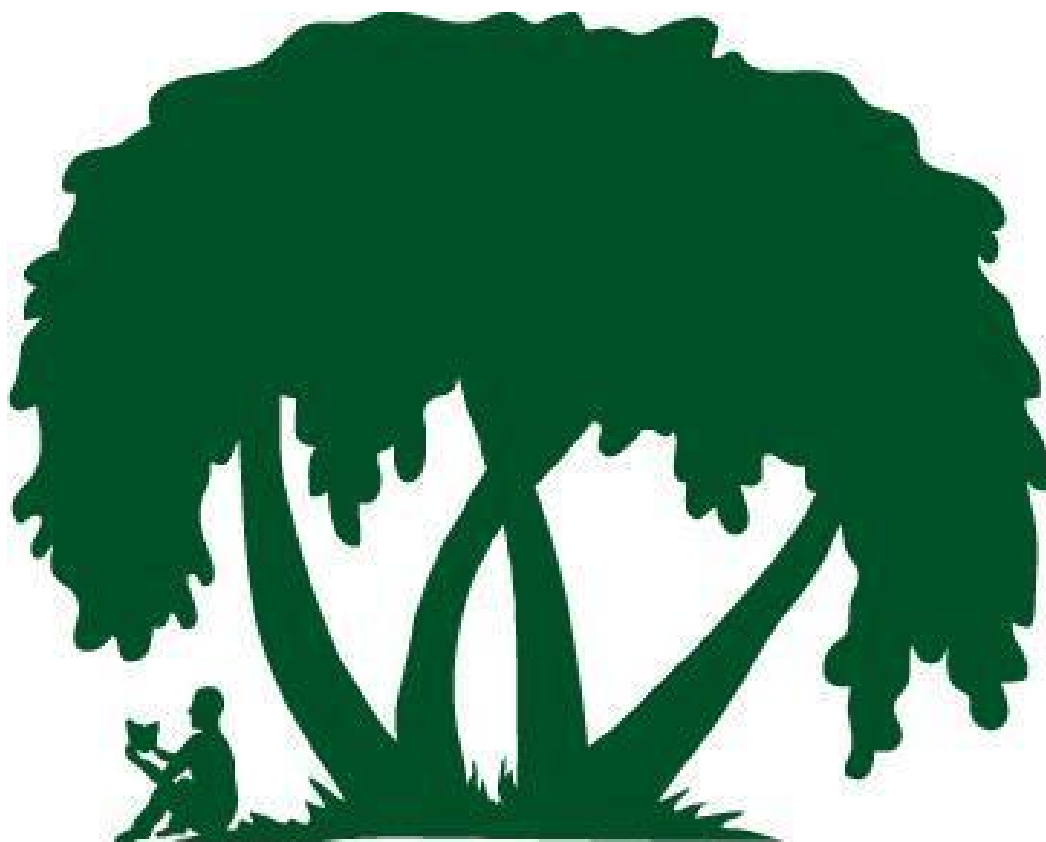


# **SASKATCHEWAN YOUNG READERS' CHOICE AWARDS**



## **THE WILLOW AWARDS ANNUAL REPORT 2013 – 2014**

**Curl up with a good book – a Willow nominated  
book**





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**President: Ruth Garnett, Saskatoon**

**Vice-President A: Ann Atchison, Saskatoon**

**Vice-President B: Tammie Latimer, Yorkton**

**Treasurer: Donna Koch, Regina**

**Secretary: Melody Wood, Yorkton**

**Fundraising Officer: Naomi Kral, Regina**

**Past President: Florence Barton, Saskatoon**

**Directors at Large:**

**Sherry Chase, Regina**

**Leanne Forrest, Regina      Val Gerrard, Regina**

**Margot Mack, Regina      Jocelyn Mark Provost, La Ronge**

**Kathie Tenold, Air Ronge      Erin Walton, Regina**

**Director SLA Rep: Cassandra Mireau, Saskatoon      Director SRC Rep: Pam Foy, Moosomin**



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 website 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.



Effective strategic planning requires us to focus on a few key priorities, while at the same time continuing to attend to all the important areas that relate to our mandate as outlined in our mission statement. A priority is often carried out over more than one year. SYRCA’s complete planning document is found on the website at <http://www.willowards.ca/about-syrca>.

<b>Organizational Structure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Task &amp; Responsibilities</li> <li>● Board Meetings</li> </ul> <b>Fiscal Responsibility</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Budget</li> <li>● Fund Development</li> </ul> <b>Communications</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Website</li> <li>● Posters, Bookmarks</li> <li>● Internal Communications</li> <li>● External Communications</li> <li>● Conferences</li> </ul>	<b>Sustainability</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Membership</li> <li>● Board Memberships, Human Resources, Volunteers</li> <li>● Executive Director ---paid position</li> </ul> <b>Program</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Book Selection</li> <li>● Gala – winning authors’ attendance, reading at host Schools</li> <li>● Launch</li> <li>● Educational Activities</li> </ul>
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The Saskatchewan Young Readers’ Choice Awards, “The Willow Awards” Inc. Board of Directors met five times during the 2013 – 2014 year. We are pleased that all 15 positions on the Board were filled this year. Midway through the year we accepted Margot Mack’s resignation, and appointed Leanne Forrest (Regina) to fill the position for the remainder of the term.

## **Organizational Structure**

We acknowledge the provincial nature of our board and make every effort to recruit board members from across Saskatchewan. To facilitate our geographical distance, we hold meetings by SKYPE conference calls if we are not able to meet face to face. We continue to work toward a practical and equitable division of board related tasks. During the 2013 – 2014 fiscal year, the Board continued to review and update our Policy Manual, which will be available from our new website.

## **Fiscal Responsibility**

The positive financial statement reflects the Board's serious attention to fiscal responsibility. The very successful fundraising campaign under the leadership of Board member Naomi Kral provided funds to provide programming and further improve the Willow website. The Board continues to promote SYRCA membership through local fundraisers each year. Board members and volunteers also set up displays and offer book talks at events such as conferences and meetings. A small reserve fund provides a measure of fiscal security for SYRCA.

## **Communication**

The Willow Awards website is the major communication tools for the public, publishers and authors. It is continuously evaluated and updated to meet the increasing demands of an online world. Thank you to web chair Val Gerrard for her knowledgeable leadership, and direction in the development of our new website. We distribute posters and bookmarks by mail to every school division, for distribution to every school in the province, in addition to all public libraries. This year we also included temporary tattoos in our mail outs, which were very favourably received. SYRCA news continues to be posted regularly on the website.

## **Sustainability**

SYRCA continues to promote The Willow Awards across the province and voter numbers increase each year, a measure that the program is growing. Attempts to recruit Board members from different areas of Saskatchewan have been successful and are ongoing. We continue to expand the membership and volunteer base.

## **Programming**

The Willow Awards receives many positive comments about book selection, related activities found on the website, events like the launch and gala and prizes offered to classrooms and individual students. A great deal of attention is directed to activities and rewards that will encourage children to be lifelong readers.

After the voting deadline this year, a survey was sent to all voters. Questions were asked regarding awareness of aspects of the program, willingness to offer financial support, and asking for suggestions to



improve the program. In the fall, we hope to develop a new five-year plan that will incorporate voters' suggestions.

SYRCA "The Willow Awards" Inc. appreciates the generous support of our patrons, sponsors, donors, friends and members. On behalf of the SYRCA Board of Directors, I would like to thank each of you for your commitment to literacy and the children of Saskatchewan. I would also like to thank the volunteer Board members who have devoted countless hours to ensure the success of the organization. They are a creative, hardworking group of people who cheerfully share their time, talents and endless enthusiasm for fulfilling the SYRCA mandate, to promote reading among Saskatchewan children and youth. This has been my third year as president and I would like to thank the Board members for their support and encouragement in allowing me to fill this role.

The SYRCA Annual Report reflects the success of the 2013 – 2014 operating year. Minutes of the 2012 – 2013 Annual General Meeting will be available at the May 24, 2014 Annual General Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ruth Garnett,  
President



It seems that fundraising is a necessary fact of life if the Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice Awards – Willow Awards Inc. continues in its endeavor to promote reading for children in the province. As the fundraising officer, I develop a package of materials and include a letter to highlight the activity around

the province and how the Board needs the continued support of patrons from various locations and sectors such as agricultural, mining, financial institutions, educational institutions and the media. This year a number of online applications were made to a variety of organizations.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to acknowledge the continued support of our Gold Patron namely, PotashCorp, who contributed \$5,000 to help promote reading in the province. Silver Patrons donating \$3000 or more include Evraz, Conexus Credit Union, and The Leader Post and The Star Phoenix. SaskEnergy has promoted the Willows Gala from the start and contributes \$3500 as a Silver Patron. Book and Brier Patch, Areva, Cameco, Garnett Industries Limited, SGI, Redhead Equipment, and United Library Services returned as Bronze patrons contributing \$1000 each and we are very grateful for their support. We continue to look for support from new patrons around the province and we welcome H.J. Linnen as a new Gold Patron for 2014.

This year the Board did a survey with people who submitted votes for the winning authors. An interesting misconception people articulated within the survey was that they thought school boards were making donations to help send out posters to their schools. The reality is that the SYRCA Board has been handling these costs through provincial fundraising.

Buffet and Books, a fundraising dinner, was held in Regina on April 9, 2014 with guest author, Melanie Schnell speaking about the importance of communication with characters in a novel. As the fundraising officer, I think it is important for me to communicate that SYRCA needs more support across Saskatchewan in rural and urban areas to continue to promote literacy for children in our province.

Please hit the “donate now” button on our website page to show your commitment to the Willow Awards in Saskatchewan.

Respectfully submitted,  
Naomi Kral  
Fundraising Officer



Stickers are one-inch square circles with our Willow logo imprinted on it. These are available on black background for nominated books and on gold foil background for the winners. They can be ordered by downloading a copy of our order form from our website. Since April 2013, we have sold a total of \$922.00 worth of stickers. Compared to the \$1,152.45 sold in 2012 – 2013, annual sticker sales are down by 20% or \$240.45.







Every year, Saskatchewan schools and public libraries are invited to participate in a province-wide launch of the Willow nominees. During October and November participants can enter a competition to win a complete set of 30 nominated books by submitting a photo (photos) and/or a description of their local launch. Winners are randomly drawn. This year's winners were Tracy Aulie from Clive Draycott School (Bethune), Christine Steigbeil, Mossbank School (Mossbank), and Kimberley Black, William Mason School (Choiceland). Honourable mention went to Tracy Aulie, South Shore School (Regina Beach), Lori-Ann Stiglitz, St. Francis School (Prince Albert), and Donna Lindstrom, Grant Road School (Regina), each receiving a box of 30 assorted books.



Board Members readying winning boxes of books







*Goal – Strategic Plan:* Maintain and enhance the current website.



The website is the key communication tool with the membership and participants in the Willow Awards. Thanks to the generous donation of HJ Linnen Associates who developed, hosts and maintains it, a new website was launched on March 7, 2014. It is still under development with the full site available by the summer of 2014.

The Willow program continues to grow in popularity with over 700 more students casting votes this year than last, totaling 13,354 for the 2013 Willow nominees.

The generous funding provided by our corporate sponsors is gratefully appreciated and ensures the existence and growth of the website.

Respectfully submitted  
Val Gerrard  
Web Committee Chair



Each year the Willow Awards gauges the success of its main objective to promote reading to Saskatchewan children by the voting for the nominees. After a slight decline in voting last year, voting numbers showed an increase. The increase was such that the number was the highest over the past five years. Reaching more children throughout the province, particularly in rural areas is a primary interest. With 13,354 votes being cast, this has been a very successful year for the Willow Awards. Thank you to the patrons and sponsors who make the Willow Awards possible.

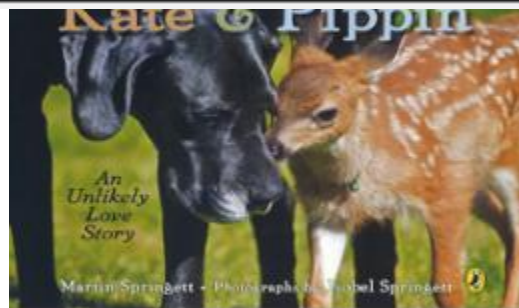
Votes by Category	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	% CHANGE
SHINING	9,326	10,582	11,270	10,871	11,839	8.9%
DIAMOND	1,239	1,252	1,400	1,145	1,092	-4.6%
SNOW	526	520	593	602	423	-29%



TOTAL VOTES	11,101	12,534	13,293	12,618	13,354	5.8%
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**“Thanks for giving us  
the opportunity to participate. I get so  
much  
positive feedback from both  
the students and teachers.”**

Adele Green, Outlook



# **SHINING WILLOW**

## **KATE & PIPPIN: AN UNLIKELY LOVE STORY**

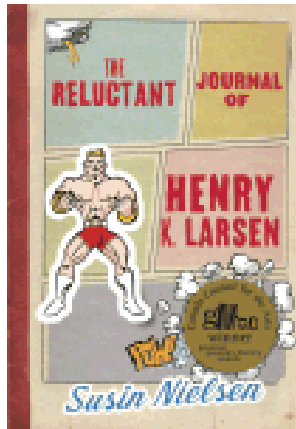
BY MARTIN SPRINGETT,  
ILLUSTRATED BY ISOBEL SPRINGETT



# **DIAMOND WILLOW**

## **PETER NIMBLE & HIS FANTASTIC EYES**

BY JONATHAN AUXIER



# **SNOW WILLOW**

## **THE RELUCTANT JOURNAL OF HENRY K. LARSEN**

BY SUSIN NIELSEN

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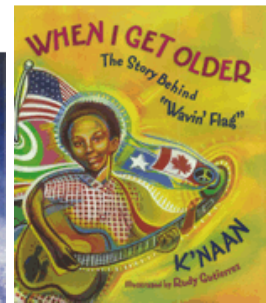
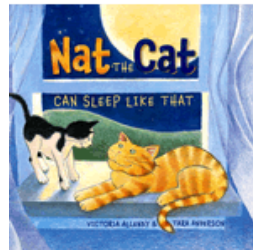
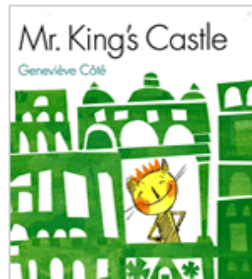
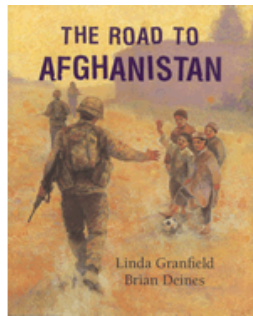
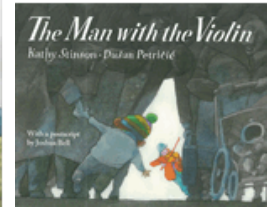
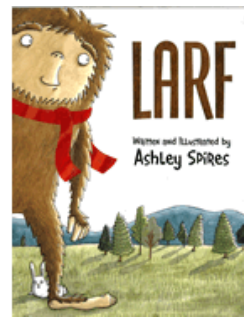
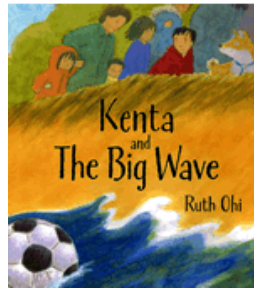
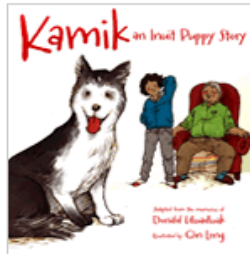
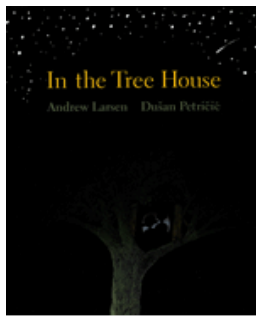
### **REPORT**

Each year the task of selecting the ten nominees for the following year falls to a committee of teachers, public and school librarians, and others who are devoted to and knowledgeable about Canadian children's literature. This year the committee consisted of 10 active readers from Yorkton, Melville and Regina who read 124 books to consider for the 2014 Shining Willow Nominees. We met several times between November 2013 and January 2014 to discuss the books. After careful consideration of content, interest, illustrations and overall quality as well as overall variety, we have put forward the final selection of the ten titles for the 2014 Shining Willows, which are listed below.

We would like to thank all our committee members for their time, their expertise, experience and thoughtful reading that they brought to the selection committee.

Respectfully submitted,  
Tammie Latimer and Melody Wood  
Shining Selection Committee Co-chairs.

## **THE SHINING WILLOW NOMINEES 2014**



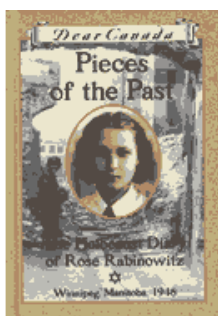
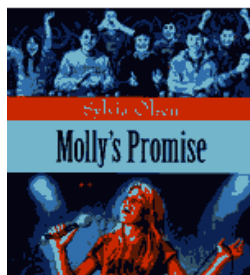
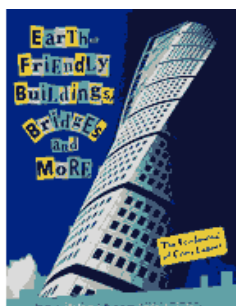
This year the Diamond Willow Reading Committee consisted of 10 readers, a social worker, a teacher librarian, two retired teachers, a retired library worker, a money relationship manager, three library workers, and a teaching assistant. Reading was fun and group discussions were lively. Meetings were held at the La Ronge Public Library with some reviewers using SKYPE.

Over all, we considered 111 titles this year, of which 68 we removed outright; 19 were sent up to Snow Willow Committee; 14 were sent down to Shining committee; 11 titles of which we received double copies; and the 10 nominees. We have 30 titles that carry over to next year, most of which arrived after the October 31<sup>st</sup> deadline. Our 10 nominees are listed below.

Thank you to our reviewers for all their reading and for their time adding their comments to the Wiki and to our lively discussions at the meetings.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jocelyn Provost  
Diamond Willow Committee Chair

## THE DIAMOND WILLOW NOMINEES 2014



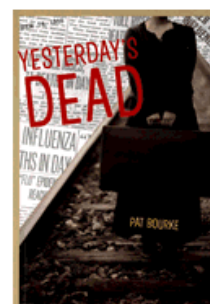
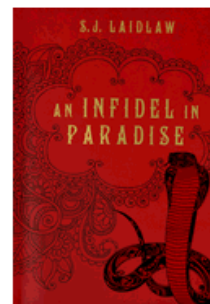
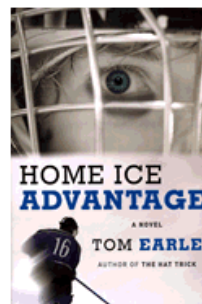
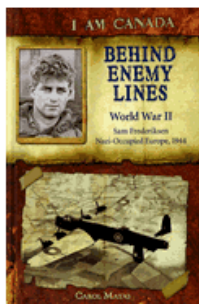
The Snow Committee considered 106 titles this year for the 2014 Snow Willow award. 22 were from 2012 and 84 were from 2013. We have carried over 13 titles that were submitted too late for consideration.

Thank you to our committee of diligent readers, which consisted of: Ruth Garnett, Florence Barton, Yvonne Denomy, Ruth Elliot, Naomi Kral, Sherry Chase, and myself. Earlier in the year we lost one of our readers due to personal reasons.

Our nominees are presented below.

Respectfully submitted by

## THE SNOW WILLOW NOMINEES 2014



### April 24, 2013 – Excitement is radiating from Davidson School - SaskEnergy Willow Awards Gala Day has arrived!

Davidson School was chosen to host the 2013 SaskEnergy Willow Awards Gala to announce the winners of the 2012 nominees. Months of thought and preparation went into the planning of this exciting celebration. The school was full of student work showcasing just how excited the students were about all thirty of the nominated books. It was also full of enthusiastic children and staff who were so proud to be hosting this wonderful party. The Shining students were clad in green, the Diamond students sparkled in blue and the Snow was represented by middle years students dressed in white.



The students and guests from visiting schools and the community gathered in the gym to await the “Parade of Dignitaries”. It was especially exciting to welcome Her Honour, Lieutenant Governor Vaughn Solomon Schofield to Davidson School and the SaskEnergy Willow Awards Gala. Other special guests included the Mayor of Davidson, Clayton Schneider, Dr. Guy Tetrault Director of Education, and Trish Watier who represented SaskEnergy.



Lieutenant Governor Vaughn Solomon Schofield



SaskEnergy Representative Trish Watier

Following the parade of nominees and greetings from the dignitaries, students highlighted the 2012 Willow nominees with a program that included skits, songs and PowerPoint presentations. Each of the 30 book titles was skillfully woven into the program.

**And the winners are –**

#### **2012 Shining Willow Award – *Small Saul* by Ashley Spires**

Ashley accepted her award and thanked the students for choosing *Small Saul* as their favourite book from the 2012 nominated books.

#### **2012 Diamond Willow Award – *Missing* by Becky Citra**

Becky was also at the gala to accept her award and told the students how much a “children’s choice” award means to authors.

#### **2012 Snow Willow Award – *Held* by Edeet Ravel**

Edeet was not able to attend the gala but sent a message that was read to the students ‘...This prize is particularly meaningful to me because so many young readers participated, read books, voted. I am truly thrilled to be part of this wonderful event, if from a distance. Enormous thanks to everyone who made all this possible. Thank you for bringing books to readers and readers to books. May we continue to meet this way.’

Following the gala, the students were treated to cupcakes and juice in their classrooms and the adult guests were treated to a lovely tea in the library.

The Board of Directors of SYRCA would like to extend a huge Thank You to the staff and students of Davidson School, Gala chairs Debbie Jestin and Arlene Lowe and their committees who worked tirelessly to put together a wonderful celebration of the 2012 Willow Award nominees and winning books. We would also like to thank SaskEnergy for once again sponsoring this wonderful event.

Submitted by  
Florence Barton  
2013 Gala Liaison



Becky Citras



Ashley Spires



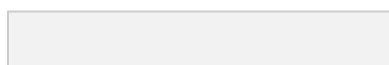
Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice Awards gratefully acknowledge our patrons, sponsors and friends for their financial support. The generous contributions made by those listed below have made the Willow Awards possible.



**SYRCA Gold Patrons have generously contributed \$5,000 or more:**



**SYRCA Silver Patrons have generously contributed \$3,000 to \$4,999:**



**LEADER-POST**

**The StarPhoenix**

**SYRCA Bronze Patrons have generously contributed \$1,000 to \$2999:**



**SYRCA Friends have generously contributed \$100 or more:**

<b>Ann Atchison</b>	<b>Colin O'Brian's Man's Shoppe</b>
<b>Ruth Garnett</b>	<b>Val Gerrard</b>
<b>Lynn Gilbert</b>	<b>Globe Theatre</b>
<b>Clair Isaac</b>	<b>Naomi Kral</b>
<b>Kramer's Hair Studio</b>	<b>McNally Robinson Bookstore</b>
<b>Margot Mack</b>	<b>Deborah Mervold</b>
<b>Photography by June McDonald</b>	<b>Sylvia Regnier</b>
<b>Sask. Reading Council</b>	<b>Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra</b>
<b>Superannuated Teachers of Saskatchewan, Regina Chapter</b>	
<b>Kathie Tenold</b>	<b>Willow on Wascana Restaurant</b>



# THE WILLOW AWARDS

