

# CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

## THE WILLOW AWARDS ANNUAL REPORT 2011 - 2012



## SASKATCHEWAN YOUNG READERS' CHOICE AWARDS











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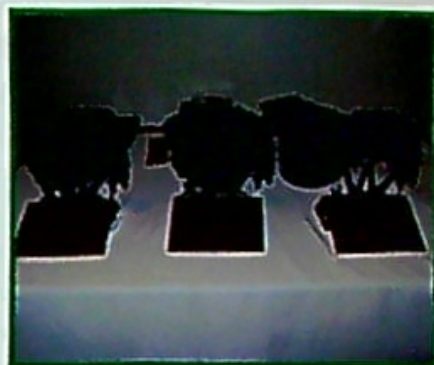
## MISSION STATEMENT

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 MEMEBERS 2011 - 2012

President: Ruth Garnett, Saskatoon

Vice-President: Ann Atchison, Saskatoon

Vice-President: Tammie Latimer, Yorkton

Treasurer: Donna Koch, Regina

Secretary: Amanda Hassen, Moose Jaw

Fundraising Officer: Naomi Kral, Regina

Past President: Florence Barton, Saskatoon

Directors at Large:

Elsbeth Dormuth, Saskatoon

Val Gerrard, Regina

Margaret Lipp, Regina

Cheryl Piprell, Prince Albert

Melody Wood, Yorkton

SLA Representative: Jocelyn Mark Provost, La Ronge





## REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT, SYRCA INC. 2011 - 2012



The Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice Awards, "The Willow Awards" Inc. met five times during the 2011 – 2012 year. We welcomed new board member Melody Wood from Yorkton, and returning board member Elsbeth Dormuth from Saskatoon. Our board had three vacancies this year: two members at large and the SSLA appointed representative

### Organizational Structure

During the 2011 – 2012 fiscal year, the board reviewed and continued to address the SYRCA Planning Document. We acknowledge the provincial nature of our board and try to recruit board members from across Saskatchewan. As well as meeting face-to-face, we hold meetings by conference call and this year had board members join via SKYPE. We continue to work toward a practical and equitable division of board related tasks.

### Fiscal Responsibility

The positive financial statement reflects the board's serious attention to fiscal responsibility. The very successful fundraising campaign under the leadership of board member Naomi Kral provided funds to provide programming and further improve the Willow website. The board continues to promote SYRCA membership through local fundraisers held in Saskatoon and Regina each year. Board members and volunteers also set up displays and offer book talks at events such as conferences and meetings. A small reserve fund provides a measure of fiscal security for SYRCA. A special budget was set up this year to provide funds for the celebration of our 10<sup>th</sup> annual awards. This included 10 author visits to 10 schools throughout the province, and a gift of a complete set of the current nominees to each school. We also produced a promotional poster "Huddle Up with Willow Books", which was sent to every school library and public library in the province.

### Communication

The Willow Awards website is the major communication tools for the public, publishers and authors. It is continuously evaluated and updated to meet the increasing demands of an online world. Thank you to web chair Val Gerrard for her knowledgeable leadership. We also print posters and bookmarks and distribute them by mail to every school division for distribution to every school in the province. SYRCA News continues to be posted regularly on the website.

### Sustainability

SYRCA continues to promote The Willow Awards across the province and continues to have voter numbers increase each year. This would indicate that the program is growing. Attempts to recruit board members from different areas of Saskatchewan have been successful and are ongoing. We continue to expand the membership and volunteer base. Extra initiatives were added this year to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> annual awards, which brought more attention and awareness to The Willow Awards province-wide.

### Programming

The Willow Awards receives many positive comments about book selection, related activities found on the website, events like the launch and gala and prizes offered to classrooms and individual students. A great deal of board attention is directed to activities and rewards that will encourage children to be lifelong readers. This year, those schools that entered our launch had their names submitted to receive one of 10 author visits and a complete set of 2011 nominated books.



## REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT, SYRCA INC. 2011 - 2012

Details of winners and photos of the author visits can be found on the website. SYRCA "The Willow Awards" Inc. appreciates the generous support of our patrons, 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 the volunteer board members who have devoted countless hours to ensure the success of the organization. They are a creative, hardworking group of people who cheerfully share their time, talents and endless enthusiasm for fulfilling the SYRCA mandate, to promote reading among Saskatchewan children and youth.

This has been my first year as president, and it has been a full one, with regular SYRCA duties as well as the 10 year initiative. A special thanks to the Board members this year, as many extra hours were required to complete all the celebratory initiatives that were planned.

The SYRCA Annual Report reflects the success of the 2011 – 2012 operating year. Minutes of the 2010 – 2011 Annual General Meeting will be available at the May 26, 2012 Annual General Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Garnett, President

Key Priorities for 2011 - 2012

## SYRCA - THE WILLOW AWARDS STRATEGIC PLAN

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

<http://www.willowawards.ca/about-syrca>

### Organizational Structure

- Task and Responsibilities
- Board Meetings

### Fiscal Responsibility

- Budget
- Fund Development

### Communications

- Website
- Posters, Bookmarks
- Internal Communications
- External Communications
- Conferences

### Sustainability

- Membership
- Board Memberships, Human Resources, Volunteers
- Executive Director- paid position

### Program

- Book Selection
- Gala- winning authors' attendance, reading at host schools
- Launch
- Educational Activities



## REPORT OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT

Goal: Foster positive relationships with Canadian publishers, authors and illustrators

In my role as Vice-President, it is my responsibility to maintain communication with the publishers, authors, and illustrators. To facilitate this I maintain databases of contact information.

In early June, publishers were contacted to request submissions for our selection committees. At this time I also notified them of the award winners. In early February, following the Board meeting where the list of nominated books was shared, I contacted the publishers to obtain information for each of the nominated authors and illustrators, as well as relevant permissions. Nominated authors and illustrators were also contacted to inform them of their nominations and to request permission to link to their websites. In January, nominated authors and illustrators were contacted with an official letter of congratulations on their nominations and a request for a signed copy of their book. Each letter included a copy of our poster and a set of bookmarks. This year a copy of our Gainer poster celebrating 10 years was also included. The signed books were given to individual students who attended the Gala. Illustrators were also sent a package with our posters and bookmarks. Following the voting, the winning authors and illustrators were contacted and invited to the Gala. Each year I receive notes and emails from a number of authors and illustrators thanking us for the work that we do.

Maintaining a current list of contact people for the publishers can be a challenge, however, it is essential to our work. Without their assistance in providing copies of the books, as well as information about the books, authors and illustrators, our work would be very difficult, if not impossible.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ann Atchison

*The SYRCA Willow Awards provide our students with a fantastic opportunity to get excited and engaged in reading. It encourages students to explore great literature and discover their love of reading and writing. It creates an atmosphere of excitement and ownership. The students can't wait to read the books and share what they thought with their peers. They quickly find their favourites and begin advocating for them. My students had the wonderful opportunity to attend the Gala this year and they were thrilled at the prospect of their favourite book winning, and possibly meeting the authors. The students sat on pins and needles with fingers crossed as the nominees were announced. You would have thought the students wrote the winning books by how excited they were! The students feel a strong connection with the books as they explore, share and vote.*

*I appreciate the tremendous time and effort it takes to narrow down the Willow Award nominations each year. There is always such a broad range of topics and fascinating stories. Each year I have watched students make powerful connections with different Willow Award nominated books. Thank you for giving the students a chance to explore these wonderful selections and for allowing the students to be a part of the Willow Awards by giving them a voice.*

*Stacey Moser, St. Margaret School, Moose Jaw*



## A LOOK BACK

Sometime during the year 2000, an idea began percolating in the minds of the executive of the Saskatchewan School Library Association. It was recognized by the president at the time, Carol Thiessen, that many provinces had a Children's Choice Award, and perhaps it was time for Saskatchewan to develop our own. A feasibility study was undertaken by Marion Perry, with the help of a core of dedicated volunteers. The result was the incorporation on August 31, 2001 of SYRCA-Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice - The Willow Awards Inc., which is a registered non-profit corporation, registered with the province of Saskatchewan.

As the literacy movement in the province grew, so did involvement in The Willow Awards. The number of communities participating continues to grow each year, as votes increased from about 2000 the first year, to over 14,000 this past year. Our readership well exceeds the number of votes, as we know there are many readers who somehow miss the voting process, but still love reading from our lists. Over the years, a website was developed, that has expanded to feature book reviews and activities for each book, a monitored comment feature for readers, online voting, and a place to inform and feature our celebrations. We continue to grow and keep up with the current trends in technology, while maintaining our focus on reading.

We feel proud to promote quality literature for our young people that represents many genres, cultures and interest, all written by Canadian authors and illustrators.

The first Board of Directors included:

Marion Perry - President	Marlene McBain - Director
Lynn Gilbert - Vice President	Chris MacLennan - Director
Claire Isaac - Vice President	Barbara Monen - Director
Margaret Steger - Treasurer	Judy Nicholson - Director
Liz Roberts - Secretary	Marion Piche - Director
Muriel Drew - Director	Lori Rog - Director
Maureen Erlendson - Director	Caroline Selinger - Director
John Haas - Director	Carol Thiessen - Director
Eleanor Matz - Director	Leslie Widdifield-Konkin - Director

MAY 2009





## CELEBRATING 10 YEARS



2011 was a special year for SYRCA as this was the 10<sup>th</sup> year of nominees and award winners. The Board decided that this deserved a special year of initiatives and celebrations. Each year, 30 books are nominated, with a resulting 3 winners, one in each category of Shining (K- Grade 3), Diamond (Grades 4-6), and Snow (Grades 7-9). Over 10 years, we have had a total of 300 nominated books, and 30 winners – all quality Canadian children's literature. Each committee reviews up to 150 books annually, from which 10 are nominated. The numbers are mind boggling!

To celebrate, the Board chose two main initiatives. First, we wanted a special poster that would go to all school and public libraries, which would have meaning for all. We felt that Gainer the Gopher, the Saskatchewan Roughrider mascot, would be representative of all Saskatchewan. As we are promoting a "Reader Nation", we chose a group of children that would represent gender and ethnic diversity, reading with their buddy, Gainer. The poster turned out beautifully, and is entitled "Huddle Up With Willow Books". A copy was also given to each child attending the Gala in Moose Jaw on April 27, 2012.

The second initiative invited adults (teacher librarians, technicians, teachers and others) to submit their intention to participate this year. These names were then entered to win an author visit and a complete set of 2011 nominees, and books by the visiting author. Over 100 entries were received, from which 10 winners were randomly drawn, to represent 10 school divisions. The winners were:

1. Alycia Duplantie, Makwa Sahgaiehan First Nation School Loon Lake.  
Visiting author – Leah Dorian
2. Donna Lee Astring, Central School, Swift Current. Visiting author – Rebecca Grambo
3. Angela Nordstrum, Red Wing Elementary School, Prince Albert. Visiting author – Alice Kuipers
4. Laurel Kentel, Churchbridge Public School, Churchbridge. Visiting author – Maureen Ulrich
5. Charmaine Stouse, McClurg School, Regina. Visiting author – Peter Eyvindson
6. Adele Green, Outlook Elementary School, Outlook. Visiting author – Ashley Spires
7. Carol Edquist, Valley View School/Beauval Public Library, Beauval.  
Visiting author – Leah Dorian
8. Leanne Miller, Pleasantdale School, Estevan. Visiting author – Alison Lohans
9. Melody McPherson, Pilot Butte School, Pilot Butte. Visiting author – Maureen Ulrich
10. Diane Barsi, Holliston School, Saskatoon. Visiting author – Dr. Beverly Brenna



Thanks for participating – we look forward to your feedback! Please visit our website for individual reports and pictures from the visits.



# FINANCIAL STATEMENT



**SYRCA - SASKATCHEWAN YOUNG READERS' CHOICE -  
THE WILLOW AWARDS INC.  
FINANCIAL STATEMENT  
YEAR ENDING MARCH 31, 2012**

Bank Balance at March 31, 2011 **\$19,831.15**

**INCOME**

Memberships	\$1,820.00
Sponsorships	\$23,975.00
Grant	\$500.00
Fundraising	\$12,924.00
Stickers	\$1,621.45
GST Rebate	\$419.74

Total Income **\$41,260.19**

**DISBURSEMENTS**

Memberships	\$140.86
Sponsorships/Grants	\$164.72
Fundraising	\$4,208.89
Marketing	\$39.29
Posters/Bookmarks	\$10,582.63
Stickers	\$18.07
Awards	\$3,928.69
Lunch/Gala	\$1,825.50
Office Expenses	\$432.50
Meeting Expenses	\$5,167.58
Author Expenses	\$5,427.30
Website Expenses	\$5,341.95
Insurance	\$1,060.00
Review of Books	\$150.00
Sask Culture Membership	\$75.00
Non-Profit Registration	\$10.00

Total Disbursements **\$38,568.98**

Bank Balance at March 31, 2012 **\$22,522.36**

**Term Deposit**

Balance at Mar. 31/11	\$15,202.97	
Interest	\$114.02	
Total		<b>\$15,316.99</b>

**TOTAL ASSETS** **\$37,839.35**

Checked and verified by:

S. Dishington, DAA

April 21, 2012



## LAUNCHING THE 2011 WILLOW NOMINEES

Schools and public libraries are invited to participate in a province-wide launch of the Willow nominees by submitting a photo and/or description of their local launch. Ideas are many and varied and can be found on the website <http://www.willowawards.ca> under "Event Reports". We love to give away books, so each year the winning entry receives a set of the 30 current nominees. This year the set of nominated books was awarded to Michelle McGovarin and Aimee Whitbread from Cut Knife High School. Three other entries were chosen to receive boxes of miscellaneous books. Christine Heggstad from Frontier School, Nicole Rowlinson from Lindale School and Tara McKinnon from Alameda School were the winners of those prizes.

Respectfully submitted,  
Florence Barton, Past President



## STICKER REPORT FOR 2011 - 2012

In 2010 - 2011 we sold \$498.40 in stickers. This year, 2011 - 2012 we sold \$1,646 worth of SYRCA Willow Award stickers!

Amanda Hassen

## FUNDRAISING REPORT 2012

The fundraising committee had a dream this year to try to find funding to promote ten author visits for children in the province to celebrate ten years of reading books by Canadian and Saskatchewan authors. Sometimes dreams come true, and that happened this year thanks to the dedicated volunteers who worked on the fundraising committee for SYRCA. What an exciting year this has been for the Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice - Willow Awards! Of course, none of this would have been possible without the generous support of our corporate patrons and the donations we received from individuals throughout the year. As a Silver Patron, Access Communications Children's Fund provided funding for five of the ten author visits around the province.

Two patrons, Book and Brier Patch (Bronze Patron) and SaskEnergy (Silver Patron), have supported and promoted the Willow Awards since the start. SaskEnergy has supported the Gala where the winners are announced each year. Potash Corp has been a Gold Patron, and thanks to their contribution, we can maintain and improve our website so that it is more accessible. The commenting feature that was added last year has been popular not only with the children but also with adults of all ages and with the authors as well. Silver Patron, Conexus Credit Union has been very supportive over the years; their financial support helps print posters which promotes reading around the whole province. The Royal Bank of Canada (Silver Patron) was proud to provide additional funding to support the Celebrating 10 Years Gala in Moose Jaw. The Willow Awards receives print support from Silver Patrons *The Leader-Post* and *The Star Phoenix*.



## FUNDRAISING REPORT 2012 continued...

Another special promotion this year was the printing of a poster to celebrate ten years of reading Willow Books. Board members, Tammie Latimer from Yorkton and Amanda Hassen from Moose Jaw, coordinated with the Saskatchewan Roughriders and photographer, Mitch of Canada (Bronze Patron) in Yorkton to develop a "made in Saskatchewan" poster appropriately entitled **Huddle Up with Willow Books**.

Without the help of some of our Bronze Patrons such as Areva, Cameco, Evraz, Garnett Industries Limited and United Life Services, we could not reach and promote reading to all children in the province. The Ministry of Education changed their status from a Patron to a Sponsor this year.

Since the addition of the commenting feature, the website has become busier, and we are proud to say that over 14,000 children voted this year to pick the winners for 2011 which celebrated ten years of the Willow Awards in Saskatchewan. Change is constant, and the webmaster is working on a new platform to make the website more interactive.

In addition to the financial donations from our patrons, sponsors and friends, the Board held two fundraising dinners and silent auctions in Saskatoon and Regina to help with Board expenses, production of posters and mailing, as well as website expenses and other promotions of the Willow Awards.

Thank you to my committee, Elsbeth Dormuth, Tammie Latimer, Amanda Hassen and Florence Barton for their help and support. The Board of SYRCA would like to extend a special thank you to all the people who have contributed financially. If you wish to make a donation, please think of SYRCA - Willow Awards Inc. to leave a legacy for the children of Saskatchewan.

Respectively submitted,  
Naomi Kral  
Fundraising Officer

## 7TH ANNUAL BUFFET AND BOOKS IN SASKATOON



The 7th annual Buffet and Books on Oct. 27, 2011 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Saskatoon had an extra atmosphere of celebration. As SYRCA is celebrating 10 years, we took this opportunity to showcase a special initiative – our "Huddle Up With Books" poster, featuring Gainer the Gopher and some of our young readers from throughout the province.



Carol Thiessen, one of SYRCA's founding members, along with president Ruth Garnett unveiled the poster to an appreciative group of supporters, who each received a poster. After a sumptuous buffet dinner, we were inspired with a presentation by literary activist Carey Rigby-Wilcox, who shared her story of overcoming her learning disability. Thanks to all who attended, and congratulations to those who went home with an array of great items from our raffles and silent auction.





## BUFFET AND BOOKS IN REGINA



Over 130 people attended the Buffet and Books dinner at the West Harvest Inn in Regina on April 18, 2012. For the first time at the Regina dinner an author spoke about reading and writing. Alice Kuipers, 2011 Snow Willow nominee and author of *The Worst Thing She Ever Did*, addressed the crowd. Alice gave the audience ten tips for reading:

1. Read with your children.
2. Join the library.
3. Always take a book when traveling.
4. Work in a book shop.
5. Share the books you love.
6. Read whatever you want and don't let anyone tell you otherwise.
7. Don't read the last page first (because it upsets the authors when you do that).
8. Read prize lists.
9. You don't have to finish a book.
10. Read with your children.

Read to your children was repeated to enforce what an important role reading still plays in society today!

Alice's love of reading and enthusiasm captivated everyone. The committee members received many e-mails indicating how they enjoyed Alice's love affair with reading. Alice has worked in both a bookstore and a library, and later started a bookstore as a business. Alice and her husband, accomplished author Yann Martel, share their love of reading with one another. Alice was kind enough to autograph her new book *40 Things I Want to Tell You* which was just released in February this year.

It was also nice to have other Willow author nominees Wilfred Burton, Anne Patton and Judith Silverthorne in the audience.

To celebrate our tenth anniversary, Linda Galenzoski, a friend of the Willow Awards, decorated three cakes: Shining Willow - red velvet cake with chocolate icing and a Willow tree in edible foil; Diamond Willow Cake - a confetti cake covered in pink fondant icing sparkled with diamonds; Snow Willow cake - a white cake with custard filling covered in shiny white snowflakes.

Ross Empey, an auctioneer, auctioned the cakes to raise funds for SYRCA. This was a first for Ross, he has auctioned many things, but never cakes!

In addition to the cake auction, the annual Silent Auction featured 41 items. This year the format was enhanced by the purchase of "Trump the Bid" tickets. One lucky ticket winner was able to select one auction item of their choice. Ted Forrest from Regina was the lucky winner.

Thanks to everyone present and to all the volunteers who make this event so successful. However, we need more Board members in Regina. Please consider letting your name stand for the Board to help promote reading for kids!

Naomi Kral



## COMMUNICATION: WILLOW AWARDS WEBSITE REPORT

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

The website continues to be our key communication tool with the membership and participants in the Willow Awards. The last year saw the usual activity associated with the yearly cycle of the Willow Awards. The 2011 nominees, activities, the Launch and Gala applications, and the voting forms were added to the website at the appropriate times. Throughout the year, items are added to the "What's New" tab, which has become one of the most popular pages on the website. The commenting feature has provided a forum for interaction between the nominated authors and the children and is heavily used. Giving students a voice on the nominated books is hitting our target audience in a new way. Realizing the limitations of the current website, the committee is exploring options for a new platform that will make it more functional as well as more appealing to visitors.

With over 14,000 students voting this year, the backend database was used to streamline the voting and awarding of student prizes. The majority of the votes again were online. For the 2012 voting year, we are looking to discontinue paper votes.

Due to the continued dedication of our website developer Trevor Cunningham, website volunteers Marion Perry and Kathy Stedwill, and graphic support from Rob Bredin, the website is maintained and continues to evolve. The volunteers' generous donation of time ensures the continuity of the Willow Awards website. The website is an expensive module for SYRCA to maintain, and is made possible solely by the generous funding provided by our corporate sponsors.

Respectfully submitted,

Val Gerrard  
Website Committee Chair



It was pretty obvious at the Willow Awards 10th Anniversary Gala that the Willow Awards promotes interest in reading. The atmosphere was electric as children cheered for each nominated title.

Children respond positively when they are invited to read and vote on their favorite book. Their enthusiasm for reading is expanded as they read for multiple purposes - enjoyment as well as "best" book selection.

Clayton Boyer  
St. Margaret School  
Moose Jaw



## 2011 WILLOW NOMINEE VOTING REPORT

The Willow Awards keeps on growing. More than 14,000 children voted for their favourite Willow nominee. This is an increase of almost 1,000 votes. The voters represent communities from all corners of Saskatchewan and each year, we see new school communities participating. Each year, we draw the names of three participating teachers who each receive a "classroom library" of books appropriate to their age of students. This year, the winning classrooms were from St. Mary's Community School in North Battleford, Glaslyn Central School in Glaslyn and Melfort and Unit Comprehensive Collegiate in Melfort. Thirty-five individual students from all areas of the province were also awarded a book each through draws made from the voters.

The increase in voting numbers indicates that The Willow Awards program is growing and reaching more children in our province. It is encouraging to receive feedback from teachers and children indicating their enthusiasm for the program and for their favourite books. Thank you to the patrons and sponsors who make The Willow Awards possible.

Respectfully submitted,  
Florence Barton, Past President

Votes by Category	2008	2009	2010	2011	%CHANGE
SHINING	9,057	9,326	10,582	<del>12,100</del> 11,270	%14
DIAMOND	769	1,239	1,252	<del>1,494</del> 1,400	%19
SNOW	262	526	520	585 537	%13
TOTAL VOTES	10,088	11,101	12,534	<del>14,179</del> 13,213	%13

The Willow Awards is like the Peoples' Choice Awards of children's books. The students are actively involved and are very excited to be a part of the process of reading the books and choosing their favourites to win. But win or lose, they come away from the experience with a greater appreciation of the writing process and the written word.

Pam Diacon, Literacy Coach, Moose Jaw



## PROGRAM: SHINING WILLOW SELECTION COMMITTEE REPORT



The Shining Willow Selection Committee for 2012 nominees met four times - once each in October, November December and January. The committee consisted of 11 readers: Florence Barton (chair), Dr. Christine Fondse, Tamar Green, Kandice Heinrichs, Laurie Hnatiuk, Alicia Klopoushak, Donna Koch, Tammie Latimer, Kathy Sharman, Susan Voitka-Seager, Tracy Woodward. SKYPE was used to include members from out of Saskatoon in the meetings.

The committee considered about 90 titles published in 2011 and 26 titles published in 2010. The wiki was used more extensively this year to make comments about the books individual members read. The wiki was then used at meetings, especially to include comments of members who could not be present.

In January, we finalized our list of 10 titles and 2 alternates to be presented to the board. We concluded our meeting with dinner for those who could stay.

I appreciated the enthusiasm and dedication of the committee and the lively debates that took place at meetings. It is a privilege to work with a group of people who have a passion for and expertise in children's literature and the children for whom the literature is written.

Respectfully submitted,  
Florence Barton  
Chair, 2011 Shining Willow Selection Committee



### THE SHINING NOMINEES 2012





## PROGRAM: DIAMOND WILLOW SELECTION COMMITTEE REPORT

The Diamond Willow committee had a diverse membership this year; library workers, teachers, children, a town councillor and a Conexus Credit Union employee. Due to varying amounts of free time that the committee members could devote to reading we had a group of 14 readers who chose 10 titles from a collection of 37 titles from 2010 and 117 titles from 2011. Of those 117 titles, we put off 47 to the next year for consideration. This was to ease our agony over too many good books.

We met in October, November, December, and twice in January to narrow down the choices. At times we raved about a book, but ultimately had to reject it as we felt it was more interesting to adults than to children. There were members who were so excited as though they had been granted membership into an ultra-cool secret club, which in a way it is, and certainly a book club where junior literature is discussed. We used a wiki, as well as emails, and phone calls to carry on discussions between face-to-face meetings.

Most often we met at the La Ronge Public Library as it offered better parking than my house and the librarian agreed to house the books. This allowed people to exchange the books they had finished with greater ease which increased in importance the closer to the end we were.

Once the final selection of our 2012 nominees had been made, the members happily scooped up titles to start reading for the 2013 nominees. Below are the books that were selected. Descriptive annotations, links to reviews and author information may be found at <http://www.willowawards.ca/nominated-books/2012/diamond-willow>.

I would like to thank my committee members Judy Angelstad, Nikki Beaudin, Kacy Callin, Erin Carter, Gail Clark, Tyrone Halkett, Connie Hogan, Annalisa Lindskog, Rosemary Loeffler, Evelyn Parker, Harriet Roy, Serena Roy and Lisa Ulriksen for the time they volunteered to this endeavor.

Respectfully submitted

Jocelyn Provost, Chair – Diamond Willow Committee



### THE DIAMOND NOMINEES 2012





## PROGRAM: SNOW WILLOW SELECTION COMMITTEE REPORT

The Snow Willow committee consisted of 12 members from Regina and Saskatoon. Our group represents Teacher Librarians, Teachers and school Library Technicians, including some retired book-lovers. We continued to use our online wiki to share reviews, have conversations and discussions of books. We had 4 face-to-face meetings in Saskatoon, and we now also use Skype as a way to include members who cannot physically attend.



This year we considered 134 submitted titles: 35 published in 2010 and 99 published in 2011. Submitted titles that were received after the Oct. 31 deadline will be considered for next year.

We are happy to present the books below as finalists for the 2012 Snow Willow Award. Descriptive annotations, links to reviews and author information may be found <http://www.willowawards.ca/nominated-books/2012/snow-willow>.

I would like to thank all committee members for the many hours spend reading books and for their thoughtful contributions to the discussions, which allowed for selection of a list of titles worthy of nomination.



Thanks to all committee members: Ann Atchison, Florence Barton, Ruth Elliott, Jane Glen, Lindsay Kelleher, Naomi Kral, Tamzen Kulyk, Bridget Osika, Sheree Rutherford, Carlene Walter, Carole Caman for many hours of thoughtful reading, analyses and camaraderie.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ruth Garnett, Chair – Snow Willow Committee



### THE SNOW NOMINEES 2012





## THE 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SASKENERGY WILLOW AWARDS GALA



The Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice Awards is celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> year in 2011-2012, so Amanda Hassen of Holy Trinity Catholic School Division took up the challenge of putting on an Awards Gala fitting this milestone. Amanda and her team, including Stacey Moser, Clayton Boyer, Monique Byers, Jessica Kowbel, Amy Scuka, Christine Messer, Colleen Mitchell, Ruth Schneider, and Arlene Kolosky certainly met this challenge. With the continuous sponsorship of SaskEnergy, and additional financial support from RBC, the committee was able to bring together 600 students and guests from Kindergarten to Grade Eight from all of the Holy Trinity schools in Moose Jaw for a day of celebration.

The Gala was held at the Heritage Inn and Convention Centre in Moose Jaw, and for the first time ever at a Gala, the students were seated around banquet tables. Capable student Masters of Ceremony were Maguire Abell and Melanie Bissonnette-Compain. Wonderful contributions to the program were made by individuals, small groups and classrooms from St. Mary School, École St. Margaret, St. Agnes School, Sacred Heart, and St. Michael School. Special greetings emphasizing the importance and the benefits of reading were given by His Worship Glenn Hagel, Mayor of Moose Jaw; Mrs. Ruth Garnett, President of SYRCA; the Honorable Dustin Duncan, Minister of SaskEnergy; and Mrs. Geri Hall, Superintendent for Holy Trinity. A commemorative willow tree, a complete set of 2012 Willow nominated books, and a commemorative plaque were presented to the school division as well.



The highlight and main reason for holding the Gala was to announce the Winners of the 2011 Willow Awards, *and the winners are:* Susin Nielsen for *Dear George Clooney Please Marry My Mom*, L.M. Falcone for *The Midnight Curse*, and Kenneth Oppel for *The King's Taster*. Both Susin Nielsen from Vancouver and L.M. Falcone from Toronto attended the Gala, and were cheered enthusiastically. Both were excited and honoured to have won, and stated that an award where only the students can vote has special meaning for writers, because the readers are doing the judging.





## THE 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SASKENERGY WILLOW AWARDS GALA

Following the Gala, everyone enjoyed scrumptious cupcakes and juice, and took time to appreciate the wonderful decorations and student art around the room.



The large room was then divided into two, and Susin Nielsen and Lucy Falcone got up-close and personal with the students, doing author visits with Grades 7 and 8, and Grades 3 to 6 respectively.

They were certainly a hit with the students, and will leave lasting impressions on many.



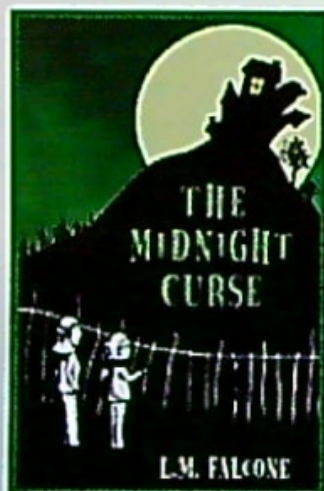




## WILLOW AWARD WINNERS 2011 - 2012



*SHINING WILLOW*  
THE KING'S TASTER  
BY KENNETH OPPEL



*DIAMOND WILLOW*  
THE MIDNIGHT CURSE  
BY L. M. FALCONE



*SNOW WILLOW*  
DEAR GEORGE CLOONEY  
PLEASE MARRY MY MOM  
BY SUSIN NIELSEN



# SYRCA-THE WILLOW AWARDS

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- Melody Wood



# THE WILLOW AWARDS