

2023 – A Year in Review

"The Royal City Literary Arts Society's mission is to maintain and build a welcoming community of writers and readers, to support the goals of writers at all stages of their development, and to promote an appreciation of all forms of literary arts. We are committed to building community capacity through the literary arts, promoting literacy, social connection and cross cultural understanding and the central importance of the written and spoken word in community life"

Programs and activities report for 2023

In 2023, we continued to offer interactive & informative workshops centered on the art of writing.

Workshops this year included:

"What Does Home Mean to You?" with Alan Hill

"Poetic Memoir and Photo Journaling" with Cynthia Sharp

"Writing from Life" with Lois Peterson

"Above the Fold: a chapbook making workshop" with Kevin Spenst

"Embracing the Non-Linear: Mapping Toward Your Poem" with Jessica Lee McMillan

This summer **Poetry in the Park** returned once again to the Queen's Park bandshell. We were excited to celebrate the 12th Anniversary of **PIP**. Each session of our annual outdoor poetry event features two poets and a very popular Open Mic. Thanks to those who continued to support us by coming out to read and to listen, and to all the new faces who came out this year. Thanks so much to the City of New Westminster and the Arts New West for our 2023 funding. It was a huge success!

"It was a spectacular summer showcasing nine wonderful weeks of PIP. We featured 18 poets this year, with a stellar line up of Open Mic readers each week. A big shout out to our hosts. We look forward to 2024... PIP PIP Hooray!"

Our literary online magazine, **Wordplay at Work** gives RCLAS members an opportunity to submit their poems, short stories and other literary formats for publication. It continues to be wonderful showcase for both emerging and seasoned writers and a definitive perk to membership.

"My 100th issue was published this fall. I have enjoyed the opportunity to work with our amazing members, who continue to submit and to support us. Annual highlights included the February Haiku Special Feature, contest issues and the National Poetry Month Co-operative Poem with contributions from 20+ RCLAS members."

Our free bi-monthly group **In Their Words** featured presenters sharing their favourite authors from any genre in poetry, fiction, non-fiction or drama, followed by Q&A. This year we had a wonderful eclectic mix with a broad spectrum of writers ranging from Edgar Allan Poe to Lucille Clifton, Emily Carr to Dorothy Wordsworth. Thank you to **In Their Words** manager and host **Ruth Kozak**. Excellent work!

Tellers of Short Tales, one of our free evening events, attracts storytellers from New Westminster and throughout the Lower

Mainland. ToST includes one feature writer as well as an Open Mic segment for short stories. Our 2023 Featured Authors included Winona Kent, Bill Arnott, Sylvia Taylor, Erik D'Souza, Cristy Watson, Esmeralda Cabral, Una Bruhns, and Jerena Tobiason. We also hosted a special edition in collaboration with Surrey International Writers Conference featuring Diana Gabaldon, Sonali Dev, and Renée Sarojini Saklikar.

Poetic Justice reading series showcasing the work of two featured poets each session followed by a popular open mic. Feature poets included: Cherie Hanson, W. Ruth Kozak, Paul Raworth Bennett, Kevin Spenst, Jónína Kirton, Ford Weisberg, Judith Berlin, Jessica Lee McMillan, Alan Hill, Aidan Chafe, Franci Louann, H.W. Bryce. We also included a few all Open-Mic zoom editions for fun.

In mid-January we launched our successful **11th Annual Write On! Contest**. Open to submissions of poetry, fiction and non-fiction with cash prizes in all three categories. The 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winning stories and poems as well as the honourable mentions were published in the RCLAS e-zine. We are thankful to the 2023 judges for taking up the challenge - all past winners from our previous year's contest. Thank you to Director **Angela Kenyon** for her fabulous admin work! We also invited the winners to read at Poetry in the Park this year.

Celebrating its tenth year, **the Annual Fred Cogswell Award for Excellence in Poetry** called on authors and publishers from across Canada for submissions of poetry books published in English in 2022. Our 2023 Judge is award-winning poet Joseph Dandurand. A longlist of ten books is announced mid-to-late November with the Top 3 to be announced in December. Cash prizes and award medals are sent to our First, Second and Third place award recipients.

Board of directors as elected at our Annual General Meeting held on June 4, 2023: **Janet Kvammen**, President; **Angela Kenyon**, Treasurer; **Deborah White**, Secretary; **Carol Johnson**, Director-at-Large, **Lisa Strong**, Director-at-Large; **Sarah Wethered**, Director-at-Large; **Iulia Sincraian**, Director-at-Large.

Visit our website www.rclas.com for our ongoing events and announcements. We continue to maintain an active presence on our **Facebook group Royal City Literary Arts Society**, and **FB RCLAS page**. Find us on **Instagram @royalcitylit** and on **X @rclas_com**

RCLAS celebrates our 11th Birthday on Dec 12, 2023. I wish to thank the City of New Westminster and the Arts New West for their ongoing support. Thank you to the RCLAS Board of Directors. I want to thank our supportive members who keep us going. Please join us in our mission to create a vibrant community rich with literary art opportunities. On behalf of the RCLAS Board, we wish everyone a safe, healthy and happy new year. Hope to see you at our Holiday Open House on Saturday December 16.

– Janet Kvammen,

President, Royal City Literary Arts Society (RCLAS)



Membership is \$35 a year. We appreciate your support. If you are looking to volunteer with our society, we would love to hear from you!

Visit our website www.rclas.com

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