

SASKATCHEWAN YOUNG READERS' CHOICE AWARDS



THE WILLOW AWARDS ANNUAL REPORT 2015-2016

Get lost in a good book:



a Willow book, of course!

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BOARD MEMBERS 2015 – 2016

Co- President: Cassandra Mireau, Saskatoon

Co-President Amy Korver, Saskatoon

Vice-President A: Ann Atchison, Saskatoon

Vice-President B: Erin Walton, Regina

Treasurer: Yvonne Denomy, Saskatoon

Secretary: Melody Wood, Yorkton

Fundraising Officer: Amy Korver, Saskatoon

Past President: Ruth Garnett, Saskatoon

Directors at Large:

Donna Lindstrom, Regina

Leanne Forrest, Regina

Director SLA Rep: Catherine Howett, Regina

Director SRC Rep: Pam Foy, Moosomin



*Honouring retiring board members
of long standing.*



MISSION STATEMENT

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 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.

SYRCA – THE WILLOW AWARDS STRATEGIC PLAN

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.willowawards.ca/about-syrca>.

Organizational Structure <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Task & Responsibilities• Board Meetings Fiscal Responsibility <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budget• Fund Development Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Website• Posters, Bookmarks• Internal Communications• External Communications• Conferences	Sustainability <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Membership• Board Memberships, Human Resources, Volunteers• Executive Director ---paid position Programs <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Book Selection• Gala – winning authors’ attendance, reading at host Schools<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Launch• Educational Activities
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REPORT OF THE CO-PRESIDENTS, SYRCA INC. 2015 - 2016

The SYRCA Annual Report reflects the success of the 2015 – 2016 operating year. Minutes of the 2015 – 2016 Annual General Meeting will be available at the June 11, 2016 Annual General Meeting.

This year the board had 11 positions filled including new Co-Presidents, a new Vice President, and a new Treasurer. With the retirement of long time board members, this year has been a challenging, interesting, and exciting learning curve for us. We are incredibly proud of the work we have completed and the goals we have set for future years.

We began the year creating our Board Strategic Directions for 2015-2017. Our goal over the next three years is to increase the promotion and awareness of the Willow Awards across the province; utilize technology and social media in a relevant and meaningful way for voters, readers, teachers, librarians and the general public; and continue to develop a strong board and volunteer base.

Our social media (Twitter and Facebook), as well as our website, continue to be the major point of communication for public, publishers, and authors. We are working hard to continue to make it user friendly and as a “go-to” resource for anyone interested in the Willow Awards. We continue to publish and update all new articles on all three. Every fall, we distribute posters and bookmarks by mail to every school and library in the province to advertise and promote the latest finalists. We have made an effort to be present at major literacy and reading conferences throughout the province to share and promote the Willow Awards. We have seen the results of our hard work in a continual increase in votes cast for our finalists.

The Willow Awards can only continue with the generous support of patrons, sponsors, donors, friends, and members. We would like to thank all of you for your commitment to promoting quality Canadian children’s literature for the children of Saskatchewan. It is because of this generous financial support that we are able to maintain key programming to promote and advertise the Willow Awards.

As a provincial board, we have members from across Saskatchewan and we facilitate the geographic distance by inviting member to meet via Skype and conference calls. The board met face to face 4 times this year and communicates regularly via email to stay in touch.

We would also like to thank our volunteer board members who are hardworking, creative, and enthusiastic. They have donated countless hours over the year to ensure the success of our organization and to fulfill the SYRCA mandate.

As new presidents, we would like to thank the Board for their support and encouragement as we fill the role.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Korver and Cassandra Mireau

PAST PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It is time to say goodbye. I began my involvement with SYRCA as a Teacher Librarian in two elementary schools in Saskatoon, encouraging teachers and students to promote and read the Willow nominees. As a selection committee member for the Diamond Willows, I soon learned the ropes of a daunting but exciting job. From there, I became a Board member and chair of the Snow Willow committee, with more challenges. Moving along, I then became President and finally Past President of SYRCA. My years of involvement have been fulfilling not only to meet the mandates of SYRCA, but also in having developed many professional relationships, which have further developed into lifelong personal friendships. I will continue to be part of the Snow Willow selection committee – reading the newest in quality young adult literature has become part of my life! Thanks to all the past and current Board members! The value of the work you continue to do is immeasurable!

Respectfully submitted by

Ruth Garnett

FUNDRAISING REPORT 2015 – 2016

As a non-profit organization, we are always fundraising and returning to our sponsors and patrons to help us be able to promote reading to all Saskatchewan children. All fundraising contributions help to directly support the expenditure of the production of posters and bookmarks, and all related mailing costs, to all schools and libraries in the province. With the economic downturn, we are well aware that organizations are making choices about what and who they sponsor and we are incredibly thankful to our patrons and sponsors this year.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to acknowledge the support of our returning patrons and sponsors: Evraz, Potash Corp, HJ Linnen, Cameco, the Book and Brier, and ULS Library Services.

Thank you for continuing to support the Willow Awards and children's literature in Saskatchewan!

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Korver,

Fundraising Chair

*At the Beginning Teachers Conference in Saskatoon,
promoting the current Willow book nominees.*



STICKER REPORT FOR 2015 – 2016

Stickers are one-inch square circles with the Willow logo imprint, available on black background for nominated books and on gold foil background for the winners. They can be ordered by downloading a copy of the order form from our website. Since April 2015, we have sold a total of \$756 worth of stickers. Annual sticker sales are up slightly from our 2014 sales of \$742.

Fiscal Year April 1, 2015 - March 31, 2016				
Date	Invoice/Receipt	Amount	Paid	Difference/Outstanding
14-Apr	2015-01	\$ 60.00	\$ 60.00	
12-Mar	2015-02	\$ 12.00	\$ 12.00	
26-Mar	2015-03	\$ 20.00	\$ 20.00	
22-Apr	2015-04	\$ 12.00	\$ 12.00	
13-May	2015-05	\$ 24.00	\$ 24.00	
21-May	2015-06	\$ 12.00	\$ 12.00	
21-May	2015-07	\$ 36.00	\$ 36.00	
27-May	2015-08	\$ 12.00	\$ 12.00	
27-May	2015-09	\$ 36.00	\$ 36.00	
08-Jun	2015-10	\$ 16.00	\$ 16.00	
08-Jun	2015-11	\$ 12.00	\$ 12.00	
29-Jun	2015-12	\$ 12.00	\$ 12.00	
03-Sep	2015-13	\$ 12.00	\$ 12.00	
14-Sep	2015-14	\$ 36.00	\$ 36.00	
22-Sep	2015-15	\$ 12.00	\$ 12.00	
29-Sep	2015-16	\$ 24.00	\$ 24.00	
19-Oct	2015-17	\$ 12.00	\$ 12.00	
19-Oct	2015-18	\$ 12.00	\$ 12.00	
05-Nov	2015-19	\$ 12.00	\$ 12.00	
09-Nov	2015-20	\$ 36.00	\$ 36.00	
09-Nov	2015-21	\$ 36.00	\$ 36.00	
05-Feb	2015-22	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00	
		\$ 756.00	\$ 756.00	\$ -

Respectfully submitted by
Pam Foy
Sticker Chair

FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2015 – 2016



SYRCA - SASKATCHEWAN YOUNG READERS' CHOICE - THE WILLOW AWARDS INC. FINANCIAL STATEMENT YEAR ENDING MARCH 31, 2016

Bank Balance at March 31, 2015 **\$34,090.87**

INCOME

Memberships	\$979.03
Sponsorships	\$15,200.00
Stickers	\$736.00
GST Rebate	\$441.26
Insurance Refund	\$85.00

Total Income **\$17,441.29**

DISBURSEMENTS

Sponsorships/Grants	\$15.12
Fundraising	\$33.18
Marketing	\$28.91
Posters/Bookmarks	\$470.32
Stickers	\$50.79
Awards	\$981.57
Lunch/Gala	\$4,135.10
Office Expenses	\$341.33
Meeting Expenses	\$3,859.11
Misc (Book postage)	\$31.08
Website Expenses	\$3,630.00
Insurance	\$835.00
Review of Books	\$150.00
Sask Culture Membership	\$75.00
Non-Profit Registration	\$10.39

Total Disbursements **\$14,626.90**

Bank Balance at March 31, 2016 **\$36,905.26**

Term Deposit

Balance at Mar. 31/15	\$15,890.57	
Interest	\$166.85	
Total Balance at Mar. 31/16		\$16,057.42

TOTAL ASSETS **\$52,962.68**

Checked and verified by:

_____, 2016

LAUNCHING OF THE WILLOW NOMINEES

Each year, every school in the province is encouraged to launch the new Willow Award nominees! We are very interested in sharing the great work you have done to promote this quality literature. 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.

Congratulations to the following people, who submitted their launch ideas and are recipients of book prizes:

Grand prize winner, recipient of the entire set of 2015 Willow nominees (30 books): **Magi McFadden**, Literacy-Numeracy teacher at Minahik Waskahigan School in Pinehouse Lake, Saskatchewan.

Runner up winner, recipient of a set of 2015 Shining and Diamond Willow nominees (20 books): **Lori-Ann Stiglitz**, Teacher at St. Michael School in Prince Albert, SK

Runner up winner, recipient of the set of 2015 Shining Willow nominees (10 books): **Kerri McKay**, Albert Community School in Regina, SK.

Runner up winner, recipient of the set of 2015 Diamond Willow nominees (10 books): **Peggy Heincke**, Wagner Elementary School, Nipawin, SK.

Runner up winner, recipient of the set of 2015 Snow Willow nominees (10 books): **Joan Long**, Librarian at Rosetown Central High School in Rosetown, SK.



Buddy the Book Clown reading Fox and Squirrel to Kindergarten and Grade One students at Minahik Waskahigan School, Pinehouse Lake, SK.

Launching The Willow Nominees



Mike the Squirrel and his buddy Mick live in the library tree of St. Michael School in Prince Albert, SK.

Bulletin board display at the Rosetown Central High School, Rosetown, SK.



A display of Willow Award Nominees at the Wagner Elementary, School, Nipawin, SK.

COMMUNICATION: WILLOW AWARDS WEBSITE REPORT

www.willowawards.ca

The website is the key communication tool with the membership and participants in the Willow Awards. Thanks to the ongoing support of HJ Linnen who develops, hosts and maintains the site. We are in discussions to plan a redesign of the website for 2016-17. The plan for the redesign includes updating archives to view past nominees and winners more efficiently as well as focusing on making the website more kid friendly.

The voting for the Willow Awards this year tracked a total of 11,040 votes for 2015. The Shining category is still the most popular by far with 89% of the vote.

The Willow Awards Gala was also live-streamed through the website to ensure that as many fans across Saskatchewan can view this special event.

The Willow Board would like to recognize that the generous funding of all our sponsors ensure that we can maintain our website which plays such a central role in our success.

Respectfully submitted
Leanne Forrest
Web Committee Chair

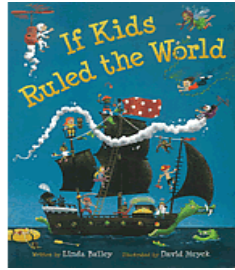
2015 WILLOW NOMINEE VOTING REPORT

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 an increase in voting last year, voting numbers showed a decrease this year, 11,040 votes were received with the Shining category still the most popular. Reaching more children throughout the province, particularly in rural areas is a primary interest. Thank you to the patrons and sponsors who make the Willow Awards possible.

Votes by Category	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	CHANGE
SHINING	11,270	10,871	11,839	12,680	9,901	-21.91%
DIAMOND	1,400	1,145	1,092	866	883	1.97%
SNOW	593	602	423	572	307	-46.2%
TOTAL VOTES	13,293	12,618	13,354	14,118	11,040	-21.8%

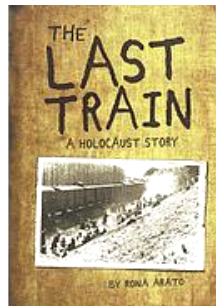
2015 WILLOW AWARD WINNERS

SHINING WILLOW



IF KIDS RULED THE WORLD
BY LINDA BAILEY
ILLUSTRATED BY DAVID HUYCK

DIAMOND WILLOW



LAST TRAIN: A HOLOCAUST STORY
BY RONA ARATO

SNOW WILLOW



RULE OF THREE
BY ERIC WALTERS

PROGRAM: SHINING WILLOW SELECTION COMMITTEE REPORT

The Shining Willow Selection Committee for 2016 was comprised of thirteen readers: Florence Barton and Ann Atchison (co-chairs), Carolyn Barton, Wilfred Burton, Coralee Danyluk, Dr. Christine Fondse, Kandice Heinrichs, Laurie Hnatiuk, Kerri Nakoneshny, Tricia Reed, Lindsay Sali, Susan Voitka-Seager, and Melody Wood. SKYPE was used at our meetings to include members who lived outside Saskatoon.

I would like to thank each of these enthusiastic and thoughtful readers for taking the time to read and carefully consider the many titles. A special thank-you goes to Florence for contacting potential committee members, hosting the meetings, housing the books, and preparing a dinner at the last meeting. It was truly an honour and privilege to work with such an enthusiastic and dedicated group of people who are so passionate and knowledgeable about children's literature and the children for whom the literature was written.

This year the Shining Willow Selection Committee received 162 books. There were 16 chapter books, 2 board books and 143 picture books from 27 Canadian publishers. We continued to use our wiki to share comments about the books read by the various members. It was also used at our meetings to help frame the discussion.

Respectfully submitted by
Ann Atchison
Shining Willow Co-Chair

THE SHINING WILLOW NOMINEES 2016



PROGRAM: DIAMOND WILLOW SELECTION COMMITTEE REPORT

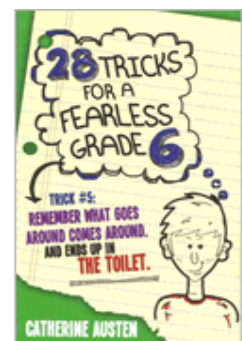
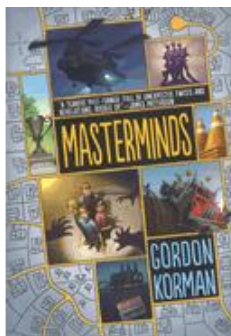
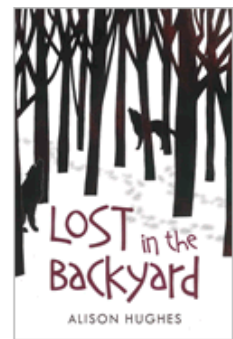
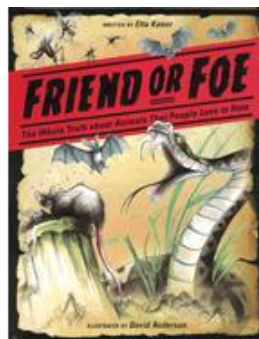
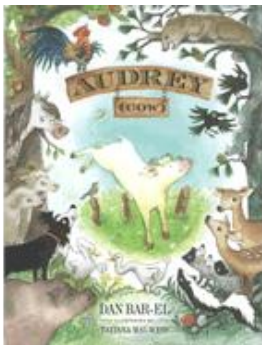
During the 2016 Diamond Willow selection process, there were 140 submissions, which included 6 titles rolled over from last year. Twenty-seven titles were passed on to the Snow Committee and 11 titles were moved to the Shining Committee. Twenty-three titles were rejected as they didn't meet the submission policy. The Diamond Willow Selection Committee was left with 79 titles for consideration. After the finalists were selected, 5 titles have been rolled over for consideration for the 2017 awards.

Thank you to the 12 dedicated teachers, retired teachers, teacher librarians and public librarians who donated their time and expertise to choosing our wonderful selection of 2016 Diamond Willow finalists. Our outstanding committee members were Jessica Cammer, Kim McDonald, Kerri McKay, Susan Holmes, Alison Newman, Rhonda Wills, Donna Lindstrom, Amy Johnston, Charmaine Stouse, Whitney Blaisdell, Charlene Hinks and Erin Walton.

The Diamond Willow Committee is pleased to present the finalists for the 2016 Diamond Willow Award.

Respectfully submitted by
Erin Walton
Diamond Willow Chair

THE DIAMOND WILLOW NOMINEES 2016

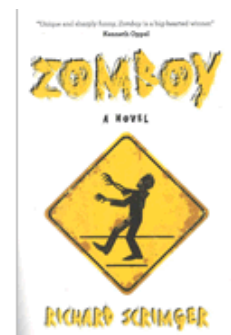
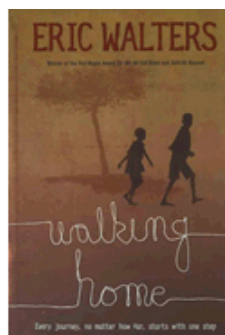
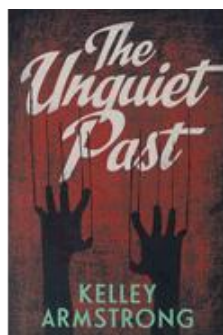
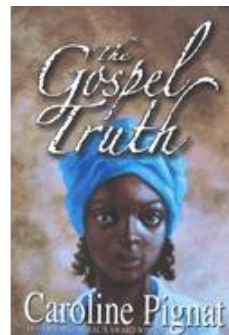


PROGRAM: SNOW WILLOW SELECTION COMMITTEE REPORT

This year the Snow Committee read and considered 115 titles for the Snow Willow Award. Our committee was comprised of 8 passionate readers including teachers, school librarians, principals, retired teachers, library technicians, and public librarians. Our excellent and knowledgeable readers were: Rob Baraniuk, Florence Barton, Danielle Bergen, Yvonne Denomy, Darrelle Downs, Ruth Elliott, Ruth Garnett and Cassandra Mireau. A huge thank you goes to each of these committee members for donating hundreds of hours reading submissions and selecting our top ten titles for nomination. We proudly present the 2016 nominees for the Snow Willow.

Respectfully Submitted,
Yvonne Denomy
Snow Willow committee member

THE SNOW WILLOW NOMINEES 2016



THE ANNUAL SASKENERGY WILLOW AWARDS GALA

A Walk Through the Willows

Assiniboia Park Elementary School in Weyburn, under the leadership of teacher Tammy Manning, hosted the 2015 SaskEnergy Willow Awards Gala. The morning of Thursday, May 14, 2015 was fairly cool and cloudy, but the sun was definitely shining on this special event all day. When we arrived at Assiniboia Park Elementary (APES), the entrance was transformed into a Walk Through the Willows, with posters and real willow trees lining the hallway. The entire school was immersed in The Willows, because in every hallway and classroom there were displays of art and writing projects celebrating the 30 nominated books, and everywhere you looked there were creatively crafted willow trees

Although the theme for the Gala was A WALK THROUGH THE WILLOWS, this Gala was all about "Total Immersion." Every student, staff member, and parent volunteer wore a black and white T-shirt with the Willows Logo on the front. Every student in the school played an active role in the Gala. The Gym was arranged with guests in the centre and a small stage at the front. Around the edges of the gym were Grades 5 & 6 students arranged in tableaux of many of the nominated books, and on one side of the gym were the Kindergarten to Grade 4 students on risers.

The program featured greetings from several dignitaries and these greetings were interspersed with interviews of the students in the tableaux. We learned a lot about some of the nominated books.

During the Gala two fabulous musical numbers were presented. The first was The Tree Song, performed with actions by the Kindergarten to Grade 4 Chorus. The second was a performance of K'Naan's song, Wavin' Flag by the Chorus, featuring a full verse introduction by the Grade 4 Recorder Ensemble. What a moving tribute to one of the nominated books.

Then the time came to announce the winners. The winner of the Shining Willow Award was K'Naan for When I Get Older: The Story Behind "Wavin' Flag". Sadly, K'Naan was not in attendance to accept his award, but the students were very pleased that he had won. The winner of the Diamond Willow Award was David Carroll for Ultra. David came from Toronto to accept his award, and he was extremely excited to receive an award chosen by students. The winner of the Snow Willow Award was Lisa Harrington for Live to Tell. Lisa was so excited to come all the way from Halifax to see the prairies for the very first time, and she was also thrilled to win a Readers' Choice award.

Leslie Gosselin, the representative from SaskEnergy, presented the school with a willow tree to be planted as a remembrance of hosting the Gala. The President of the Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice Awards, Ruth Garnett, presented APES with a set of 30 nominated Willow books for the 2015-2016 year, along with a commemorative plaque for hosting the Gala.

Following the wonderful, child-centred Gala, a reception was held in the Library. What a truly celebratory day of immersion as we Walked through the Willows.

Respectfully submitted by

Donna Koch, Gala Liaison

A Walk Through the Willows in Pictures



Assiniboia Park Elementary School, Weyburn, SK.



Hallways, and the Library decorated with willow trees. Walls decorated with everything about the Willow books. Everyone associated with the school had a special t-shirt.

A Walk Through the Willows continues



*Lisa Harrington and David Carroll
authors of two of the three winning books
with their Willow tree awards.*



Author, Wilfred Burton with Board members



Musical numbers and tableaux by the students of many of the nominated Willow books



*Live Willow Tree Presentation by
Leslie Gosselin, SaskEnergy representative*



*Basket of Willow Book Nominees
presented to the school by
Ruth Garnett, SYRCA President*



*Ruth Garnett, SYRCA President giving book
prizes to lucky students.*



*Tammy Manning, Leslie Gosselin, Lisa Harrington,
David Carroll & board members in attendance.*

SYRCA – THE WILLOW AWARDS

Patrons, Sponsors, and Friends

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



SYRCA – THE WILLOW AWARDS

Patrons, Sponsors, and Friends

SYRCA Sponsors have generously contributed \$500 - \$999.



United Library Services

SYRCA Friends have generously contributed \$100 or more:

Regina Chapter of the Superannuated Teachers of Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan Reading Council

E. Ann Atchison

Ruth Garnett

Florence Barton

Melody Wood

“You’re never too old, too wacky, too wild,

To pick up a book and read to a child.”

Dr. Seuss

“Children are made readers on the laps of their parents.”

Emilie Buchwald

“Start with a Book. Read. Talk. Explore.”

www.readingrockets.com

For more information, please contact willowawards@willowawards.ca.



THE WILLOW AWARDS