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**For Release November 25, 2007
Regina, SK**

2007 Saskatchewan Book Awards Winners Announced

The 2007 winners of the Saskatchewan Book Awards were announced on Saturday, November 24th at the 15th Annual Awards Gala in Regina. Dave Margoshes' fiction collection *Bix's Trumpet and other stories* took the Book of the Year Award as well as the Regina Book Award. Another double winner was Sheri Benning, whose *Thin Moon Psalm* won both Poetry and Saskatoon Book Awards.

Saskatchewan novelist Sandra Birdsell, herself a former double winner, addressed a crowd of over 400 enthusiastic book lovers, writers and publishers who gathered at the Conexus Arts Centre for the annual celebration of excellence in Saskatchewan writing and publishing.

“For the fourth year in a row we received more than 200 entries, with 210 in 13 categories, and a record-breaking number in the Publishing in Education category,” reported Glenda James, the Book Awards’ Executive Director. “And this year’s event celebrated 15 years of honouring Saskatchewan’s authors and publishers.” The organization, run largely by volunteers on a shoestring budget, was founded in 1993 by the Saskatchewan Writers Guild, the Saskatchewan Publishers Group and the provincial Library Association.

A number of winning titles highlight uniquely Saskatchewan themes. The award for Publishing went to Nature Saskatchewan’s *The Great Sand Hills: A Prairie Oasis* by Rebecca L. Grambo with photographs by Branimir Gjetvaj, a striking portrait of this unique Saskatchewan ecosystem. Canadian Plains Research Centre, winner for Publishing in Education, produced a comprehensive guide to the province in *Saskatchewan: Geographic Perspectives*, edited by Bernard D. Thraves, Marilyn L. Lewry, Janis E. Dale and Hansgeorg Schlichtmann. *I am Hutterite* by Mary-Ann Kirkby, winner of the Non-Fiction Award, offers a perceptive look at life on the communal farms that dot the prairie landscape.

New perspectives on Saskatchewan history are also present. The First Peoples’ Publishing winner, *Two Families: Treaties and Government* by Harold Johnson, addresses treaty relationships in a book produced by Purich Publishing. *Frontier Farewell: The 1870s and the End of the Old West*, by Scholarly Writing Award winner Garrett Wilson, focuses on the era preceding the province’s formation. Both works are noteworthy for their readability, particularly given the complex subject matter treated.

Saskatchewan novelists also made a strong showing. Alice Kuipers carried off the First Book Award with her unique young adult novel *Life on the Refrigerator Door*, detailing a mother-daughter relationship through a series of hastily scribbled notes. R.P. MacIntyre of LaRonge won the Children’s Literature Award with his latest work, *Feeding at Nine*. The first Readers’ Choice Award, chosen by readers in libraries throughout Saskatchewan, went to Amanda Deitz for her fast paced, dialogue-driven novel *Longer than Life, Volume 2*. Saskatoon author Bernice Friesen captured the Fiction Award itself with her acclaimed work *The Book of Beasts*, from Coteau Books.

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