



Casting the future

SASKATCHEWAN WRITERS' GUILD

# ANNUAL REPORT

2024-25

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## 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

## Miguel Fenrich



Each year on the board, I'm offered countless opportunities to connect with our community: at Writing North and Talking Fresh, mentorship readings and the Kloppenburg Awards, the annual Poetry Soirée and Fast Friends Reception at our conference, author readings across the province, writing groups supported through our funding, and through the pages of *Grain* and *Freelance*.

Wherever there are writers, the Guild exists.

At the risk of sounding cliché, serving as President this past year has been an honour bestowed upon me by our membership. I must extend my gratitude to my fellow directors—David Schleich, Victoria Johnson, Monica Johnson, Daryl Sexsmith, Tim Blackett, Helen Chang and Chinedu Ezeala—for their gracious support, as well as to Julianna McLean and Joy Brown who stepped away this year, and the many volunteers whose contributions sustain the SWG.

The Board has continued its ever-important work of strengthening governance frame-

works and charting a forward-focused path. This work happens around governance committee, audit committee, and board meeting tables throughout the year, and through continued stakeholder engagement via community events and direct conversation.

In the 2024-25 fiscal year, we committed to annual in-person strategic plan refreshes, adopted annual board work plans, updated committee Terms of Reference, and consistent reviews of our risk matrices. Our bylaws, refreshed in 2024, return to the membership this year for further proposed amendments. These steps keep us aligned with the 2024–27 Strategic Plan as we near its halfway mark.

Despite inflationary pressures, our programming remains strong thanks to our funders, SK Lotteries through SaskCulture, and to the dedication of our staff led by Executive Director Tracy Hamon. On behalf of the board, I extend sincere thanks to Tracy and the entire team: Andrea MacLeod, Ashwina Parmar, Yolanda Hansen, Cat Abenstein, Tea Gerbeza, Debbie Sunchild-Petersen, Shirley Fehr, and Sharon Johnson, who stepped in during Ashwina's maternity leave. Gratitude also goes to *Grain* editor Elena Bentley, associate editors Kate O'Gorman, Credence McFadzean and Taidgh Lynch, and proofreader Delane Just.

But the board is always thinking ahead, thinking about the seeds we've planted and what we'll sow—how do we cultivate leadership, how do we allow our staff to consistently offer quality programming on status-quo funding during a difficult time for the arts community? How do we listen better, how do we serve in a more accessible manner?

In 2025-26, our new HR Committee will chart a path for future leadership transitions. We welcome input from members on the priorities you'd like to see reflected in this process. Please feel free to reach out at [miguelfenrich@gmail.com](mailto:miguelfenrich@gmail.com).

Fundraising also remains a priority. Under the leadership of David Schleich, President of the SWG Foundation, the Foundation board is working to elevate our fundraising capacity and further sustain the Guild. My thanks to David, Hugh Williams,

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## Tracy Hamon



Jeff Siegfried, Jennifer Brooks, Lisa Vargo, and Daryl Sexsmith for their commitment.

This year also marks progress on transparency and accessibility. Our newly struck Ad Hoc Communications Committee is working to share more information about board activities with the membership, with the goal of fostering stronger links between board and membership, allowing for better succession planning, accountability, and accessibility.

The board continues to explore how to respond meaningfully to the SWG's spring 2024 survey, in which members expressed a desire for the Guild to better reflect the diversity of Saskatchewan's writing community—across genre, geography, and underserved communities. We are listening carefully and considering how to ensure the SWG more accurately represents our diverse province, and that governance best serves the membership and our stakeholders.

We will continue to aim for a modern SWG that serves all writers, as outlined in our mission. It is my hope then, that we can ensure the SWG continues to serve writers across the province with the creativity and community spirit that has defined us for decades, as we enter an age of inclusivity, diversity, equity, and accessibility.

With that in mind, please feel free to reach out with concerns, compliments, or suggestions. Our Guild is only as strong as the voices who speak up and fight to shape it.

Regards,

Miguel Fenrich

President, Saskatchewan Writers' Guild

The weather report today announced a heat warning. The warnings for heading outside are dire: stay indoors, drink plenty of fluids, avoid direct contact with the sun, but in many ways, they are like a prediction for a writer working on a project. Then again, as Homer Simpson would say: "What's the point of going out? We're just going to wind up back here, anyway."

What does it mean to forecast and how does the SWG work from the 2024-2025 fiscal year to the next fiscal year and the next? While it is hot or cold sometimes, maybe even a little rainy or snowy, we combat the elements by purposefully planning, producing then predicating where we want to be. Looking ahead while travelling onward is integral to our yearly process and to maintaining and developing strategies for the SWG.

The SWG 2024-25 fiscal year was relatively ordinary in many ways. In financial health, we adjusted some of our programming to



combat inflation whipping us around like a wind sock and ended with a small deficit. In order to keep steady, we moved two issues of *Freelance* to digital and reduced the number of workshops and readings slightly to balance our budget. Despite the minor reductions, we continued to offer a variety of accessibility measures and maintained many of our quality programming and services.

The SWG Board of Directors helped steer us through the year by volunteering their time to engage with the governance of the SWG and we thank them for their valuable time. In May of 2025, the board took extra hours to participate in a strategic plan refresh. The rejuvenating session gave the SWG some innovative insights for year three and four of the plan, but it also reconnected the board with the original intentions for the strategies, goals for fundraising through the SWG Foundation, and overall health of the organization now and in the future.

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 RBC for their last year of support for the Youth Poet Laureate. In thanking funders, we also thank those that have donated not only money to our calls for donations, but their time. Our gratitude is enormous!

I know that I say this every year, but like any meteorologist, the SWG is made better by the good weather. Great staff are the blue skies necessary for perfect days. Thank you to Program Director Yolanda Hansen, Program Manager Cat Abenstein, Indigenous Program Coordinator Debbie Sunchild-Petersen, and Program Coordinator Tea Gerbeza for their smooth and professional handling of all things programming. Their incredible talent lets our members enjoy countless hours of excellent programming. As Ina Garten would say, how good is that?

Over at *Grain*, we said goodbye to fiction editor Kate O’Gorman last summer as she left the magazine for other adventures. We thank her for her diligent work on *Grain*. Many thanks go out

to Editor Elena Bentley, along with poetry editor Taidgh Lynch, and the new fiction editor Credence McFadzean. They worked incredibly hard on the past four issues of *Grain* and, along with creating some super-exciting issues, you can now read these as digital versions!

Thanks to Shirley Fehr, who continues to excite us design-wise, all the while overseeing the remarkable production of all our publications. Our publications continue to showcase Saskatchewan writing talent and we are proud to continue to produce captivating issues of *Freelance* and *Windscript* this past year.

In SWG finances, Ashwina Parmar returned from maternity leave in May 2025. Thank you to Sharon Johnson for stepping in to help. Together our accounting team kept the storms at bay.

Our tireless Executive Assistant Andrea MacLeod seamlessly managed memberships, board details, phone calls, and everything office—we appreciate and are grateful for her energy and willingness to help wherever needed.

Lastly, thank you members! We got to know some of you, learned from some of you, and helped some of you. Our members are why we are here and why we continue to dream about the future. You are our perfect forecast, because, as the other Homer once said, “we will never be here again.”

Tracy Hamon

Executive Director, Saskatchewan Writers’ Guild

# SUMMARY OF THE YEAR

## 2024-25



Photo top: Dimple Mehta, Iryn Tushabe, Carol Rose Golden Eagle, Elaine McArthur  
Middle: Kofo Odunjo  
Bottom: Jane Urquhart

### INDIGENOUS STORYTELLING

We reached nearly 450 people through our four Indigenous Storytelling Month events in February.

### POETS LAUREATE

Our Poet Laureate and Youth Poet Laureate reached an audience of 4,000 people.

### WRITERS' GROUPS

The SWG funded fourteen writers' groups, who represent 125 writers from all over Saskatchewan.

### AUTHOR READINGS PROGRAM

Sixty-four different schools, libraries, and community groups hosted readings by forty-two Saskatchewan authors who travelled nearly 24,000 kms across Saskatchewan.

### DONATIONS

\$6,995 was raised in three donation campaigns.

- Help Keep our Festivals Free (Nov 2024) raised \$2,570
- Grow it Forward Campaign (Apr 2025) raised \$2,900 for our scholarships/bursary.
- Grain Campaign (June 2025) raised \$1,525

### SCHOLARSHIPS/BURSARY

The SWG awarded one Doris Hillis Scholarship, one Anne Campbell Memorial Scholarship and two Judy McCrosky Bursaries.

Photo top: Jane Munro, Annie Deeley, Susan Hazen-Hammond, Helen Power,  
Courtney Bates-Hardy, Tanisha Khan, Darla Tenold  
Bottom left to right: Marissa Stapley, Austen 'The Noble Savage' Ahenakew

## SWG HOSTED EVENTS

24 Workshops  
17 Talks  
17 Readings  
14 Panels  
12 Community Building Events  
4 Retreats  
3 Awards  
2 Lectures



## EVENT AUDIENCE NUMBERS

2213 in total attended forty-three in-person events.  
1037 in total attended our virtual and livestreamed events.

## DIGITAL VIEWS

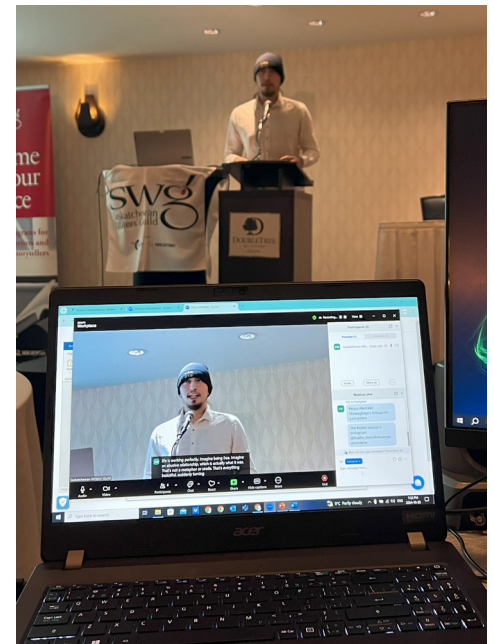
Our recorded events had 12,647 views. That's more than double from the previous year.

## REACHING YOUTH

We reached 4531 youth through our Author Readings Program, *Windscrip*t Magazine, and Youth Poet Laureate events.

## HIRING WRITERS

We hired 244 writers in 2024-25 as facilitators, evaluators, presenters and editors. We also paid 248 contributors to our publications.



# 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 and the Public Lending Right.

2024-25 workshops offered:

- *Writing From Family Stories* with Rhea Tregebov and host Leah Horlick
- *From Idea to Novel* with Kristy Jackson
- *How to Find Your Creative Practice—and Never Lose it Again* with Lizzie Derksen
- *The Art of Characterization* with Gail Bowen

Photo top from left: paulo da costa, Anthony Woodward  
Bottom from left: Patricia Dawn Robertson, Elaine McArthur

- *Crafting True Stories Using Fictional Techniques* with Kelly-Anne Riess and host Cassidy McFadzean
- *Indigenizing the Page—Poetry for the Indigenous Poet* with Elaine McArthur
- *Understanding the Public Lending Right Program*
- *On Being a Neurodivergent Writer* with Michael Trussler
- *Writing the Opening Sentence* with Dr. Norma Dunning
- *Little Workshop of Horrors: An Introduction to Horror Writing* with Helen Power
- *Creation then Devise: The Joy of Comm-Poetics* with Peace Akintade-Oluwagbeye
- *Sudden Impact—The Art of Micro Fiction* with paulo da costa
- *When Pen Meets Pixel: Writing for Video Games* with Tonia Laird
- *Writing Nonfiction Comics* with Anthony Woodward
- *Feedback Fundamentals: How to Give and Receive Writing Critique* with Sarah Ens and host Delane Just
- *See Your Poem: Shaping History and Personal Stories through Visual Poetry* with Diana Hope Tegenkamp
- *Personal Essay Workshop: Take Your Worst Moments and Use Them as Life Writing* with Patricia Dawn Robertson
- *Roll For Initiative: Queer and Trans Storytelling in an Age of Dragons* with Jes Battis

## First Draft: Conversations on Writing

First Draft: Conversations on Writing is an online talk series that dives into themes that affect our writing lives. Presenters, themes, and hosts in 2024-25 included:

- Cat C. Haines *Writing Desire* (hosted by Kai Cheng Thom)
- Elizabeth Haynes *Writing Travel Memoir* (hosted by Margaret Macpherson)

- Clarissa Harwood *When Your Writing Resists You Despite Your Best Efforts* (hosted by Amanda Marcotte)
- John Leoppky *Whose Crip is This Anyway? Juggling Identity as a Disabled Writer* (hosted by Natascia Lypny)

## Virtual Writers in Residence

Meredith Hambrock (Sept-Nov 2024) and Gordon Portman (Feb-Apr 2025) were the SWG's Virtual Writers-in-Residence for 2024-25. This program gives SWG members living outside Regina and Saskatoon access to a professional Writer-in-Residence through Zoom. Meredith and Gordon worked with thirty-one SWG members.

## Penned Up!

We know how hard it can be to make time to write, so Penned Up provides a two-hour period and space for folks to drop in and write. Penned Up 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. Eighty-eight people participated in total.

## Mentorship Program

Three pairs of apprentices and mentors were matched in the 2025 Mentorship Program to work together between January and May. This year's participants included:

- Brent Moore (Moose Jaw) mentored by Shane Arbuthnott (Regina) – speculative fiction
- Jan Coffey-Olson (Rosetown) mentored by J. Jill Robinson (Galiano Island) – fiction
- Rowan Neufeld (Saskatoon) mentored by Bruce Rice (Regina) – poetry

The Apprentice Reading was hosted May 2 at the Delta Bessborough Hotel in Saskatoon, hosted by former apprentice Curt Sanderson.

The Mentorship and Indigenous Mentorship apprentices shared excerpts from their writing completed during the program to 75 people in attendance.

## Manuscript Evaluation Service

This program assists writers at all levels of development with professional evaluations of completed manuscripts. Twenty-six writers submitted manuscripts to the program in the genres of fiction (including literary, fantasy, sci-fi, thriller, historical, romance, children's, and young adult fiction), creative nonfiction, and poetry.

## Retreats

The SWG's Fall Facilitated Retreat was hosted November 8-11 at St. Peter's Abbey in Muenster with Writer-in-Residence Clarissa Harwood, who worked with 10 emerging writers.

A Virtual Facilitated Retreat was hosted via Zoom with Writer-in-Residence paulo da costa, who worked with 9 emerging writers from Feb 6-9.

Both Writers' Retreats were hosted at St. Peter's Abbey: the Winter Writers' Retreat (Feb 14-28) welcomed 11 retreatants and the Summer Writers' Retreat was hosted July 11-25 with 16 writers. Judy McCrosky served as our on-site retreat coordinator.

Scholarship and Bursary Recipients:

### Doris Hillis Scholarship

Warsha Mushtaq (Nov 2024)

### Judy McCrosky Bursary

Cat C. Haines (Feb 2025)

Emily Garland (July 2025)

### Anne Campbell Memorial Scholarship

Tanisha Khan (July 2025)





Photo: Author Saskatoon Horse (centre holding book) and family members.

## National Day for Truth & Reconciliation

In partnership with Wanuskewin Heritage Park, we organized a special event for the National Day for Truth & Reconciliation. We presented author Saskatoon Horse with her talk, *Intergenerational Healing Our Gut*, which acknowledged the impact of intergenerational trauma on gut health and demonstrated how taking action can prevent and reverse chronic conditions. She shared her personal journey and highlighted the benefits of working with a certified Nutrition & Detoxification coach to create a generational healing legacy.

## Indigenous Mentorship Program

One apprentice and mentor were matched in the 2025 Indigenous Mentorship Program to work together between January and May. This year's pair was Jennifer Gardiner (Leask) mentored by Carol Rose GoldenEagle (Regina Beach) in fiction.

## National Indigenous Peoples Day

In partnership with Wanuskewin Heritage Park for National Indigenous Peoples Day on June 21, Lyndon Linklater, a traditional knowledge keeper and storyteller, presented *Storytelling – a Journey Towards Truth & Reconciliation* to a Saskatoon audience. The event was hosted by Terri Bear-Linklater.

## 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.

- *A Chemical Loneliness* with Curtis Sanderson and host Kaleigh River Aramenko
- *The Resonance of Land: Indigenous Narratives Through Poetic Expression* with Alexandra 'Axis' Jarrett and host Bevann Fox
- *Naked Messy Storytelling* with Arnolda Dufour Bowes and host Cheyenna Sapp
- *Perseverance, Humility and What to do with 300 Rejection Letters* with John Brady McDonald and host Jennifer Gardiner

## Indigenous Storytelling Month

February is Indigenous Storytelling Month. Every week in February, Indigenous writers and storytellers shared stories important to themselves and our community. These events were supported by the Library Services for Saskatchewan Aboriginal Peoples.

- *The Use of Music in Storytelling* with Dickie Yuzicapi and host Kaleigh River Aramenko
- *Indigenous Teachings* with Hazel Dixon and host Kaleigh River Aramenko
- *Creation Stories* with Daphie Pooyak and host Kyla Morin
- *Métis Identity Through Storytelling* with Cort Dogniez and host Kaleigh River Aramenko

# WRITING FESTIVALS



Photo l-r: Ashleigh Mattern, Marissa Stapley, Craig Davidson, and Gail Bowen

## Talking Fresh

Our Talking Fresh 2025 festival was held virtually on March 11, 12, and 14 and in-person on March 15 with the theme of Open Secrets. Our program included online and in-person events:

### Online

- *Between Two Lines* with Joseph Kakwinokanasum and host Alexandra 'Axis' Jarrett
- *Tell Your Story and Tell It Crooked* with Michelle Porter and host Tara Gereaux
- *Full Disclosure* with Jake Byrne and host Rowan Neufeld

### In-Person & \*Livestreamed

- *Open Secrets – How to Develop Conflict in Fiction* with Craig Davidson
- *Hidden in Plain Sight: How to Use Secrets in Storytelling* with Marissa Stapley
- *\*Open Secrets* panel discussion with Marissa Stapley, Craig Davidson, Gail Bowen and hosted by Ashleigh Mattern

## Writing North

From Jan 24-25, the SWG and the University of Saskatchewan's MFA Program hosted Writing North 15: Coming Home, which included these in-person and livestreamed events:

- *Further Migrations: How Ancestral Family Rumours Become Fiction* with Jane Urquhart featuring an introduction and poem by Poet Laureate Peace Akintade-Oluwagbeye
- *Homing In: Memory, Place, and Eco-Poetics*: An interactive talk with Sarah Ens
- *Ethical Remembering: On Writing Memoir*: An interactive talk with Lisa Bird-Wilson
- *Life Lanes: the Complexities of Home and Home-Making*: A Panel Discussion with Jane Urquhart, Lisa Bird-Wilson, Sarah Ens, and host Rachel Laverdiere



Photo l-r: Rachel Laverdiere, Jane Urquhart, Sarah Ens, and Lisa Bird-Wilson



# READING PROGRAMS

Photo top: Iryn Tushabe at Words in the Park  
Bottom: Jes Battis



## 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 2025 readers and hosts included:

- July 9 – Iryn Tushabe, Carol Rose GoldenEagle, Elaine McArthur, and host Dimple Mehta
- July 16 – Carrie Biner, Shayna Stock, Christian Riegel, and host Don Dietrich

## Book Bytes

Book Bytes is our online reading series that brings audiences readings by Saskatchewan writers.

Our 2024 readers and hosts include:

- September 18 – Betty McGillivray, Dimple Mehta, Jaclyn Morken, and host Ashleigh Mattern
- September 25 – Carol Kavanagh, Alanna Truong, Becky Zimmer, and host Julie Yu



## Author Readings Program

The Author Readings Program makes it possible for people of all ages to meet and listen to their favourite Saskatchewan authors and storytellers who share the distinctiveness of their own stories when they visit online or in-person.

We saw sixty-four different schools, libraries, and community groups host readings by forty-two Saskatchewan authors for a total of seventy-nine readings between August 2024 and July 2025. Authors travelled over 23,000 kms across Saskatchewan for readings this year! There were over 3300 attendees at these events, including many elementary students.

## Bushwakker Brewpub – Writer’s Corner Seventh Edition Author Reading

The Bushwakker Writer’s Corner is a space dedicated to celebrating the recent works of Regina and area published authors.

The seventh edition reading in partnership with Bushwakker Brewpub on November 23 featured Courtney Bates-Hardy, Jes Battis, Jesse Rae Archibald-Barber, K.D. Kulpa, Kofoworola Odunjo and was hosted by Shane Arbuthnott. Bushwakker created a special dessert for the event.

## Poetry & A Pint Events

Our November 6 event took place at the Pink Cadillacs Diner and T-Bird Lounge in Saskatoon with Peace Akintade-Oluwagbeye, Dash Reimer, Lisa Bird-Wilson, Mika Lafond, and Jay Semko.

An event on May 3 at Bushwakker’s Brewpub featured readings by Peace Akintade-Oluwagbeye, Elaine McArthur, Eric Gabriel aka Gabriel ‘ArchAngel’ Ehijie, Andrea Martineau, and Amber Goodwyn.

## Saskatoon’s Reader’s Corner

On May 15, our community gathered at the Willow Country Restaurant & Bar in Saskatoon to share space and hear readings by local writers Marina Endicott, Marilyn Frey, Curtis Sanderson, Kristy Jackson, and Anthony Bidulka.



Photo l-r: Marina Endicott, Marilyn Frey, Curtis Sanderson, Kristy Jackson and Anthony Bidulka



## Pride Parade

In June, the SWG participated in the Queen City Pride Parade in Regina to show our support for our Trans, 2 Spirit, LGBTQIA+ members, writers, and staff. The SWG invited members and our community (trans or queer or allies) to walk with us in the parade. We had fifteen people walk with us.



## Regina Open Door Society - Summer Blast Youth Program

In partnership with the Regina Open Door Society (RODS), newcomers to Canada met in-person over four Saturdays in November at RODS to work with author Marie Powell to develop creative writing and expand their English literacy skills. Their writing culminated into the Opening Doors Through Stories: Community chapbook, the seventh in the *Opening Doors Through Stories* series.

In May, the chapbook was launched in-person with our facility partners, the Regina Public Library, in the Community Commons room at the Central branch and livestreamed to a public audience. 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 150 people. 2024-2025 Chapbook contributors are Abu Zafor Chowdhory, Amira Lotfy, Ananta (Dimple Mehta), Chinedu Ezeala, Marwa Abu Eita, Munit Vikram, and Nazam, Ningning Zhang.



## Global Gathering Place – Weaving Words

In partnership with The Global Gathering Place (GGP), the SWG offered newcomers to Canada in Saskatoon an opportunity to build their creative writing and storytelling skills with Danica Lorier through an interactive *Weaving Words* workshop held at the GGP facility with eleven participants. This session was supported by the City of Saskatoon's SK Lotteries Community Grant.

## Saskatchewan Festival of Words - LitCon

The SWG partnered with the SK Festival of Words to sponsor a LitCon session with Ashleigh Mattern: *The Writer's Spellbook: Fantasy Essentials from Worldbuilding to Magic Systems* in the spring of 2025.

## 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 and an \*in-person poetry workshop:

- *Little Workshop of Horrors: An Introduction to Horror Writing* with Helen Power
- *When Pen Meets Pixel: Writing for Video Games* with Tonia Laird
- *Writing Nonfiction Comics* with Anthony Woodward
- *\*Creation then Devise: The Joy of Comm-Poetics* with Peace Akintade-Oluwagbeye

## CARFAC Mentorship Public Artist Talks and Workshop

In partnership with CARFAC SASK to celebrate their Art Writing Mentorship program and to expand their public artist talks and workshop reach, we offered three online sessions featuring mentors Emily Riddle and Nic Wilson.

- *What Even is Art Writing?* Artist Talks with Emily Riddle and Nic Wilson
- *The Continuum of Reading/Writing* with Nic Wilson
- *Decolonizing the Archives via Poetics* with Emily Riddle

## Saskatoon Public Library-Creative Writing Workshops

In partnership with the Saskatoon Public Library, we presented two virtual creative writing workshops. Both sessions were hosted by Joe Geary from the Saskatoon Public Library.

- September 19- *From Idea to Novel* with Kristy Jackson
- April 17- *Writing the Opening Sentence* with Dr. Norma Dunning

## SaskBooks Publishing Symposium

In partnership with SaskBooks, we offered writers and publishers a chance to learn about the basics of publishing and marketing their books in two online sessions, and a chance for a one-on-one consultation with SaskBooks.

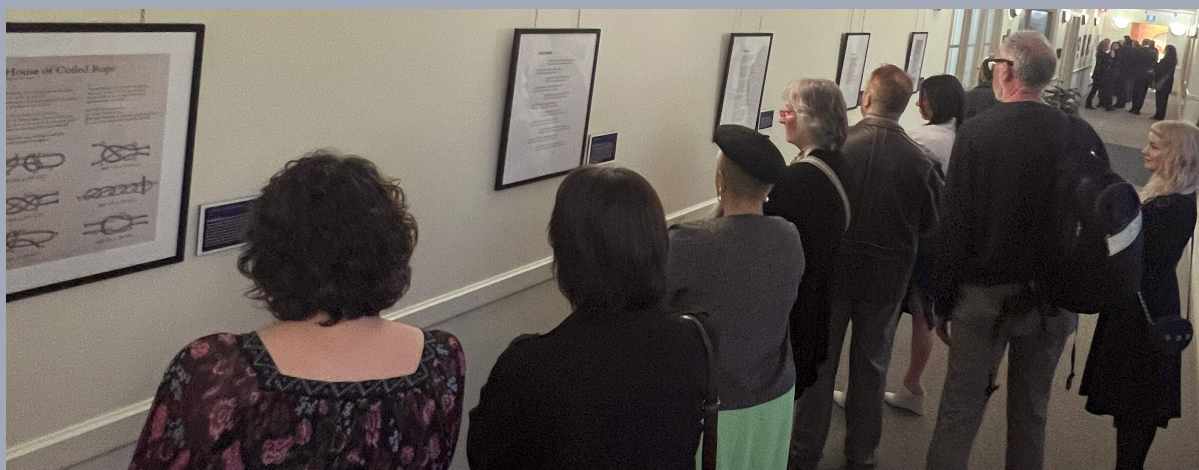
- *Open Book: Marketing* with Debra Bell (Radiant Press), Suzy Krause, and Hollay Ghadery
- *Publishing 101* with Jillian Bell and host Vickie Derksen
- *Blue Pencil Sessions* with Jillian Bell

## Regina Public Library Pride Event

In partnership with the Regina Public Library, we offered a queer creative writing workshop in celebration of Pride Month: *Roll For Initiative: Queer and Trans Storytelling in an Age of Dragons* with Jes Battis.

## 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 professional development sessions for the second SKribe Youth Poetry Festival. Craig Edes (The Northwest Kid) presented a workshop on song writing for fourteen youth participants and each participant was gifted an original beat to inspire their work. Elena Bentley offered a found poetry/erasure poetry workshop for fourteen youth that complemented a poetry mural project by the youth that was featured at the YXE Urban Games.



## Government House - *Family+* Group Exhibition

The League of Canadian Poets designated April 2025's National Poetry Month theme as "Family". In partnership with Government House and in celebration of National Poetry Month, *Family+* was a group exhibition exploring the rich dynamics of the families in our lives.

Eight Saskatchewan poets were selected from an open call for submissions and their poetry was exhibited alongside Poet Laureate Peace Akintade-Oluwagbeye and Youth Poet Laureate Dash Reimer in the Queen Elizabeth II Gallery at Government House between March 31 and June 22.

The exhibiting poets and poems included:

- *matoes and prayers* by Peace Akintade-Oluwagbeye
- *Wild Violets* by Courtney Bates-Hardy
- *Travels with my Mother* by Beverley Brenna
- *How Do We Know What We'll Hold In Our Arms And What Will Be Our Ghosts* by Chelsea Coupal
- *Switchback* by Amber Goodwyn
- *And Cried, And Cried* by Nicole Mae
- *Prayer* by Josiah Nelson
- *Are you still happy with your home?* by Medrie Purdham
- *A House of Coiled Rope* by Dash Reimer
- *Mira Flying Home* by Bruce Rice

# YOUTH POET LAUREATE



## Dash Reimer

Through his work with Saskatoon's Write Out Loud, Dash co-organized three open mics and two poetry slams affecting 50 youth poets and nearly 200 audience members and helped facilitate a feature performance spot in Regina for four Saskatoon youth poets with Regina Word Up. Dash led writing workshops at nine different schools and organizations across Saskatoon and Humboldt, including several multi-session series for Poetry Slam Clubs reaching an audience of 765 students in his workshops.

Dash was an event host and feature performer at another 16 events, including the 2025 Saskatchewan Book Awards, Winterruption Festival, SK Festival of Words Performer's Café and Summer Festival, the TicTocTen festival, and premiered his Loop Pedal Show at Art Bar, reaching an audience of over 1000 people through these events.

To round his year off, Dash organized another six "The Pancake House Show" events (featuring in two of them.) Dash was introduced in the SK Legislative Assembly and read at the Legislative Library, and performed at the 2025 Poetry Soiree at Government House alongside Ash Kilback and Peace Akintade-Oluwagbeye.

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

# POET LAUREATE



## Peace Akintade-Oluwagbeye

As Poet Laureate, Peace was very active, engaging in 28 different events with approximately 450 individuals attending, sharing her philosophy that poetry continues to be a living, breathing force across Saskatchewan.

Peace worked with organizations such as the Saskatchewan Arts Alliance, Sonic Poetics Conference, Saskatoon and Regina Public Library, CUPE Human Rights Conference, Remail Art Gallery, Winterruption Festival, Common Weal Community Arts, and the Festival of Words.

Peace sat on leadership panels, launched a chapbook (*Equanimity with Sonder, Equanimity in Conversation, and the Taste of Sonder*), engaged in interdisciplinary arts practices, co-organized several Write Out Loud Youth Poetry events, worked with students at high schools and art galleries, and made her directorial debut with the play "The NewComers."

Peace also presented a special event alongside Saskatoon poets Danielle Richardson and Isaac Bond who participated in *You, A Muse for Poetry*. Each poet was stationed to sit at Sparrow Coffee and write poetry on the spot for participants, and each participant left with a personalized poem, a poetry prompt, and a mini-appreciation gift bag. Peace was introduced in the SK Legislative Assembly and read at the Legislative Library, and performed at the 2025 Poetry Soiree at Government House alongside Ash Kilback and Dash Reimer.

# ANNUAL CONFERENCE & AGM



Lorna Crozier, Caroline Heath Memorial Lecture

## SWG Annual Conference: Mirrors

The SWG Annual Conference was held October 25-26 at Regina's DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel. Our program included the following in-person and livestreamed events:

- *Stories Under a Living Sky Showcase* featuring Austin "The Noble Savage" Ahenakew, Geanna Dunbar, Eric Gabriel aka Gabriel "ArchAngel" Ehijie and hosted by Peace Akintade-Oluwagbeye (also livestreamed)
- Presentation of the 2024 John V. Hicks Awards in Poetry (also livestreamed)
- 2024 Annual General Meeting
- *Beyond the Reflection* fiction workshop with Anne Lazurko
- *Looking-Glass Selves* poetry workshop with Medrie Purdham
- 2024 Caroline Heath Memorial Lecture: *Who is that Woman in the Mirror?* with Lorna Crozier (also livestreamed)
- *Imagination's Looking Glass* panel discussion with Bev Brenna, Heather O'Watch, Sharon Plumb and host Elaine McArthur
- *Clearing the Smoke and Mirrors: On Writing Hard Topics and Caring for our Mental Wellness* panel discussion with Peace Akintade-Oluwagbeye, Suzy Krause, Iryn Tushabe and host Rhea McFarlane
- *Mirror Images: How Poetry Reflects and Distorts* panel discussion with Lorna Crozier, Robert Currie, Courtney Bates-Hardy and host Michael Trussler
- *Beyond the Black Mirror: Society and Genre Fiction's Influence* panel discussion with Heather Polischuk, Jes Battis and host Marie Powell
- *Fast Friends: Building Connections*
- *Community Stage Open Mic & Social* hosted by Dash Reimer





Photos top left, clockwise:

- Anne Lazurko
- Eric Gabriel aka Gabriel 'ArchAngel' Ehijie
- Cat Abenstein, Heather O'Watch, Bev Brenna
- Geanna Dunbar
- Rhea McFarlane, Peace Akintade-Oluwagbeye, Suzy Krause, Iryn Tushabe
- Marie Powell, Jes Battis, Heather Polischuk



# AWARDS & PRIZES

## The Guild Prize



Michael Mirolla



Raquel Fletcher

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 winners of The Guild Prize receive \$250 plus paid publication in the Summer 2025 issue of *Freelance* Magazine.

The winners of the 2024-25 Guild Prize are separated into two categories: prose and poetry.

Michael Mirolla won the prose Guild Prize for his story *Recognition*, with Chad Doell as honourable mention for *Yelling*. The prose prize was judged by Helen Power.

Raquel Fletcher won the poetry Guild Prize for *Tiny Gold Frames (or The Gallery Wall)*, with Jaime Speed's *A Wish in III Acts* as honourable mention. The poetry prize was judged by Jenna Butler.

## Cheryl and Henry Kloppenburg Award for Literary Excellence



Photo l-r: Charlie Clark (Saskatoon Mayor); Cheryl Kloppenburg; Tim Lilburn (Recipient); Peter Stoicheff (USask President); Russ Merasty (Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan).

Tim Lilburn was the winner of the 2024 Cheryl and Henry Kloppenburg Award for Literary Excellence. The announcement took place at a lunch at the Saskatoon Golf & Country Club on Sept 26, as well as virtually with a video produced by Paper Heart Films. The SWG is deeply appreciative of the Cheryl and Henry Kloppenburg Foundation's continued support for this award.

## John V. Hicks Long Manuscript Award in Fiction



Photo l-r: Wynne Nicholson, Michael Trussler, Chelsea Coupal, Jeanette Lynes.

The John V. Hicks Awards in Poetry were celebrated at the SWG Conference on Oct 25 and handed out by Jeanette Lynes. First-place winner was Michael Trussler for *Whoosh*, second place was Chelsea Coupal for *Village Sprawl* and third place was Wynne Nicholson for *Body Songs*. Honorable Mention goes to Carol Rose GoldenEagle for *Singing to the Moon*. Judges were Domenica Martinello and Holley Ghadery.



## City of Regina Writing Award



Photo l-r: Courtney Bates-Hardy (Winner), Suzy Krause (Runner-Up) and Iryn Tushabe. (Missing from photo, Gordon Portman - Runner-Up).

The 2025 City of Regina Writing Awards on May 29 were handed out by Iryn Tushabe to winner Courtney Bates-Hardy for her submission *We Want to Live Like Trees* and runners up Suzy Krause and Gordon Portman. Judges were Finnian Burnett and Molly Cross-Blanchard. The SWG is grateful to the City of Regina for their continued sponsorship of this \$4,500 award and reception.

# PUBLICATIONS

## Windscrip

*Windscrip* features the best in Saskatchewan high school writing. This year's magazine was edited by Brandon Fick (Managing and Poetry Editor) and Kelby Cottenie (Prose Editor).

The following youth were selected as magazine contributors, and many read their work at the launch in June or video excerpts of their work were shared across SWG's social media: Abigail Nelson, Angeley McLean, Bella Pinay, Cole Allen, Ebe Johnson, Emily Neufeld, Erika Hertlein, Finn Landry, Hallie Quist, Heidi Paice, Ibrahim Osman, Jhan Lorah, Julia Cismaru, Justine M.H., Keller Nickell, Sam Ellis, Seraphim Strauss, Toni Mulder, and Zayden Mack.

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

### Jerrett Ens Award for Poetry

- Winner: *Baby Fat* by Emily Neufeld
- Honourable Mention: *The Weight of War* by Cole Allen

### Jerrett Ens Award for Prose

- Winner: *When the Night Comes* by Bella Pinay
- Honourable Mention: *The House Across the Coulee* by Justine M.H.

### Currie-Hyland Award for Poetry

- Winner: *Sour Apples and Cinnamon* by Zayden Mack
- Honourable Mention: *My Configuration of Heaven* by Jhan Lorah

A digital copy of *Windscrip* is available year-round to the general public on our website for free. SWG members receive a digital copy of



# PUBLICATIONS (cont.)

*Windscrip*t by email as part of their membership. Every high school and public library in Saskatchewan receive a printed issue of *Windscrip*t magazine in the fall.

Additional printed copies of the current issue are available for purchase for \$12 and back issues of *Windscrip*t are available to classrooms for free (plus shipping) through the SWG office.

## Freelance

*Freelance* continues to be a source of information for SWG members, and also a way to gain experience writing for publications. Focusing on the craft and business of writing, *Freelance* featured 27 contributors in 2024-25.

Two small, but significant, changes were made this year. One featured members on the cover of each issue. Our covers included: Gail Bowen, Peace Akintade-Oluwagbeye, Norma Dunning and Miguel Fenrich. A second change is moving from four printed issues to two printed and two digital per year. This was a cost-saving feature and will continue into 2025-26.

## Ebriefs

Our weekly e-newsletter, Ebriefs, provides information on SWG events and announcements, member and industry news, and professional development opportunities. From August 1, 2024 to July 31, 2025, we distributed 51 Ebriefs to an average of 500 members each issue.

## Social Media

This year the our social media channels connected members and writers around the country to the SWG. We had a total of 548,583 interactions across Facebook and 152,103 across Instagram. We have left X (formerly Twitter), but continue to see followers tag us, collaborate with us on posts, and share —proving the effectiveness of social media in reaching audiences.

## Grain

Over this past year, *Grain* has once again continued to grow and harvest the best of eclectic writing! Volumes 52.1 through 52.4 featured new work by 87 writers and poets from across Turtle Island and the UK, for a total of 68 poems and 31 fiction and nonfiction pieces; visual art from four talented Canadian artists, including Allison Morris, Patty Maher, Janis Woode, and Etty Anderson; the six winning pieces from the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Short *Grain* Contest; and the three winning pieces from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Hybrid *Grain* Contest for Experimental Writing.

Between September 15, 2024 and July 31, 2025, *Grain* received a total of 3,469 submissions, which is an increase from the previous year. Print subscriptions remained steady, with an average of 407 per quarter. In addition to print, *Grain* is now available digitally. This format allows *Grain* to reach new readers and offers a more accessible reading option. Also implemented last year, a \$5 reading fee for international submitters.

Reaching new audiences was an important goal for *Grain* this year. Additional newsletter information, social media posts, and litmag community engagement, saw an increase in followers—especially on Instagram. A postcard campaign and a renewal form on the reverse side of the magazine flysheet aimed to encourage current readers to renew their subscriptions with *Grain*. *Grain* also joined the newly established Literary Magazines Canada Collective (LMCC), which is a non-profit organization focused on fostering collaboration between magazines and works to highlight literary magazines within the field of publishing.

*Grain's* editorial team saw the addition of Credence McFadzean as prose editor; previous prose editor, Kate O'Gorman, completed

her tenure with Volume 52.1. Kendall Rude, taking over from Delane Just, joined as proofreader. All of the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild staff, including Shirley Fehr, Tea Gerbeza, Cat Abenstein, Yolanda Hansen, Andrea MacLeod, Debbie Sunchild-Peterson, Tracy Hamon, Sharon Johnson, and Ashwina Parmar, continued to support *Grain* and the editors as needed.

The 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Short *Grain* Contest, judged by Conor Kerr (poetry) and Fawn Parker (fiction), received from 252 entrants a total of 427 submissions (248 poems and 179 short stories), which is a significant increase compared to the previous year's contest; winners were announced in August 2025, and the winning selections will be published in the Fall 2025 (53.1) issue. Similarly, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Hybrid *Grain* Contest for Experimental Writing, judged by Jordan Abel and Kate Siklosi, received double the amount of entries than the previous year, for a total of 64 entrants and 94 entries; winners were announced in February 2025, and published in the Spring 2025 (52.3) issue. Also new for both contests was the addition of an early-bird offer; this offer allowed entrants to submit one extra poem, short story, or hybrid piece, at no extra cost. At the time of this report, the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Hybrid *Grain* Contest is open, and Eric Schmaltz and Sacha Archer will act as judges.

*Grain's* contributors, once again, received recognition at the national level; eight contributors (four featured and four notable) were selected from Volumes 50.2 to 51.1 for Best Canadian Poetry 2025 (Biblioasis).

As part of *Grain's* commitment to writers both locally and within the larger litmag community, the editors decided that the Spring 2026 issue (53.3) will feature work by new and emerging Saskatchewan writers; this call for submissions was announced on June 4, 2025. The editors also decided that while submissions would remain closed for the summer months as per *Grain's* regular submission period, Submittable would remain open for submissions from under-represented and/or marginalized writers from June 16 to Sept 14, 2025.

As always, the *Grain* team would like to acknowledge and give sincere thanks to The Cheryl and Henry Kloppenburg Foundation, the Canada Council for the Arts, Saskatchewan Lotteries through SaskCulture, and its individual donors for the ongoing support of *Grain* and its writers.

With 2024 came opportunities for growth, learning, and change, but one thing remained the same: *Grain's* unwavering commitment to showcasing the best new writing and nurturing writers, both emerging and established, from Saskatchewan and beyond. We can't wait to see what the next year brings!

Kishchi maarsii. With many thanks,

Elena Bentley  
Editor, *Grain*



52.1 Fall 2024



52.2 Winter 2025



52.3 Spring 2025



52.4 Summer 2025

# AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

## 2024-25

The majority of SWG funding is grant revenue (\$772,684 of \$1,018,800 total income), of which \$714,000 comes from Saskatchewan Lotteries Trust Fund for Sport, Culture, and Recreation. SWG operates on grant revenue to improve the status of Saskatchewan writers, encourage the development of writers at all levels, and improve public access to and awareness of Saskatchewan writers and their work. A small amount of self-generated revenue includes membership fees of \$41,877 to partially fund member benefits.

Representatives of the external auditor met with the Audit Committee, Executive Director, and Finance Manager/Accountant to review draft audited financial statements to July 31, 2025. 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.
- Net assets at year end of \$306,647 are slightly less than prior year due to a minimal net loss.
- Positive net income from operations of \$17,795 was reported before amortization and a \$10,000 donation to related party SWG Foundation, the fundraising arm of SWG.
- Year end showed positive cash flows of \$52,515.
- Audit adjustments included the usual entry for amortization of fixed assets, a large payable for lease occupancy costs, and adjustments to accounting for investment income. In the aggregate, these changed an initial net income of \$12,234 to a net loss of \$1,656, very close to break even.

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 monitors finances and budget on a day-to-day basis.

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, 2025, 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, 2025. We expressed a qualified audit opinion on those financial statements in our report dated September 26, 2025.

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 26, 2025. 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

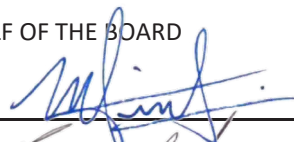
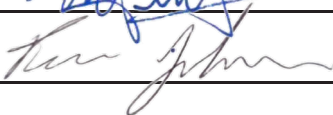
REGINA, Saskatchewan  
September 26, 2025



Saskatchewan Writers' Guild Inc.  
Summary Financial Statements

Summary Statement of Financial Position				
As of July 31		2025		2024
ASSETS				
Current assets	\$	730,749	\$	697,822
Due from related parties		280		6,703
Capital assets and art work		9,404		20,642
	\$	740,433	\$	725,167
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS				
Current liabilities	\$	27,407	\$	25,838
Current deferred revenue		406,379		391,026
Net Assets		306,647		308,303
	\$	740,433	\$	725,167

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**

<b>Summary Statement of Operations and Changes in Net Assets</b>			
Year Ended July 31	<b>2025</b>		<b>2024</b>
<b>REVENUES</b>			
Grant	\$	<b>772,684</b>	\$ <b>783,700</b>
Self-generated		<b>131,141</b>	<b>121,921</b>
Grain <i>(Schedule 1)</i>		<b>71,456</b>	<b>95,913</b>
Donations and sponsorships		<b>40,421</b>	<b>37,451</b>
Fundraising		<b>3,098</b>	<b>317</b>
		<b>1,018,800</b>	<b>1,039,302</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Salaries and benefits		<b>469,064</b>	<b>462,588</b>
Artists' fees		<b>160,752</b>	<b>177,329</b>
Operational and amortization expenses		<b>156,915</b>	<b>166,636</b>
Grain <i>(Schedule 1)</i>		<b>122,597</b>	<b>156,456</b>
Program delivery		<b>101,128</b>	<b>107,451</b>
Donation to SWG Foundation Inc.		<b>10,000</b>	<b>-</b>
		<b>1,020,456</b>	<b>1,070,460</b>
<b>EXCESS OF REVENUES (EXPENSES)</b>	\$	<b>(1,656)</b>	\$ <b>(31,158)</b>
Net assets - beginning of year		<b>308,303</b>	<b>339,461</b>
<b>NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR</b>	\$	<b>306,647</b>	\$ <b>308,303</b>

*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**

<b>Summary Statement of Grain Operations</b>			<i>(Schedule 1)</i>	
Year Ended July 31		2025		2024
<b>REVENUES</b>				
Grant	\$	37,000	\$	68,739
Publications revenue		22,155		20,554
Donations and sponsorships		5,655		6,620
International submission fees		5,221		-
Fundraising		1,425		-
		71,456		95,913
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
Artists' fees		65,731		87,674
Salaries and benefits		31,128		29,053
Publishing and distribution		20,950		37,128
Office, meetings and travel		3,001		301
Amortization of intangible assets		1,787		2,300
		122,597		156,456
<b>EXCESS OF REVENUES (EXPENSES) FROM GRAIN OPERATIONS</b>	\$	(51,141)	\$	(60,543)

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 2025)

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**Program Coordinator**  
Tea Gerbeza

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Sharon Johnson (June 2024-May 2025);  
Ashwina Parmar (May 2025 to present)

**Grain**  
**Editor**  
Elena Bentley

**Prose Editor**  
Kate O’Gorman (ended Sept 2024);  
Credence McFadzean

**Poetry Editor**  
Taidgh Lynch

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RBC Foundation in  
support of Youth  
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Raye Hendrickson  
Cheryl and Henry  
Kloppenburg  
Foundation  
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### **Cheryl and Henry Kloppenburg Award for Literary Excellence** Saskatoon Community Foundation

## SWG Foundation

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