



## 2015 Annual Report from the Royal City Literary Arts Society (RCLAS)

RCLAS is just days away from turning three years old and exciting times lie ahead! 2015 has been a year of transition where a changing of the guard of several Board members will take place at our AGM on Saturday December 05, 2015.

With the resignation of Kyle McKillop in September, James Felton was appointed Interim President to lead RCLAS into 2016 and beyond. Change can induce anxiety and stress; not changing can be worse! 😊

Our revenues have come largely from the generous funding by the City of New Westminster and dues from just over 100 members. In 2016, we are going to be making a concerted effort to broaden our search for additional funding and this will not exclude approaching various corporate sponsors.

Our mandate, in a nutshell, is to stimulate, support, and facilitate the written and spoken word among creative writers and to foster a growing base of fans of literature. One of the ways (but by no means the only way) we get the message out about our activities is through our monthly e-zine, *Wordplay at Work*. [Click here to see our most recent issue.](#)

To achieve our mandate, we have established many different **Programmes** and **Events** and we will quickly share a little about each. We are also planning three new initiatives next year that we are particularly excited about (more on these towards the end of the report).

### Update on our Current Programmes

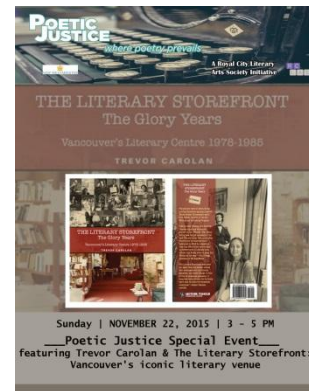
We are currently operating seven **Programmes**, each catering to a different niche in the literary community. Here is a brief update on each:

#### Poetic Justice

Poetic Justice is our weekly poetry reading series where we showcase two established poets on Sundays from 3-5 p.m. We cycle through a stable of hosts who, upon the completion of the readings, then run an Open Mic reading opportunity for any aspiring or emerging poet to share a poem or two. Poetic Justice recently lost our beloved venue, the Back Room of the Heritage

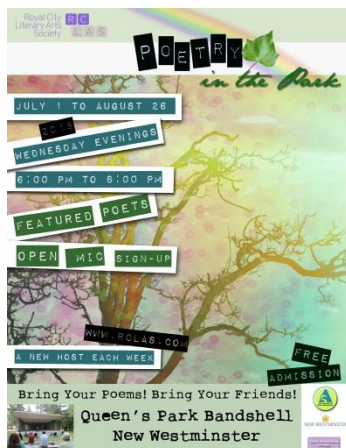


Grill. We have, however, found a new home on a trial basis and that is [Original's Restaurante Mexicano](#), right at the foot of the New Westminster SkyTrain station. We are going to have a fresh line-up of poets in 2016, and you can find out more at [www.poeticjustice.ca](http://www.poeticjustice.ca).



### Poetry in the Park

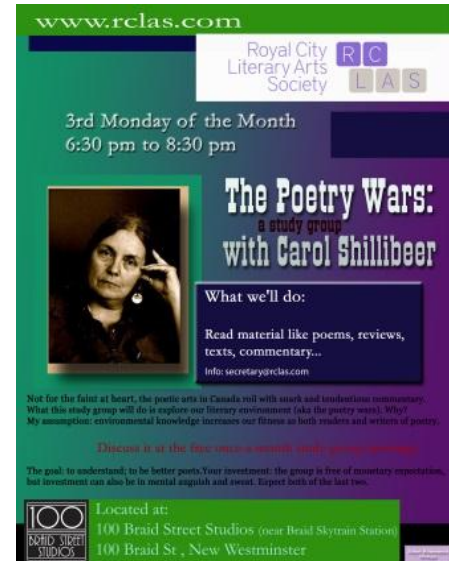
Poetry in the Park is a very innovative way to bring poetry closer to those in our community who otherwise not get as much exposure to this genre. Held during the months of July and August, the readings take place Wednesdays from 6-8 p.m. in the [Queen's Park Bandshell](#). Our attendance this past summer was the best ever! The format follows that of Poetic Justice where two established poets read from their recent publications and an Open Mic is available to those yet-to-be-published writers. 2016 will see some very in-demand writers; more information is available at <http://rclas.com/events/recurring/poetry-in-the-park/>.





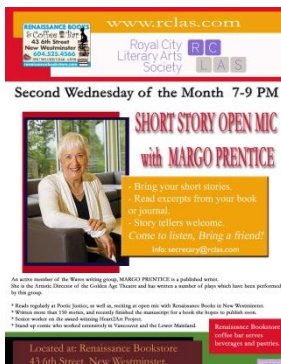
### Poetry Wars

Poetry Wars is devoted to vigorous and animated discussions on the poetics of poetry. How do we like a poem? What makes one more compelling than another? Open to both writers and literary fans, we are an intimate group of poetry lovers who leaves each session more excited about being able to identify our own evolving poetics. Poetry Wars happens at [100 Braid Street Studios](http://100BraidStreet.com) the third Monday of each month from 6:30-8:30 p.m. A new approach is underway where a recent anthology of Canadian poems is being critiqued and reviewed one poem at a time. Find out more at <http://rclas.com/events/recurring/poetry-wars/>.



### Short Story Open Mic

Short Story Open Mic is a vibrant and enthusiastic group that gives fiction writers an opportunity to showcase their recent short story drafts. RCLAS’s hope is that this Programme will produce the next Alice Munro! The intimate group meets the second Wednesday of each from 7-9 p.m. at [Renaissance Books](http://RenaissanceBooks.com). It is a fun, friendly atmosphere and open to anyone who has a story – written or spoken – to tell. We are in the midst of looking for a new facilitator for this group, but in the meantime, for more information, go to <http://rclas.com/events/recurring/short-story-open-mic/>.





### Songwriter's Open Mic

Songwriter's Open Mic is where the literary arts shake hands with the performing arts. In a relaxed and friendly atmosphere, singer-songwriters can showcase their latest efforts. This forum has unconditionally embraced performers, both regulars and newcomers alike. For musicians bursting to try out a recent composition, they can come out on the last Tuesday of each month from 7:30-9 p.m. at [Renaissance Books](#). Co-hosted by two talented musicians and songwriters, it is the perfect opportunity for feedback and encouragement. So write it, bring it, and sing it! Find out more at <http://rclas.com/events/recurring/songwriters-open-mic/>.



### Wordplay

Wordplay meets on the first Thursday of the month from 7-9 p.m. to provide writers of all genres to work off spontaneously inspired words or phrases provided by a different guest-host at each get-together. It is not a critiquing session but rather a forum where a creative spark can fire the imagination. Writers will discover new approaches to unlock the treasury of thoughts in the mind. Wordplay is currently looking for a new venue, but this hasn't prevented the group from generating some fabulous first drafts this past year. All that is needed is a pen, paper and a ready mind. More is available at <http://rclas.com/events/recurring/wordplay/>.



**Wordplay**  
www.rclas.com

First Thursday  
of the Month  
New Time 6 - 8 PM

{the (FREE) monthly poetry-generating drop-in series}

Host Alan Girling

Wrap your mind around the writing prompts we provide.  
Try your hand at generating some fabulous first drafts,  
and  
*free your poetic heart!*

Bring your writing tools & paper.  
This is not a critique group.  
Let's have some fun!

For more info, email [secretary@rclas.com](mailto:secretary@rclas.com)

Location:  
The Heritage Grill, Back Room  
447 Columbia Street  
(half a block from the  
Columbia Skytrain Station),  
New Westminster BC.

Presented by  
Royal City Literary Arts Society

## Writing for Kidz

Writing for Kidz is a fun, bi-weekly writing group geared for adult writers of any genre who want to write for children. At the moment, it is on hiatus as the group's facilitator deals with a serious health issue. Normally hosted at [Renaissance Books](#) It is a safe and friendly place where juvenilia writers can share and discuss their manuscripts with like-minded budding or established authors. Valuable feedback and advice is dispensed, including the do's and don't's of writing for various age groups. What is also shared is how to submit to publishers and literary agents. We will update the status of this Programme via our [website](#).

www.rclas.com

Renaissance Books & Coffee Bar  
43 6th Street  
New Westminster  
604.523.4566

Royal City Literary Arts Society

Every Other Monday Morning 10:00AM to Noon

**Writing for Kidz**  
with  
**Max Tell**

a writing group created for  
adult writers in any genre  
related to children

The wide range of purposes this new writer's group may choose in its mandate may include giving children's writers a safe place to meet and play creatively with writing, to share their writing, and receive valuable feedback. It may also include discussions on the 'Dos and Don'ts' of writing for various age groups and pointers on how to submit to publishers and agents.

Writing for Kidz on Facebook

Located at: Renaissance Bookstore  
43 6th Street, New Westminster.

\$5 Drop-in Fee at door  
includes refreshments



### Update on our Current Events

We are also heavily involved in four annual **Events**, again each with a very different and unique approach to enhancing support for the literary arts community. Here is an update:

#### Fred Cogswell Award and Show

Last month at the [Anvil Centre](#), RCLAS hosted our Second Annual Fred Cogswell Award for Excellence in Poetry. The submission rules are several but the three prize-winning awards go to the most talented poets who have published with a Canadian imprint the previous year. George McWhirter, Vancouver’s inaugural Poet Laureate, was this year’s judge and keynote speaker who adjudicated a whopping 40 entries! First prize went to Cara-Lyn Morgan, and the second and third prizes went to Jane Munro and Bruce Meyer respectively. To find out more, go to...

<http://rclas.com/awards-contests/fred-cogswell-award/>.

Royal City Literary Arts Society RCLAS 2nd Annual Fred Cogswell Award For Excellence In Poetry Winners Announcement

Royal City Literary Arts Society RCLAS AWARDS SHOW 2015

The 2nd Annual Fred Cogswell Award For Excellence in Poetry

1st place (\$500)  
Cara-Lyn Morgan, *What Became My Grieving Ceremony* (ThistleDown Press)

2nd place (\$250)  
Jane Munro, *Blue Sonoma* (Brick Books)

3rd place (\$100)  
Bruce Meyer, *The Seasons* (The Porcupine’s Quill)

2015 Judge  
George McWhirter  
Keynote Speaker

Sat Nov 21, 2015  
1:00 PM - 3:30 PM  
(Doors Open at 12:45 PM)

Anvil Centre, Room #413  
777 Columbia Street  
New Westminster, BC  
FREE ADMISSION! ~ OPEN TO ALL

Your MC’s will be:  
Candice James  
Poet Laureate, New Westminster  
&  
James Felton (President)  
\*\*\*  
Open Mic Readings

Discounted RCLAS Memberships Available  
New Memberships \$20



### LitFest NewWest

RCLAS has been an active and enthusiastic participant and supporter of [LitFest NewWest](#), the premier literary event in New Westminster. Presented by the [Arts Council of New Westminster](#) and co-sponsored by [Douglas College](#) and the [New Westminster Public Library](#), LitFest took place in April this year with significant contributions by volunteers from RCLAS. Next year, the festival is slated for May 13-19 and RCLAS will be taking on an ever-increasing role in helping to make it yet another success. Once again there will be offerings of writing workshops, poetry and other readings, a literary marketplace, book signings by authors, and a literary showcase.



### Workshops

In many ways, RCLAS Workshops have become our signature Event series. Throughout 2015, we maintained a frenetic pace of two workshops each month. See-sawing between the [New Westminster Public Library](#) and [MLA Judy Darcy’s community office](#), the two venues hosted a hugely diverse series of Workshops. Subjects varied from “So You Want to Write an Historical Novel” to “The Art and Engineering of Making a Living in the Writing World”, and many others. Towards the last third of this year, we noticed a decline in attendance figures which has been largely attributed to the Lower Mainland being awash in literary workshops this Fall. At a recent Board meeting, it was decided to curtail the number of Workshops and to focus on what we believe will be absolute ‘hits’ for the literary community.

# RCLAS

Royal City Literary Arts Society

## The Write On! Contest

RCLAS’s annual Write On! Contest was a huge success, and we were once again in awe of the talent we had the pleasure and privilege to judge. There were 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place winners in each of three categories: fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. All nine winners received cash prizes and the three first- place winners read their award-winning work at the LitFest New West “Written in the Stars” gala event held in the Muir Theatre at Douglas College. In addition, the winners and Honourable Mentions were published in our RCLAS E-zine. For more information on next year’s contest, go to <http://rclas.com/awards-contests/write-on-contest>.







## **Exciting New Things Are In The Works At RCLAS!**

There are three brand new initiatives we are considering for 2016. Two are likely to materialize much sooner than the third.

In RCLAS' mandate, it states, among other things, that we want 'to provide reading, performance, workshop and *critiquing* opportunities for literary artists'. Currently, we don't have a critique programme. We are therefore looking seriously at an innovative initiative that can offer objective and meaningful feedback to apprentice writers by an experienced panel of published authors. An announcement will be made sometime in January, 2016.

A second initiative brought forward by one of our Board members will also be more fully discussed and voted on at our January Board meeting. The New Westminster Public Library has been a stalwart supporter of RCLAS and we are hoping to introduce a monthly series at the NWPL that will span all literary genres. It will appeal to library patrons and literary fans and will be presented by writers who will showcase their favourite authors.

A third, more grandiose project up for consideration is one designed to help New Westminster earn the moniker of B.C.'s literary arts capital. We already enjoy a growing reputation in the Lower Mainland as a major drawing card for writers and their fans. RCLAS now wants to strengthen this reputation by approaching both corporate players and the municipal government about a very unique series of public installations of creative writing that will be installed throughout the Royal City. Much more we cannot say at this time, but news will be shared as and when it comes available.

There is so much more to share, but this gives a synopsis of where the Royal City Literary Arts Society is at right now and where it's heading in the very near future.

For more information, contact:

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