

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

SASKATCHEWAN YOUNG READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

THE WILLOW AWARDS

OCTOBER, 2002

THE
Willow Awards



SASKATCHEWAN YOUNG
READERS' CHOICE AWARDS INC.

President's Report, 2002

Submitted by: Marion Perry

SYRCA - Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice - The Willow Awards, Inc. was officially incorporated on August 31, 2001. It has been my privilege to serve as the first President. I would like to begin my report by acknowledging the role of the province's teacher-librarians in the development of these Awards.

I think it all began years ago when Stephanie Olson started Young Readers' Choice Awards in some Moose Jaw Schools and told other teacher-librarians how to do it at a provincial conference. Then Judy Nicholson, teacher-librarian at Pilot Butte, used a GrassRoots Technology grant to pilot a Young Readers' Choice Award for the province using the Internet. Eventually the Saskatchewan School Library Association (SSLA) became formally involved, commissioning a feasibility study and providing major funding to support the establishment of The Willow Awards as an independent organization. Thank you, teacher-librarians, for your vision, leadership and hard work.

When the new organization began, the founding Board of Directors: Claire Isaac, Lynn Gilbert, Liz Roberts, Margaret Steger, Maureen Erlendson, Caroline Selinger, Carol Thiessen, Judy Nicholson, Lori Rog and I were challenged with the many exciting decisions that would define The Willow Awards. How many awards would there be? What would the award be? What are the selection criteria? How do students vote? How do we get a domain name and what should be be? There were also some necessary, but not so exciting decisions - What are our bylaws? Do they meet Sask. Justice's criteria? Should there be set membership fees? What is the mileage allowance? What's the policy on e-mail resolutions? What is the timeline for our activities? How do we become a registered charity? It's been a busy year as you will learn from the Committee Reports.

For me, the highlights of the year occurred when ideas became tangible - the first Ballots and Bookmarks; the Website, the Award, and the enthusiasm of students, parents and teachers at the First Launch at Grant Road School on October 18th.

The Willow Awards will soon be a registered charity, able to issue tax receipts. Except for amending our Articles of Corporation and their acceptance by Sask. Justice, the criteria have been met. Your next membership should be tax deductible!

In 2003, there are plans to refine The Willow Awards by making some changes to the ballots and bookmarks, and also to develop education kits for the selected books. Fundraising will be a major challenge.

Thank you to everyone who supported establishing The Willow Awards, especially the Saskatchewan School Library Association, the Saskatchewan Library Association, and our members. If you wish to become more involved with the activities of The Willow Awards, please contact a Board Member. To flourish The Willow Awards need your continued support.

Thanks Lori Rog, Judy Nicholson, Maureen Erlendson.

Financial Report, 2002

Submitted by: Margaret Steger

Account opened Oct 9/01					
	\$0.00				
INCOME					
	Start-up grant	\$5,000.00			
	Memberships	\$1,845.00			
				\$6,845.00	
DISBURSEMENTS					
	Bank charges	\$15.29			
	Meeting expenses	\$945.60			
	Selection expenses	\$50.50			
	Office expenses	\$174.53			
	Website expenses	\$151.39			
				\$1,337.31	
Balance at March 31/02					
	\$5,507.69				

April 1 -

Sept 30/02 \$, 661.07

Aym will be in May 30, 2003 in Isotodon

POLICY REGARDING CHOOSING SELECTION COMMITTEES

1. Chairpersons must be members of the SYRCA Inc. Board.
2. Chairpersons are responsible for choosing a committee of 6-10 persons by September 30 of each year to work with them in selecting ten books for each award list.
3. ✓ Seek the widest representation from the following interest groups:
 - a. Teacher-librarians
 - b. Public librarians
 - c. Classroom teachers at the specific interest level
 - d. Book retailers
 - e. Professors of Children's Literature at the universities
 - f. Media representatives
 - g. Retired public librarians/teacher-librarians
 - h. English Language Arts representatives from boards and curriculum committees
4. Publishers will not be included in selection committees due to conflict of interest.
5. Authors/illustrators may serve on the selection committees providing they do not have any books eligible for consideration.

Procedures for Book List Selection

1. Appoint committee members.
2. Set the date for a meeting.
3. Request that committee members collect reviews, recommended lists and possible books to bring to the first meeting.
4. At first meeting discuss pros and cons of each suggested book.
5. Compile a possible list. (This list will have more than 10 selections.)
6. Have each committee member read as many of the books on the temporary list as possible.
7. Books on the temporary list must be read by at least half of the committee before compiling final list.
8. When compiling lists consider:
 - a. Saskatchewan authors
 - b. Various genres
 - c. Male/female protagonists
 - d. Multicultural content

- e. Aboriginal content
 - f. Readability level
-
9. At the second meeting discuss the books. Come to a consensus on 10 books for each list.
 10. Arrange for the acquisition of each of the books selected for each list to ensure they are available for presentation to the executive at the January meeting as well as for scanning and annotations.
 11. Present book lists to SYRCA Inc. executive for final approval.
 12. Chairpersons prepare original annotations and scanned book covers, which they send to the web master and the marketing director by the end of February.

Challenges to Book List Selection

Individual titles, which in and of themselves may be controversial or offensive to some people, may be selected if they have received a substantial number of nominations or if their inclusion contributes to the diversity of the ballot. No title will be excluded because of the race, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and political or social view of either the author or the material.

Individuals wishing to express their opinion or concerns about a title on the ballot may do so in writing to the SYRCA Inc. Chair. All individuals expressing concerns will receive a response in writing. This correspondence will be addressed at a SYRCA Inc. Board meeting.

The SYRCA Inc. Board strongly encourages people to suggest titles to be included on the ballot. Serious consideration will be given to all nominations.

Revised June 2002

POLICY FOR THE SYRCA WILLOW AWARDS

VOTING ELLIGIBILITY

READERS NEED TO KNOW:

1. Individuals may vote
2. Groups may vote using a group tally which must include the total number of votes for each title on the list
3. Children may vote in more than one category providing they read the minimum number of books in each category
4. Participants must attend school or reside in Saskatchewan

Participants are encouraged to read or have read to them all the books on the list; however, the minimum number of books that must be read in order to vote is:

1. Shining Willow Award (K-3) - minimum to read is 5
2. Diamond Willow Award (Gr. 4-6) - minimum to read is 4
3. Snow Willow Award (Gr. 7-12) - minimum to read is 4

Voting Process:

1. Ballots available on the Willow web site at
<<http://www.willowawards.ca>>
2. Ballots available on the SYRCA Inc. brochures.
3. No ballots will be accepted after the stated deadline for any given year.
4. The title that receives the most votes is the winner. In the event of a tie the award will be shared.

SELECTION POLICY

Part A

1. Fiction and non-fiction books will be considered
2. Books must be written by a Canadian author
3. Books must be copyrighted in the past 2 calendar years
4. It is recommended that the book have a favorable review, particularly by a Canadian review journal
5. A recognized Canadian publisher must publish the book
6. Textbooks will not be considered
7. It is recommended that Saskatchewan authors receive first consideration
8. If a Canadian illustrator illustrates a non-Canadian writer's work it will not be eligible for these awards. The Willow awards are reading awards, not awards for illustrations.
9. Reprints or reissues are not eligible
10. New editions are eligible only if there is evidence of significant change in text

Part B

1. Books for consideration must be submitted by October 31st
2. Selection committees are not restricted to consideration of submitted titles
3. Proposed lists to be approved by SYRCA Board by January 30
4. Final lists must be released by March 1. All titles will be kept confidential until they have received final approval from the SYRCA Inc. Board.
5. Lists will be presented at SSLA, SLA, and Saskatchewan Reading Council Conferences

Revised: June 2002

Fund Raising Report, October 2002

Submitted by: Claire Isaac

Summary of Activities

Judy Nicholson sent out numerous letters to bookstores, media outlets, associations, government departments and corporations. I have sent funding requests to SLA, ISM Ltd., TD Bank and Sask Energy. The funding proposal to the TD Bank has been completed and was mailed about two weeks ago. The information included will be used as the basis of future proposals to other corporations and government departments, the list of which is attached. The list was compiled Through the research of Judy Nicholson, Ann Gagnon and myself. Contact names for any of these would be appreciated.

Responses

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Sask. Cultur7e Youth and Recreation | * will provide promotion but no funding |
| 2. Sask. Teachers' Federation | * will provide mailings and promotion but no funding |
| 3. Sask. Wheat Pool | * no donation |
| 4. Direct West | * donation of mini-phone books |
| 5. NBS | * donated set of books for media launch |
| 6. Provincial Library | * request sent to budget meeting in Sept. |
| 7. Teachers' Credit Union | * is considering a corporate sponsorship |
| 8. STELA | * will discuss request at fall meeting |
| 9. SLA | * approved donation of \$500 for November |
| 10. ISM | * declined to sponsor at this time |

Judy Nicholson noted that many of the associations will not yet have met to discuss our requests.

List of Future Contacts:

Businesses

Future Corporation	Greystone Managed Investments
McDougall, Gauley Barristers & Solicitors	Bunting Warburg Inc.
Connor, Clark and Lunn	Deloitte - Touche
ESTI	Gordon Capital Corporation
James Evans and Associates	McLean McCarthy Inc.
Metropolitan Life	Nesbitt Burns
North American Life	RBC Dominion Securities Ltd.
Robertson Stromberg	William M. Mercer Ltd.
Sanderson Securities	SaskPower
SaskTel	SaskEnergy
Air Canada	West Jet
Hotel Saskatchewan	Bessborough Hotel and others
Canada Post	Century Sales and Service
Weyerhaeuser	Pan Canadian Energy
NewsWest	Crown Life
SGI	Office Depot

Staples
Cameco
Brown Communication Group
The Co-operators

Government

Sask. Culture

Service Groups

Lions Clubs

Potash Corporation
Print-It Centres
Enbridge
Sherwood Credit Union

Education

SRC
STELA
ECEC
SSTA
University of Regina
University of Saskatchewan

Foundations

Jacquie Schumiatcher
Sask. Literacy Foundation
Raise a Reader - CanWest Global

Marketing Report, October 2002

The major aim of any marketing endeavours in this formative year has been to present the profile of the Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice Awards and raise awareness of *The Willow Awards* in the province. To this end, letters of introduction which included an invitation to join SYRCA were sent to every school division office in the province -- public, separate and independent. In addition, information packages were sent to Saskatchewan Education officials, interested librarians, university professors, teachers and others interested in books, children and reading. While the response was limited, we did recruit a number of new members.

To launch the program, ten thousand bookmarks and five thousand posters were printed and distributed for each award. The materials included a ballot which students could reproduce or use as printed. The website address was also included on the brochures so that students might access further information about the awards. The information packages about *The Willow Awards* were released at three different spring conferences -- the Saskatchewan Reading Council, the Saskatchewan Library Association and the Saskatchewan School Library Association. In addition, information packages were sent to each member of SYRCA, updating them on our progress.

All authors whose works were short listed for an award were sent an information package about the awards and a congratulatory message. The Board also received permission from a number of authors to link our website to their personal websites so that young people might find out more about them or correspond with them. The publishing companies of all nominees were also advised of our selections and sent resource materials.

Selected Saskatchewan artists were approached and asked to submit prototypes for the actual award to be given as *The Willow Award*. The design by Jacquie Berting was accepted by the Board in June. Three awards are to be developed for May, 2003.

The beginnings of liaisons between the Saskatchewan Book Awards and the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild were established. It is to be hoped that these relationships will grow in the future with authors or Board members perhaps sharing an interest in at least two of these organizations. Both of these sister groups were sent media kits announcing the launch of our first season..

In June, requests for submissions for the 2003 awards were sent to fifty-eight publishing companies in Canada. The information about the submission deadline and criteria was also carried in an e-mail article written for Quill and Quire's online publication. Books began arriving during the summer and submissions continue to be received.

In June also, media packages were sent to newspapers, television, radio and public information agencies. They included background details about SYRCA, membership applications, the website address, information about the selections for 2002 and where to obtain further information. The October media launch date was also included in the packages. In early October, as a follow-up, specific media were targeted with a birth announcement about the October 19th date. The kits were sent to radio, television, newspaper and government offices.

Last fall, an invitation was sent to her honour, Lieutenant-Governor Linda Haverstock, inviting her to attend the first awards gala. The invitation has been officially accepted, and she will attend. All the authors whose works were nominated for an award have been contacted about attending the gala in May. The Board has suggested arranging a series of readings for any author wishing to attend, in lieu of

meeting transportation costs. Many replies have arrived and for those replying in the affirmative, reading tours will be arranged. The SWG has expressed an interest in sharing information about these tours.

During this year, work began on education kits which will accompany the 2003 selections. Three kits will be developed -- one for each award. Each kit will contain information about *The Willow Awards*, certificates of participation, record keeping charts, and activity ideas to accompany each book nominated for that specific award. Kits will be sold on a cost recovery basis. A cost analysis has been done for this project, and it was decided to attempt to keep the cost below \$20.00 if possible. A number of volunteers are prepared to begin working on the kits once the selection of books for the 2003 lists is completed.

The Board also decided in September that one copy of each book submitted by a publisher will be sent to the library of the Pediatric Chemo Lab. of the Allan Blair Cancer Centre at the Pasqua hospital in Regina. Each will contain a bookplate, bookmark and a ballot so that the children may vote on the awards if they so wish.

A closed competition for the design of a new logo for the awards was announced in early October. Designs are to be submitted by mid-November. The issues raised by Board members about the present design were the problems with readability of the print, lack of colour and the inability to produce the logo distinctly in a variety of sizes for stickers and other labels. The present design was also seen as being derivative of the Hackmatack logo. The criteria now suggest a logo that is clear, somewhat semiabstract, and "kid friendly."

Materials for *The Willow Awards* have been circulated throughout many school divisions. Blanket coverage in some divisions has led to a great deal of interest and activity among students. Additional programs in the public library system are providing promising results. It has been a busy first year, but that activity has hopefully led to growth and the beginnings of a flourishing program. A certain systematic flow is being developed, many problems have been overcome, authors, publishers and bookstores are aware of our existence. We have a promising future.

Respectfully submitted,
Liz Roberts

Web Page Report, October 2002

Submitted by: Maureen Erlendson

The Willow Awards Web page was launched in the May 2002 announcing the three awards:

- * The Shining Willow Award for books written for young readers.
- * The Diamond Willow Award for titles written for upper elementary readers.
- * The Snow Willow Award for young adult books.

The web site offers a brief description of each of the nominees and provides a link to author's web pages wherever possible. Voting information and ballots can be accessed through the web site along with information about the SYRCA executive and membership fees. It is our hope that the website provides a useful resource to anyone wishing to participate in the willow awards.

Events Committee Report

October, 2002

The Willow Awards plans to have two events annually. A fall launch for the new lists will, if possible, be held close to or in conjunction with Saskatchewan Library Week and/ or Education Week, and a gala for the presentation of the annual awards will be held in the spring. The intent is to alternate these events in the north and south of the province.

The Launch Committee included Claire Isaac, Caroline Selinger, Margaret Steger and Marion Perry. In May 2002, a letter was sent to teacher-librarians and principals of Regina schools inviting them to submit ideas for an interesting and innovative way to launch the 2002 Willow Awards. The launch was to involve students in a meaningful way and was to be held October 18th. The deadline for submission of ideas was the second week in June. Eight schools submitted ideas. Grant Road School was chosen to host the launch and received a complete set of the nominated books for their efforts. The Willow Awards wishes to thank Bob Sawatsky of National Book Service for donating the books.

The awards presentation will take place at Dr. John G. Egnatoff School on May 30, 2003. Lynn Gilbert, Carol Thiessen and other Saskatoon members will plan this event.

Submitted by:
Marion Perry

Policy Committee Report

October, 2002

In addition to the Articles of Corporation and the Bylaws, The Willow Awards Inc. needs to develop policies to guide the running of the corporation. To date, policies for conducting business by e-mail, for determining travel allowance, for membership, for forming selection committees and for selecting resources to be nominated for awards have been developed.

Submitted by:
Marion Perry