

JUVENILE BOOKS

1ST PRIZE

The Sign of the Scales by Marianne Brandis, with original wood engravings by G. Brender à Brandis

Erin, Ontario: The Porcupine's Quill ISBN 0-88984-103-9

Design: Tim Inkster

2ND PRIZE

Crow and Weasel by Barry Lopez, illustrations by Tom Pohrt

Toronto: Random House of Canada ISBN 0-394-22176-1

Design: David Bullen

3RD PRIZE

Nina's Treasures by Stefan Czernecki and Timothy Rhodes, illustrations by Stefan Czernecki

Winnipeg: Hyperion Press ISBN 0-920534-65-1

Design: Arlene O. Osen

HONOURABLE MENTIONS

Building an Igloo text and photographs by Ulli Steltzer

Toronto and Vancouver: Groundwood Books; Douglas & McIntyre
ISBN 0-88899-118-5

Design: Michael Solomon

The Orphan Boy by Tololwa M. Mollel, illustrated by Paul Morin

Toronto: Oxford University Press ISBN 0-19-540783-5

Design: Kathryn Cole

Uncle Henry's Dinner Guests by Bénédicte Froissart,

illustrations by Pierre Pratt

Toronto: Annick Press ISBN 1-55037-141-x

Design: Michel Groleau

As in most years, Children's book design offers a wealth of riches. Once again this year six out of the many submitted warranted recognition.

There was no doubt about the first prize although it represents a departure: this is a two-hundred-page book of prose illustrated with a small number of black-and-white wood engravings. But it is for young people and it is a most elegant book. It also shows that Carl Dair's Cartier type, introduced in 1967 for the Canadian centennial, has slowly made its way into the vocabulary of designers for running prose, and not only for captions and accents (hitherto its chief uses). This is not the only book in the competition for which Cartier is the text type, but it is the most successfully realized one.



Chapter One

Whenever the front door of McPhail's Hotel opened, a dozen big authoritative birds fell back. Mrs. McPhail would go and see who had come in. If it was someone asking a question, she answered it. If it was people entering rooms, she signed them in and, if necessary, answered Jaeph Tabb's help with the luggage.

On this windy afternoon in April, Mrs. McPhail was out and her niece Emma Anderson was signing in a new guest. He was a neat, slender, middle-aged man in beige pantsuones and a cutaway coat; he had taken off his overcoat and tall hat when he came in and laid them on the reception counter at the hotel lobby. He was a very gentlemanly-looking person, but his voice was gravelly and Emma was having trouble with his name. She had already had to ask him once to repeat it and now, with the hotel registers open in front of her and the pen poised, she asked again. Mrs. McPhail noticed on seeing the guest's name card.

Mr. Michael Starbuck? Emma asked.

Michael Starbuck? he said patiently. 'With a hyphen. That's the full surname.'

He pulled a small leather case out of his waistcoat pocket and laid one of his cards on the counter in front of her. She copied the name carefully, halfway through she had to dip her pen in the ink again. The card gave his address as Albany, New York; she wrote that down too.

Thank you, sir, she said, laying down the pen and curving the ink bottle. When she looked up she caught him watching her. He had observed Emma's eyes with a smile looking to them.

You're doing fine, young lady, he said, just fine.

Emma flushed with irritation. The words sounded like a compliment, but the man's smile suggested that she was doing fine for a raw beginner - which was not a compliment at all. She had been signing in guests for nearly a year, and it was only because of the man's complicated name and hoarse voice that she had seemed slow.

The Sign of the Scales, pp. 8 and 9



Crow and Weasel, p. 42

The 32-page book on igloos is another uncharacteristically black-and-white children's book, but how well suited this is to its subject and the excellently reproduced photographs!

The remaining awards for children's books go to the more usual coloured picture books. The Lopez/Pohrt recreation of a native Indian theme is successful on every design level. The Czernecki/Rhodes collaboration won an award last year, and does so again with a strong and consistent treatment of Ukrainian folk art. Among the honourable mentions, Pierre Pratt's unusual use of perspective gives Uncle Henry special interest, while Paul Morin's realistic treatment of the African theme is a bold direct appeal to the viewer.

THE TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF PRODUCTION ARE CRUCIAL: good or bad printing, colour separations, paper, etc. reinforce or destroy good design. This year there is a noticeable increase in the proportion of Canadian to non-Canadian typesetters, printers and binders. Of the twenty-seven awards and mentions, only six were produced offshore, and none in the United States, which means that despite Free Trade and taxes, we can compete with our southern neighbours very well in print production. Hong Kong and Singapore continue to offer lower labour costs, but only one of the prize winners was produced in Japan, presumably for the higher quality anticipated. It is perhaps notable that only in the category of children's books with coloured illustration is it still commonly felt necessary to produce in countries with lower labour costs.

The excellent print quality from The Porcupine's Quill and the Morriss Printing Company has already been commented on, in this as in previous years. This year, special recognition must go to Friesen Printers of Altona, Manitoba, responsible for six award-winning books, including; the top two winners in the General Trade Books, Prose section, the reproduction of the Leonard Frank photographs in the Adult Picture and Photography Books section, the third prize in the General Trade, How To- section, and one of the coloured children's books.

JUDGES

The judges for this year's Alcuin Society Design Competition were:

Roberto Dosil (Praxis Design, Vancouver)

Jan Elsted (Barbarian Press)

Ronald Hagler (Professor, School of Library, Archival and Information Studies, The University of British Columbia)

Dennis Nagy (Studio Allsorts, Vancouver)

Professor Hagler compiled the above comments as, he hopes, a reasonable summary of the hours of discussion involved.