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For Release Sunday, NOVEMBER 30, 2008

2008 Saskatchewan Book Awards Winners Announced

The many facets of Saskatchewan culture were reflected in this year's celebration of its best writers and publishers at the 16th Annual Saskatchewan Book Awards Gala held on Saturday, November 29th in Regina. Guest speaker Maria Campbell, award winning author and activist, along with renowned Métis fiddler John Arcand and his wife Vicki, set the stage for a unique Métis themed evening, with a crowd of over 400 enthusiastic book lovers, writers and publishers at the Conexus Arts Centre. The announcement of the 2008 Saskatchewan Book Awards recipients completed the evening.

"This year we had an all time record-breaking number of entries with 113 titles submitted," reported Glenda James, the Awards' Executive Director, "so the competition this year was stiff. Whittling down such a long list to 14 Award recipients was a challenge for this year's jurors."

Poetry entries were strong this year, and leading the pack was beloved Moose Jaw poet Gary Hyland who won both the Poetry Award and the Book of the Year Award for *Love of Mirrors: Poems New and Selected* (Coteau Books). Former Saskatchewan Poet Laureate Louise Bernice Halfe was also a double winner for her book of poetry, *The Crooked Good* (Coteau Books), which received both the Saskatoon and First Peoples' Publishing Awards. Their publisher, Coteau Books, also received the Publishing Award for *Passchendaele: Canada's Triumph and Tragedy on the Fields of Flanders* by Norman Leach.

Saskatchewan towns played a leading role in the books written by two double award winning first time authors. Playwright Pam Bustin of Saskatoon won both the Fiction Award and the First Book Award for her stirring debut novel, *Mostly Happy* (Thistledown Press). It tells the story of a young girl who carries everything that is important to her in a red Samsonite suitcase as her troubled family moves from town to town. David McLennan's book, *Our Towns: Saskatchewan Communities from Abbey to Zenon Park* (Canadian Plains Research Center), received both the Regina Book Award and the Publishing in Education Award.

Personal experiences, here and abroad, informed the books by other award recipients. Non-fiction award winner, Donna Caruso describes hers in *Journey Without a Map, Growing Up Italian: A Memoir* (Thistledown Press) while first time author and winner of the Readers' Choice Award, Janita Van de Velde, fictionalizes her world travels in *Postcards Never Written*. Alison Lohans, winner of the Young Adult Literature Award for *This Land We Call Home*, draws on her mother's experience as a teacher at an Arizona World War II Japanese American relocation camp.

Two authors added a second Saskatchewan Book Award to their collection. David Baudemont received the bi-annual Prix du livre français, this time for the children's book *Olga* (Éditions de la Nouvelle Plume). Veteran writer James Youngblood Henderson received the Scholarly Award for *Treaty Rights in the Constitution of Canada* (Thomson Carswell).

Over the next six months, the authors will be reading from their award winning books at more than a dozen Saskatchewan Book Awards Literary Salons being planned at various locations throughout the province.

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SBA WINNERS 2008

Book of the Year – sponsored by the Co-operators

Gary Hyland, *Love of Mirrors: Poems New and Selected* (Coteau Books)

Fiction – sponsored by SaskPower

Pam Bustin, *Mostly Happy* (Thistledown Press)

Nonfiction sponsored by the University of Saskatchewan

Donna Caruso, *Journey Without a Map. Growing Up Italian: A Memoir*
(Thistledown Press)

Young Adult Literature sponsored by SaskEnergy

Alison Lohans, *This Land We Call Home* (Raupo/Pearson Education New Zealand)

First Book (Honouring Brenda Macdonald Riches) sponsored by Agrium

Pam Bustin, *Mostly Happy* (Thistledown Press)

Poetry (Honouring Anne Szumigalski) sponsored by Saskatchewan Arts Board

Gary Hyland, *Love of Mirrors: Poems New and Selected* (Coteau Books)

Regina Book Award sponsored by Drs Morris & Jacqui Shumiatcher

David McLennan, *Our Towns: Saskatchewan Communities from Abbey to Zenon Park*
(Canadian Plains Research Center)

Saskatoon Book Award sponsored by the City of Saskatoon and Saskatoon Public Library

Louise Bernice Halfe, *The Crooked Good* (Coteau Books)

Scholarly Writing presented by Ralph and Pamela Goodale

James Youngblood Henderson, *Treaty Rights in the Constitution of Canada* (Thomson Carswell)

Prix du livre français sponsored by Fondation Fransaskoise

David Baudemont, *Olga* (Éditions de la Nouvelle Plume)

Readers' Choice sponsored by Regina Public Library

Janita Van de Velde, *Postcards Never Written* (Van De Velde Publications)

Award for Publishing sponsored by the Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport

Coteau Books, *Passchendaele: Canada's Triumph and Tragedy on the Fields of Flanders*,
Norman Leach

First Peoples Publishing sponsored by the University of Saskatchewan

Louise Bernice Halfe, *The Crooked Good* (Coteau Books)

Publishing in Education sponsored by the University of Regina Bookstore

David McLennan, *Our Towns: Saskatchewan Communities from Abbey to Zenon Park*
(Canadian Plains Research Center)