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2025/2026

Annual Report

Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia



Prepared by
Oriana Duinker, Executive Director
Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| PRESIDENT’S REPORT | 2 |
| EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT | 4 |
| ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW | 6 |
| COMMITTEE REPORTS | 9 |
| 50th Anniversary Committee | 9 |
| Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) Committee | 9 |
| Finance Committee | 10 |
| Fund Development Committee | 10 |
| Membership & Engagement Committee | 12 |
| Personnel Committee | 13 |
| Programs & Special Projects Committee | 14 |
| Recruitment & Nominating Committee | 15 |
| Strategy & Policies Committee | 17 |
| PROGRAM REPORTS | 18 |
| 50th Anniversary Special Projects: 50 for 50 Contest Series | 18 |
| 50th Anniversary Special Projects: Writers of Nova Scotia profile series | 18 |
| Alistair MacLeod Mentorship Program | 19 |
| Book Awards | 19 |
| Booktoberfest | 21 |
| Coffee Chats program and Manuscript Review Program | 22 |
| Ellemenno Visual Literature Prize | 22 |
| Emerging Writers Prizes | 23 |
| Jampolis Cottage Residency Program | 24 |
| Micro-Anthology Series | 26 |
| Nova Writes Competition | 26 |
| Writers In The Schools (WITS) program | 27 |
| Events | 28 |
| Workshops | 32 |

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As I write this, the days have stretched longer, the leaves have returned, and the peepers are out in full force. We are in a season of change—and, like nature, WFNS is in transition as well.

I know many of you—if not all—are privy to the provincial budget cuts that were announced in February. I was saddened and disheartened by the threat these cuts have made to the Arts, Culture, and Heritage sectors of Nova Scotia. I grew up in this province, I'm raising my family here, and this is where I write and create. This province is vibrant because of its arts and culture, and WFNS is an invaluable asset to the literary community.



With the small amount of government funding we are given, WFNS generates jobs in the nonprofit sector, creates events and workshops for emerging and established writers, sends authors into the schools to teach children about the importance of storytelling, and provides writers with opportunities for paid work, which means we can live and write in this province. The provincial funds we receive are not a handout. The Arts, Culture, and Heritage communities are necessary for the well-being of our province—along with our economy—and WFNS is a big part of that ecosystem.

I want to thank the staff of WFNS—Oriana Duinker, Andy Verboom, and Linda Hudson—who sprang into action immediately after we learned about the cuts. They held meetings to triage the most important decisions that needed to be made, they wrote letters and emails, and organized for rallies alongside the Nova Scotia Arts Coalition. I saw many WFNS members at the rallies at Province House, and it was an uplifting experience for everyone who was there. We had an influx of donations, which was heartwarming to see, and some of our members bravely spoke at Province House about what these cuts mean to them.

As big a challenge as these cuts present, we are well situated to weather this storm. A lot of behind-the-scenes financial work has been undertaken over the last two years, with the helpful guidance of our treasurer, Carol, to secure our funds into safe and manageable investments. Ori has spent many hours with a local fundraising consultant, Liz LeClair (Uprising Philanthropic Consulting), to learn how we can better raise funds on our own. Our staff are hard-working and creative, our Board shows up to make decisions when needed, and our members are smart and creative when it comes to living and writing in this province. WFNS is in great hands, and as we move into this new season, we will continue to create opportunities for our members around the province and be a strong voice for the arts.

We welcomed two new Board members this year, Sonja Boon and Renée Hartleib, who dove right in and became committee chairs—Sonja for Programs & Special Projects Committee and Renée for the Personnel Committee. They've been huge assets to the Board. (We are so glad you're here, Sonja and Renee!) Steve Vernon stepped down from his position earlier this year, and we sent him off with well-wishes and gratitude for the time he gave to the WFNS. Habiba Diallo will be retiring at the end of her term in June. (We appreciate your service to the WFNS as well, Habiba!) Philip Moscovitch, our outgoing Past President who has been my mentor for the past two years, has also decided to step down in June to seek some new opportunities (and perhaps make more sourdough!). Philip has been a part of the Board for several years, and I want to acknowledge his work as former President and mentor and the great insights and expertise he brought to the Board. (Thank you, Philip, you will be missed!)

Our Board committees have been hard at work, and I want to thank the chairs of each committee—Becca Babcock, Lindsey Harrington, Cory Lavender, Danica Roache, Carol Shilibeer, Tiffany Morris, Whitney

Moran, Sonja Boon, and Renée Hartlieb—for everything they’ve done this past year to keep WFNS running, and provide opportunities for members. You can read all about the great work they’ve done in their reports.

We were fortunate to have a few professional development sessions for the Board and committee members this past year. As chair of the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) Committee, Tiffany coordinated a session with Gillian Austin in October called “Embodying Treaty Workshop” and a session in January with Dr. Lynn Jones on community and activism from an African Nova Scotian lens. In addition to these, Board members attended a session this past month with Liz LeClair on fundraising fundamentals. All three sessions gave us knowledge and skills to help serve the WFNS community better.

I want to end my report by reminding everyone that this year, in September, the WFNS will be celebrating its 50th anniversary as a registered society. It comes as a great reminder that we have a longstanding history of serving writers in Nova Scotia, that we’ve gone through many periods of change and uncertainty, and that we’re still here. We have no plans on leaving, and we’re going to celebrate our hard work together. I hope to see many of you there!

Thank you for being a part of WFNS, an organization I love. It’s been a great privilege to serve as President of the Board for another year. I am so grateful you’re all here, and I can’t wait for this next year to come.

Warmly,

Joanne Gallant

President

Writer’s Federation of Nova Scotia

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The past year has been nothing if not a rollercoaster of highs and lows. As we navigate a funding landscape in which our government refuses to see the value in our sector, it would be easy to dwell on the difficulties ahead of us. But I have been inclined over these past few months to try to find the silver linings in it all. Maybe it's because I'm writing this message on the heels of the Atlantic Book Awards Festival week, where we celebrated and recognized the exceptional work of so many writers. Maybe it's because I'm looking through photos from the rallies at Province House and feeling a swell of pride at the sight of friends and colleagues standing together to demand recognition of the value we bring to Nova Scotia. Yes, we are facing unprecedented challenges as an organization. But I really do believe that we will come out on the other side, stronger for it.



WFNS Program Manager Linda Hudson and Executive Director Oriana Duinker on their way to a rally at Province House. March 2026.

In this Annual Report, you'll see evidence of another busy and productive year at the Fed. After a staff planning retreat at Jampolis Cottage at the end of the summer, we dove headfirst in a busy fall. The Writers In The Schools (WITS) program kicked off with a strong showing of school bookings. Our 4th annual Booktoberfest brought over 400 people to the Halifax Central Library for a celebratory day of free workshops, readings, and a packed book market. Our annual Writing Rumble fundraiser and our winter storytelling event, Gather 'Round, were wonderful opportunities to engage with our membership and raise significant funds for special projects.

In the background of these public-facing events, work is always being done to improve the structure of programs and shore up our operations. With the support of a Culture Innovation Fund grant, I was pleased to begin work in the fall with Liz LeClair of Uprising Philanthropic to strengthen our internal fundraising policies and systems—work that, in retrospect, couldn't have started at a better time. The work of the new Jampolis Facilities Committee and the transition to a contract cleaning service was a huge help to ease the burden of property management previously on WFNS staff. At the Board level, a new five-year strategic plan was adopted and the Personnel Committee put in many hours of work to update our structures for staff support. In short, it felt like we were really hitting our stride as we started 2026, heading towards our upcoming 50th anniversary year with confidence and optimism.

The provincial budget cuts that were announced in late February, 2026, came as a complete shock to the sector. WFNS suffered a 20% cut to our operational grant and a 100% cut to Writers In The Schools (WITS) funding. The swift, vocal response of a united arts/culture sector was incredible. I'm so grateful to our **Board of Directors** and to **Linda Hudson** (Program Manager, Education) and **Andy Verboom** (Program Manager, Membership Services) for jumping on the advocacy bandwagon with me. On behalf of the staff and Board, **I also want to extend our heartfelt thanks to all our members who wrote letters, shared the calls to action, spoke at the Standing Committee on Public Bills, attended rallies, gave donations, and checked in on us in the aftermath of the budget announcement.** Because of this collective action, WFNS is *much* better connected with the broader arts community in Nova Scotia. We're activating our storytelling skills and learning how to more effectively communicate why what we do is important. We're getting better at asking for help from our membership when we really need it.

We've got our work cut out for us as we continue determining how these budget cuts will affect our 2026/2027 programming. But we are starting to see gains in our increased fundraising efforts, which will ease the pressures on our budget and afford us some much-needed breathing room. We will continue to advocate for writers and publishers, and for the sector more broadly, with elected representatives and government staff.

To end on a more cheerful note, WFNS turns 50 this year! We're planning a big bash in September, and some of our ancillary anniversary programming (the 50 for 50 Contest Series and the *Writers of Nova Scotia* profile series) has already started. After the year we've had, I think we definitely deserve to celebrate.



Sincerely,

Oriana Duinker

Executive Director

Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

The mandate of the Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia (WFNS) is captured in our Mission Statement:

To foster creative writing and the profession of writing in the Province of Nova Scotia; to provide advice and assistance to writers at all stages of their careers; to encourage greater public recognition of writers and their achievements; and to enhance the literary arts in our regional and national culture.

Fulfillment of our mission is guided by our core values:

1. We value the diversity of writers in all regions of Nova Scotia and strive to be inclusive of all backgrounds, abilities, and languages represented in the province. We value all genres of writing and aim to create a welcoming, accessible, and supportive atmosphere for all writers.
2. We value the practice of writing and the importance of developing our skill and craft as writers.
3. We value writing as a profession and a creative pursuit. We strive to support and represent the interests of all writers.
4. We value community building among writers. We encourage writers to connect to readers, services, and resources. We have an appreciation for writing and a commitment to supporting its role in the life of Nova Scotians. We value the contributions of Nova Scotian writers regionally, nationally and internationally.
5. We value the inherent skills and resources of our community and, where possible, will use the skills and resources of our membership and community at large.
6. We value professionalism and conduct ourselves with a high level of integrity. We are resourceful and creative in how we manage our organization's operations.

Membership

As an arts service organization with a mandate that is provincial in scope and inclusive of all established and emerging writing practices, WFNS serves members throughout Nova Scotia.

There are two types of WFNS membership:

General Membership is an annual designation open to anyone with an interest in creative writing, regardless of writing experience or place of residence. Benefits include eligibility to participate in members-only resources and programs, discounted registration and program fees, subscription to the members-only newsletter, and voting rights at General Meetings. General Membership is also required to activate the benefits of Writers' Council Membership. Starting with the 2027 membership, annual dues for General Members will be \$75 ("regular dues") or \$35 ("reduced dues for full-time students, the underwaged, and those on fixed incomes"). Prospective and renewing members may request that dues be waived entirely.

- The above dues rates, representing the first increase in dues in a decade, come into effect starting with 2027 General Membership. The previous rates (\$65 for regular dues; \$30 reduced dues) will continue to apply to new 2026 General Memberships, which will be available until mid fall of 2026.
- In spring of 2026, WFNS quietly introduced a communications initiative termed Associate Access. Associate Access is related but not equivalent to General Membership, granting free, permanent access to two members-only WFNS resources: the Literary Events Calendar (specifically, its event submission form) and *Subtext* (i.e., a permanent subscription to the weekly member newsletter). Associate Access can be requested from WFNS staff by Nova Scotian book publishers, literary magazines, booksellers, libraries, and arts nonprofits that regularly organize literary events. Active outreach to eligible organizations will be conducted in 2026/2027.
- In fall of 2024, WFNS introduced a Nova Scotia Student Membership option for first-time members

up to 30 years old who are full- or part-time students at Nova Scotian post-secondary institutions. Functionally, the initiative streamlines the process of waiving dues for any prospective member who meets the eligibility requirements: the prospective member applies through a short digital form, and their dues are automatically waived for their first annual General Membership. The initiative aimed to address a critical underrepresentation identified in WFNS's 2024 General Member Survey: writers aged 20 to 29 comprised only 1.6% of WFNS's General Membership compared to 11.9% of Nova Scotia's population. Since the initiative's introduction, WFNS has received 81 eligible applications, granting 52 General Memberships for 2025 and 29 General Memberships for 2026. As of May 31, 2026, of the 52 General Members who joined this way for 2025, only 4 have renewed their General Membership for 2026 through traditional means, suggesting a retention rate as low as 7%.

Writers' Council Membership is a permanent designation that is open (by application) to General Members who (1) have produced a professional body of work and (2) have developed the literary skills to provide literary instruction, assessment, and/or mentorship. Writers' Council members are eligible for numerous competitively compensated opportunities through WFNS programs, including instructing adults (through workshops) and youth (through Writer In The Schools); providing peer assessment for programs and awards; mentoring and advising newer writers; and giving public talks and readings.

Governance

The Board of Directors of the Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia is a governance board, holding legal authority and fiduciary responsibility for oversight of WFNS's mandate and of the implementation of WFNS's mission. The Board's role is to govern the affairs of WFNS within relevant legal and legislative requirements for a nonprofit and charitable organization, to develop and implement Board policy, and to ensure the stability and viability of WFNS.

The Board engages an Executive Director, who is responsible for the management and day-to-day operations of WFNS. The Board and the Executive Director draw on the work of Standing Committees and Ad-Hoc Committees to help advance governance and operational activities.

Board Structure

The Board of Directors consists of no fewer than 8 and no more than 12 Directors, plus a Past President position. A maximum of four Directors may be General Members, and the remainder must be Writers' Council members. Directors are elected by the membership at the Annual General Meeting. The term of office is normally two years, and a Director normally serves a maximum of two consecutive terms. The Board Officers are President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary, and these Officers have roles and responsibilities in addition to the core duties of all Directors. The Past President is a non-voting ex-officio member of the Board.

The Board normally meets six to eight times a year. Board Committees meet between Board meetings in order to advance the responsibilities outlined in the Committee Terms of Reference and prepare any information or recommendations for review and action at Board meetings.

2025/2026 Board of Directors

| | |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| President: | Joanne Gallant (Halifax) |
| Vice President: | Whitney Moran (West Dover) |
| Treasurer: | Carol Shillibeer (Glace Bay) |
| Secretary: | Rebecca Babcock (Halifax) |
| Directors-at-Large: | Sonja Boon (Halifax) |

Habiba Diallo (Halifax)
Lindsey Harrington (Dartmouth)
Renée Hartleib (Halifax)
Cory Lavender (Gunning Cove)
Tiffany Morris (Halifax)
Danica Roache (Dartmouth)
Steve Vernon (Halifax)
Philip Moscovitch (Glen Margaret)

Past President:

Staff

Executive Director: Oriana Duinker (Halifax)
Program Manager (Arts Education): Linda Hudson (Halifax)
Program Manager (Membership Services): Andy Verboom (Halifax)

COMMITTEE REPORTS

50th Anniversary Committee

The 50th Anniversary Committee is an ad hoc committee, meaning it was formed by the Board for a limited term. It identifies, assesses the feasibility of, and assists staff in the delivery of opportunities to celebrate WFNS's 50th anniversary in 2026, proposing celebratory events, legacy projects, and/or member engagement strategies.

Composition:

- Chair: Lindsey Harrington (Director-at-Large)
- Danica Roach (Director-at-Large)
- donalee Moulton (Writers' Council Member)
- Danielle Metcalfe-Chenail (Writers' Council Member)
- Oriana Duinker (Executive Director)

Chair's Report:

This committee tracks all anniversary initiatives in collaboration with other committees (such as the Membership & Engagement Committee, which oversees the *Writers of Nova Scotia* profile series, and the Programs & Special Projects Committee, which oversees the 50 for 50 Contest Series). Planning the main celebration and commemorative initiatives is also within this committee's scope. Activities have included the following:

- Meeting regularly (approximately monthly) since September, 2025
- Brainstorming a wide range of potential events and programming
- Paring down events to a manageable scope, including three main flagship events spaced throughout the year:
 - a Literary Trivia night (June, 2025)
 - 50th Anniversary Party (September, 2025)
 - 50th Anniversary Time Capsule (May, 2026)
- Applying for recognition opportunities (including with the Halifax Bridge Commission)
- Budgeting
- Researching and pursuing funding and sponsorship options for events and programming
- Determining the theme, location, logistics, and order of events for the anniversary party
- Ensuring event accessibility

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) Committee

The EDIA Committee oversees the improvement of programming and of communication and outreach practices to create more equitable opportunities for member and public participation and to eliminate barriers to participation created by discrimination and bias on the basis of race, ethnicity, (dis)ability, gender, sexual orientation, and/or other protected classes under Canadian law. The EDIA Committee also works with the Strategy & Policies Committee to ensure WFNS policies are equitable.

Composition

- Chair: Tiffany Morris (Director-at-Large)
- Habiba Diallo (Director-At-Large)
- Renée Hartleib (Director-At-Large)

- Cory Lavender (Director-At-Large)
- Danica Roache (Director-At-Large)

Chair's Report:

Over this past year, the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Committee focused on bringing professional development EDIA workshops to WFNS's staff, Board of Directors, and Writers' Council members. These workshops were led by community members who are not current members of the WFNS. The first session, held in November, 2025, was led by Dr. Gillian Austin. This session focused on treaty responsibilities for settlers and allies in Mi'kma'ki, and it combined discussion and lecture and offered robust opportunities for reflection and conversation among attendees. The second session was offered by Dr. Lynn Jones in January, 2026, and focused on her life, activism, and history as a leader in the African Nova Scotian community. We also learned about her work in human rights, bringing in larger histories of African Nova Scotians and global Black communities, their monumental contributions, and the movements for social justice that all continue to shape the present.

In terms of EDIA outreach, WFNS was present at the Glooscap First Nation powwow in summer of 2025 and is developing new strategies for outreach to Asian and newcomer communities, including potential partnership with ESL library programming. Members have also brought forward ideas for diverse events including Pride coffeehouses and BIPOC writer meetups, virtually or in-person.

Internally, the EDIA Committee also submitted a final review of the Statement of Solidarity (first released in 2020), refining the language with a deep appreciation for how the political environment in which it was drafted informs and expands into the present moment. We acknowledge this statement as a living document that affirms the awareness and commitment of WFNS to equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility and to strengthening its solidarity with and support for writers of diverse communities.

We're deeply grateful for the work being done in our writing communities and by WFNS, its Board, and its members. We continue to celebrate the diversity of our diversity.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee advises the Board on matters relating to the finances of the organization and provides financial information to help the Board and Executive Director make fiscal decisions and plans.

Composition

- Chair: Carol Shillibeer (Treasurer)
- Oriana Duinker (Executive Director)
- Joanne Gallant (President)

Chair's Report

See the AGM document Financial Statements for 2025/2026 Fiscal Year.

Fund Development Committee

The Fund Development Committee assists the Executive Director in the implementation and evaluation of a range of fund development strategies that identify and solicit support from public, private, and corporate sectors.

Composition

- Chair: Whitney Moran (Vice President)
- Joanne Gallant (President)
- Tiffany Morris (Director-at-Large)
- Angela Reynolds (Writers' Council member)
- Oriana Duinker (Executive Director)

Chair's Report

It was a busy and successful year for the Fund Development Committee. As always, our mandate was to raise \$10,000 for the year. This year we raised a total of \$11,355 through special projects and events, and \$11,267 in general donations.

In May, the Run-on-Sentences, including Executive Director Oriana Duinker and Board President Joanne Gallant, raised \$770 for WFNS programming by running in the Bluenose Marathon (Halifax).

Over the summer, we did the heavy work of planning our big fundraiser: the annual Writing Rumble, featuring two teams of six writers chain-writing stories in front of a live audience! The Rumble took place on October 25, 2025, in North End Halifax. The Fund Development Committee once again created an original premise (a haunted bookshop!) and three tiers of writing prompts for Rumlbers. We tried a new venue this year: the multipurpose room at Nimbus Publishing. Neighbouring Open Book Coffee agreed to stay open late for participants and guests. The Word Slingers (**Tim Covell, Danica Roache, Charlotte Ashley, Renée Belliveau, Stephen Kimber, Sue Murtagh**) triumphed over the Quilluminati (**Jessica Marsh, Sue MacLeod, Shelley Thompson, Gillian Turnbull, Jen Britton, Chris Benjamin**), but it was a tight race, with wacky stories including an eerie cameo in both stories by Joel Plaskett. Our intrepid Rumlbers raised \$6,350 for the Alistair MacLeod Mentorship program.

From November 24 to December 16, 2025, we ran a quilt raffle on the WFNS website through the raffle platform Rafflebox. Former WFNS Executive Director **Marilyn Smulders** provided a one-of-a-kind *Anne of Green Gables*-patterned quilt using fabric designed by Writers' Council Member **Briana Corr Scott**. The raffle brought in a total of \$1,650. The winner was Angela Reynolds.

Executive Director Oriana Duinker and Fund Development Committee Chair Whitney Moran worked together with Nimbus Publishing and author Shelley Thompson to organize a winter-themed storytelling event, Gather 'Round, held at The Carleton (Halifax) on November 18, 2025. Featured authors included WFNS members **Carol Bruneau, Lorri Nielsen Glenn, and Michelle Samson**, with **Shelley Thompson** headlining and musical accompaniment by the Blue Engine String Quartet. **Alexander MacLeod** gave an impassioned speech about his father's legacy to start the night off. All proceeds were donated to the Alistair MacLeod Mentorship Program. It was a magical evening with a full house, and raised over \$1,400.

We took a little break over the holidays and came back on Saturday, February 7, 2026, with what has become a very popular event: the Just My Type bespoke poetry fundraiser. This year, we again hosted two simultaneous events: one at the Halifax Brewery Market, which remains busy, and one at a new location, Truro Farmers' Market, in keeping with our desire to increase our outreach and presence in communities outside of HRM. We opted not to include a digital component this year. Ori oversaw the Halifax event with poets **Aren Morris, Jaime Forsythe, and Jamie Samson**, while **Whitney Moran** and **Lindsey Harrington** held the fort in Truro. The event was promoted through a spot on CBC's *Mainstreet*. The typewriters and custom poems were a big hit again this year, with \$470 raised for general programming.

We're very pleased with the number and quality of events we've been able to offer over the past fiscal year, both tried-and-true and brand new. With each event, the WFNS was able to increase outreach, provide opportunities for our membership, and raise both funds and awareness for some of our most vital, and yet most vulnerable, programming.

Jampolis Facilities Committee

The Jampolis Facilities Committee is a working committee, overseeing the facilities, capital improvements, and scheduled maintenance of Jampolis Cottage, 315 Bluff Road in Avonport. It is responsible for the physical aspects of the property (e.g., grounds, buildings, and physical systems). It is not responsible for residency programming, special events, and occasional (i.e., time-sensitive) maintenance, which are handled by the Executive Director and Support Staff.

Composition

- Chair: Cory Lavender (Director-at-Large)
- Scott Andrew Christensen (General Member)
- Jayme Melrose (General Member)
- Oriana Duinker (Executive Director)

Chair's Report

Committee members unofficially met during the annual Jampolis Open House on August 29, 2025. Alongside WFNS staff and volunteers, they helped to rebuild the beach deck at the edge of the property's bluff, worked on some planting, etc. In September, Executive Director Oriana Duinker officially welcomed everyone to the committee and, as our staff point-person, arranged to share useful documents related to the upkeep of the Jampolis cottage.

The committee met and, in December, gained another opportunity during a week of vacancy to work on the cottage. Mid-December efforts resulted in some light carpentry getting done, trash hauled out of the shed, investigation and remedying of where a squirrel was getting in, and the refinishing of the clawfoot bathtub in the upstairs bathroom. The committee met again during the last week of April, 2026, ahead of another week's vacancy, and was able to accomplish a few more tasks: we installed a new garbage box with a parking spot for the compost bin alongside the driveway near the road; did extensive cleaning and patchwork to the culvert that runs alongside the road; created garden beds with some rhubarb plants; did a little raking up; tapped in shingle nails; and cleaned the basement. Future projects include building a cover for the exterior heat pump unit and more raking.

Membership & Engagement Committee

The Membership & Engagement Committee may be a working committee, advising on strategies and developing and implementing special projects to promote growth of General Membership throughout the province and among equity-deserving communities and to promote increased engagement in WFNS programming among existing General Members.

Composition

- Chair: Danica Roache (Director-at-Large)
- Cory Lavender (Director-at-Large)

- Rebecca Babcock (Secretary)
- Tina Capalbo (Writers' Council)
- Andy Verboom (Program Manager; non-voting liaison)

Chair's Report

Since the last Annual General Meeting (June 16, 2025), we have welcomed 5 professional writers to the WFNS Writers' Council fold: **Charlotte Ashley, Jessica Joy Heimstra, Shelagh Meagher, N.L. Blandford, and Alice White.**

This is a notable difference from the past two years, which saw 21 (2024/2025) and 26 (2023/2024) successful applicants. 2025/2026 was the year in which the new points-based application system was introduced. This system had multiple aims—to make Writers' Council status more accessible to those without traditional book publications and to ensure new Writers' Council members have a wealth of expertise and well-rounded experiences.

General Membership numbers remain high: as of June 5, 2026, WFNS has 739 General Members, of whom 313 are subscribed for automatic dues payments.

This year, the Board revised the terms of reference specific to the Membership & Engagement Committee. The name of the committee was changed (from "Membership Committee"), as were the purpose, roles, and responsibilities of the committee. The additional responsibilities include reviewing criteria and orientation documents for General and Writers' Council membership, as required, and the development and implementation of special projects related to membership growth and engagement in collaboration with the Executive Director, relevant Support Staff, the Programs & Special Projects Committee, and/or volunteers.

The committee also implemented and ran the *Writers of Nova Scotia* profile series, which aimed to explore and celebrate the diversity of writers across the province—including the variety of works they create and the range of backgrounds and experiences they draw from. Publication of the series will continue into July as a celebratory lead up to the 50th anniversary of WFNS.

Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee conducts the recruitment, selection, contract negotiations, performance evaluation, and release of the Executive Director. The Personnel Committee also assists in the review of the Personnel Policy and in any processes concerning appeals and grievances that may be necessary.

Composition

- Chair: Renée Hartleib (Director-At-Large)
- Joanne Gallant (President)
- Whitney Moran (Vice President)

Chair's Report

The Personnel Committee carried out its regular duties over the course of the year—conducting the Executive Director's performance evaluation, approving vacation time, and offering advice to the Executive Director as requested.

In the fall of 2025, our committee began to do research into salaries by benchmarking with other nonprofits. The salaries of our employees were on the low end of the averages for nonprofit arts

organizations in Canada and our salary grids were very out-of-date and out of touch with the current economic reality.

Added to that was the fact that Executive Director Oriana Duinker and Program Manager Andy Verboom reported accruing a great deal of overtime. When the Personnel Committee spoke to them, it became clear that the workload was greater than the number of hours in the day and, certainly, the number of hours that our staff was being compensated for.

Believing that our staff should not be put in the position of having to work overtime just to get the job done, the Personnel Committee met with our Treasurer, Carol Shillibeer, and we brought this issue to the Board, along with ideas for how we might both update the salary grids and figure out how to compensate our staff more fairly.

At the Board meeting in October, 2025, all Board members were supportive of revamping our salary grids and trying to find a way to properly compensate our staff for their excellent work and bring their salaries more in-line with similar organizations and current cost-of-living.

By the Board meeting in December, 2025, the Personnel Committee had, with Carol's help, revamped the salary grids and motioned to amend the salary grids to reflect a needed 15% increase for the Bank of Canada 'basket of goods' costs, which have gone up by just under 15% since 2021. This motion was carried.

While the Board was in favour of increasing staff salaries, we've been unable to put this into action due to the recent provincial budget cuts. The Board, however, has added an annual review of staff compensation to the Personnel Committee's roles and responsibilities with the hopes we can make good on this promise soon.

Programs & Special Projects Committee

The Programs & Special Projects Committee may be a working committee, overseeing the development, review, and re-development of WFNS programming and the implementation of some special projects.

Composition

- Chair: Sonja Boon (Director-at-Large)
- Habiba Diallo (Director-at-Large)
- Lee-Anne Lavell (General Member)
- Cory Lavender (Director-at-Large)
- Jamie Samson (General Member)
- Oriana Duinker (Executive Director)

Chair's Report

This year, the Programs & Special Projects Committee has focused its attention on one main special project: a series of four contests titled "50 for 50," which are part of the Federation's 50th anniversary celebrations.

For each 50 for 50 contest, NS writers are invited to enter a 50-word piece in any genre in response to prompts drawn from the work of NS authors. To date, we've featured prompts from work by **Afua Cooper**, **El Jones**, **Alistair MacLeod**, **Shauntay Grant**, **Sheree Fitch**, and **Ami McKay**.

There is no fee to enter, and prizes (\$50 independent bookstore gift cards) have been donated by the bookstores themselves. Our deepest thanks to Kings Co-op Bookstore (Halifax), Wozzles Children's

Bookstore (Halifax), Bookmark (Halifax), and Block Shop Books (Lunenburg) for their support. The volunteer selection committee for each contest is composed of three members of the Programs & Special Projects Committee and is reconstituted for each contest, so there are never exactly the same readers. Our thanks to Program Manager Andy Verboom for receiving and managing all submissions!

We've had tremendous uptake from the writing community, with over 80 submissions to the first two contests combined! Upcoming deadlines: August 14, 2026, for contest #3 and sometime in October/November for contest #4.

For next year, we would like to turn our attention to working with staff in two areas directly affected by provincial government cuts:

1. Programming for youth (100% cut to Writers In The Schools [WITS] funding)
2. Reconsidering/reshaping the mentorship program (not sustainable in its current form in current fiscal context)

Recruitment & Nominating Committee

The Recruitment & Nominating Committee ensures that appointments to the Board of Directors are conducted in accordance with WFNS By-Laws. The Recruitment & Nominating Committee also identifies, recruits, and nominates candidates for available positions on the Board in order to recommend a full slate of candidates (and no more than a full slate) at Annual General Meetings while ensuring that the General Membership is informed beforehand about the process of nominating candidates from the floor during Annual General Meetings. The Recruitment & Nominating Committee also recruits representatives from the WFNS membership for the purposes of member representation on committees where appropriate.

Composition

- Chair: Joanne Gallant (President)
- Cory Lavender (Director-at-Large)
- Tiffany Morris (Director-at-Large)

Chair's Report

As of May 25, 2026, there were two vacant positions on the Board that did not have incumbents running for re-election: Steve Vernon stepped down in February, and Habiba Diallo is retiring at the end of her term. Philip Moscovitch has also decided to step down from his role as past president. In accordance with WFNS policy, the incoming Board for 2026/2027 will vote at our first meeting if this position will be kept vacant and the duties of the Past President passed on to other Board Executives or if we will attempt to ask former Past Presidents to reprise their role. That will come following the AGM.

Typically, Board members serve up to two consecutive terms. As our Governance & Elections Policy says, "Each Director's term of office will normally be two governance years. Each Director may normally serve a maximum of two consecutive terms, regardless of either term's length." With the current financial climate of Nova Scotia presenting an abnormal time for all of the Arts and Culture sectors in our province, it was noted by WFNS staff that policy permitted the Recruitment & Nominating Committee to ask our retiring Board members—Whitney Moran, Tiffany Morris, and Carol Shillibeer—if they'd be interested in running for third terms. Each Board member's experience was felt to be a massive asset to help weather the uncertainty of this next year. Whitney, who has served as Vice President and also the chair of the Fund Development Committee; Tiffany and her excellent leadership with EDIA; and Carol, our long-standing treasurer with her wealth of knowledge.

The Recruitment & Nominating Committee thought it was a great idea to maintain some consistency for one more year, and so we approached each Board member to see if they'd be interested in running for a third term, and they all agreed enthusiastically. This is why you will see some candidates for re-election to a third Board term. A note of justification is included in the preamble to this year's candidacy statements.

| Director | Member status | Role in 2025/2026 governance year | Consecutive years served (as of AGM 2026) | Status (as of AGM 2026) |
|--------------------|----------------------|--|--|---|
| Whitney Moran | Writers' Council | Vice President | 4 | Ending 2nd term – (re-)election required |
| Tiffany Morris | Writers' Council | Director-at-Large | 4 | Ending 2nd term – (re-)election required |
| Carol Shillibeer | General | Treasurer | 4 | Ending 2nd term – (re-)election required |
| Joanne Gallant | Writers' Council | President | 3 | Continuing |
| Danica Roache | General | Director-at-Large | 3 | Continuing |
| Becca Babcock | Writers' Council | Secretary | 2 | Ending 1st term – (re-)election required |
| Habiba Diallo | Writers' Council | Director-at-Large | 2 | Ending 1st term – (re-)election required |
| Lindsey Harrington | Writers' Council | Director-at-Large | 2 | Ending 1st term – (re-)election required |
| Cory Lavender | Writers' Council | Director-at-Large | 2 | Ending 1st term – (re-)election required |
| Steve Vernon | Writers' Council | Director-at-Large | 2 | Resigned – election required |
| Sonja Boon | Writers' Council | Director-at-Large | 1 | Continuing |
| Renée Hartleib | Writers' Council | Director-at-Large | 1 | Continuing |

The Recruitment & Nominating Committee was tasked with recruiting and endorsing eight candidates to fill the eight vacant seats on the incoming Board. The candidates endorsed for the 2026/2027 governance year are Whitney Moran, Tiffany Morris, Carol Shillibeer, Becca Babcock, Lindsey Harrington, Cory Lavender, Jonté Jyne, and Jamie Sampson.

While this committee endorses certain candidates, WFNS invites all General Members to run for election to the Board by submitting a candidacy statement. The call for candidacy statements (May 1 to May 14, 2026) was communicated via our *Subtext* newsletter, our social media pages, and our website.

Strategy & Policies Committee

The Strategy & Policies Committee sets and maintains the strategic direction of WFNS through the development of a five-year strategic plan and annual assessment of that plan. It also develops and reviews policies and By-Laws that provide policy governance for WFNS.

Composition:

- Becca Babcock (Committee Chair)
- Carol Shilibeer (Board Treasurer)
- Sylvia Gunnery (Writers' Council)
- Sonja Boon (Director)
- Kathy Mac (Writers' Council)
- Oriana Duinker (Executive Director)

Chair's Report

2025/2026 represented a much lighter year for the Strategy & Policies Committee than the previous two. We began in the fall by revising and editing the Strategic Plan, presented at the 2025 Annual General Meeting, following feedback from the Board and membership. The Plan was formally adopted at the Board meeting in November, 2025.

In the winter, the committee reviewed changes to the Policy Manual proposed by WFNS staff before formally presenting these changes to the Board. The updated Policy Manual was approved by the Board meeting in February, 2026.

Finally, over the winter and at the request of our Executive Director, the committee performed an environmental survey of writers' organizations across Canada in an effort to learn about bequest and large-gift policies. We learned that very few organizations have such a policy in place; in fact, most requested that we update them should we establish a policy of our own. This policy will be necessary in the future but must be discussed with legal counsel before the committee begins the work of establishing such a policy (likely in 2026/2027).

PROGRAM REPORTS

50th Anniversary Special Projects: 50 for 50 Contest Series

As a part of WFNS's 50th anniversary celebration, the 50 for 50 Contest Series encourages Nova Scotians to reflect on the rich legacy of creative writing in our province—and to contribute to that legacy by creating and sharing new work.

The series consists of four prompt-based contests held throughout 2026. Each contest prompts Nova Scotian writers to respond—in very short-form fiction, nonfiction, or poetry—to one of two short passages by notable Nova Scotian authors. Entries must be no more than 50 words, a limit celebrating both WFNS's anniversary and the Nova Scotian tradition of doing very much with very little. There are no limitations with respect to genre or style. The winning entrant of each contest receives a \$50 gift card for a Nova Scotian independent bookseller and digital publication of their winning entry on WFNS's social media channels and website. Entries are anonymized and assessed by WFNS's Programs & Special Projects Committee.

Contest #1 invited responses to passages by **El Jones** and **Dr. Afua Cooper**. We received 38 entries between January 29 and February 26, and the winning entry was **Ramona Eloise**'s poem "together," a response to El Jones's passage. Ramona received a \$50 gift card donated by **King's Co-op Bookstore** (Halifax). Honourable mentions were extended to entrants Laura MacMillan and Tiffany Briand Boudreau.

Contest #2 invited responses to passages by **Shauntay Grant** and **Alistair MacLeod**. We received 49 entries between March 12 and May 14, and the winning entry will be announced in mid-June. The winner will receive a \$50 gift card donated by **Block Shop Books** (Lunenburg).

Contest #3 invites responses to passages by **Sheree Fitch** and **Ami McKay**. Entries opened May 14 and will close August 13. The winner will receive a \$50 gift card donated by **Woozles Children's Bookstore** (Halifax).

Contest #4 will be announced, and entries accepted, in fall of 2026.

50th Anniversary Special Projects: *Writers of Nova Scotia* profile series

As a part of WFNS's 50th anniversary celebration, the *Writers of Nova Scotia* profile series aimed to explore and celebrate the diversity of writers across the province—including the variety of works they create and the range of backgrounds and experiences they draw from.

The series consisted of 50 short-form profiles of Nova Scotian writers published on the WFNS Instagram account over spring and summer of 2026. Any WFNS General Member residing in Nova Scotia was invited to submit a profile for possible inclusion. Profiles were considered and selected on a rolling basis by WFNS's Membership & Engagement Committee. Writers selected for inclusion were notified by email in advance.

After profile submissions closed, all submitting writers were entered into a draw for a prize package (\$200 value): one of each item in the WFNS Gift Shop, including a General Membership. The draw-winning submitter was **Sarah Jane Conklin** (Fall River).

64 profiles were submitted by General Members between February 19 and June 6, 2026. Three selected profiles have been published each week beginning March 17, with the 50th profile scheduled to be published on July 15. At the conclusion of the series, all selected profiles will be presented on the WFNS website.

Alistair MacLeod Mentorship Program

Since 2001, the Alistair MacLeod Mentorship Program has supported the development of emerging writers in Nova Scotia who are on the cusp of professional publication and who are committed to their writing and creative development. It is a disciplined, focused, and supportive one-on-one apprenticeship program through which writers expand and hone their craft.

Through this program, WFNS pairs professionally published writers with emerging writers, taking care through an assessment process to match mentoring authors' experience and craft with emerging writers' project goals and draft manuscripts. Writers from across Nova Scotia—with projects in all forms and genres of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry—are welcome to apply.

The program helps emerging writers overcome barriers to their growth and development, provides mentoring authors with an opportunity to refine their mentorship and instructional skills, and reaffirms the creative conviction of everyone involved.

Two cohorts of the MacLeod Mentorship Program run over the fiscal year, including the 23rd cohort, who began their work in February of 2025 and finished in June of 2025, the duration of the Mentorship program being shortened from five to three months due to budgetary constraints:

- Fiction: **Carol Bruneau** (Halifax) & apprentice **Jennifer Stewart** (Halifax)
- Geriatric sci-fi: **Elaine McClusky** (Dartmouth) & apprentice **Roberta McGinn** (Halifax)
- Afrofuturist sci-fi and eco-Fiction: **Julian Mortimer Smith** (Yarmouth) & apprentice and Charles R. Saunders Prize recipient **Nailah Tataa** (Halifax)
- Nonfiction: **Evelyn C. White** (Halifax) & apprentice **Melizza Goertzen** (Halifax)

The 24th cohort of the MacLeod Mentorship Program just wrapped up their work and participated in the Celebration of Emerging Writers (in-person at the Cultural Federations of Nova Scotia, Halifax) on June 10, 2026:

- Historical fiction: **Stephanie Domet** (Halifax) & apprentice **Jessica Marsh** (Halifax)
- Sci-fi: **Jane Doucet** (Halifax) & apprentice **Pamela Sinclair** (Bedford)
- Sci-fi: **Sylvia Gunnery** (LaHave) & apprentice and Charles R. Saunter Prize recipient **Norman Ho** (Halifax)
- Nonfiction: **Joanne Gallant** (Halifax) & apprentice **Alexandra Vlachopoulou Horn** (Halifax)

In 2025/2026, the MacLeod Mentorship Program ran from February to June for a duration of four months. This format seemed to strike a balance between the best length for a productive mentorship and WFNS's budgetary capacity to support the program.

As of the 2026 AGM, the MacLeod Mentorship Program has been placed on pause due to budgetary constraints. If WFNS's operational funding situation has changed by fall of 2026, the program may be reintroduced to the 2026/2027 programming year.

Book Awards

Book Awards administered by WFNS celebrate and promote excellence in writing from Nova Scotia and from Atlantic Canada. The number of titles submitted each year is a testament to the diversity and quality of writing from our region. Although jurors have the unenviable task of selecting one winner for each award, each year's shortlists introduce local, national, and international readers to a tremendous body of work and the vibrant culture of the region. WFNS administers and acts as steward for two Nova Scotia Book Awards and three Atlantic Book Awards.

All awards are given annually, with the exception of the biennial Maxine Tynes Nova Scotia Poetry Award

(established in 2020 and first awarded in 2021). All WFNS book awards are supported by endowments.

WFNS's Nova Scotia and Atlantic Book Awards are presented at two ceremonies held during the same week. The 2026 Evelyn Richardson Non-Fiction Award (\$2,000) was presented as part of the **Nova Scotia Book Awards Gala**, hosted by Juanita Peters on June 1 at Brightwood Golf and Country Club (Dartmouth). WFNS's 2026 Atlantic Book Awards—the J.M. Abraham Atlantic Poetry Award (\$2,000), the Ann Connor Brimer Award for Atlantic Canadian Children's Literature (\$5,000), and the Thomas Raddall Atlantic Fiction Award (\$30,000)—were presented as part of the **Atlantic Book Awards Gala**, hosted by CBC's Portia Clarke on June 4 at Paul O'Regan Hall, Halifax Central Library (Halifax).

In the fall of 2025, WFNS's Nova Scotia and Atlantic Book Awards attracted **161 total submissions** from publishers and self-published authors:

- 26 submissions for the Evelyn Richardson Non-Fiction Award
- 16 submissions for the J.M. Abraham Atlantic Poetry Award
- 63 submissions for the Ann Connor Brimer Award for Atlantic Canadian Children's Literature
- 56 submissions for the Thomas Raddall Atlantic Fiction Award

Recipients, finalists, and juries for the 2026 awards are listed below.

Evelyn Richardson Non-Fiction Award

2026 recipient: Halina St. James, *The Golden Daughter: My Mother's Secret Past as a Ukrainian Slave Worker in Nazi Germany* (House of Anansi Press)

Finalists:

- **Jessie Harrold**, *Mothershift: Reclaiming Motherhood as a Rite of Passage* (Shambhala Publications)
- **Marjorie Simmins** *In Search of Puffins: Stories of Loss, Light, and Flight* (Pottersfield Press)

Jury: **Heather Fegan, Melissa Kuipers, and Evelyn White**

Ann Connor Brimer Award for Atlantic Canadian Children's Literature

2026 recipient: Lauren Soloy, *The Newest Gnome* (Tundra Books)

Finalists:

- **Charis Cotter**, *The Mystery of the Haunted Dance Hall* (Tundra Books)
- **Jacqueline Halsey**, *Joe and the Wreck of the Tribune* (Nimbus Publishing)
- **Melanie Mosher**, *Bertie Stewart is Perfectly Imperfect* (Nimbus Publishing)
- **Willie Poll**, *Our Ancestor's Kitchen* (Annick Press)

Jury: **Heather MacKenzie, Sara O'Leary, and Sheila O'Neill**

J.M. Abraham Atlantic Poetry Award

2026 recipient: Sue Goyette, *Future Howl* (Gaspereau Press)

Finalists:

- **Leigh Faulkner**, *Yes is the Only Word the Earth Understands* (Owl's Head Press)
- **Natalie Rice**, *Nightjar* (Gaspereau Press)
- **Rebecca Salazar**, *antibody*, (McLelland & Stewart)

- **Christine Wu**, *Familial Hungers* (Brick Books)

Jury: **Jenna Colclough, Cory Lavender, and Matt Robinson**

Thomas Raddall Atlantic Fiction Award

2026 recipient: Jaime Burnet *milktooth* (Vagrant Press)

Finalists:

- **Renée Belliveau**, *A Sense of Things Beyond* (Vagrant Press)
- **Robert de la Chevotière**, *We Were Not Kings* (Little A)
- **Danny Jacobs**, *The Ignis Psalter* (Porcupine's Quill)
- **Danica Roache**, *Five Seasons of Charlie Francis* (Vagrant Press)

Jury: **B.R. Myers, Fawn Parker, and Amanda Peters**

A number of literary events led up to the two book award ceremonies, including the following:

- **Writing the Truth: An Evening of Non-Fiction.** May 28 at the University of King's College. Readings and conversation with finalists **Halina St. James, Jessie Harrold, Marjorie Simmins, Jo-Ann Roberts, Ken Hynes, James MacDuff, and Mirriam Mweemba.** Hosted by **Simon Thibault.**
- **Writing the Story (Before the Picture).** May 30 on Zoom. **Willie Poll** gave a talk on her publishing journey and offered advice to aspiring children's authors.
- **Dartmouth Writers' Circle.** May 31 at the Alderney Gate Library. Featuring readings from authors **Jacqueline Halsey and Melanie Mosher** and an open writing circle for sharing new works and soliciting feedback.
- **J.M. Abraham Atlantic Poetry Reading: Live at The Carleton.** June 3 at The Carleton (Halifax). Readings by finalists **Leigh Faulkner, Natalie Rice, Rebecca Salazar, Christine Wu, and Sue Goyette.** Hosted by **Tara Thorne.**
- **A Fiction Fête.** June 3 at the Chester Playhouse. Featuring readings by finalists **Renée Belliveau, Jaime Burnet, Robert de la Chevotière, Danny Jacobs, and Danica Roache.** Hosted by **Stephanie Domet.**

Booktoberfest

Booktoberfest is WFNS's annual literary festival. It celebrates Nova Scotian authors & publishers—and the books they've published over the past year—by creating a place for authors & readers to meet; for book sales & signings; and for free readings & creative writing workshops.

Booktoberfest 2025 was held at Halifax Central Library on October 11, 2025. The book fair featured 31 vendor tables, including 61 Nova Scotian authors and 7 Nova Scotian publishers. Four creative writing workshops were led by **Gina N. Brown, Lesley Choyce, Corinne Lewandowski, and Marjorie Simmins.** Four author readings were given by **Robert de la Chevotière, Renée Hartleib, Nicole Northwood, and Bryn Pottie.**

A survey circulated to vendors after Booktoberfest 2025 received 33 responses, a response rate of roughly 50%. On average, each vendor sold 8 units. When asked to rank the importance of three Booktoberfest outcomes on a scale from 1 (unimportant) to 5 (very important), most respondents assigned

- high importance to “public visibility / engagement” (58% selected 5);
- moderate importance to “sales” (42% selected 4); and
- moderate importance to “networking” (45% selected 4).

When asked to rank how likely they would be to participate in future “supplemental activities” on a scale from 1 (very unlikely) to 5 (very likely), most respondents showed mild to strong interest in

- “social opportunities for authors & publishers (e.g., after-party)” (75% chose 3, 4, or 5);
- “professional development opportunities for authors (e.g., advice on preparing for a book fair)” (75% chose 3, 4, or 5); and
- “virtual vendor floor” (81% chose 3, 4, or 5).

The “virtual vendor floor” activity was described in the survey as follows: “a catalogue of featured titles on the WFNS website, which would expand Booktoberfest reach to readers who cannot attend in-person. Each title listing would include a cover image, short synopsis, and link to purchase online.”

Coffee Chats program and Manuscript Review Program

Launched in 2020, the Coffee Chats program enables WFNS members at all career stages to seek advice and inspiration from professional authors. Coffee Chats provide writers with affordable, subsidized access to the advice of professional authors on a wide range of topics related to the writing life, such as overcoming creative blocks and challenges, establishing healthy writing practices, and planning for publication opportunities. The program fee for advice-seeking writers is \$40; advisors are compensated \$65 for the 30-minute conversation, with the difference subsidized by WFNS.

Launched in 2016, the Manuscript Review Program enables WFNS members at all career stages to receive developmental advice for re-vamping, re-visioning, or re-conceiving a literary project that needs a fresh pair of eyes. Each manuscript review provides developmental advice for re-vamping, re-visioning, or re-conceiving a literary project that needs a fresh pair of eyes. The program fee for review-seeking writers starts at \$100 and increases with manuscript length; reviewers are compensated the full amount of the fee.

WFNS facilitated 7 advisory sessions and 8 manuscript reviews in the 2025/2026 fiscal year.

Ellemenno Visual Literature Prize

The Ellemenno Visual Literature Prize has been retired, running for its third and final time in our 2025/2026 programming year. Factors in this decision include consistently low submissions numbers (12 in 2023/2024, 12 in 2024/2025, and 13 in 2025/2026), the administrative challenge of promoting a high-concept contest, and a lack of endowment or supporting revenue.

Established in 2023, the Ellemenno Prize recognizes creativity that bridges the formal divide between contemporary literary arts and visual arts in Nova Scotia, accepting both literary submissions (that respond to, incorporate, or creatively ‘translate’ visual artworks) and visual submissions (that respond to, incorporate, or creatively ‘translate’ literary works). The winning writer or artist receives a cash prize (\$250) along with digital publication and a featured interview on the WFNS website.

The Ellemenno Prize was established in recognition of textile artist Marilyn Smulders, who made significant contributions to Nova Scotia’s literary landscape during her tenure as WFNS Executive Director from 2017 to 2023. The prize is named for Marilyn’s screenprinting and quilting moniker, Ellemenno.

The 2026 prize was awarded to **Gabriel Milhet** (Halifax) for the poem “Researching the Life of Gabriel Hall (to 1824): Farmer, Freedom Fighter, and a Black Refugee of The War of 1812,” which responds a photographic portrait of Gabriel Hall (1892) taken by George H. Craig and held by Archives Nova Scotia. Gabriel is an African Nova Scotian writer. He is a winner of the 2025 Varma Prizes in Gothic Literature. His research appears in *Intersections* and *Canada’s History* and is forthcoming in *The Canadian Encyclopedia* and *Findings / Trouvailles*. His poetry is forthcoming in *The White Wall Review* and *The South Shore*

Review.

Finalists:

- **Shelagh Howard** for the long-exposure photo series *The Secret Keepers*, which responds to the poetry anthology *Resistance: Righteous Rage in the Age of #MeToo* (University of Regina Press, 2021), edited by Sue Goyette.
- **Basma Kavanagh** for the textile work *Untitled (Tidelines embroidery)*, which responds to an unpublished short poem by fellow Nova Scotian poet Sean Howard.
- **Rebecca Wilson** for the watercolour painting *Desire Paths*, which responds to Robert McFarlane's *The Old Ways: A Journey on Foot* (Penguin Books, 2012).

Volunteer selection committee: **Sonja Boon**, **Carol Shillibeer**, Andy Verboom (Program Manager)

Emerging Writers Prizes

WFNS administers three prizes for emerging and early-career writers, each of which recognizes barriers to literary creation and supports writers as they advance book-length works-in-progress—completing, revising, and/or submitting them for publication—and as they undertake creative writing mentorships and professional training to advance their literary careers.

Writers eligible for more than one prize are required to submit only one submission package. All three prizes are assessed by a single Emerging Writers Prizes jury. The 2025/2026 jurors were **Jon Tattrie**, **Charlotte Ashley**, and **Lindsay Ruck**.

Charles R. Saunders Prize

2026 recipient: Norman Ho (Halifax)

Introduced in 2023, the Charles R. Saunders Prize provides the recipient with time, space, and professional development support as they complete, revise and edit, and/or submit work for publication. The prize is awarded each year to an emerging or early-career writer with an in-progress work in speculative fiction that shows promise and career-advancing merit. Priority is given to writers from equity-deserving communities, including but not limited to writers who have faced marginalization on the basis of disability, ethnicity, gender, or sexuality.

From 2023 to 2026, the prize package consisted of \$1,000 cash and a \$2,000-value literary mentorship through the Alistair MacLeod Mentorship Program. Starting in 2027, the Saunders Prize prize package will mirror that of the Venart Prize: \$1,000 cash, \$200 in advisory sessions through the Coffee Chats program, and a \$700-value one-week residency at Jampolis Cottage.

Elizabeth Venart Prize

2026 recipient: Sarah Mian (Halifax)

Introduced in 2021, the Elizabeth Venart Prize provides the recipient with time, space, and professional development support as they complete, revise and edit, and/or submit work for publication. One prize (\$1,000 cash, \$200 in advisory sessions through the Coffee Chats program, and a \$700-value one-week residency at Jampolis Cottage) is awarded each year to an emerging or early-career writer working in any genre of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, or writing for children/YA whose work-in-progress shows promise and career-advancing merit. Eligible writers are women and/or other marginalized genders (including but not limited to Two-Spirit, trans, nonbinary, and fluid genders).

Senator Don Oliver Black Voices Prize

2026 recipient: Guyleigh Johnson (Halifax)

Introduced in 2023, the Senator Don Oliver Black Voices Prize provides the recipient with time and space as they complete, revise and edit, and/or submit work for publication. One prize (\$5,000 cash) is awarded each year to an emerging or early-career writer working in any genre of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, or writing for children/YA whose work-in-progress shows promise and career-advancing merit. Eligible writers are Black and/or African Nova Scotian.

Jampolis Cottage Residency Program

Introduced in 2023, the Jampolis Cottage Residency Program welcomes emerging, established, and professional authors from Nova Scotia and beyond. Through residencies and retreats, it provides committed writers with space and inspiration for focused development of their works-in-progress. Located on the shores of the Minas Basin in Avonport, Nova Scotia, Jampolis Cottage is a lovingly maintained and updated 230-year-old Georgian colonial house.

Cottage Facilities

No significant capital projects have been undertaken at Jampolis Cottage in 2025/2026, but WFNS staff, the Jampolis Cottage Facilities Committee, and volunteers have made a number of smaller improvements around the cottage: we refinished the bathtub, replaced the couch, decommissioned a broken dishwasher, cleaned the basement, installed a curbside waste receptacle, redecorated and reorganized furniture in the bedrooms, squirrel-proofed the foundation, replaced a broken sump pump, rebuilt the beach deck, and built a new garden bed.

Operationally, we have transitioned to an external cleaning service. Residents report that the house is exceptionally clean, well-appointed, and welcoming!

Self-Directed Retreats

Self-Directed Retreats (one week in length) are open to Nova Scotian, Canadian, and international writers. Applicants should apply in creative groups (of two to five) but may also apply as solo writers. Self-Directed Retreats are private and provided at-cost: a base rate of \$550 + \$150 per creative resident. There is no additional charge for essential companions (personal attendants, service animals, or dependants or domestic pets who require care) or for creative or social guests.

Effective June, 2026, Self-Directed Retreat fees were raised from \$440/week + \$110/week per resident to \$550/week + \$150/week per resident to better reflect the true expenses of maintaining and administering the cottage and to approach fiscal self-sustainability for Jampolis Cottage programming.

Self-Directed Retreat applications are deemed successful or unsuccessful (if missing elements) by WFNS staff and are not ranked by merit. Interested writers may subscribe for email notification whenever Self-Directed Retreat applications open; as of May 25, 2026, this email list has 257 subscribers, showing steady growth from 207 subscribers in spring of 2025 and 151 subscribers in spring of 2024 .

In the 2024/2025 fiscal year, 25 Self-Directed Retreat weeks were undertaken at Jampolis Cottage by 67 creative residents (an average of 2.7 residents per week), who paid \$18,900 in residency fees (an average of \$282 per resident per week).

In the 2025/2026 fiscal year, 26 Self-Directed Retreat weeks were undertaken at Jampolis Cottage by 56 creative residents (an average of 2.2 residents per week), who paid \$17,600 in residency fees (an average of \$314 per resident per week).

In the 2026/2027 fiscal year, we anticipate 23 Self-Directed Retreat weeks will be undertaken by approximately 63 creative residents (an average of 2.7 residents per week), who will pay approximately \$21,730 in residency fees (an average of \$344 per resident per week). These estimates are based on the 16 Self-Directed Retreats already scheduled for the fiscal year (up to December, 2026).

Sponsored Residencies

Sponsored Residencies (one to four weeks in length) are primarily open to permanent residents of Nova Scotia; the Atlantic Indigenous Writer's Residency is open to permanent residents of any Atlantic Canadian province (NB, NL, NS, or PEI). Each successful applicant is provided with free, private residence and a \$2000 honorarium. Low-residency and split-residency options are available to accommodate writers with work and care commitments. There is no additional charge for essential companions (personal attendants, service animals, or dependants or domestic pets who require care) or for creative or social guests. A travel reimbursement fund is available to successful applicants.

Sponsored Residency applications are assessed by a peer assessment jury.

The following writers undertook their Sponsored Residencies in 2025/2026:

- **Michelle Porter** (St. John's), recipient of the Atlantic Indigenous Writer's Residency (sponsored by Amanda Peters)
- **Trevor Silver** (North Preston), recipient of the Delmore "Buddy" Daye Residency (sponsored by the Delmore "Buddy" Daye Learning Institute)
- **Christine Wu** (Halifax), recipient of the Robert Pope Foundation Residency (sponsored by the Robert Pope Foundation)
- **Les Tyler Johnson** (Halifax), recipient of a Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia Residency
- **Amy Saunders** (Portuguese Cove), recipient of a Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia Residency

The 2026/2027 peer assessment jury consisted of K.R. Byggdin, Andre Fenton, and Tiffany Morris, who met in March, 2026, to assess applications.

The following writers will undertake their Sponsored Residencies in 2025/2026:

- **shalan joudry** (Bear River First Nation), recipient of the Atlantic Indigenous Writer's Residency (sponsored by Amanda Peters)
- **Sig Burwash** (Cape North), recipient of the DAWN Residency (sponsored by The DAWN Fund)
- **Angela Bowden** (New Glasgow), recipient the Delmore "Buddy" Daye Residency (sponsored by the Delmore "Buddy" Daye Learning Institute)
- **Margo Wheaton** (Dartmouth), recipient of the Robert Pope Foundation Residency (sponsored by the Robert Pope Foundation)
- **Jaime Forsythe** (Middle Sackville), recipient of a Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia Residency
- **Lindsey Harrington** (Dartmouth), recipient of a Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia Residency

Sponsored Retreats

We currently offer one Sponsored Retreat, the **Oliver-Craig Black Writers' Retreat** (one week in length), which is open to Nova Scotian writers. Each successful applicant is provided with free, shared residence; a \$250 honorarium; and the instruction, mentorship, and advice of a distinguished Black or African Nova Scotian author. A travel reimbursement fund is available to successful applicants. Sponsored

Retreat applications are assessed by the same jury as sponsored residency applications.

The 2025 Oliver-Craig Black Writers' Retreat took place at Jampolis Cottage in August, 2025. Participants were **Trevor Silver** (North Preston) and **Tracy Pinder** (Beaverbank), under the mentorship of **Wanda Taylor** (Toronto).

The 2026 Oliver-Craig Retreat will take place at Jampolis Cottage in August, 2026. Participants will be **LeoNia Elms** (Dartmouth) and **Lisette Sumbu** (Amherst), under the mentorship of **Chad Lucas** (Beaver Bank).

Micro-Anthology Series

Launched in 2026, the Micro-Anthology Series provides publication opportunities and encourages Nova Scotian readers to discover local genre fiction authors. Submissions are capped at 750 words, anonymized, and considered by volunteer selection committees, usually composed of WFNS staff and representatives from partnering organizations. Each micro-anthology includes 13 stories and is distributed for free in print and digital formats.

Three annual micro-anthologies will be published in 2026:

- *Nova Swoons* (romance fiction), which received 33 submissions, was published in February in partnership with the Association of Romance Writers of Atlantic Canada and with a print sponsorship from Dartmouth Book Exchange. Print copies debuted at the Just My Type fundraisers in Halifax and Truro on February 7, 2026.
- *Terra Nova Scotia* (speculative fiction), which received 37 submissions, was published in May in partnership with TriCon: The Trident Conference for Speculative Fiction, with a print sponsorship from Trident Booksellers & Cafe, and with cover design and illustration donated by WFNS member **Sunil Sarwal**. Print copies debuted at TriCon: The Trident Conference for Speculative Fiction (May 15 to 17, 2026), being included in conference registrants' swag bags and available at the WFNS table on the conference's vendor floor.
- *Blue Lobster Detective Agency* (crime/mystery fiction), which has received 31 submissions, will be published in September in partnership with Crime Writers of Canada and with a print sponsorship from Quantum Communications. Print copies will debut at Crime Will Tell (September, 2026), an annual celebration of Nova Scotian crime writing organized by Crime Writers of Canada in partnership with WFNS and Halifax Public Libraries.



Nova Writes Competition

First established in 1975—and having undergone many changes in name and description in the intervening decades—the Nova Writes Competition currently accepts original, unpublished entries from emerging writers in four short-form categories: short story, essay, poetry, and middle-grade / young adult fiction. Standalone excerpts from long-form works are permitted in all categories.

The Nova Writes Competition supports emerging writers in Nova Scotia—and more established writers exploring new forms—through developmental and publication opportunities. All entrants receive feedback from competition readers; finalists receive additional feedback from judges; and winning entries are

published in the annual Nova Writes anthology, which is launched at the annual Celebration of Emerging Writers and sold through WFNS and independent booksellers.

We received 65 entries for the 2026 Nova Writes Competition (25 short fiction, 9 short nonfiction, 17 poetry, and 14 YA/children's) which is comparable to the previous year's 70 entries.

The winners were announced in *Subtext* and were invited to read from their entries at the Celebration of Emerging Writers, held on June 11 at the Cultural Federations of Nova Scotia (1113 Marginal Road, Halifax).

Winners, finalists, and judges for the 2026 competition are listed below.

Budge Wilson Short Fiction Prize

Winner: Elizabeth Collis, "Migration Flight"

Finalists: Emily Dodge, Lauren McNeil, Zoey Phillips, Nicole Regalado, Paula Romanow, Jennifer Stewart

Judge: Donna Jones Alward

Silver Donald Cameron Essay Prize

Winner: Sophia Lawrence, "Weeding and Burning"

Finalists: Anneli Berger, Nancy Kimber, Michael S. Ryan,

Judge: Lezlie Lowe

Rita Joe Poetry Prize

Winner: Lorraine Ryan, *Demise of a Forest Model*

Finalists: Ava Cranhill, Grace Hamilton-Burge, Kristen Stark

Judge: Margo Wheaton

Joyce Barkhouse Young Adult Fiction Prize

Winner: Avery Mossop, "The Memory Thief"

Finalists: Carolyn Harnanan, Gabrielle Pope

Judge: Chad Lucas

Writers In The Schools (WITS) program

Each year, the Writers In The Schools (WITS) program facilitates visits by approximately 40 to 50 professional writers (WFNS Writers' Council members) to schools throughout the province, where they provide presentations, workshops, and readings for approximately 20,000 P-12 students. This in-school arts education program encourages students' enjoyment of Nova Scotian literature and engages them in the development of literacy skills. WITS pays professional writers participating in the program at a rate of \$175 for a half-day visit and \$350 for a full-day visit.

We promoted the WITS program across the province by producing an engaging poster with a commissioned illustration by WITS author/illustrator Doretta Groenendyk, as well as a brochure that listed as many participating authors as we could squeeze in. These materials were sent by mail to every school in the province in September of 2025.

As with last year, we equipped the participating WITS authors with a promotional toolkit so that they could promote their involvement in WITS. The demand for WITS visits remains high across the province.

The 2026/2027 provincial budget announced, among other cuts, a 100% reduction to WITS funding. As of the 2026 AGM, the WITS program has been placed on pause due to this funding cut. We are actively seeking funding to continue WITS programming in some capacity in the 2026/2027 programming year.

WFNS also engages youth through creative writing day camps. In summer of 2025, Linda Hudson facilitated three day camps:

- “The Art of Writing” (Ages 10 – 14) (July 7 to July 11 at NSCAD Port Campus) – Instructors: Chad Lucas, Karen Kelloway, Janice Walsh-Cruddas, Andy Tolson, Jessica Scott Kerrin
- “Creative Writing for Kids” (Ages 11 – 14) (July 14 to July 18 at Lunenburg School of the Arts) – Instructors: Joanne Gallant, Jo Treggiari, Sal Sawler, Lindsey Harrington, Stephanie Domet
- “Writing Program with WFNS” (Ages 12 – 19) (Aug 11 to Aug 15 at MacPhee Centre for Creative Learning) – Instructors: Janice Walsh-Cruddas, Evelyn White, Sal Sawler, Dave Beynon, Holly Carr

As summer of 2026 approaches, three day camps are scheduled:

- “The Art of Writing” (Ages 10 – 14) (July 6 to July 10 at NSCAD Port Campus) – Instructors: Karen Kelloway, Danielle Metcalfe-Chenail, Tiffany Morris, John A. Read, Andy Tolson
- “Creative Writing for Kids” (Ages 11 – 14) (July 13 to July 17 at Lunenburg School of the Arts) – Instructors: Joanne Gallant, Sylvia Gunnery, Chad Lucas, Sal Sawler, Vivian Zhou
- “Writing Program with WFNS” (Ages 12 – 19) (Aug 10 to Aug 14 at MacPhee Centre for Creative Learning) – Instructors: Joanne Gallant, Linda Hudson, Sal Sawler, Evelyn White

Events

The 2025/2026 programming year saw a strong return to in-person event delivery, with most of WFNS’s literary events offering members the chance to gather in-person. WFNS hosted, partnered in the presentation of, or had a strong outreach presence at the following events:

- April 3, 2025 **Off the Page.** The first in a series of monthly readings featuring local emerging writers. Readers at this event were **Jessica Marsh, Les Tyler Johnson, Nailah Tataa, Cole Martin, and Danica Roache.**
Held at Wonder’neath (Halifax)
Audience: 19
- April 17, 2025 **Literary Trivia Night.** WFNS staff organized a fun and competitive evening of literary trivia for members and friends.
Held at the Cultural Federations of Nova Scotia (Halifax)
Audience: 32
- April 23, 2025 **Beyond Survival: 5 Writers on Trans Joy and Authorship.** Trans and gender non-conforming writers **Zoë Comeau, K.R. Byggdin, Luke Hathaway, Trynne Delaney,** and moderator **Sal Sawler** discussed reading, writing, storytelling, and celebrating trans narratives. A recommended reading list was developed by the panelists and circulated publicly.
Virtual webinar on Zoom.
Audience: 38
- May 8, 2025 **Off the Page.** The second edition of a series of monthly readings featuring local emerging writers. Readers at this event were **Morgan Beck, Lisa Comeau, Nora Riemersma, Sasha Pickering,** and **Asher Cookson.**

Held at Wonder'neath (Halifax).
Audience: 21

- May 16 - 18, 2025 **Bluenose Giv'er Charity Challenge.** WFNS organized a small team of staff and members called "The Run-On Sentences", and we raised just over \$800 for WFNS operations.
Held in Halifax.
Participants: 6 runners
- May 29, 2025 **Writing the Truth: An Evening of Nonfiction** (Atlantic Book Awards Festival). A celebration of the nonfiction books that were finalists for the NS and Atlantic Book Awards, including readings from **Martin Bauman, Andrea Currie, and Dean Jobb.** Hosted by **Simon Thibault.**
Held at the University of King's College (Halifax)
Audience: 24
- June 2, 2025 **Nova Scotia Book Awards Gala.** The Evelyn Richardson Award and the Maxine Tynes Award were presented at this gala, along with the literary awards within the Dartmouth Book Awards umbrella.
Held at the Brightwood Golf & Country Club (Dartmouth)
Audience: 124
- June 3, 2025 **YA! Meet The Authors** (Atlantic Book Awards Festival). A celebration of the finalists for the Ann Connor Brimer Award, featuring readings by **Chad Lucas, Hannah D. State, Gloria Wesley, and Rebecca Philips.** Hosted by **Oriana Duinker and Digitally Lit.**
Held at the MacPhee Centre for Learning (Dartmouth)
Audience: 11
- June 4, 2025 **Fiction Fete** (Atlantic Book Awards Festival). A celebration of the fiction books that were finalists for the NS and Atlantic Book Awards, including readings from **Carol Bruneau, Mark Blgrave, Charlene Carr, Lesley Crewe, Jessica Ilse, Shawn Lawlor, Susan LeBlanc, and Susie Taylor.** Hosted by **Sarah Hampson.**
Held at the Chester Playhouse
Audience: 43
- June 4, 2025 **Atlantic Poetry Reading** (Atlantic Book Awards Festival). A celebration of the finalists for the J.M. Abraham Atlantic Poetry Award and the Maxine Tynes Nova Scotia Poetry Award, including readings from **Annick MacAskill, Alice Burdick, Glare Goulet, Johanna Skibsrud, and Bren Simmers.** Hosted by **Tara Thorne.**
Held at the Carleton (Halifax)
Audience: 34
- June 5, 2025 **Atlantic Book Awards Gala.** The Ann Connor Brimer Award, the J.M. Abraham Award, and the Thomas Raddall Award were presented at this gala, along with other literary awards that are Atlantic in scope.
Held at the Halifax Central Library
- June 11, 2025 **Celebration of Emerging Writers & Island Folk Cider Launch.** Our annual celebration recognizes the graduates of the Alexander MacLeod Mentorship Program, the recipients of our prizes for emerging writers, and the winners of our Nova Writes

Competition. We also launched the new cider (“Starfall Scrumping”) and the Nova Writes Anthology.

Held at the Cultural Federations of Nova Scotia (Halifax)

Audience: 54

- July 11 - 12, 2025 **WFNS Book Sale.** This book sale was a chance to raise some money and move along the deaccessioned books in our extensive library.
Held at the WFNS office (Halifax)
Audience: 60 people dropping in
- July 24, 2025 **Off the Page.** The third edition of a series of monthly readings featuring local emerging writers. Readers at this event were **L.M. Hicks, Thushara Premarajan, Rohini Bannerjee** and 12 other readers who signed up for the open mic portion of the event.
Held at Wonder’neath (Halifax)
Audience: 26
- August 29, 2025 **Jampolis Open House.** An opportunity for members to help us with a deep clean of the house, various landscaping tasks, and rebuilding the viewing deck at the edge of the property.
Held at Jampolis Cottage (Avonport).
Audience: 15
- September 5, 2025 **Crime Will Tell.** Our annual partnership with the Halifax Public Libraries and Crime Writers Canada for an event to celebrate local crime writing. The fiction panel featured moderator **Jane Doucet** and panelists **Charlene Carr, C.S. Porter, and N.L. Blandford.** The nonfiction panel featured moderator **Kayla Hounsell** and panelists **Andrea Currie, Laura Churchill Duke, and John Elliott.**
Held at the Halifax Central Library
Audience: 70
- October 11, 2025 **Booktoberfest.** Annual book fair celebrating recently published, NS books. We hosted nearly 70 authors and publishers in the book fair and featured four authors (**Nicole Northwood, Bryn Pottie, Renée Hartleib, and Robert de la Chevotière**) in free, public readings. We also hosted four free, public, creative writing workshops by **Lesley Choyce, Marjorie Simmins, Gina N. Brown, and Corrinne Lewandowski.**
Held at the Halifax Central Library
Audience: 400
- October 18, 2025 **Project Bookmark: Budge Wilson.** WFNS played a role in organizing the fabrication, installation, and celebration of a Project Bookmark (plaque) for beloved NS author Budge Wilson. It was installed on the Dalhousie campus and features a quote from Budge’s short story “The Leaving.” This event was the plaque unveiling and a reception.
Held at Dalhousie University (Halifax)
Audience: 62
- October 23, 2025 **Writing Rumble.** Our annual peer-to-peer fundraiser. The “Quilluminati” squared off against “The Word Slingers” at a madcap writing relay. Participants collected sponsorships ahead of the event (we raised just over \$6,000 for the Mentorship program). Writers: **Shelley Thompson, Chris Benjamin, Jessica Marsh, Jen Britton, Sue MacLeod, Gillian Turnbull, Tim Covell, Danica Roache,**

Charlotte Ashley, Sue Murtagh, Stephan Kimber, and Renée Belliveau.
 Held at Open Book Coffee (Halifax)
 Audience: 29

- November 7 - 9, 2025 **Hal-Con.** Once again, WFNS participated at Hal Con with a vendor table where we gave out copies of our Hal-Con micro-anthology (featuring local speculative fiction writers) and told the public about our membership and programs. This continues to be an important avenue for reaching genre writers.
 Held at the Nova Convention Centre (Halifax)
- November 18, 2025 **Gather 'Round.** A night of wintery storytelling in support of the Alistair MacLeod Mentorship Program. This event featured seasonal readings by two past mentors and a mentee (**Lorri Neilsen Glenn, Carol Bruneau, and Michelle Samson**) and a reading to musical accompaniment by **Shelley Thompson** with the Blue Engine String Quartet.
 Held at the Carleton (Halifax)
 Audience: 74
- February 7, 2026 **Just My Type.** WFNS brought poets with typewriters to the Halifax Brewery Market and the Truro Farmers' Market to sell custom, on-demand love poems in time for Valentine's Day. **Whitney Moran and Lindsey Harrington** were in Truro, while **Jamie Samson, Jaime Forsythe, and Aren Morris** were in Halifax. We also distributed the Nova Swoons Micro-Anthology (see programs for more details).
 Held in Truro and Halifax
 Audience: hundreds of market-goers
- February 25, 2026 **Shelf Indulgence.** The first in a new book club series where Program Manager **Linda Hudson** reads NS titles. This session was co-hosted by **Carol Moreria** and featured *The Gift Child* by **Elaine McClusky**.
 Held on Zoom
 Audience: 4
- March 26, 2026 **Raddall Reading.** In partnership with Dalhousie Libraries, we hosted **David Huebert** (winner of the 2025 Raddall Award) in conversation with **Alexander MacLeod**.
 Held on Zoom
 Audience: 45
- March 30, 2026 **Book Awards Shortlist Announcement.** WFNS hosted the NS and Atlantic Book Awards for an announcement and celebration of the finalists for all of our book awards.
 Held at the Cultural Federations of Nova Scotia (Halifax)
 Audience: 65

In addition to the above events, the WFNS office and programming space at 1113 Marginal Road hosted book launches and reading events for **Vicki Grant, Karen Loucks, Marjorie Simmins, donalee Moulton, Jill MacLean, and AfterWords Literary Festival**. It is also regularly used by **Creatively Speaking Toastmasters** and two private writing groups.

Workshops

Workshop offerings include:

- **creative writing workshops** (focusing on the craft side of writing),
- **professional development workshops** (focusing on the logistical and business side of writing),
- **intensive workshops** (blending creative and professional instruction while emphasizing peer feedback), and
- **masterclasses** (reserved for early-career, established, and professional authors).

| Date | Workshop | Instructor(s) | Participants | Delivery |
|--------------------|---|--|--------------|---------------------|
| Spring 2025 | | | | |
| April 1 - 9 | Poetry Intensive: Organic Structures | Basma Kavanaugh | 6/6 | Zoom |
| Apr 10 - May 1 | Making Memories Work for You: Memoir & Personal Essay | Sandra Phinney | 12/12 | Zoom |
| June 23 - 27 | Flexing Your Creative Muscles: An Adult Summer Camp | Stephanie Domet, Joanne Gallant, Sal Sawler, Alice Burdick, & Tiffany Morris | 12/12 | In-person (Halifax) |
| Fall 2025 | | | | |
| Sept 16 - Oct 28 | Foundations of Poetry | Jaime Forsythe & Kathy Mac | 6/12 | Zoom |
| Oct 22 - Nov 12 | Making Memories Work for You: Memoir & Personal Essay | Sandra Phinney | 12/12 | Zoom |
| Nov 4 - 25 | Poetry Masterclass: Erasures, Insertions, Collages | Anne Simpson | 11/12 | Zoom |
| Nov 12 - 19 | After 'The End': Self-Editing Strategies for Writers | Sherry D. Ramsay | 9/12 | In-person (Sydney) |
| Nov 17 | The SFFH Short Story Market | Charlotte Ashley | 14/14 | Zoom |
| Nov 18 - 25 | Death by Info Dump | donalee Moulton | 4/12 | Zoom |
| Nov 19 | Sharpen Your Setting | K.R. Byggdin | 6/12 | Zoom |
| Nov 20 | I don't believe a word of it: Suspending Disbelief | Julian Mortimer Smith | 5/12 | Zoom |

| Winter/Spring 2026 | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|-------|---------------------|
| Jan 13 - Feb 10 | How to Self-Edit Your Novel | Sarah Mian | 9/12 | Zoom |
| Jan 18 - Mar 15 | Foundations of Nonfiction | Tina Capalbo, Andrea Currie, & Darryl Whetter | 6/12 | Zoom |
| Jan 22 - Mar 19 | Foundations of Fiction | David Huebert, Anne C. Kelly, & Jessica Scott Kerrin | 11/12 | Zoom |
| Feb 17 | The Writer's Guide to Tax Season | Michelle Elrick | 7/12 | Zoom |
| Feb 17 | Listening to Ourselves | Cory Lavender | 7/12 | Zoom |
| Feb 23 | Working with Bookstores as an Indie Author | Charlotte Ashley | 8/12 | Zoom |
| Mar 4 | Hit the Road: Taking Your Book on Tour | Donna Alward | 5/12 | Zoom |
| Apr 1 - 8 | Making the Everyday Magical / Making the Magical Everyday | Julian Mortimer Smith | 5/12 | Zoom |
| Apr 21 - May 19 | Fiction Intensive: The Short Story | Sharon English | 5/6 | Zoom |
| Apr 22 - 24 | Speculative Realism | David Huebert | 6/12 | In-person (Halifax) |
| May 6 - June 3 | Trans Writers Fiction Intensive | K.R. Byggdin | 8/8 | Zoom |