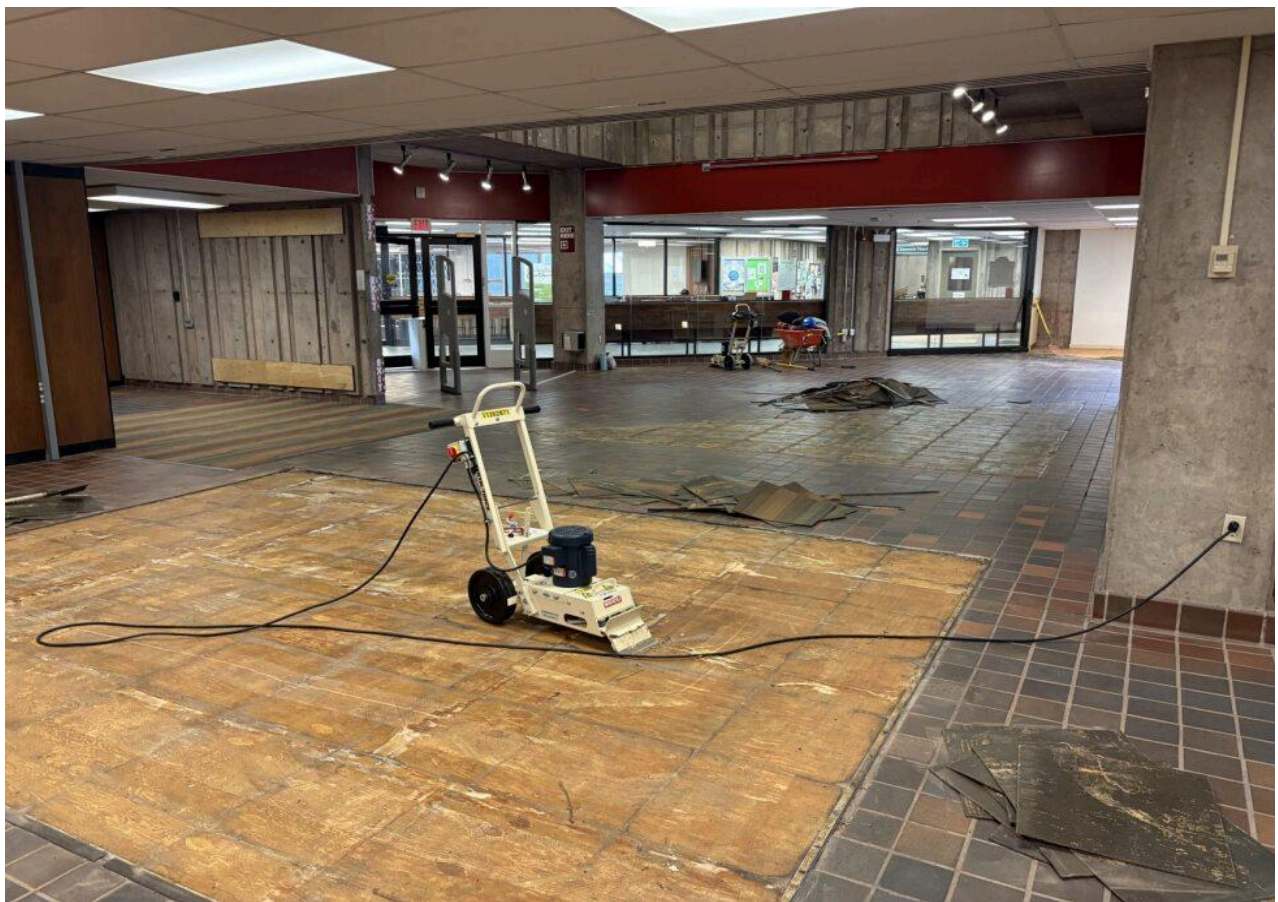


## News from Prince Edward Island

Juanita Rossiter, VP PEI

### News from [Robertson Library, UPEI](#):

Robertson Library is getting a new look!



(Photo credit: Juanita Rossiter)

With funding from the [Love Our Library](#) capital campaign, the Robertson Library lobby is getting its first-ever major renovation.

On May 1, 2026, a large crowd gathered in the library lobby to attend the kick off for the first phase of the renovation project that is designed to transform the building into a more modern, accessible, and inspiring space. In addition to the library lobby, the University Archives and Special Collections unit will

also be renovated and expanded. To date, over \$6.2 million has been raised for the renovations. The lobby will be named the SDU Lobby in recognition of the The Saint Dunstan's University (SDU) Board of Governors who donated \$1,050,000 to the project.

The main Library spaces closed the first week of May and will remain closed until the end of August while lobby renovation work is underway. From May until August, limited in-person library services are available in the Robertson Library Annex Room 235. This temporary service point will be open Monday through Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.



(Photo credit: UPEI Marketing and Communications)

Attending the kick-off to the first phase of the Robertson Library renovation project on May 1 were (left to right): **George Morrison**, Executive Director, SDU Board of Governors; **Dr. Svetlana Kochkina**, University Librarian; **Noah Mannholland**, student representative; **Dr. Donna Hardy-Cox**, Interim Vice-President, Academic and Research; **Peter Doiron**, Facilities Management; **Simon Lloyd**, University Archives and Special Collections Librarian.



Library Technician Sarah Leyenaar helping a student in room 235 during the library renovation.  
(Photo credit: Brooke Saunders)



Photo credit: Stacey Meenink  
Cindy MacDonald (left) and Chris MacLauchlan (right)



Photo credit: Shawne Holcomb

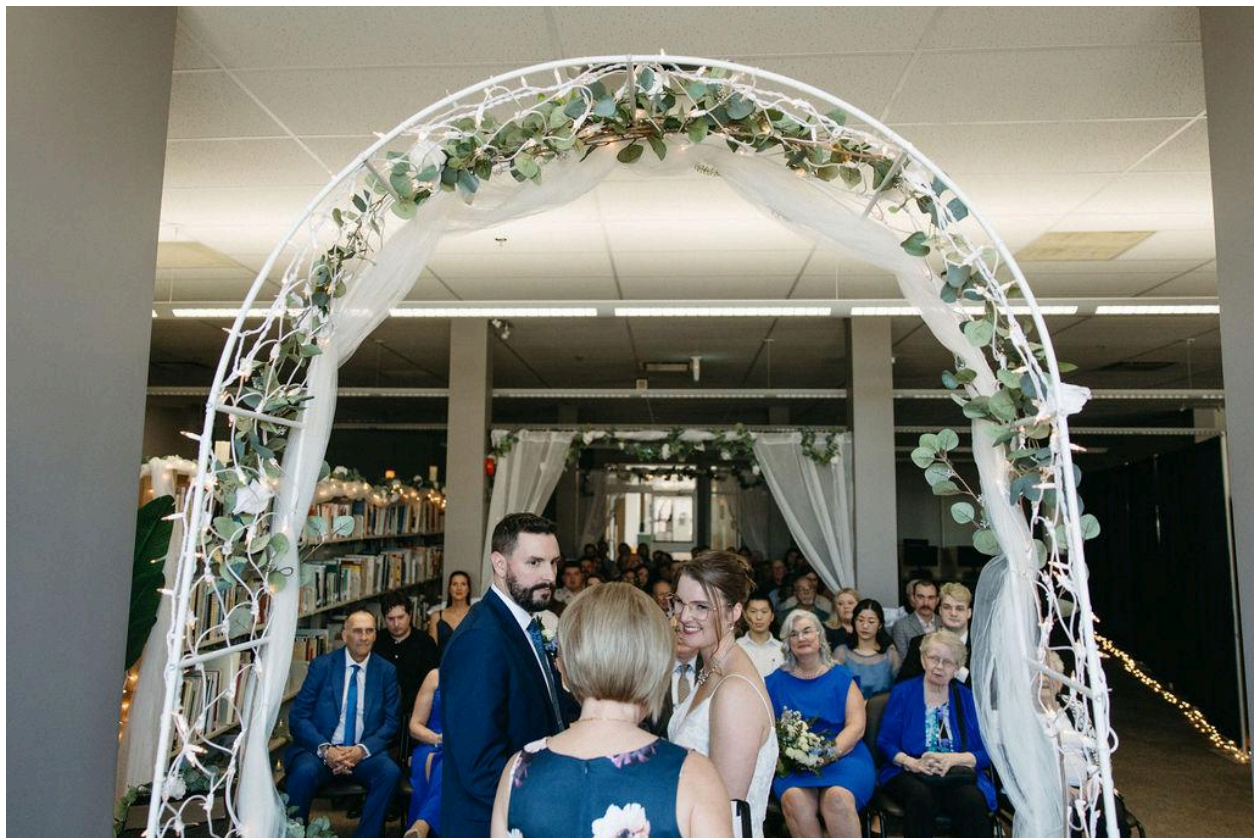
Some Robertson Library staff members who recently celebrated work anniversaries include **Shawne Holcomb** (5 years), **Cindy MacDonald** (15 years) and **Chris MacLauchlan** (25 years).

## News from [Holland College Libraries](#)

During the Winter Term at Holland College, the Holland College Library Department hosted a photo contest titled Brag About Your Break, the goal of which was for students to highlight the fun activities they did over their February break. The contest was open to all students at every campus, and the library received submissions showing a variety of activities.

### **A Wedding at the Prince of Wales College (PWC) Library!**

This May, Student Engagement and Instructional Librarian **Emily Maclsaac** got married in the PWC Library. Maclsaac says, “The library was transformed into a romantic ceremony location for an evening wedding with lots of twinkle lights and greenery.” The day went perfectly, and now the couple are heading off on their honeymoon. Emily shared that “The day was amazing with amazing weather.”



(Photo credit: Emily Maclsaac)

## News from the [Benevolent Irish Society](#) - [Brendan O'Grady Memorial Library](#)

The Benevolent Irish Society (BIS) is one of the oldest organizations in Prince Edward Island. Established in 1825, the BIS celebrated its 200th anniversary last year. The BIS is known for its work in preserving and promoting Irish history, culture, and heritage. One of the ways it does this is through its lending library.



**Brendan O'Grady Memorial Library at the Benevolent Irish Society**  
(Photo credit: Benevolent Irish Society)

**Paula Kenny** is a volunteer coordinator for the library. She recently answered a series of questions provided by **Juanita Rossiter** concerning the BIS library:

### **How and when was the library established?**

*The library was really the dream of the late George O'Connor, who was the President of the BIS for many years. A large room in the lower level of the [Edward Whelan Centre](#), aka the Irish Hall, was set aside for*

*the purpose of a library and George collected books and periodicals for years, mainly through donations. The holdings had grown to about 300 volumes before receiving hundreds and hundreds of books from the O'Grady family in 2020.*

*Dr. Brendan O'Grady was an English professor at UPEI for decades and had a passion for his Irish roots and the Irish story of PEI. A large proportion of his personal library was given to the Benevolent Irish Society of Prince Edward Island after he passed away.*

### **Library Holdings:**

*The focus of the library centres on books by Irish authors or authors of Irish ancestry or books on any subject related to Ireland or the Irish diaspora. There are about 3000 volumes in the catalogue ranging through fiction, drama, poetry, travel, music, mythology, arts and culture, genealogy, humour, biographies and autobiographies. About a third of the catalogued books are on various aspects of Irish history and the stories of the Irish diaspora. There are also about 1000 books and periodicals that have not yet been entered into the catalogue and are shelved separately in a non-circulating area of the room. These include some historical records of the BIS, many 'old' books and books that are too fragile or rare to be replaced, plus several series of Irish magazines and journals on Irish heritage.*

### **Does the library focus only on Irish Heritage?**

*In addition to the focus on Ireland and the Irish diaspora, there is also a computer station dedicated to genealogical research with a worldwide Ancestry license available to library users. BIS members also have access to that Ancestry license on their personal computers. There is a huge collection of cassette tapes of Irish music including some home recordings of local artists who are no longer with us, in addition to CDs, DVDs, VHS tapes, and vinyl albums.*

### **What is the oldest book in your holdings?**

*There are a couple of old bibles written in Irish that would have been brought to PEI with immigrants in the early 1800s since most Irish settlers came to PEI before the famine.*

### **What is your favourite item in the library?**

*Some of the most treasured books in the library are re-prints of 16th and 17th century land records from Ireland that were in the collection of Nova Scotian genealogist/historian Terry Punch that came to the BIS library through St. Mary's University. There have also been large donations of Irish books from PEI collectors such as Michael Hennessey, Daniel Gillis, and George Mullally, who is the current BIS Patron. Donations are also accepted from the general public if they are related to the collection mandate although there is a limit on the number of duplicate copies that can be accepted due to space constraints.*

## **Is the library run by volunteers? How does one access the library?**

*The library is staffed by volunteers and is open on weekdays 10 am to 1 pm except in the summer when hours are extended to 9 am to 5 pm, thanks to a summer student subsidized by the PEI government. The library is open to all, not just BIS members. Books can be borrowed for three weeks and visitors are welcome to make use of a couple of comfortable armchairs to spend some time enjoying even the non-circulating publications. Although located on the lower level of the building at 582 North River Road, Charlottetown, the library is fully accessible thanks to a lift that operates from the entry level.*



**Left to Right: Phillip Brown (Mayor of Charlottetown), Judy Donovan Whitty (BIS Library volunteer), and George Mullally (BIS Patron). Photo credit: Benevolent Irish Society**

## News from [PEI Library Services](#)

### **Kensington Heritage Library**

The Kensington Heritage Library's newest monthly program, called the Poetry Circle, is now in full swing.

“Locals come in to share their work, listen to others, and share their ideas. We're pleased to provide a welcoming space for Artistic-minded folks to share their work,” says **Hailey Lewis**.



Members of the Poetry Circle at the Kensington Heritage Library  
(Photo credit: Hailey Lewis)

## Dear Friend

You are still my best friend  
even with the time and miles  
that keep us apart.  
You were always there for me,  
ready to listen.  
and partake.  
You were the quiet one  
But we got along famously.  
We talked and biked and hiked.  
We never had any money  
so what we did was free.  
We made our own fun.  
With what little we had,  
we kept our friendship going.  
We never thought about parting.  
We talked about our future  
and what we would do,  
but we never got there that way.  
We were grounded in reality.  
We just fed each other.  
We were there for each other.  
We were laughed at and taunted,  
but just brushed off  
and went ahead.  
Eventually, life got in the way.  
and, sadly, we parted,  
each going his own way.  
I never forgot our friendship,  
I never had a friend so close.  
We both still live,  
but, miles apart.  
We each remember  
what we had.

**By Victor Owen Negus (Poetry Circle member, Kensington Heritage Library)**

## Charlottetown Library Learning Centre

The Charlottetown Library Learning Centre has introduced Princh as one of its newest services. Princh is a print from your own device service that allows the public to print from anywhere. The printer is accessed via an app or a website. Payment is made online, in advance, with the only caveat being that printing must be picked up within 24 hours at the library. It has been quite popular, especially during the tax season for T-4s and other documents.

Libraries throughout the province participated in [Revenue Canada's CVITP Program](#) where volunteers complete simple tax returns for people with modest incomes. This is an ongoing popular program that is a great help to Islanders, with over 1500 tax returns being filed in March and April.

During April the Charlottetown Library ran a very popular LARP (Live Action Role Playing) Club for ages 10-14 with costume and prop making and a whole lot of fun!

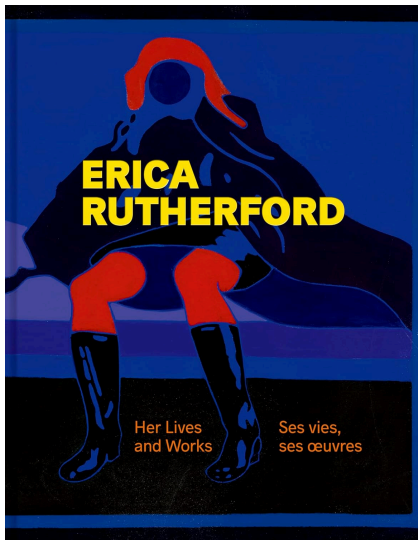


This Spring the [Summerside Rotary Library](#) partnered with Summerside Police Services to offer Storytime with a Cop, Painting with a Cop and a Senior's Cafe. Participants in these programs had the opportunity to meet K-9 Lucy, a Golden Retriever who is a support dog for the Summerside Police Department.

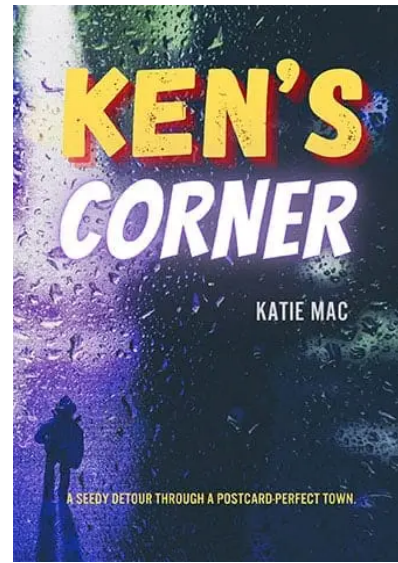
For more information about K-9 Lucy, please [watch this clip](#) from CTV news.

The 2026 [PEI Book Awards](#) were presented on May 24 at the Charlottetown Library Learning Centre. The PEI Book Awards are intended to promote and to celebrate excellence in creation and publication of books by Prince Edward Island authors and creators. They are presented biennially for the books that best exemplify excellence in those fields. The awards are based on overall assessment of a book's quality of writing, social and cultural merit of the text and originality of content, approach and technique.

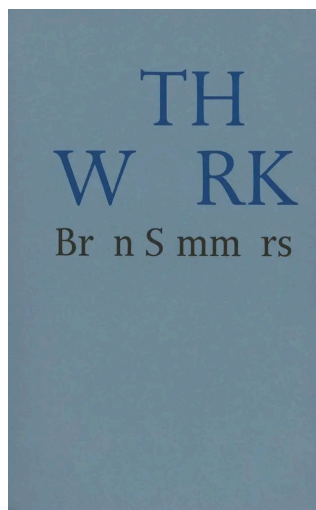
The 2026 PEI Book Award winners this year are:



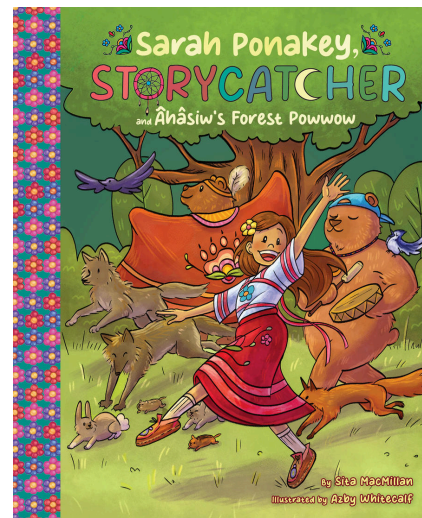
Non-fiction: [Erica Rutherford: Her lives and works](#)  
By **Pan Wendt**



Fiction: [Ken's Corner](#) By **Katie Mac**



Poetry:  
[The Work](#)  
By **Bren Simmers**



Children's Literature: [Sarah Ponakey, Storycatcher and Âhâsiw's Forest Powwow](#) By **Sita MacMillan**