

THE  
WILLOW  
AWARDS

Annual Report  
May 7, 2005



## Mission

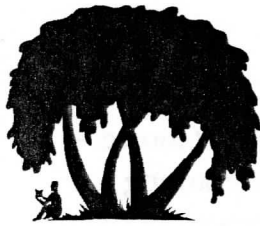
The mission of SYRCA - Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice – The Willow Awards, Inc. is to promote reading by granting a “Willow Award” to the Canadian and/or Saskatchewan book(s) voted by students to be the best of those nominated in designated categories for a specific year.



## Objectives

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

President	Marion Perry, Regina, Sk.
Vice President	Lynn Gilbert, Saskatoon, Sk.
Vice President	Claire Isaac, Regina, Sk
Treasurer	Margaret Steger, Regina, Sk
Secretary	Eleanor Matz, Regina, Sk.

### Directors at large

Carol Thiessen, SSLA Rep., Saskatoon, Sk.  
Marilyn Andrews, SLA Rep., Regina, Sk.  
Ann Atchison, Saskatoon, Sk.  
Elsbeth Dormuth. Saskatoon, Sk.  
Antonia Gisler, Saskatoon, Sk.  
Chris MacLennan, Regina, Sk  
Debbie Mervold, Shellbrooke, Sk  
Liz Roberts, Rockglen, Sk.  
Jeff Ruf, Regina, Sk.  
Kathy Sharman, Saskatoon, Sk

## **President's Report: The Willow Awards' Year, 2004-2005**

The Willow Awards' official year runs from April 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup>. In April the Willow Awards herald the new list of nominated books with displays, posters, bookmarks, education kits and sometimes presentations at spring conferences. In 2004-2005, these included the Regina Teachers' Convention, the Saskatchewan Reading Conference, the Saskatchewan Library Association Conference and the Saskatchewan School Library Conference.

By late May or early June, the SaskEnergy Willow Awards Gala celebrates the winning books and authors, and showcases the students who voted for them. The report of the 2004 Gala at Jack MacKenzie/St. Gabriel Schools in Regina is found later in this document. Thanks to everyone who contributed to the success of that event.

The day after the Gala, new board members are elected at the Annual General Meeting. The Willow Awards Board is a working board. At the board meeting following the AGM, board member's responsibilities and preliminary plans for the upcoming year are discussed. Before summer vacation, publishers are contacted regarding submissions for the following year.

The September Board meeting confirms each board member's responsibilities and the timeline for the year's upcoming business. Selection Committees are formed in different parts of the province to begin the task of finding the books for the following year.

It is worth noting that the Board changed the level designation for Snow Willow Books at the June 2004 Board Meeting. Snow Willow Books are now targeted at grades 7-9. We occasionally receive letters from individuals expressing concern about the appropriateness of certain titles. I encourage teachers and librarians to attend sessions on the Willow Books at Conferences and to check for reviews of titles in sources such as *CM Magazine: Canadian Review of Materials* that is available on the internet.

The Official Willow Awards Launch occurs in October. Congratulations to the staff and students of Kincaid Central School who held a splendid Launch for the 2004 Awards. The 2005 Launch will be on October 20 at Kennedy Langbank School.

The Board has decided to recognize schools that host either the Launch or the Gala with a plaque commemorating the event. All schools that hosted one of these events have received a plaque.

Also in the fall, the committee to organize the spring gala begins planning. By December the author tour coordinator begins work. This is a big job. Thanks to Elta Fae Marlor for rising to the challenge of coordinating the 2005 author readings with a late start.

At the January Board meeting, the Selection Committees must have completed their work and submit their recommendations for the coming year's nominees. As soon as lists of nominated books are approved, work begins on developing the new membership



brochure, poster, bookmarks and education kits. I am very excited about the new full-colour poster for 2005. We ordered 20,000 and hope to have them in schools and libraries throughout the province.

February 28th is the deadline for receiving votes. Vote counting night is always exciting. This year 2,176 votes were submitted in approximately 60 emails to [vote@willowawards.ca](mailto:vote@willowawards.ca). Most of these emails also included student names for the book draw that is held from the ballots. The other 3,347 votes were received on paper.

The table below summarizes the voting for the past three years. As is evident, the number of teachers/adults, schools and voters declined in 2005

Willow Award Participants	2002	2003	2004	% Change 2003-2004
Teachers/Adults	180	195	129	-34%
Schools	83	114	84	-26%
Libraries	2	1	5	+400%
Communities	59	61	73	+20%
Voters	5000	7521	5523	-27%

Following ballot counting, discussion was held regarding offering incentives to schools and students to encourage voting in 2006. I invite anyone interested in pursuing this idea further to contact me. A decision will have to be made before the ballots are published in the fall.

The Willow Awards is run entirely by volunteers, and we need more. In addition to the Board, there are committees to deal with on-going work such as the webpage, and selection of nominated books, more focused task forces to deal with issues such as outlining board member responsibilities and there are volunteers who help for one event or task. Thanks to everyone who assisted in 2004-2005.

My years as founding president of the Willow Awards have been immensely rewarding. I intend to remain on the Board as Past President and focus on documenting policy and procedures, but I would like to thank all the Board Members and Volunteers who helped birth and nurture this organization. You are tremendous. I would also like to thank our patrons, The Book and Brier Patch, SaskEnergy, SaskCulture, and Saskatchewan Lotteries, as well as our sponsors, McNally Robinson Booksellers and National Book Service and the Saskatchewan Library Association. Finally, I would like to thank all who participated in reading and voting.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marion Perry

## Vice-President Report – Lynn Gilbert

As vice-president I have:

1. Served on the Shining Willow selection committee for 2005
2. I was also on the organizing committee and was the emcee for the “Books and Buffet” dinner
3. Liasoned with the gala committee.
4. Assisted with the author visitation scheduling
5. Attended all of the SYRCA board meetings.
6. Book talked the Shining Willow Books for SLA and SSLA.

I have been with the awards since its inception, but will not be able to serve on the Executive this coming year. These awards are an important tool for encouraging literacy in our province. This organization has accomplished a lot in the last three years; I am proud to be able to serve with so many capable people.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lynn Gilbert

**SYRCA -- THE SASKATCHEWAN YOUNG READERS CHOICE AWARDS  
FINANCIAL STATEMENT  
FISCAL YEAR ENDING MARCH 31, 2005**

Balance at March 31, 2004

**\$6,052.58**

**INCOME**

Grants	\$8,050.00
Sponsorships	\$1,000.00
Memberships	\$2,825.00
Fundraising	\$7,588.00
Stickers/Kits	\$1,782.00
GST Rebate	\$501.78

**\$21,746.78**

**DISBURSEMENTS**

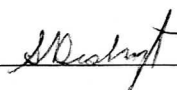
Meeting Expenses	\$2,539.14
Office Expenses	\$823.64
Award Expenses	\$1,027.78
Award Function Expenses	\$1,664.54
Corp/Rev. Canada/	
Audit Expenses	\$110.00
Marketing	\$167.28
Fundraising	\$3,058.61
Poster/Ballots	\$5,281.52
Stickers/Kits	\$403.40
Author Expenses	\$2,646.12
Web Site expenses	\$110.20
Bank Error	\$50.00

**\$17,882.23**

Balance at Mar. 31/05

**\$9,917.13**

Checked and verified by: S. Dishington  
April 19, 2005



## **The Willow Awards Fund Raising Annual Report**

### **Summary of Activities June 2004-April 2005**

#### **Corporations**

SaskEnergy has once again donated \$2,000 to sponsor the 2004-2005 Awards ceremony in Regina. A representative of SaskEnergy has been invited to speak at the Awards ceremony.

WestJet was approached to donate travel certificates to the Regina fund-raising dinner but they declined.

Book and Brier Patch, a Regina bookstore and book distributor once again contributed \$1,000. McNally Robinson in Saskatoon donated \$500.

NBS donated cash and a complete set of nominated books.

A request for funding was made to Ipsco and Teachers' Credit Union but both declined.

#### **Associations**

SSLA donated \$500. A request for funding to Regina Retired Teachers Association was declined.

#### **Funding Agencies**

The third annual application to SaskCulture was sent in early January 2005 but as of this date we have not received any information on its status. The final payment from our second annual grant will be received in May 2005, after the submission of our annual report. This is the final year of funding for this grant.

#### **Other Fund-Raising**

A third Willow Awards fund-raising dinner, "Noodles and Books" was held in Regina on March 18. Over 70 people attended this delightful evening. A silent auction was part of the evening, with many great prizes up for auction. The event raised over \$2,000. There were also some personal memberships and donations as a result of the evening. Many thanks to Eleanor Matz, Marion Perry, Muriel Drew and Hazel Zaharik for arranging the evening.

A dinner was also held in Saskatoon on January 21. It too was very successful. We hope it will become an annual event. (See the included report.) Thanks to SYRCA Inc. Board members who solicited door prizes and auction items. The dinners are very successful fund-raising initiatives and contribute a great deal to the Willow Awards.

### **Books and Buffet – Saskatoon Willow Award Fundraiser**

The Saskatoon Fundraiser for Willow Awards was held at the Park Town Hotel in the Oak Room on Friday, January 21, 2005 at 6:30 p.m. 87 people were in attendance. Lynn Gilbert chaired the evening. Elspeth Dormuth ran the silent auction. Carol Thiessen did bookings and tickets. Katy Sharman, Elspeth Dormuth and Sheree Rutherford were in charge of preparing items for auction and setting up although all of us worked together to gather items. We received over 100 donations from different businesses and individuals. We raffled a large print that brought in a goodly amount. We cleared over two thousand dollars (\$2000.00). The evening was fun and successful.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carol Thiessen

Marion Perry organized draws for books at conferences and raised approximately \$350. Thanks to Chris MacLennan, Lorie Volk, Eleanor Matz, Marion Perry, Elsbeth Dormuth, Anne Brander and Kathy Sharman who helped with these draws.



### **The Future**

The following possibilities should be pursued in the future:

The "Raise a Reader" funds sponsored by newspapers are administered by the Saskatchewan Literacy Network. I have obtained the application deadlines for both Saskatoon and Regina.

Young Readers' Choice Awards in other provinces receive funding from the Hudson's Bay Charitable Foundation and RBC (Royal Bank) Foundation.

The Bay permits its customers to channel their shopping awards points to charitable and community organizations. SYRCA Inc. should consider this.

As always, any suggestions for fund-raising or corporate support would be gratefully received.

Respectfully submitted,  
Claire Isaac  
Fund-Raising Committee





## 2004 SaskEnergy Willow Awards Gala

On June 4, 2004 the second annual SaskEnergy Willow Awards Gala was held in Regina at Jack MacKenzie and St. Gabriel School Joint Gymnasium. Approximately 800 to 900 students, teachers and guests, including delegates from schools in Lake Lenore, Deep River, Moosomin and other Saskatchewan communities celebrated reading and Canadian books at the Gala.

The event began with a grand entrance of banners for the 30 nominated books and the nominated authors in attendance; there was music by the combined St. Gabriel and Jack MacKenzie Choir, student drummers, Umoja...One Heart, One Beat, and a power-point Academy Awards style awards presentation prepared by the students.

In an overwhelming response, over 7521 children and young people representing communities throughout our province, have chosen to award the following books winners of the 2003 Willow Awards:

- TJ and the Cats, by Hazel Hutchins (Shining Willow Award)
- Return of the Grudstone Ghosts, by Arthur Slade (Diamond Willow Award)
- Offside, by Cathy Beveridge (Snow Willow Award)

The 2003 Willow Awards' winning authors, Hazel Hutchins, Arthur Slade and Cathy Beveridge were honoured at the Gala and were presented with a sand cast glass replica of the Willow Awards Logo by artist, Jacqueline Berting.

The Gala was wonderful! The involvement and commitment of the staff and students of the two schools was amazing. It was a treat to walk down the hallway to witness the creativity of the students and the recognition of all the authors for their work.

Congratulations and thank you to the staff, students, and parent councils of St. Gabriel and Jack MacKenzie schools, and to the Willow Awards 2004 Gala Committee: Joanne Beltramini, chair, Susan Kohuch, Mary Sue Muldoon, Mary Scott, Chris Wilkie, Margaret Steger, Dawn Kesslering, and Marion Perry.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marion Perry

Hazel Hutchins with some students prior to the Gala.



## Willow Awards' Launch 2004

On Thursday afternoon, October 21, the students of Kincaid School (with the guidance of their dedicated staff) celebrated reading in a big way! This small rural school in southwest Saskatchewan, with a population of only ninety-three students K-12, took on a province-wide project when it hosted the official launch of the books nominated for the 2004 Willow Awards. The program was amazing!

The Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice Awards, better known as 'the Willows', consists of three separate awards given to the author of the book which the students of Saskatchewan vote as 'the best book' in its category. The Shining Willow Award is for the book selected by kindergarten to grade three students, the Diamond Willow is selected by grades four to six students, and the Snow Willow by grades seven to nine. Ten books are nominated for each award, and once the book titles are launched, the reading begins in earnest. There is a good deal of discussion about the relative merits of each book. Clearly, the decisions made prior to the students casting their votes are not made lightly.

To introduce the thirty nominees to the rest of the province, students Rochelle Haubrich and Keith MacKenzie hosted an extremely enjoyable ceremony. As the high school choir, directed by Glenda Jacobs, sang "Without Dreams How Can Wishes Come True", large posters of the book jackets were paraded into the gym carried by students of every age. The parade was followed by an excellent power point presentation of each book and its author. The big screen acted as a background as students personally introduced each book. The Shining Willow books became part of an interview between the primary students and their high school partners. For weeks these 'buddies' had been reading and discussing the books and spending time together colouring the book jackets. Some of the answers to the interview questions were truly unique. The Diamond Willow books were introduced by students in a giant book talk on stage, followed by high school students giving a précis of each of the Snow Willows nominees.

Mr. Creasy's Grade 3/4 class entertained the audience with two choral speaking works: "Willow" and "Grandma's Willow Tree". The poems were beautifully executed and reminded everyone of the reasons that the willow trees were chosen as the symbol for these awards. The children spoke of those cosy nooks in the arms of a willow where one can curl up with a good book, hidden from the view of the passing world. They mentioned the swinging motion of the trees that can lull you into an imaginary place of your own creation. It was particularly appropriate that one of the poems was written by a student.

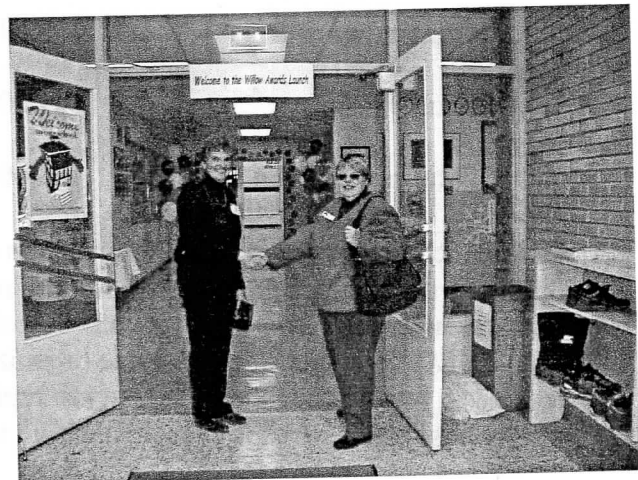
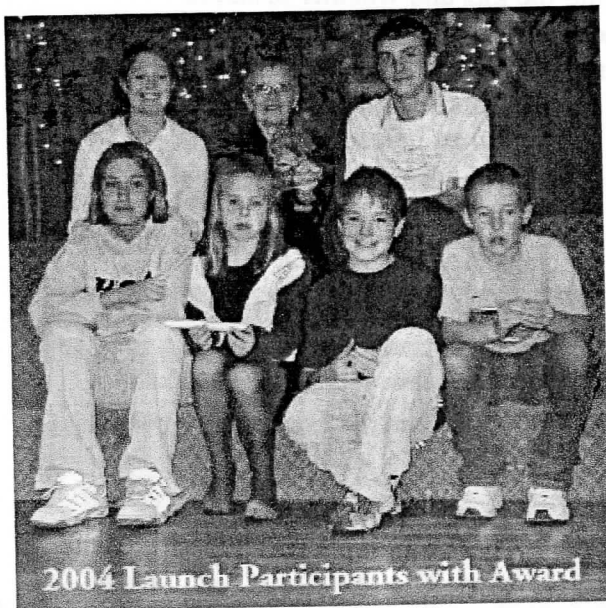
Following the ceremonies, the parents and guests of honour were treated to hors d'oeuvres and coffee -- all prepared by the students themselves. To say that the whole school participated in this project would not be stretching the truth. From painting the huge decorations that graced the gym walls to the ushering, greeting, colouring, cooking and videotaping, student participation was the norm. However, the real success of the program became apparent after it was all over.

Gathered around a display of the Willow books in the corner of the gym a group of students avidly discussed what they liked or disliked about the various books, and took pleasure in recommending their favourites to their friends. In addition, the statement from librarian, Aline Church, that she had "a terrible time getting the books from the students to put on display for the afternoon" spoke volumes about the engagement of the young people with the literature. She had to promise to return all books to their readers immediately after the ceremonies. In the hallway outside the school library students gathered around a bulletin board to read the messages received from authors all across Canada congratulating them on their celebration and wishing them well.

Kincaid School was the first in the province to have its Student Council take out a membership in the Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice Awards. They have been staunch supporters ever since, and are truly representative of the 7, 500 students who voted for the awards last year. Continued 'Happy Reading' will surely be a part of the Kincaid School program. Be sure to view further launch coverage online at [www.willowawards.ca](http://www.willowawards.ca).

In April of this year, Kincaid School was given a plaque of appreciation by SYRCA recognizing their efforts on behalf of the Willow Awards.

Respectfully submitted,  
Liz Roberts, SYRCALiaison



## Education Kit Reports 2004

Three education kits were prepared to accompany the 2004 lists of nominees. The Shining Willow kit was constructed in Regina with Chris MacLennan acting as editor. Elsbeth Dormuth was the editor for the Diamond Willow kit in Saskatoon, and Liz Roberts supervised the Snow Willow kit in Rockglen. A number of capable volunteers submitted materials for the kits and we thank them most sincerely for their efforts on behalf of the young readers of Saskatchewan.

The sales of the kits slumped in 2004. This may be partially due to the fact that we were unable to have them available for some important conferences because the dates for the conferences were very early last year. It might also be that we need to market the kits more efficiently. Kathy Sharman is presently surveying the people who purchased kits, and this survey may give us some answers. It will certainly help us decide whether or not to continue with the production of the kits.

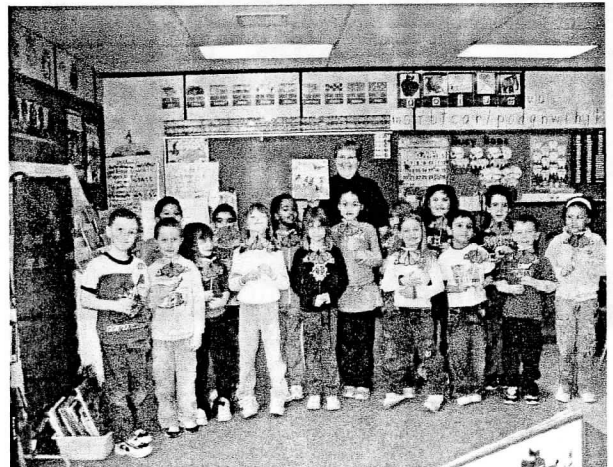
In 2004, we sold 27 Shining Willow Kits, 24 Diamond Willow and 14 Snow Willow. The economic breakdown is as follows:

Photocopying	\$100.00
Stickers, postage and folders	403.40
<b>Total expenditures</b>	<b>503.40</b>
Income:	1289.00
<b>Total profit from sales</b>	<b>785.60</b>

We invite comments from SYRCA members concerning the kits and whether or not to continue with their production. It is important to remember that the kits fulfill the requirement that the Board provide an educational component to its activities in order to retain SYRCA's status as a charitable organization. If we discontinue their production, we need to find an educational activity to replace the kits, and this, indeed, may be entirely possible -- perhaps even an exciting new direction for the Board.

Respectfully submitted,  
Liz Roberts

Donna Koch and her students from Dr. Hanna School read Marigold's Wings one of the books nominated for the Shining Willow Award. The class then helped Marigold fly all the way to Mexico.



### Shining Willow Education Package

The Shining Willow Education package for 2005 was organized by Chris MacLennan with help from the teacher-librarians and teachers of the Regina Public School Board. The following individuals helped by reading a book(s), and then writing the author and book pages.

Andra Donbrook	Kira Fladager
Janice Flaman	Elayne Fox
Chris MacLennan	Bonnie Miles
Betty O'Byrne	Gillian Sernich
Susan Whittick	

The work was then edited by Donna Koch.

A big thank you goes to all the volunteers who all work full time, but still give some of their valuable time to the Willows. The package could not have been completed without their help.

Respectfully submitted,  
Chris MacLennan

### Diamond Willow Education Packages

The Diamond Willow Educational Packages were prepared this year by teachers from the Davidson School Division. A big thank you goes to Shari Martin and Leanne White for developing the packages. Each took time from busy administrative and or teaching schedules to read the novels and developed activities centred around the selections. Input was received from the publishers regarding authors, and this was greatly appreciated. All of the authors were personally contacted and those that had the time to respond provided interesting anecdotes and valuable comments about their work.

Respectfully submitted,  
Elsbeth Dormuth



## Willow Awards Web Page Committee Report, 2004-2005

The Willow Awards' website has been updated, regularly to reflect Willow Award activities as they occur. The home page has featured the June 2004 SaskEnergy Willow Awards Gala at St. Gabriel and Jack MacKenzie Schools in Regina, the October 2004 Launch in Kincaid and the upcoming May 2005 Gala. The 2005 nominees, and the 2005 bookmark templates are posted. The ballots will be added in the fall. The site navigation has been refined and other behind the scenes work is being done.

Our webpage is an extremely popular way for people to learn about the Willow Awards. We have visitors from Argentina, Peru, Sweden, Singapore, Japan, Australia, Turkey and many other countries, although the majority are from Canada. The table below shows website activity from May 2004 up to April 14, 2005.

<b><u>www.willowawards.ca</u> Activity May 2004 to Apr. 14, 05</b>		
<b>Month</b>	<b>Average Daily Hits</b>	<b>Total Monthly Hits</b>
to Apr. 14, 2005	863	12,090
March 2005	733	22,726
Feb. 2005	904	25,338
Jan. 2005	616	19,111
Dec. 2004	289	8,965
Nov. 2004	544	16,327
Oct. 3004	477	13,836
Sept. 2004	442	13,272
Aug. 2004	186	5,795
July 2004	233	7,249
June 2004	391	11,730
May 2004	297	9,221
<b>Total</b>		<b>165,660</b>

I would like to thank our website committee: Kathy Stedwill, Val Gerrard, Antonia Gisler, and Eleanor Matz for their wonderful work.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marion Perry

## Selection Committee Annual Reports 2004/2005

### Shining Willow Award

#### Selection Committee Members

Carry Dueck	Elsbeth Dormuth
Jane Glen	Ione Langlois
Florence Barton	Lynn Gilbert
Verna Demers	Sandra Ellis Rollack
Jessica Latshaw	Susan Voitka-Seager
Judith Benninger	Cheryl Smith
Terry Clark	Kathy Sharman
Denise Rossmo-Wiegers	Carol Thiessen
Valerie Blain	

The selection committee met for its first meeting on November 29th at 4:30 p.m. in the library at Dr. John G. Egnatoff School. We seemed to have fewer submissions from the publishers this year. We also accepted possible suggestions from members of the selection committee. We spent four to five 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 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting was held on December 20th 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 a shortened list was established. The Shining Willow list had 19 titles. The books were again distributed and all committee members went away to read as many of the books on the list as possible.

Members present: Ione Langlois, Florence Barton, Denise Rossmo-Wiegers, Susan Voitka-Seager, Jane Glen, Hedio Borne, Kathy Sharman, Lynn Gilbert, Verna Demers, Carol Thiessen.

The third meeting was held on January 10th at McNally Robinsons. After much deliberation the final list was compiled. Attention was given to the criteria such as genre, gender, aboriginal content, reading level and interest level as outlined in our policy document.

Members Present: Judith Benninger, Jessica Latshaw, Hedio Borne, Florence Barton, Denise Rossmo-Wiegers, Terry Clark, Ione Langlois, Sandra Ellis Rollack, Kathy Sharman, Jane Glen, Susan Voitka-Seager, Elsbeth Dormuth, Cheryl J. Smith, Lynn Gilbert, Carol Thiessen.

The final list was presented for approval to the SYRCA Inc. Board by email since the meeting to be held on January 22, 2005 had to be postponed due to inclement weather.

### Shining Willow Nominations 2005

Arsenault, Elaine. *Doggie in the Window*. Toronto : Douglas & McIntyre, 2004.  
Karleen Bradford. *You Can't Rush a Cat*. Victoria, BC: Orca, 2003.  
Gay, Marie-Louise. *Stella : Princess of the Sky*. Toronto : Douglas & McIntyre, 2004.  
Harris, Dorothy Joan. *A Very Unusual Dog*. North Winds Press/Scholastic, 2004.  
Heidbreder, Robert. *Drumheller Dinosaur Dance*. Kids Can Press, 2004.  
Hutchins, Hazel. *The Sidewalk Rescue*. Annick Press, 2004.  
Maybarduk, Linda. *James the Dancing Dog*. Toronto, ON: Tundra, 2004.  
Oppel, Kenneth. *Peg and the Yeti*. Toronto, ON: HarperCollins, 2004.  
Patterson, Heather. *A Poppy is to Remember*. Markham, ON: North Winds Press/Scholastic Canada, 2004.  
Wishinsky, Frieda. *A Noodle Up Your Nose*. Victoria, BC: Orca, 2004.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carol Thiessen and Lynn Gilbert

### Diamond Willow Award

#### Selection Committee Members:

Carol Adams Librarian (retired)  
Dennis Andrews Chemist  
Marilyn Andrews Librarian  
Jane Blackett Librarian  
Wilfred Burton Instructor at Gabriel Dumont Institute(formerly an elementary school teacher in the Regina Public Schools)  
Margaret Johannsson Accountant  
Elizabeth Magee APT Library Staff Member U of R  
Leslie Polsom Librarian  
Leslie Pominville Teacher  
Marian Powell Librarian  
Gwen Schirr Teacher

The Committee was made up of an enthusiastic group of teachers, librarians and parents. Some of the members have indicated a desire to be readers again next year.

Because the books arrived over a three-month period, approximately, the actual distribution of the books did not happen until mid-December. This required the readers to approach the project at a higher level of intensity than had been anticipated. (The teachers said the only time they would be able to read them was over the Christmas break so that was fine with them.)

Due to the number of titles, the number of readers and the quick deadline to meet in mid-January, Marilyn arbitrarily distributed the books. The original plan was to meet and allow people to choose what they wanted to read. The method was efficient and the readers were agreeable to it. It also avoided the problem of having to retrieving books from various people to pass on to someone else.

Most of the Committee read a lengthy list of titles. All of the books that were ultimately selected were read by three or more readers.

There were many excellent books and the decision to eliminate several of them was quite difficult. The Committee felt that several of the ones that were published in 2004 should be reconsidered next year while still eligible.

The fact that the books cover a wide range of reading levels and the same can be said about the readers, it is challenging to put the list together. One does not want the books to appeal only to those in grades 4 at the exclusion of those in grade 6, for example.

Perhaps teachers or teacher-librarians could be allowed to make exceptions for children who are either reluctant or advanced readers, to read at the level most appropriate for their abilities meaning that in some cases they may read in a different awards category.

### **Diamond Willow Nominations 2005**

Belgue, Nancy. *The Scream of the Hawk*. Victoria, Orca Book Publishers, c2003. 1551432579 \$8.95  
<http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol10/no3/thescreamofthehawk.html>

Griggs, Terry. *The Silver Door*. Vancouver, Raincoast Books, c2004. 1551926857 \$12.95  
<http://www.umanitoba.ca/cm/vol10/no20/thesilverdoor.html>

Hegner, Barbara. *The Tunnel King*. Toronto, Harper-Trophy, c2004. 0006394779, \$9.99.  
<http://www.umanitoba.ca/cm/vol11/no5/thetunnelking.html>

Meikle, Marg. *Ask Me Anything!* Toronto, Scholastic Canada, c2004. 0439989094 \$7.99  
<http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol10/no19/askmeanything.html>

Olsen, Sylvia. *Catching Spring*. Victoria, Orca Book Publishers, c2004. 1551432986 \$7.95  
<http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol11/no4/catchingspring.html>

Perkins, Dorothy. *Last Days in Africville*. Vancouver, Beach Holme Publishing, c2003. 0-88878-446-5 \$9.95  
<http://www.umanitoba.ca/cm/vol10/no14/lastdaysinafricville.html>

Rose, Simon. *The Sorcerer's Letterbox*. Vancouver, Tradewind Books, c2004. 1896580521 \$9.95  
<http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol11/no2/thesorcerersletterbox.html>

Smith, Linda. *The Minstrel's Daughter*. Regina, Coteau Books, c2004. 15505309X \$9.95  
<http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol11/no8/theminstrelsdughter.html>

Supene, Shelagh Lynne. *My Name is Mitch*. Victoria, Orca Book Publishers, c2003. 1551432552 \$8.95.  
<http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol10/no1/mynameismitch.html>  
gr. 5-9

Woods, Shirley. Amber, *The Story of a Red Fox*. Markham, Fitzhenry & Whiteside, c2004. 1550418114 hc  
\$19.95, 155041-810-6 pb  
<http://www.umanitoba.ca/cm/vol10/no18/amber.html>  
gr. 2-5

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Andrews

Elizabeth Magee

Co-chairs Diamond Willow Awards Selection Committee

## Snow Willow Award

### Members of the Committee:

Anne Gaboury, superannuated teacher  
Virginia Gray, Principal, Shellbrook Schools  
Debra Kuzbik, Director, Parkland School Division  
Glenys Martin, Grade 6 teacher at W.P. Sandin Composite School  
Linda Mazurkewich, librarian, Shellbrook Public Library  
Melissa Person, Grade 9 student, W.P. Sandin Composite School  
Pat Sontag, superannuated teacher  
Deborah Mervold, chairperson, Willow Awards Board Member

This year the committee was very pleased with both the number of selections and the quality of the selections. A total of 83 books were considered. An additional eleven titles were rejected because of copyright date. The focus was on books for Grades 7 to 9 which made the selection process narrower than it had been in the past. The committee feels that there is a good blend of fiction and nonfiction, male and female protagonists, subject matter, writing style and age appeal.

### Snow Willow Nominations 2005

Martini, Clem. (2004). *The Mob*. Toronto: Kids can Press  
ISBN 1-55337-574-2 \$16.95

A Gathering during the spring migration brings together hundreds of crows to the Gathering Tree. Usually a time of joy and celebration, the order and unity is threatened when Kyp, a young crow, stages an attack on a neighbourhood cat. When a young newling is killed, Kyp is punished by the flock and is exiled. Not everyone agrees with the punishment, and when a blizzard suddenly occurs, Kyp is called upon to save the flock.

McKay, Sharon E. (2004) *Esther*. Toronto: Penguin Group  
ISBN 0-14-331204-0 \$12.99

This is the fictionalized story of Esther Brandeau, a Jewish teenager who journeys to New France in the 1730's disguised as a boy. In 1738, Intendant Gilles Hocquart questions a prisoner who has a miniature portrait of King Louis XV, which is framed in gold. He is puzzled how a young boy has come into possession of such a valuable item. Upon investigation, he realizes that the boy is a girl. The book then relays the "historical imagining" of Esther's flight from St. Esprit, France three years earlier to escape an arranged marriage.

Oppel, Kenneth. (2004). *Airborne*. Toronto: HarperCollins Canada  
ISBN 0-00-200537-9 \$22.99

Matt is the cabin boy aboard the luxury airship, the Aurora. He has dreams to become an assistant sail maker, then sail maker and eventually a captain. When they encounter a hot air balloon with an injured pilot, Matt proves his worth as a crewman when he makes a daring rescue. The pilot dies after telling Matt that Kate, his daughter, would love the beautiful creatures he has seen flying through the sky. A year later, Kate de Vries arrives to prove that the creatures are real. Their adventures lead them to an island with a deadly cat and a ship of pirates. They must escape and warn the Aurora or be ransomed by the pirates.



O'Reilly, Gillian. (2004). *Slangalicious*. Richmond Hill, Ontario: Annick  
ISBN 1-55037-764-7 \$14.95

This nonfiction book is subtitled, *Where We Got That Crazy Lingo*. The eleven chapters include interesting slang expressions through the years with their meaning and history. The chapters are divided by themes such as "Thumbs Up" where the positive aspects of slang are explored and "The Boob Tube, the Flicks, and the Funnies" which looks at slang from the television, music, movies and comic strips. A first person narrative links the chapters. An index, suggestions for further reading and selected sources are also included.

Poulsen, David A. (2004) *Last Sam's Cage*. Toronto: Key Porter Books  
ISBN 1-55253-611-9 \$15.95

Eddie is a fifteen-year-old break and enter thief. When Steve, his mom's boyfriend, becomes abusive, Eddie knows that he must run away to save his life. He runs to the Calgary Zoo where he meets Jack. Eddie follows Jack home and discovers clippings about the murder of an eight year old near the zoo in 1959. In his adventure, Eddie discovers his own strength and true friendship from an unexpected source.

Reekie, Jocely. (2004). *The Week of the Horse*. Vancouver, B.C: Raincoast Books ISBN 1-55192-655-5 \$12.95

Twelve-year-old Paulie loves horses. More than anything she wants her own horse. When the stable she helps with is being torn down, all the horses are going to be auctioned. Paulie is devastated. Duke, an older horse, is her favourite. She exercises Duke regularly. She thinks that Duke will be sold to Railway Three to be slaughtered. Paulie pleads with her parents and her nana to lend her the money to buy Duke. Paulie discovers that when you get what you want, the results are not always what you expect.

Schwartz, Virginia Frances. (2003) *Initiation*. Markham, Ontario: Fitzhenry and Whiteside ISBN 1-55005-054-0 \$12.95

Nana, and her twin brother, Nanolatch live in an imaginary Kwakiutl village far north of Vancouver, B.C. They are the children of the chief and have important roles to play in the survival of their tribe. Noh, is a young girl from the Salish tribe who is a slave in the Kwakiutl village. The three become part of the legend that saves the salmon so that the tribe will survive.

Shapiro and Forrester. (2003). *Ultra Hush-Hush*. Richmond Hill, Ontario: Annick Press. ISBN 1-55037-778-7 \$19.95

This is a nonfiction selection and the first book in the series, *Outwitting the Enemy: Stories from the Second World War*. The subtitle is Espionage and Special Missions. This book includes a time line, maps, biographies, a glossary and an index. The information is divided into four main sections with 4 to 6 shorter sections included in each main section. Illustrations are included extensively throughout the text. Text boxes add extra information on the topics.

Sherrard, Valerie. (2004) *Sam's Light*. Toronto: The Dundurn Group.  
ISBN 1-55002-535-X

Cole Fennety is fourteen years old and wants a job to buy a Kona Bicycle. When summer holidays arrive, Cole applies at Sam's Shop, which handles all types of farming materials. Sam

Kerrigan is a gruff senior citizen who is different than he appears to be. Cole learns the value of friendship and honour as he works for Sam, separates from his best friend, Wayne, explores a relationship with a girl and learns a secret about his grandparents. His grandfather's words, "you never really knew a man until you worked for him" were proved correct.

Stratton, Allan. (2004) *Chandra's Secrets*. Toronto: Ontario: Annick Press ISBN 1-55037-834-1 \$11.95

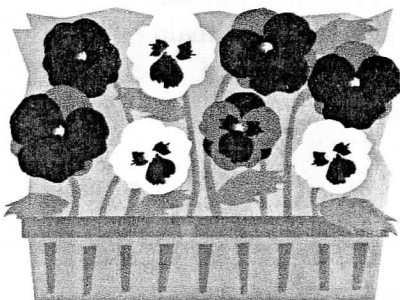
Chandra is a sixteen-year-old girl who is dealing with many challenges. Her baby sister, Sara, has just died and Chandra is sent to make funeral arrangements. Her family lives in Africa where AIDS has hit almost every family and yet no one wants to talk about. Her sister and brother need her help and guidance, her friend, Esther, is living dangerously, her mother is sick and has gone to her home village and her step father is drunk. Chandra puts aside her dreams for education to fight for AIDS awareness in a country torn apart by fear and denial.

One concern that the committee voiced was the number of selections that arrived late in October. The time frame is very short to complete the reading in a fair and timely manner.

I enjoyed working with this committee and commend them on their dedication to reading and their sincere efforts on behalf of Saskatchewan youth.

Respectfully submitted,  
Deborah Mervold

**Thank You to Our Volunteers!**  
**Your dedication and support are helping us to provide opportunities for many Saskatchewan children and youth to experience the pleasures of reading.**



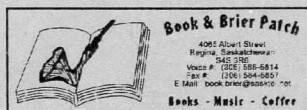
Thank you also to the many volunteers whose pictures we were unable to obtain.



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