

THE WILLOW AWARDS

Annual Report May 24, 2003



The mission of SYRCA - Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice – The Willow Awards, Inc. is to promote reading by granting a "Willow Award" to the Canadian and/or Saskatchewan book(s) voted by students to be the best of those nominated in designated categories for a specific year.



In order to achieve its Mission, the Corporation will:

- develop an annual list of Canadian and Saskatchewan books nominated to receive a Willow Award;
- maintain a web site to inform the public of the list of nominated books, and to conduct the voting electronically;
- present Willow Award(s) to the author(s) of the winning book(s);
- promote reading of Saskatchewan and/or Canadian books by conducting the award, and by developing incentives for young readers to participate;
- develop and ensure implementation of SYRCA Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice – The Willow Awards, Inc. policies;
- encourage community involvement in all levels of SYRCA -Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice – The Willow Awards, Inc. activity;
- cooperate with other organizations and groups in order to maximize the use of limited resources;
- ensure that SYRCA Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice The Willow Awards, Inc. is managed in a financially responsible, prudent and ethical manner.



Board Members

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Marion Perry, Regina, Sk.

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Vice President

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John Haas, Regina, Sk.
Marlene McBain, Moose Jaw, Sk.
Chris MacLennan, Regina, Sk.
Barbara Moneo, Wood Mountain Sk.
Marion Piche, Gravelbourg, Sk.

President's Report

I am elated at the success of the first cycle of Willow Awards. I can chart our progress from day one. In the fall of 2000, The Saskatchewan School Library Association asked me to do a study to determine the feasibility of Young Readers' Choice Awards for Saskatchewan. In May 2001, the first group met to discuss the practicalities of setting up the Awards. At that time, the Willow was chosen as the emblem of the Awards because it is present everywhere in the province, and because many Young Readers' Choice Awards in Canada have a tree symbol.

Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice – The Willow Awards was officially incorporated in August 2001, and the first official Board Meeting was in September of that Year. By May 2002, the Selection Committees had completed their work, and the first poster/ballots and the web site were published.

October 2002 brought the first Official Launch of the Willow Awards at Grant Road School in Regina. Actually seeing students and teachers excited about the Willow Award Books, and watching them share this excitement in a variety of entertaining ways made The Willow Awards became real for me. Our first AGM the following day expanded our Board and set the course for the months we have just completed.

In November 2002, SYRCA-The Willow Awards, Inc. became a registered charity. Membership donations became tax deductible. By the end of January, the Selection Committees had produced the 2003 lists of nominated books. Enhancements to the program – author visits, book stickers and education packages were planned. The Board decided to give one copy of the books submitted for consideration to the Alan Blair Cancer Clinic in order to give young people undergoing treatment the opportunity to read good Canadian books. The remaining books were to be used as incentives and prizes for students who are participating in the program, and to raise funds.

In February, Eleanor Matz and I presented a session on the Willow Awards at the Regina Catholic Schools' Teachers' Institute. Some of this session was repeated at the Saskatchewan Reading Council Conference later in the spring. Also in February, we obtained our new banner and signs. With these, our promotional brochures, and the 2003 nominated books, the Willow Awards had exhibits at the Regina Teachers' Convention, and the Moose Jaw Teachers' Convention, the Saskatchewan School Library Association Conference and the Saskatchewan Reading Council Conference. Many teachers learned of the Willow Awards at these conferences, and four lucky ones won \$500 worth of books.

March was exciting. We counted the ballots – more than five thousand from every corner of the province. Many teachers and students wrote comments telling us how students had enjoyed reading the books and participating in the voting. The new poster/ballots and book stickers were printed. Regina volunteers organized a fund raising dinner and silent auction. Near the end of the month, we learned we had received a SaskCulture Grant for the coming year.

Now it's May 2003. We have just presented the first Willow Awards at the SaskEnergy Presentation Gala at Dr. John G. Eganatoff School in Saskatoon. At this Annual General Meeting you will hear reports that outline the activities of the various committees. We have reached many milestones. I

would like to thank the members of the Board of Trustees and volunteers. To maintain the Willow Awards requires a year round effort on the part of many volunteers. Often an intense amount of work is required in a very short time.

The challenge of the future is to maintain and exceed our initial success. To do so, we must continually seek sources of funding by expanding our membership and seeking new sponsors and grants. We must ensure the organization is sustainable by having a broad base of volunteers from every area of the province actively participating in the work of the Awards, and we must develop policies and procedures to guide us as we move ahead.

Yes, I am elated. Once more, I thank you all again for your participation and support during our formative years. It's been hard work but fun.

Respectfully submitted, Marion Perry, President

SYRCA -- THE SASKATCHEWAN YOUNG READERS CHOICE AWARDS FINANCIAL STATEMENT FISCAL YEAR ENDING MARCH 31, 2003

Balance at March 31/02

\$5,507.69

INCOME

Grants	\$7,000.00
Memberships/	
Sponsorships	\$4,136.00
Fundraising	\$1,935.30
Bank error	\$0.47

\$13,071.77

DISBURSEMENTS

Bank charges	\$47.75
Meeting expenses	\$2,713.22
Award expenses	\$217.40
Office expenses	\$443.97
Award function	
expenses	\$1,234.38
Corp/Rev. Canada/	
Audit expenses	\$140.00
Marketing	\$10,354.51
Fundraising	\$1,350.87

\$16,502.10

Balance at March 31/03

\$2,077.36

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May				

Fund Raising Annual Report

Summary of Activities October 2002-May 2003

Corporations

PrintWest and Office Depot were approached to cover printing costs. Both declined, although there may be an opportunity to pursue donations from PrintWest in the future.

TD Bank declined to sponsor the Willow Awards.

SaskEnergy donated \$2,000 to sponsor the 2002-2003 Awards ceremony in Saskatoon. In response to their request, it is known as "The Willow Awards, The SaskEnergy Gala." A representative of SaskEnergy has been invited to speak at the Awards ceremony.

Air Canada declined to provide three free tickets for the Award winners travel. WestJet was approached with the same request and provided three free tickets. They asked for a tax receipt, which has been provided. Since they asked for the tax receipt we cannot print their logo on any materials. This would constitute advertising and would put our charitable status in jeopardy. There were some restrictions on the tickets, which made booking flights difficult. This should be investigated further for future years.

Teachers Credit Union donated \$500.

Associations

SLA donated \$500.

SSLA donated \$5,000. This is the final sum of their seed money for The Willow Awards. The association will not be able to sustain funding at this level in the future. Funding Agencies

An application for annual funding, in the amount of \$7,800 was made to SaskCulture Inc. It was successful, with the amount of \$6,800 being awarded. SYRCA Inc. is eligible to apply for this funding for another two years. SaskCulture Inc. expects this money to be used to develop the program and allow it to become self-sustaining. As part of the application process, we had to include letters of support from our "community." Many people responded. Letters of thanks, including the news of the success of the application and the progress of the Willow Awards were sent to these people. SaskCulture Inc. declined an invitation to be present at the Awards ceremony.

SaskEd provided \$500 for the 2002/03 fiscal year.

Service Groups

Marion Piche has applied for support from service and community groups. The Saskatoon Kinsmen donated \$300.

Other Fund-Raising

A Willow Awards fund-raising dinner was held in Regina on March 28. Over 60 people attended this delightful evening. A silent auction was part of the evening, with many great prizes up for auction. The event raised \$1,253.36. There were also some personal memberships and donations as a result of the evening. Willow Awards members in other communities might want to consider putting on a similar event. It is certainly a worthwhile endeavor in support the Awards.

Marion Perry organized draws for books at conferences and raised \$1,054.06.

Fund-Raising November 2002-May 2003

SaskEnergy	\$2,000
Teachers Credit Union	500
SLA	500
SSLA	5,000
SaskCulture	6,800
SaskEd	500
Saskatoon Kinsmen	300
Fund-Raising Dinner	1,253
Draws	1,054
TOTAL	\$17, 907

Plus: Three free airline tickets.

Thanks

Thank you very much to Marion Piche for her help with the fundraising, and Naomi Kral, Muriel Drew, Eleanor Matz, Rita Hengen and Marion Perry for organizing the dinner. Respectfully submitted

Claire Isaac Fund-Raising Chair

Selection Committee Annual Report

Shining Willow Award and Diamond Willow Award

Selection Committee Members

Kathy Probert Carry Dueck Ione Langlois Jane Glen Florence Barton Pat Taylor Verna Demers Carol Boden Jessica Latshaw Judy Ostrander Cheryl Smith **Judith Benninger** Saache Heinrichs Terry Clark Lynn Gilbert Carol Thiessen

The selection committee met for its first meeting in mid-November at 4:30 p.m. in the library at Dr. John G. Egnatoff School. We were thrilled with the submissions from the publishers. We also accepted possible suggestions from members of the selection committee. We spent several hours talking about the books, listening to reviews and discussing any books the various committee members had already read. At the end of the meeting the books were distributed to the members with the same books going to at least three members.

The 2nd meeting was held in mid-December at Dr. John G. Egnatoff School. Members shared personal reviews as well as written reviews from reputable sources such as *Resource Links* and library catalogues. After much discussion and deliberation two (2) short lists were established. The Shining Willow list had 13 books while the Diamond Willow list consisted of 14 titles. The short listed books were again distributed and all committee members went away to read as many of the books on the short lists as possible.

The third meeting was held mid-January at McNally Robinsons. After much deliberation the final lists were compiled. Attention was given to the criteria such as genre, gender, aboriginal content, reading level and interest level as outlined in our policy document.

The final lists were presented for approval to the SYRCA Inc. Board at the meeting held on January 29, 2003.

One change was made when selection committees for both the Diamond Willow Award and the Snow Willow Award chose the same book. Wizards by Candace Savage remained on the Snow Willow list and the next choice was placed on the Diamond Willow list.

Respectfully submitted, Carol Thiessen and Lynn Gilbert

Snow Willow Selection Committee Report

Seventy-seven books were considered for the 2003 Snow Willow Award List. Twenty-eight were published in 2001 and 49 in 2002. A record of these books has been kept for the reference of future committees.

The Snow Willow Committee met five times from October to January. The initial meeting was spent reviewing the selection parameters and the task at hand. Members then selected books to read and also began searching for reviews. Narrowing the list to approximately 20 books occurred by early January. Weighing these to arrive at the final 10 took until the final meeting just 2 days before the list was due to be submitted to the Board. The broad range for Snow Willow Readers (mature readers approximately grades 7-12), and the length of the books in this category make selecting the Snow Willow Nominees a challenging but enjoyable task.

The Snow Willow Selection Committee was Regina based. I would like to thank the Regina Public Library for providing multiple copies of many of the titles on extended loan and Miller High School Resource Centre for providing space for our meetings. I would also like to thank the members of the Snow Willow Selection Committee: Muriel Drew, John Haas, Naomi Kral, Lori Jamison Rog, Sandy White, Jessica Cammer, and Tracy Johnston for all their work and for making selecting the Snow Willow Nominees fun.

Respectfully submitted, Marion Perry







Winners of the 2003 Willow Awards

The first annual Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice-The Willow Awards have been chosen. In an overwhelming response, over 5,000 children and young people representing communities throughout the province, from La Ronge to Estevan, Lloydminister to Langenburg, as well as the major urban centres, have chosen the following books:

The Shining Willow Award – (Books for beginning readers.)

Mister Got to Go and Arnie

By Lois Simmie; illustrations by Cynthia Nugent Raincoast Books c2001

The Diamond Willow Award – (Books for more experienced readers.)

Power Play in Washington

By Roy MacGregor McClelland and Stewart, c2001

The Snow Willow Award – (Books for sophisticated readers)

Rebound

By Eric Walters Stoddart, c2000

The awards were presented to the authors at the

Willow Awards SaskEnergy Gala

May 23, 2003, 10:00 a.m.

Dr. John G.Egnatoff Elementary School

http://schools.sbe.saskatoon.sk.ca/Drjoh/

225 Kenderdine Road

SASKATOON, Saskatchewan

Launch Committee Report

Since the Willow Awards are provincial awards, the Board recommends that the Launch for the Willow Awards and the Awards Ceremony be held in different areas of the province each year. The first Launch would be held in Regina and the first Awards in Saskatoon.

A Launch Committee met to develop objectives and guidelines for the event. Briefly, the Launch is to be an innovative and interesting way to introduce the Awards and the nominated books. The Launch should involve students in a meaningful way, and attract some media coverage as well. The successful school would receive a complete set of the nominated books and some funding to defray expenses.

A fax to schools in the Regina area in May 2002 invited them to apply to host the first annual Launch for the Willow Awards. The application deadline was June 10, 2002. Eight applications were received. From these, Grant Road School was selected as the site for the first Launch to be held October 19, 2002.

Once Grant Road School's application was chosen, the school staff planned the event with the Launch Committee acting as a resource. No one who attended the first Launch will forget the dramatization of *Emma's Cold Day* by Mrs Koch's class, or the book introductions and book fair stations presented that day. The entire school had prepared for the event and student work was evident throughout the school. I would like to thank Mr. Dale Finch, Principal, Mrs. Janice Flaman, Teacher-Librarian, Mrs. Koch and all the other teachers and all the students of Grant Road School for making the first Launch a great success.

Thanks are also extended to Bob Sawatsky of National Book Service for donating the nominated books that are presented to the Launch School.

An invitation to host the 2003 Launch was published in the Medium, and on the web page. The Board accepted the application from the 4 Teacher-Librarians and the Assistant Director of the Nipawin School Division. The 2003 Launch will be held at Ecole Wagner Community School in Nipawin on October 17, 2003. Each school within the Nipawin School Division will be involved. It's going to be an exciting event.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the members of the Launch Committee: Margaret Steger, Claire Isaac and Caroline Selinger.

Respectfully submitted, Marion Perry

Willow Award Gala Annual Report

Plans began in early fall of 2002 for the first annual Willow Awards Gala. The venue was set and booked; namely, the gymnasium at Dr. John G. Egnatoff School in Saskatoon. The date was originally set for May 30th; however, it was moved to May 23rd to accommodate Her Honour the Honourable Dr. Lynda Haverstock.

Donna Douglas-Elliott, the principal of Dr. John G. Egnatoff School, met with members of the SYRCA Board to establish details and responsibilities. Video and sound equipment as well as operators were booked. Mr. Bob Morton was booked to pipe in Her Honour and the other dignitaries. Preliminary plans were presented to the SYRCA Inc. Board at the January meeting.

A guest list of dignitaries was established and a draft of the program was formulated. The dignitaries were approached about being part of the program at the Gala. Marion Perry prepared the guest invitation. This was sent by Carol Thiessen and Lynn Gilbert in the royal mail to all authors of nominated books and other dignitaries on the guest list. The label program on Microsoft Word was used. Caroline Selinger, Marion Perry and Margaret Steger sent email invitations to all participating school boards in the southern part of the province while the Saskatoon team sent emails to the school boards in the north. Participating classes were invited to apply to send three (3) children with one (1) adult and individual voters were invited to apply to attend accompanied by an adult. The deadline of April 30, 2003 was given.

The voting had been completed by the end of February. Claire Isaac and her committee tallied the votes and informed the winning authors. These titles were released at the end of March.

By mid-April orders had been placed for food for the reception for the dignitaries as well as cookies and juice for the student voters attending the Gala. The tree for presentation to the school was ordered from Dutch Growers, a local nursery. They recommended the Laurel-leaf Willow as hardy and able to withstand a schoolyard. The SYRCA president will present this willow tree to the principal of the host school.

Liz Roberts attempted to coordinate author visits around the time frame of the Gala. This proved to be a very time consuming and difficult task.

Attempts have been made to make this occasion a 'young readers' gala. Students will be used in as many situations as possible. Student artwork as it pertains to the nominated books will be highlighted. Attention will be given to acknowledging our sponsors. Press releases will be issued two (2) weeks prior to the Gala.

Funding from SaskEnergy was obtained for the Gala and it will be known as the SaskEnergy Willow Awards Gala. The Saskatoon group will keep accurate records of the monies spent.

A binder is being kept with all arrangements pertaining to the Gala. This will be given to the next sponsoring group along with a timeline to be prepared after the Gala is over.

Respectfully submitted, Carol Thiessen and Lynn Gilbert

Marketing

There have been a number of initiatives begun since October, 2002. Several members of the executive have been involved in carrying out these activities. In addition, supportive members have assumed leadership roles to make many of the events a success.

- 1. Visits were made to several STF subject council meetings to make presentations on the Willow Awards and to disseminate brochures, bookmarks and membership information. The subject councils attended include: SSLA, ECEC, Reading Council. In addition, members of the Board attended the teachers' conventions of a number of school divisions for the same purpose. Marion Perry, Eleanor Matz, Lynn Gilbert, Carol Thiessen and Margaret Steger were involved in these visits. These visits also acted as fundraisers since packages of books were raffled off to participants who purchased tickets.
- 2. Board members Claire Isaac, Marion Perry and John Haas took part in a special Canada Book Week display on the Scarth St. Mall in Regina to introduce prospective members to the organization.
- 3. Marion Perry ordered sets of stickers which can be used in libraries to identify Willow Award nominees so that children can find the books more easily on the shelves. These are being sold in packets of ten for each award. The packets also include a silver sticker for award winning titles.
- 4. Noodles and Books, a fundraiser held in conjunction with Alfredo's Restaurant and led by Naomi Krall, provided a venue for the promotion of the Willow Awards in the community. Naomi was assisted by other Board members as well as other supporters in Regina and beyond.
- 5. Education Kits were produced for each of the Willow Awards and are being marketed through Saskatchewan Learning, the STF, SLA and SSLA. Several Board members worked on the production of these kits including Muriel Drew, Chris MacLennan, Marion Piche, Eleanor Matz and Marlene McBain. In addition, several outside supporters provided materials and expertise. Although there are a number of areas of the production that require refinement, the kits appear to have been well-received by the Willow Award participants.
- 6. Author tours have been organized on a very small scale to accompany the Gala in Saskatoon. Authors Julie Burtinshaw (B.C.), Sharon McKay (ON), and Mary-Harelkin Bishop will be touring. Lois Simmie and illustrator Cynthia Nugent are also doing readings in local schools during the week prior to the Gala. The change in date for the Gala caused several conflicts with the Silver Birch Awards in Ontario, a problem that will need to be considered next year if more tours are planned. In addition, a contract between the schools and SYRCA needs to be developed to avoid the many changes that made scheduling difficult this year.
- 7. Members are being informed by Margaret Steger when their memberships have elapsed. Personal letters have been sent to other members whose memberships are due.

Respectfully submitted, Liz Roberts



SYRCA—The Willow Awards' Members

Aksomitis, Linda, Qu'Appelle Arendt, Dorothy. Regina Arnstead, Chris, Regina Atchison, Ann. Saskatoon Barton, Florence, Saskatoon Beltramini, Joanne, Regina Biffart, Wanda. Woodrow Bircham, Doris. Piapot Borderland S.D. No. 68. Rockglen Braun, Michele. Regina Brockmeyer-Klebaum, Donna, Dr. Saskatoon Brucedale Press. Port Elgin, ON Buffalo Plains S.D. No. 21. Regina Cairns, Linda. Prince Albert Carter, Jan. Regina Casswell, Carol. Regina Cherland, Meredith. Regina Cocks, Cheryl. Leader Davidson S.D. No. 31. Davidson DesRoches, Donna, North Battleford Dorion, Betty. Prince Albert Drew, Muriel. Regina Dubord, Susan. Regina Dueck, Carry, McNally Robinson Booksellers. Saskatoon Erlendson, Maureen. Regina Eston-Elrose S.D. No. 33, Elrose Fahlman, Sylvia. Vibank Flaman, Janice, Regina Foran, Bryan. Saskatoon Fox, Elaine. Regina Frobisher School Staff. Frobisher Gabora, Sharon, Regina Gagnon, André. Regina Gagnon, Ann. Regina Galvin, Glenda. Regina Garnett, Ruth. Saskatoon Gilbert, Lynn, Saskatoon Glen, Jane. Saskatoon Grant Road School, Regina Haas, John. Regina Haug, Frances, Regina Hengen, Rita, Regina Hladky, Christine. Regina Hoiland, Esther. Regina Hopkinson, Valerie. Naicam Hysuik, Carmen. Rockglen Isaac, Claire, Regina

Janssen, Donna. Regina Beach

Kimmitt, Darcy, Regina Kincaid Central School Elem. Gov't. Kincaid Kincaid Central School SRC. Kincaid Kindrachuk.Irene. Saskatoon Kinsmen Club of Saskatoon. Saskatoon Kral, Naomi, Regina Langlois, Ione, Saskatoon Lawrence, Jeff. Dinsmore Lind, Karen. Regina Lohans, Alison, Regina MacGowan, Judy. Meadow Lake MacLennan, Chris. Regina Makelki, Rosemary, Regina Matz, Eleanor. Regina McArthur, Wenda. Saskatoon McBain, Marlene. Moose Jaw Merkosky, Janet. Dalmeny Mervold, Debbie, Shellbrook Miller, Joan P. Regina Moneo, Barbara, Wood Mountain Moose Jaw & District Reading Council Moosomin S.D. No. 9, Moosomin Neal, Mary, Tuxford Nicholson, Judy. Regina Olson, Stephanie. Moose Jaw Ostrander, Judy. Saskatoon Outlook S.D. No. 32. Outlook Perry, Marion, Regina Petrisor, Kendra, White City Piché, Marion. Gravelbourg Pott, Gail. Regina Prairie West S.D. No. 75. Swift Current Raine, Charlotte, Langenburg Regina Public Library. Regina Regina Public Schools. Regina Roberts, Liz. Rockglen Rog, Lori Jamison. Regina Rowan, Susan. Melville Sask. East S.D. No. 41. Saskatoon Sask, Indian Cultural Centre. Saskatoon Sask, Library Association, Regina Sask. Publishers Grp. Regina Saskatoon Catholic Schools. Saskatoon Saunders, Gail, Regina Sawatzky, Bob. Saskatoon Saylor, Barb. Regina Schindel, Joan. Meadow Lake



SYRCA—The Willow Awards' Members

Slade, Anne. Tompkins
Slade, Arthur. Saskatoon
Smotra-Cook, Violet. Regina
Soulier, Sheila. Prince Albert
Spruce Home School. Prince Albert
Steger, Margaret. Regina
Stouce, Charmaine. Regina
Stuart, Ann. Regina
Sunningdale School c/o D. Humenick.

Taylor, Pat. Saskatoon
Thiessen, Carol. Langham
Thunder Creek S.D. No. 78, Moose Jaw
Trites, Rae. Moose Jaw
Valaitis, Kathy. Regina
Watson, Beverly. Saskatoon
Whittick, Sandra. Regina
Wills, Rhonda. Regina
Wiseman, Sharon. Saskatoon



Eleanor Mats, Ione Langlois, Verna Demers Photo courtesy of B ob Cunningham, Surrey, BC

Information

Promotion

Sales

For current information please check with our website:

http://www.willowawards.ca





CULTURE BUILDS COMMUNITY

The Willow Awards gratefully acknowledge the support of:

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