

SWG 2023 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Building on our Foundation

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The SWG serves a membership spanning the entire province of Saskatchewan in Treaties 2, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 10 which encompasses the unceded territories of the nêhiyawak (Cree), Anihşināpēk (Saulteaux), Dakota, Lakota, Nakota and Dené Nations and the Homeland of the Métis Nation.

Vision

As an advocate for the art and craft of writing, the vision of the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild is to continually support and promote all writers and their vital contributions to a healthy and vibrant society.

Mission

The Saskatchewan Writers' Guild serves, supports and champions diverse writers, cultivating a vibrant literary community.

Values

In all its endeavours the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild offers its members, colleagues and the public the highest standards of leadership, service and professionalism. The SWG is an inclusive organization open to all interested in writing; provides programs and services that are accessible to its members and to the public; and is open and accountable in decision-making and the management of SWG resources. The SWG welcomes and encourages member participation; respects the skill, professionalism and diversity of writers; embraces and fosters diversity and inclusiveness; and supports and encourages all writers.

President's Message

David J. Schleich



In my interactions with SWG members over the past year, they have consistently expressed that we are fostering an enabling, inclusive, savvy, eclectic, and omnipresent community. This reflects positively on the health of the Guild, as we continue to operate at full capacity, providing support, enhancement, promotion, and preservation of writing resources and standards across Saskatchewan—from the boreal forest to the high prairie and the grasslands of the south.

The SWG got going with its ambitious programs and services back in 1969, dedicated to writers in our province, and has been serving writers at every stage of development for fifty-five years and counting.

The SWG is dedicated to demystifying and delivering information and tools for both established and beginner writers. We consistently advocate for writers and offer workshops and programs throughout the year. Additionally, the Guild provides guided and unguided retreats, publishes the literary journal *Grain*, and other helpful publications like *Ebriefs* and *Freelance*. We also publish *Windscript* as a writing catalyst for secondary school age writers, and *spring*, which gives a leg up to new writers every other year.

In 2023/24, participants took part in many Guild offerings, including: Writing North, Talking Fresh, Tàn'si Talks, Penned Up, Indigenous Storytelling Month, and our Annual Conference with its lineup of rock star writers from Saskatchewan. Our manuscript evaluation service, mentorship programs, the Poet Laureate program, Writers Group grants, and Writer-in-Residence programs provided a wealth of support and inspiration. And, the Kloppenburg Literary Excellence Award, the City of Regina Writing Award, the John V. Hicks Long Manuscript Award, the Hyland Volunteer Award, and the Guild Prize honour the best.

There are close to 650 members who benefit from a stable seven figure budget, the sources of which funds include Sask Lotteries, the Canada Council for the Arts, the City of Regina and many individual donors.

This past year your Board completed and put into motion our new Strategic Plan. Especially industrious has been Ashley Martin, our Past President, who stick-handled the business of relentlessly tidying up our governance practices, resulting in new language, clarity and access. Monica Johnson is one of those wizards of finance who notices every detail. The insights, commitment and hard work on our

various committees of Helen Chang, Daryl Sexsmith, Margot Johnson, Victoria Johnson, Tim Blackett, and Miguel French is very much appreciated. Blessings all for everything you did this past year to make the Guild a success.

Going forward we are ramping up our SWG Foundation, on the lookout for more money, more friends and expanded relationships. We are stoked to strengthen and expand the mandate and operations of the Guild for the benefit of our members as we go about enhancing the writing arts.

My term as President concludes this year. I will now focus on steering our Foundation and being the Guild's past president, succeeding Ashley Martin who is retiring from the board to begin the adventure and challenge of parenthood. The SWG team and members have taught me a lot, for which I am very grateful. There was much I had to learn about the writing universe in Saskatchewan and about how our metamorphosing culture affects the writing community we serve.

The Guild is a very special organization, unique in Canada. Not early old age yet, but a vital middle-age outfit with people who believe deeply in its mission and values and are busy making things happen every day.

Executive Director's Message

Tracy Hamon



What makes a good foundation? According to the internet, a good foundation provides full coverage to hide crow's feet, jowl, frown, and forehead lines caused from overthinking everything. At first, I thought the only answer was cosmetic surgery, but as I looked closer at how the SWG worked its way through our 2023-2024 fiscal year, I realized how hard we'd worked to earn each one of our lines. All our wrinkles are the badges of an energetic writing organization. At 55 years old, the SWG appreciates all of our folds and understands that a good foundation can work for us, helping us to build solidly for a writing community in the future.

The SWG kept our healthy glow during the 2023-2024 year. Unfortunately, all this glow comes with a cost. Inflation had an impact on our expenses as we continued to apply programs and services with tried and true formulas (and some new methods too); we smoothed online and in-person programs, and progressed to advancing accessibility measures with staying power. All this to say, though we carried a slight deficit financially as costs continue to rise, we did our SWG best to maintain great programs and services for our members.

The SWG remains under the attentive guard of our Board of Directors. This past year they volunteered their time to help create and disseminate a survey to our community. The survey was part of a capacity building project provided by the Lifecycles program and was made possible by the support of SaskCulture. We're grateful to SaskCulture for the opportunity to learn more about our members and what they want from the SWG. Our board takes a keen interest in building our SWG foundations (including the SWG

Foundation and scholarships) for our members, our community, and our community beyond; we appreciate that they help to inform the SWG in all that we do.

Thank you once again to our funders for all they provide to the SWG: SaskLotteries (in partnership with SaskCulture) for our Annual Global Funding, City of Regina, Canada Council, SK Lotteries Community Grant through the City of Saskatoon, and Heritage Canada, for Grain's 50th anniversary funding. We're thankful for their support as it helps us deliver our programs and services.

The clues to the right foundation are on the labels: great staff are listed as the key ingredients. In fact, our programming team is so dexterous and extraordinary that we gave them bigger roles: Yolanda Hansen became the Program Director, Cat Abenstein the Program Manager, and Tea Gerbeza the Program Coordinator. Debbie Sunchild-Petersen remains the Indigenous Coordinator, but she's taken on some extra Saskatoon programming administration in the

past few months. We're thankful that this dynamic team provides not only a full eight hours of coverage, but an incredible year's worth of astonishing programming.

Over at *Grain*, we said goodbye to Editor Mari-Lou Rowley, along with Associate Poetry Editor Brenda Schmidt. Their keen eyes helped produce some astonishing issues and we were grateful for their skills. Our 50th anniversary issue and launches were a highlight of fall 2023! In early 2024, we welcomed Elena Bentley as the new Editor, Taidgh Lynch as the new poetry editor—they joined fantastic fiction editor Kate O'Gorman; we thank them for their work in producing some exciting issues.

In other publication news, we continued to explore writing, writers, and the craft of writing in *Freelance*, we produced the special bi-annual *spring* magazine, featuring emerging Saskatchewan writers, and we published *Windscript*, our high school writing showcase. Our gratitude again goes to Shirley Fehr for designing,

managing, and overseeing the production of all our publications.

In SWG finances, Ashwina Parmar left us and gave birth to baby girl in the fall of 2023. Congratulations to her and her family. Since Ashwina's departure, our thanks goes to temporary bookkeepers Jennifer Kehler, Manvi Khare, and Sharon Johnson. They helped to keep the SWG financial lines furrow-free.

Andrea MacLeod provided the best overall coverage in her role as our Executive Assistant. From tackling questions on the phone, arranging board meetings, overseeing all things office related, her expertise is truly appreciated by all.

During our productive and substantial year, we enjoyed meeting and learning with and about you, our many members. Thank you for being a part of the SWG and most importantly, continuing to be the top ingredient in our foundation. Our goal is to continue to build our foundations in the SWG and the SWG Foundation; you make us look good (blush)!

“At 55 years old, the SWG appreciates all of our folds and understands that a good foundation can work for us, helping us to build solidly for a writing community in the future.”

2023-2024 At a Glance

SWG hosted **95** events reaching **4486** attendees including:

- 22 Workshops
- 20 Talks
- 17 Panel Discussions
- 12 Readings
- 11 Community Events
- 5 Retreats
- 4 Awards
- 2 Lectures



106 events enriched **5092** youth across Saskatchewan including:

- 80 author reading visits
- *Windscrip*t Vol 40 Magazine & Launch
- 24 Youth Poet Laureate Events
- RODS Summer Youth Program



SWG funded **14** writers' groups, representing **96** writers from all over Saskatchewan.

SWG Events by Genre

Adult Fiction - 20%
Poetry - 19%
Personal Writing - 17%
Nonfiction - 16%
No Targeted Genre - 11%
Memoir - 7%
Genre Fiction - 4%

SWG events took place throughout Saskatchewan - **63%** in Saskatoon, **27%** in Regina and **10%** other locations.



51 Virtual & Livestreamed Events including:

- First Draft
- Tận'si Talks
- Indigenous Storytelling Month
- Penned Up
- Workshops
- Book Bytes
- Virtual Writer-in-Residence

Presenter Identities

Saskatchewan-based 83%
 No Marginalized Identity 36%
 Indigenous 25%
 LGBTQ2S+ 14%
 BPOC 12%
 Seniors 9%
 Rural 8%
 Disabled 8%
 Youth 6%

1636 Views on
 our YouTube Channel
 of Recorded Events

2 Poets Laureate
 reached **1528** people
 in **30** events across
 Saskatchewan.

68% of readings in our
 Authors Reading Program
 covered the author's
 mileage. Authors traveled
 nearly **26,000** km
 across Saskatchewan.



Professional Development

Workshops

We continue to focus on diversity and inclusivity by offering professional development workshops on a wide range of writing topics and genres, with diverse facilitators in-person and online. Workshop partners include the Regina and Saskatoon Public Libraries.

2023-24 workshops offered:

- Joanne Gerber: *Get That Grant! Writing a Grant Application that Shines*
- dee Hobsbawn-Smith: *Repetition, Resonance and Rhythm in Form Poetry: Writing Villanelles, Pantoums and Sestinas*



Bill Waiser



Samantha Jones



Ariel Gordon



Mary Harelkin Bishop

- Bill Waiser: *Writing History and Other Nonfiction*
- Friesen Press: *The Great Debate: Self-Publishing vs Traditional*
- Mary Harelkin Bishop: *Fleshing Out Your Characters to Bring Them to Life*
- Samantha Jones: *What's in a Name? Let's Talk About Poem Titles*
- Marie Powell: *The Hermit-Writer's Guide to Publicity: Guidelines for Introverted Writers*
- Judy McCrosky: *Short Story Structure*
- Heather Polischuk: *Writing the Wrongs: Realism in Crime Fiction*
- Shane Arbuthnott: *Meeting Young Readers as Equals: Writing YA Without Talking Down*
- Barbara Langhorst: *Out of Line: Tone, Voice and Structure*
- Ariel Gordon: *Dispatches from the World*

Virtual Writers in Residence

Lauren Carter (Sept-Nov 2023) and Bev Brenna (Feb-Apr 2024) were the SWG's Virtual Writers-in-Residence for 2023-24. This program gives SWG members living outside Regina and Saskatoon access to a professional Writer-in-Residence through Zoom. Lauren and Bev worked with 25 SWG members and offered the following public talks:

- Lauren Carter: *How Do You Know When You're Done?* hosted by Anne Lazaruko
- Bev Brenna: *Close Reading and Mentor Texts* hosted by Theresa Tavares

Penned Up!

Penned Up! provides a two-hour period and space for folks to drop in and write. It is also an opportunity for members to build community, gather together in a shared space, meet writing goals, commit to writing, and to protect creative time by coming to write. We met virtually over Zoom on a monthly schedule between September and May, with a virtual celebratory social in June. In total, 98 people participated.

First Draft: Conversations on Writing

This online talk series dives into themes that affect our writing lives.

Presenters, themes, and hosts in 2023-24 included:

- Zachari Logan: *Interdisciplinary Approaches* (hosted by Adrienne Gruber)
- Helen Power: *The Importance of Self Care: Managing the Highs and Lows of Writing, Submitting, and Publishing Your Work* (hosted by Jill McMillan)
- Suzy Krause: *On Baring Your Soul (and Your Brain): Writing About Mental Illness* (hosted by Amber Cowie)
- Leah Horlick: *Redirected: Coping with and Considering Rejection for Writers* (hosted by Meredith Hambrock)
- Taidgh Lynch: *Everything Glittered Like Blank Paper: Writing in, through and around Grief* (hosted by Elena Bentley)



Taidgh Lynch



Cassidy McFadzean



Gordon Portman

- Iryn Tushabe: *Fiction Teaches Empathy (and other half truths about reading writers of colour)* (hosted by Jean Marc Ah-Sen)
- Floyd Favel: *Writing in a Second Language – the Winter Count and the Pictograph* (hosted by Janelle Pewapsconias)

Retreats

The SWG hosts all in person retreats at St. Peter's Abbey in Muenster, SK. Our Fall Facilitated Retreat in November featured Writer-in-Residence Sally Ito who worked with nine emerging writers. Our Spring Facilitated Retreat in April included Writer-in-Residence Gordon Portman and 10 emerging writers.

A Virtual Facilitated Retreat in February was hosted via Zoom with Writer-in-Residence Cassidy McFadzean, who worked with 10 emerging writers.

Our Winter Writers' Retreat in February welcomed 12 retreatants and the Summer Writers' Retreat in July hosted nine writers. Judy McCrosky continues to serve as our on-site retreat coordinator.

The SWG offers financial assistance to retreatants at the February and July Writers' Retreats and the Fall Facilitated Retreat.

Scholarship and Bursary Recipients this year were:

- Eli Bird *Doris Hillis Scholarship (Nov)*
- Credence McFadzean *Judy McCrosky Bursary (Feb)*
- Carmen Gilmore *Judy McCrosky Bursary (Jul)*
- dee Hobsbawn-Smith *John V Hicks Scholarship (Feb)*

Mentorship Program

Three pairs of apprentices and mentors completed the 2024 Mentorship Program between January and May.

The Apprentice Reading was hosted May 3 at the Delta Downtown Hotel in Saskatoon, hosted by former apprentice Theresa Slind. The Mentorship and Indigenous Mentorship apprentices shared excerpts from their writing completed during the program to 70 people in attendance.

This year's participants included:

- Hilary Klassen (Saskatoon) mentored by Jill Robinson (Galiano Island) – creative nonfiction

- Lynn McGonigle-Clark (Saskatoon) mentored by Bev Brenna (Saskatoon) – fiction
- Morgan Traquair (Regina) mentored by Lynda Monahan (Prince Albert) - poetry

Manuscript Evaluation Service

This program assists writers at all levels of development with professional evaluations of completed manuscripts. Twenty-seven writers submitted manuscripts to the program in the genres of fiction (including children's and young adult fiction), nonfiction and poetry.



Louise Bernice Halfe - Sky Dancer



Michelle Good



Hilary Klassen, Jill Robinson, Lynda Monahan, Morgan Traquair, Lynn McGonigle-Clark, Bev Brenna, Curtis Sanderson (Indigenous Apprentice).

Indigenous Programs

National Day for Truth & Reconciliation Event

The SWG, in partnership with Wanuskewin Heritage Park, presented Louise Bernice Halfe - Sky Dancer, an award-winning author and residential school survivor, who provided a keynote talk entitled *Risking – on the seat of my pants/skirt*. This event was hosted by Jennifer Dawn Bishop.

Saskatoon Public Library – Creative Writing Workshops

In partnership with the Saskatoon Public Library, the SWG presented two creative writing workshops:

- Tara Gereaux: *Exploring Character Values*; hosted by Theresa Slind (Online)
- Elena Bentley: *Write it New: Using Found Poetry to Find Your Poem*; hosted by Dawn Martens-Koop (In-person)

Youth Workshop

In November, Austin “The Noble Savage” Ahenakew presented an online workshop for youth: *Mad Lib/Build Your Own Poem*, which was a chance to generate a collaborative community poem. Hosted by Bevann Fox.

Indigenous Storytelling Month

Every week in February, we featured Indigenous writers and storytellers online who shared stories important to themselves and our community. Each event was hosted by Erica Violet Lee. These events were supported by the Library Services for Saskatchewan Aboriginal Peoples.

- Rita Bouvier, *Wordsongs of a Warrior*
- Solomon Ratt, *What do our Traditional Stories Tell Us?*
- Michelle Good, *Underneath the Myth of Canadian History*
- Mika Lafond, *Reclaiming Storytelling*

Indigenous Mentorship Program

This program allows emerging Indigenous writers to work on developing their craft of creative writing. One apprentice and one mentor were matched to work together between January and May. This year’s apprentice was Curtis Sanderson (Saskatoon) who was mentored by Dr. Norma Dunning (Regina).

National Indigenous Peoples Day - June 21

In partnership with Wanuskewin Heritage Park, the SWG welcomed artist and activist Danielle Kehler who provided a keynote talk entitled *The Aunt of Antarctica*, her Antarctica adventures, the responsibility of artists, and the importance of representation. This event was hosted by Julianna McLean.

Tân’si Talks

Tân’si means welcome/hello in Cree. *Tân’si Talks* is an online series that features Indigenous creatives who discuss elements of their creative practices.

- Mark Thunderchild: *Positivity in Our Children-Kohkum’s Kitchen*. Hosted by Carol Rose GoldenEagle.
- John Langan: *Iskoces Tipiskak-A Spark in the Dark*. Hosted by Kyla Morin.
- Eden Fineday: *Cree Storytelling in Contemporary Times*. Hosted by Lori Deets.
- Marcel Petit: *Why Our Stories Are Important*. Hosted by Alexandra ‘Axis’ Jarrett.

Reading Programs

Words in the Park

Words in the Park shares readings by an eclectic mix of readers in Regina's Victoria Park over the lunch hour.

Our 2024 readers and hosts included:

- Jesse Desjarlais and Dr. Norma Dunning with Dickie Yuzicapi
- Nicole Aldred, Victoria Koops, and Allister White with host Rhea McFarlane

Saskatoon's Reader's Corner

In May, our community gathered at the Pink Cadillac in Saskatoon to share space and hear readings by local writers: Mark Thunderchild, Karin Martel, Michael Afenfia, Susanne Gauthier, and Tonia Laird.

Author Readings Program

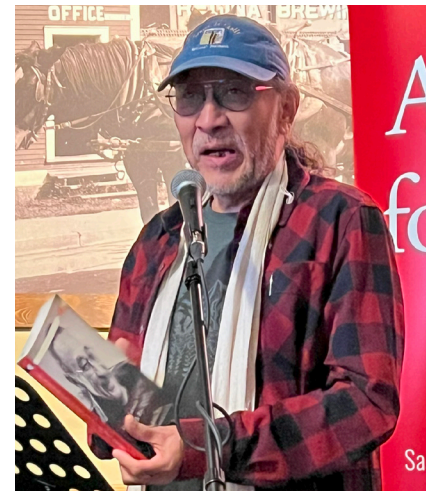
This well-established SWG program was another big success! We saw 83 different schools, libraries, and community groups host readings by 47 Saskatchewan authors for a total of 100 readings between August 2023 to July 2024. Authors traveled nearly

26,000 km across SK for readings this year! There were over 5600 attendees at these events, many elementary students, demonstrating the importance of connecting Saskatchewan audiences with Saskatchewan authors.

Bushwakker Brew Pub – Writer's Corner Sixth Edition Author Reading

The Bushwakker Writer's Corner is a space dedicated to celebrating the recent works of Saskatchewan published authors.

The Sixth Edition Bushwakker Writer's Corner Reading, organized by the SWG and Bushwakker on November 4, featured five Regina and area authors: Annabel Townsend, Bev Lundahl, Solomon Ratt, Tim Blackett, and Michael Trussler. The event was hosted by Shane Arbuthnott.



Solomon Ratt



Jane Munro

Writing Festivals

Writing North

From Jan 26-27, the SWG and the University of Saskatchewan's MFA Program hosted Writing North 14: *Care*, which included these in-person and live streamed events:

- River Volta Alumni Readings by Delane Just, Mika Lafond, Taidgh Lynch, Jaclyn Morken, Josiah Nelson and Gayle Smith.
- *Caring for Ourselves, Performers, and Audiences: Better Readings for Writers* with Leah Horlick
- *Fiction is a House Made of Details* with Michael Christie
- *The Complexity of Care: Writing and Community* panel discussion with Michael Christie, Leah Horlick, Kristine Scarrow and host Sandy Bonny
- Keynote talk with Gregory Scofield

Talking Fresh

Our Talking Fresh 2024 festival was held Saturday March 2 with the theme of *Craftiness*. Our program included the following in-person and live streamed events:

- *The Swiss Army Knife Approach to Writing Nonfiction* with Candace Savage
- *Searching for the "I": Exploring (Un)truths in Poetry* with David Ly
- *You Can Trust Me: A Practical Guide for Unreliable 1st Person Narrators* with C.L. Polk
- *Craftiness: Blurring Reality and Untruths in Writing* panel discussion with Amber Cowie, David Ly, C.L. Polk and host Courtney Bates-Hardy
- *The Elements of Suspense: How to Craft Twists, Turns, and Tension* with Amber Cowie



L-R: Writing North: Sandy Marie Bonny, Michael Christie, Kristine Scarrow, Leah Horlick



L-R: Talking Fresh Panel: Amber Cowie, David Ly, CL Polk, Courtney Bates-Hardy

Community Programs

The Artesian – Pride Event

In partnership with The Artesian in Regina, we presented a special event in celebration of Pride month in Saskatchewan. This event, *Queering Digital Storytelling*, was an opportunity for Evie Johnny Ruddy to share some of their impressive digital storytelling initiatives with our community. After a short presentation, Evie Johnny and j wallace skelton conversed to dive deeper into art, representation, and queer life.



Evie Johnny Ruddy, j wallace skelton



Shane Arbuthnott

Regina Public Library – Writes of Spring

In partnership with the Regina Public Library for *Writes of Spring*, a month-long celebration of writers and readers, the SWG offered three genre-specific online writing workshops:

- Judy McCrosky: *Short Story Structure*
- Heather Polischuk (H. P. Bayne): *Writing the Wrongs: Realism in Crime Fiction*
- Shane Arbuthnott: *Meeting Young Readers as Equals: Writing YA Without Talking Down*



Regina Open Door Society – Opening Doors Through Stories

A group of newcomers to Canada met in-person in Regina over four Saturdays in October and November through the Regina Open Door Society (RODS) to work with author Marie Powell to develop creative writing and expand their English literacy skills.

Opening Doors Through Stories: Home, the sixth chapbook in the *Opening Doors Through Stories* series, is a collection of stories and poems reflective of participants' personal experiences and perspectives and is a testament to the resiliency of the human spirit.

In May, the *Opening Doors Through Stories: Home* launch was held in-person with our facility partners, the Regina Public Library, and was also livestreamed to a public audience, with a recording made available on the SWG's YouTube for 30 days following the event. The event was hosted by facilitator and editor Marie Powell.

Between in-person attendees, live online attendees, and video views, the Chapbook Launch was viewed by over 200 people.

2023-2024 Chapbook contributors are Alina Shylan, Ananta (Dimple Mehta), Marwa Abu Eita, and Munit Vikram.

Global Gathering Place – Weaving Words

In partnership with The Global Gathering Place (GGP), the SWG offered newcomers to Canada in Saskatoon two creative writing opportunities to develop their storytelling and writing skills.

Danica Lorer facilitated two 10-hour workshop series in August and March with 28 participants. Both workshop groups explored memory and imagination through creative writing and shared their writing in a celebratory environment. These sessions are supported by the City of Saskatoon’s SK Lotteries Community Grant.

SaskBooks Publishing Symposium

The SWG, SaskBooks, Regina Public Library, and the Saskatoon Public Library offered writers and publishers a chance to learn more about things that affect publishing at our two-part online Publishing Symposium in April.

- *Publishing Symposium Part 1: Generative AI 101 for Writers* with Briana Brownell which gave writers an understanding of the tools available to them through generative AI and insights into ethics and applications of the technology. Hosted by David Gane.
- *Publishing Symposium Part 2: Copyright and AI with Access Copyright* which offered writers practical insights into the legalities of using generative AI in your writing, and potential implications for copyrighting generative AI-assisted work. Hosted by Jennifer S. Wallace.

Write Out Loud Poetry – SKribe Youth Poetry Festival

In July, in partnership with Write Out Loud Poetry, a youth spoken word community in Saskatoon, we partnered to present a professional development session for youth interested in writing two-person collaborative poetry, or affectionately called “team pieces” by spoken word artists. The session was facilitated by Caraganna Ennis and Dash Reimer at the Remai Modern with 12 participants from across Saskatchewan. Most of these young poets performed their team pieces at the festival’s Final Night Showcase.



Dash Reimer



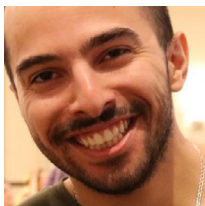
Danica Lorer



Jennifer S. Wallace

Regina Open Door Society - Summer Blast Youth Programming

Newcomer youth to Canada living in Regina had the opportunity to attend creative writing workshops with Saskatchewan based writers, both online and in-person. The Regina Open Door Society's Summer Blast Youth programming is designed to empower newcomer youth to become proactive members of the community through a variety of educational and recreational activities. An average of 30 youth attended each session.



Ahmad Majid



Elena Bentley



Tanisha Khan

Online, August 2023:

- Youth Poet Laureate, Lauren Klassen: *We All Have a Poem Inside Us!*
- Elena Bentley: *Writing the Body into Place: A Generative Poetry Workshop*
- Ahmad Majid: *Writing Workshop*

In-person, July 2024:

- Tanisha Khan: *Creating Worlds, Shaping Stories*

Saskatchewan Festival of Words - LitCon

The SWG partnered with the SK Festival of Words to sponsor a session with Tonia Laird: *Where Pen Meets Pixel: Writing for Video Games* in the spring of 2024.

Community Sponsorships

The SWG sponsored writing events and workshops across the province:

- Saskatchewan Festival of Words' writing workshops with Premee Mohamed, Johnny D. Trinh and Robert Sawyer
- Saskatchewan Library Association's One Book One Province with Jennifer S. Wallace for *Miss G and Me*
- SAWCI's 2024 Anskohk Festival
- Playwright Reading Series with On Cue Performance Hub's 2023-2024 season
- Buffalo People Arts Institute's Tatanga Day Festival July 1
- High Plains Book Awards reception

Poets Laureate

Poet Laureate dee Hobsbawn-Smith and Youth Poet Laureate Lauren Klassen represented the Saskatchewan literary community in a variety of virtual and in-person events and initiatives in 2023-24.

Youth Poet Laureate

Lauren Klassen had a busy year for her second Youth Poet Laureate term. She led writing workshops at six different schools across Saskatchewan and worked in 23 different classes from grades 5 to 12, reaching an audience of 659 students. She also led a Regina Open Door Society youth workshop, reaching 20 newcomers to Canada. She was involved in a national Zoom meet up of other Youth Poet Laureates in Canada, was featured in a Star Phoenix Bridges profile, a special CBC Blue Sky Poetry Month episode with the Poet Laureate and will be featured in a student documentary on CBC.

The Youth Poet Laureate program is proudly sponsored by the RBC Emerging Artists program.

Poet Laureate

As Poet Laureate, dee Hobsbawn-Smith spoke to poetry loving audiences all over the province; from Assiniboia and Moose Jaw in southern SK to Rosthern and Saskatoon in central SK and other points between. dee's readings took place at festivals, art galleries, meetings with university faculty, MFA students and cultural and artistic workers, public workshops at libraries and readings at both Regina and Saskatoon City Council. She was introduced in the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly and read at the Legislative Library. Her readings and poet's rambles engaged almost 700 people during her term.

Both Poets were involved in the 2024 Poetry Soiree and the Youth Poet Laureate Showcase at the 2023 Conference. Two Poetry & A Pint reading events were hosted: Poetry & A Pint Saskatoon Nov 2 with dee Hobsbawn-Smith, Lauren Klassen and three local poets Erica Violet Lee, Francine Merasty and Katherine Lawrence. May 11th's event at Bushwakker's Brew Pub featured readings by dee Hobsbawn-Smith, Tara Dawn Solheim, Michael Trussler and Kathleen Wall.



dee Hobsbawn-Smith and Lauren Klassen

Annual Conference & AGM

The SWG Annual Conference: *Symbiosis* was held October 20-21 at Saskatoon's ParkTown Hotel. Our program included the following:

- *Country Black: Racial Identity on the Prairies, One Song at a Time* with Bertrand Bickersteth
- *Overcoming Obstacles and Challenges in Storytelling* with Randy Morin
- *The Business of Combining Writing, Photography and Publishing* with Robin and Arlene Karpan
- *Writing While Black* with Khodi Dill
- *Symbiosis of Relationships* with Marina Endicott
- *Inside and Outside All at Once: Poetry and the Body* with Jennifer Still
- *Sense of Place: Creating a Convincing World* with Alissa York
- *Landscapes Within, Landscapes Without* with Bertrand Bickersteth
- *How Poetry Grieves* panel with Louise Halfe-Sky Dancer, Katherine Lawrence, Jennifer Still and host Alasdair Rees
- Heath Memorial Lecture: *What's It All About* with Alissa York. Onstage conversation with Marina Endicott

- Presentation of the 2023 John V. Hicks Awards in Literary Nonfiction
- Lunch & Conversation with Bob Calder & David Carpenter
- Youth Poet Laureate Showcase with Alasdair Rees, Peace Akintade, Lauren Klassen, host dee Hobsbawn-Smith and guest poets Danika Michael, Deziyah Nokusis and Imogene Rennie
- 2023 AGM
- Fast Friends: Building Connections
- Community Stage Open Mic & Social hosted by Dash Reimer



Alissa York, Caroline Heath Memorial Lecture



Poetry Panel, Alasdair Rees, Katherine Lawrence, Jennifer Still and Louise Bernice Halfe-Sky Dancer

SYMBIOSIS



Ashley Martin introducing Presenter Bertrand Bickersteth



John V. Hicks Long Manuscript Award in Literary Nonfiction: Jennifer Wallace (host), Jeanette Lynes (1st), Judy McCrosky (2nd), and Michael Trussler (3rd).



Khodi Dill



Bob Calder, Dave Carpenter

Awards

The Cheryl and Henry Kloppenburg Award for Literary Excellence

Maria Campbell was the winner of the 2023 Cheryl and Henry Kloppenburg Award for Literary Excellence. The announcement took place at an in-person lunch at the Saskatoon Golf & Country Club on Sept 27, as well as virtually with a video produced by Shoot with Scrapes Videography. The SWG is deeply appreciative of the Cheryl and Henry Kloppenburg Foundation's continued support for this award.

The Guild Prize

The Guild Prize (established in 2022) is a response to the desire to offer SWG members more opportunities to have their work reviewed by a jury and be published. The winner of The Guild Prize receives \$250 plus paid publication in *Freelance Magazine*.

In Fall 2023, Lauren Griffin won the prize with her piece "Excavation." David Bellerive received an honourable mention for his piece, "Waiting on a Train." The Fall 2023 competition was judged by Allie McFarland.

City of Regina Writing Award

The 2024 City of Regina Writing Awards on May 9 celebrated winner Iryn Tushabe for her submission *Saved* and runners up Ryshia Kennie and Elaine McArthur. Judges were Alice Major and Ruby Lang. The SWG is grateful to the City of Regina for their continued sponsorship of this \$4,500 award and reception.



Maria Campbell with Cheryl Kloppenburg

John V. Hicks Long Manuscript Awards in Fiction

The John V. Hicks Awards in Literary Nonfiction were celebrated at the SWG Conference on Oct 21. The first-place winner was Jeanette Lynes for *Apron Apocalypse: Lyric Essays*, second place was Judy McCrosky for *Long Shadows: A Holocaust Family History and Memoir* and third place was Michael Trussler for *Zigzag: Or There's Been a Murmur in My Head*. Honourable Mention went to dee Hobsbawn-Smith for *Giving Up the Garden: On Loss and Letting Go*. Winners were awarded \$1,000, \$650, and \$350 respectively. Selections were made by jurors Marsha Lederman and Jenny Heijun Wills.



Iryn Tushabe with Her Worship Regina Mayor Sandra Masters



Lauren Griffin

Publications

Windscrip

Windscrip features the best in Saskatchewan high school writing. This year's magazine was edited by Danica Lorier (Managing and Prose Editor) and Josiah Nelson (Poetry Editor).



The following youth were selected as magazine contributors: Joanna Andree, Paris Belisle, Alyssa Burnouf, Niko Cosmic, Cosmo, Sophia Fafard, Lilah Flieg-Bacheschi, Abigail Friesen, Charlie Garipey, Ashlynn Ippolito, Ella Manoucheri, Aurora McLeod, Shaheer Mohammed, Blue Mushens, Jan Nasibog, Zaid Bin Rehan, Nevin Runnalls, Nora Runnalls, Medha Sarma, Jocelyn Thiessen, Payton Todd, Vaishu Venkata, and Tari Wenzel.

Congratulations to our *Windscrip* award winners and honourable mentions:

Jerrett Ens Award for Poetry

- Winner: "The Sun and the Moon" by Lilah Flieg-Bacheschi
- Honourable Mention: "Behind a Starry Night" by Nevin Runnalls

Jerrett Ens Award for Prose

- Winner: "For I Only Love the Sea" by Payton Todd
- Honourable Mention: "The Return" by Sophia Fafard

Currie-Hyland Award for Poetry

- Winner: "The Den" by Paris Belisle
- Honourable Mention: "My Day of Blue" by Blue Mushens

SWG members receive a digital copy of *Windscrip* by email as part of their membership and every high school and public library in Saskatchewan is mailed a printed copy in the fall.

A free digital copy is available year-round to the general public on our website (skwriter.com) and additional printed copies of the current issue are available for purchase for \$10 (includes shipping) by calling the SWG office.

spring

spring is a biannual publication that showcases emerging Saskatchewan writers. Managing and Poetry Editor Elena Bentley and Associate Prose Editor Brandon Fick selected 17 final works of fiction, creative nonfiction and poetry by 12 emerging writers. Contributors were able to read their

work at launches in April in Regina at The Artesian and in Saskatoon at the Women's Business Hub.

Contributors included: Helen Chang, CC Corbett, C. Ingrid Deringer, Lauren Griffin, Mackenzie Hay, Robert Judge, Daniel Kemp, Taylor Marshall, Mark Romphf, I.M.N. Vaissi, Stephanie Vance, and Allister White.



Ebriefs

Our weekly e-newsletter, *Ebriefs* provides information on SWG events and announcements, member and industry news, and professional development opportunities. Just over 80% of respondents in the 2024 SWG Survey identified *Ebriefs* as the top member benefit of most value to them. From August 1, 2023 to July 31, 2024 the SWG distributed 51 *Ebriefs* to an average of 600 people each issue.

Publications

Freelance

Freelance continues to be a source of information, and also a way to gain experience writing for publications. Focusing on the craft and business of writing, *Freelance* featured 24 contributors in 2023/24. Almost 60% of respondents in the 2024 SWG Survey selected it as one of the top 10 most valuable SWG member benefits. *Freelance* is mailed and emailed to members based on their preference.



53.4 Fall 2023



54.1 Winter 2024



54.2 Spring 2024



54.3 Summer 2024

Grain

This next half-century of *Grain* began with another year of stellar issues! Volumes 51.1 through 51.4 featured new work from 88 writers and poets from across Turtle Island and the UK, for a total of 79 poems and 32 prose stories; visual art from four diverse artists, including David Garneau, Joan Butterfield, Jeff Dillon, and Jenny Lewis; the six winning pieces from the 35th Annual Short *Grain* Contest, selected by judges Leona Theis and Daniel Scott Tysdal; and the six winning pieces from the 2nd Annual Hybrid *Grain* Contest for Experimental Writing, selected by judges Chelene Knight and Michael Trussler.

Between September 15, 2023 and June 5, 2024, *Grain* received a total of 2,944 regular submissions (1,579 poetry; 1,115 fiction, and 250 creative nonfiction). On average, *Grain* reached its monthly Submittable cap of 300 submissions by mid-month. Individual issue sales increased slightly in 2024 with volumes 51.1, 51.2, and 51.3 selling out; as a result, additional copies of 51.4 were ordered. Subscriptions remained steady at an average of 405 per quarter.

To celebrate *Grain*'s 50th anniversary, a special edition of *Grain* was published in Fall 2023. The issue featured two guest editors, Sharon Bala (prose) and Jim Johnstone (poetry), and was designed by guest designer, Tim Neal; it featured the work of 43 writers and artwork by Canadian visual artist, Claire Desjardins. To promote the issue, two launches were held: at the Bassment in Saskatoon, hosted by dee Hobsbawn-Smith, with readers Danica Lorer, Dave Margoshes, Elizabeth Phillips, and Betsy Rosenwald, and at the MacKenzie Art Gallery in Regina, hosted by Kathleen Wall, with readers Judith Krause, Gerald Hill, Michael Trussler, and Zachari Logan.

Both Mari-Lou Rowley (Editor) and Brenda Schmidt (Associate Poetry Editor) completed their tenures with 51.2 and 51.3, respectively. Joining Kate O'Gorman, Associate Prose Editor, were two new faces to *Grain*'s editorial team: Elena Bentley, as Editor, and Taidgh Lynch, as Associate Poetry Editor. Shirley Fehr (Art Editor/Designer), Delane Just (Proofreader), Tea Gerbeza (SWG Program Coordinator), and Andrea MacLeod (SWG Executive Assistant), all continued to offer their invaluable skills to the creation, development, and circulation of each *Grain* issue.

The 36th Annual Short *Grain* Contest, judged by Cassidy McFadzean (poetry) and Danny Ramadan (fiction), received a total of 147 individual submissions, consisting of 123 poetry and 113 fiction pieces. Winners were announced in August 2024, with the winning selections to be published in Fall 2024 (52.1). At the time of submitting this report, the 3rd Annual Hybrid *Grain* Contest for Experimental Writing is open for submissions, and Jordan Abel and Kate Siklosi will act as judges.

Grain's contributors, once again, received recognition at the national level. Eleven contributors were selected from volumes 49.3 to 50.3 for *Best Canadian Poetry 2024* (Biblioasis), and 50.2 contributor, Dawn Muenchrath, received an Honourable Mention for Fiction at the 2024 National Magazine Awards.

Grain continued to strive to maintain its mandate to feature eclectic writing from new and established authors and poets from all communities, and to nurture Saskatchewan-based writers. The *Grain* team also committed to growing and establishing new relationships with writers and readers within the larger CanLit community, and to reaching new audiences, in

part through social media campaigns, establishing a monthly newsletter, and taking part in community events.

Grain is immensely grateful for the ongoing support from the Cheryl and Henry Kloppenburg Foundation, the Canada Council for the Arts, Saskatchewan Lotteries through SaskCulture, and from its individual donors.

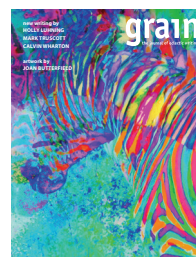
As *Grain* moves forward into a new fiscal year, I hope to honour the vision of *Grain's* founders who wrote the following in the inaugural issue of *Grain*, which was first seeded in June of 1973: “We hope the harvest will continue.” Yes—I promise to grow *Grain*, nurture its writers, cultivate great writing, and offer that harvest to readers across this country and beyond. Let the harvest continue!

Kishchi maarsii. With many thanks,

Elena Bentley
Editor, *Grain*



51.1 Fall 2023



51.2 Winter 2024



51.3 Spring 2024



51.4 Summer 2024

Audit Committee Report

2023-2024

The Audit Committee meets online quarterly with the Executive Director to review financial results compared to budget. Meeting minutes are submitted to the Board.

The Executive Director closely monitor finances and budget, especially through several changes in financial support staff.

A representative of the external auditor met with the Audit Committee, Executive Director, and temporary bookkeeper to review draft audited financial statements to July 31, 2024. There were no significant audit findings.

- The audit qualification due to inability to ensure completeness of sponsorship and donation revenue is standard for most charities.
- Guaranteed investment certificates are now classified as current assets due to risk assessment focusing on liquidity over maturity date.
- Overall assets exceed liabilities ensuring ability to settle debts.
- There is economic dependence on government grant funding (74% of revenue).
- There was approximately \$20,000 operating loss plus \$10,000 amortization expense for capital assets purchased in previous years.
- Decrease in cash was just under \$17,000. Cash management is good.
- As government funding remains stagnant while costs increase, the Guild will increase its focus on self-generated revenue and donations.
- There has been no change to significant accounting policies.

Respectfully submitted,
Monica Johnson, B.A., CPA, CMA
Audit Committee Chair



REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITOR ON SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

To the Members of Saskatchewan Writers' Guild Inc.

Opinion

The summary financial statements, which comprise of the summary statement of financial position as of July 31, 2024, the summary statement of operations and changes in net assets and the summary statement of grain operations for the year then ended, are derived from the audited financial statements of Saskatchewan Writers' Guild Inc. for the year ended July 31, 2024. We expressed a qualified audit opinion on those financial statements in our report dated September 25, 2024.

Which are prepared in our opinion, the accompanying summary financial statements are a fair summary of the audited financial statements, in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

Summary Financial Statements

The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations. Reading the summary financial statements and the related auditor's report, is not a substitute for reading the complete audited financial statements, including notes and the auditor's report thereon.

The Audited Financial Statements and Our Report Thereon

We expressed a qualified audit opinion on the audited financial statements in our report dated September 25, 2024. The basis for our qualified audit opinion was on the completeness of donation and sponsorship revenues.

Management's Responsibility for the Summarized Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation of a summary of the audited financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the summarized financial statements based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with Canadian Auditing Standard (CAS) 810, "Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements."



Chartered Professional Accountants LLP

REGINA, Saskatchewan
September 25, 2024

Saskatchewan Writers' Guild Inc.
Summary Financial Statements

Summary Statement of Financial Position				
As of July 31	2024		2023	
ASSETS				
Current assets	\$	697,822	\$	751,647
Due from related parties		6,703		
Capital assets and art work		20,642		32,982
	\$	725,167	\$	784,629
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS				
Current liabilities	\$	25,837	\$	20,902
Current deferred revenue		391,026		417,980
Due to related parties		-		6,285
Net Assets		308,304		339,462
	\$	725,167	\$	784,629

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD

Director

Director

These statements are derived from the audited financial statements which are available upon request from the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild

Saskatchewan Writers' Guild Inc.
Summary Financial Statements

Summary Statement of Operations and Changes in Net Assets				
Year Ended July 31		2024		2023
REVENUES				
Grant	\$	783,700	\$	795,640
Self-generated		121,921		111,782
Grain <i>(Schedule 1)</i>		95,913		72,654
Donations and sponsorships		37,451		34,449
Fundraising		317		1,102
		1,039,302		1,015,627
EXPENSES				
Artists' fees		177,329		179,692
Program delivery		107,451		99,727
Grain <i>(Schedule 1)</i>		156,456		131,586
Operational and amortization expenses		166,636		174,015
Salaries and benefits		462,588		436,237
Fundraising		-		289
Donation to SWG Foundation Inc.		-		10,000
		1,070,460		1,031,546
EXCESS OF REVENUES (EXPENSES)	\$	(31,158)	\$	(15,919)
Net assets - beginning of year		339,462		355,381
NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR	\$	308,304	\$	339,462

These statements are derived from the audited financial statements which are available upon request from the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild

Saskatchewan Writers' Guild Inc.
Summary Financial Statements

Summary Statement of Grain Operations			<i>(Schedule 1)</i>	
Year Ended July 31		2024		2023
REVENUES				
Grant	\$	68,739	\$	50,151
Donations and sponsorships		6,620		5,250
Publications revenue		20,554		17,253
		95,913		72,654
EXPENSES				
Artists' fees		87,674		81,759
Publishing and distribution		37,128		21,623
Office, meetings and travel		301		892
Amortization of intangible assets		2,300		2,300
Salaries and benefits		29,053		25,012
		156,456		131,586
EXCESS OF REVENUES (EXPENSES) FROM GRAIN OPERATIONS	\$	(60,543)	\$	(58,932)

This schedule reports the revenues and expenses of publishing the quarterly Grain magazine. Any shortfall is covered by general operational funds.

These statements are derived from the audited financial statements which are available upon request from the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild

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(as of October 2023)

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Margot Johnson (Vice President ended Jan 2024)

Past President

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Tim Blackett

Helen Chang

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Julianna McLean

Daryl Sexsmith

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Jeanette Montgomery

David J. Schleich

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Ashley Martin

David J. Schleich

Daryl Sexsmith

2023-2024 SWG Staff

Executive Director - Tracy Hamon

Executive Assistant - Andrea MacLeod

Program Director - Yolanda Hansen

Program Manager - Cat Abenstein

Indigenous Program Coordinator -

Debbie Sunchild-Petersen

Program Coordinator - Tea Gerbeza

Publications Coordinator - Shirley Fehr

Bookkeeper - Ashwina Parmar (maternity leave Oct 2023); Jennifer Kehler (Oct 2023-Mar 2024); Manvi Khare (Apr-Jun 2024); Sharon Johnson (Jun-Present)

Grain

Editor - Mari-Lou Rowley (ended Dec. 2023); Elena Bentley (Jan 2024-present)

Prose Editor - Kate O’Gorman

Poetry Editor - Brenda Schmidt (ended Mar. 2023); Taidgh Lynch (Apr-present)

Fundraising & Donors

Grain Donor Campaign (Nov 2023) raised \$5,320 through cash donations and new and renewed subscriptions.

Grow it Forward Campaign (Apr 2024) raised \$2,636 for our scholarships/bursary.

Windscrip Donor Campaign (June 2024) raised \$1200 for production costs.

Program Donors

Patron (\$500 and over)

- Felicia Daunt

Benefactors (\$200-\$499)

- Lyn Goldman
- Ilonka Halsband
- Kathleen Wall
- Lynda Monahan
- Glen Sorestad

Supporters (\$100-\$199)

- Anthony Bidulka
- Amy Jo Ehman
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- Alice Kuipers
- Suzanne McNab
- Linda Mikolayenko
- Karla O'Regan
- William Robertson
- Terr Toews

Friends (\$50-\$99)

- Brenda Baker
- Rita Bouvier
- Jerry Haigh
- Maureen Harris
- Elena Krause
- Alison Lohans
- Danica Lorer
- A.E. Matheson
- Jayne Whyte
- Karen Wood

Contributors (up to \$49)

- Randy Burton
- Helen Chang
- Annie Deeley
- Deana Driver
- Fran Eldridge
- Jean Fahlman
- Glenda Goertzen
- Troni Grande
- Judith Hindle
- Allison Kydd
- Taidgh Lynch
- A.E. Matheson
- Karin Melberg Schwier
- Leeann Minogue
- Wynne Nicholson
- Tricia Saxby
- Gayle Smith
- Toby Welch

Retreats

- Brenda Baker
- Suzanne McNabb

Grain

- David Bellerive
- Steven Benstead
- Mary-Alice Boulter
- Felicia Daunt
- Cynthia Flood
- David Gane
- Tara Gereaux
- Nora Gould
- gillian harding-russell
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- Kathryn Nogue
- David J. Schleich
- Paddy Scott
- Daryl Sexsmith
- Glen Sorestad
- Gordon Taylor
- Tom Wayman
- Karen Wood
- Mary Young

Cheryl and Henry Kloppenburger Award for Literary Excellence

- Cheryl and Henry Kloppenburg Foundation

SWG Foundation Donors

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- Myrna Dey
- Don Dietrich
- Terry Toews

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- Felicia Daunt
- Rodney Dickinson
- Chris Fisher
- Mary Bishop Harelkin
- Carol Kavanagh
- Anne Lazurko
- Judy McCrosky
- Terry Toews

John V. Hicks Scholarship

- Belinda Betker
- Felicia Daunt

Anne Campbell Memorial Scholarship

- Belinda Betker
- Felicia Daunt
- Leona King
- Glen Sorestad

Unspecified Foundation Donation

- Thomas Eastman
- Amy Jo Ehman
- Peter Meier
- John & Jennifer Wallace

Thank you!

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