme of the 2023 WGA Conference was: Origins: A Return to Networking, Publishing, Genre and Craft, and it took place from June 2-4 at Fort Calgary. The event focused on helping participants make new connections, foster old ones, and network with other writers and industry professionals over the course of the weekend. The conference offered online, in-person, and hybrid events, including keynotes, panels, workshops, and masterclasses on a variety topics and genres.

The conference had 141 participants in total and all registrants received access to recorded sessions through YouTube for a limited time following the event.

Some of the special guests included:

- Alice Major (Knife on Snow)
- Waubgeshig Rice (Moon of the Turning Leaves)
- Emily St. John Mandel (Sea of Tranquility)
- Rayanne Haines (Tell the Birds Your Body is Not a Gun)
- Weyman Chan (Witness Back at Me: Mis-Mothering and Transmigration)
- Berman Ghan (*The Years Shall Run Like Rabbits*)
- Wakefield Brewster, spoken word artist

The theme for the WGA's 2024 conference is: No Place Like Home. The upcoming conference looks to examine the meaning of literary citizenship: What is literary citizenship, what makes us active literary citizens, and how can all of us writers continue to contribute – in our own way – to the very special literary scene here in our province?

Along with literary citizenship, the Spring conference – which will include hybrid events — will explore the nuances of writing in various genres, the business of writing, and the art of writing on timely topics like climate change and other important issues; the WGA wants to explore what it means to be an Alberta writer now.

### Canadian Literacy Centre (CLC)

The mission of the CLC is to foster knowledge, reading, and appreciation of Canadian literatures, in English and in French, with a special focus on Indigenous, minority, and marginalized writing. The WGA partnered with the CLC on two masterclasses, the first on September 29th, 2023, with Olive Senior, and the second on February 21st, 2024, with Wayne Arthurson.

The masterclass with Olive Senior, "Writing Your Environment" was held in-person and was open to all emerging creative writers. Black, Indigenous, and other racialized writers were especially encouraged to join. The Masterclass with Wayne Arthurson was held online and focussed on key clauses in a book contract and other writerly business.

### Controversy @ Noon Series

The WGA offered its inaugural Controversy @ Noon panel on September 20, 2023. The theme of the panel was "The Effects of AI on the Literary World," and the discussion went so well that the WGA team sought grant funding in order to have the series continue the following year. Successful in securing funding from the Rozsa Foundation for the duration of 2024, the WGA has offered panels on the following topics to date:

- The Ethics of Writing on Social Issues (January 24, 2024) – 60 attendees
- Book Banning in Alberta and Canada (February 21, 2024) – 70 attendees
- Trans Voice Magnified (March 20, 2024) 13 attendees
- Ageism in the Industry (April 24, 2024) 40 attendees

Controversy @ Noon aims to address the interests and concerns of the WGA membership and the Alberta writing community, while fostering a fresh collaboration dynamic and providing stimulating discussion, straightforward facts, and clear calls for action — without having to wait for the WGA's next annual conference or festival panel.

# Digital Strategies

When the COVID-19 pandemic forced all of the WGA programming to an online format, we noted how online programming allowed for a greater number and variety of participants and hosts at our events. Even though we've transitioned back to inperson for the majority of our events, our online programming has continued due to the increase in rural and remote attendance. The mix of online, inperson, and hybrid events has allowed our programming to be as accessible to the greater Alberta writing community as possible.

### **Events and Workshops**

The WGA hosts monthly events in both Edmonton and Calgary which are generally free for members and available to non-members for a small fee. The WGA continues to host professional development presentations, workshops, intensives, and panels both in-person and online. The online format has helped engage more members and communities, and has helped with making WGA programming more accessible. The WGA continues to navigate its way forward and adjust programming to fit the needs of its members and the public.

For a complete list of the past year's events and workshops, see page 15.

#### Horizons Writers Circle

Horizons Writers Circle, funded by the Edmonton Arts Council, is a program that provides support and mentorship for writers within the Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) community, ESL, and underrepresented writers who live in Edmonton and are at the beginning of their literary journey.

This year's Horizons Writers Circle has 5 mentees each matched with a mentor for 5 months, January to May 2024. The mentees have heritage affiliations with El-Salvador, India, Jamaica, Philippines, and Vietnam-China. The genres are ekphrastic poetry, memoir-poetry, playwriting, and solarpunk (a subgenre in Science Fiction). The mentees have had two public readings, and 5 workshops.

Some were discussions with Writers in Residence Premee Mohamed and Wayne Arthruson, and some were writing workshops with Giselle General (Memoir), Pierette Requir (Stillness), and Josh Languedoc (writing dialogue).

The final reading for the Horizons mentees took place May 11 at the Coast Edmonton Plaza Hotel, together with the mentees from WGA mentorship. We will continue to meet monthly with the Horizons mentees over the summer to continue the writing and critique workshops, and provide more opportunities for them to meet more writers in the Edmonton writing community. New this year as well is that we invited people who applied but were not accepted into Horizons mentorship to some of the workshops. The aim is to keep them engaged with WGA, and to help them create a stronger application for the next round.

General sessions included:

- · Meet with Premee Mohamed
- Meet with Wayne Arthurson
- Memoir writing with Giselle General
- Mentee Public Readings
- Writing Workshop with Pierette Requier
- Playwriting and Dialogue workshop with Josh Languedoc

#### Intensives

Springboards Story to Script

In 2023 the WGA partnered with Workshop West Playwrights' Theatre to offer a Story to Script Intensive for Springboards, a New Play Festival. Facilitated by Katherine Koller, the intensive consisted of two in-person workshops and one in-person blue pencil session for each participant. Geared toward emerging playwrights and writers new to playwriting, the intensive focused on story finding, character development, and dialogue drafting. It took place from March 19 to March 26, 2023.

#### Moving Your Manuscript Forward

The WGA also offered a Moving Your Manuscript Forward intensive from October 4, 2023, to January 17, 2024. Led by Natasha Deen, participants examined the importance of character development and the business of writing in two separate online workshops. The workshops were followed by thirty-minute blue pencil session with each participant, giving attendees the unique opportunity to discuss their work with Natasha one on one.

### Kemosa Scholarship

First established in 2017 by Dr. Nhung Tran-Davies in partnership with Tlicho Dene author Richard Van Camp, the Kemosa Scholarship offers an opportunity for First Nations, Métis and Inuit Mothers to obtain resources to help them complete the work on their writing whether that be a novel, a collection of stories, poems, or whatever other form their writing might take.

Richard Van Camp, Jacqueline Guest, and Nicole Harrish were the 2023 judges. They selected the three finalists (Shelley Willier, Rhonda Gladue, and Paige Cardinal) as well as an honourable mention (Diana Powers).

# Manuscript Reading Service

The Manuscript Reading Service is a valuable opportunity for writers to have their manuscript read by a professional writer who will then provide them with a detailed evaluation of their work and suggestions for improvement. Writers send their manuscripts to the WGA head office, and they are matched with a professional writer whose experience most closely suits the manuscript submitted. The WGA subsidizes the services for members to keep it affordable. There were 23 participants in the 2023/24 fiscal year.

# Mentorship Program

2024 marks the thirteenth year for the Mentorship program, which pairs emerging writers with established Alberta authors for four months to develop the emerging writer's literary work, and to provide support and encouragement. Sponsored by the RBC Foundation, this program has seen many of its participants grow and succeed as published authors.

- Ann Sutherland Fiction matched with mentor Barb Howard
- Chad Neufeld Pilot (TV script) matched with mentor AJ Devlin (Chad's participation was supported by the Sharon L. Henderson Award for Young and Emerging Writers)
- Juleus Ghunta Poetry matched with mentor Uchechukwu Peter Umezurike
- Dianne Koebel-Pede YA Fiction matched with mentor Gail Anderson-Dargatz (Supported by the Mary Bell Memorial Scholarship)
- Margaret McKeon Memoir matched with mentor Matthew Stepanic
- Megan Stobbe Poetry matched with mentor Peter Midgley
- Miji Campbell Fiction matched with mentor Ali Bryan

### **Partnerships**

The WGA continued the following major ongoing partnerships in 2023/2024: The City of Calgary W.O. Mitchell Book Prize, The Robert Kroetsch City of Edmonton Book Prize, and administration for the Edmonton Stroll of Poets. The WGA has also successfully partnered on events and programs with the Canadian Literature Centre, Wordfest, the Book Publishers Association of Alberta, Calgary's Single Onion Reading Series, Calgary Spoken Word Festival, the Literary Translators Association of Canada, and the Alexandra Writers' Centre Society.

#### City Book Prizes

Both The City of Calgary W.O. Mitchell Book Prize and The Robert Kroetsch City of Edmonton Book Prize continue to be successful. The Calgary prize received over 50 entries and the Edmonton prize received over 35.

The WGA hired three successful and prominent jurors for each prize, oversaw the jury's group deliberations, and collected the final jury results and declarations.

Close communication and collaboration with the two cities were very successful in the execution of both city's respective prizes. The Robert Kroetsch City of Edmonton Book Prize winner, Mathew James Weigel for *Whitemud Walking*, was announced with the other primary winners of the Edmonton Arts Prizes on May 3, 2023. The winner of The City of Calgary W.O. Mitchell Book Prize, Suzette Mayr, for *The Sleeping Car Porter* (Coach House Books) was announced during The Calgary Awards on June 14, 2023.

#### Edmonton Stroll of Poets

The Edmonton Stroll of Poets Society has been in partnership with the WGA for many years. The WGA continues to provide administrative support to run a very successful organization. The Edmonton Stroll of Poets has over 100 active members, holds over 20 readings in a year, releases a weekly newsletter, and also publishes a yearly anthology. This year, with the WGA's administrative support, the Stroll of Poets opened a Google Nonprofit Workspace, which will allow for more seamless collaboration between their committee and board members.

#### Retreats

The WGA will be hosting an in-person weekend retreat at Sanctum in Fall 2024, from September 20-22 in Caroline, Alberta. We hope to secure two facilitators for the duration of the weekend, where registrants will have the opportunity to enjoy a beautiful, scenic, nature-laden venue while taking the time to work on their writing projects.

#### Webinars

The Get Publishing Webinar Series was launched in 2016 after the Get Publishing Communications Society dissolved and gifted its brand to the WGA. The webinars allow more accessibility to presentations about the writing craft and business for members who are unable to attend our events in Edmonton and Calgary.

They also allow us to more easily bring in presenters from outside Alberta, thus increasing the diversity of voices in our programs. We also offer recordings of select webinars for purchase.

See WGA Events on page 15 for the webinars we hosted over the past year.

#### WestWord

WestWord Magazine is distributed quarterly to over 1000 members and stakeholders, with Raymond Gariépy as editor. The magazine continues to include articles on the craft, business, and life of writing, regular features such as a column on legal natters for writers, as well as community and member news. WestWord is available in both print and electronic editions, and is currently distributed to over 600 members by post and over 570 by email.

#### WGA Podcast

The WGA podcast channel aims to encourage more readers to explore Alberta authors by making the audio recording of the WGA events and programs available to the virtual community. Ongoing events and discussions about the Canadian literary field, such as the Online Reading Series, can be accessed at any time through our podcast channel. The channel will continue to be updated to give members the chance to revisit or explore any of our former events or programs.

#### WriteClick

WriteClick, our email newsletter, continues to be distributed to members who opt-in to receive it. The newsletter is distributed to over 1000 members each week. It includes current WGA news, event listings, member book launches and readings, upcoming workshops and classes, employment and volunteer opportunities for writers, and up-to-date market and contest listings.

WriteClick is distributed weekly so members receive information in a timely fashion. WGA special bulletins are also distributed via WriteClick when required. WriteClick continues to have a higher-than-average open rate and click rate for our industry.

### Youth Writing Residencies

The WGA's youth writing programs and residencies for 11 - 19 year-olds continue to be popular as well as an invaluable experience for young writers. Participants experience not only improvement in their writing but also personal growth, connections with like-minded young writers, and mentorship from experienced and enthusiastic artists. WordsWorth was once again held in person at Red Deer Polytechnic, Drink the Wild Air was unfortunately cancelled, and Circuit Tree was rebooted into a series of workshops throughout the year. Colin Matty once again served as Camp Director for WordsWorth and Drink the Wild Air.

WordsWorth is a week-long sleep-over creative writing residency for young writers and artists who enjoy storytelling and believe in the power of words. Guided by established and respected artist-instructors, participants experience writing and storytelling through a variety of forms. But the experiences don't begin and end with the classes; young writers come together to celebrate writing through friendships, campfires, concerts, open mic sessions, hikes, free-writing time, and semi-competitive games.

As we are continuing to regain momentum for our youth programming, and to promote the chaotic liveliness that WordsWorth participants keep coming back for, we once again only offered two weeks of programming. The first week ran from July 9th-14th and was for ages 11-14. The second week ran from July 16th-21st and was for ages 15-19. WordsWorth 2023: LET'S GO!! attracted a total of 34 participants: 15 participants for week one and 19 participants for week two.

The 2023 staff consisted of Colin Matty as the Camp Director; Sadie MacGillivray, Jess Tollestrup, Gab Dubbbeldam, and Kaja Pedersen as the Creative Team; as well as Kim Firmston, Johnny MacRae, David Wilson, Marin Perlette, Shima Robinson, Kunji Ikeda, Marcello Di Cintio, and Steve Currie as the instructors.

Examples of the workshops offered include:

- Collaborative Writing
- Imagination in Morion
- Writing Wrongs
- Stories that Move
- The Writer's Voice



# **Youth Committee Report**



I joined the Writers' Guild of Alberta Board as the Youth Representative in 2023. In taking this role, my goal was to host new events to draw in young participants, while making existing events more accessible and less intimidating so that people under 30 feel they can benefit from being part of the WGA. A year later, I am very proud of what the Youth Committee has been able to accomplish. We started by re-vamping the defunct @wga\_youth\_hub Instagram. Committee member Kate Gough took charge of curating content to appeal to a young audience, including a series on coping with rejection, Q&As with local authors, and other helpful resources. The Instagram page currently has 268 followers.

The youth committee hosted our first online Youth Writers' Circle in September. Eleven people signed up, and each participant took the opportunity to share some of their work and seek feedback. The event was positively received. We hosted a second Youth Writers' Circle in February, though this one saw less of a turnout. We decided to switch gears and instead focus on elevating youth presence at already-existing WGA events.

I worked with WGA staff liaison Ashley Frerichs to organize a youth-centered Connections Brewing Night. Ashley graciously allowed me to host and curate the evening's readers. We were joined by poet Bret Crowle, whose debut poetry collection is being released by Frontenac House this fall, and poet Mikaela Cacho, who released a poetry collection in 2019, and is currently very involved in the zine community. There were 17 people in attendance.

This summer, we hope to shine a further spotlight on youth talent by having committee member Kate Gough headline the July Poetry Parlour, while also encouraging other writers under 30 to attend and participate. Other ideas the youth committee would like to pursue include a zine fair, promoting youth submissions to WestWord, and a youth-specific Coffee and Chat at the library. Our goal is to space these out over the remaining months of the year to build and maintain a community of young writers in Alberta.

I encourage all Alberta writers who are under 30 to keep up to date with the WGA programs offered throughout the year, whether it is youth-specific or not. When young writers feel they belong in the community, they'll remain and contribute to the sphere of Alberta writing for years to come.

Kendall Bistretzan Youth Committee Chair

# **Membership Committee Report**



The membership committee was formed based on recommendations arising from a WGA Board retreat. Acknowledging the overlap between membership, equity, fund raising and programming, it was determined that the membership committee should first prepare a survey to be sent to the membership in order for the Board and staff to better understand the demographics of the membership, what the membership needed from the Guild, where Guild programs may require modification or extension in order to be current with the needs of the membership, and to identify, as far as is reasonable, who is at the table and who is not.

This information is at the core of what the WGA needs to remain relevant with the current landscape of the Alberta writing community and, perhaps more importantly, what that landscape is likely to look like in the future. This is essential if the WGA is not only to support Alberta writers, but to lead.

Building on the framework of the previous membership survey of 2014 (now 10 years old), the committee asked the questions: what do we need to know; why do we want to know it; what actions might we take based on this information?

The membership committee developed a draft survey for review by the Board as a whole. This draft, up-dated based upon Board input, has now been provided to staff for additional feedback and to identify the technological requirements of the survey (how information is collected and how this information is to be turned into knowledge).

It is anticipated that the survey will go out to the membership in the late summer/early fall of this year. It will form the basis for future Board actions and assist in the preparation of a similar survey for non-members to be prepared by the Equity Committee.

Thanks to the committee members for their time and their insight. Their range of perspectives was invaluable.

Blaine Newton, Past President Committee Chair

# **WGA Events**



# AWCS & WGA Connections Brewing Pub Night (Prairie Dog Brewing, Calgary)

April 3, May 1, June 12, July 17, August 21, September 11, October 2, November 6, December 4, 2023, January 8, February 5, March 4, 2024

# Queer Calgary & WGA Writing Group (Alexandra Writers Centre, Calgary)

April 8, 2023

### Calgary Coffee Chat (Various locations, Calgary)

April 13, May 4, 25, June 29, September 7, October 11, November 10, 15, December 8, 2023, January 22, February 16, 26, March 4, 11, 18, 25, 2024

# The City of Calgary W.O. Mitchell Book Prize Shortlist Readings (Shelf Life Books, Calgary) *April* 13, 2023

# Kemosa Reading Event: A Celebration of Métis, Inuit, and First Nations Mothers Who Write (Yorath House, Edmonton)

April 14, 2023

#### Poetry Parlour (Pachamama Soul Café, Calgary)

April 18, May 16, June 20, September 19, October 17, November 21, December 19, 2023, January 16, February 19, March 19, April 16, 2024

# Single Onion Poetry Reading Series (Shelf Life Books, Calgary)

April 20, May 18, October 19, November 16, 2023

# Alberta Literary Awards Finalists Readings (Audreys Books, Edmonton)

April 23, 2023

# Alberta Literary Awards Finalists Reading (Shelf Life Books, Calgary)

April 25, 2023

# Mentorship Program Reading (Varscona Hotel, Edmonton)

May 6, 2023

# Spring Poetry Reading: 9 by 7 (Shelf Life Books, Calgary)

May 30, 2023

# WGA Annual Conference: Origins (Fort Calgary, Calgary)

June 2 - 4, 2023

# Alberta Literary Awards Gala (Fort Calgary, Calgary) June 3, 2023

# Writers Outside (Outside, Edmonton)

June 21, 2023

### No Alcohol in the Archives! (Online)

July 4, 2023

# WordsWorth - Let's Go! (Red Deer Polytechnic, Red Deer)

July 9 - 14, 2023 (Week 1), July 16 - 21, 2023 (Week 2)

#### Writers Outside, But Inside (Online)

July 26, 2023

# Fort McMurray Write Nights (Wood Buffalo Regional Library, Fort McMurray)

June 15, 2023

# Dog Days of Summer Calgary Mixer (Community Wise Patio, Calgary)

August 10, 2023

### **How to Query / Pitch an Agent Webinar (Online)**

August 10, 2023

# Writers Outside! Are You Afraid of the Dark? (Outdoors, Edmonton)

August 24, 2023

# September Soiree: Poetry & Music (cSpace,

Calgary)

September 13, 2023

The Olive Reading Series Relaunch (Rooster Kitchen, Edmonton)

September 13, 2023

Controversy @ Noon: The Effects of AI on Writers and the Literary World (Online)

September 20, 2023

WGA Youth Committee Online Writers' Circle (Online)

September 20, 2023

Alberta Culture Days - Voice and Vocality as Vocation: Speaking Words to Give Meaning to Life in Community (Edmonton Public Library Strathcona Branch, Edmonton)

September 23, 2023

Alberta Culture Days - Memoir as Medicine for the Heart (Alexandra Writers' Centre, Calgary)

September 23, 2023

WGA Fall Kick Off (Rooster Kitchen, Edmonton)

October 4, 2023

WGA Fall Kick Off (Joyce on 4th, Calgary)

October 5, 2023

Moving Your Manuscript Forward Intensive with Natasha Deen (Online)

October 4, 2023 & January 17, 2024

Horror Workshop with Francine Cunningham (Online)

October 11, 2023

This Beautiful Place: Authors in Fish Creek Park (The PoetTree at the Bow Valley Ranche, Calgary)

October 15, 2023

Literary Travel Adventures (Rooster Kitchen, Edmonton)

November 2, 2023

WGA Christmas Party (Asymmetrical Brewing, Edmonton)

December 12, 2023

WGA Christmas Party (Joyce on 4th, Calgary)

December 13, 2023

Retreat Six-Month Check-In (Online)

November 14, 2023

Oh, Is That a Fact? Workshop (Alexandra Writers'

Centre, Calgary)

November 25, 2023

Blue January Yoga & Writing Workshop (Yoga

Santosha, Calgary)

January 19, 2024

Controversy @ Noon Panel: The Ethics of Writing

on Social Issues (Online)

January 24, 2024

Fail Better (Rooster Kitchen, Edmonton)

February 6, 2024

Controversy @ Noon Panel: Book Banning in

Alberta and Canada (Online)

February 21, 2024

Writers & Mentors Reading (Rooster Kitchen,

**Edmonton**)

March 5, 2024

Writing for Social Change Workshop (Online)

March 13, 2024

Controversy @ Noon Panel: Trans Voices Magnified

(Online)

March 20, 2024

Controversy @ Noon Extended Edition: Ink Wars: Out With The Old And In With The New? (Online)

March 27, 2024

# **WGA Literary Awards**



Our juries deliberated on an overwhelming number of submissions to select the following 31 finalists in ten categories. Finalists represent excellence in literary work written by Alberta authors and published or created in 2022-2023. We encourage you to check out these fantastic titles. Congratulations to the finalists of the 2024 WGA Literary Awards!

Please Note: Finalists for the *Robert Kroetsch City of Edmonton Book Prize* and *The City of Calgary W.O. Mitchell Book Prize* are announced separately by their respective cities.

#### R. Ross Annett Award for Children's Literature (Chapter Books)

(Sponsored by Under the Arch Youth Foundation at The Calgary Foundation)

- Kate A. Boorman Into the Sublime (McMillan/Henry Holt)
- Natasha Deen The Signs and Wonders of Tuna Rashad (Running Press Kids)
- Dee Hahn The Grave Thief (Puffin Canada)

#### **Georges Bugnet Award for Fiction**

(Sponsored by Scott Saxberg)

- Jessica Johns Bad Cree (HarperCollins)
- Thomas Wharton Book of Rain (Random House Canada)
- Deborah Willis Girlfriend on Mars (Hamish Hamilton Canada)

#### Wilfrid Eggleston Award for Nonfiction

- David Laurence Jones New World Dreams (Heritage House)
- Paul McKendrick Scrubbing the Sky (Figure 1 Publishing)
- Alexandra Zabjek We Need to do This (LCR Publishing)

#### **Memoir Award**

(Supported by Vivian Hansen)

- Cecile Beaulieu Brother Broken (FriesenPress)
- Charlotte Bellows The Definition of Beautiful (Freehand Books)
- Jennifer Bowering-Delisle Micrographia (Gordon Hill Press)

#### **Short Story Collection**

- Astrid Blodgett This is How You Start to Disappear (University of Alberta Press)
- Idman Nur Omar Private Apartments (House of Anansi Press)
- Premee Mohamed No one will come back for us (Undertow Publications)

### Stephan G. Stephansson Award for Book of Poetry

(Sponsored by Stephan V. Benediktson)

- Alice Major Knife on Snow (Turnstone Press)
- Natalie Meisner It Begins in Salt (Frontenac House)
- Juleta Severson-Baker Antecedent (Frontenac House)

#### **Gwen Pharis Ringwood Award for Drama**

- Caleigh Crow There is Violence and There is Righteous Violence and There is Death, or the Born Again Crow (Playwrights Canada Press)
- Mieko Ouchi Burning Mom (Playwrights Canada Press)
- Josée Thibeault La fille du facteur (Les Éditions du Blé)

### James H. Gray Awards for Short Nonfiction

(Supported by Marilyn and Bob Stallworthy)

- paulo da costa The Stones that Anchor Us (Queens Quarterly)
- Patti Edgar Ascending in a Hotel Conference Room (The Dalhousie Review)
- Thomas Wharton Cat Fox Neutrino (Hazlitt)

### **Howard O'Hagan Short Story Award**

(Supported by the Alexandra Writers' Centre Society)

- Katherine Abbass Fred (The Malahat Review)
- Astrid Blodgett How to Read Water (University of Alberta Press)
- Ben Lof The Care Bears (The Malahat Review)

### Jon Whyte Memorial Unpublished Essay Award

(Supported by the Haynes Family – In Memory of Dr. Sterling Haynes)

- Antoinette Bekker The Sensibilities of Dogs
- Marcello Di Cintio Desconocido
- Julie Sedivy Prosthesis



Photo by Unique Perspectives

# Important Acknowledgements



The Writers' Guild of Alberta gratefully acknowledges the funding support of the following organizations and individuals in 2023/2024:

#### **Grantors & Foundations**

- Alberta Culture
- · Alberta Foundation for the Arts
- Calgary Arts Development
- · Canada Council for the Arts
- Edmonton Arts Council
- Edmonton Community Foundation
- RBC Foundation (Mentorship Program)
- Rozsa Foundation
- Under the Arch Youth Foundation at The Calgary Foundation (R. Ross Annett Award for Children's Literature)

# Supporters

- Jeananne Kathol Kirwin, LLP (Kemosa Scholarship)
- Marilyn and Bob Stallworthy (James H. Gray Award for Short Nonfiction)
- Aritha van Herk (Golden Pen Award)
- The Haynes Family In Memory of Dr.
   Sterling Haynes (Jon Whyte Memorial Essay Prize)
- Rona Altrows (Horizons Writers Circle)
- Vivian Hansen (Memoir Award)
- Nhung Tran-Davies (Kemosa Scholarship)

# **Sponsors**

- Alberta Playwrights' Network (Conference)
- Alexandra Writers' Centre Society (Howard O'Hagan Award for Short Story & Conference)
- Alberta Views (Conference)
- Audreys Books (The Robert Kroetsch City of Edmonton Book Prize)
- Adriana and Stephan V. Benediktson (Stephan G. Stephansson Award for Poetry)
- Book Publishers Association of Alberta (Conference)
- The City of Calgary (The City of Calgary W.O. Mitchell Book Prize)
- The City of Edmonton (The Robert Kroetsch City of Edmonton Book Prize)
- EDGE Science Fiction and Fantasy Publishing (Conference)
- Jasper Community Habitat for the Arts (Conference)
- Literary Translators Association of Canada (Conference)
- Pandemic University (Conference)
- Priority Printing (Conference)

# **Donors**



### Thank you to all of our donors.

Saleem Abubacker Carmen Adams Candace Allan Rona Altrows Lvnda Anderson Miroslav Andrix Katherine Antal Susan Anthony Diane Armstrong S.L. Asmundson Patricia Atchison Pritam Atwal Holden Baker Jars Balan Andrew Barbero Karen Bass Steve Bauer Kim Beach Rvan Beauvais Anna Marie Becker Nancy Bedard Patricia Beelby Fileen Bell Patricia Benedict **Dorothy Bentley** Shirley Black Astrid Blodgett Barbara Boettcher Gina Bolton Owl's Nest Bookstore Chris Boudreault Pamela Brierley Patricia Brine J.R. Broderick Marion Brooker **Audrey Brooks** Eric Bryer Diane Buchanan Diana Dettling Buckley Anna Burwash Sharon Butala

Rick Butler

**Eleanor Byers** 

Lenard Calon **Emily Campbell** Judith Campbell Lillian Campbell Kerri-Lynn Campbell Ann Campbell Anton Capri Dave & Lorna Carley Mary Cavill Pam Chamberlain Sandra Cherniawsky Ricardo Chiang Leslie Chivers Earl Choldin Judith Clark Pamela Clark Kelly Clemmer **Daniel Cole Grant Corev Christine Cottrell** Myrl Coulter Corinne Cowan Joan Crate Jennifer Cross Jean Crozier **Christine Cruz** Elaine Cust Dan Dagostino Robert Alan Davidson Nhung Tran Davies Laurel Deedrick-Mayne Kris Demeanor Vivian Demuth **Dolly Dennis** Kay Dier Erick Dillman **Derek Donais** Marion Douglas Dymphny Dronyk Steve Dunn

Ruth DyckFehderau

Wynne Edwards

Beth Elhard

Beth Everest Krystyna Fedosejevs Lori Feldbera Roxanne Felix-Mah Kim Firmston Kathy Fisher Deanna Fisher Kat Flannery Marilyn Fleger Erika Folev Fil Fraser Lvnn Gale Myrna Garanis Raymond Gariepy **Marion Gauzer** Leslie Gavel Marie Gervais Shree Ghatage W. Mark Giles Gary Gin Susan Glasier Ann Goldblatt Nora Gould **Chris Goulet** Leslie Greentree Janet Greidanus Murray Greig Rosemary Griebel **Trudy Grienauer** Liz Griffith Lisa Guenther Jacqueline Guest Brenda Gunn **David Haas** Michael Hadford David Hadley Lori Hahnel Helen Hajnoczky Lois Hammond Charmaine Hammond Vivian Hansen Margaret Hansen

Harry Hansen

Herb Hartshorne Marilyn Haworson John Hawrelko Nancy Hayes Melissa Haynes Jessie Haynes Elizabeth Haynes Robin Hedley-Smith Lars Hedlund Betty Jane Hegerat **Kevin Heinrichs** Randy Henderson Henrietta Henry Aritha van Herk Sonja Herter Cathy Hodgson **Dorothy Hollands** Carol Holmes Faye Reineberg Holt Barbara Howard **Barb Howard** Laurie Hodges Humble Shaun Hunter **Bruce Hunter** Virginia Hunter **Hazel Hutchins** James Irving Alex Jalba J.A. Jenks Sadru Jetha Lanice Jones **Garry Jones** JoAnn Jones-Hole **Bobbi Junior** Shirley Kabachia **Abdul Kamal** Ellen Kartz Therezinha Kennedy Dianne Kenny Shannon Kernaghan **Brian Kiers** 

Fran Kimmel

Kathy King

Jenny King-Brown Mark Kirtland Jeananne Kathol Kirwin Warren Knetsch W. John Koch Kelly Komm **Gregory Koop** Myrna Kostash Jani Krulc Michael Kryton Ron Kube Angela Kublik Lee Kvern Allison Kydd James Lavers Liz Lawryk **Dennis Lee** Elizabeth Lefsrud Reinekke Lengelle Igor Leonov Carol Livingstone Julie Lockhart Anne Logan Margaret Lonsdale Janice Lore Brenda Love Mark Lowey Maciej Lukowski Ann Marie Lyseng Jodi MacAulay Carol MacKay Margaret Macpherson Janice Smyrski MacRae Joy Magnusson Cheryl Mahaffy Alice Major Leslee Mann Ronelda Marks Sue Marxheimer Stephen Mason Kin Mason Elizabeth Massiah Bruce Masterman

William Masuak Sheelagh Matthews

Micheline Maylor

Vivian Mayne

Maggie McCourt Janice McCrum Brenda McDermott Ken McGuire **Bob McInnis** Stuart Ian McKay Pamela McLean Janet McMahen Margaret Mcpherson Kathleen McWilliams Marijan Megla **Dennis Merrell** Joy-Ruth Mickelson Peter Midgley Heather Miller Elizabeth MIIIham Sonny Milne Angela Misri Scott Moore Catalina Morales Joanne Morcom Marie Moser Kerry Mulholland **Doreen Muncaster** Lisa Murphy-Lamb Leanne Myggland-Carter Millie Mytton Shenaaz Nanji Shari Narine Mary Nelson Christine Nelson Blaine Newton Catherine Simmons Niven Teja Singh Charles Noble William O\'Callaghan Paula Ohreen Frank O'Keeffe Katz Olson David Orr Cathy Ostlere Olyn Ozbick Paul Papin Giselle Parker **Ruth Parsons** Melvin Pasternak Nancy Paul Taryn Pawluk

Michael Penny David Peyto Lisa Pollock Joy Pritchard Darlene Quaife Anne Rae Catalina Ramirez Daphne Raubenheimer David M Reid Jim Rennie Ken Rivard Lori D. Roadhouse Judith Robb Hermine Robinson Diane Robitelle Walter Romanow Alain Ross **Bev Ross** Cheryl Schenk Alvin Schrader Eileen Schuh Marilyn Scott Elana Scraba Julie Sedivy **Shirley Serviss** Glenda Sheard Joan Sherman Joan Shillington Amanda Da Silva Rea Silvester Catherine Simmons Patti Sinclair Anita Sjouwerman D. Lynn Skillen Janet Smith Mireille Smith June Smith-Jeffries Dianne Smyth **Bradley Somer** aul Sonsteby Karen Spafford-Fitz J. Alvin Speers Laurel Sproule

Marianne Stamm

Penny Stathonikos

Judy Stauffer John Stephens Virginia Stewart Diana Stokes Betheiah Storheim Nora Stovel Barbori Streibl Diane Strickland Daniel Stuart Merna Summers Sandra Sutter L. Deborah Sword Joel Taguchi Cheryl Tardif **Aron Taylor** Digna Tembreza William Thompson Lyn Thompson Mike Thompson Kevin Van Tighem **Grant Tilly** Jayden Tobert Bernard Ng Tong Nhung Tran-Davies Judi Trelenberg William Trofimuk Jane Trotter Inge Trueman Francisco Alaniz Uribe Jeanie Vanderwell Karen Virag Violet Vlchek Susan Ames Vogelaar Gail de Vos Bianca Watson Rick Wenman **Evelyn Whiteford-Carter Audrey Whitson** Chris Wiseman Lasith Witharana **Hugh Wollis** Suzanne Wood Vivian Wood Peter Woodbury Sonan Yeshopa

Saul Zalik

# **WGA Staff & Volunteers**



WGA Staff

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Giorgia Severini

PROGRAM AND OPERATIONS

COORDINATOR

Ashley Mann

PROGRAM AND EVENTS COORDINATOR

Jason Norman

PROGRAM COORDINATOR (SOUTH

ALBERTA OFFICE)

Ashley Frerichs

COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

Christyn Carter

MEMBER SERVICES COORDINATOR

Mike Maguire

YOUTH OUTREACH COORDINATOR

Sadie MacGillivray

**WGA Contractors** 

WESTWORD EDITOR

Raymond Gariépy

WORDSWORTH DIRECTOR

Colin Matty

HORIZONS WRITERS CIRCLE

COORDINATOR

Mila Philipzig

#### 2023/2024 Board of Directors

PRESIDENT
Colin Martin

VICE PRESIDENT Dorothy Bentley

TREASURER Nicolas Brown

SECRETARY Moorea Gray

MEMBER-AT-LARGE
Anne Bailey

MEMBER-AT-LARGE Moni Brar

MEMBER-AT-LARGE Nicole Hill

MEMBER-AT-LARGE Anna Shannon

YOUTH MEMBER-AT-LARGE Kendall Bistretzan

PAST PRESIDENT
Blaine Newton

# Membership Committee

Nicolas Brown
Moorea Gray
Colin Martin
Blaine Newton (Chair)
Anna Shannon

Dorothy Bentley

# **Equity Committee**

Moni Brar Luciana Erregue-Saachi Nicole Hill Colin Martin (Chair) Naomi McIllwraith Mila Philipzig

#### Youth Committee

Simon Benzon
Kendall Bistretzan (Chair)
Amanda Gómez Sánchez
Kate Gough
Danielle Guthrie
Alyssa Short
Sophie Torro

#### Golden Pen Committee

The WGA Board of Directors selects the Golden Pen recipient based on the recommendation of this subcommittee.

Dorothy Bentley
Kendall Bistretzan
Joan Crate
Nicole Hill
Colin Martin

#### **Volunteers**

Lareina Abbott
Ali Bryan
Ricci Fox
Laurie Fuhr
Dana Goldstein
Vivian Hansen
Rachel Harvey

Jeananne Kathol Kiriwn

Jeff Lennard Penny Lennard

Doreen MacGillivray

Nancy Mackenzie

Cindy Morris Karen Motyka Patricia Paterson

Seth Rasporich Linda Sanche Anna Shannon Devika Short Grant Tilly

Frances Wright

# Treasurer's Report



I'm happy to report that the WGA continues to stay on budget and operate in a fiscally responsible manner.

Key items of interest on the financial statements:

- Revenues are roughly comparable to the previous year, fluctuations in grant revenue track against deferred contributions.
- The variance in "other" revenues is due to a one-time amount in the prior year and is not a concern.
- Note the increase in investments due to the receipt of a multi-year grant in one lumpsum. As a result, the portion of the grant intended for future years has been set aside in a new GIC (see Note 5 on page 9 of the financial statements for details).

We have continued to receive valuable support from sponsors and grant funding agencies, which has been instrumental in supporting WGA programs. You can find a listing of the grant funders on Note 10 (page 11) of the Financial Statements.

The WGA staff continue to perform admirably in running the guild's programs effectively under budgetary constraints. I would emphasize the extensive work our staff, board members, and volunteers put in to organize programs and services that all members of Alberta's literary community can benefit from.

I encourage our members to remember that the WGA relies on your support, both your membership and your donations, for our continued success. Donations to the WGA through the WGA Endowment Fund contribute to more sustainable long-term funding for WGA programs.

I continue to have high hopes that through the support of our members, and the hard work of our staff and volunteers, the WGA will have an even better year moving forward.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicolas Brown Treasurer

# WRITERS' GUILD OF ALBERTA

# FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

# March 31, 2024

# **INDEX**

	Page
Independent Auditor's Report	
Statement of Operations	3
Statement of Changes in Net Assets	4
Statement of Financial Position	5
Cash Flow Statement	6
Notes to Financial Statements	7 - 12



Pierre Bergeron CPA,CGA\* Simon Belzile CPA,CGA\* Mathieu Lepage CPA,CGA\*

\* Professional Corporation

#### INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Members of Writers' Guild of Alberta

#### Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Writers' Guild of Alberta, which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2024, and the statements of operations, changes in net assets, and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Writers' Guild of Alberta as at March 31, 2024, and the results of its activities and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

#### Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the Entity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with

Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, and for such internal control as management
determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement,
whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Entity or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Entity's financial reporting process.

#### Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements. As part of an audit, in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.

#### We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures
  that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the
  effectiveness of the Entity's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Entity to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the
  disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events
  in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Bergeron & Co. Chartered Professional Accountants

May 21, 2024 Edmonton, AB

# WRITERS' GUILD OF ALBERTA STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS For the year ended March 31, 2024

	2024	2023
REVENUES	Φ 400.704	n 527.050
Grants (Note 10)	\$ 499,704	\$ 527,950
Programming	75,329	74,852
Membership fees	42,193	41,749
Donations	24,248	20,264
Interest	12,426	4,988
Sponsorships	10,600	17,900
Fundraising	4,072	10,207
Advertising	600	700
Other	32	13,624
	669,204	712,234
EXPENSES		
Wages and benefits	319,594	323,157
Contract fees	155,616	177,335
Program	137,245	159,437
Professional fees	11,967	11,940
Office and administration	10,327	10,160
Insurance	6,579	4,038
Travel	4,983	8,037
Contributions Edmonton Community Foundation	4,599	7,245
Bank charges (Note 7)	3,565	4,138
Telephone and utilities	3,075	3,365
Rent	2,057	2,011
Advertising and promotion	1,042	840
Amortization of tangible capital assets	675	949
	661,324	712,652
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	\$ <u>7,880</u>	\$ <u>(418)</u>

# WRITERS' GUILD OF ALBERTA STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS For the year ended March 31, 2024

NET ASSETS	_	Restricted Note 11)		vested in ital assets	<u>Ur</u>	nrestricted		Total 2024		Total <u>2023</u>
Balance, beginning of year	\$	165,000	\$	2,252	\$	138,586	\$	305,838	\$	306,256
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenses	_		-	(675)	_	8,555	_	7,880	_	(418)
Balance, end of year	<b>S_</b>	165,000	<b>S</b>	1,577	S_	147,141	S_	313,718	S_	305,838

# WRITERS' GUILD OF ALBERTA STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION March 31, 2024

ASSETS

1100010	2024	2023
CURRENT Cash (Note 3) Accounts receivable (Note 4) Goods and Services Tax recoverable Prepaid expenses Short-term investments (Note 5)	\$ 239,731 7,113 3,090 3,801 222,266	\$ 312,375 17,309 4,054 19,491 96,606
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	476,001	449,835
INVESTMENTS (Note 5)	38,000	68,754
TANGIBLE CAPITAL ASSETS (Note 6)	1,577	2,252
TOTAL ASSETS	\$515,578	\$520,841
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT Accounts payable and accrued liabilities (Note 7) Deferred contributions (Note 8)	\$ 26,299 175,561	\$ 40,318 145,787
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	201,860	186,105
LOAN ISSUED UNDER THE CANADA EMERGENCY BUSINESS ACCOUNT (Note 9)		28,898
TOTAL LIABILITIES	201,860	215,003
NET ASSETS		
Net assets invested in capital assets Restricted net assets (Note 11) Unrestricted net assets	1,577 165,000 147,141	2,252 165,000 138,586
TOTAL NET ASSETS	313,718	305,838
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	S <u>515,578</u>	S <u>520,841</u>
Approved by the Directors:		
Director Nies	les Grown	, Director

# WRITERS' GUILD OF ALBERTA CASH FLOW STATEMENT For the year ended March 31, 2024

		2024		2023
OPERATING ACTIVITIES	Φ.	7.000	•	(410)
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses	\$	7,880	\$	(418)
Add (deduct):				
Charges to income not involving cash		675		949
Amortization of tangible capital assets				
Interest reinvested directly to investments	_	1,100	_	1,407
Net change in non-cash working capital		9,655		1,938
balances related to operations				
Trade receivables		13,863		(7,241)
Interest receivable		(3,667)		(2,700)
Grants receivable		(3,007)		11,813
Goods and Services Tax recoverable		964		(2,271)
Prepaid expenses		15,690		(8,710)
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities		(14,017)		30,715
Deferred contributions		29,774		21,567
	-	52,262	_	45,111
FINANCING ACTIVITIES				
Repayment of				
Canada Emergency Business Account loan	_	(30,000)	_	-
DIVERTING ACTIVITIES				
INVESTING ACTIVITIES Purchase of investments		(101 512)		(121 100)
		(191,512)		(121,180)
Receipt of investments	-	96,606	_	121,180
	_	(94,906)	_	-
(DECDE ACE) DICHEAGE DI CAGN		(72 (14)		45 111
(DECREASE) INCREASE IN CASH		(72,644)		45,111
CASH, beginning of year	_	312,375	_	267,264
CASH, end of year	<b>\$_</b>	239,731	<b>S_</b>	312,375

#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATION AND ECONOMIC DEPENDENCY

The Writers' Guild of Alberta (the "Guild") was incorporated in 1981 under the Societies Act of the province of Alberta. The Guild is engaged in the operation of a Provincial Arts Service Organization (PASO) dedicated to writers. The Writers' Guild of Alberta is a registered charitable organization therefore it is exempt from income taxes.

The Writers' Guild of Alberta receives 38% of its revenue from one grantor (2023 - 34%).

#### 2. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

These financial statements were prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations (ASNPO) and include the following significant accounting policies:

### Management's use of estimates

a) The preparation of these financial statements in conformity with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amount of assets and liabilities, the disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the current year. These estimates are reviewed periodically and adjustments are made to income as appropriate in the year they become known.

#### Revenue recognition

b) The Guild uses the deferral method of accounting for contributions (i.e. grants, casino, and donations). Under this method, contributions restricted to expenses of future periods are deferred and recognized as revenue in the period when the related expenses are incurred. Unrestricted contributions are recognized as revenue when they are received or receivable if the amount to be received can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assured.

Programming fees, fundraising, sponsorships, and advertising are recognized as revenue upon the completion of the event to which they relate.

Membership fees are recognized as revenue in the fiscal year to which they relate.

Investment transactions are recognized on the transaction date and resulting revenue is recognized on an accrual basis. Specifically, interest income is recognized on a time proportion basis.

#### **Financial instruments**

 Financial assets and liabilities are measured initially at fair value. Subsequent measurement is at amortized cost.

Financial assets measured at amortized cost consist of cash, trade receivables, grants receivable, interest receivable, and non-redeemable guaranteed investment certificates.

Financial liabilities measured at amortized cost consist of accounts payable and accrued liabilities.

Transaction costs related to financial assets and financial liabilties subsequently measured at amortized cost are included or deducted in the initial measurement of the asset or liability.

#### Impairment of financial assets

d) Financial assets measured at cost or amortized cost are tested for impairment if there are indications of possible impairment. The amount of the write-down is recognized in income. A previously recognized impairment loss may be reversed to the extent of the improvement, either directly or by adjusting the allowance account, provided it is no greater than the amount that would have been reported at the date of the reversal had the impairment loss not been recognized previously. The amount of the reversal is recognized in income.

#### Cash and cash equivalents

e) The Guild's policy is to present bank balances and guaranteed investment certificates with a maturity period of three months or less from the date of acquisition under cash and cash equivalents.

### Tangible capital assets of an NPO

f) Purchased tangible capital assets are recorded at cost. Contributed tangible capital assets are recorded at fair value at the date of contribution. Amortization is recorded at the following rates, which have been established by estimates of useful lives. Additions during the current year are amortized at one-half their normal rates, and no amortization is taken in the year of disposition.

Computer hardware 30% declining balance Furniture and fixtures 20% declining balance

Amortization expense is reported in the statement of operations.

When a tangible capital asset no longer has any long-term service potential for the Guild, the excess of its net carrying amount over any residual value is recognized as an expense in the statement of operations.

#### Contributed materials and services

g) Volunteers contribute many hours per year to assist the Guild in carrying out its service delivery activities. Because of the difficulty of determining their fair value, contributed services are not recognized in the financial statements. Contributed materials are recognized at their fair value.

#### 3. RESTRICTED CASH

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
Externally restricted cash - Casino funds Externally restricted cash - Deferred contributions Externally restricted cash	\$ 10,216 \(\frac{71,345}{81,561}\)	\$ 55,755 90,032 145,787
Unrestricted cash	158,170	166,588
Cash	\$239,731	\$ 312,375

#### 4. ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE

5.

	2024	2023
Trade receivables Interest receivable	\$ 328 6,785	\$ 14,191 3,118
	\$7,113	\$17,309
INVESTMENTS		
	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
Non-redeemable Guaranteed Investment Certificate, maturing on April 13, 2024, bearing interest at 2.5% per annum (*)	\$ 68,754	\$ 68,754
Non-redeemable Guaranteed Investment Certificate, maturing on June 8, 2024, bearing interest at 4.55% per annum (**)	38,000	-
Non-redeemable Guaranteed Investment Certificate maturing on June 28, 2024, bearing interest at a rate of 4.50% per annum (*)	51,426	-
Non-redeemable Guaranteed Investment Certificate maturing on August 19, 2024, bearing interest at 5.15% per annum (***)	18,000	-
Non-redeemable Guaranteed Investment Certificate maturing on March 25, 2025, bearing interest at 4.00% per annum (*)	46,086	_
Non-redeemable Guaranteed Investment Certificate maturing on June 8, 2025, bearing interest at a rate of 4.20% per annum (**)	38,000	_
Redeemable Guaranteed Investment Certificate, maturing on June 28, 2023, bearing interest at 1.25% per annum		51,426
Non-redeemable Guaranteed Investment Certificate maturing on March 23, 2024 bearing interest at a rate of 2.00% per		45.100
annum		45,180
	\$260,266	\$ <u>165,360</u>

<sup>(\*)</sup> As mentioned in note 11, the guaranteed investment certificates are restricted to cover the internally imposed restriction.

<sup>(\*\*)</sup> The two GICs for \$38,000 consist of contributions from the Edmonton Arts Council for 2024-2026 that have been deferred.

<sup>(\*\*\*)</sup> The GIC of \$18,000 consists of contributions from the Edmonton Community Foundation for 2024-2025 that have been deferred.

#### 6. TANGIBLE CAPITAL ASSETS

		Cost	Accumulated Amortization		Net Boo 2024	ok V	<u>alue</u> 2023	
Computer hardware Furniture and fixtures	\$	34,324 9,293	\$	33,018 9,022	\$_	1,306 271	\$_	1,913 339
	\$_	43,617	\$_	42,040	\$_	1,577	\$_	2,252

#### 7. CREDIT CARDS

The Guild holds a credit card with an authorized credit limit of \$8,000 bearing interest at a rate of 19.99%. The amount payable on the credit card as at March 31, 2024, was \$2,739 (2023 - \$4,283). This balance is included in the accounts payable and accrued liabilities amount. The amount of interest paid on the credit cards during the fiscal year was \$35 (2023 - \$371); these amounts are included in bank charges. The credit cards are guaranteed by the current and future assets of the Guild.

#### 8. DEFERRED CONTRIBUTIONS

	Opening	Funds received	Funds used		Ending
Edmonton Arts Council \$	-	\$ 139,000	\$ (51,806)	\$	87,194
<b>Edmonton Community Foundat</b>	ion -	18,000	-		18,000
Calgary Arts					
Development Agency	26,200	38,256	(64,456)		-
Casino	56,239	-	(46,023)		10,216
Donations, fees and other	45,848	9 <del>=</del> 7	(13,373)		32,475
Alberta					
Foundation for the Arts	10,000	242,134	(252, 134)		-
Rozsa Foundation	-	7,000	(1,950)		5,050
<b>RBC</b> - Emerging Artists	7,500	15,000	(15,000)		7,500
Saskatchewan Arts Board	-	7,125	-		7,125
Alberta Culture & Tourism _		8,750	(750)	_	8,000
\$_	145,787	\$ 475,265	\$(445,492)	\$	175,560

### 9. LOAN GRANTED UNDER THE CANADA EMERGENCY BUSINESS ACCOUNT

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
Loan, with an unpaid principal of \$40,000, guaranteed by		
the Canadian government, interest-free until December		
31, 2023 (a)	\$	\$28,898

(a) The Guild obtained a \$40,000 loan under the Canada Emergency Businesss Account Program. If the Guild repaid \$30,000 by December 31, 2023, the \$10,000 balance would be forgiven. Otherwise, an interest rate of 5% would apply to the balance which would be repayable in 36 monthly blended installments. The loan was repaid on January 2, 2024. The loan of \$30,000 net of the forgivable portion was included in short-term debt at year-end and the interest cost of \$1,102 to adjust the loan balance to fair value was included in interest expense.

Regular principal payments required on all long-term debt for the next five years are due as follows:

2025	\$	0
2026		0
2027		0
2028		0
2029	-	0
	\$	0

#### 10. GRANTS

	2024			2023		
Alberta Foundation for the Arts	\$	252,134	\$	244,914		
Calgary Arts Development Agency		64,456		38,800		
Edmonton Arts Council		51,806		81,346		
Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis		45,539		26,980		
Canada Council for the Arts		42,000		78,400		
Edmonton Community Foundation		25,069		20,931		
Royal Bank of Canada Emerging Artists		15,000		15,000		
Rozsa Foundation		1,950		7,500		
LCM Foundation		1,000		1,000		
Alberta Culture Days		750		10,750		
Amber Bowerman-Webb Foundation		-		2,000		
Cultural Human Resources Council				330		
	\$	499,704	\$	527,951		

#### 11. RESTRICTED NET ASSET

The Writers' Guild of Alberta's Board of Directors has restricted a sum of \$61,000 (2023 - \$61,000) as a sustainability fund. The funds are held in the guaranteed investment certificates pursuant to the conditions imposed by grant contracts; see note 5.

The Writers' Guild of Alberta Board of Directors restricted a sum of \$104,000 (2023 - \$104,000) as a sustainability fund for future programming and operations. These funds are held in the guaranteed invetment certificates; see note 5.

#### 12. WRITERS' GUILD OF ALBERTA ENDOWMENT FUND

The Writers' Guild of Alberta is the beneficiary of the Writers' Guild of Alberta Endowment Fund held with the Edmonton Community Foundation. Assets of this fund are not the property of the Guild but the income generated from the fund is transferred to the Guild. As at December 31, 2023, the balance in the Foundation's Endowment Fund was \$56,150 (2022 - \$52,151).

#### 13. FUND-RAISING EXPENSES AND OTHER

As required under Section 7(2) of the Regulations of the Charitable Fundraising Act of Alberta, the Guild discloses that it incurred \$0 of expenses related to fundraising in 2024 (2023 - \$0) and it received \$28,320 of contributions in 2024 (2023 - \$30,471).

#### 14. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

The Guild is exposed to various risks through its financial instruments. The following analysis presents the Guild's exposures to significant risks at reporting date.

#### Credit risk:

The Guild is exposed to credit risk with respect to its trade receivables, interest receivable and grants receivable.

#### Interest rate risk:

The Guild is exposed to interest rate risk on its fixed-rate financial instruments, which consists solely of guaranteed investment certificates. These fixed-rate instruments subject the Guild to a risk of changes in fair value.

### Liquidity risk:

The Guild is exposed to liquidity risk with respect to its accounts payable and accrued liabilities.

The Guild's estimates that its exposure to the above noted risks has not significantly changed from the previous period.

#### 15. COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

Certain corresponding figures have been reclassified to conform with the current year classifications.



Writers' Guild of Alberta **Percy Page Centre** 11579 Groat Road Edmonton, AB T5M 3K6

(780) 422-8174 Toll-free:1-800-665-5354 mail@writersguild.ca writersguild.ca



@ WritersGuildAB



@writersguildab



Writers' Guild of Alberta



WritersGuildofAlberta

# WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE THE SUPPORT OF:

















