

THE WILLOW AWARDS



Annual Report
May 25, 2007



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 2006-2007

Past President	Marion Perry, Regina, SK
President	Claire Isaac, Regina, SK
Vice President	Carol Thiessen, Saskatoon, SK
Vice President	Vacant
Treasurer	Margaret Steger, Regina, SK
Secretary	Ann Atchison, Saskatoon, SK

Directors At Large

Florence Barton	SSLA Rep, Saskatoon, SK
Wilfred Burton	Regina, SK
Michelle Howland	Regina, SK
Donna Koch	Regina, SK
Naomi Kral	Regina, SK
Chris MacLennan	Regina, SK
Elizabeth Magee	Regina, SK
Deborah Mervold	Shellbrooke, SK
Mary Saso	Regina, SK
Cheryl Smith	SLA Rep, Saskatoon, SK

President's Report: The Willow Awards' Year, 2006- 2007

The Willow Awards official year runs from April 1 to March 31. The spring of 2006 was highlighted by the 2005-2006 SaskEnergy Willow Awards Gala, which was held on May 12, 2006 at Lindale School in Moose Jaw. The Gala celebrates the winning authors and their books. Since the Awards are decided by children, it is important to SYRCA Inc that students are active in preparation, hosting and presenting the Awards. The Moose Jaw students were excellent hosts and performers. They were also an enthusiastic audience, waiting breathlessly for the announcement of the winners. We were delighted that all three winning authors were able to attend the event. The authors did readings in Regina and Moose Jaw.

Winners of the 2005-2006 Willow Awards

Shining Willow Award:	Karleen Bradford for <i>You Can't Rush a Cat</i>
Diamond Willow Award:	Shirley Woods for <i>Amber, the Story of a Red Fox</i>
Snow Willow Award:	Allan Stratton for <i>Chanda's Secrets</i>

The day after the Gala, the Willow Awards AGM was held, and new Board members and Executive were elected. The regular board meeting, held immediately afterwards, allocated duties, set up a timetable and dates for the year's meetings.

Requests for submissions from publishers were sent in the summer, and preliminary lists of eligible books established. The chairs of the selection committees recruited members and reading of the books began.

The official 2006-2007 Willow Awards Launch was held October 27, at Little Red River School, home to students from Montreal Lake Cree Nation and Lac La Ronge Indian Band. They welcomed guests from St. Louis and Sturgeon Lake Schools as well as parents and guests from Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert and North Battleford. They highlighted the books nominated for the 2006-2007 Willow Awards.

In an effort to save money on Board members travel expenses, two of the Board meetings were held by phone. Board members gathered at a location in either Regina or Saskatoon and used a speakerphone. With careful preparation and lots of patience this practice worked fairly well and was certainly cost effective. However, it is still necessary to meet face to face at least part of the time.

The selection committees presented their lists of titles nominated for the 2007-2008 Awards at the January 2007 Board meeting. After some discussion, it was decided to go with an alternative title for one of the Diamond Willow selections. Once again, a very strong list of nominees was selected, indicating the wealth of Canadian literature for young people.

As soon as the lists are confirmed, work began on printing the posters and bookmarks. Willow Awards members and participants were informed by email that the posters and bookmarks would be available at the spring conferences.

The Board debated the future of the Education Kits. The meager sales did not justify the work involved in producing them. Therefore, it was decided not to produce Education Kits in 2007. Activities and information about the author will be posted on the website throughout the summer. Book labels were reprinted with a new design, which was round and slightly smaller than the previous labels. It was decided to go with one design for all three awards.

Two very successful Fundraising Dinners were once again held in Saskatoon (February 23) and Regina (February 28). Despite blizzards on both evenings, the many participants had a wonderful evening. The Regina evening surpassed all previous records with over 130 tickets sold. The dinners require a lot of work by Board members and volunteers, but are essential to the funding of SYRCA Inc. and the Willow Awards.

The deadline for voting was February 28, 2007. Again, most votes were received electronically resulting in a much faster vote counting process. We were delighted that there was the highest number of votes ever this year.

This year the Board repeated the offer of various incentives to increase participation in the Willow Awards. A draw was made from the names of teachers and teacher-librarians who registered their classes. Six teachers or teacher-librarians received a box of books for their school or classroom. In addition, the names of ten students who voted in each of the three Willow Awards categories were drawn. The first names drawn in each category won a major prize. These students were invited to the Gala to receive their prizes. The other 27 students received a book prize that was shipped to them care of their teachers or teacher-librarians.

The Willow Awards participated in three conferences in Saskatoon this spring: Saskatchewan Reading Conference, the Saskatchewan School Library Association Conference and the Saskatchewan Library Association Conference. The new lists of nominated titles were presented at special sessions. Posters and membership forms were distributed. In addition, there was a Willow Awards table at the conferences. Willow Awards book labels were sold. It is important to have a presence at these conferences to promote the Awards in general and the new booklists in particular. Thanks to the Saskatoon Board members and volunteers who presented the sessions and sat at the tables.

Michael Keaschuk, Director of Chinook Regional System received a grant from SaskLearning to promote the Willow Awards in schools and libraries within his region. As a result, every school and public library in the Chinook Region received copies of all thirty of the Willow Awards books nominated for 2006-2007. They also purchased Education Kits and book labels for every location. Posters and bookmarks were

distributed around the region. The number of communities participating in the Willow Awards increased from 11 communities in 2005-2006 to 27 communities in 2006-2007. Swift Current Public Library will also host the SaskEnergy Willow Awards Gala in 2007. The grant certainly made a difference in that region of Saskatchewan. Many thanks to Michael Keaschuk for initiating this project!

Despite extensive fund-raising efforts, the financial situation of SYRCA Inc. is currently bleak. This year, with reluctance we decided we could only afford to invite one of the winning authors to the Gala. The Board has discussed other cost-cutting measures. A letter explaining this situation was sent to members with their renewal notices and seems to be producing some good results. Board member Naomi Kral was able to secure new patrons in the Regina Leader Post and Saskatoon Star Phoenix as well as funding from the Saskatchewan Literacy Commission. Fund-raising is an ongoing challenge.

We also need to recruit more potential Board members and volunteers. Vice-President Carol Thiessen has made arrangements for a Board retreat in September to examine these and other issues with the help of an experienced facilitator. We hope that this project will ensure the long-term viability of SYRCA Inc and the Willow Awards.

I wish to thank my hard-working colleagues on the Board for all their support, especially Past-President Marion Perry for her invaluable guidance. Thanks also to the many volunteers who worked in various capacities throughout the year. Our patrons, The Book and Brier Patch, SaskEnergy, Regina Leader Post, Saskatoon Star Phoenix and Saskatchewan Literacy Commission, and our sponsors Saskatchewan School Libraries Association and National Book Service make the Awards possible and to them we extend our grateful thanks. I also would like to thank the teachers, teacher-librarians, public librarians and parents who encourage children to read and participate in the Willow Awards.

Respectfully submitted
Claire Isaac
April 29, 2007



Past President's Report 2007

The Willow Award Board is a working Board. Over the past year, my activities have focused on several areas.

Newsletter

Two editions of the SYRCA Newsletter, *Willow Winds*, were published - one in June following the Gala and one in November after the Launch.

Website

Activities are reported separately. The incentive draws are an offshoot of the website.

Teacher Incentive Draws (Marketing)

Winners of Draw 1 - December

The first draw was for teachers who submitted their name and address to indicate their class' participation by Dec. 10. The following teachers received a box of books:

Shining Willow Level: Charlene Leaderhouse, St. John Community School, Prince Albert

Diamond Willow Level: Julie Stevenson, Kelliher School, Kelliher

Snow Willow Level: Mrs. Maureen Ryan-Dobbin, Elizabeth Elementary School, Kindersley

Winners of Draw 2 – February.

These entrants had to indicate an activity related to The Willow Awards in their school. Eventually these activities will be posted on our website as student projects or learning activities

Boxes of books were sent to

Krista Routledge, Herbert School, Herbert (gr. K-9)

Julie Bepalko, Morlach School, Mortlach (K-8)

Shelly Galloway, Imperial Community School, Regina (K-8)

Mme Leask/Mme Kobelsky, École St. Andrew, Regina (gr 7)

Roseanne Carter, St. Matthew School, Saskatoon (K-8)

Ann Fofonoff, Princess Alexandra Community School, Saskatoon (gr 3-4)

Brenda Tumbach, Burstall School, Burstall, (K-12)

Loretta Brann, Opawikoscikan Community School, Pelican Narrows (gr. 8))

Teachers of Elizabeth Elementary School, Kindersley – Mrs. Edgerton (gr 3),

Mrs. Dobbin (gr 6), Mrs. Wagner, librarian, Mrs. Jamieson (gr 5), Mrs. Georget (gr 5), Kindersley

Posters & Bookmarks

Electronic files for the 2007 bookmarks and posters were prepared and taken to Allied Printers who completed the work. 20,000 posters and 20,000 of each bookmark were printed.

Regina Dinner and Auction

Thanks to Michele Howland for coordinating the dinner and to all the Regina people who sold 142 tickets to Books at the Bistro and contributed to the success of the event. My role included printing tickets, posters, and the program, collecting, and organizing the auction items with the assistance of Michele, Muriel Drew and Eleanor Matz, and coordinating ticket sales to insure the minimum number were sold.



The responsibilities of the past president are not explicitly outlined in the bylaws but involve “serving as a resource and ensuring continuity with past terms.” I hope in the coming year to narrow my focus to fewer areas.

Respectfully submitted,
Marion Perry
May 1, 2007

Vice-President's Report

There's no better way to invest in your “life story” than to read. Not only is reading a necessity but it also provides many unexpected delights and allows us to be engaged in the serendipities of life. I submit to you that SYRCA – The Willow Awards Inc. has invested in the “life stories” of children and young people.

As vice-president of SYRCA, I would like to thank all of the board members for their untiring work for this organization. We are a working board and every director has contributed in countless ways. I would also like to thank all of our members, friends, patrons and sponsors for without you SYRCA – the Willow Awards Inc. would not be viable today.

As vice president I have:

- co-chaired the Snow Willow selection committee for 2007
- served on the organizing committee for “Books and Buffet” – the fundraising dinner in Saskatoon
- attended SYRCA board meetings
- worked at the Willow table at the Reading Conference, S.S.L.A. Conference, and S.L.A. Conference
- book talked the Snow Willow books at the S.L.A Conference

I am proud of SYRCA and I am proud to say, “I read Willow Books”.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Thiessen



**SYRCA - SASKATCHEWAN YOUNG READERS' CHOICE -
THE WILLOW AWARDS
FINANCIAL STATEMENT
YEAR ENDING MARCH 31, 2007**

Bank Balance at March 31, 2006

\$5,176.06

INCOME

Grants	\$725.00
Sponsorships	\$4,000.00
Memberships	\$2,552.50
Fundraising	\$11,826.25
Stickers/Kits	\$3,694.00
Interest on Term Deposit	\$43.34
Bank error correction	\$0.20
Transfer from Term Deposit	\$5,000.00

\$27,841.29

DISBURSEMENTS

Meeting Expenses	\$1,710.82
Office Expenses	\$319.50
Award Expenses	\$1,998.10
Award Function Expenses	\$1,415.27
Corp/Rev. Canada/ Audit Expenses	\$110.00
Marketing	\$2,303.01
Fundraising	\$4,573.44
Poster/Ballots	\$5,830.00
Stickers/Kits	\$1,695.50
Author Expenses	\$3,342.07
Web Site expenses	\$153.10
Bank Errors	\$0.10

\$23,450.91

Bank Balance at Mar. 31/07

\$9,566.44

Checked and verified by:

S. Dishington

May 15, 2007

Fund Raising Report – 2006-2007

Support from:

CanWest - Leader-Post and Star Phoenix - \$1000 in cash and \$1000 in advertising to be split between the two papers.

Saskatchewan Literacy Commission - \$2,000 and the offer to partner with SYRCA to promote literacy.

SaskEnergy - \$2,000 for the Gala.

Companies Approached:

Cameco- would not provide support

Connexus Credit Union- expressed an interest in support but want their names on the posters and bookmarks; will approach them again in the fall for 2009 posters etc.

Dutch Growers (Regina)- no (support only local projects)

Harvard Properties (Regina)- did not support

IPSCO – have not heard from them

Saskatchewan Construction Association Inc. – no reply yet

Phoenix Advertising Group – no reply yet

Saskatchewan Wheat Pool – no reply yet

Saskatchewan Roughriders- no financial support; gave items for Silent Auction – willing to partner to promote literacy

Roberts Properties Inc. – no reply yet

Access Communications—no reply yet

Companies to Contact:

Saskatchewan Mining Association

Kramer Ltd.

Brandt Engineered Products Ltd.

Degelman Industries Ltd.

Reimer Express Lines Ltd.

Private Individuals:

Ralph Goodale MLA - no reply yet

Fundraising is a major issue for the Willow Awards since the grant we received to start the awards is a one time only grant. SaskCulture was contacted to see if the Willow Awards were eligible for any other grants. However, this was unsuccessful. We continued to receive support from the Book and Brier Patch, and National Book Service.

We considered holding a special “Book Selling” event at Book and Brier or McNally Robinson, but decided that the effort involved would be unlikely to result in sufficient profits to make it worthwhile.

The two Fundraising Dinners and Silent Auctions proved to be successful and generate useful and substantial funds for the Awards. Increasing the price at the Regina Dinner and offering income tax receipts seemed to be a way to increase the revenue.

Raffles and sticker sales at the three spring conferences brought in a total of \$489.

I find we receive funding for literacy and the fact that this is a provincial project. Sometimes we are refused funding because the awards are provincial and not just for the local community.

Many people are out there beating the bushes for funding thus people pick and choose what they want to fund. Fund raising is a challenge that we must continue to work hard at and promote to continue with the activities associated with the Willow Awards.

Respectfully submitted,
Naomi Kral
Claire Isaac
May 1, 2007

Buffet and Books – Saskatoon Willow Award Fundraiser

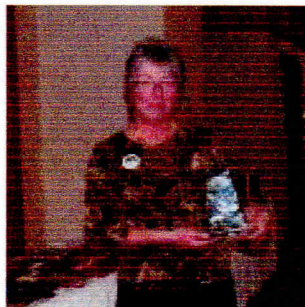
Saskatoon's 3rd annual fundraising dinner "Buffet and Books" was held on Friday, February 23, 2006 at the Park Town Hotel. Cash bar was at 6:30 pm with the dinner beginning at 7:00 pm. Tickets were \$25.00, which included dinner, coffee and gratuity. We sold 98 tickets for the dinner. Because of the inclement weather 90 people were in attendance.

The silent auction was successful. We had 43 pre-packaged gift baskets, each of which included various items as well as several books. We raised \$1636.00 from the silent auction. We had a quilt and a picture that we raffled off. The raffle brought in close to \$350.00. Tickets were sold at \$2.00 each or 3 for \$5.00.

Throughout the evening names were drawn from people in attendance to pick from a large variety of books. Every one who attended went home with at least one book.

It was great to have five authors in our midst as well as our president, Claire Isaac. Thanks for coming Claire!

There were also presentations made to Elsbeth Dormuth and Kathy Sharman for significant service on the SYRCA board.



This year we put a membership form at every place setting, which proved worthwhile. We received \$150.00 in memberships during the evening.

The evening was a success. We brought in around \$2800.00.

Thanks to all who helped make this venture a success.

The only down side was again the weather. Maybe we should be looking at a different time of year to hold this annual fundraiser or maybe a different format.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Sharman

Moose Jaw's Lindale School Hosts Gala

All 3 winning authors attended the SaskEnergy Willow Awards Gala at Lindale School on May 12 - a happy first for the Willow Awards.

Again, this year, the authors, who have attended other children's choice award celebrations across the country, commented that they liked Saskatchewan's the best because the students are up front and centre during the entire event. They are the ushers and greeters at the door, the masters of ceremony, and the photographers; they provide entertainment; run the Academy Award style presentation and present the Awards.



Indeed, Lindale School students and teachers did a wonderful job in all respects. Guests were warmly welcomed at the door and led to the library in preparation for the celebration. During the ceremony grades 1-2 and 2-3 performed *Drumheller Dinosaur Dance* based on the nominated book by Robert Heidbreder with music by Janie Fries, a Moose Jaw music teacher. Grades 3-4 and 4 presented "In the Pages of a Book" accompanied by a PowerPoint including nominated books created by Taylan Dufresne.

Al Schwinghamer, Mayor of Moose Jaw; Claire Isaac, SYRCA President; Leslie Gosselin, SaskEnergy, and Brenda Edwards, Director of Education, Prairie South School Division, brought greetings. Deb Higgins, Minister of Education, made closing remarks. Claire Isaac presented the school with the commemorative plaque and willow tree for the school grounds. Leslie Gosselin presented teacher-librarian, Stephanie Olson, with the 2006 nominated books. (Students were borrowing them before the day was out.)

On behalf of the 7,262 Saskatchewan students who voted for their favourite books, Lindale students presented the 2005 Willow Awards to Karleen Bradford, Shining

Willow Award for *You Can't Rush a Cat*, Shirley Woods, Diamond Willow Award for *Amber, the Story of a Red Fox*, and Allan Stratton, Snow Willow Award for *Chanda's Secrets*.

Congratulations students and teachers! Congratulations authors!

Respectfully submitted,
Marion Perry

Little Red River School Launches the 2006 Willow Awards

Little Red River School, home to students from the Montreal Lake Cree Nation and the Lac La Ronge Indian Band, hosted the 2006 Willow Awards' Launch on October 27. Principal Darren Solomon and Masters of Ceremony, Brittany Morin and Elisa Halkett, welcomed students from St. Louis and Sturgeon Lake Schools as well as parents and guests from Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and North Battleford.

After "O Canada", Elder Judy Bear, from Sweetgrass First Nation said the opening prayer in Cree and English. Entertainer, Ted Longbottom, sang songs based on his Metis heritage and growing up on a reserve in Manitoba.



Students paraded large reproductions of the covers of the 2006 Willow Awards' nominated books around the gym to the front where they were attached to the wall. Elder Daniels then blessed the books and the readers. Following the Honour Song, student Pow Wow Dancers entertained.

Lynn Gilbert and Liz Roberts, founding members of Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice (SYRCA) Willow Awards, were honoured with SYRCA Distinguished Service Awards. Books and bookmarks were presented to St. Louis and Sturgeon Lake Schools.



The celebration concluded with everyone participating in a Round Dance, followed by a Victory Song and a closing prayer by Elder Judy Bear. Tea and bannock followed.

Thanks to the staff and students of Little Red River School for hosting a wonderful Launch for the 2006 Willow Awards.

SYRCA, the Willow Awards, gratefully acknowledges the support of our patrons, the Book and Briar Patch, SaskEnergy, and Saskculture/Saskatchewan Lotteries, and our sponsors, especially Bob Sawatsky of National Book Services for donating the nominated books to the Launch school.

Respectfully submitted,
Marion Perry

Voting Statistics 2006-2007

Willow Award Participants	2003	2004	2005	2006	% Change 2005-2006
Teachers/Adults	195	129	151	204	+26%
Schools	114	84	132	207	+36%
Libraries	1	5	4	3	
Communities	61	73	65	74	+12%
Voters	7521	5523	7262	8087	+10%

Votes by Category

Snow Willow	189
Diamond Willow	839
Shining Willow	7059
Total	8087

Respectfully submitted,
Claire Isaac

Willow Awards' Web Page Committee Report, 2006-2007

www.willowawards.ca

The Willow Awards' website is updated regularly to reflect the annual cycle of Willow Award activities and events. The home page has featured the May 2006 SaskEnergy Willow Awards Gala at Lindale School in Moose Jaw, the October 2006 Launch at Little Red River School, and announcements such as those for the incentive draws available to teachers and students. The 2007 nominees have been posted. The page announcing the 2006 winners will be posted immediately after the Gala. The 2007 bookmark templates, ballots and vote summary forms will be posted in October. Since Education Kits have been discontinued, the goal is to provide generic activities for each award level. This material is required by September. More volunteers are needed to create learning activities.

This year the majority of votes were received via the online vote summary form. There were 286 forms submitted by 162 different teachers, librarians and parents, 63 communities were represented. The total number of votes, online and paper, was 8,057.

Trevor Cunningham from the U. of R. has been approached for advice regarding our website, and, in particular, about using a back-end database to support such areas as vote tabulation. Any changes will occur gradually as volunteers acquire new skills and find time to implement them.

Our web page is an extremely popular way for people to learn about the Willow Awards. The table below shows website activity from May 2004 up to April 26, 2007.

Month	Average Daily Hits 2004- 2005	Average Daily Hits 2005- 2006	Average Daily Hits 2006- 2007	Total Monthly Hits 2004- 2005	Total Monthly Hits 2005- 2006	Total Monthly Hits 2006- 2007
	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007
April	863	759	865	12,090	22,580	21,634
March	733	1174	1083	22,726	36,405	33,590
February	904	1026	1374	25,338	28,745	38,492
January	616	680	979	19,111	21,095	30,358
	2004	2005	2006	2004	2005	2006
December	289	347	709	8,965	10,757	21,985
November	544	769	743	16,327	23,088	22,308
October	477	710	969	13,836	22,019	30,048
September	442	505	776	13,272	15,179	23,291
August	186	320	528	5,795	9,940	16,378
July	233	318	418	7,249	9,858	12,962
June	391	515	803	11,730	15,453	24,119
May	297	828	941	9,221	25,684	29,177
Total				165,660	240,803	304,342

I would like to thank Ann Atchison for her assistance with permissions and author information, and Kathy Stedwill and Val Gerrard their wonderful work on the website itself.

Respectfully submitted
Marion Perry
April 26, 2007

Selection Committee Annual Reports – 2006

Shining Willow Selection Committee Report

Selection Committee Members

Marjorie Bradley, elementary school librarian
Joanne Goller, kindergarten teacher
Virginia Gray, principal, Shellbrook Schools
Glenys Martin, Grade 6 teacher at W.P. Sandin Composite School
Linda Mazurkewich, librarian, Shellbrook Public Library
Annette, Paul, Jenna and Evan Beaulieu, Shellbrook
Heather, Grant, Taylor and Noah Hladun, Shellbrook
Darcie, Wayne, Kessa and Kira Gerein, Saskatoon

This year the committee considered 59 titles with an additional three titles rejected because of copyright date. The focus was on books for kindergarten to Grade 3. The committee balanced historical with contemporary, fiction with non-fiction, animal with non-animal, male with female, and younger readers with older readers. The committee also considered that the award is a literary award as opposed to an artistic award. With picture books the pictures are an important part of the presentation. This year as well as with individual readers, the committee had three reading families with at least one child in the target age group. The children had direct input in the book selection. The committee would like to thank SYRCA for the opportunity to assist with this project.

In November, a Celebrate Literacy and Appreciation Tea was held to thank all the volunteers from the past three years who participated in the selection committees in Shellbrook. Pat Sonntag provided music with her harp, door prizes were enthusiastically received, and a short program was followed by lunch.

2007 Shining Willow Nominees

Small Wonders: Baby Animals in the Wild by Marilyn Baillie. Maple Leaf Press.
c2006 ISBN-13:978-1-897066-72-0

Fourteen baby animals are shown in their natural habitat from mountains to prairie grasslands the far north, and coastal waters. Each animal has a two-page spread where

the left hand side gives general information about the animal and the right hand side gives a view of the animal told from the animal's point of view. The animals include moose, Canada goose, polar bears, wolves, loons, bison, raccoon, cougars, beavers, mountain sheep, snowy owls, harp seals, caribou and Orca whales.

Review: <http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol13/no6/smallwonders.html>
<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinions/columnists/Susan+Perren.html>

Snow by Joan Clark. Groundwood Books, c2006. ISBN 13:97-0-88899-712-8
Sammy is delighted when it starts to snow and doesn't stop for a month. The world is completely covered in snow. Everything, trees and houses, have disappeared and plows and shovels come to clear away the snow. Sammy climbs to the highest point he can find which is the roof of his house and he imagines what is beneath the snow. Everyday he goes out and imagines the possibilities as the snow begins to disappear with the sun warming up the earth.

Review: <http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol13/no2/snow.html>
<http://www.vpl.ca/branches/LibrarySquare/chi/booklists/perfectpresents06.html>

The Hockey Tree by David Ward. North Winds Press, c2006. ISBN 0-439-95619-6
Owen, his sister, Holly, and his dad go out to Humboldt Lake the first day that the lake has frozen and it is good for hockey. They share the ice with ice fishermen and enjoy the play. When their puck mistakenly goes down one of the fishing holes, dad shows Owen and Holly how to make a puck by cutting a piece off a poplar tree. They then, put the pieces, in a net and drop them into a hole so the pucks freeze. Soon friends arrive and the game continues with the new puck.

Review: <http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol13/no5/thehockeytree.html>
http://www.quillandquire.com/books_young/review.cfm?review_id=5157

Clip-Clop by Eleanor Koldofsky. Tundra Books, c2005. ISBN 0-88776-681-1
This book is a tribute to the horses at the beginning of the 20th century that worked with humans to provide goods, transportation, and services, on city streets. Consuela recognizes the many different wagons by the varying clip-clop sounds of the horses. Consuela is never happier than the day she sits on a horse to have her picture taken for 25 cents.

Review: <http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol12/no2/clipclop.html>

Yetsa's Sweater by Sylvia Olsen. Sono Nis Press, c2006. ISBN -13:978-1-55039-155-8
It's May and Yetsa and her mom walk down the trail to her grandma's house. Yetsa loves her Cowichan sweater but it is getting a little bit small. Her grandma tells her how knits the sweaters with the favourite things of the wearer and the sweaters tell stories about the family. Yetsa helps her grandma prepare the wool for spinning so that her grandma has enough wool for knitting through the winter. The book includes information about Cowichan sweaters made by the West Coast Salish.

Review: <http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol13/no6/yetsassweater.html>
<http://www.vpl.ca/branches/LibrarySquare/chi/booklists/perfectpresents06.html>

Fox Walked Alone by Barbara Reid. North Winds Press, c2006. ISBN 0-439-94910-6
One day Fox, who likes being alone, sees the animals on the move in pairs. The ravens question where the Fox is going and travel along. The fox wonders where everyone is going and journeys in the same direction until they find the ark and Noah welcomes them aboard.

Review: <http://www.vpl.ca/branches/LibrarySquare/chi/booklists/perfectpresents06.html>
<http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol13/no4/foxwalkedalone.html>
http://www.quillandquiere.com/books_young/review.cfm?review_id=5236

What if your Mom made raisin buns? by Catherine Hogan Safer. Tuckamore Books, c2006. ISBN 1-897174-03-9

A young child wonders what would happen if his mom made raisin buns and he took out the raisins and stuck them to the wall. Then if he drew legs on them so they looked like bugs but his mom made him put them back in the buns and wash the wall, would he ever do that again? Each page begins the story from the beginning and adds the next line.

Review: <http://www.creativebookpublishing.ca/authorbios/index.cfm?aid=81>
<http://www.rotaryreadalong.com/RecommendedReading.asp?Grade=2>

Abby's Birds by Ellen Schwartz. Tradewind Books, c2006. ISBN 1-896580-866
Abby's family has moved to a new house and a new neighbourhood. She meets Mrs. Naka who is her elderly Japanese neighbor. Together they watch the robins that build a nest in the maple tree. They provide some of their hair for the nest and they eagerly watch the new, hungry babies. Mrs. Naka teaches Abby to make birds out of paper, Tori. When Mrs. Naka falls and breaks her hip, Abby decides to plan a surprise and covers the tree with origami for Mrs. Naka's return. The back of the dust jacket shows plans for making paper cranes.

Review: <http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol13/no5/abbysbirds.html>
http://www.winnipegwords.com/school_program/author_bios.html
<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinions/columnists/Susan+Perren.html>
<http://cwillbc.wordpress.com/>

Sadie the Ballerina by Joan Betty Stuchner. North Winds Press, c2006. ISBN 0-439-96109-2

Sadie wants to be a famous ballerina. She knows that she has talent and if she keeps practicing, she will be perfect. She tries to convince her mother that she should take ballet lessons but her mom just says, "we'll see" which are Sadie's least favourite words. When her family gets tickets to see a ballet at the theatre, Sadie is delighted. Her parents are shocked when during the ballet Sadie leaves her seat and goes on stage. She runs toward the Sugar Plum Fairy who although surprised, lifts Sadie up and tosses her to the Nutcracker. Sadie waves her arms, points her toes, and tilts her head. The Nutcracker hands Sadie to the harpist, he hands her to the first violinist, then to the conductor and finally back to her parents. When Sadie asks again if she can take lessons, her wish is granted on recommendation of the Sugar Plum Fairy.

Review: <http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol13/no8/sadietheballerina.html>
<http://cwillbc.wordpress.com/>

Augustine by Melanie Watt. Kids Can Press, c2006 ISBN 13:9788-1-55337-885-3
Augustine is a shy, artistic penguin who moves with her family from the South Pole to the North Pole. Her dad has a new office but Augustine knows she will miss her room, her friends, her teacher, her cousins, her aunts and uncles and most of all her grandparents. She rides on an airplane for the first time and is happy when her parents find a new house which looks like a castle. School is daunting but through her art, she finds a way to fit in and become part of the class.

Review: <http://jellymom-bookreviews.blogspot.com/2006/10/augustine-ages-4-8.html>
http://www.slcppl.lib.ut.us/good_reads.jsp?parent_id=132&page_id=303
<http://www.woozles.com/picks.php>
<http://motherreader.blogspot.com/2006/09/top-picks-for-2006-so-far-master-list.html>

Respectfully submitted.
Deb Mervold

Diamond Willow Selection Committee Report

Selection Committee Members

- Wilfred Burton (chair)
- Mary Quickfall (classroom teacher – special needs)
- Liz Magee (University Librarian)
- Donna Koch (retired teacher)
- Sharon Hamilton (parent/children's author)
- Michelle Howland (retired librarian)
- Karen Lind (University Instructor)
- Wendy Willis (University Instructor)
- Phyllis Mulvenna (retired teacher)
- Sharon Medhurst (retired teacher)
- Christy Andrews
- Debbie Wagner (Librarian)
- Kim Kovacs (GDI Librarian)

We started out with a committee of twenty readers. Seven of the readers, for a variety of reasons, did not read any selections. This was problematic, as some did not inform me that they were not reading until just before the deadline. However, the remaining committee members read many, many titles and helped read extra books at the last minute so each title had three readers.

The committee previewed one hundred and six books in total. The total number of books submitted by the publishers was significantly less than last year. We had a wonderful selection of non-fiction books and many sequels to books previously published.

The committee met in mid-January to decide on the top ten. We did our best in selecting books with Aboriginal content, Saskatchewan author, male/female protagonists, fiction/non-fiction and readability levels for grades four, five and six. The students will enjoy the books selected.

I would like to thank the committee for all of their hard work. I would also like to thank Claire Isaac for compiling lists of eligible books in the spring and fall. All the hard work could not be done without a dedicated group of readers...thank you again.

2007 Diamond Willow Nominees

Jurassic Poop by Jacob Berkowitz. Kids Can Press, 2006. ISBN 13 978 1 55337 860 0

This is the story of fossilized poop: what it is, how it has been preserved through the ages, and what distinguishes it from "poop imposters". It is also the story of the scientists who study it and what their research can tell us about the lives of dinosaurs, humans and other animals who lived long ago.

Reviews: http://childrensbooks.suite101.com/article.cfm/jurassic_poop
<http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol13/no1/jurassicpoop.html>

Crazy About Canada by Vivien Bowers. Maple Tree Press, 2006. ISBN 13 978 1 897066 48 5 (pbk).

This book is full of wonderful questions from kids about Canada. The author and her sidekick, Morton, answer the questions in an, interesting and entertaining way. If you love Canada, you'll love this non-fiction book!

Review: <http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol12/no21/crazyaboutcanada.html>

The Mystery of the Graffiti Ghoul by Marty Chan. Thistle-down Press, 2006. ISBN 13 978 1 897235 00 3

Ten-year-old Marty and his best friend Remi are a very resourceful pair. In a school filled with bullies, they always have each other's backs. When graffiti is discovered on school property, they are determined to get to the bottom of things - until Remi is blamed and a misunderstanding puts a chill on the boys' friendship. Forced to team up with his nemesis, Trina, Marty will have to use all of his skills and ingenuity to find the real culprits, clear Remi's name, and win back the trust of his only friend. In the process Marty may just find some new friends in unexpected places.

Reviews: <http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol13/no1/themysteryofthegraffiti.html>
<http://www.bookweek.ca/MartyChan.html>

Hamish X And The Cheese Pirates by Sean Cullen. Penguin Group, 2006. ISBN 13 978 0 670 065 02 8

Hamish X is an orphan that cannot be detained in any orphanage anywhere. He is sent to Wind City where orphans are made to work in a blue cheese factory. He plans an escape with some friends but it is put on hold when the factory is attacked by a gang of pirates. With his magic boots and a boring plumbing book (that holds the secret identity of his mother) Hamish and his friends embark on an adventure that is both hilarious and captivating.

Reviews: http://www.quillandquire.com/books_young/review.cfm?review_id=4989
<http://www.umanitoba.ca/cm/vol12/no20/hamishxandthecheesepirates.html>

Terror At Turtle Mountain by Penny Draper. Coteau Books, 2006. ISBN I55050 343 X (pbk).

Natalie lives in a mining town of Frank in 1903. Turtle Mountain, where the townspeople seek their living, breaks way and hurls tons and tons of rocks and mud down its side onto the town. Natalie's friends are buried under all of this rubble. This young girl works endlessly digging through tons of rocks to find buried people. She also stops a train before it speeds into the valley and comforts survivors. This is a fictional story based on the true event of the Frank Slide.

Reviews: <http://www.forewordmagazine.com/reviews/viewreviews.aspx?reviewID=3686>
<http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol12/no21/terroratturtlemountain.html>

Tabasco the Saucy Raccoon by Lyn Hancock. Sono Nis Press, 2006. ISBN 1 55039 156 9

Tabasco the raccoon, at three weeks of age, is orphaned and becomes the constant companion of Lyn. She takes Tabasco everywhere with her including planes, hotels, and research trips. Tabasco gets into all sorts of mischief but is loved by everyone. This is a true story.

Review: <http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol12/no20/tabascothesaucyraccoon.html>

Jared Lester Fifth Grade Jester by Tanya Lloyd Kyi. Annick Press, 2006. ISBN 13 978 1 55 451 025 2

Jared Lester is full of energy and spunk. One day while watching his sister's movie he sees a background character doing flips, cracking jokes, and juggling. Jared wants to be jester! The problem is there is no real call for jesters in contemporary times until he hears that one student from his school will get to perform for visiting royalty. Jared gets to fulfill his dream.

Reviews:

<http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol13/no5/jaredlesterfifthgradejester.html>
<http://www.fireflybooks.com/asp/moreonbook.asp?id=8953>

Thumb On A Diamond by Ken Roberts. Groundwood Press, 2006. ISBN 13 978 0 88899 705 0

Leon, also known as Thumb, lives in a B.C. fishing village perched on the edge of the mountains right next to the ocean. They want to see the big city so they devise a plan to get to the city by starting a baseball team. Perhaps they can get in a tournament that is being held in Vancouver. They have big problems. There is no space large enough for a baseball field in their small town, no one has ever played baseball and there are no other teams to play against. With a lot of planning and some help from grown ups the team finally gets to Vancouver to play in a tournament. Now they have to worry about how to play the game?

Reviews: <http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol12/no20/thumbonadiamond.html>
http://www.groundwoodbooks.com/gw_titles.cfm?pub_id=608

Trouble On Tarragon Island by Nikki Tate. Sono Nis Press, 2005. ISBN 1 55039 154 2
Heather Blake and her family live on Tarragon Island, off the coast of British Columbia, where the main employer is a large international forestry company. When the company begins to harvest a stand of old-growth forest, Heather's grandmother joins a local protest group planning to save the woods. The group produces a calendar with pictures of their members, including Heather's grandmother, posing semi-nude in the forest. This embarrasses Heather. Heather uses her talents as a writer to submit editorials critical of the protesters to the student newspaper. The tensions in Heather's family and in the community build as the protesters are arrested and jailed for their actions. Heather is drawn into the events and forced to look closely at both sides of the issue.

Reviews: <http://www.sononis.com/book122.htm>

<http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol12/no15/troubleontarragonisland.html>

Christmas At Wapos Bay by Jordan Wheeler & Dennis Jackson. Coteau Books, 2005. ISBN 1 550 50 324 3 (pbk).

Three urban Cree children visit their Mushom at his northern Saskatchewan cabin. Christmas is coming and more relatives are coming from the city. Because of a summer fire there aren't many animals around for them to hunt and trap. Will they have enough food for Christmas? The three cousins decide to set out alone with the dog team. Grandfather follows them but collapses. This is a story of survival on the trap line where the children need to remember what their grandfather taught them in order to beat the weather and save their grandfather. Will Christmas be cancelled?

Reviews: <http://www.umanitoba.ca/cm/vol12/no10/christmasatwaposbay.html> <http://www.amazon.com/Christmas-Wapos-Bay-Many-Peoples/dp/1550503243>

Respectfully submitted,
Wilfred Burton

Snow Willow Selection Committee Report

The 2007 Snow Willow Selection Committee consisted of Carol Thiessen – co-chair, SYRCA board member, Florence Barton – co-chair, SYRCA board member, Ann Atchison, SYRCA board member, Kathy Sharman, library technician and retired SYRCA board member, Jane Glen, teacher librarian, Suseia Gordon, grade 7/8 teacher, Tim Gulutzan, grade 5 teacher, Laurie Hnatiuk, grade 6 teacher, Shona Iverson, teacher librarian, Kim Johnson, teacher librarian, Joe Geary, Young Adult librarian, Saskatoon Public Library, Michelle Pantel, grade 7/8 teacher, Sheree Rutherford, library technician, Susan Voitka-Seager, grade 5/6 teacher. All members are avid readers of YA literature.

We met 4 times during the selection process and considered about 120 titles. Publishers submitted many of the titles; however, our eager committee also suggested titles that had not been submitted. We read several 2005 titles to be certain we had the best representation possible. We created a spreadsheet that was updated and emailed to members regularly so they could request books they had not yet read and keep track of

books that had been eliminated. A rubric was created to provide a process for the readers to have consistent points for evaluation. Although we feel it needs revision, the committee members were generally satisfied with the rubric.

The books were distributed from Greystone Heights School. People also used the public library and Saskatoon Public School LRCs to access books. The selection process made obvious the narrow range of young adult titles that are suitable for the grade seven to nine Snow Willow category. Many of the excellent titles we read were considered to be too mature for promotion in elementary schools and were removed from our list because schools are our main area of promotion.

The 2007 selection committee enjoyed their work. We feel confident that Saskatchewan young adult readers will enjoy the ten nominated titles.

2007 Snow Willow Nominees

After by Francis Chalifour. Tundra Books, c2005. ISBN 0-88776-705-2

This story tells of the year following the suicide of a family member. Over a period of months, with the help of his mother, with counseling, and with time, Francis begins to come to terms with his father's and his family's tragedy.

Review: <http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol12/no2/after.html>

The Aquanauts by John Lunn. Tundra Books, c2005. ISBN 0-88776-727-3

15-year-old Greta travels with her scientist father to a laboratory in a submarine on the floor of the Pacific Ocean. Her father has created the first man-made black hole. Greta's adventure turns into a nightmare when an accident with the black hole spins them billions of years into the future.

Review: <http://www.umanitoba.ca/cm/vol12/no4/theaquanauts.html>

I am a Taxi (The Cocalere Novels) by Deborah Ellis. Groundwood Books, c2006.

ISBN 0-88899-736-1 (pbk.), ISBN 0-88899-735-3 (cl.).

12-year-old Diego's family has been caught in the middle of the Bolivian government's war on drugs and they now live in prison. Diego is free to come and go so he helps earn the family's living by being a "taxi" and running errands for other prisoners. The hopelessness of the family situation leaves him vulnerable to the drug trade.

Review: <http://www.umanitoba.ca/cm/vol13/no2/iamataxi.html>

Keturah and Lord Death by Martine Leavitt. Red Deer Press, c2006. ISBN 0-88995-370-8

Keturah, who lives with her grandmother near a remote medieval village owned by Lord Temsland, is renowned for her storytelling. When her audience requests yet another tale, she tells this story of bargaining with Lord Death for the lives of the villagers who are threatened by the onset of the plague.

Review: http://www.frontstreetbooks.com/apage/main_b_keturah.htm

Megiddo's Shadow by Arthur Slade. HarperCollins, c2006. ISBN -13:978-0-00-639568-3, ISBN-10: 0-00-639568-6

Edward Bathe, a prairie farm boy, enlists to fight in France in 1917, hoping to revenge his brother's death. He is disappointed to be assigned to a horse-training unit and is ultimately sent to Palestine, where he learns the true horrors of war.

Review: <http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/article/CA6394673.html>

Out of Focus by Margaret Buffie. KidsCanPress, c2006. ISBN 1-55337-956-X (pbk.), ISBN 1-55337-955-1 (cl.).

When 16-year-old Bernice Dodd discovers they have inherited Black Spruce Lodge, she threatens to have social services take her younger siblings from her irresponsible, alcoholic mother if she doesn't agree to move the family. Bernice struggles to find a way to get their lives in focus in the Northern Ontario wilderness.

<http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol13/no1/outoffocus.html>

Shattered by Eric Walters. Penguin, c2006. ISBN 0-670-06366-5 (cl).

15-year-old Ian chooses to work at a soup kitchen to complete a community service requirement for social studies. After Sarge saves him from a mugging, Ian learns about this veteran and the memories that have left him homeless after his last tour as a peacekeeper in Rwanda.

<http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol12/no14/shattered.html>

Skybreaker by Kenneth Oppel. HarperCollins, c2005. ISBN 0-00-200699-5 (cl)

Matt Cruise has seen the legendary lost ship Hyperion and is the only one who remembers its coordinates. Suddenly it seems everyone wants those coordinates. Matt's courage and wit are tested as he embarks on an adventure to find the fabled airship.

<http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol12/no6/skybreaker.html>

Sun Signs by Shelley Hrdlitschka. Orca Books, c2005. ISBN 1-55143-338-9 (pbk.), ISBN 1-55143-388-5 (cl.).

Told entirely through e-mail and online correspondence, 15-year-old Kaleigh, a cancer patient who is trying to complete her classes online, enlists the help of other online learners to complete a science project. Kaleigh learns that people are not necessarily who they present themselves to be.

<http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol11/no17/sunsigns.html>

Wild Orchid by Beverly Brenna. Red Deer Press, c2005. ISBN 0-88995-330-9.

Taylor is an 18-year-old girl with Asperger's Syndrome. Her mother is taking her to Prince Albert National Park to spend the summer so her mother can work in her boyfriend's pizza restaurant. Taylor shows much courage as she learns to deal with new people and unfamiliar situations alone.

Review: <http://www.umanitoba.ca/cm/vol12/no10/wildorchid.html>

Respectfully submitted,
Florence Barton
Carol Thiessen

Thank You To All Our Volunteers!

Your dedication and support are helping us to provide opportunities for many Saskatchewan children and youth to experience the pleasures of reading.

