

# Annual Report



**Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice**

## **The Willow Awards**

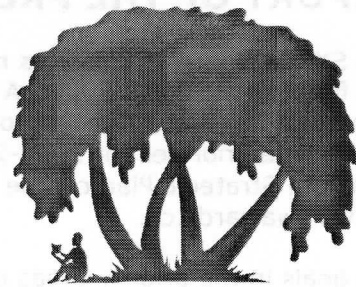
**May 23, 2009**





## MISSION STATEMENT

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



## OBJECTIVES

In order to achieve its Mission, the Corporation will:

- develop an annual list of Canadian and Saskatchewan books nominated to receive a Willow Award;
- maintain a web site to inform the public of the list of nominated books, and to conduct the voting electronically;
- present Willow Award(s) to the author(s) of the winning book(s);
- promote reading of Saskatchewan and/or Canadian books by conducting the award, and by developing incentives for young readers to participate;
- develop and ensure implementation of SYRCA - Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice - The Willow Awards, Inc. policies;
- encourage community involvement in all levels of SYRCA - Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice - The Willow Awards, Inc. activity;
- cooperate with other organizations and groups in order to maximize the use of limited resources;
- ensure that SYRCA - Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice - The Willow Awards, Inc. is managed in a financially responsible, prudent and ethical manner.

## BOARD MEMBERS

President: Florence Barton, Saskatoon

Vice President: Ann Atchison, Saskatoon

Vice President/Saskatchewan School Library Association Representative:

Ruth Garnett, Saskatoon

Treasurer: Margaret Steger, Regina

Secretary/Saskatchewan Library Association Representative:

Cheryl Smith, Saskatoon (resigned, January 2009)

Past President: Claire Isaac, Regina

Directors at Large:

Gloria Antifaiff, Regina (resigned, November 2008)

Jillian Bell, Lumsden

Wilfred Burton, Regina

Val Gerrard, Regina

Donna Koch, Regina

Naomi Kral, Regina

Marion Perry, Regina

Arwen Rudolph, Moose Jaw (resigned, November 2008)

## REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT, SYRCA INC.

The SYRCA Board of Directors met in May, September, November, January and March of this fiscal year 2008 - 2009. A considerable amount of time was spent developing a Strategic Plan that will help provide direction for the SYRCA board for the next 3 - 5 years. The Priorities for 2008-2009 outlined in this plan are found on page 3. The complete Strategic Plan can be found on the "About SYRCA" page of our website, [www.willowawards.ca](http://www.willowawards.ca).

The goals in the priority areas of Organizational Structure and Fiscal Responsibility represent an annual "to do" list for the board to address at the first meeting of the year.

The organization has a strong structure with well defined policies and procedures. We were successful this fiscal year in building a reserve fund that will provide the organization with a small cushion if fiscal resources decrease due to economic restraint. Our fundraising committee, chaired by Naomi Kral, has been very active in seeking funds from corporate donations. The decision to create new levels of patrons reflects the corporate support we received this year. We continue to seek grant sources and long-term, stable funding sources for our organization and take every opportunity to grow the membership in SYRCA.

Communication is a major priority for SYRCA. This year the website, <http://www.willowawards.ca>, has undergone significant change. The web committee, chaired by Marion Perry, worked with website developer Trevor Cunningham to add an online voting feature, a board login page and an updated look. This has improved communication with our members and readership and has provided another means of internal communication. The newsletter is a priority that requires significant attention in the next year. Difficulties in getting the newsletter produced have meant time delays and errors. Other communication priorities and goals such as posters and bookmarks and media coverage have been met.

Sustainability is identified as a priority. It is the long term goal of the board to hire an executive co-ordinator to help manage the work load. Expanding the membership and volunteer base are ongoing goals.

Programming was identified as a strength of our organization. The selection committees work effectively and the educational activities on the website are visited frequently. We piloted a multi-site launch in October and will continue with that format in the fall, followed by an evaluation. The Gala was hosted by Lumsden Elementary School and was a wonderfully celebratory event.

In conclusion, the 2008 - 2009 year for Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice Awards was productive and successful thanks to the many hours spent by the volunteer Board of Directors. I would like to thank each of them for their time, their talents and their endless enthusiasm for fulfilling our mandate of promoting literacy to the young readers of our province. Reports will follow outlining the work of various board members.

Respectfully submitted,  
Florence Barton, President

## **SYRCA - THE WILLOW AWARDS' STRATEGIC PLAN**

### **Key Priorities for: 2008 - 2009**

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

#### **Organizational Structure**

- Tasks and responsibilities
- Board Meetings

#### **Fiscal Responsibility**

- Budget
- Fund Development

#### **Communication**

- Website
- Newsletter
- Posters, bookmarks
- Internal communication
- External communication
- Conferences

#### **Sustainability**

- Membership
- Board membership, human resources, volunteers
- Executive director – paid position

#### **Program**

- Book selection
- Gala – winning authors attendance, reading at host school
- Launch
- Educational activities



## REPORT OF VICE-PRESIDENT ANN ATCHISON

As Vice President one of my main responsibilities is to act as the contact person for publishers, authors and illustrators. In addition to this, I have also worked on the organizing committee for the Saskatoon fund-raiser, Buffet and Books, and served as co-chair, with Cheryl Smith, of the Diamond Willow Selection Committee.

In early June our Call for Submissions was sent to publishers requesting submissions for the 2009 Willow Awards. I have endeavored to keep our database as current as possible and I have developed a distribution list to assist in the process of distributing information to the publishers.

In early January, a letter containing a poster and set of bookmarks was sent to each of the nominated authors and illustrators thanking them for their contribution to Canadian children's literature. Authors were asked if they would be willing to donate a signed copy of their book to be given to a student attending the Gala at the Lumsden Elementary School in Lumsden. Twenty-four authors responded by sending at least one signed copy of their book. Two of the authors sent two copies and another author sent a box of postcards and fridge magnets in addition to two signed copies of her books. These were given to Janice Schmitz who looked after distributing them to the students who attended the Gala. I also received a number of notes and emails from the authors thanking us for all the work that we do.

In early February, the publishers of the 2009 nominees were contacted to inform them of the nomination and request biographies, photographs and contact information for the authors and illustrators. A congratulatory email was sent to each of the authors and illustrators. All relevant permissions from publishers, authors, and illustrators were collected. Information was forward to Val Gerrard who looked after putting it on the website.

In early March I contacted each of the winning authors to inform them that their book had been selected as one of the winners of the 2009 Willow Awards. Unfortunately only one of the authors, Caroline Adderson, was able to attend our Gala. Both Melanie Watt and Gordon Korman had previous commitments.

This has been a challenging year for SYRCA. We have had a number of resignations from the Board. This has meant more work for those of us who have remained. I would like to thank all of the SYRCA board members for their work during the past year. Your work on developing our Strategic Plan has given us direction as we move into the future. The hard work of the Fund-raising Committee has ensured that we do have a future. Thank you to each and every one of you for your commitment and dedication. In addition, I would also like to thank all of our members, friends, patrons and sponsors. Without you, SYRCA - The Willow Awards Inc. would not be viable today.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ann Atchison

## REPORT OF VICE PRESIDENT RUTH GARNETT

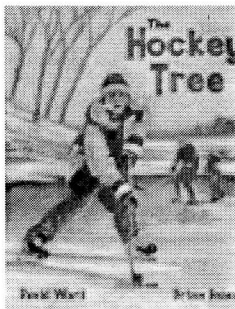
My first year as a board member has been one of learning and growth. Serving on the board has allowed me to further become involved with development of the goals of the Willow Awards, on both a personal level within my own schools and on a provincial level as board member. Chairing the Snow Willow committee was not only challenging, but also exciting and rewarding. I am very proud of the selections that our committee made, and was privileged to have the opportunity to read such a variety of quality Canadian literature.

In addition, as Vice President I was part of the development of the 2008-09 Planning Document which provides direction for the Board in the near future. I also participated on the Fundraising Committee. I look forward to the second year of this term, continuing on with the development of Board goals.

Submitted by,  
Ruth Garnett

### WILLOW AWARD WINNERS 2007 - 2008

#### Shining Willow



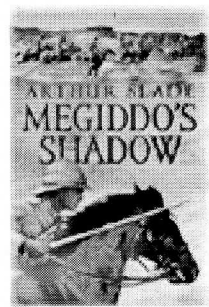
**David Ward**  
**The Hockey Tree**

#### Diamond Willow



**Marty Chan**  
**The Mystery of the Graffiti  
Ghoul**

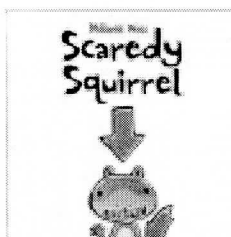
#### Snow Willow



**Arthur Slade**  
**Megiddo's Shadow**

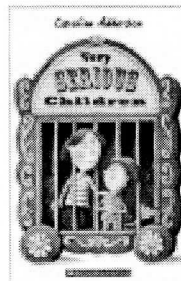
### WILLOW AWARD WINNERS 2008 - 2009

#### Shining Willow



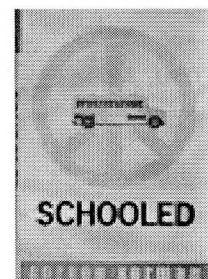
**Melanie Watt**  
**Scaredy Squirrel**

#### Diamond Willow



**Caroline Adderson**  
**Very Serious Children**

#### Snow Willow



**Gordon Korman**  
**Schooled**





**SYRCA - SASKATCHEWAN YOUNG READERS' CHOICE -  
THE WILLOW AWARDS INC.  
FINANCIAL STATEMENT  
YEAR ENDING MARCH 31, 2009**

Bank Balance at March 31, 2008

**\$23,571.99**

**INCOME**

Grants	\$5,000.00
Sponsorships	\$11,000.00
Memberships	\$4,930.00
Fundraising	\$13,335.00
Stickers	\$1,855.00
GST Rebate	\$356.09

**\$36,476.09**

**DISBURSEMENTS**

Meeting Expenses	\$2,691.16
Office Expenses	\$492.64
Award Expenses	\$1,133.70
Award Function Expenses	\$1,445.61
Corp/Rev. Canada/ Audit Expenses	\$110.00
Marketing	\$337.33
Fundraising	\$5,821.43
Poster/Ballots	\$5,010.50
Stickers	\$11.93
Author Expenses	\$2,161.46
Web Site expenses	\$5,241.87
Transfer to term deposit	\$15,000.00

**\$39,457.63**

Bank Balance at Mar. 31/09

**\$20,590.45**

**Term Deposit**

**\$15,000.00**

**TOTAL ASSETS**

**\$35,590.45**

Checked and verified by:

S. Dishington, DAA

May 10, 2009

## FUNDRAISING REPORT 2009

*Goal – Strategic Plan: Ensure sufficient funding for sustainability*

At the beginning of the 2008-2009 year, the fundraising committee consisting of board members Claire Isaac, Ruth Garnett, and Naomi Kral, began a provincial letter writing campaign to solicit donations to support Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice - The Willow Awards Inc. Since our mandate is to encourage children in the province to read Saskatchewan and Canadian authors, the committee approached people from various sectors instead of concentrating on the two larger cities to fund this provincial initiative.

The letter writing campaign focused on obtaining funding for a database to be added to the Willow Awards website to make it more interactive, to count the students votes electronically, and to archive some of the previous content.

In the fall Regina Board members hosted a brunch to launch the new book titles for 2009 and to thank some of the past sponsors. Conexus Credit Union provided funding for the brunch and became the title sponsor in the amount of \$3000 dollars. As the committee organized the brunch, I received a letter from the Literacy Commission informing us of a donation of \$5,000 dollars to help build the database. Shouts of joy erupted from the audience when this generous donation was announced at the brunch. One of the web committee wept with delight! The new work began immediately and by December the website was enhanced. The number of hits on the website to record the interactivity and the comments about the new and improved website indicate it is well used! The goal to achieve funding to improve the website and promote the Willow Awards was met this year.

This year we were fortunate to receive these two significant donations but as the interest grows the workload continues for a few. Regina held a Brunch and A Silent Auction and Dinner this year; I am not sure if we can continue this feat again next year without more manpower. Saskatoon held a Silent Auction and Dinner as well.

The strategies to seek additional corporate sponsorships and maintain current sponsorships were achieved, and SYRCA became more secure financially. The Willow Awards was extremely grateful to a number of returning sponsors and to the newspapers (Leader-Post and Star Phoenix) that continued to provide support by advertising the new titles for the brunch in Regina and the dinner in Saskatoon.

Claire sought other grant sources and renewed previous grants.

Funding was obtained from the following people:

Conexus Credit Union (Oct.08)	\$3000
Evraz Inc. NA (Jan.09)	\$1000
Book and Brier (Dec.08)	\$1000
Garnett Industries Ltd. (Nov. 08)	\$1000
Potash Corporation Sask.(Nov.08)	\$1000
Quantum Capital Corp. (Oct .08)	\$1000
SaskEnergy	\$2500
SaskSmart (Literacy Commission)(Oct.08)	\$5000
United Library Services (Apr.09)	\$500

It is not easy fundraising in these tough economic times, but it is really nice to have



sponsors who return each year and support the objective of SYRCA to promote reading for all children in Saskatchewan. It was particularly heart warming at the Gala in March to hear Leslie Gosselin from SaskEnergy, one of the first supporters of the Willow Awards, acknowledge the changes and the growth of SYRCA over the years.

A special thank you to my committee members, Claire Isaac and Ruth Garnett, for the time spent writing grants and letters to promote SYRCA - the Willow Awards Inc.

Respectively submitted,  
Naomi Kral  
Fundraising Chair for 2008/2009

## **FUNDRAISING: SASKATOON BOOKS AND BUFFET**

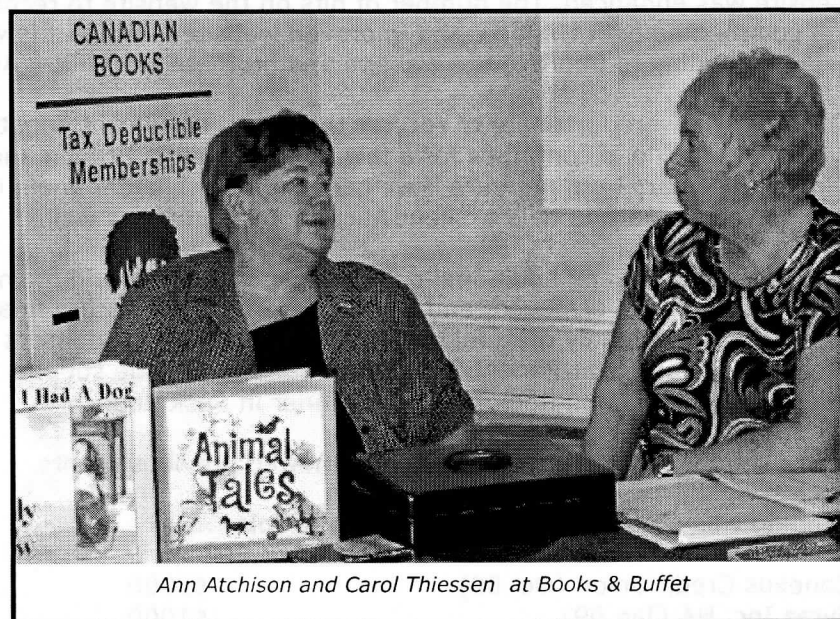
Another successful Books and Buffet Dinner and Silent Auction was held in Saskatoon October 24, 2008, at the Travelodge. One hundred guests enjoyed visiting and placing bids on the many wonderful auction items before a delicious dinner was served. John Barton was our MC for the evening. After dinner, it was a special privilege to listen to Arthur Slade, winner of the 2008 Snow Willow Award for *Megiddo's Shadow*, speak about Awakening the Imagination. A clip of Art's presentation can be found on the website under News or by following this link:

<http://www.willowawards.ca/news/2008-10-24-saskatoons-books-and-buffet>.

At Books and Buffet it has become a tradition to raffle a donated quilt. This year's winner was Sarah Godson, a teacher at Buena Vista School in Saskatoon.

An event like Books and Buffet cannot run without organizers. These very special people support SYRCA

in many ways and make Books and Buffet possible: Ann Atchison, Kathy Sharman, Carol Thiessen, Ruth Garnett, Cheryl Smith, Elsbeth Dormuth and Brenda Nissen. The Willow Awards received about \$3,000 from this function. Thank you to everyone who contributed their time and energy to organize, attend and provide donations.



Ann Atchison and Carol Thiessen at Books & Buffet

## FUNDRAISING: BOOKS @ THE BISTRO



Margaret Steger and Mary Saso at Books @ the Bistro

Two days at a B&B, a full yoga session, Christmas dishes, and 'manly things' were among the offerings at Books @ the Bistro, the seventh annual dinner and silent auction in support of the Willow Awards held in Regina on March 19, 2009. Cheerful conversations filled Alfredo's East Bistro as friends met and bid against one another.

Chair Claire Isaac welcomed nominated authors, Maureen Ulrich and Wilfed Burton, as well as Willow website developer, Trevor Cunningham. During dinner there were door prizes, and a raffle. Before successful bidders collected their items, Claire closed the evening with thanks to the organizing committee, the donors, and Reza and Tracy from Alfredo's for their contributions to a successful evening.

Thanks as well to everyone who attended Books @ the Bistro 2009. This event raised approximately \$4,200 to support the Willow Awards.

## FUNDRAISING: STICKER SALES REPORT

I would like to thank Mary Saso, Claire Isaac and Naomi Kral who also participated in the sticker sales this year. The following is a breakdown of the sticker sales for April 2008 - March 2009.

Circular graphic stickers	\$1717.00
Shining stickers	\$29.00
Snow stickers	\$29.00
Mixed stickers	\$12.00
Winners stickers	\$68.00
Total	\$1855.00

Respectfully submitted  
Val Gerrard



Bulletin Board, Lumsden Elementary School



## PROGRAM: VOTING REPORT 2008-2009

*Goal - Strategic Plan: To revamp the online voting process to make it easier to use for both the teachers/teacher-librarians and for the Board.*

The new online voting system proved very popular. There were very few paper votes. All votes were tallied in less than 30 minutes. The online process makes the whole procedure much faster and also facilitates the collection of statistics.

*Goal - Strategic Plan: To increase the total number of votes , the number of participating communities and the number of participating schools.*  
Achieved.

For the first time, the number of votes exceeded 10,000. This is an increase of 4% over last year. The number of communities also reached the highest yet (77), an increase of 13% over last year. The number of schools is 9% higher than last year, but still falls short of the number achieved in 2006. In addition, this year had the greatest number of teachers and teacher-librarians participating in the Willow Awards.

Draws for prizes for 10 students who participated in voting in each of the three Willow categories were made. In addition, draws were made for teachers/teacher librarians who participated. They were sent boxes of books.

Voting Statistics 2008-2009

Participants	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	% Change
Teachers/Adults	129	151	204	185	206	+11%
Schools	84	132	207	148	161	+9%
Libraries	5	4	3	1	0	
Communities	73	65	74	68	77	+13%
Voters	5,523	7,262	8,087	9,708	10,090	+4%
<b>Votes by Category</b>						
Snow	262					
Diamond	769					
Shining	9,059					
Total Votes 10,090						

Respectfully submitted,  
Claire Isaac, Past President



Student Game Show at Caroline Adderson Reading  
Lumsden Elementary School

## COMMUNICATION: WILLOW AWARDS' WEBSITE REPORT

[www.willowawards.ca](http://www.willowawards.ca)

*Goal -Strategic Plan: Maintain and enhance the current website*

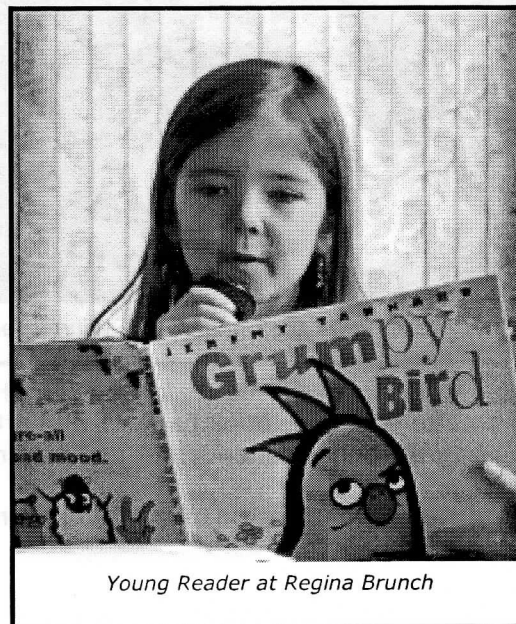
In 2008 the Willow Awards' website was completely restructured and now operates on MODx, an open source content management system. The new system is template driven, which allows easier implementation of changes and ensures consistency in layout and presentation.

With the new system and the hard work of Trevor Cunningham, our website developer, we were able to realize our goal of implementing a backend database to manage the information that arrives through the website. The database saved many volunteer hours by automatically tallying votes from the vote summaries entered by teachers and by sorting and storing contact information so that the results and prizes could be sent to participating schools and students. The database also facilitated other applications such as managing submissions of Launch Activities and applications to host the Gala.

As the yearly Willow Awards' cycle moved from selection, to nomination, reading, voting, and finally the awards, the website reflected the changes. The Nominated Books Page was updated and the 2008 pages were moved to the Archives Page. The Student Projects Page was updated with the Power Point presentation of *Scaredy Squirrel* and other the Launch activities submitted by schools. Accounts and photos from the two Galas held in this fiscal year were created and posted on the Event Reports Page. Content was added and edited on the Ballots and Forms, Newsletter, Our Supporters, and About SYRCA pages. The Home Page was re-designed and published with the release of the 2009 nominees. Two new pages were added this year. The News Page contains updates and photos of activities related to the Willow Awards and includes a RSS Feed where people can sign up to be notified of new postings. The Board Login Page contains policy and other information for the Board and facilitates communication among board members

Thanks to everyone who contributed content for the website. In particular I would like to thank Trevor Cunningham, our website developer, and Val Gerrard and Kathy Stedwill who generously donated their time to develop, update and maintain the content of the site.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marion Perry





## PROGRAM: SASKENERGY WILLOW AWARDS' GALA 2008

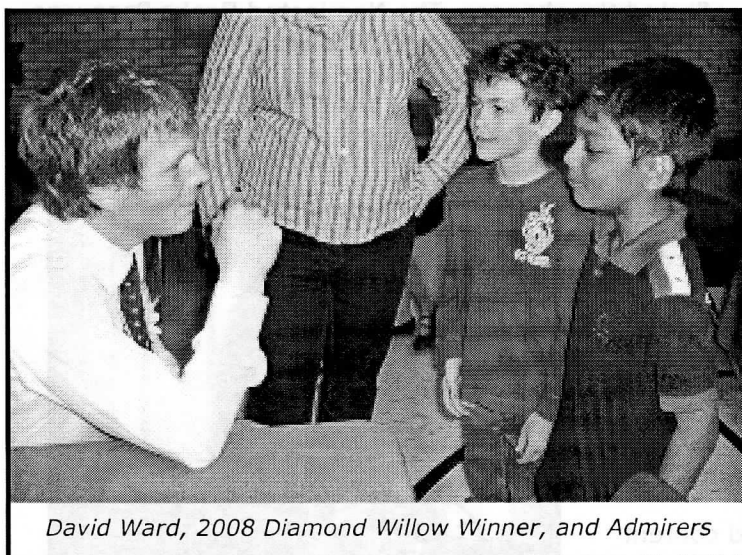
On May 30, 2008, North Park Wilson School in Saskatoon hosted the sixth annual SaskEnergy Willow Awards' Gala with a celebration of music, dance and visual arts.

Willow chairs filled with blooming petunias and metal figures of a boy and girl holding books greeted guests.

The talents of the students of North Park Wilson (NPW), a school with a fine arts focus, were evident everywhere. On the way to the resource centre where authors, teachers, and volunteers gathered before the Gala, we admired large paintings of students' reading.

As the NPW Handbell Choir began to play, special guests proceeded to gym past artwork that reflected the students' interaction with the nominated books.

After "O Canada" the NPW Dance Team performed "Think", an interpretation of books and reading. Claire Isaac, President of the Willow Awards, and Linda Lawrence, representative of SaskEnergy, the Gala sponsor, brought greetings. Then Grade 4/5 presented a performance piece based on the nominated book, "Jared Lester, Fifth Grade Jester." Wearing jester masks students demonstrated scarf juggling and cup stacking to the high energy beat of "The Final Countdown".



*David Ward, 2008 Diamond Willow Winner, and Admirers*

Finally, it was time for the Awards. The winners are: David Ward for *The Hockey Tree*, Marty Chan for *The Mystery of the Graffiti Ghoul* and Arthur Slade for *Megiddo's Shadow*.

Linda Lawrence, SaskEnergy representative, presented Brenda Nissan, the teacher-librarian, with a willow tree for the school grounds, and Claire Isaac, Willow Awards President, presented a plaque to commemorate the event.

Some lucky students won autographed copies of nominated books. The Gala

concluded with a performance by the NPW Handbell Choir. After the celebration guests took time to enjoy the book banners and artwork in the gym. At the reception in the multipurpose room, students met and congratulated the winning authors.

Congratulations to the students and teachers of North Park Wilson School. It was a spectacular gala.

## PROGRAM: SASKENERGY WILLOW AWARDS' GALA 2009

On March 25th, 2009, Lumsden Elementary School (LES) students warmly greeted guests who were stamping the snow off their boots at the school entrance. Was this an author? The Lieutenant Governor? Excitement buzzed through the school. Who were the winning Willow authors?

At 1:15 the Masters of Ceremony, Morgan Meyer and Mariel Kleer, announced the Entrance of Dignitaries and the crowd hushed as His Honour, The Honourable Dr. Gordon L. Barnhart, Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan, his Aide-de-Camp, Mr. Verne Barber Mayor of Lumsden, and other dignitaries filed into the gym.

Mrs. Connie Fritzler, Principal of LES, welcomed students and guests. When His Honour, Dr. Gordon Barnhart spoke, he revealed that as a boy, he had difficulty learning to read, but with the assistance of his mother and a dedicated teacher who introduced him to the Hardy Boy books, he succeeded. He assured students who had difficulty reading that there are ways of coping and encouraged them to persist.



*Caroline Adderson, 2009 Diamond Willow Winner, and Students*

There was a surprise guest among those bringing greetings. After Mr. Verne Barber, Mayor of Lumsden, Mrs. Janet Kotylak, chair of Prairie Valley School Division (PVSD) Board of Education and Mrs. Maureen Erlendson, PVSD Curriculum Coordinator, Gainer the Gopher, mascot of the PVSD's Take Time to Read Program appeared to the delight of students. Gainer led students in a "Go Readers Go" chant and later participated as the envelope bearer and cheerleader. Florence Barton, President of Saskatchewan Young Readers Choice - The Willow Awards (SYRCA) concluded the greetings.

A video of Grades K-3 students telling which book they voted for and why, and a Shining Willow Chant introduced the presentation of the Shining Willow Award. The winner of the Shining Willow Award for 2009 is *Scaredy Squirrel* by Melanie Watt. A message from Ms Watt was read as she was unable to attend.

Grades 4/5/6 students presented Book Tableaux to introduce each of the nominated Diamond Willow Books. The Diamond Willow Winner for 2009 is Caroline Adderson for *Very Serious Children*. As she accepted her award, Ms Adderson thanked her voters and commented that as the novel is set in Saskatchewan she was especially pleased



*Lumsden Students Dressed for Book Tableau*

Book Trailers by the Grades 7/8 students introduced the Snow Willow Nominees.

***Schooled*** by Gordon Korman is the 2009 Snow Willow Award Winner. Gordon Korman had a previous commitment, but sent students a message for the occasion.

Ms Leslie Gosselin of SaskEnergy, sponsor of the Willow Awards Gala since its beginning, presented a gift certificate for the traditional willow tree for the school yard to members of the school's environmental club. Donna Koch, SYRCA Director presented a basket of next year's Willow Awards Books and a plaque to the school for hosting the 2009 SaskEnergy Willow Awards' Gala.

"Read a Good Book" sang the Choir as the celebration of the seventh annual SaskEnergy Willow Awards' Gala concluded.

## PROGRAM: WILLOW AWARDS' LAUNCH 2008

This year the Willow Awards' Board encouraged schools across the province to launch reading the Willow Books in their school and to submit accounts, activities and photos to the website. Schools' names would be entered into a draw for books. Brevoort Park School in Saskatoon received copies of the nominated books. Dr. Hanna and Ethel Milliken Schools in Regina, Lindale School in Moose Jaw, Eyebrow School and Mortlach School also received a box of books for their submissions.

Thanks to everyone who participated. Check out Student Projects page at [www.willowawards.ca](http://www.willowawards.ca) to see the 2008 Launch activities.



*Guest Reader at 2008 Eyebrow School Launch*

## **PROGRAM: SNOW WILLOW SELECTION COMMITTEE REPORT**

The Snow Willow committee consisted of 12 members, who as a group chose 10 titles from books that were published in 2007/2008 and submitted. We read and considered 146 titles in all: 48 titles that were held over from 2007, and 98 titles that were published in 2008. Another 20 titles, also published in 2008 were late submissions, which will be included in our list of considerations for the 2009 Snow Willow nominations.

The group had meetings in September, November, December and January, with a majority of the group able to attend all meetings. In order to facilitate conversations, a wiki which allowed members to post and share opinions and reviews of titles was developed. The wiki was also a good format to allow members from both Saskatoon and Regina to participate in all book discussions.

The following is a list of books selected. Descriptive annotations, links to reviews, and author information may be found at <http://www.willowawards.ca/nominated-books/2009/snow-willow-nominees>.

### **Snow Willow Nominees 2009**

***Alexandria of Africa*** by Eric Walters. Doubleday Canada, c2008  
***The Broken Thread*** by Linda Smith. Coteau Books, c2008  
***Dear Jo*** by Christina Kilbourne. Lobster Press, c2007  
***Egghead*** by Caroline Pignat. Red Deer Press, c2008  
***Eye of the Crow*** by Shane Peacock. Tundra, c2007  
***The Juvie Three*** by Gordon Korman. Scholastic Canada, c2008  
***Night Wanderer*** by Drew Hayden Taylor. Annick Press, c2007  
***Power Plays*** by Maureen Ulrich. Coteau Books, c2007  
***Tweaked*** by Katherine Holubitsky. Orca, c2008  
***War Brothers*** by Sharon McKay. Puffin Canada, c2008

I would like to thank all group members for the many hours spent reading titles and for their thoughtful contribution to the discussions, which allowed for selection of a list of titles that are all worthy of nomination.

Many thanks to: Florence Barton, Jane Glen, Suseia Gordon, Kim Johnson, Sheree Rutherford Kathy Sharman, Lori Trischuk (Saskatoon Public School Division), Carlene Walter (Prairie Spirit School Division), Joe Geary (Saskatoon Public Library), Wilfred Burton (Regina Public School Division) Naomi Kral (retired teacher-librarian).

Respectfully submitted  
Ruth Garnett, Chair – Snow Willow Committee



## **PROGRAM: DIAMOND WILLOW SELECTION COMMITTEE REPORT**

### **Selection Committee Members:**

Co-chair - Cheryl Smith (librarian, Saskatoon Public Library)  
Co-chair - Ann Atchison (teacher-librarian, retired)  
Edna Evans (teacher, Regina Public School Division)  
Ann Foster (librarian, Saskatoon Public Library)  
Kim Hebig (librarian, Wheatland Regional Library)  
Jean Kobialka (teacher, Saskatoon Public School Division)  
Donna Koch (teacher, retired)  
Candace Mann (library technician, Saskatoon Public School Division)  
Dawn Morgan (teacher-librarian, Saskatoon Public School Division)  
Candace Rutar (librarian, Saskatoon Public Library)  
Brad Will (teacher, Saskatoon Public School Division)

This year our committee previewed one hundred eighty-six books. Fifty-seven books were published in 2007 and one hundred twenty-nine were published in 2008. Some of the books, which were deemed unsuitable for our age group, were forwarded to either the Snow Willow or Shining Willow committees for their consideration. Twenty-one books were held for consideration by next year's committee. Some of these arrived too late to be given proper consideration and others were deemed by the committee to merit reconsideration.

The committee met four times beginning in September. Cheryl arranged to have the books stored at J. S. Wood Public Library. A Wiki, listing all the books with links to reviews, was set up for so that committee members could post comments on the books as they read them. This was not as well used as it might have been but those who used it found it to be a valuable tool. After each meeting, the list was amended to assist the committee members in their reading. A rubric was used as part of the evaluation process.

In mid January the committee met to make their final decision. We believe that the nominated books cover a good range of reading levels, genres and interests. Unfortunately, we were not able to include a book with Aboriginal content as there were very few books with Aboriginal content submitted. This continues to be problematic at this level.

We would like to thank our committee for all their hard work reading and evaluating the books. Their insightful comments and experience working with children played a critical role in the decision making process. We would also like to thank Claire Isaac for compiling a list of eligible titles. All this work could not be done without a dedicated group of readers.

### **Diamond Willow Nominees 2009**

Descriptive annotations, links to reviews, and author information may be found at <http://www.willowawards.ca/nominated-books/2009/diamond-willow>.

***Animals at the Edge: Saving the World's Rarest Creatures*** by Marilyn Baillie and Jonathan Baillie. Maple Tree Press, c2008

***Impossible Things*** by Robin Stevenson. Orca Book Publishers, c2008

***Klutzhood*** by Chris McMahan. Orca, c2007

***The Nexus Ring*** by Maureen Bush. Coteau Books for Kids, c2007

***Racing for Diamonds*** by Anita Daher, Orca Book Publishers, c2007

***Robots: From Everyday to Out of This World*** by Yes Magazine Editors. Kids Can Press, c2008

***The Secret of Grim Hill*** by Linda DeMeulemeester. Lobster Press, c2007

***Submarine Outlaw*** by Philip Roy. Ronsdale Press, c2008

***Swindle*** by Gordon Korman. Scholastic Press, c2008

***The Triple Chocolate Brownie Genius*** by Deborah Sherman. Fitzhenry & Whiteside c2007

Respectfully submitted,  
Ann Atchison and Cheryl Smith

## **PROGRAM: SHINING WILLOW SELECTION COMMITTEE REPORT**

The Shining Willow selection committee was chaired by Annie Beaumier in Prince Albert. Members of the committee were Colette Matheson, Janice Manning, Liz Havlichek, Charlene Leaderhouse, Julie Tournier, Jason Stonechild, Elizabeth Blondeau and Michelle Thomas. After narrowing the selection down to about 20 books, Annie met with Ann Atchison, Ruth Garnett and Florence Barton to make the final selection. Thank you to everyone who helped in the process of choosing 10 books from an excellent group of about 100 submissions.

### **Shining Willow Nominees 2009**

Descriptive annotations, links to reviews, and author information may be found at

<http://www.willowawards.ca/nominated-books/2009/shining-willow-nominees>.

***Ben's Bunny Trouble*** by Daniel Wakeman. Orca, c2007

***Elf the Eagle*** by Ron Smith. Oolichan Books, c2007

***Fiddle Dancer*** by Wilfred Burton and Anne Patton. The Gabriel Dumont Institute, c2007

***I, Bruno*** by Caroline Adderson. Orca, c2007

***It's Moving Day*** by Pamela Hickman. Kids Can Press, c2008

***Lily and the Paper Man*** by Rebecca Upjohn. Second Story Press, c2007

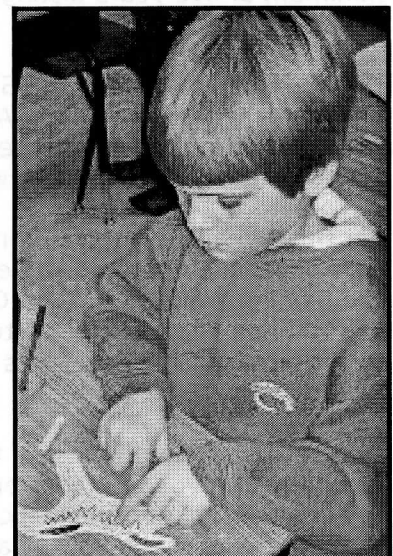
***Making Grizzle Grow*** by Rachna Gilmore. Fitzhenry & Whiteside, c2007

***Mechanicals*** by Chris Tougas. Orca, c2007

***Rosie and Buttercup*** by Chieri Uegaki. Kids Can Press, c2008

***There's A Cow Under My Bed!*** by Valerie Sherrard. Tuckamore Books, c2008

Submitted by  
Florence Barton



Student at 2008 School Launch  
in Moose Jaw

## THANK YOU TO ALL WILLOW AWARDS' VOLUNTEERS!

*Your generosity enables many Saskatchewan children and youth to have the opportunity to experience the pleasures of reading. Your dedication and hard work make the Willow Awards possible!*

### DEBORAH MERVOLD SYRCA DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD 2008

*The Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice Distinguished Service Award recognizes extraordinary service, effort or example by an individual, which resulted in outstanding benefit to a program or project important to SYRCA. The Willow Awards. A suggested minimum of five years distinguished service must have been rendered to qualify for this award.*

Deborah Mervold joined the SYRCA Board in 2003. Since then she has quietly and efficiently served the Willow Awards in different capacities. She has worked on membership files, presented book talks at conferences, and developed activities for education kits and the website.

For three years, students, parents, teachers and librarians from Shellbrook participated as committee members when Debbie chaired the Snow Willow Selection Committee and then the Shining Willow Selection Committee in her home town. To celebrate and recognize the contribution of these people to the Willow Awards, she organized a tea at the Shellbrook Public Library. This event was recorded in the community newspaper as well as the Willow Awards' Newsletter.

Debbie has attended most of the Willow Awards' Launches and Galas, usually in the company of a young reader or two. Clearly, Debbie has the ability to get others involved in her passions, and these include reading and the Willow Awards. Debbie's contribution to the Board and the Willow Awards program will be missed.



*Deborah Mervold Receives Award from Claire Isaac*

Thank you, Debbie for your efforts on behalf of literacy and the Willow Awards. You are the worthy recipient of the Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice Distinguished Service Award for 2008.



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