



Write by the Rails  
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## BRIEF HISTORY OF WRITE BY THE RAILS AUGUST 2011 – AUGUST 2018

Write by the Rails (WbtR) aims to raise the profile of the local literary community and explore ways we can nurture, cultivate and help the writing community grow. The area's longest-running literary group with a statewide affiliation, Write by the Rails is the Prince William area chapter of the nonprofit Virginia Writers Club which celebrated 100 years in 2018. Here are a few of our accomplishments since our launch at Okra's Cajun Creole in Manassas, VA August 8, 2011.

- Write by the Rails has encouraged and assisted members in getting over fifty books published since 2011;
- Holds monthly meetings to encourage local writers in their craft. Meetings are announced on our Community Public Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/WritebytheRails/groups>. as well as in our e-newsletter to members and private group face book page;
- Chapter members network through daily posts in a Closed Private Facebook group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Writebytherails>, members request to be part of this page;
- Became the Prince William Chapter of the Virginia Writers Club;
- Published an anthology, *New Departures*, by Write by the Rails members;
- Published second anthology, *No Additional Postage Necessary*, by participants at Rising Writers Workshop;
- Created and distributed an information brochure;
- Created a website <https://wbtr.org>;
- Worked with local schools to promote writing;
- Conducted readings, discussions and book signings at the Arts Alive! festival sponsored by the Prince William Arts Council;
- Hosted a "How to Market Your Book" panel discussion with local, experienced authors;
- Rising Writers Workshop, a one-day workshop for teens and adults, partnering with Woodbridge High School's CFPA Creative Writers Program and educators June Forte, Cathy Hailey, Garrett Carlson, John Dutton and Robert Scott (2014-to present);
- Fall for the Book's Haute Cuisine at the Hylton event, an evening event focusing on books and local food, partnering with George Mason University (2013-2015);
- Writer's Workshops have been held four times since our inception. The next one is scheduled for October 27, 2018 from 9 am to 1 pm at Trinity Episcopal Church. Information can be found on our website;
- Members participated in book sales, signings and readings at Prospero's Books, Richard McKay's Used Books, Barnes & Noble, The Manassas Museum, Books-A-Million and 2nd and Charles, as well as the Mill Street Studio in Occoquan, and Staples and J.E. Rice Tru Value Hardware in Manassas. Members hosted their book launches at Giuseppe's Ristorante Italiano (Desiderio's), Merchant Gallery at the Candy Factory Lion & Bull, McKay's Used Books and Manassas Baptist Church;
- Members contributed articles on local authors, books and literary projects in media, including Prince William Living and Haymarket Lifestyle magazines; PotomacLocal.com and BristowBeat.com; Southern Writers magazine.

## SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

- We started a Social Media Campaign #BackonTrackNow promoting writing by having folks write a short poem, 9 word-memoir or Twitter-friendly blurb of creative non-fiction. The work is uploaded to our form at [www.WbtrBackOnTrackNow.org](http://www.WbtrBackOnTrackNow.org). We will be publishing an anthology with selected works from this project.
- Members maintain a website, <https://wbtr.org>
- Twitter presence, @writebytherails
- Facebook community page <https://www.facebook.com/WritebytheRails>;
- Email at [writebytherails@gmail.com](mailto:writebytherails@gmail.com),
- We have held Write by the Rails member Blog Tours to promote our various authors

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- We represent the chapter as paid members of the Interservice Club Council of Manassas (ISCC-Manassas.org), the Prince William County Arts Council (pwcartsCouncil.org) and the Prince William Chamber of Commerce (pwchamber.org).
- We regularly have members participate in 1<sup>st</sup> Friday in Old Town Manassas.
- We have Local Author's sections at Prospero's Books in Old Town Manassas where books can be purchased.
- We have a Local Author's section in Makay Used Books in Manassas as well.
- Members donated books to fundraisers for the American Red Cross and Rainbow Riding Center, and donated books to stock the Little Free Libraries and the library at the Bull Run Warrior Retreat for wounded service members and their families.

## CREATION OF SUSTAINABLE LITERARY WRITING PROJECTS

- In 2014 Write by the Rails launched the Prince William Poet Laureate Program working with the PWC Arts Council, Tackett's Mill and the Clearwater Foundation. In 2014 two Poets Laureate were named to a two-year term: Robert and Alexandria "Zan" Hailey. In 2016 Kathy Smaltz was named Poet Laureate for 2016-2018. All three have a visible presence throughout Prince William County and Poetry Society of Virginia events.
- Write by the Rails was instrumental in the launch of Spilled Ink hosted by John Dutton. Spilled Ink is now held at Jirani Coffee House every fourth Friday of the month from 7:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. Spilled Ink is an open mic night that celebrates the written word.

## PROMOTION OF OTHER LITERARY EFFORTS

- Book Talks by historians at the Manassas Museum
- Open mic nights by Piedmont Writers in Haymarket and Spirit & Lyrics in Manassas Park
- PWC Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority's annual Red Carpet Event in Manassas Park or Woodbridge (alternating years)
- Book Lover's Bazaar at Tackett's Mill Lakeside
- Memoir Writers, Writers of Adult Lit and Writers of Children's Lit, which meet at Bull Run Regional Library, as well as other genre groups (screenwriting, speculative fiction, romance)
- The National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo) regional group that meets weekly at Barnes & Noble or Panera in Manassas
- Visiting writers at Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA), such as "An Evening with Sonia Sanchez"
- Robert Bausch's annual Woodbridge Writers' Retreat
- Mary Winsky's workshop for older writers through the Lifelong Learning Institute-Manassas.
- George Mason University's Northern Virginia Writing Project for educators
- George Mason University's week-long annual Fall for the Book Festival at locations throughout Northern Virginia
- Free Little Library project

## AWARDS

- Seefeldt Arts Excellence Pioneer Award, Cindy Brookshire, Prince William County Arts Council, 2012
- Special Achievement Award, Cindy Brookshire, Virginia Writers Club, 2013
- Lily Foundation Grant, Highlights Foundation Workshop, Chautauqua, NY, Stuart Schadt, 2013
- Outstanding Chapter of the Year, Write by the Rails, Virginia Writers Club, 2014
- Best Writer in Prince William County (Virginia) by readers of Prince William Today, Dan Verner, 2014
- State-wide Virginia Writers Club Golden Nib awards, 2015