



## The Rocky Mountain Book Award

P.O. Box 42

Lethbridge, Alberta

T1J 3Y3

Fax: (403) 320.9124

Internet: <http://rmba.lethsd.ab.ca/>

, 2011

Dear

On behalf of the Rocky Mountain Book Award I am submitting an application for your consideration. **The Rocky Mountain Book Award – The Alberta Children's Choice Book Award**, is an ongoing project aimed at getting quality Canadian children's literature into the hands of Alberta's school children and encouraging them to become critical readers. Schools from all over Alberta have taken part in the Rocky Mountain Book Award.

Several businesses and organizations have helped us to finance our project while others have helped with promotion. Over the years our supporters have included: local public libraries, ATB Securities, Lethbridge School District 51, Royal Bank Financial Group, Save-On-Foods Book Store, Grassroots Program, Alberta School Library Council, Lethbridge Children's Literature Roundtable, United Library Services, Canadian Federation of University Women, Alberta Foundation for the Arts a, Rotary Clubs and interested individuals.

At present, the Rocky Mountain book award program operates on an extremely limited budget but through the use of modern technology we are able have our list available to approximately 175,000 Alberta students, their teachers, librarians and support staff, as well as public librarians and home schooled families. We hope your generosity will help us to continue providing this service and allowing for the participation of a greater percentage of those students.

There are many benefits to this program. Students have access to good literature that they may not have a chance to read otherwise. They are exposed to other cultures and other points-of-view and it increases their knowledge base and enhances their literacy and problem solving skills. Those students lucky enough to have a visit from a winning author, can be motivated and inspired to pursue their own creative endeavors.

As you are well aware, Alberta's economic future depends on a skilled and creative labour force. We feel that the Rocky Book Award Program can help develop highly productive citizens. For more information, please check out our website at <http://rmba.lethsd.ab.ca/>.

Thank you for the time you are taking to review our request.

Sincerely

Ruth Scales McMahon  
Co-Chair, Rocky Mountain Book Award

Michelle Dimnik  
Co-Chair, Rocky Mountain Book Award

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## **The Rocky Mountain Book Award**

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Incorporated Name: Rocky Mountain Book Award

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### **Contact Person: Ruth Scales McMahon, Co-Chair**

**Fax (403) 327-9699**

**Email – [seah0rse@telus.net](mailto:seah0rse@telus.net)**

#### **Executive Committee:**

Michelle Dimnik, Co-Chair

1602 7th Ave South

Lethbridge AB

T1J 1L6

Ruth Scales McMahon, Co-Chair

807 15 St S

Lethbridge AB

T1J 3A3

Jane Franz, Treasurer

2117 11 St

Coaldale, AB

T1M 1C1

Helen McAllindon, Secretary

9 Notre Dame PI W

Lethbridge AB

T1K 3Z9

Richard Chase, Webmaster

#### **Members:**

Margaret Rodermond

Elisabeth Hegarat

Terry Roth

Jennifer Burke

JoAnne St. John

Michael Pollard

Heather Willms

Richard Chase

Roxane Holmes

Patricia Butler

Janice Sheets

JoAnne St. John

Paige McGeorge

Corene Brown

Kae McFadzen

Kari Tanaka



## **Mandate/Background Information**

The groundwork for the establishment of the Rocky Mountain Book Award was established by a group of teachers, teacher-librarians, children's and educational librarians and booksellers. This group found they had a shared commitment to connecting young people with good Canadian literature written especially for them. The Rocky Mountain Book Award was born of the conviction that as so much competes for the young person's attention, it behooves that adults around them present only the very best of the hundreds of books available. This children's choice book award is the only Alberta program of its kind and is aimed at increasing the literacy level of Alberta grade 4 – 7 students. This population includes 175,000 students who have free access to this program via the Internet.

Many of the people involved with the initial Rocky Mountain Book Award proposal had worked on the University of Lethbridge young reader's choice award that was one of the original Canadian reader's choice awards. The award began in 1978 and was ended in 1994 because of financial cutbacks at the University of Lethbridge. The University of Lethbridge Award drew participants from all over Alberta.

The Rocky Mountain Book Award began in the 2000 – 2001 school year. Publicity was very limited, still 45 schools took part. In 2002 program had 91 schools that have registered and 2003 saw 165 schools registered. In the following years participation has ranged from 97 to 175 schools in spite of cuts in school library funding.



## **Project's Purpose and Objectives**

The purpose of the Rocky Mountain Book Award reading program is to promote quality Canadian literature and to enrich and broaden a child's reading experience. It brings an excellent selection of recent Canadian children's books to the attention of Alberta children. The program promotes literacy and rewards them for reading by making them the judges in a province-wide event. Through the participation of the children, the Rocky Mountain Book Award encourages Canadian writing, Canadian authors, and the improvement of reading skills.

The Rocky Mountain Book Award program provides teachers, teacher-librarians, librarians, parents and writers with insight into young people's reading preferences. It further affords an opportunity to honour and encourage imaginative authors who create works with high appeal to Alberta children.

Most importantly, the Rocky Mountain Book Award gives children the opportunity to be involved. The children benefit from the obvious encouragement to read and also through the opportunity to see their opinion honoured.

Finally the winning author is united with the voters in an author tour. Names of four of the participating schools are drawn. The Rocky Mountain Book Award Committee then makes arrangements and financially supports this geographically symbolic tour.

### Selection Process

A shortlist of 20 current Canadian fiction, non-fiction and poetry books is selected annually. Members of this selection committee include teachers, librarians, book sellers, parents and students. This list is then made available through the website and school and library mail.

### Who Can Participate

Alberta children in grades 4, 5, 6, or 7 may participate. This award program is for schools, libraries, and interested groups of students. This may include children who are being home-schooled or families who wish to become involved in reading good Canadian children's literature. Each reading group must have a teacher or adult leader.

### How the Children Participate

A teacher or adult leader must register a reading group made up of a minimum of three children on the Rocky Mountain Book Award website (<http://rmba.lethsd.ab.ca/>). Students must have read or have read aloud to them, a minimum of five books from the combined list of fiction, non-fiction and poetry. However, students are encouraged to read as many of the titles as possible to provide the most well informed vote. The adult leader or teacher then submits the votes electronically via the award's website. The book receiving the most votes wins and the winner is announced on Canada Book Day on April 23.

### How the Winning Author Participates

The winning author is offered an opportunity to tour the province, visiting randomly selected participating schools. (Should this not fit with his/her schedule, the tour is offered to the runner-up.) The students are invited into a dialogue with the winning author - stimulating, inspiring and motivating students and teachers.

A medal cast in gold in the mold of the logo is awarded the winning author.



## Benefits

### Literacy and Reading Skills

The entire province of Alberta benefits from the Rocky Mountain Book Award. By presenting exemplary Canadian literature to Alberta children, their literacy skills are strengthened and their reading experience is expanded. Provincial and national educators and others working with children use the Rocky Mountain Book Award website and pamphlets as a book selection tool.

### Writing and Communication Skills

In addition to the exposure to quality literature, which leads to improved writing skills, the students are supported in their own writing endeavours by the visiting author(s). As well children are encouraged to write reviews about the books they have read and submit them to the Rocky Mountain Book Award Website. Many teachers use various titles in these lists as springboards or prototypes for creative writing assignments. While other titles are used as resource materials for research papers.

### Cultural and Social Awareness

Through works of fiction and non-fiction children are introduced in a safe setting to other worlds, cultural sensibilities, and different times in history. As well as connecting with experiences familiar to them.

### Information – Knowledge – Wisdom

Reading a broad spectrum of good literature provides children with the opportunity to obtain information that they can apply to other situations giving them greater knowledge and control of their world. This in turn gives their lives relevance and a context giving them the wisdom to make well-informed decisions and be productive citizens.

### “Every reader his or her book. Every book its reader.”

S.R. (Shiyali Ramamrita) Ranganathan, an Indian Mathematician turned Librarian, penned these rules as two of his five rules of library science. Almost a century later it is still the goal of teachers and librarians to connect the right book with the right reader. The committee works very hard at finding books for all types of readers.

### Contact with Authors

The Rocky Mountain Book Award also provides the opportunity for authors to visit cities and towns that may not otherwise benefit from such visits. Though the large urban centres of Calgary and Edmonton have opportunities to present authors to the public, smaller communities surrounding these areas, along with those in northern and southern Alberta, do not always have the same opportunities. The Rocky Mountain Book Award has made it a priority to bring its winning authors to Alberta. The winner is invited to Alberta to speak at a number of participating schools. The schools receiving the author visit are chosen by random draw from a pool of all participating schools. This provides students with the invaluable opportunity to meet their favourite authors.

### Enhanced Library Collections

The lists of books chosen for the Rocky Mountain Book Award by the professionals on the book award committee, are often used as selection tools by school librarians, school library assistants, public librarians home schooling parents and parents in general. In other words, these lists add depth and breadth to library collections, as well as offering those with the task of spending library dollars titles of books worthy of their valuable resources.

### Direct support of the “Alberta Learning English Arts Curriculum”

This program directly supports three areas of the Alberta curriculum:

- Identify and discuss favourite authors, topics of print text.
- Assess a variety of print texts and discuss preferences for particular forms.
- Experience print texts from a variety of cultural traditions and genres, such as autobiographies, myths, legends and etc.

### **Expected Results**

- Improved literacy skills in Alberta students
- Broadening cultural and social awareness in students, teachers and support staff
- More Canadian books in school libraries
- Improved self esteem
- Increased number of participants (schools and individuals)
- Educating refreshing and encouraging teachers
- Rediscovering the magic moment when the reader finds the perfect book
- Promote liaisons between students, teachers, authors, librarians and parents

### **Donor Participation and Recognition -**

- Sponsor may have opportunity to host the visiting author and do introductions at school.
- Sponsor near the winning schools of the annual RMBA book draw would be responsible for presenting the books to the school.
- Sponsor may wish to donate a set of books to local school.
- Possible display of RMBA - Sponsor together at Teachers' Conventions or other educational conferences such as Weaving Words, Alberta Library Conference or Alberta School Library Conference.
- Links from RMBA website to Sponsor website that is student oriented (i.e. information about saving, investing and etc for students).
- Link from Sponsor website to RMBA website.
- Book labels for short listed books with both Sponsor and RMBA logo.
- Book marks with cover about each short listed book and information about RMBA and Sponsor.
- Interested people may be interested in joining the RMBA Book Selection Committee.
- The RMBA website, posters, brochures, stationary and email will recognize Sponsor as a major sponsor.
- Sponsor may wish to send a letter of recognition to each participating school.
- Sponsor may wish to host a Gala with some of the short listed authors and students. This Gala could rotate from city to city in the Province of Alberta



## **Budget**

The Rocky Mountain Book Award is able to function due to generous partnerships with organizations such as Lethbridge School District #51, Lethbridge Children's Literature Roundtable, Southern Alberta Professional Development Corporation, publishers, Coaldale Public Library and Lethbridge Public Library. In the past sponsorship from financial institutions, Alberta Foundation for the Arts and individual donors has allowed this program to flourish. Currently our volunteer base is stretched to the maximum (e.g. reading and choosing appropriate titles for the list, soliciting donations from publishers, notifying publishers of the shortlist and winning titles, preparing grant proposals and society registrations, arranging author tours, maintaining the archives, liaising with our partners and other similar award committees, etc.) and we anticipate further monetary commitments as we continue to grow (e.g. hiring an award co-ordinator and a web-master).

Monetary needs for the current year are \$10,150.00. This includes the author's travel expenses, reading fees, medal casting, and promotion (poster, pamphlet creation and distribution).



## Current Operating Budget - 2010-2011

Cash Balance at October 31, 2010 \$1752.00

<b>Administrative Costs:</b>	
Postage	\$100.00
Photocopying	\$50.00
Stationary Supplies	\$50.00
Long Distance Phone Calls	\$50.00
Society Registration	\$100.00
<b>Total Administrative Costs</b>	<b>\$350.00</b>

<b>Promotion Costs:</b>	
Pamphlets	\$500.00
Posters	\$2000.00
ATA Mailout	\$500.00
ATA News	\$1000.00
Authors' Medal	\$500.00
Convention Table Fees	\$1000.00
<b>Total Promotion Costs</b>	<b>\$5500.00</b>

<b>Author Tour</b>	
Airfare and Rental Car	\$1500.00
Accommodations	\$500.00
Meals	\$300.00
Author Reading Fee	\$2000.00
<b>Total Author Tour Costs</b>	<b>\$4300.00</b>

<b>Total Budget for Book Award</b>	<b>\$10150.00</b>
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<b>Revenue:</b>	
Individual Donations	\$1000.00
Sale of Sweatshirts and T Shirts	\$500.00
Other Donations	
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$1,500.00</b>



## **Support Materials:**

Letters of Support see *Appendix A*

Alberta Communities that have participated in RMBA see *Appendix B*

Our website: <http://rmba.lethsd.ab.ca/>

Other materials available upon request (e.g. posters, brochures)



## **Appendix A**

### **Students' Comments:**

I loved the Rocky Mountain Book Award very much! It helped me read a lot. *Edmonton.*

I think the Rocky Mountain Book Award was a good program because it gets kids into reading. I started reading again. *Edmonton.*

I think that the Rocky Mountain Book Award is magnificent! You know that you'll read the best Canadian books. *Lethbridge.*

The Rocky Mountain Book Award is an excellent way to find great books. *Lethbridge.*

This award Rocks!! I just couldn't stop reading! The group was fantastic and the books were even better(if at all possible). When It came to the voting I didn't know what to choose!. I was the only one who finished reading all twenty books so it was even harder to pick! I think that the Rocky Mountain Book Award is a great program for people who love to read and even for those people who are just beginning! I wish that they would do this program at the Middle School next year because it was the best co-curricular activity that I've done!. Thank you for a fun, fantastic reading program. *Lethbridge*

Student reviews of individual titles are available on the website <http://rmba.lethsd.ab.ca/> just click on 'READ'.

### **Teachers' Comments:**

I have received the list for next years books. I am just e-mailing to say that you have outdone yourself this year. What a great selection. I was very happy to see that Hope's War by Marsha Forchuk Skrypuch was on the list. My daughter read this book over a year ago, and very much enjoyed it. *Edmonton*

Wow, the children really enjoyed her [Ting-Xing Ye], what a great presenter. She spoke to the children about her books White Lily and Three Monks and no water. We all lover her. She is a great lady. We would all welcome her to our school again at a drop of a hat. Thank you from our School for choosing us to have the free Author visit. *Edmonton*

I just wanted to thank you for arranging to have, and paying for, Ting-xing's visit with us. She gave a wonderful, fascinating presentation that was enjoyed by all. What a great representative of the Rocky Mountain Book Awards she is and what an incredible inspiration to young writers. *Edmonton*

Mountain Book Award is such a great program! I love to see children interacting with good quality "CANADIAN" literature. Keep it coming! *Lethbridge*

I offer a Rocky Mountain Book Award co-curricular lunch hour group. It has been one of the best co-curricular activities I have ever done. The students come in talking about all the books they have been reading, sharing their favorite parts, pretending to be a character from their books. The lunch hour goes so quickly. I love to see students engaged and excited about good quality literature. ☺ *Lethbridge*

I was wondering how to nominate an exceptional Canadian children's book for the award. I am a librarian in Calgary. The exceptional book I discovered is called "Jasper's Day" published by Kids Can Press and written by Marjorie Blain Parker. If it is too late for this year's list it would be great for next year's list. This book is a very sensitive story about a family who deals with an ailing older dog who needs to be put to sleep to relieve its suffering. It is so exceptionally written and a beautiful story. It also helped when my daughter, who is 10 years old, had a hard time dealing with our older cat that needed to be put to sleep for the same reason. We too celebrated, but as "Zildjian's Day." It is truly a remarkable book and is due an award for such a touching and well-written story. Please contact me if you need any more information other than what I provided. Calgary.



## Award Winning Author (2002)

### Comments from Ting-Xing Ye, author of White Lily

I am home safe and sound, and my visits to Calgary and Edmonton were more than successful; they were wonderful. The weather was good, sunny and warm as in Lethbridge, but the famous western hospitality extended to me went far beyond. Everything went well, and I have you to thank, once again, from your selection of the hotels I was staying to the delightful schools I was sent to.

At Ecole St. Pius, though Connie is new in her position, she managed to have a group of Grade 6 students to come and join the second session which went on surprisingly well. They are from a public school across the street. It's the first time for me to talk to students from two school systems. And it's also the first time that I was presented with a huge bouquet of white lilies. A few parents came, and one of them told me before she left and she was going to ask the teacher/librarian why her daughter's school hadn't participated the Rocky Mountain Book Award project. And dutifully with delight, I gave her a few pamphlets you had given to me.

At Hawkwood, I talked to about 80 students who were once again very well behaved and prepared. I didn't hesitate to talk about *Throwaway Daughter* even though they are Grade 6 students, and it was very well received.

As for talking to Calgary children's literature roundtable, I have to say, as I said to them that it was the most glamorous roundtable gathering I had ever attended, and very well attended. Diane came to pick me up and drop me off at the hotel, very much appreciated. Or as Connie put it a guest is "not allowed" to take a taxi while staying in Calgary. I had to use your name to put out a "fight" when Connie or Linda insisted to drive me back to hotel after my reading at Hawkwood. "Richard said Calgary's rush hour is bad and I should take a taxi." And it worked. At the roundtable I saw a few familiar faces, one of them whom Bill and I met one year ago brought along her two daughters and good friend. A very friendly gathering of warmth and hospitality, and Diane is a delight.

In Edmonton, I was a bit early at Meyokumin, but had a chance to talk to Carol. It was a good session, attended by around 80 students. Many of them asked questions of qualities.

At Kildare school, for a moment I thought I was back in China. I knew about its Mandarin program but I had no idea that such a large body of students are Chinese. At the last minute, upon the request of its teacher, a group of Grade Five was added but it went on very well. Iain lost his voice, (not because of me) but was there, he had his students well prepared for the visit.

The visit to Brookwood was my last stop in my tour, yet in a way, it was the highlight of trip. All the students attended, around 90 of them, read all my picture books, as well as *White Lily*. Their delightfulness and respectable manners closed the last page of my tour. Nancy came to pick me up at school even though she didn't feel well enough to attend the session herself but we had a good chat on the way to her school. I realized after this trip that teachers in Alberta are quite stubborn; they don't listen to you, particularly when using taxi is involved. Richard, this is the report of my tour on behalf of Rocky Mountain Book Award. I hope it is satisfactory. So from the bottom of my heart, thank you all for a wonderful week, and for meeting your colleagues and students.

with warmest regards

Ting-xing ye

Appendix B

Some of the Alberta Communities That Have Participated in the Rocky Mountain Book Award

Acadia Valley	Edmonton	Picture Butte
Airdrie	Fort McMurray	Pincher Creek
Alder Flats	Grande Prairie	Red Deer
Barrhead	High River	Rosemary
Bow Island	Innisfail	Rycroft
Bragg Creek	Jasper	St. Albert
Brooks	Lac La Biche	Sexsmith
Bushby	Lacombe	Sherwood Park
Canmore	Lethbridge	Slave Lake
Claresholm	Lomond	Spruce Grove
Coaldale	Magrath	Stettler
Coalhurst	Manning	Stirling
Crestomere	Medicine Hat	Strathmore
Devon	Morinville	Taber
Dewinton	Neerlandia	Tomahawk
Didsbury	New Sarepta	Two Hills
Drayton Valley	Nobleford	Valley View
Drumheller	Okotoks	Viking
Duffield	Peace River	Westlock