



#205B - 2314 11th Ave
Regina SK S4P 0K1
Phone: (306) 569-1585
Fax: (306) 569-4187
director@bookawards.sk.ca
www.bookawards.sk.ca

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LITERARY SALONS ALL THE RAGE IN REGINA

Saskatchewan Book Awards has revived and revised an old form of entertainment, the Victorian salon, as a new way of bringing Saskatchewan authors into Regina homes.

“The idea is to promote Saskatchewan authors and publishers,” President Judy Wagner said, “particularly those who won awards at our recent Awards Gala”. It is also a fundraiser for the nonprofit organization, as guests are asked to make a donation to the Saskatchewan Book Awards. The hosts invite friends for an evening or afternoon, provide refreshments, and the guests meet the authors who read from their books.

Between January 13 and February 19, seven Literary Salons will be held, the first featuring Martine Noël-Maw whose book, *Amelia et les Papillons*, won the Prix du Livre Français. On January 19, Elyse St. George, who won the Non-fiction Award, will read from *Once in a Blue Moon*. That salon will also showcase baritone Jeff Sawatsky, and landscape art by Mel Malkin of Saskatoon.

Salon co-ordinator Byrna Barclay said, “Some of our guests have never attended a reading before, and they are thrilled they’ll be able to meet the authors and have their books signed.”

Fiction Award winner, Marta Blum of Saskatoon (*The Apothecary*) and Regina’s own mystery writer Gail Bowen, who won the Readers’ Choice Award for *The Endless Knot*, will read on February 3rd. The next salon will feature Jim Warren whose book *A History of Labour in Saskatchewan* won both the Scholarly Award and the Publishing in Education Award. Another 2006 double award winner, Michael Trussler, whose book *Encounters* won both the Book of the Year Award and the Regina Book Award, will be featured at the sixth salon.

“The public response has been exciting,” Barclay said, with different parts of our community involved. Francophone readers will attend the first salon, while other salons involve people from the academic community, the legal community, book clubs, the Aboriginal community and the business world. “No one we’ve invited has turned us down and many people are eager to either host or attend one of the first literary salons. It’s a great way to entertain one’s friends.”

The seventh and last salon will be held on February 18th, with Trevor Herriot and Paul Wilson entertaining naturalists, such as guests from the Nature Conservancy of Canada.

“Already we have plans for expansion,” Barclay added. “We hope to increase the number of salons in 2008. We have one art gallery already committed to hosting a salon in rural Saskatchewan.”

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for more information:

Glenda James

Phone: (306) 569-1585

director@bookawards.sk.ca