WRITERS' FEDERATION OF NOVA SCOTIA

Writers helping writers

Since 1976, the Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia (WFNS) has built on this foundational philosophy — **"writers helping writers"** — to support the craft of creative writing, the business of being a writer, and the promotion of Nova Scotia writers as integral to the province's cultural life and creative economy.

Our **800+ annual members** come from all career stages and parts of the province and engage in a diverse range of forms, genres, and writing practices.

writers.ns.ca/**Membership**

WFNS **General Membership** is open to anyone with an interest in writing, regardless of their writing experience or place of residence. General Members receive access to members-only programs and resources, discounts on program and registration fees, and our weekly email newsletter full of literary news, events, and opportunities.

WFNS is based in Kjipuktuk, Mi'kma'ki, ancestral & unceded Mi'kmaq territory.

writers.ns.ca | contact@writers.ns.ca
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RECOMMENDED WFNS PROGRAMMING

writers.ns.ca/**Programs**

Our annual programs facilitate direct writer-to-writer assistance and help writers grow their readerships.

The **Alistair MacLeod Mentorship Program** supports writers who are on the cusp of book-length publication through disciplined, focused, and supportive one-on-one mentorships with experienced authors.

The members-only **Coffee Chats** program and **Manuscript Review Program** help writers seeking affordable career/creative advice and feedback on works-in-progress

The **Emerging Writers Prizes** support writers facing barriers to literary creation.

The **Micro-Anthology Series** provides publication opportunities for emerging and established writers and encourages readers to discover locally authored romance, speculative, and crime & mystery fiction.

The **Nova Writes Competition** offers feedback on all entries and publication of winning entries in an annual print anthology.

writers.ns.ca/**Workshops**

Our annual **in-person & virtual** creative and professional development workshops invite writers with similar interests to gather, share, and learn from experienced authors—and stay in touch by forming writing groups.

RECOMMENDED WFNS RESOURCES

writers.ns.ca/**Resources**

Our free public resources help writers to orientate within the writing and publishing landscape and plot their course forward.

Atlantic Publishers & Periodicals indexes the many presses and literary magazines based in the four Atlantic provinces and links to Canada-wide indexes.

NS Independent Booksellers summarizes local bookshop specialties and event spaces.

NS Literary Festivals, Book Fairs, & Reading Series helps writers discover and plan for annual reading, attending, and volunteering opportunities.

NS Writing Groups, with profiles of writers seeking writing groups and of writing groups welcoming new members, helps writers find peer-to-peer feedback on their work.

writers.ns.ca/**Calendar**

Our public **Literary Calendar** features Nova Scotian literary events organized by WFNS, by its members, and by local publishers, literary magazines, booksellers, libraries, universities, arts centres, and nonprofits.

WFNS **General Members** can submit events to the Literary Calendar and book free in-person space (Halifax) or virtual space (Zoom) for their own literary events.

Grow Your Writing Community

Connect with other writers & find support for your craft

WFNS
WRITERS' FEDERATION OF NOVA SCOTIA

WRITING + COMMUNITY

The practice of creative writing can feel like a solitary pursuit. Yes, our ideas and voices need their own time and space to develop, become unique, and flourish—but that image of 'the author' as a lonely, isolated genius is pure fiction. We learn best among those who share our interests.

By seeking out, joining, and contributing to writing communities, writers both new and established can find opportunities to grow their creative networks, practices, or careers.

Show up for other writers by attending launches and readings, by sharing their work, and by engaging with their social media posts. Most writers love to return a favour—and a network of writers grown through reciprocity can encourage you to reach further, help keep you accountable to your writing goals, and share writing advice and opportunities with you.

Listen up! When joining a community, you enter a long, ongoing conversation. By giving fellow writers your attention (and not being afraid to ask questions), you'll learn from their creative processes and experiences. You'll also learn which parts of the conversation you *want* to join and how you do or don't feel comfortable contributing.

Speak up by sharing your work through open mics, public readings, and writing groups; by inviting feedback on your work and offering feedback to others; by advocating for changes to the community or its conversation; and by submitting your work to literary magazines and contests. By growing your writing community, you will also be growing your readership.

WRITING COMMUNITY +

A writing community doesn't stop at the border between *writers* and *everyone else*.

You'll also benefit from the creative experience and support of those most impacted by creative writing—including illustrators, musicians, and other artists; booksellers, librarians, and teachers; publishers, editors, and literary organizers; and most importantly, readers.

And you'll find that many are writers too.

SOCIAL MEDIA FOR WRITERS

Social media are useful communication tools, but most are designed to be addictive: they can quickly exhaust your time and your social battery and distract from your writing.

Before launching the social media campaign for your debut book, **spend some time on *one* platform** that interests you. Use it to follow, engage with, and share the works of other writers. Learn from what other author accounts post (and how often they post) to determine if the platform is a good fit for your writing and for you. While engaging with and sharing others, you'll pick up their tricks for effective promotion on the platform—and you'll be **showing up** for other writers, who are likely to return the favour when you have something to promote.

The three social platforms we recommend looking into first are Instagram (photo-based), TikTok (video-based), and Substack (text-based blogging & newsletter plaform).

WRITING GROUPS

While literary organizations like WFNS have legal status, staff, budgets, and member dues, *writing groups* (also called writers' groups) are **informal, social collectives of writers** who meet regularly to write, read or listen to each others' works-in-progress, give and receive feedback, and share creative struggles and successes.

A writing group can be a great motivator if you struggle with committing time to writing. Because they are run by their participants, however, **writing groups are not registered and can be difficult to find**. Writing groups seeking new members will often advertise in libraries or by word-of-mouth at literary events. If you can't join one, the surest bet is to **start your own writing group**. All you need is to *invite* other writers instead of seeking an invitation.

Whether starting a writing group or deciding if you'll join one, consider

- meeting space (Will you meet in a cafe or pub, a library community room, or a member's home? Can members and potential members travel to meetings easily? Could you meet virtually?);
- meeting frequency & duration (Can you meet for an hour per week, or will that be unsustainable in the long run? Will each writer share a whole short story at each meeting, or will you take turns giving and receiving feedback?);
- meeting structure (Will meetings include writing time or be focused on sharing and feedback? Will work be read aloud or circulated by email beforehand? Will feedback be oral, written, or both?);
- scope (What forms and genres of writing will the group discuss—or not discuss?);
- and recruitment (How are new members invited into the writing group?).

LITERARY EVENTS

Bookstores, libraries, galleries, theatres, arts hubs, and other small businesses frequently offer events where writers, others artists, and their supporters can connect. (Staff at these types of venues are often on the lookout for events they can schedule at no cost, so they're also a great option for planning your own literary events.)

Open mics and **writing workshops** allow writers of all levels to share new work and find writers with similar interests, while **free public readings** at libraries and bookshops often showcase local and visiting book authors and may include live interviews or Q&As. Attend these events to meet fellow writers, learn about their writing pro-cesses, and join conversations about reading, writing, and publishing.

Readings are often offered as part a **book launch** or a **book tour** (a series of launches and readings in different locations). The occasional formality of launches and tours shouldn't discourage you from attending and engaging: visiting authors want to meet readers and fellow writers just as much as they want to sell copies of their books.

Authors, publishers, and booksellers gather at **book fairs** to sell and promote their work, creating a welcoming environment for discovering local presses and chatting with leditors and publishers. **Literary festivals**, annual celebrations of the literary arts, can include book fairs, public readings by local and visiting authors, panel discussions, social events, workshops, pitch sessions, and more.

Volunteering for a book fair or festival can provide an even richer experience and often earns free admission.