



THE
WILLOW
AWARDS

Annual Report
May 12, 2006



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 2005-2006

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
Chris MacLennan	Regina, SK
Elizabeth Magee	Regina, SK
Deborah Mervold	Shellbrooke, SK
Liz Roberts	Rockglen, SK (resigned January 2006)
Kathy Sharman	Saskatoon, SK
Cheryl Smith	SLA Rep, Saskatoon, SK

President's Report: The Willow Awards' Year, 2005-2006

The Willow Awards' official year runs from April 1 to March 31. The spring of 2005 was highlighted by the 2004-2005 SaskEnergy Willow Awards Gala, which was held on May 6, 2005 at Mother Teresa School in Saskatoon. The Gala celebrates the winning authors and their books. Since the awards are decided by children, students were active in preparation, hosting and presenting the Awards. They also formed an enthusiastic audience. Once again, we appreciated the participation of Her Honour, The Honourable Dr. Lynda Haverstock, Lieutenant-Governor of Saskatchewan. Two of the winning authors were able to attend the event.

Winners of the 2004-2005 Willow Awards

Shining Willow Award:	Linda Bailey for <i>Stanley's Party</i>
Diamond Willow Award:	Pat Hancock for <i>Haunted Canada</i>
Snow Willow Award:	Barbara Haworth-Attard for <i>Theories of Relativity</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 each selection committee recruited members and reading of the books began.

The official Willow Awards Launch was held October 19, 2005 at Kennedy Langbank School. The whole school participated and, virtually, the entire community attended the ceremony. The books nominated for the 2005-2006 Awards were highlighted. Many thanks to Jill Dorrance and her colleagues for hosting the event. The location of the 2006 Launch will be announced shortly.

Usually the planning for the Gala starts in the winter, but it was late this year due to difficulties in finding a host school. This may have been due to upheavals in schools with the amalgamation of school boards. However, Lindale School in Moose Jaw volunteered to be the host school for the 2006 Gala. Many thanks to Stephanie Olson and her colleagues for planning and hosting the Gala. Also thanks to Jessica Cammer for organizing winner Allan Stratton's visit.

The selection committees presented their lists of titles nominated for the 2006-2007 Awards at the January Board meeting. There was some difficulty in determining which titles were reprints and therefore ineligible. The selection committee chairs have instituted procedures to try to avoid last minute discoveries of this nature. The Board also passed a resolution clarifying the definition of "Canadian" writers.

As soon as the lists are confirmed, work begins on printing the posters and bookmarks. Every effort is made to have these available for distribution at the spring conferences. Despite short timelines, this was accomplished. Many thanks to Marion Perry for preparing the posters and bookmarks for the printer and liaising with them. The colourful new posters are superb. This year we have produced glossy bookmarks and they also will have a positive impact on promoting the Awards.

Work also begins on the materials for the Education Kits. A survey was conducted last year to obtain feedback on the use of the Education Kits. We also undertook a review of sales. It was determined that given the amount of effort and expense required to produce the Snow and Diamond Kits, that their use and sales were not sufficient to justify production. Therefore, only Shining Willow Education Kits will be produced and sold this year. They will be available by mid-May. In lieu of the Diamond and Snow Willow Education Kits, information about the nominated books and authors, and suggested fun activities will be available on the website.

Fundraising Dinners were once again held in Saskatoon (February 24) and Regina (March 10). These require a lot of work by Board members and volunteers, but do generate very useful funds for the Awards. They also function as social events for Willow Awards supporters and promote the Awards to the community.

The deadline for voting was February 28, 2006. This year most votes were received electronically. This made the vote counting process much quicker. Improvements, which will make tallying the votes automatic, are planned for next year. We were delighted that there was a substantial increase in votes this year and will work hard to continue this encouraging trend. We also receive reports that many other children read some of the books on the lists, but not quite enough to qualify to vote. Since the goal of the Willow Awards is to encourage children to read, this is also a plus for the program.

This year the Board decided to offer 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 by December 15, 2005. Six teachers or teacher-librarians received a box of books for their school or classroom and a class set of Willow Awards buttons. In addition, the names of ten students who voted in each of the three Willow Awards categories was 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 Board will consider repeating these incentives for the next year.

The Willow Awards participated in three conferences this spring: Saskatchewan Reading Conference in Regina, the Saskatchewan School Library Association Conference in Saskatoon and the Saskatchewan Library Conference in Regina. 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 SRC and SSLA conferences. Orders were taken for Education Kits and a raffle for a "Box of Books" was held. 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 Board members and volunteers who presented the sessions and sat at the tables.

Volunteers are very important for the running of the Willow Awards. The Board members are all volunteers and, in addition, many people help with ongoing work such as the web page or single events and tasks such as the Dinners or Education Kits. Of course, more volunteers are always welcome and I encourage interested people to contact a Board member for more information. This year the Board established criteria for recognition of volunteers at various levels and created appropriate awards. They will be presented at Willow Awards functions in the future.

The Board approved a "Privacy and Protecting Personal Information" policy. Information on Willow Awards members and participants will only be used for Willow Awards purposes. We do not share information with other groups or agencies.

In late 2005, Sask. Learning and the Provincial Library offered "Partnerships for Community Learning Resource Grants" to school boards and public libraries in the province. Michael Keaschuk, Director of Chinook Regional System, received a grant to promote the Willow Awards in schools and libraries within his region. As a result, every school and public library in the Chinook Region will receive copies of all thirty of the Willow Awards books nominated for 2006-2007. They will also purchase Education Kits and book labels for every location. Posters and bookmarks will be distributed around the region. We look forward to working with the Chinook Regional Library System and its associated schools. Many thanks to Michael Keaschuk for initiating this project.

My first year as President of the Willow Awards has been filled with challenges and learning experiences. 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, SaskCulture and Saskatchewan Lotteries, and our sponsors McNally Robinson Booksellers and National Book Service make the Awards possible and we extend to them our grateful thanks. Finally I wish to thank our members, and the teachers, teacher-librarians, public librarians and parents who encourage children to read and participate in the Willow Awards.

Respectfully submitted
Claire Isaac

April 23, 2006

Past President's Annual Report

The past year was Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice – The Willow Awards' (SYRCA) first with a past president. The responsibilities of this role are not explicitly outlined in the bylaws but involve serving as a resource and ensuring continuity with past terms. To this end I have been responsible for nominations, and for developing and updating SYRCA policies.

In 2005-2006 policies regarding privacy and protecting personal information, and gifts and recognition awards for service to SYRCA were developed and approved. Policies regarding the responsibilities of the Selection Committees, the eligibility requirements for the submission of books, member fees and donations, car and meeting expenses were updated. A release form for permission to use students' photos in Willow Awards publications was developed for use where schools and libraries have not already obtained these releases.

Beyond the role of past president I have been involved with the website committee, publishing the newsletter, the bookmarks and posters, and the Regina Fundraising Dinner. Thanks to everyone who assisted with these endeavours.

Respectfully submitted
Marion Perry, Past President
April 24, 2006

Vice-President's Report

I have been part of the "Willow Awards" since the "Feasibility Report" for a Saskatchewan young readers' award was undertaken by S.S.L.A. in 2001. It has been a rewarding experience to watch the growth from its inception to a time when students' votes can be entered directly online. I am proud of our web site with its information and activities. I am excited to see that SYRCA –the Willow Awards, Inc. is realizing its mission of promoting literature and reading by encouraging students to choose the best of the books nominated in designated categories for a specific year.

As vice-president I have:

- chaired the Shining Willow selection committee for 2006
- served on the organizing committee and acted as emcee for the "Buffet and Books" fundraising dinner in Saskatoon
- attended SYRCA board meetings
- book talked the Shining Willow books at the S.S.L.A. conference.

I am passionate about books and reading both for myself and for Saskatchewan children and youth. 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, 2006**

Balance at March 31, 2005

\$9,917.13

INCOME

Grants	\$3,625.00
Sponsorships	\$2,800.00
Memberships	\$2,215.00
Fundraising	\$8,494.71
Stickers/Kits	\$1,840.36
GST Rebate	\$456.08
Author Expense cancelled cheque	\$770.77

\$20,201.92

DISBURSEMENTS

Meeting Expenses	\$2,803.48
Office Expenses	\$523.41
Award Expenses	\$791.46
Award Function Expenses	\$2,160.10
Corp/Rev. Canada/ Audit Expenses	\$110.00
Marketing	\$1,261.32
Fundraising	\$3,058.51
Poster/Ballots	\$5,642.11
Stickers/Kits	\$245.14
Author Expenses	\$3,226.15
Web Site expenses	\$110.20
Bank Errors	\$1.11
Cheque stop pmt.	\$10.00
Transfer to Term Deposit	\$5,000.00

\$24,942.99

Bank Balance at Mar. 31/06

\$5,176.06

Term Deposit at Mar. 31/06

\$5,000.00

Total

\$10,176.06

Checked and verified by:

S. Dishington

April 27, 2006

The Willow Awards Fund Raising Annual Report 2005-2006

Corporations

SaskEnergy has once again promised to donate \$2,000 to sponsor the 2005-2006 Gala.

Book and Brier Patch, a Regina bookstore and distributor, once again contributed \$1,000.

McNally Robinson Booksellers in Saskatoon donated \$500.

NBS donated cash and a complete set of nominated books.

Chapters has a charitable corporation which funds some children's literacy activities, but it is school oriented and the Willow Awards does not qualify.

Associations

SSLA donated \$300.

Funding Agencies

The third annual application to SaskCulture resulted in \$2,900, of which 75% has been received. The remainder will be received in May -June 2006 after submission of our annual report. This is the final year of funding from this grant.

Carol Thiessen investigated "Raise a Reader" in Saskatoon, but we don't qualify for funds from them.

SaskSmart is supposed to be funding some literacy oriented programs, but initial investigation does not look promising. However, we may investigate further.

Other Fund-Raising Activities

Once again the "Buffet and Books" dinner and silent auction was held in Saskatoon. It was a very successful event, raising approximately \$2,300. A highlight of the evening was the raffle for a beautiful quilt. The fourth "Noodles and Books" dinner and auction in Regina was also a success raising approximately \$2,600. Many thanks to the Board members and volunteers who arranged the evenings and solicited donations of door prizes and auction items. As can be seen, the dinners are a valuable fund-raising activity for the Willow Awards.

Raffles at conferences in spring of 2005 raised \$444. The amounts raised at conferences in spring 2006 will be included in the next fiscal year's annual report.

Many fraternal and service groups in Regina and Saskatoon were contacted and asked for

support. So far we have not received any donations as a result of this effort, but they may bring results in the future. Thanks to Donna Koch and Cheryl Smith for undertaking this task.

The Future

There are still some corporate possibilities to explore. SaskCulture should be investigated to see if there are other grants for which we might be eligible.

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

Respectfully submitted
Claire Isaac
Fund-Raising Committee

Buffet and Books – Saskatoon Willow Award Fundraiser

Saskatoon's annual fundraising dinner "Buffet and Books" was held on February 24th, 2006 at the Park Town Hotel. The cash bar opened at 6:30 p.m. with the dinner beginning at 7:00 p.m. Tickets were \$25.00, which included dinner, coffee and gratuity. We sold 87 tickets for the dinner.

The silent auction was very successful. We had 43 prepackaged gift baskets, each of which included various items as well as several books. We had a hand-quilted quilt for the raffle. The quilt raffle brought in close to \$500.00. Tickets sold for \$2.00 each or 3 for \$5.00. Shona Inverson, a teacher librarian with the Saskatoon Public School Division, was thrilled to win the quilt.

Throughout the evening many books, as well as other items, were given away as draws. It was great to have five authors in our midst as well as our president, Claire Issac. Thanks for coming Claire.

The evening was a success. We brought in around \$2300.00. Thanks to all who helped make this venture a success.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Thiessen



2005 SaskEnergy Willow Awards Gala

Authors and guests were warmly greeted by students and teachers as they entered Mother Teresa School the morning of May 6. The Willow Awards' Executive had brought "I Read Willow Books" buttons and by the time they were seated in the gym, everyone was wearing one.

The Lieutenant Governor, Her Honour, Dr. Lynda Haverstock, and other dignitaries were piped into the gym. After the Vice-Regal Salute, O Canada, welcome and opening prayer, the Mother Teresa/Holy Family Schools Senior Bands played. Her Honour, Dr. Haverstock, related to the students the importance of reading in her life and in theirs. Greetings were brought by Bev Dubois, Saskatoon City Councillor, Marion Perry, SYRCA President, Leslie Gosselin, SaskEnergy, and Dr. Helen Horsman, Director of Education, Saskatoon Catholic Schools.

To mark the Centennial, the Choir sang "Saskatchewan We Love This Place". Excitement peaked as slides introduced the nominated books in each category and the name of the author of the book selected as the students' favourite in each category was announced. The winners: Shining Willow, Linda Bailey for *Stanley's Party*, Diamond Willow, Pat Hancock, for *Haunted Canada*, and Snow Willow, Barbara Haworth-Attard for *Theories of Relativity*.



Marion Perry presented the school with the traditional willow tree for the school grounds and a plaque commemorating the day. Following the ceremonies, guests attended a reception in the school library and students gathered in different rooms for author presentations.

The Willow Awards would like to thank Bev Pacholik, Dot Zens, and the staff and students of Mother Teresa School for hosting a wonderful Gala.

Respectfully submitted,

Marion Perry



Kennedy Langbank School Launches the 2005 Willow Awards

The foyer of Kennedy Langbank School was abuzz on October 19th. Students preparing for “The Launch” dashed back and forth, checking last minute details with teachers who stood anchored like trees responding to requests for directions. Soon students and guests were in the gym opening the celebrations with “O Canada”. Principal Alvin Will welcomed all. Dr. Margaret Lipp, Saskatchewan’s new Literacy Commissioner, reminded the audience of the importance of initiatives like The Willow Awards for promoting literacy and commended the volunteers and sponsors who make The Willow Awards possible. Angela Lees brought greetings from Sask. Culture and Saskatchewan Lotteries, major sponsors of The Willow Awards. Leona Cote, Assistant Director of Aspen Grove School Division, spoke of the wonders awaiting those who read, and Elmer Molnar, representing the village of Kennedy reminded students that reading is essential in a knowledge economy.

Students entertained with “Read A Book” by Len Gatica, “Mississauga Rattlesnakes” by Dennis Lee, and a poem from Robert Heidbreder author of *Drumheller Dinosaur Dance*. The choir sang and had the audience swaying like a willow.

Students paraded the nominated books through the gym as the masters of ceremonies, Tyler Smith and Casey Berglund, read summaries and letters that the authors had written in reply to students’ letters.

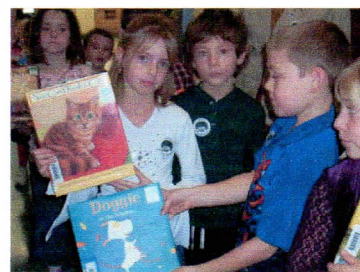
Willow Awards’ President, Claire Isaac, presented Jill Dorrance, the school’s library associate, with a set of the nominated books and a plaque recognizing the school as the host of the 4th annual Willow Awards’ Launch.



During the reception following the ceremony, guests admired the Willow Awards’ Quilt crafted by the library associates of the Aspen Grove School Division and the student artwork on the school doors. Each of the 30 school doors represented one book.

Congratulations, Kennedy Langbank School, for a great start to the 2005 Willow Awards. Schools interested in hosting the 2006 Launch will find the application on the Willow Awards webpage under “Ballots and Forms”.

Respectfully submitted,
Marion Perry



Voting Statistics 2005-2006

Willow Award Participants	2003	2004	2005	% Change 2004 -2005
Teachers/Adults	195	129	151	+15%
Schools	114	84	132	+32%
Libraries	1	5	4	
Communities	61	73	65	-12%
Voters	7521	5523	7262	+12%

Votes by Category

Snow Willow 220

Diamond Willow 609

Shining Willow 6437

Total 7262

Respectfully submitted,
Clair Isaac

Willow Awards' Web Page Committee Report, 2005-2006

www.willowawards.ca

During the past year, the Willow Awards' website was updated regularly to reflect the annual cycle of Willow Award activities and events. The home page has featured the June 2005 SaskEnergy Willow Awards Gala at St. Angela School in Saskatoon, the October 2005 Launch at Kennedy-Langbank School and announcements such as those for the incentive draws available to teachers and students. The 2006 nominees and the 2006 bookmark templates have been posted. Additional material has been being added to the pages for the nominated books. For each title there is a picture and biography of the

author, plus a link to the review of the book published by *Canadian Materials*. Since the Snow and Diamond Education Kits have been discontinued, the goal has been set to provide at least one activity such as an online quiz or puzzle for these books by September. More volunteers are needed to create content such as multiple choice quizzes, puzzles and book activities.

In February we posted our first on-line forms. The Vote Summary Forms were very popular as 4,429 of the approximately 7,000 votes were received via these forms. Applications for the 2006 Launch were received through the online form posted in March.

Our webpage 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 18, 2006.

www.willowawards.ca				
Month	Average Daily Hits 2004-2005	Average Daily Hits 2005-2006	Total Monthly Hits 2004-2005	Total Monthly Hits 2005-2006
	2005	2006	2005	2006
To mid April	863	759	12,090	13,670
March	733	1174	22,726	36,405
February	904	1026	25,338	28,745
January	616	680	19,111	21,095
	2004	2005	2004	2005
December	289	347	8,965	10,757
November	544	769	16,327	23,088
October	477	710	13,836	22,019
September	442	505	13,272	15,179
August	186	320	5,795	9,940
July	233	318	7,249	9,858
June	391	515	11,730	15,453
May	297	828	9,221	25,684
Total			165,660	231,891

I would like to thank Kathy Stedwill and Val Gerrard their wonderful work.

Respectfully submitted
Marion Perry
April 18, 2006

Shining Willow Education Package

Chris MacLennan organized the Shining Willow Education Package for 2006-2007 with help from the teacher-librarians and teachers from the Regina Public School Board. The following individuals helped by reading a book(s) and then writing the author and book pages.

Ellen Aitken
Kira Fladager
Sandy Howe
Bonnie Miles
Deanna Wees

Andra Donbrook
Carol Hart
Donna Lindstrom
Erin Walton
Susan Whittick

Donna Koch (Board member) edited the pages.

I have some recommendations to make this process more streamlined.

1. Every year there is a problem getting information from publishers in a timely manner. By the time the information is received the volunteers have already finished their pages, and then it is up to the co-coordinator to try and integrate what the publisher has sent. I believe that the secretary should inform the publisher of who the nominees are. Then a list of publisher e-mail addresses should be sent to the Shining Willow co-coordinator who will then e-mail the publishers. The co-coordinator now has more control over how fast the information is coming, and can do follow-ups quickly and efficiently. It makes more sense for the volunteers to have the information from the publisher, then for the co-coordinator to try to integrate information at the last minute.

2. Contact with each author is much more valuable than contact with the publisher. Once the nominated books have been announced and publishers have been informed, e-mails will be sent to each author informing them of the project and how they can help. This means that the information to the publishers must go out as soon as humanly possible. The Shining Willow co-coordinator would be responsible for sending e-mails to the authors. The information given to us by the author can then be forwarded to the volunteers working on a particular book.

A big thank you to all the volunteers who all work at very busy and demanding jobs, but still found time to give some of their valuable expertise to the Willows. The package could not have been completed without their help.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris MacLennan

Selection Committee Annual Reports 2005

Shining Willow Award

Selection Committee Members

Ann Atchison	Kim Johnson
Florence Barton	Ione Langlois
Judith Benninger	Jessica Latshaw
Valerie Blain	Judy Pocha
Hedie Borne	Denise Rossmo-Wiegers
Terry Clark	Sheree Rutherford
Verna Demers	Kathy Sharman
Elsbeth Dormuth	Cheryl Smith
Carry Dueck	Carol Thiessen
Sandra Ellis-Rollack	Susan Voitka-Seager
Jane Glen	

The Shining Willow selection committee met for its first meeting on November 5, 2005 at 4:30 p.m. in the library at Sutherland School. Once again the submissions and multiple copies from the publishers were of great significance. We presented each committee member with a list of books we had received and began the evaluation process. We also accepted possible suggestions from members of the selection committee. One hundred and seven books were considered for the Shining Willow Award this year. We spent several hours reading and discussing the books and listening to reviews that had been gathered. We were able to pare the number of possible choices to 34 books. At the end of the meeting these books were distributed to the members. Members went away endeavouring to read as many of these books as possible.

The second meeting was held December 5th at Sutherland School. Members shared personal reviews as well as written reviews from reputable sources such as *Resource Links*, *Quill and Quire*, web sites and library catalogues. A big thank you to Cheryl Smith from the Saskatoon Public Library for hunting up so many reviews. After much discussion and deliberation a shortened list of 19 books was established. The books on this list were again distributed and all committee members went away committed to read as many of the books as possible. We found it necessary to purchase copies of some of the books as we had not received copies from the publishers.

The third meeting was held January 9th at McNally Robinson. After much deliberation the final list was compiled. Attention was given to criteria such as genre, gender, aboriginal content, reading level and interest level as outlined in our policy document.

The final list was presented for approval to the SYRCA Inc. Board at the meeting held on January 28, 2006.

I would like to thank the members of the Shining Willow Selection Committee for their commitment to books and "Saskatchewan Readers".

2006 Shining Willow Nominees

Orphans in the Sky by Jean Bushey, illustrated by Vldyana Krykorka. Red Deer Press, c2004. ISBN 0-88995-291-4

This story is based on a traditional Inuit legend that explains why we have thunder and lightning. An orphaned brother and sister are mistakenly abandoned by their people and find a new home with the stars. Little Sister dispels the dark with a flint she carries and Little Brother's laughter makes his sealskin crackle loudly. Thus, Little Brother becomes Thunder and Little Sister becomes lightning and they become part of a new family of the sun, moon, northern lights, and stars. Eventually their people return but the children choose to use their own light and energy and remain as Brother Thunder and Sister Lightning with their sky family.

Review: <http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol11/no14/orphansinthesky.html>

Gummytoes by Sean Cassidy. Fitzhenry & Whiteside, c2004. ISBN 1-55041-824-6

Gummytoes, a young tree frog, allows himself to be caught by some young children because his greatest wish is to be admired. He dazzles the children with his skills but when they take him home and place him in a terrarium Gummytoes is startled and frightened. He longs to return to his natural existence so he engineers an escape plan. Gummytoes distracts the children and manages to hop away. He learns a valuable lesson about being the centre of attention and realizes that he needs to make himself happy in order to be happy.

Review: <http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol11/no5/gummytoes.html>

Sophie and the Sea Monster by Don Gillmor, illustrated by Michael Martchenko. North Winds Press, c2005. ISBN 0-439-97461-5

Sophie worries about everything, especially about the moon falling from the sky. She gets very worried when her brother tells her there is a sea monster under her bed until she realizes there really is a sea monster under her bed and it is also afraid of the moon falling from the sky. Sophie lures the sea monster out from under the bed and after a fun filled day that ends with them daring the moon to fall from the sky, the sea monster slips back into the sea and Sophie returns home with her fears gone.

Review: http://www.quillandquire.com/books_young/review.cfm?review_id=4796

A Team Like No Other by Georgia Graham. Red Deer Press, c2004. ISBN 0-88995-290-6

Stephen is dog sledding with his father in Southern Alberta. He is thrilled and very excited until a log knocks his father off the sled and the team takes off at full speed. Stephen, from his vantage point on the runaway sled, is terrified; however, he keeps his wits about him and with the help of Skoki, the lead dog, he is able to stop the sled before it goes over a high cliff.

Review: <http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol11/no12/ateamlikenooother.html>

Earth to Audrey by Susan Hughes, illustrated by Stéphane Poulin. Kids Can Press, c2005. ISBN 1-55337-843-1

Ray is having a boring and lonely summer until he meets Audrey, a strange girl who sends signals with a kite, trains grasshoppers, and lies very still on the ground looking up into the sky. Ray is convinced Audrey is an alien, but as he follows Audrey around the town, he finds out things about his planet that he never knew. Audrey and Ray share some wonderful escapades and Ray is amazed at the world he sees through Audrey's eyes. We rejoice in Ray's imaginings but wonder if Audrey really is an alien or just an ordinary little girl who is feeling alone. In the end Audrey gives Ray a gift more precious than gold.

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

In the Country by Don Kilby. Kids Can Press, c2004. ISBN 1-55337-472-X

This book, part of the 'Wheels at Work' series, explains some of the machines that are commonly used in the country. Double page illustrations show a tractor, farm truck, cultivator, sprayer, feed truck, school bus, livestock trailer, baler, combine, grain buggy, drilling rig, horse trailer, and plough. In the accompanying text, which explains the use of each machine, the name of the machine is in bold type. The illustrations, which are very detailed, complement the text.

Review: <http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol11/no3/wheelsatwork.html>

Martin Bridge: Ready for Takeoff by Jessica Scott Kerrin, illustrated by Joseph Kelly. Kids Can Press, c2005. ISBN 1-55337-772-9 (pbk), ISBN 1-55337-688-9 (cl)

Martin, a young boy, experiences the challenges of ethical dilemmas in three short stories. Martin's good intentions go awry as he tries to do what is right. Martin is forced to deal with a friend who takes his idea for a rocket, a hamster that dies, and a grumpy bus driver. In each situation he learns a life lesson in a humorous manner.

Review:

<http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol11/no18/martinbridgereadyfortakeoff.html>

Mile High Apple Pie by Laura Langston, illustrated by Lindsey Gardiner. Random House of Canada, c2004. ISBN 0-099-44388-0 (pbk), ISBN 0-370-32736-5 (cl)

Margaret spends a lot of time with her grandmother who lives with them because she can't remember. When Grandma forgets, Margaret helps her out. Margaret's mother has explained that Grandma's brain is mixed up and even if she can't remember Margaret's name, she still loves Margaret. With great wisdom, Margaret knows when to say, "I am Margaret and I am your remembering." She climbs into her Grandma's lap and returns her Grandma's love.

Review: <http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol11/no16/milehighapplepie.html>

Bigbeard's Hook by Evan Solomon, illustrated by Bill Slavin. Viking Canada, c2005. ISBN 0-670-06386-X

Nathaniel, a mischievous boy goes to visit his grandfather. Gramp's house is a mansion filled with interesting knickknacks. Nathaniel begins to explore the attic and can't resist

entering a forbidden room. He notices a pirate's hook and picks it up. He is not prepared for his trip to a pirate ship and his meeting with the infamous pirate Bigbeard..

Review: <http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol11/no21/bigbeardshook.html>

The Baabaasheep Quartet by Leslie Elizabeth Watts. Fitzhenry & Whiteside, c2005. ISBN 1-55041-890-4

Four retired sheep are a little disillusioned with retirement. Woolcott, Lambert, Eugene, and Waylon just can't seem to fit in no matter where they go, how they dress, or what they do. When they find a damaged poster advertising a "Ba bshp" contest, they decide to enter the singing contest." When they arrive at the contest and find out it is not for sheep, they once again try to fit in with the other contestants. This time it works and they are judged for their "art, " not their appearance.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Thiessen

Diamond Willow Award

Selection Committee Members

- Wilfred Burton (chair)
- Mary Quickfall (classroom teacher – special needs)
- Donna Scarfe (University instructor)
- Jeanne Scarfe (classroom teacher – special needs)
- Liz Magee (University Librarian)
- Marilyn Andrews (University Librarian)
- Jeanne Labelle (Avid Reader/parent)
- Donna Koch (retired teacher)
- Gerri Trenker (classroom teacher: grade 4)
- Diane Szabo (classroom teacher: grade 5)
- Sharon Hamilton (parent/children's author)
- Michelle Howland (retired librarian)
- Anne Patton (retired teacher/children's author)
- Karen Lind (University Instructor)

The selection committee was a group of dedicated readers who love children's stories. They chose a variety of books to read: different genres, different reading levels and different publishers. As they read they kept me informed of their preferences.

During the summer, Claire Isaac developed a list of potential books and pulled them from the Regina Public Library's children's collection. Some of the committee members were able to read these selections over the summer. This was very helpful and we would like to thank Claire for doing this. Starting at the end of August the books arrived from the

publishers and they kept arriving well into November. The committee previewed one hundred and ninety six books in total. Some of the books were not appropriate for our grade levels and were sent to the Shining Willow chair for consideration.

The extensive list of good books was made shorter when the committee met in mid-January to decide on the top ten. We think we did an excellent job of selecting books with: Aboriginal content, a Saskatchewan author, male/female protagonists, fiction/non-fiction and readability levels for grades four, five and six. We need to become more aware of titles that have been republished under a new title, and books published in another language previously.

I would like to thank the committee for all of their hard work. Most of the committee will read again next year and those that are leaving are moving out of the province or do not have the time to commit to this endeavor. Thank you again.

2006 Diamond Willow Nominees

Money, Money, Money by Eve Drobot. Maple Tree Press, 2004. ISBN 1 897066 11 2 (pbk).

This is an exploration of the history of money, different currency from around the globe, how to save it, spend it and make it grow.

Rosie's Dream Cape by Zelda Freeman. Ronsdale Press, 2005. ISBN 1 55380 025 7 (pbk)

Eleven year old Rosie fled to Canada from Russia with her grandmother. She immediately is hired in a sweatshop to sew capes. Rosie dreams about having a red cape much like the one her dead theatrical mother wore to the theatre. She steals the scraps and makes a cape at home, only to be found out by the boss who threatens to send her back to Russia.

Walking With The Dead by L.M. Falcone. Kids Can Press, 2005. ISBN 1 55337 708 7 (bound).

After Alex's dad brings home an ancient Greek corpse, Alex gets very weird. He has crazy dreams, gets struck by lightening and falls through a door into the night sky. After 2000 years the corpse wakes up and Alex and his friend help the cadaver to the world of the dead.

Ellen Fremedon: Journalist by Joan Givner. Groundwood Books, 2005. ISBN 88899 691 8 (pbk).

Ellen and her friend decide to publish their own newspaper that will only portray the truth. The girls become investigative reporters in their community. They become intrigued with a mysterious stranger who moves in next door where they put their investigative skills to the test.

The Prairie Dogs by Glenda Goertzen. Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 2005. ISBN 1 55005 113 X (pbk).

Pierre, an agility-winning poodle escapes from his owner's motor home. Once away from the daily grind he befriends stray dogs and dazzles them with his agility. However, another pack of bully strays try and entice Pierre into their gang. Eventually Pierre and his "underdogs" save an old man's life. The old man befriends the "underdogs" and takes them to live with him.

Daniel's Dinosaurs: A True Story of Discovery by Charles Helm, Maple Tree Press, 2004. ISBN 1 897066 07 4 (pbk).

Daniel and his friend Mark find six dinosaur footprints while out exploring. The footprints led to major exploration and discoveries around Tumbler Ridge.

Torrie And The Pirate Queen by K.V. Johansen. Annick Press, 2005. ISBN 1 55037 900 3.

Torrie convinces the captain of a ship to let him be part of the crew. The captain, Anna, is setting sail to go and find her father who is being held by a Pirate Queen. They must unearth treasure before they can locate the father.

Francesca And The Magic Bike by Cynthia Nugent, Raincoast Books, 2004. ISBN 1 55192 561 3 (pbk).

Ten year-old Francesca (Frankie) is sent to live with her biological father after her mother dies. He is a bumbling but well-intentioned man. Frankie is left on her own. She befriends the blind elderly neighbour who sends her on a quest to find a family heirloom at the bottom of a lake. To guide her on her journey, Augusta gives Frankie an unusual bike. Meanwhile, Frankie's father is threatened by Social Services and he realizes the importance of being a good father.

Murphy and Mousetrap by Sylvia Olson, Orca Books, 2005. ISBN 1 55143 344 3 (pbk).

Murphy and his cat Mousetrap have just moved back to the reserve. Although he is First Nations, he is worried that he and his cat won't fit in. He is fair and Mousetrap is an indoor cat. The two characters find their place in the community; Murphy by playing soccer and Mousetrap by going outside and getting dirty.

Rescue Pup by Jean Little. Orca Books, 2004.

Shakespeare is a seeing-eye puppy who spends a year with a girl who has never learned to love. Before the puppy comes of age to train as a seeing-eye dog, he "rescues" this sad little foster girl and makes her know what love is again. It comes with many struggles, including almost losing his life.

Respectfully submitted,
Wilfred Burton

Snow Willow Award

Selection Committee Members

Michelle Crawford, parent
Jenna Fusick, grade 7 student
Virginia Gray, Principal, Shellbrook Schools
Naomi Kenny, grade 7 student
Stephanie Kennedy, teacher associate
Tamara Kress, parent
Glenys Martin, grade 6 teacher at W.P. Sandin Composite School
Linda Mazurkewich, librarian, Shellbrook Public Library
Linda Randall, grade 7 student
Pat Sontag, superannuated teacher
Deborah Mervold, chairperson, SYRCA board member

This year the committee considered 61 titles with an additional seven titles rejected because of copyright date or other criteria. The focus was on books for Grades 7 to 9. The committee felt that there was a good variety of fiction topics although more books had female rather than male protagonists. Non-fiction was more limited than in previous years. There were some books submitted that had been previously published with another publisher. The committee would like to thank SYRCA for the opportunity to assist with this project.

2006 Snow Willow Nominees

The Starrigans of Little Brook Bottom by Harold Davis. Creative Book Publishing. c2005. ISBN 1-894294-85-8

The Starrigans are fabled "little people" who live at Little Brook Bottom. When a young human child goes missing from a nearby town, the Starrigans feel obliged to help. Their ancient enemies, the cunnocks, are also involved and complicate the rescue. Friendship and community are tested.

Review:

Gravesavers by Sheree Fitch. Random House. c2005. ISBN 0-385-66073-1

Twelve year old Minn is sent to spend the summer in Boulder Basin with the grandmother she resents. When Minn realizes that the graves from a shipping disaster are being destroyed she finds a cause. Through her fight, she comes to a new understanding of her grandmother and her own life.

Review:

<http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol12/no1/thegravesavers.html>

The Ghost Horse of Meadow Green by Anne Louise MacDonald. Kids Can Press. c2005 ISBN 1-55337-636-6

Kim is excited that her Gramma-Lou is coming to stay with them. Everyday on the school bus she sees a black horse. Is it a ghost? What are the secrets that Gramma-Lou's Alzheimers Disease is hiding? How is the ghost horse connected to her

Grandmother?

Review:

<http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol11/no18/ghosthorseofmeadowgreen.html>

Forever: The Annual Hockey Classic by Roy MacGregor. Northern Lights. C2005. ISBN 0-88995-306-6

Bump waits patiently until he is tall enough to join his family in the Christmas Classic, a hockey game played on the nearby pond. The illustrations add to this ageless story of a family and a tradition that will only stay the same in memory.

Review: <http://www.myhamilton.ca/NR/rdonlyres/23FC9C71-5B93-4654-BB91-C45412BE5D40/0/BooksforGiving2005FullList.PDF>

Sky Dancer by Cathy Brown Murphy. Creative Book Publishing. c2005. ISBN 1-894294-75-0

Wulf, his siblings, Loki and Morrigan, are newly hatched ravens. Wulf discovers a passion for flying which may be ended by Chaos, an older, powerful raven. Wulf must face many hardships and trials to ensure a life for himself and safety for his family.

Hannah Waters and the Daughter of Johann Sebastian Bach by Barbara Nickel. Penguin c2005. ISBN 0-14-305078-8

Catharina, daughter of J.S. Bach, has a beautiful singing voice unnoticed by her father who is composing the Concerto to Two Violins. Three centuries later, Hannah is learning to play the Concerto when her father moves with her to Saskatchewan from Toronto after the death of her mother. The two girls reach out to each other across the centuries.

Review:

<http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol12/no1/hannahwatersandthedaughter.html>

The Crazy Man by Pamela Porter. Groundwood Books. c2005. ISBN 0-88899-695-0

Emaline loses her father, her dog and her health on a single day because of a farm accident. When her mother hires a man from a nearby institution, Emaline learns a valuable lesson about life.

Review: <http://umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol12/no8/crazyman.html>

Rink of Dreams by Nancy L.M. Russell. Key Porter Books. c2005. ISBN 1-55263-727-1

Gary MacDonald is a thirteen year old hockey player who is small for his age and playing his first year as a Bantam. When the Mexico Snow Dogs begin playing in Charlottetown, at Gary's home rink, life becomes more complicated for Gary and his friends.

Review: <http://www.kalwriters.com/kidswwwrite/46/rink.html>

Thirst by Catherine Taylor. Fitzhenry and Whiteside. C2005. ISBN 1-55005-107-5

Mara lives in Regnboga, a desert settlement, run by the watchers who control life in the walled city. With her guardian, she follows her destiny to the sea. Now that she knows the old stories are true, she must continue her journey even if it leads back through danger to tell her people the truth.

Review: <http://umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol12/no5/thirst.html>

Research Ate My Brain: The Panic-Proof Guide to Surviving Homework by Toronto Public Library. Annick Press Ltd. C2005. ISBN 1-55037-938-0

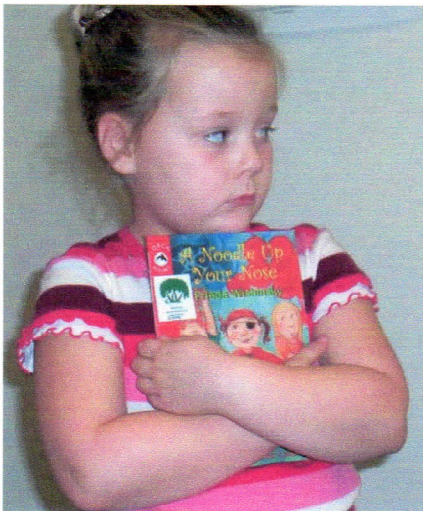
This book takes students through projects, assignments and research. The format includes cartoons, websites, lists and examples.

Review: <http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol12/no9/researchatemybrain.html>

Respectfully submitted,
Deborah Mervold

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 pleasure of reading.



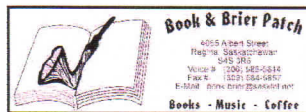
Thank you to the many volunteers whose pictures we were unable to obtain



CULTURE BUILDS COMMUNITY

The Willow Awards gratefully acknowledge the support of:

Patrons:



SUPPORTED BY:



Friends:

Sharon Gabora
Saskatoon Catholic S.D.
Marion Perry
Carol Thiessen