

**2nd Prize:** *Poem about Nothing* [by] William of Poitiers. Kingston: Lock's Press. [no ISBN] (8 leaves accordion folded, sewn to a tryptich hbk cover; 80 copies) \$xxx.xx. [Designer and printer: Margaret Lock] no

**3rd Prize:** *Wee Folk Drawn from Life* by Charles van Sandwyk. North Vancouver: Charles van Sandwyk. [no ISBN] (12 leaves of engravings + 14 guard-sheets, hbk; 40 copies) \$xx.xx. [Designer and printer: Charles van Sandwyk] no

What a pleasure to see a book clearly, richly, and sharply printed with as much love for the process as the originating artists put into the content and without apparent regard for the labour the judges know to have been involved. The first-prize winner this year is a multi-year effort of printing over a hundred twenty different woodblocks of varying technique, artistic content, and presumably quality of wood, alignment, etc. Jan Elsted had to execute some xx,xxx separate acceptable impressions and appears to have done so with startlingly even results. How many pulls were rejected? Probably only she knows. The original text, the binding, and the slipcase all match the quality of what the book is there for: the woodcut reproductions. On each leaf of Margaret Lock's unusual assemblage of accordion-fold leaves with tryptich cover there is a six-line poem in roman with a six-line translation in italic, headed by a woodcut with a strongly mediaeval flavour in two, three, or four colours, one of the colours always an interesting grained background. Charles van Sandwyk's charming gnomes (elves?, leprechauns?), also the title page and two pages of text, are engravings printed in sepia. The colouration is carried over into the endpapers and cover of a delightful little booklet.

#### Juvenile Books

**1st Prize:** *Bone Button Borscht*; written by Aubrey Davis; illustrated by Dusan Petricic [accents needed]. Toronto: Kids Can Press. ISBN 1-55074-224-8 ([32]pp., hbk) \$xx.xx. [Designer: Dusan Petricic and Marie Bartholomew; Printer: Wing King Tong, Hong Kong] P27

**2nd Prize:** *Let's Play: Traditional Games of Childhood*; illustrated by Dusan Petricic [accents]; written by Camilla Gryski. Toronto: Kids Can Press. ISBN 1-55074-256-6 (47pp., hbk) \$xx.xx. [Designer: Dusan Petricic and Marie Bartholomew; Printer: Wing King Tong, Hong Kong] D. 50 1203

**3rd Prize (tie):** *Houses of Adobe: Native Dwellings, the Southwest* [by] Bonnie Shemie. Montreal: Tundra Books. ISBN 0-88776-330-8 (24pp., hbk) \$xx.xx [also available as pbk, ISBN 0-88776-353-7, \$x.xx]. [Designer: May Cutler; Printer: South China Printing Co. Ltd., Hong Kong] P28 37  
--[also published (but not submitted) in the French-language edition]: *Maisons d'adobe* ISBN 0-88776-331-6(hbk).

**3rd Prize (tie):** *The Magic Ear*; story by Laura Langston; illustrations by Victor Bosson. Victoria: Orca Book Publishers. ISBN 1-55143-035-5 ([32]pp., hbk) \$14.95. [Designer: Victor Bosson; Printer: King's Time Ltd., Hong Kong] P28.1

**Hon. Men.:** *8 o'Cluck* [text by] Jill Creighton; [illustrations by] Pierre-Paul Pariseau. Richmond Hill: Scholastic Canada Ltd. ISBN 0-590-24439-6 (30pp., pbk) \$5.99. [Designer: Yüksel Hassan; Printer: D.W. Friesen] P27  
--[also published (but not submitted) in the French-language edition]: *L'heure des poules* ISBN

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*thought* carefully all the way. *Let's Play* is a book of games with a clearly visualized text with catching cartoons. Both third-prize winners totally catch the spirit of their locales, the arid south-west and Japan, in illustration, ornamentation, and even layout. The difficulty of judging may be reflected in the number of honourable mentions. *8 o'Cluck*, as the title might indicate, has to do with farm animals. Its collage of photograph-like animal heads and background juxtaposed with two-dimensionally drawn clothes and other details produces a most unusual lively quality. *Bears, Bears, Bears* is in a somewhat different class: it is a book of photographs and extensive prose, for older children - even perhaps adults. Placing so much information clearly in a three-column format in so inexpensive a book is a design challenge very well met here. Finally, *Poopini's* integration of illustration and other ornamental features and a well set text demands attention. This year, as often in the past, a majority of the children's books acknowledged here are printed abroad. Increasingly common deficiency in the proper setting of text type is noted in the commentary on poetry above. These are even more noticeable, and more significantly detrimental, in the setting of the text of children's books. Over and over again a judge remarked on inappropriate word- or line-spacing or justification, orphan or widow lines on a page, the hiding of text in the coloured background to an illustration, or a blatantly poor choice of type face. Children must to struggle to read text which simply do not "hang together". Text is becoming too often subordinate to illustration in the designer's concern. Many of the submissions got short shrift because of this failing.

### Concluding Comments

[RH to add]

### Judges

Peter Bartl (Professor, Department of Art and Design, University of Alberta) [have I spelled Bartl correctly? Is he a full Professor?]

Roberto Dosil (Praxis Design, Vancouver)

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

Dennis Nagy (Studio Allsorts, Vancouver).

This year, Professor Bartl joined the other three judges who have served on this panel for several years. Professor Hagler trusts that his compilation of hours of the comments of his fellow judges constitutes a balanced summary of their views as well as his own.

April 21, 1996

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Note for AY & RLH:

In last year's commentary, I wrote

In many recent years, one or another prize has gone unawarded in this category. Design jumbles, if at times pretty ones, have often characterized the output of the amateur in this type of publication. Furthermore, it appears harder each year to distinguish these from, for example, picture, children's, general trade, or even reference books. And the number of submissions dwindles: this year there were but eleven, by far the smallest category except for limited editions. The judges recommend to the Alcuin Society's Design Awards Committee that the category be discontinued since submissions can as well be judged in another category as appropriate.

Both Roberto and Dennis immediately recalled this, then I remembered something more dimly and now wish I had followed up immediately but perhaps it is better to make the change with forwarning to those submitting the books. Now I find that the following sentence, which none of the judges recalled this year, appears in last year's report:

The judges suggest that the Society's Design Awards Committee consider separating fiction and nonfiction categories in future. That the latter now almost always, while the former rarely, involve the use of illustrations provides significantly different design issues.