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LITERARY SALONS CREATE NEW AUDIENCES FOR WRITERS

The revival of an old idea is creating new audiences for the latest winners of the Saskatchewan Book Awards (SBA). Literary salons were a popular social event during the Victorian era - a way for patrons of the arts to promote the writers they supported. Saskatchewan Book Awards piloted the revival of Literary Salons in 2007, receiving rave reviews from attendees, many of whom had never attended an author reading before:

“A feast for the body and soul.”
“An inspired decision to have the salons.”
“Literary, musical, and culinary fare were exceptional.”

“The public’s response to last year’s salons was heartening,” said Salon Co-ordinator Byrna Barclay. “And this year we’ve had to expand the number of events, creating new ones for Saskatoon, but the most exciting grand finale is yet to come on June 1 when all the authors will read at the Shurniak Gallery in Assiniboia.”

For 2008, the Literary Salons have expanded from seven to twelve, with two new salons to be held in Saskatoon and a grand finale to take place on June 1 at the Shurniak Gallery in Assiniboia. With the Literary Salon program, Saskatchewan Book Awards events promoting the province’s writers and publishers have expanded to operate year round and throughout the province.

The Literary Salon season begins on January 6th in Saskatoon and will feature Sheri Benning, winner of the Poetry Award for *Thin Moon Psalm* and Fiction Award winner, Bernice Friesen reading from *The Book of Beasts*. January 13th will be a lucky day for the Canadian Plains Research Center whose authors will be reading at a Regina Salon that day. Featured will be Bernard Thraves, one of the University of Regina geographers whose book *Saskatchewan Geographic Perspectives* won the Publishing in Education Award and Garrett Wilson who won the Scholarly Award for *Frontier Farewell*. Saskatchewan’s own Poet Laureate, Robert Currie and Non-Fiction Award-winner, Mary Ann Kirkby of Prince Albert will be featured on January 25th. The next Salon will showcase other publishers’ Award winning books: Harold Johnson will read from *Two Families* and Rebecca Grambo reading from *The Great Sand Hills*. Another new feature of the 2008 salons will be one especially for children, with songwriter Brenda Baker. In Saskatoon, Rod McIntyre, winner of the Children’s Literature Award for *Feeding at Nine*, will team up with Alice Kuipers who will read from *Notes on the Refrigerator Door*. Dave Margoshes who won the Regina Book Award and the coveted Book-of-the-Year Award will read from *Bix’s Trumpet* along with Amanda Dietz whose book *Longer Than Life* won the Readers’ Choice Award.

“Anyone who wants to host a salon to entertain friends and introduce them to Saskatchewan’s best books or anyone who wants to attend a salon and discover our award winners may contact our office at 569-1585 or email director@bookawards.sk.ca” says Glenda James, SBA Executive Director.