

Vancouver Writers Fest: Proposed Board Slate 2023

Andie Bjornsfelt

Andie loves books and the Writers Fest. She brings experience working in publishing and bookselling, as well as working in the non-profit world. Her degree is in communications. She has experience in early childhood education, and training in multiple forms of accessibility.

Alison Broddle

Alison has spent the last several decades working for the CBC, first in Vancouver, then in Toronto. She's delighted to have recently returned to Vancouver in her role as Senior Director of Current Affairs and Investigative, where she oversees network radio programming including special projects focused on reconciliation as well as climate change. She's been in charge of implementing diversity and inclusion practices at the CBC, and takes pride in the innovative programming she's developed over the years.

Alison is also a tremendous reader, former Festival fanatic, and served an extremely brief term as Board Chair of the VWF before her move to Toronto. She's glad to be back, and to have the opportunity to rejoin the Board where she's eager to learn what's changed, and support the organization where it is now.

Pat Cumming

Prior to retiring in 2021, Pat had a 40 year career working in school, government, academic and public libraries. In her last position as Head of Customer and Community Experience at West Vancouver Memorial Library, she had the opportunity to build community partnerships with Indigenous and newcomer groups, as well as climate organizations to deliver unique, educational programming to library patrons. As a Director of the BC Library Association Board she participated in strategic planning and conference organization. Along with her book club, she brought the Read for the Cure cancer fundraiser to Vancouver in 2013 and has been instrumental in planning and coordinating the event for 10 years.

Her passion for reading and literature began at an early age. She has been an avid supporter of the Vancouver Writers Fest for many years, maintaining a membership and attending as many events as possible. She belongs to two book clubs that have both been together for more than 20 years.

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writersfest.bc.ca

Jaiden Dembo

Jaiden Dembo (She/Her) is a marketing and publicity professional who is deeply passionate about social and environmental justice. After attending Simon Fraser University's Masters of Publishing program, she worked as a publicist and subsequently the Marketing and Publicity Manager at award-winning social justice publisher Arsenal Pulp Press. After having spent over five years in the publishing industry, Jaiden shifted to a career in renewable energy to aid in the necessary transition away from fossil fuels with her current position as a Digital Communications Coordinator at BC Hydro. She believes that storytelling in its many forms has been and always will be a crucial part of achieving an equitable and just future.

Benita Loughlin

Benita is a Chartered Professional Accountant with a fellowship designation (FCPA) and was a tax partner at KPMG in Vancouver until she retired on September 30, 2022. She was a cross-border tax specialist with a focus on Canadian and US tax and estate planning for individuals. She spent 36 amazing years at KPMG.

Benita is an avid reader and has been a member of the Binding Book Club since it was founded in 1989. She has kept a list of all the books read over the years. Supporting local books stores in Vancouver, Whistler, Victoria and Revelstoke is important to her. Benita recently joined the board of Coast Mental Health and also volunteers with the Chartered Professional Accountants of BC. From 2014 to 2020 she was on the executive of the Estate Planning Council of Vancouver and also a KPMG Canada Board Director.

Steve Tomes

Steve works at SFU's Vancity Office of Community Engagement where he coordinates events both large and small, including working as a data specialist for NexTech AR Solutions, an Augmented Reality company that organizes virtual events. Through this role, he has cultivated a passion for data and analytics -- skills he's eager to bring to the Writers Fest. Additionally, he's served as Chair of the Social Planning Advisory Committee as well as the Advisory Planning Commission for North Vancouver, building strong working relationships with internal and external partners, including municipal staff, elected officials, committee members, non-profit organizations, and the public. He's the co-founder of a workers cooperative that conducts demographic research, supports organizational change, and offers workshops to create an environment where differences are valued through a culture of care.



This has included facilitating workshops for the City of Vancouver regarding anti-oppression, decolonization, disability justice, equity in organizational operations, unconscious bias.

Caroline White

Caroline is passionate about reading and social justice -- seeing the two as going hand in hand. She has respected the inherently precarious nature of words, books, authors, libraries, independent bookstores and thus their critical importance. Caroline believes that there is a book, graphic novel, cartoon, for everyone. It's just finding the right connection. Which is why equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is imperative in all forms of publishing, libraries, bookstores and related events and festivals. Caroline has worked for the Centre for Leadership and Centre for Counselling and Community Safety, School of Health, Community and Social Justice and the Justice Institute of British Columbia. She brings a wealth of experience and expertise in diversity, equity, and inclusion, and is deeply committed to supporting efforts to move forward in a good way.

Sonia Wong

As the president and founder of Hotfusion Communications Inc., Sonia has over two decades of experience working with enterprise software and cloud companies. She has deep expertise in strategic planning, integrated marketing, and event marketing and management for some of the world's most successful technology companies. Through leading marketing strategy and messaging for clients such as Google Cloud, SAP, Atlassian, and Microsoft, she is continuously learning about new technologies that are changing our world. She believes human creativity is the foundation of innovation and that connecting people to books and ideas has the power to shape our world. As a lifelong reader, Sonia is particularly passionate about building opportunities to extend the transformative power of books to children and underserved communities.

Returning Board Members (no affirmation required)

Michelle Blackwell

Kyla Epstein

Allison Felker

Karen Gilmore

Julie Iannacone

Alexia Jones