13TH EDITION

# wordstock

FESTIVAL LITTÉRAIRE SUDBURY LITERARY FESTIVAL

## OCTOBER

## 16TH -17TH, 2026

FOR READERS,
WRITERS AND
LOVERS OF WORDS.




PLACE DES ARTS
DU GRAND SUDBURY

27 LARCH STREET

WORDSTOCKSUDBURY.CA

**Congratulations**
**Wordstock Sudbury Literary Festival**
**on your 13th Edition!**

**Thank you for nurturing our**
**community through the power of words.**


Financial Decisions

**REALIZE AND ACHIEVE YOUR FINANCIAL LIFE GOALS**

**Linda Cartier**

**705.525.7526**

lindaac@financialdecisions.ca

**financialdecisions.ca**




# CONTENTS


5 ABOUT US
7 FESTIVAL ORGANIZER WELCOME
9 MESSAGE FROM MP LAPOINTE
10 MESSAGE FROM MPP WEST
11 MESSAGE FROM MAYOR PAUL LEFEBVRE
13 SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE
15 SESSION DESCRIPTIONS
21 FEATURED GUESTS
35 SPONSORS
38 SUPPORT THE FESTIVAL


13TH EDITION

OCTOBER 16TH-17TH, 2026

# ABOUT US

## OUR MANDATE

Wordstock Sudbury Literary Festival is a celebration of stories and how we connect to each other through them. The festival features some of Canada's most celebrated authors, poets, playwrights, and songwriters.

Established in 2013 to support and promote the love of reading and writing in Northern Ontario, we return this year for our 13th edition.

## ACCESSIBILITY

Wordstock Sudbury is committed to providing an inclusive experience for all attendees. Our venues are wheelchair accessible, and we offer services such as ASL interpretation and large print materials upon request. For further assistance or to discuss specific accessibility needs, please feel free to contact us: festivalorganizer@wordstocksudbury.ca

*Wordstock Sudbury recognizes that we are operating on traditional Indigenous land within the Robinson Huron Treaty territory. We respect the cultures and peoples of the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek, Nipissing First Nation, Temagami First Nation, Wahnapitae First Nation, and Dokis First Nation. We recognize and respect the Aaniishinaabe peoples' sacred relationship with the land and water. Wordstock Sudbury will continuously work to listen and learn from the shared wisdom of Indigenous Peoples.*

# ABOUT US

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dinah Laprairie (Chair)
Christa Corbiere
Kim Fahner
Liisa Kovala
Molly Nethavhani

## FESTIVAL ORGANIZER

Annie Blodgett

## FESTIVAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

Alex Tétrault
Alexia Cousineau
Holly Gutwillinger
Laura Young
Matt Heiti
Melanie Marttila
Nancy Daoust
Tina Siegel

## FESTIVAL VOLUNTEERS

A huge thank you to all our many, many volunteers who made this year, and every year, possible. If you see one (and chances are, you will), thank them!

# Festival Organizer's Welcome



Welcome to the 13th edition of Wordstock Sudbury Literary Festival!

This year's festival brings together two days of conversations, readings, workshops, performances, and interactive events with writers and readers from Northern Ontario and across Canada.

There are so many people who help make this festival possible. I want to thank our sponsors, funders, donors, community partners, volunteers, authors, poets, moderators, and our incredible Board of Directors.

This year's theme, *The Words Between Us*, feels especially fitting, with so many people rallying around the festival and helping bring such a full program to life.

I feel very lucky to be part of another Wordstock Sudbury Literary Festival.

Thank you to everyone who continues to show up, support writers, attend events, read books, and make this festival such an exciting community to be part of.

I can't wait to see you this weekend!

**Annie Blodgett**
**Festival Organizer**

Manitoulin TRANSPORT

Proud Supporter of the

wordstock

SUDBURY LITERARY FESTIVAL

Manitoulin Transport, built on the principles of hard work and integrity, has become a leader in the industry, initiating advances in technology, improving efficiencies and embracing many changes as our world evolves. Throughout the Manitoulin Group of Companies we employ various services - over the road less than truckload and truckload, ocean, air, intermodal, logistics, customs brokerage, and warehousing, providing our customers with a one-stop shop and a first-class service.

Shipping Your World™

SUDBURY TERMINAL:
75 Mumford Road
Lively, ON P3Y 1L1

www.manitoulintransport.com

CUSTOMER SERVICE: 1-800-265-1485

Rotary
Club of Sudbury

The Rotary Club of Sudbury has been serving community since 1924. Since this time, many Rotarians have dedicated themselves

*PROUD TO SUPPORT WORDSTOCK SUDBURY!*

# Welcome from MP Vivian Lapointe



Welcome. Aniin. Bienvenue.

I am so pleased to extend greetings to the 2026 Wordstock Sudbury Literary Festival.

I want to welcome those who have travelled near and far to Sudbury for this year's Wordstock Literary Festival. Wordstock is a celebration of literary arts in Canada, and I know the next few days will be filled with brilliant minds, great support, and vital conservations to grow and expand the literary community not just in Northern Ontario, but nationally.

For over a decade, Wordstock has been an incredible resource for authors, poets, playwrights, and songwriters. As the festival continues to promote the love of reading and writing in Northern Ontario, I know the community will benefit greatly from the programming and opportunities to meet other like-minded writers.

I would like to acknowledge the Board of Directors of Wordstock Sudbury Literary Festival for their exceptional leadership and dedication to the literary arts in Northern Ontario.

Thank you. Merci. Miigwech.

**Viviane Lapointe**
**Member of Parliament Sudbury**

# Welcome from MPP Jamie West



Dear Wordstock Sudbury Literary Festival Community,

For over a decade, Wordstock has celebrated the love of literary arts in the North, and this year, we celebrate our strength and community.

Wordstock Sudbury has given our community a wonderful gift by inspiring a greater love of reading, writing, and reflection. It gives us all a chance to explore new views, engage on a deeper level, and forges strong connections with new and existing supporters.

It has been an absolute pleasure to recognize the growth of the Sudbury Wordstock Literary Festival since 2013. The positive impacts that the festival has had on arts and culture in Greater Sudbury and Northern Ontario cannot be overstated.

Thank you to all the volunteers and organizers who help make this annual event possible and thank you to the community for supporting the growth and development of the arts in our community and beyond!

**Jamie West**
**MPP/ Député Sudbury**

# Welcome from Mayor Paul Lefebvre



It gives me great pleasure to welcome every participant to the 13th Annual 2026 Wordstock Sudbury Literary Festival.

It's incredibly special that so many authors, poets, playwrights, and songwriters from across northern Ontario are gathered in our community. I'm confident that this vibrant gathering will foster meaningful connections among all who share a passion for words and spark new creative ideas.

I invite you to immerse yourself in all that our beautiful city has to offer, from lush green landscapes to the culinary scene and warm hospitality waiting to be discovered throughout our community.

I encourage you to savour every moment of these next two days and let your talents shine and thank you to the dedicated organizers, volunteers, and sponsors for making this festival possible once again.

Enjoy the festival!

**Mayor Paul Lefebvre**

# WELCOME 2026 FESTIVAL BOOKSELLER!

Visit the Festival Bookstore in the **Normand Bradley Room** to browse and purchase books by this year's festival authors.

PARRY SOUND BOOKS



**parrysoundbooks.com**

# SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

**Friday, October 16, 2026**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 5:30 PM- 6:30 PM | Masterclass: Polishing Your Performance with Charlie Petch | Studio |
| 6:45 PM - 7:15PM | Festival Opening | Studio |
| 7:30 PM-8:30 PM | Maggie Helwig in Conversation with Jessica Pope | Studio |
| 9:00 PM -11:00 PM | Annual Poetry Slam! | Studio |

**Saturday, October 17, 2026**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM | Masterclass: Writing Compelling Characters with Lauren Carter | La Zone |
| 9:30 AM- 11:00 AM | Tell a Good Yarn: Storytelling Skills with Roger Dallaire | Studio |
| 11:15 AM- 12:15 PM | Masterclass: *Opening Acts*, How to Start Writing Plays | La Zone |
| 11:15 AM- 12:15 PM | The Sweet Plot: Romance and Pastries | Studio |
| 12:20 PM - 12:40 PM | Lunch n' Learn with Anaphore: *How 29 Local Businesses Funded a Poetry Anthology* | La Zone |
| 12:45 PM - 1:45 PM | Northern Exposure: Local Lit for your TBR! | Studio |
| 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM | Sensory Drop- In Space | La Zone |
| 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM | There's More to the Story: *Secrets and Suspense* | Studio |
| 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM | Book Launch | La Zone |
| 3:15 PM - 4:15 PM | Compassion is The Story | Studio |
| 4:30 PM- 5:30 PM | Antonio Michael Downing In Conversation with Jonathan Pinto | Studio |
| 5:30 PM - 6:00 PM | Festival Closing! | Studio |

# Read widely. Think critically. *Write creatively.*

Hone your skills, fuel your passion, and develop your talents in one of these programs:

- **English Literature, Media and Writing, BA**
- **Master's in Relational Studies, MA**



Let your imagination take flight.
AT **LAURENTIAN**.

THE FACULTY OF **arts**
Laurentianarts ♥ artsLaurentienne

**Laurentian**University
Université**Laurentienne**
laurentian.ca/faculty/arts

# SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

## FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16TH

### Masterclass - Polishing Your Performance
### 5:30-6:30 PM (Studio)

Join award-winning spoken word artist **Charlie Petch** for a hands-on masterclass on preparing your writing for an audience. Learn practical ways to manage nerves, strengthen your stage presence and deliver a more confident reading. Bring a short piece to practice.

### Festival Opening
### 6:45-7:15 PM (Studio)

Join us as we officially open the 13th edition of **Wordstock Sudbury Literary Festival**. We'll welcome this year's authors and audiences, share a few opening remarks and begin the weekend with a special reading from Sudbury's Poet Laureate.

### Maggie Helwig in Conversation with Jessica Pope
### 7:30-8:30 PM (Studio)

Join **Maggie Helwig,** Award winning author of *Encampment* and CBC Sudbury journalist **Jessica Pope** for a conversation about housing, faith, resistance and community.

***Featuring Maggie Helwig and Jessica Pope.***

### Poetry Slam
### 9:00 PM- 11:00 PM (Studio)

poets.ca
League of Canadian Poets

One of the most anticipated events of the festival, this year's Poetry Slam brings the same excitement as every year. Sign up and compete for the winning title, or come and watch the fun unfold.

***Featuring Charlie Petch and Tyler Pennock and hosted by Lindsay Mayhew***

# SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17TH

### Writing Compelling Characters
### 9:00-10:00 AM (La Zone)

Join author **Lauren Carter** for a masterclass on creating characters with depth, complexity and purpose. Through practical exercises and writing prompts, participants will explore new ways to understand their characters and uncover the details that make them feel alive on the page.

### Tell a Good Yarn: Storytelling Skills
### 9:30-11:00 AM (Studio)

Join storyteller **Roger Dallaire** for a free bilingual session exploring the basics of telling a good oral story. Bring your own craft or just come listen and learn some practical storytelling tips.

***in collaboration with the Centre franco-ontarien de folklore.***

### Opening Acts: How to Start Writing Plays
### 11:15 AM-12:15 PM (La Zone)

Join Sudbury playwright and novelist Matthew Heiti for an introduction to the building blocks of playwriting. Through short exercises, participants will explore character, conflict, dialogue and structure while developing ideas and beginning a scene of their own. No previous playwriting experience is required.

***Led by Matthew Heiti.***

### The Sweet Plot: Romance & Pastries
### 11:15 AM- 12:15 PM (Studio)

Join Uzma Jalaluddin, Jessica Cunsolo and Delaney Gervais of Evermore Cafe & Bookshop, moderated by Victoria Brock of House of Fae, for coffee, pastries and a conversation about writing and reading romance. They'll talk meet-cutes, messy characters, favourite tropes and what goes into creating a satisfying happily ever after.

***Featuring Uzma Jalaluddin, Jessica Cunsolo, Delaney Gervais and Victoria Brock.***

*Thank You*

# 2026 PRINT SPONSOR




BookPrinter.ca

# SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17TH

**Lunch & Learn: *How 29 Local Businesses Funded a Poetry Anthology***

### 12:20-12:40 PM (La Zone)

Bring a packed lunch and join Alexia Cousineau to hear how Local Matter brought together 29 Sudbury businesses and local poets to create a community-funded anthology celebrating the places that make up our city.

### Northern Exposure: Local Lit for your TBR!
### 12:45-1:45 PM (Studio)

Meet five Northern Ontario writers working across genres in this celebration of local storytelling.

***Featuring Adam Mardero, Mat Del Papa, Tamsin Sheridan, Blaine Thornton, Holly Gutwillinger and moderated by Scott Overton.***

### Sensory Drop-In Space
### 1:00-3:00 PM (La Zone)

Step into La Zone for a quieter place to pause during the festival. Sit, recharge, take a break from the crowd or read. Come and go at any time throughout the afternoon.

***Presented in collaboration with Sudbury Fierté Pride and the Greater Sudbury Public Library.***



### There's More to the Story: *Secrets and Suspense*
### 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (Studio)

Mysteries, secrets and suspense take centre stage in this session, from Northern Ontario back roads to close-knit neighbourhoods, with small-town crimes, amateur sleuths, haunted histories and familiar places where danger finds its way in.

***Featuring John Degen, Matthew Heiti, Elizabeth Urso, Uzma Jalaluddin and Liisa Kovala.***

# SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17TH

### BOOK LAUNCH
### 3:00-5:00 PM (La Zone)

Join **Éditions Prise de parole** for a special festival book launch of La nostalgie du Nil, by Melchior Mbonimpa,

### Compassion Is the Story
### 3:15 PM-4:15 PM (Studio)

Join these authors in a conversation about writing through uncertainty, grief and change, exploring community, resistance, the search for home and what stories can offer us in difficult times.

***Featuring Maggie Helwig, Lauren Carter, Kim Echlin, moderated by Kim Fahner.***

### Antonio Michael Downing in Conversation with Jonathan Pinto
### 4:30 PM-5:30 PM (Studio)

Join writer, musician and CBC host Antonio Michael Downing in conversation with fellow CBC host Jonathan Pinto about family, identity and belonging. Centred on his debut novel, Black Cherokee, Downing will discuss the histories and experiences that shape his work across fiction, memoir, music and radio.

***Featuring Antonio Michael Downing and Jonathan Pinto***

### Festival Closing
### 5:30 PM-6:00 PM (Studio)

Join us as we close the 13th edition of Wordstock Sudbury Literary Festival.

DOWNTOWN
SUDBURY
CUE THE GOOD STUFF

Proud supporter of Wordstock Sudbury.



705-566-2931
WWW.SUDBURYCU.COM
Sudbury Credit Union
Community Banking Services

# 2026 Featured Guests



**Victoria Brock** is a local performing artist who has worked on and off with YES Theatre since 2011, is a core member of the “Sudbury Burlesque" troupe, has played in local bands, teaches at Pole Camp and is the owner of Please Cheeze Me. Most recently she has co-founded House of Fae Events to bring romantasy readers together and create more magic here in Sudbury! She’s a slow reader who appreciates a slow burn.



**Lauren Carter** is the author of six books, including the 2025 Quill & Quire Notable Book The Longest Night. Her novel This Has Nothing To Do With You won the Margaret Laurence Award for Fiction, and her collection Places Like These was a 2023 INDIES Book of the Year finalist. She also runs Wild Ground Writing Retreats in Manitoba.



**Alexia Cousineau** she/her) is a queer Franco-Ontarian multidisciplinary artist and poet from Timmins. A former Wordstock Sudbury slam winner, her work has appeared in The Literary Review of Canada, Sulphur Literary Journal, and Alocasia. She is the editor of Local Matter: an anthology of poetry (Anaphore, 2026) and creative director of Anaphore.



**Jessica Cunsolo**’s young adult series, With Me, has amassed over 215 million reads on Wattpad since she posted her first story, She’s With Me, on the platform in 2015. It has been published in multiple languages and is in development with Wattpad WEBTOON studios. Jessica lives just outside of Toronto, where she enjoys the outdoors and transforming her real-life awkward situations into plotlines for her viral stories.

# 2026 Featured Guests



**Roger Dallaire** is a musician and storyteller from St-Paul, Alberta, rooted in the province's francophone community. Trained in physical theatre in Toronto, he has performed in more than twenty stage productions and written and directed numerous works. He has toured Western Canada, including as part of the duo Tradbadours with Daniel Gervais, and has contributed for over a decade to Edmonton's Flying Canoë Volant festival. His work celebrates francophone storytelling, music, heritage, and the traditions that continue to connect communities across generations.



**John Degen** is a poet and novelist with four published books. His debut novel, The Uninvited Guest, was shortlisted for the 2006 Amazon.ca First Novel Award, and his essays have appeared in Publishers Weekly, The Globe and Mail, The Toronto Star, and the Literary Review of Canada. He is CEO of The Writers' Union of Canada and Chair of the International Authors Forum. His latest novel, Seldom Seen Road, was published by Latitude 46 in 2026. He lives, works, and swims (six months of the year) on the north shore of Lake Huron.



**Matthew Del Papa** was born and raised in Capreol, Ontario and studied English Literature and Humanities at Laurentian University. A member of the Sudbury Writers' Guild, he has self-published more than a dozen hyper-local titles and contributed to Nothing Without Us Too, MIGHTY: An Anthology of Disabled Superheroes, and SWG: Unearthed. He wrote JERRY LEWIS TOLD ME I WAS GOING TO DIE (Latitude 46 Publishing, 2023) and co-edited SUPERCANUCKS: An Anthology of Canadian Small-town Superheroes (Latitude 46 Publishing, 2026) alongside Andy W. Taylor.



**Antonio Michael Downing** is the author of the acclaimed memoir Saga Boy, called by Giller winner Ian Williams, "the triumph of Blackness everywhere." Black Cherokee, his novel, was a finalist for the 2026 Amazon First Novel Award. He is also the host of the CBC Radio program The Next Chapter where he interviews readers and authors. He spends his time writing books, singing songs, and trying to make his grandma proud.

# INTERACTIVE POETRY INSTALLATIONS



**Find the three interactive poetry typewriters located throughout the festival and type a few lines!**

**Head to the back of the Studio and make your own poem at the giant magnetic poetry station.**

***presented by Anaphore Artist Collective.***

ANAPHORE

# 2026 Featured Guests



**Kim Echlin i**s a Canadian novelist, translator, editor and teacher. She has written five novels. The Disappeared is translated into 20 languages and won the Barnes and Noble New Writing Award. Speak, Silence, about the International Criminal Court, won the City of Toronto Book award. Her coming novel is about the first poet in Mesopotamia to sign her own name to her poetry and to stand up against empire. Her nonfiction focuses on social justice, women's voices and freedom of expression. She has won the CBC Nonfiction Award and the Dalton Camp Award. Her new collection of essays, Tell Others, reflects on literature and witness.



**Kim Fahner** lives and writes in Sudbury. Her most recent books include The Pollination Field (Turnstone Press, 2025) and The Donoghue Girl (Latitude 46, 2024). Kim is the Chair of The Writers' Union of Canada (TWUC) and a past Poet Laureate for The City of Greater Sudbury (2016-18). She won 2nd place in the 2025 Northwestern Ontario Writers' Workshop Essay Contest, 1st place for The Ampersand Review's 2024 Essay Contest, and was shortlisted for the The Fiddlehead's 2023 Ralph Gustafson Poetry Contest.



**Delaney Gervais** is the owner of Evermore Cafe & Bookshop, a lifelong avid reader with nearly 15 years of experience in customer service. After years of dreaming, planning, and preparing, she decided to bring her vision of a cozy, welcoming community space to life. Evermore will offer a simple café menu, a large selection of new and used romance novels, and a dedicated space to showcase local artisans.

SUDBURY WRITERS' GUILD
EST. 1992
Write Where You Belong

# 2026 Featured Guests



**Holly Gutwillinger** is an author, podcaster, and proud resident of Chelmsford Ontario town where the snow falls sideways and the dogs run the show. Holly has a knack for turning life's heaviest stuff — grief, healing, starting over — into stories that somehow still make you smile, mostly thanks to the rescue dogs trotting through every page, muddy paws and all.



**Matthew Heiti** Born in this crater, Matthew is a writer and teacher. His first novel, The City Still Breathing (Coach House Books) was awarded a place in Project Bookmark, and the follow-up, One Soft Infested Summer, has just been published with Latitude 46. His short stories have won distinctions, including the Carter V. Cooper Emerging Writer award and Grain Magazine's short fiction prize. As a theatre maker, his plays have been produced with festivals and theatres across Canada, including Mucking in the Drift, Aéroportée, and Receiver of Wreck.



**Maggie Helwig** (they/she) is a white settler in Tkaronto/Toronto, and the author of seventeen books and chapbooks, including Girls Fall Down (Coach House Books 2008), shortlisted for the Toronto Book Award and chosen as the One Book Toronto in 2012; Encampment: Resistance, Grace and an Unhoused Community (Coach House Books, 2025), which won the 2025 Toronto Book Award and the 2026 Shaughnessy Cohen Prize for Political Writing; and Instructions for the End of the World (Coach House Books 2026). Helwig is an Anglican priest and social justice activist.



**Uzma Jalaluddin** is the author of two mystery novels, Moonlight Murder (2026) and Detective Aunty (2025), featuring Kausar Khan, a South Asian Miss Marple, as well as six romance novels, including Ayesha at Last and Three Holidays and a Wedding (2023), co-written with Marissa Stapley. Many of her books have been optioned for film and television, and her work has appeared on "Best of" lists in The Globe and Mail, Publisher's Weekly, and The Washington Post. She lives outside Toronto with her husband and two sons.

YWCA SUDBURY | A TURNING POINT FOR WOMEN | UN POINT TOURNANT POUR LES FEMMES

ywcasubdury.ca

LEAF FAEJ | WOMEN'S LEGAL EDUCATION & ACTION FUND | FONDS D'ACTION ET D'ÉDUCATION JURIDIQUE POUR LES FEMMES

leaf.ca/branch/leaf-sudbury/

Join us for the Sudbury book launch of:

# SHE RAN

## with author Ann Rauhala



November 5, 7:00 pm
All Nations Church
414 St Raphael St.




- Fireside Chat
- Reception
- Book Sales & Signing

Sudbury author Ann Rauhala shares the story behind ***She Ran***, a part memoir and part investigative journalism, inspired by the 1975 murder of Sudbury resident Donna Evoy by her ex-boyfriend.

$20/Ticket
In-person & Virtual

**Tickets available at**
Adoro Oils & Vinegars, 1984 Regent St., Suite 11
Amici, 863 Barry Downe Rd
Long Lake General Store, 4644 Long Lake Rd
Eventbrite, search "*Sudbury book launch of She Ran*"

**Thank you to our sponsors!**

Miller Maki LLP.

Liz Spooner-Young & ASSOCIATES REMAX CROWN REALTY INC.

ECW Press

ALL NATIONS CHURCH

Journal Printing

# 2026 Featured Guests



**Liisa Kovala** is an award-winning Finnish-Canadian author, Author Accelerator certified fiction and memoir book coach, and host of the Women Writing podcast. She is the author of Like Water for Weary Souls (House of Karhu, 2025), Sisu's Winter War (Latitude 46, 2022) and Surviving Stutthof: My Father's Memories Behind the Death Gate (Latitude 46, 2017). She also writes the Hygge House Nordic Cozy Mystery series under the pen name A. L. Jensen. Liisa is inspired by her Finnish heritage and the northern landscape she calls home.



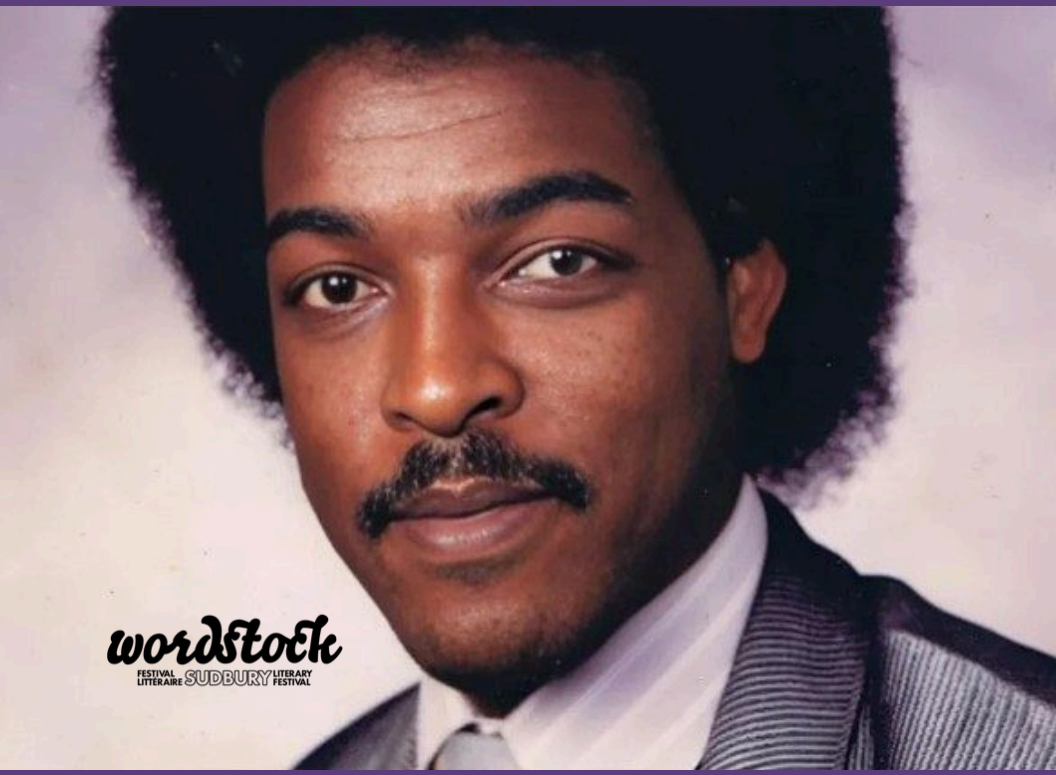
**Connor Lafortune** is a queer Anishinaabek storyteller from Dokis First Nation. He uses his understanding of the world to shape his creations as a writer, poet, and performer. His words merge academic thought with poetic prose to name the historical boundaries of Indigenous joy while building the world he hopes to experience. In 2023, he released a single with G.R. Gritt titled Qui crie au loup? In 2025, he co-released A Thousand Tiny Awakenings, a youth anthology and Can You Feel It Now? a poetic short film on Black and Indigenous resilience.



**Adam Mardero** has been fascinated by the stars for as long as he can remember, and over the years it has led him to develop a deep appreciation for astronomy and science fiction. This love, in turn, inspired him to become a fiercely outspoken advocate for the rights of LGBTQ and neurodivergent people, among his many other causes. Adam lives and writes in Sudbury, Ontario, Canada. His previous book, Uncommon Sense: an Autistic Journey, was published in 2021 by Latitude 46 Publishing.



**Lindsay Mayhew** is an interdisciplinary spoken word poet from Sudbury, Ontario. She and Connor Lafortune are the co-editors of A Thousand Tiny Awakenings (Latitude 46 Publishing, 2025). Lindsay is the runner up of the 2026 Spoken Word Award by the League of Canadian Poets. She has performed on stages across North America, including in Baltimore, Vancouver, Montreal, and across Ontario. Lindsay is also a seasoned slam competitor, placing as a runner up in the 2025 Canadian Individual Poetry Slam. Her work has appeared in The Literary Review of Canada, Prairie Fire, Orbital Studies Magazine, Button Poetry, and more.




# THE EMPTY CHAIR

LOCATED IN LA ZONE

# Dawit Isaak

journalist, playwright and poet
imprisoned in Eritrea for 25 years

PEN

# THE EMPTY CHAIR

## LOCATED IN LA ZONE

**You will notice a particular chair in La Zone during the festival. It is part of PEN Canada's Empty Chair campaign, which shares the life and work of a writer or journalist who has been threatened, targeted or imprisoned for peaceful dissent, often at great personal cost.**

**This year, the chair honours Dawit Isaak and 12 imprisoned Eritrean writers. Isaak is an award-winning journalist, playwright and poet who has been imprisoned for 25 years as of this September.**

**The Empty Chair asks us to remember writers whose freedom to speak, write and share their work has been taken away.**

# Dawit Isaak



# 2026 Featured Guests



**Scott Overton** A radio broadcaster for more than thirty years, Scott Overton described that world in his first novel, the mystery/thriller Dead Air, published by Scrivener Press. Dead Air was shortlisted for a Northern Lit Award in Ontario. But the rest of his writing is science fiction and fantasy, comprising seven novels and one collection of short fiction. His short stories have also been published in numerous magazines and anthologies across North America.Now a freelance author and voice talent, Scott works from his home on a lake in Northern Ontario.



**Tyler Pennock** author of Bones (2020), and Blood (2022) is a two-spirit adoptee queerdo from Faust, Alberta, and is a member of Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation. They teach in the Centre for Indigenous Studies at the University of Toronto and were the Inaugural Indigenous FASS Artist-in-Residence at Carleton University (2023). Their third book, Skin (Brick Books) will be released on October 6th.



**Charlie Petch** (they/he) is a disabled & transmasculine multidisciplinary artist. Their debut poetry collection, Why I Was Late (Brick Books), won the 2022 ReLit Award and was named "Best of 2021" by The Walrus. Petch received a Golden Beret Spoken Word Prize from the League of Canadian Poets. Their latest poetry book, Infinite Audition (Brick Books), was launched in 2025. They founded "Hot Damn it's a Queer Slam" and have worked in spoken word organizing and curation since 2011.



**Jonathan Pinto** is the host of Up North, CBC Radio One's regional afternoon show for northern Ontario and is based in Sudbury. He was formerly a reporter and an associate producer at CBC Windsor & CBC Toronto.

wordstock
FESTIVAL LITTÉRAIRE SUDBURY LITERARY FESTIVAL

Place des Arts
du Grand Sudbury

27 Larch street

# ANNUAL WORDSTOCK SUDBURY POETRY SLAM

PWYC!

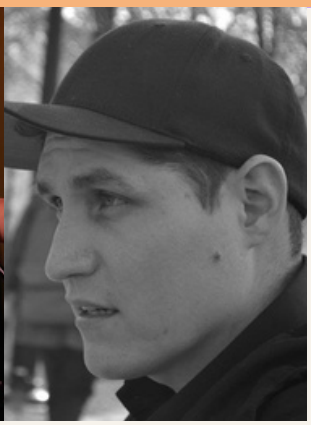
## FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2026 9:00 PM- 11:00 PM



Charlie Petch
FEATURE POET



Lindsay Mayhew
HOST



Tyler Pennock
FEATURE POET

Poets perform original work in timed rounds, with no props, costumes or musical accompaniment with the chance to win a cash prize.

poets.ca
League of Canadian Poets

***Stop by The Margin's table to grab their latest journal!***

Laurentian University
Université Laurentienne

The Margin
LITERARY JOURNAL

*Stop by The Margin's table to grab their latest journal!*

# 2026 Featured Guests



**Jessica Pope** is a former staff journalist with CBC News in Sudbury. She still covers stories from across northeastern Ontario as a producer, reporter and current affairs radio host. She holds degrees in English Literature (University of Ottawa, '06) and Journalism (University of King's College, '10), and enjoyed a brief academic foray into midwifery. Her favourite authors are David Adams Richards, Miriam Toews and Claire Keegan. When they were handing out luck in life, Jess got seconds.



**Tamsin Sheridan** is a film industry professional and screenwriter. Born and raised in Sudbury, Ontario she was part of the inaugural class of the Performing Arts program at Sudbury Secondary School. Currently, she is at work on her sixth novel, a fantasy rom-com with a murder mystery sub-plot.



**Blaine Thornton** is a non-binary community-based artist and founder of Mooncrater Theatre in Sudbury, Ontario. They are a typewriter poet, book binder, theatre maker, and installation artist. They are a graduate of Ontario College of Art & Design University (OCAD U), and the recipient of the 2023 Creative Writing Medal. Their book, Here's to Letting Go, weaves through memories of the street and what it means to be Home.They were the managing editor for the first edition of Pulse Literary Journal (2022). Their work has been published in Pulse Literary Journal (2023 & 2024) and A Thousand Tiny Awakenings (Latitude 46, 2025). Their installations have been exhibited at Up Here Music Festival (2024), Sudbury Nuit Blanche (2024), Sudbury Indie Cinema (2024), OCAD U (2023)

Finnia
CHOCOLATE AND CACAO

## STOREFRONT OPENING SOON



# Evermore

cafe • bookshop

**lattes • love stories • local artisans**

## Wordstock

October 16th- 17th • Place des Arts du Grand Sudbury

## Sudbury Literary Market

Sunday October 18th • Falconbridge Community Center

**For more information:**

evermore_greatersudbury
inquiries@evermoregreatersudbury.com
www.evermoregreatersudbury.com

# 2026 Featured Guests



**Alex Tétrault** (he/him) is a bilingual theatre creator, writer, and arts advocate born and raised in N'Swakamok (Sudbury). He's been heavily involved in Greater Sudbury's and Ontario's francophone arts & culture sector for the better part of a decade. His first play, Nickel City Fifs (2024, Éditions Prise de parole), was a finalist for the Prix Champlain and Prix Trillium, winning a Prix Émergence. Alex currently serves as the City of Greater Sudbury's Poet Laureate and Executive & Artistic Director of the Salon du livre du Grand Sudbury.



**Elizabeth Urso** is a graduate of Laurentian University, the University of New Brunswick Faculty of Law, and the Humber School for Writers. Born and raised in Sudbury, Ontario, she now lives wherever her partner—an Infantry Officer in the Canadian Armed Forces—is posted, along with their dog Harriet (the Spy). Hail Mary is her debut novel.

LACROIX
LAWYERS | AVOCATS

# Thank You

## Festival Partners

GREATER SUDBURY PUBLIC LIBRARY
BIBLIOTHÈQUE PUBLIQUE DU GRAND SUDBURY

DOWNTOWN SUDBURY
CUE THE GOOD STUFF

cion

DEPUIS 1972

Radisson

SALON DU LIVRE GRAND SUDBURY

ANAPHORE

Shanon StewART
www.shanonstewart.com

prise de parole

BOOKS AND BEANS

Biindigen N'Swakamok Apiitenim

Fierté Sudbury Pride

# Thank You

## Our Funders

Greater Sudbury

ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO
an Ontario government agency
un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

Ontario

poets.ca
League of Canadian Poets

nohfc
An Agency of the Government of Ontario

# Thank You

## Event Sponsors

Financial Decisions .ca Inc.
(705) 525-PLAN (7526)
1546 Bellevue Ave, Sudbury ON P3B 3G2

## Publisher Sponsors

Rotary Club of Sudbury

Laurentian University
Université Laurentienne

## Bookmark Sponsors

LACROIX
LAWYERS | AVOCATS

LOUISE ELLS

## Best Seller Sponsors

Sudbury Credit Union

Manitoulin TRANSPORT

GLENCORE

## Poet Sponsors

KIM FAHNER

Sudbury Writers' Guild
Write Where You Belong

BAY USED BOOKS

OJ Graphix Inc

# Thank you to this year's Festival Donors!

**BESTSELLER**
**$1,000+**

Demetra Christakos

**POET**
**$500–$999**

Kim Fahner

**STORYTELLER**
**$100–$250**

Rosanna Micelotta Battigelli
Nancy Daoust
Janet Gasparini
Roger Nash

**LITERARY SUPPORTERS**

Fermata Press | Rebecca Wood Barrett | Sandy Cameron
Mary Ann Corbiere |Farzana Doctor | Janet MacKenzie
Victoria Lucas | Melanie Marttila | Pamela McLaughlin
Judi Straughan | Jennifer Trainor

# Thank you to this year's Festival Donors!

In recognition of the City of Greater Sudbury Poets Laureate, past and present, for their collective donation to Wordstock Sudbury Literary Festival.

**Roger Nash**
**Daniel Aubin**
**Tom Leduc**
**Kim Fahner**
**Chloé LaDuchesse**
**Vera Constantineau**
**Kyla Heyming**
**Alex Tétreault**

Thank you for your contributions to arts and culture in our city!



# SUPPORT THE FESTIVAL

You can be a part of Wordstock Sudbury Literary Festival's year-round work to ensure Northern Ontario has a vibrant and growing literary arts community.

**Here's how you can give:**

1. Online: Visit www.wordstocksudbury.ca and click "Donate" (receipt available)
2. E-Transfer: info@wordstocksudbury.ca
3. By Cheque: Mail your donation to Wordstock Sudbury Literary Festival, P.O. Box 994, Coniston, ON P0M 1M0.

**Questions?**
Contact: info@wordstocksudbury.ca

**With your support, we can do so much more.**

**Thank You!**



# wordstock

FESTIVAL LITTÉRAIRE SUDBURY LITERARY FESTIVAL

FOR READERS,
WRITERS AND
LOVERS OF WORDS.



@WORDSTOCKSUDBURY

WORDSTOCKSUDBURY.CA