

NSLA CONFERENCE 2026



making connections

September 18–20 2026 in Pictou

What is where?



The 2026 NSLA Conference will take place in the deCoste Culture Hub, 99 Water Street, Pictou.



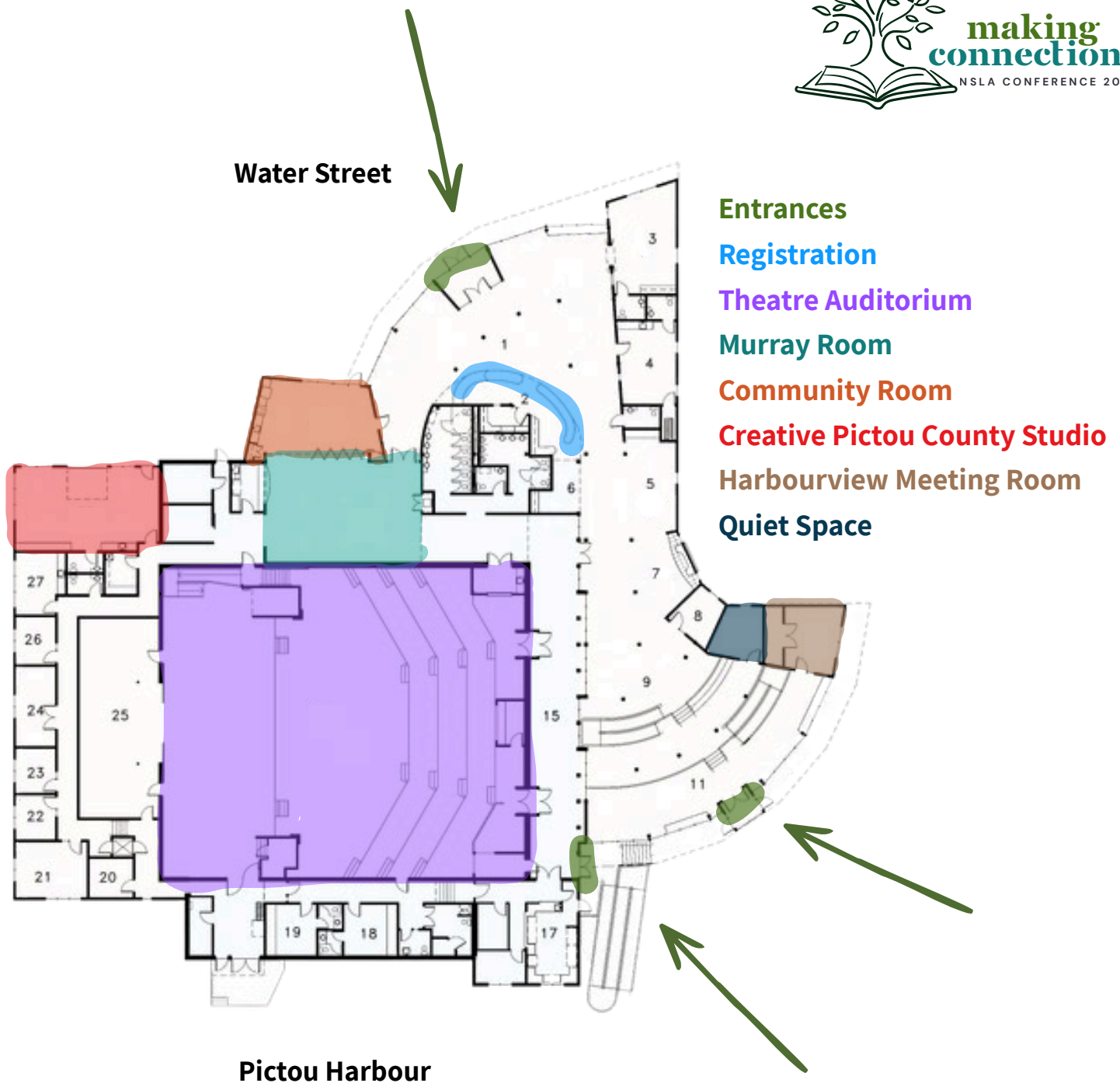
photo credit: Gerry Farrell

Entrances:

There are two main entrances to the Library: the front doors on Water Street will lead you directly to the library circulation desk (shared with the deCoste Theatre box office). If you enter via the rear entrance in the harbourside parking lot, it's a longer walk, but still a straight walk up to the circulation desk.

Parking:

There is free street parking, and two free parking lots for the Culture Hub: one behind the building (harbourside, on the waterfront), and one on the right side of the building.



Meals:

All meals and nutrition breaks will be served either in the Murray Room or in the Theatre Auditorium. If you have any allergies or other food restrictions, please let us know!

Restrooms:

All washrooms in the Pictou Library are single-occupancy & gender-neutral. Gendered washroom facilities are available elsewhere in the Hub.

Accessibility



Please let us know as soon as possible if you require any accessibility support. We are able to provide:

- **ASL interpreters**
- **Hearing assistive technology**
- **Transportation within the Town of Pictou and to/from Pictou Lodge.**

If you need any other accommodations, please get in touch with Jes (he/him):

jdavey@parl.ns.ca

phone number (text or call) 902-754-1041

If you need assistance in the moment, please let a staff member know.

- **Pictou Branch Phone: 902-485-5021**
- **Library HQ: 902-755-6031**

Friday, 18 September



1:00pm - 6:00pm Registration

1:30pm - 4:00pm Pre-Conference Sessions

- **The RADD: Readers' Advisory Divas & Dudes**
Theatre Auditorium & Virtual
- **Quilts, Community, and Culture: A Trunk Show**
Creative Pictou County Studio
- **NS Walks, Inclusive Walks Matter**
Harbourview Meeting Room

4:30pm - 6:00pm NSLA Board Meeting
Community Room

6:30pm - 8:30pm Meet and Greet/ Opening Reception
Murray Room

The RADD:

Readers' Advisory Divas and Dudes

Friday, 18 September 1.30pm

Theatre Auditorium & Virtual

The Readers' Advisory Divas and Dudes (formerly known as the Dewey Divas and Dudes) came out of a program at Toronto Public Library in 2002: each spring and autumn they would invite half a dozen publishers to present the highlights of their list to librarians from across their entire system, usually between sixty-five and one hundred librarians. While all librarians know the obvious, commercially successful titles, there was an awareness of a need to know about hidden gems on a publisher's list: debut authors, books publishers were excited about, quiet bestsellers. The benefit of working together was clear right away: no library would pull their librarians together for a half-day event for only one publisher, but there is a huge advantage when between three and nine publishers can be represented all at once. Two of the publishers' library reps thought other systems might benefit from this kind of presentation as well, and the Readers' Advisory Divas and Dudes were born. They have since done presentations to libraries across the country from Vancouver to Halifax, both in-person and virtually, and each year present books to well over 2,000 Canadian librarians. All of the Readers' Advisory Divas and Dudes' lists are inclusive and diverse.

Rosalyn - Harper Collins

Krisztina - Scholastic

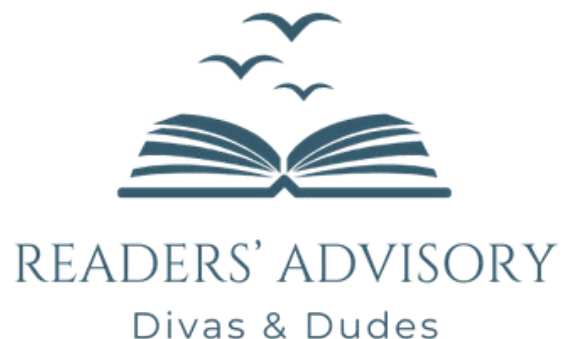
Laura - Orca

Roberta - Hornblower

Melody - PRH adult

Sam - PRH kids

Margot - Martin and Associates



Inclusive Walks Matter



Saturday, 18 September 1.30pm

Harbourview Meeting Room

This session will provide an overview of NS Walks and include a workshop on leading inclusive walks that are appropriate for most adults. We will discuss our volunteer walk leaders who lead these walks in communities and workplaces across the province. We will go on a short walk and talk about what makes a good walking route.

NS Walks was developed in 2021. Over the past five years, the program has reached communities large and small. NS Walks has been successful in bringing people together through walking. Libraries have been a key partner with us on this program. As key community hubs, our libraries are logical places where folks can walk to and from as well as find out what walks are available in their community.

Catherine originally hails from the Annapolis Valley. She graduated from Dal in 1988 with a Science degree in Health promotion. For the past 35 years, Catherine has been a health promotion/recreation practitioner in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Ontario. Catherine is passionate about physical activity and walkability and currently manages NS Walks, a province-wide walking program of Hike Nova Scotia which aims to increase the number of people enjoying the benefits of walking.



Quilts, Community, and Culture: A Trunk Show



Saturday, 18 September 1.30pm

Creative Pictou County Studio

Myla Borden was born in New Glasgow, and was taught quilting by her Aunt Frances, at a time when Borden was unable to find work as a recently graduated teacher.

She has been a keen quilt-maker ever since, and was co-founder of the Vale Quilters of New Glasgow, Nova Scotia's only Black quilting guild.



Saturday, 19 September



8:00am - 9:00am Breakfast

9:00am - 10:30am Keynote: Resilience and the New Roles of Libraries in Times of War, Yaroslava Soshynska
Theatre Auditorium & Virtual

10:30am - 11:00am Nutrition Break

11:00am - 12:00pm Session 1

- **Panel Discussion: Public Libraries and Population Health**
Theatre Auditorium & Virtual
- **Close-knit: Building Community Through Adult Craft**
Creative Pictou County Studio
- **Public & School Libraries**
location tbd

12:00pm - 1:15pm Lunch with Vendors
Murray Room

1:30pm - 4:00pm Poster Sessions
Murray Room & Gallery

Saturday, 19 September



1:30pm - 2:30pm Session 2

- **Accessibility in Action**
location tbd
- **How can medical and public libraries support each other?**
location tbd
- **Zine Making**

Creative Pictou County Studio

2:30pm-3:00pm Nutrition Break

3:00pm - 4:00pm Session 3

- **Slop! The Reality of Generative AI in Daily Life**
Theatre Auditorium & Virtual
- **Heritage Alive: A Living History Fair**
location tbd
- **Lessons Learned from a Large Event**
location tbd

6:0pm - 7:00pm Meet & Greet
Murray Room

7:00pm - 9:00pm Banquet
Theatre Auditorium

Keynote:

Resilience and the New Roles of Libraries in Times of War

Yaroslava Soshynska



Saturday, 19 September 9:00am

Theatre Auditorium & Virtual

Yaroslava Soshynska earned her PhD in History (specializing in Librarianship and Bibliography Science) in 1994. She brings more than 30 years of experience in research and teaching in the field of social communications, serving as an Associate Professor.

As Co-Founder (in 1995) and Executive Director (since 2009) of the Ukrainian Library Association, Yaroslava has led and implemented numerous initiatives and projects in collaboration with a broad range of national and international governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Yaroslava is the author of more than 160 scholarly articles, manuals, and online courses designed for university students and adult learners. Also, she is actively involved in professional development for librarians, educators, and cultural managers.



Panel Discussion:

Perspectives on Public Libraries and Population Health

Saturday, 19 September 11:00am

Theatre Auditorium & Virtual



Every day library staff see how their work impacts the health and well-being of their community members. But how do non-library practitioners view the role of public libraries in population health? This panel will feature Dr. Robert Strang, Chief Medical Officer of Health in Nova Scotia, Dr. Pat Craig, Chair of the Population Health Committee of the Aberdeen Health Foundation, and Dr. Christina Holmes, Professor of Health and Anthropology at St. Francis Xavier University.

Dr. Robert Strang is Chief Medical Officer of Health in Nova Scotia appointed in August 2007. As CMOH, he has provided leadership around the renewal of the public health system in NS as well as raising awareness around the importance of creating policies and environments that support better health for Nova Scotian families and communities. Dr. Strang has an adjunct appointment with Dalhousie University, Department of Community Health and Epidemiology.



Dr. Pat Craig is currently working as a GP in Oncology at the Aberdeen Hospital in New Glasgow. Previous to this, she practiced general family medicine in Pictou County for over 25 years. She has been on the board of directors for the Aberdeen Health Foundation since 2021, currently serving as chair of the population health committee. In her spare time, she enjoys playing euphonium with the Pictou County Brass and Reed band. She also enjoys biking, kayaking and camping. She lives in New Glasgow with her husband, David, and is the proud parent of 3 grown children, and Grandma to 4 beautiful grandchildren.

Dr. Christina Holmes is an anthropologist of science and technology and a medical anthropologist. She has done a range of research on the social implications of biotechnology and the post-genomics sciences, including medical genetic testing, genetically modified plants, and proteomic. Her recent projects are on public health governance and the science needs and uses of small farmers.



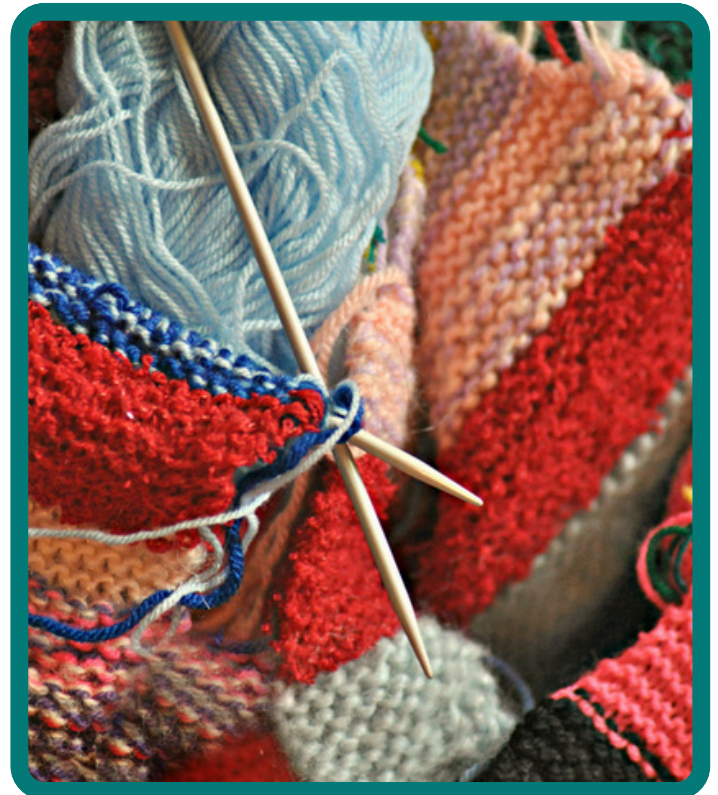
Close-knit: Building Community Through Stitching Circles and Adult Craft



Saturday, 19 September 11:00am

Creative Pictou County Studio

Libraries are often celebrated for their ability to bring people together in simple, yet powerful ways. Join us for a cozy conference session to learn and share about library knitting and stitching circles, as well as adult craft programs. Bring along a project to work on while we chat, or explore some of the materials from our craft basket. We will discuss how and why your library might benefit from getting a little craftier!



Elizabeth Glinz has facilitated stitching circles at PARL's People's Place: Antigonish Town and County Library for twelve years. She has engaged with participants from ages 5 through 95 to come together to knit, crochet, make friends, and support each other.

Collaborations Between Public and School Libraries



in Practice, and Future Possibilities

Saturday, 19 September 11:00am

location tbd.

As separate as they are in terms of organisational structure, school and public libraries have much in common and benefit from working together. We will show examples of past collaborations, as well as what we imagine has potential in the future.



Nicholas Hart is a Library Specialist working at two middle schools in Trenton and Stellarton. He has been working in the schools for over five years and worked as Library staff in many capacities over 15 years at the Halifax Public Libraries.

Debbie Clark is a Library and Information Specialist with the CCRCE, currently supporting two middle school libraries in Truro. Debbie is passionate about creating engaging, inclusive, and innovative spaces for students and staff alike. Known for her enthusiastic approach to technology integration and creative programming, Debbie enjoys exploring new ways to expand the role of the modern school library as a hub for literacy, curiosity, collaboration, and hands-on learning.



Thekla Altmann (she/they) is Branch Assistant-in-Charge at Trenton Library, the smallest branch of the Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library, where they do their darndest to foster small but mighty communities. Thekla is a queer immigrant who writes.

Poster Sessions



Saturday, 19 September 1:30pm-4:00pm

Murray Room & Gallery

Browse the poster sessions! Presented science fair style, these will stay on display all afternoon, even if presenters are attending a session themselves.

Kekina'masuti komkwejwikasikl

Learning Hieroglyphs (translating and providing access to an early 19th century Mi'kmaw hand-written text written using a hieroglyphic system)

**Nothing in a Classroom Can Compare:
Understanding the Realities of Public Library Work**

**Multilingual digital collections:
How we worked together to make languages
other than English a priority for OverDrive**

**Re-Imagining our Future:
Serving People Better (Accessibility)**

**Thinking Outside the Box When You're In It:
Versatile Use of Space in a Tiny Library**



How can Medical and Public Libraries Support Each Other?



Saturday, 19 September 1:30pm

location tbd.

Do you have patrons looking for health-related materials in your collection? Do you get asked health-related questions at the reference desk?

Nova Scotia Health Library Services can help answer health-related information questions that may arise in the public library setting, through access to our patient pamphlets and public-facing subject guides. We also direct some of our patrons to the public library when they are looking for consumer health information and computer access.

This session will help equip public library staff to access and use health resources freely available online and through NS Health. We will also reflect on how medical libraries and public libraries can support each other when answering health-related questions.



Amanda Andrews is a Librarian Educator with Nova Scotia Health. She has been with the organization for 11 years now and is responsible for Education and Training and the Literature Search service offered through NS Health Library Services. She holds a master's degree in library and information science from the University of Western Ontario. Amanda has worked within libraries for the past 18 years, which have included a mix of public, academic and medical library settings. She stays current with medical information trends and is always looking for ways to collaborate and support other library professionals.

Laura Mounce is a Librarian Educator with Nova Scotia Health's Library Services team. She has been with the organization for 5 years and is responsible for Access Services (including library collections and acquisitions, technical services, library systems, and document delivery). She is also the site lead for the Halifax Infirmary Library. Prior to joining the Nova Scotia Health team, she worked in academic libraries in Nova Scotia, Alberta, and Texas. Laura holds a Master of Library and Information Science degree from the University of Western Ontario. She is interested in information literacy instruction and health information-seeking behaviour, as well as the evolution of library search systems.



Accessibility in Action:

Meeting accessibility requirements at service points and in collections

Saturday, 19 September 1:30pm

location tbd.

Joint Lydia from Western Counties for a presentation on designing accessible service points and meeting accessibility standards in collection organization. She will be discussing accessibility requirements, design considerations, and how WCRL is implementing these changes. She will also be discussing how accessibility requirements have affected collection organization and size, and how she tracks progress on meeting these requirements.

Lydia Hunsberger (she/her) is the Collections and Digital Services Manager for Western Counties Regional Library where she manages the materials budget, selects English materials, and is currently working on different accessibility projects. Outside of work, you can probably find her sewing, gardening, or swimming. She lives in Yarmouth with her wife and two fluffy cats.



Zine Making



Saturday, 19 September 1:30pm

Creative Pictou County Studio

Join to learn about zines: what they are and how to create them! From personal, political, fandom community-centred and more... be sure to bring your creativity! Crafting supplies are provided.



Nico (he/they) is a queer, disabled, and Acadian person whose interests include (fan)translation, the intersections between personal identity and language, and all things nerdy and weird. He has worked in both the public and academic library systems, as well as in post-secondary disability services.



Slop! The Reality of Generative AI in Daily Life

Saturday, 19 September 3:00pm

Theatre Auditorium & Virtual



Tech companies paint a rosy picture of a world where our every need is provided for by generative AI. Meanwhile, their products flood online spaces with low quality content, misinformation, and scams. They exploit workers, creators, the environment, and even their own users. How can library staff deal with these issues, much less help their patrons navigate them? Join CBRL assistants Jon and Kat as they mythbust the marketing hype surrounding generative AI and offer practical advice on how to deal with it.



Jon Manley is a full time library assistant with the Cape Breton Regional Library. His foray into being a "crash test dummy" for Kat's AI experiments was a huge tech shock as he usually spends most of his time in the McConnell Library's historical archive.

His recommendation when it comes to AI is to go take your dog for a walk, do something creative, or read a book.

Katrina Nicholson is a full time library assistant and part time T-Rex with the Cape Breton Regional Library. She started researching generative AI after trying it out and discovering that the capabilities did not live up to the hype. Her recommendations for newbies to the topic are: the book "Empire of AI" by Karen Hao, the podcast "Shell Game" by Evan Ratliffe, and Cory Doctorow's article "The Reverse Centaur's Guide to Criticizing AI".



Heritage Alive:

A Living History Fair

Saturday, 19 September 3:00pm

location tbd



This session will explore the planning, execution, and impact of a community Heritage Fair hosted by the New Glasgow Library. This event invites local organizations—such as churches, neighbourhood groups, and businesses with deep community roots—to create table displays showcasing their histories through photographs, stories, and artifacts. Attendees engage directly with participants, fostering conversation and shared memory. The presentation will highlight key planning considerations, partnerships, and logistics, as well as reflect on outcomes, including community response and the role of libraries in supporting local heritage and storytelling.

Meghan Jamieson is the Branch Assistant in Charge at the New Glasgow Public Library, with an educational background in Classics and Library and Information Technology. A small sample of previous employment includes the Canadian military, reading tutor, homeschool mum of four, researcher, and brewery operator.



Susan Parker is the Reference and Heritage Assistant at the New Glasgow Library. Her academic background is in Canadian history, with a focus on the cultural and industrial heritage of the Maritimes. She worked in the heritage and tourism industry for over a decade, with most of that time spent in local and university archives. Within the community, she currently serves as a director with the St. Andrew's Society of Pictou County, the Festival of the Tartans, and the Pictou County Roots Society, and is an active volunteer with the local, provincial, and national highland dance organizations.



Heated Rivalry: Lessons Learned from Hosting a Large Event

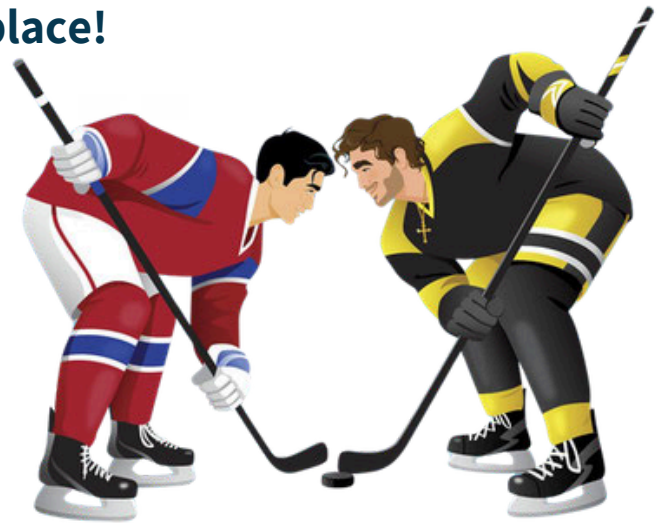


Saturday, 19 September 3:00pm

location tbd

What happens when an intimate author Q&A suddenly outgrows the room? This session explores how the Truro library booked Rachel Reid for a small, local event—only to see her skyrocket to international fame before the program even took place!

Learn how staff rapidly adapted logistics, reshaped audience expectations, and pivoted programming to meet a surge in demand—highlighting the important role of flexibility, timing, and a willingness to seize the moment.



Lesley Brann began her library career at the McConnel Library in Sydney, but has been in the role of Director of Adult Services with CEHPL since 2006. She's presented numerous times at NSLA and twice at the Ontario Library Association conference. When she's not working, she is active in medieval reenacting and travelling.

Megan Cameron is an Adult Services Coordinator at the Truro Branch of CEHPL. She has 5 Years at the Antigonish Library and 10 years (and counting!) at the Truro Library. A spicy reader and enthusiastic trail runner, she's equally at home recommending your next great book or running around in the woods. When she's off the clock, you'll likely find her fully embracing a wide range of granny hobbies—the cozier, the better.

Sunday, 20 September



8:00am - 8:30am **Yoga**
Creative Pictou County Studio

8:45am - 9:15am **Yoga**
Creative Pictou County Studio

8:30am - 9:30am **Breakfast**
NSLA Annual General Meeting
location tbd

- 9:30am - 10:30am** **Sunday Morning Sessions**
- **Panel Discussion: Making Connections for Library Service**
Theatre Auditorium & Virtual
 - **Blue Cover Moments**
location tbd
 - **Multicultural Association of Pictou County**
location tbd

11:00am - 12:00pm **Keynote: Making Connections, Terrence Taylor**
Theatre Auditorium & Virtual

12:00pm **Snacks for the Road and Wrap Up**
Murray Room

Yoga



Sunday, 20 September 8:00 & 8:45am

Creative Pictou County Studio

Julie Babudro leads participants in a 30 minute seated series of relaxed movements and gentle stretching for mobility, pain relief, and peace of mind.

This class has been enjoyed at 3 libraries since July of 2025. Come try it and be refreshed!



Multicultural Association of Pictou County (MAPC): Connecting Cultures through Information and Events Sunday, 20 September 9.30am location tbd



In this session, Nanda Shirke and team present their key events and programs they run for the newcomer community.



The Multicultural Association of Pictou County (MAPC) is a volunteer-based, non-profit organization that was founded in 2009 to serve people of diverse cultures living in Pictou County. As an Association, MAPC is focused on enriching the cultural life in local communities within Pictou County by encouraging and promoting all aspects of multiculturalism. Their goal is to serve as an important resource for newcomers through information and events and a bridge that connects people of different cultures within Pictou County.

Panel Discussion: Making Connections For Library Service: Library, Municipal, and Provincial Perspectives Sunday, 20 September 9.30am Theatre Auditorium & Virtual



TBD

Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities

TBD

Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage

Erin Comeau is the Executive Director and Regional Librarian of Western Counties Regional Library, serving communities throughout Southwest Nova Scotia. She also serves as Chair of the Council of Regional Librarians, representing Nova Scotia's nine regional library systems. Before being appointed Executive Director in 2011, Erin spent six years as French Services Manager with Western Counties Regional Library. Throughout her leadership, she has led the organization through significant service transformations and operational challenges, including the impacts of a global pandemic, evolving community needs, and ongoing funding pressures.

Committed to collaboration and community engagement, Erin works closely with stakeholders to ensure library services remain responsive, relevant, and valuable to the diverse communities they serve.



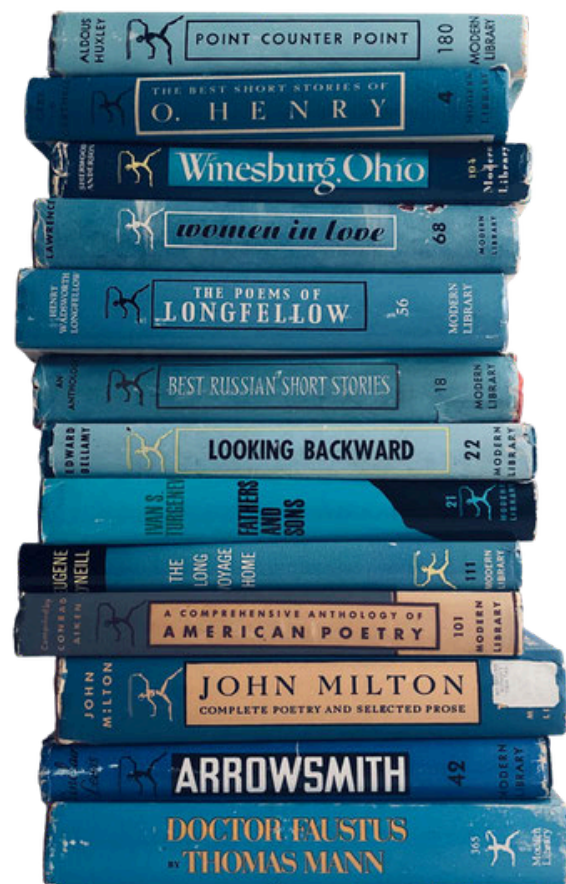
Blue Cover Moments: Strategies for Successful Readers' Advisory Sunday, 20 September 9.30am location tbd



Every day, people visit the library. They come to us seeking connection, information, and validation. You've probably heard a patron say something like, "I don't remember the title, but the cover was blue." While these interactions can feel challenging or uncertain, they also present incredible opportunities. Because what patrons are really telling us is: "I trust you to help me find what I'm looking for." In this session, we'll explore how to transform "blue cover" moments into confident, engaging, and successful Readers' Advisory interactions. We'll look at practical strategies for discovering what patrons are truly seeking, building confidence in the advisory conversation, and creating positive experiences that strengthen the connection between readers and the library.

Please bring something to write with and something to write on - no spoilers, just trust the process!

Nicole Radzikowski is a librarian with more than 20 years experience in library service. A graduate of the Master of Library and Information Studies program at Dalhousie University, she currently serves as the Technical Services Librarian at Cape Breton Regional Library in Sydney, Nova Scotia. Passionate about connecting people with books and helping library users feel seen and supported, Nicole brings a practical, patron-focused approach to Readers' Advisory and library service. Her professional interests include creating engaging and welcoming library experiences, and using social media to spark conversations and build community connections.



Keynote: Making Connections



Terrence Taylor

Sunday, 20 September 11:00am

Theatre Auditorium & Virtual

The Conference Is Over, Now What?

Most conference learning disappears within days.

The notes get buried, the slides get forgotten and the excitement of the event slowly fades somewhere between the drive home and Monday morning. So what actually lasts?

The conversations. The relationships. The people we continue building with after the room is gone.



In this closing keynote, Terrence Taylor challenges attendees to rethink the purpose of conferences entirely — not as places to simply collect information, but as spaces designed to create meaningful human connection. Through storytelling, reflection, humor and interactive connection-building exercises, attendees will explore why most networking remains surface-level, why good intentions rarely turn into real follow-up and how to intentionally continue the momentum of the conference once it ends.

Rather than leaving with another notebook full of ideas they may never use, participants will leave with something more valuable: a practical and personal plan for what happens next.

Terrence Taylor is the founder of TALKS TOO MUCH and creator of NeuroNarrative™, a storytelling and retention framework focused on what happens after learning experiences end. His work explores why most conferences, trainings, and keynotes create strong emotional moments but little long-term behavioral change — and how intentional reflection, storytelling, and follow-up can help ideas actually stick. Through interactive keynotes and experiential sessions, Terrence helps organizations rethink connection, communication, psychological safety, and retention in ways that feel human, memorable, and practical long after people leave the room.

Cardigan Exchange



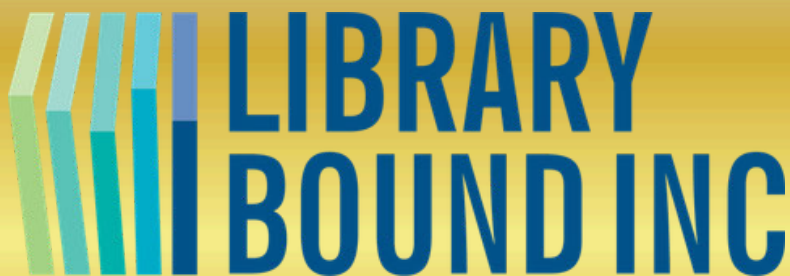
Librarians and their cardigans go together like that song at the end of Grease - and yet, we outgrow our favourites or (gasp) find new shinies. Here's your chance! Bring a cardigan or two in good condition that you don't wear anymore, take away someone else's abandoned knits as your new treasure.

Available all weekend!

A heartfelt thank you to our sponsors:



The NSLA recognizes the support of the Province of Nova Scotia. We are pleased to work in partnership with the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage to develop and promote our cultural resources for all Nova Scotians.



whitehats



Other sponsors and exhibitors tbd:



SirsiDynix®



This booklet was made without the use
of generative AI by Thekla Altmann. Yay!