

2024 – 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 2024

This summer **Poetry in the Park** returned once again to the Queen’s Park bandshell, Wednesday evenings from July 3 - August 28. We were excited to celebrate the 13th Anniversary of **PIP**. It was a huge success! Each session of our annual outdoor poetry event features two poets and a very popular Open Mic. The roster of poets included Jónína Kirton, Evelyn Lau, Franz Seachel, Sonya Littlejohn, Dale Tracy, Rob Taylor, Winston Le, Chelsea Comeau, Isabella Mori, Cynthia Sharp, Aislinn Hunter, Njoki Mbūrū, Brandon Wint, Shauna Paull, Candice James, Renée Sarojini Saklikar, Jane Frankish, Mary Kelly and Ronnie Dean Harris (Ostwelwe). Thanks to those who continued to support us by coming out to share their work, or to simply listen and enjoy. It is always wonderful to see new faces at our events. Thanks to the City of New Westminster and Arts New West for our 2024 funding! We couldn’t do it without your support. Thanks to Emily Molinari for her help this year!

*“It was a spectacular summer showcasing nine wonderful weeks of Poetry in the Park... PIP PIP Hooray!
& a big shout-out to our amazing hosts”*

In 2024, we continued to offer interactive & informative workshops and reading events:

Workshops this year included:

“From Editor to Author: A Journey in Several Parts” with Frances Peck

“Jump-Starting your Creative Writing Life” with Eileen Cook & kd dyer

“An Invitation to Soften Your Gaze and Invite Grace” with Jónína Kirton

In Their Words featured presenters sharing their favourite authors from any genre in poetry, fiction, non-fiction or drama, followed by Q&A. Thank you to *In Their Words* manager and host **Ruth Kozak**. Excellent work! This year we had a wonderful eclectic mix with a broad spectrum of writers ranging from Julio Cortázar to Uvavnuq, Rebecca Elson to Ambrose Bierce, Sy Montgomery to Michael McClure, Bob Dylan and Mark Strand.

Tellers of Short Tales, one of many free events, attracts storytellers from New Westminster and throughout the Lower Mainland. ToST includes feature writers as well as an Open Mic segment for short stories. Thank you to Christina Myers, Kathy Harms, Wren Handman.

2024 included “**Ghostly Tales from Beyond**” with Gina Armstrong & Victoria Vancek of “**Haunted History BC**”. We also hosted a special edition “**In Honour of Remembrance Day**” featuring authors Jerena

Tobiason, Winona Kent, and Shawn Gale with poetry by Alan Girling and H.W. Bryce hosted by Alan Hill. This year, we merged some of our programming to reflect a broader range of writing genres. We hope to continue with this in the coming year.

Poetic Justice reading series showcasing the work of two featured poets each session followed by a popular open mic. Highlights include: Jessica Lee McMillan, Jónína Kirton & Alan Hill (as part of the new Bridges Literary Festival), Catherine Lewis & Isabella Wang in celebration of National Poetry Month, and Cogswell Award winners: Evelyn Lau, Tolu Olorunjoba, Megan Fenny Jones. Also a “**Poets Wanted: Dead or Alive**” special event featuring Chelsea Comeau & Dan Neuman with Janet “Lady Raven” Kvammen!

In mid-January we launched our successful **12th Annual Write On! Contest**. Open to submissions of poetry, fiction and non-fiction with cash prizes in all three categories. We are thankful to the 2024 judges for taking up the challenge – the judges were all past winners from the 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.

Celebrating its eleventh 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 2023. Thrilled to announce 2024 Judge **Rob Taylor**. A longlist of ten books and Top 3 are yet to be announced. 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 June 9, 2024: **Janet Kvammen**, President; **Angela Kenyon**, Treasurer; **Deborah White**, Secretary; **Lisa Strong**, Director-at-Large; **Sarah Wethered**, Director-at-Large; **Iulia Sincraian**, Director-at-Large. We were delighted to welcome **Alan Hill** back to the board as Vice-President as well as new board member **Emily Molinari**. Thank you to long-standing Director Carol Johnson who has stepped down.

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**.

RCLAS will celebrate our 12th Birthday on Dec 20, 2024. I wish to thank the City of New Westminster and the Arts New West for their ongoing support. Thanks to New West Artists, Edgar Development for use of the “I Heart New West” Community Space, and the New West Library. 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, I wish everyone a safe, healthy and happy new year. We invite everyone to come out to our Holiday Pop-In on Tuesday eve December 17 at Centennial Lodge.

– Janet Kvammen, President, Royal City Literary Arts Society

Visit our website www.rclas.com



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!

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Facebook Group: Royal City Literary Arts Society

FB Page: RCLAS | IG @royalcitylit