

SASKATCHEWAN YOUNG READERS' CHOICE



THE WILLOW AWARDS



ANNUAL REPORT

May 29, 2010

MISSION STATEMENT

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



OBJECTIVES

In order to achieve its Mission, the Corporation will:

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

BOARD MEMBERS 2009 - 2010

President: Florence Barton, Saskatoon
Vice President: Ann Atchison, Saskatoon
Vice President: Ruth Garnett, Saskatoon
Treasurer: Margaret Steger, Regina
Secretary: Donna Koch, Regina
Past President: Claire Isaac, Regina
SLA Rep: Jocelyn Mark Provost, La Ronge
SSLA Rep: Carlene Walter, Saskatoon

Directors at Large:
Bev Bjornson-Kowalchuk, Regina (resigned, December, 2009)
Wilfred Burton, Regina
Fernando Ferrer, Saskatoon
Val Gerrard, Regina
Deborah Jackson, North Battleford
Naomi Kral, Regina

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT, SYRCA INC. 2009 – 2010

The Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice Awards "The Willow Awards" Inc. (SYRCA) Board of Directors met in May, August, November, January, February and March this fiscal year. The board welcomed new members Deborah Jackson, Bev Bjornson-Kowalchuck, Jocelyn Mark Provost, Carlene Walter, and Fernando Ferrer.

The SYRCA Planning Document was reviewed and revised at the August meeting. The board continues to address the goals in the priority area of Organizational Structure. The organizational structure is strong, with well-defined policies and procedures that are updated regularly to reflect changes. We have worked on the development of job descriptions that will facilitate the transition from one board member to another.

Fiscal Responsibility is reflected in the positive financial statement. Successful fundraising under the leadership of Board Member Naomi Kral provided the opportunity to expand programming through website initiatives and the purchase of 2010 Willow nominated books that were given to 89 schools through draws made from participating voters. The board continues to promote membership in SYRCA through local fundraisers in Saskatoon and Regina and by setting up displays and giving book talks at conferences. A small reserve fund provides a measure of fiscal security for the organization.

Communication remains a major priority for SYRCA. The website is a major means of communicating with the public, publishers and authors. The addition of a webpage available to the board and the use of web-based document sharing have facilitated internal communication. Under the leadership of Val Gerrard, The Willow Awards website is an ever evolving success. Two newsletters were published this year in June 2009 and January 2010. They were distributed to sponsors and members. Posters and bookmarks were sent to every school division in Saskatchewan to be distributed to schools in the spring of 2009. This was a major undertaking but seemed to have excellent results. An area that requires significant improvement is media coverage.

Sustainability has been addressed this year in several ways. Attempts to recruit board members from different parts of the province have been successful. We continue to expand the membership and volunteer base.

Programming through book selection, educational activities and celebratory events was a very successful component of the organization. Many positive comments were received regarding the 2009 nominated books and the related activities posted on the website. The pilot multi-site launch had a few more participants this year and the SaskEnergy Willow Award Gala to announce the 2009 winners was a wonderful celebration.

SYRCA is grateful for the generous support of sponsors donors, friends and members. On behalf of the SYRCA Board of Directors, I would like to thank each of you for your commitment to literacy and the children of Saskatchewan. I would also like to thank each

of the volunteer board members who have devoted countless hours to ensure the success of the organization. They cheerfully share their time, talents and endless enthusiasm for fulfilling the SYRCA mandate of promoting literacy to the young readers of our province.

The SYRCA Annual Report reflects the success of 2009 – 2010 fiscal year. Minutes of the 2008-2009 Annual General Meeting will be available at the May 29th, 2010 Annual General Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Florence Barton, President

SYRCA – THE WILLOW AWARDS' STRATEGIC PLAN

Key Priorities for 2009 – 2010

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

In our Strategic Plan, External Communication was designated as one of our priorities. To meet the goal of fostering positive relationships with Canadian publishers, authors, and illustrators, one of the Vice-Presidents was appointed to be in charge of this communication. To facilitate this communication a database with current contact information for publishers, authors, and illustrators is maintained.

Throughout the year I am in contact with publishers, authors, and illustrators for a variety of reasons – Call for Submissions, requests for information and relevant permissions, and congratulatory letters regarding nominated books. Most of these contacts are done by email as it is both fast and efficient. Requested information for our website and all relevant permissions are returned to me by email. Nominated authors and illustrators are sent a copy of our poster and a set of bookmarks each year.

While it is sometimes challenging to maintain contact information, particularly for publishers, it is important that we strive to keep our database as current as possible. Contact with publishers, authors, and illustrators is an essential part of SYRCA's mandate.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Atchison, Vice President

PROGRAM: A NEW LOOK FOR THE WILLOW AWARD!



Because of production constraints, Jacqueline Berting of Berting Glass was no longer able to produce the sand cast Willow Award. A new Willow Award has been produced with the suggestions and artistic collaboration of Jacky.

The new award consists of a laser-cut metal version of the Willow Award Logo set in a glass base. The 2009 awards, presented at Saltcoats School on April 30, 2010, are the first presentations of the new award.

The laser-cut metal was produced by Hi-Tec Profiles Inc. of Regina and the base was produced by Berting Glass.

The Willow Awards is very pleased to be able to continue to present an award produced by Saskatchewan artists. We think the new award is as stunning as the retired award.

We extend our thanks to Jacqueline Berting, and to Regan Wagner of Hi-Tec Profiles who facilitated the laser-cutting. Their talents and support have been invaluable.



SYRCA - SASKATCHEWAN YOUNG READERS' CHOICE -
THE WILLOW AWARDS INC.
FINANCIAL STATEMENT
YEAR ENDING MARCH 31, 2010

Bank Balance at March 31, 2009

\$20,590.45

INCOME

Grants	\$2,000.00
Sponsorships <i>(from Peter)</i>	\$12,000.00
Memberships	\$2,505.00
Fundraising <i>(donations)</i>	\$12,111.18
Stickers	\$1,437.00
GST Rebate	\$515.20
Gala correction	\$21.52

\$30,589.90

DISBURSEMENTS

Meeting Expenses	\$3,623.63
Office Expenses	\$449.18
Award Expenses	\$8,455.03
Award Function Expenses	\$244.05
Corp/Rev. Canada/ Audit Expenses	\$160.00
Marketing	\$673.48
Fundraising	\$5,587.46
Poster/Ballots	\$5,791.50
Stickers	\$5.18
Author Expenses	\$0.00
Web Site expenses	\$5,188.60
Honorarium - Newsletter	\$50.00
Membership - Sk. Culture	\$50.00

\$30,278.11

Bank Balance at March 31, 2010

\$20,902.24

Term Deposit

Balance at Mar. 31/09	\$15,000.00
Interest	\$157.50
Total	\$15,157.50

TOTAL ASSETS

\$36,059.74

Checked and verified by:

S. Dishington, DAA

April 18, 2010

FUNDRAISING REPORT: WILLOW AWARDS 2010

The mandate for the Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice Awards - Willow Inc. has been to promote reading for children throughout the province. The Board extends a sincere "thank you" to our patrons for their generosity and support. As a result, we have been able to meet the mandate. Several of our patrons have been with SYRCA since its incorporation. Book and Brier, a book retailer, in Regina was our first patron who has donated each year and watched the readership grow around the province.

SaskEnergy has provided funding for every Gala that has been held. Since SYRCA is a provincial readers' choice award, Galas have been held in different areas of the province to announce the three winning authors for the current year. Galas have been held in Regina, Saskatoon, Swift Current, Moose Jaw and this year Salcoats hosted the gala to announce the 2009 winners. Leslie Gosselin from SaskEnergy has traveled across the province to attend the Galas. Thank you to Claire Isaac who has written and applied for the grant from SaskEnergy. Claire's grant writing skills will be missed.

As the Chair of the Fundraising Committee 28 letters were sent to various companies around the province. Since the awards are for all school children in the province, the committee tried to obtain funding from companies that have a provincial aspect and have a presence in a number of communities in Saskatchewan not just in the urban areas.

Funding was obtained from the following companies:

Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan	\$5000
Conexus Credit Union	\$3000
SaskEnergy	\$3000
Leader-Post (in advertising)	\$2000
StarPhoenix (in advertising)	\$2000
Saskatchewan Ministry of Education	\$2000
Book and Brier	\$1000
Evrax	\$1000
Garnett Industries	\$1000
United Library Services	\$1000 500

As the Willow Awards continue to grow, and with over 11,000 students voting the Board is kept busy trying to fund raise and improve communication with students, teachers, our membership and other young readers' choice awards across Canada. A special package was sent to our patrons this year to show the progress and development of SYRCA. In addition, to posters (printing and shipping), the maintenance of the website, the addition of data to the database, and electronic voting, the committee asked the patrons for funding for 2.0 web feature to make the website more interactive with the students. It was very exciting to receive an early Christmas present when the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan called to say they would like to change their funding to become a gold patron! Thanks to PCS and their generous contribution! As a result, we will be able to add a blogging feature for the 2010 nominees for students to post comments about the books as they read them.

Conexus and the Willow Awards have been a fit for a number of years since credit unions are part of the provincial framework of Saskatchewan and are found in many communities throughout the province.

Once again, the two leading newspapers in the province, the Leader-Post and Star Phoenix have provided advertising to the tune of \$4000 dollars to promote reading for the Willow Awards.

The Ministry of Education and the Literacy Office donated to support and promote the reading of Saskatchewan and Canadian authors.

Evraz and Garnett Industries continued their financial donation again this year; we appreciate the support of these two Saskatchewan businesses.

This year United Library services donated cash and a set of 2010 Willow nominees.

In addition to writing letters and applying for grants, Board members in Saskatoon hold a dinner and Silent Auction in the fall and Regina Board members hold a dinner and Silent Auction in the spring. These two events are major fundraisers to help cover board expenses, printing of posters and mailing posters for schools and public libraries. Board members in both cities would appreciate help and support in running these events. Please contact the website if you can help.

The Board continues to promote reading for children, and we are recognized at the national level as a good Young Readers' Choice Award since we support three different reading levels, Shining, Diamond, and Snow Willow. I hope we can count on individual donations through memberships to help support the Board and acknowledge the wonderful patrons mentioned in this article. Reading is alive and well in Saskatchewan thanks to our patrons and members.

Respectfully submitted by,
Naomi Kral
May 12, 2010

FUNDRAISING: REGINA BOOKS @ THE BISTRO

The eighth annual dinner and silent auction was a repeat success at Alfredo's East Bistro. This year March 24th brought fair weather rather than a blizzard, as in previous years. Attendance numbers were just right, the silent auction featured a broad range of interesting items – from cookies to bird watching, and the restaurant offered three delicious choices of entrées. Thanks to everyone who attended, and helped to raise over \$3500 to support the Willow Awards.



FUNDRAISING: SASKATOON BOOKS & BUFFET

Saskatoon SYRCA Board members held their annual Buffet and Books Dinner and Silent Auction at the Hilton Garden Inn October 16, 2009. Almost one hundred people enjoyed a fine dinner and many went home with wonderful items from the auction. The lucky winner of the beautiful raffle quilt donated by Betty Lengyl was George Rathwell, Director of Saskatoon Public Schools.

The highlight of the evening was guest speaker Rebecca Grambo who took us on a wonderful "Journey of Curiosity" complete with amazing photos. Rebecca is a local author and photographer who has published many books. We were delighted with the generous support she so willingly gave to our fundraiser and The Willow Awards. You can learn more about Rebecca's books and her many other interests at <http://www.wildthreads.com/books.html>.

Thanks to John Barton for being our MC for the evening and to Wayne Rollack for providing technical assistance. Saskatoon SYRCA Board members Ann Atchison, Florence Barton and Ruth Garnett and former board members Elsbeth Dormuth, Kathy Sharman, Cheryl Smith and Carol Thiessen organized the evening.

Thank you to everyone who attended and to all the donors of items for the silent auction. Your support of Saskatchewan Young Reader's Choice Awards "The Willow Awards" Inc. is truly appreciated.



The Honourable Dr. Gordon L. Barnhart at Salcoats Elementary School



Christina Kilbourne Signing Bookmarks at Salcoats Elementary

FUNDRAISING: STICKER SALES REPORT

Sales for Fiscal Year April 1, 2009 - March 31, 2010

Total Sales	\$1,229.00
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The original Shining Willow Nominees stickers have now sold out, and there are only small amounts of the other original stickers still in stock. Some people continue to request them and they will be sold until supplies are exhausted. The circular stickers are also in short supply and another batch will be printed in the new fiscal year.

Respectfully submitted,
Claire Isaac

COMMUNICATION: WILLOW AWARDS WEBSITE REPORT

www.willowawards.ca

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

During the last year, the website was regularly updated based on the cyclical activities of the Willow Awards. Activities were added to the nominee pages in September. Book talks were placed for on all nominee pages in the fall, thanks to the hard work of Chris MacLennan, former board member and Regina teacher-librarian. For the second year a province-wide, in-school Launch was held. The applications for most-creative Launch activities were collected through the website and a winner was determined in November with the Launch activities being posted in December. At the same time, the Gala host school was chosen from applications received through the website. In February, the 2010 nominees were prepared and then posted on the website in March. Information for publishers was moved to a new page and removed from "About SYRCA" to make it easier for publishers to find relevant information. A slight rebuild is underway to streamline the handling of current news items about the Willow Awards. These articles have been moved from the homepage to the "What's New" section of the website.

This year the vast majority of voting was done through the online voting forms with the backend database automatically tabulating the votes. With this year having the highest number of votes in the history of the Willow Awards, at 11,134, this saved many hours of volunteer work. The greatly increased number of hits on the website statistics reflects not only the online voting but the use of the site for information about the Willow Awards.

In the coming year, we are looking at implementing a commenting feature that will make our website more interactive for the children. Students will be able to leave a comment on any of the current nominees that will be posted on the nominee's page. This project is in the testing stage and will be live in the fall when students return to school. Ongoing is a review of the appearance and organization of the website to ensure that information is readily available to our users and the website is visually appealing to the target audience.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the website this year. I would especially like to thank Trevor Cunningham, our website developer, for his hard work and vision; Kathy Stedwill and Marion Perry for their hours of work on the website. As with the entire Willow Awards organization, it's only through the volunteers' generous donation of time and hard work that the website can be maintained and evolves.

Respectfully submitted,
Val Gerrard – Website Committee Chair

PROGRAM: SHINING WILLOW SELECTION COMMITTEE REPORT

The Shining Willow Selection Committee consisted of ten members with a range of teacher-librarians, retired teachers & librarians, university professors, writers, consultants & parents. We met twice in person, fall and January. At the fall meeting we narrowed down our selections to be considered again in the winter. When we met in the winter we considered fall choices along with the most popular winter choices to come up with our final list. The wiki was used for communication throughout the process.

We considered 142 titles (89 picture books, 20 non-fiction books and 33 beginning chapter books). Several titles were sent to the Diamond committee and several were received from the Diamond committee. Twenty two publishers submitted titles. The publishers included: Scholastic, Crazy About Books, Kakwa, Your Nickel's Worth, Fitzhenry & Whiteside, Kids Can Press, Tradewind, Orca, Creative Book Publishing, Key Porter Books, Tundra, Pollywog, Acorn Press, Northwinds Press, Annick Press, Gabriel Dumont, Lobster Press, Owl Kids, Harper Collins, Groundwood, Tuckamore Books and Simply Read Books. We had an excellent choice of books that would appeal for girls and boys in our age range. We also had some Saskatchewan book choices this year. There were several titles with Aboriginal content to be considered. There were many books with outstanding illustrations too. In all, it was an excellent year for children's book publishing in Canada.

I wish to thank the best committee one could ask for: Donna Koch, Margaret Steger, Kim Kovacs, Diane Diebel, Courtney Dalrymple, Carolyn Yaskowich, Wendy Willis, Karen Lind and Sharon Hamilton. A special thanks to Donna Koch for preparing the annotations.

Shining Willow Nominees 2010

143 books

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

Bird Child by Nan Forler, Tundra Books, ©2009
Boo Hoo Bird by Jeremy Tankard, Scholastic Press, ©2009
The Delicious Bug by Janet Perlman, Kid Can Press, ©2009
Farley Follows His Nose by Lynn Johnston & Beth Cruikshank, The Bowen Press, ©2009
The Funny Faceoff by Irene Punt, Scholastic Canada Ltd., ©2008
The Giving Tree by Leah Dorion, The Gabriel Dumont Institute, ©2009
Have You Ever Seen a Duck in a Raincoat? by Etta Kaner, Kids Can Press, ©2009
Scaredy Squirrel at night by Mélanie Watt, Kids Can Press, ©2009
Stanley's Beauty Contest by Linda Bailey, Kids Can Press, ©2009
You're Mean, Lily Jean by Frieda Wishinsky, North Winds Press, ©2009

Respectfully submitted,
Wilfred Burton
Chair – Shining Willow Selection Committee

"Our classes really enjoyed the selection of books this year. They were excited to be part of the program. I had students who had a hard time just making one choice, because they liked so many of the books. Thanks for making this available to our school." Marilyn Herron (Saltcoats)

PROGRAM: DIAMOND WILLOW SELECTION COMMITTEE REPORT

189 titles

The Diamond Willow Selection Committee met five times. There were many good books to examine, including some excellent non-fiction.

- A total of 189 books were submitted for consideration
 - Titles sent to Shining Willow Committee: 3
 - Titles sent to Snow Willow Committee: 12
 - Titles determined to be ineligible: 7 (3 were by American writers, 3 were graphic novels based on previously published titles, and one non-fiction title was a reprint.)
- The committee actively considered 168 titles
- Books were submitted by 21 publishers
- The committee recommended that 36 titles published in 2009 be reconsidered for the next year.

Diamond Willow Award Nominees 2010

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

Dear Toni by Cyndi Sand-Eveland., Tundra, ©2008

Fight for Justice by Lori Saigeon, ©Coteau, ©2009

Focus on Flies by Norma Dixon, Fitzhenry & Whiteside, ©2008

Gotcha: 18 Amazing Ways to Freak Out Your Friends by David Acer, Kids Can Press, ©2008

Jolted: Newton Starker's Rules for Survival by Arthur Slade, HarperCollins Canada, ©2008

The Mealworm Diaries by Anna Kerz, Orca, ©2009

Meeting Miss 405 by Lois Peterson, Orca, ©2008

The Nine Lives of Travis Keating by Jill MacLean, Fitzhenry & Whiteside, ©2008

Zach and Zoe and the Bank Robber by Kristin Butcher, Lorimer, ©2008

Zoobreak by Gordon Korman, Scholastic Press, ©2009

I wish to thank the members of the committee for their careful deliberation and hard work:

Kathleen Badali, Jackie Cameron, Jessica Cammer, Carole Carman, Karen Lind, Judy Nicholson and Kathy Valaitis.

Respectfully submitted,

Claire Isaac

Chair - Diamond Willow Selection Committee

PROGRAM: SNOW WILLOW SELECTION COMMITTEE REPORT

The Snow Willow committee consisted of 15 members who chose 10 titles from books submitted, which were published in 2008/2009. We read and considered 222 titles in all: 140 titles published in 2008, and 82 titles published in 2009.

The group had meetings in September, November, December and January, with a majority of the group able to attend all meetings. Again this year we used the online wiki to facilitate sharing of opinions and reviews of titles. We found this to be an excellent format to allow members from throughout the province to participate in all book discussions. Many submissions were worthy of nomination, which resulted in lively and heated discussions.

I would like to thank all group members for the many hours spent reading books and for their thoughtful contribution to the discussions.

Many thanks to: Kelly Gibson, Jane Glen, Suseia Gordon, Kim Johnson, Kathy Sharman, Lori Trischuk, Carlene Walter (Saskatoon Public School Division); Tamzen Kulyk, Tracy Woodward (Prairie Spirit School Division); Jocelyn Mark (LaRonge – Public Library); Ann Atchison (retired), Florence Barton (retired), Naomi Kral (retired), Liz Roberts (retired).

Snow Willow Award Nominees 2010

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

After by Hazel Hutchins, Smith, Bonappétit & Son, ©2008

The Bite of the Mango by Mariatu Kamara with Susan McClelland, Annick Press, ©2008

The Hunchback Assignments by Arthur Slade, HarperCollins, ©2009

Laughing Wolf by Nicholas Maes, Dundurn Press, ©2009

Libertad by Alma Fullerton, Fitzhenry & Whiteside, ©2008

Lunch with Lenin and Other Stories by Deborah Ellis, Fitzhenry & Whiteside, ©2008

Not Suitable for Family Viewing by Vicki Grant, HarperTrophyCanada, ©2009

The Prince of Neither Here Nor There by Seán Cullen, Puffin Canada, ©2009

They Called Me Red by Christina Kilbourne, Lobster Press, ©2008

Word Nerd by Susin Neilsen, Tundra Books, ©2008

Respectfully Submitted,

Ruth Garnett

Chair – Snow Willow Selection Committee

"The books chosen are always good - too bad they can't all win! The students enjoy them. And so do I. It is wonderful to have a list of 30 books each year that I, as librarian, know will be great purchases for our library."
- Fran Balls (Maryfield)

PROGRAM: LAUNCH

Once again this year, schools around the province were invited to host their own Willow Awards Launch. Participating schools submitted summaries of their Launch activities and projects that included photos, posters, PowerPoints, Smart Board activities and links to their blogs.



One Launch Submission

Mrs. Tammie Latimer from St. Paul School, Yorkton submitted the winning entry. She received a complete set of the 2009 nominated books. Other sets of books were awarded to École St. Pius X, Regina; St. John Community School, Prince Albert; and Frontier School, Frontier.

All Launch submissions can be seen on the Willow Awards website, at the [2009 Student Projects](#) page.

PROGRAM: VOTING REPORT FOR THE 2009 WILLOW AWARDS

The overall goal for voting is to increase participation each year through Programming and Communication. The web committee does the maintenance of the online voting after successfully implementing that function on the website in 2008 – 2009. The president receives the mail-in votes.

Most of the 11,134 votes were submitted online but the mail-in option was still well used. Voting closed February 28, 2010 and the votes were tallied March 3, 2010. The following charts give a comparison of voting since 2004. It is worth noting that the Snow Willow votes doubled this year and there was a significant increase in the Diamond Willow category.

Participants	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	% Change
TeachersAdults	129	151	204	185	206	189	-8
Schools	84	132	207	148	161	166	+3
Libraries	5	4	3	1	0	2	
Communities	73	65	68	68	77	83	+8
Voters	5,523	7,262	8,087	9,708	10,090	11,134	+10%

Votes by Category	2008	2009	% Change
Shining	9,057	9,326	2%
Diamond	769	1,239	61%
Snow	262	526	100%
Total Votes	10,090	11,101	+10%

Draws were made from the participating schools for sets of 2010 nominees as follows :
Shining Willow – 30 sets, Diamond Willow – 19 sets, Snow willow – 13 sets.

Individual student draws were made and book prizes were sent to 20 Shining Willow voters, 15 Diamond Willow voters and 15 Snow Willow voters.

Respectfully submitted,
Florence Barton

PROGRAM: BONUS BOOKS !

Because of the generosity of our donors, the Willow Awards was able to purchase some sets of the newly nominated books for distribution to recipients selected from those who voted for the 2009 nominees.

The books were purchased from our long-time patron and supporter, the Book & Brier in Regina, and included 30 sets of Shining Willow nominees, 19 sets of Diamond Willow nominees and 13 sets of Snow Willow nominees. The sets were then sent to 59 schools and 2 public libraries throughout the province to encourage children to begin reading the 2010 nominees.

This project was completed by Willow Awards board members Donna Koch, Naomi Kral and Margaret Steger with the help of volunteers Marion Perry, Darla Stroeder, Kerry Armbruster-Barrett and Monte Barrett.

The Willow Awards board thanks the over 11,000 voters for the 2009 winners and encourages even more children to read the nominees and vote for the 2010 winners.

Finishing a hefty job



Students from Caroline Robins School in Saskatoon

WILLOW AWARD WINNERS 2009

SHINING WILLOW



Chris Tougas
Mechanimals

DIAMOND WILLOW



Gordon Korman
Swindle

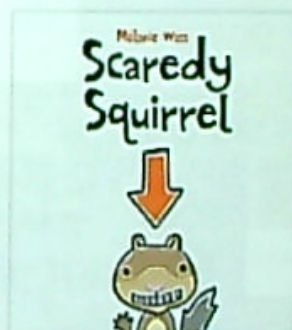
SNOW WILLOW



Christina Kilbourne
Dear Jo

WILLOW AWARD WINNERS 2008

SHINING WILLOW



Mélanie Watt
Scaredy Squirrel

DIAMOND WILLOW



Caroline Adderson
Very Serious Children

SNOW WILLOW



Gordon Korman
Schooled

PROGRAM: SASKENERGY WILLOW AWARDS GALA

April 30, 2010

Saltcoats School was the host of a wonderful gala celebration to announce and honour the winners of the 2009 Willow Awards. Despite the downpour outdoors, the school gym and halls were sunny and bright, decorated with wonderful art reflecting the thirty 2009 nominees. The addition of several pieces of willow furniture, made by a local artist, completed the picturesque setting. As we waited for the program to begin, the chairs in the gym filled with parents and community members eager to watch the students celebrate The Willow Awards. Soon the students of Saltcoats School filed into the gym.

The program began with the dignitaries being piped in. The Honourable Dr. Gordon L. Barnhart, Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan and his Aide-de-Camp were joined by Mr. Walter Farquharson, Mayor of Saltcoats, Mrs. Lois Smandych, Trustee for Good Spirit School Division and members of the SYRCA Board of Directors. Masters of Ceremonies were Jenelle Hutchings, Sara Hunt and Tyson Sass. Following the Royal Salute and O Canada students who created posters of the thirty nominated books paraded them around the gym before displaying them on the gym wall. The kindergarten class then sang a welcome song.

School principal, Mrs. Donna Kriger, welcomed everyone to the school. His

Honour The Honourable Dr. Gordon Barnhart spoke to the gathering about his journey to becoming a reader and also noted that Saltcoats is his home community. Dr. Barnhart's address was followed by greetings from Mayor Farquharson, Trustee Smandych and Mrs. Florence Barton, President of SYRCA "The Willow Awards".



Students of Saltcoats Elementary School

Several presentations based on Willow nominees entertained the audience. Jessica and Katelyn Farquharson, accompanied by their grandfather Walter, performed a play based on the Shining Willow nominee *Rosie and Buttercup*. The Shining Willow Award was presented by the Grade 3 class. The envelope was opened and the winner announced. *Mechanisms* by Chris Tougas was the winner. Cheers and a huge round of applause greeted the announcement. Chris Tougas was there to accept his award. Chris's response was followed by a choral reading of his book *Mechanisms* performed by Grade 1 and 2 students.

The Diamond Willow books were presented by the Grade 4 class. The Diamond Willow envelope was opened and the winner announced. The winning book was *Swindle* by Gordon Korman. Gordon was not able to attend the gala but he sent an email to be read expressing his delight at winning this "children's choice" award.



Chris Tougas

A special treat was a performance by student and guest fiddler Scott Cornelius. His performance had everyone's toes tapping.

The Snow Willow envelope was opened and the winner announced – *Dear Jo* by Christina Kilbourne! Christina was present to accept her award. Her response was followed by a dramatized scene from the book. Community member Mrs. Joan Wilson assisted senior students who created this play.



Christina Kilbourne

The program ended with two presentations to Salcoats School. Ms Leslie Gosselin presented a willow tree to the school on behalf of the gala sponsor, SaskEnergy. This tree will be planted on the school grounds. Mrs. Donna Koch, a SYRCA Director, presented a basket filled with the new Willow nominees and a plaque for the school.

The program was followed by treats in the classrooms for the students and refreshments for the guests. A cake beautifully decorated to display all thirty 2009 Willow nominees was a tasty centerpiece.

This gala was made special by the involvement of the Saltcoats community and the inclusion of every student in Saltcoats School. Special thanks go to the staff, led by Mrs. Marilyn Herron and Ms Charlotte Raine. Bravo, Saltcoats School and community! Congratulations to the winning authors for being voted best of the nominees in your category by the young readers of Saskatchewan. This is also the first time the new "Willow Award", a laser-cut metal version of the Willow Award Logo set in a glass base, has been presented. We hope you display it proudly as a reminder that Saskatchewan young readers think your books rock.



Gala Highlights



MARION PERRY SYRCA DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD 2009

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.

Marion Perry has provided extraordinary service to SYRCA -The Willow Awards for over eight years. In 2000, the Saskatchewan School Library Association (SSLA) executive hired Marion Perry as a consultant to investigate the possibility of creating a children's choice book award for Saskatchewan. Her report was accepted by SSLA and an interested group of people formed a charter Board of Directors to build the organization. They elected Marion as the first President of the Willow Awards. She did the hard but vital spadework of drafting a constitution and bylaws, and seeing to incorporation. Under her leadership, the Willow Awards grew from the first year with 5,000 young people voting to the over 10,000 votes received for the 2008-2009 Awards. Marion Perry served as President of SYRCA Inc. from 2001 to 2005, when she became Past-President until 2008. She then served another year as a Director at Large. Among many duties and tasks during these years, Marion chaired the Fundraising Dinner committees, was Webmaster overseeing the development of the new Willow website and electronic voting, edited the newsletter and the annual posters and bookmarks. She also acted as an invaluable mentor to subsequent Presidents and Directors. SYRCA - The Willow Awards expresses its gratitude and thanks with the presentation of the Distinguished Service Award. Claire Isaac presented Marion with the Berting Glass Willow Award Paperweight, along with a bouquet of flowers.



THANK YOU TO ALL THE 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!*

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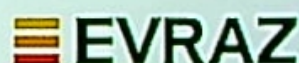
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*Florence Barton, Margaret Cowie, Ruth Garnett,
Lynn Gilbert, Naomi Kral, Marion Perry*