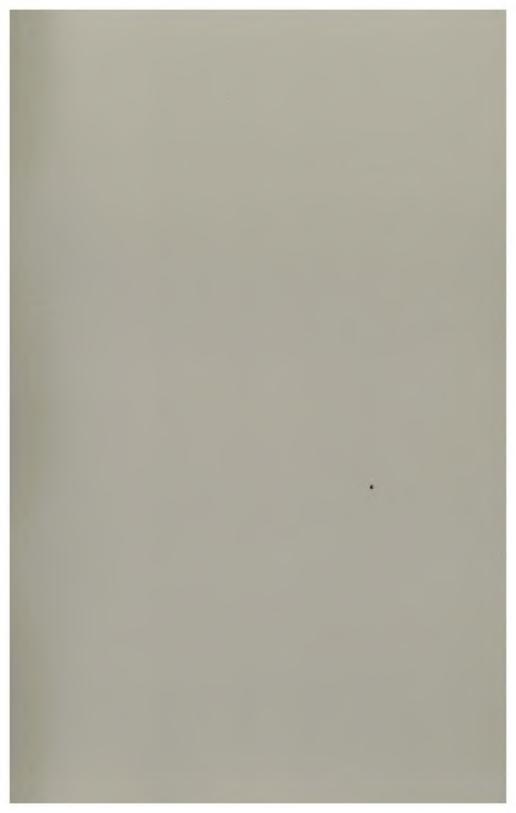
The ALCUIN AWARDS

for Excellence in Book Design

in Canada



The ALCUIN AWARDS

for Excellence in Book Design

.

in Canada

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Directors of The Alcuin Society

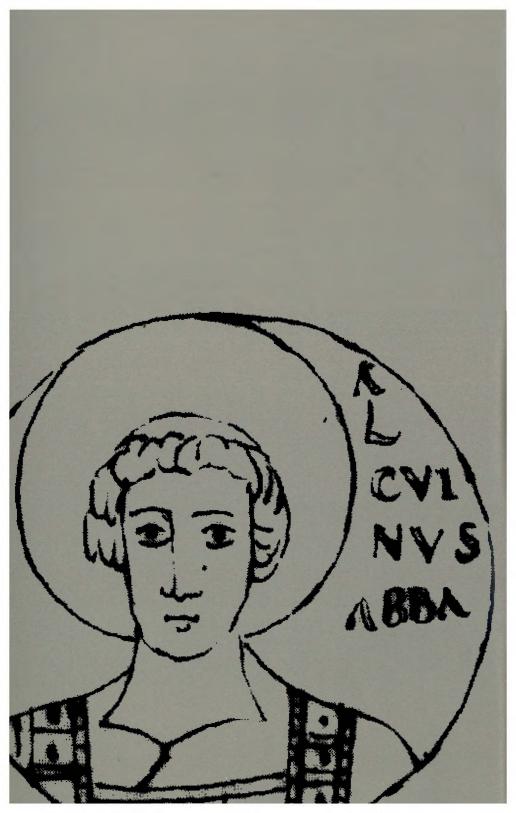
# THE ALCUIN SOCIETY DESIGN AWARDS

# Publications of 1995

The judges named on page 31 spent much of April 12 and 13, 1996 examining and discussing the approximately two hundred fifty books submitted by their Canadian publishers and/or designers and published during 1995. While we can only acknowledge the best from among those placed in competition by their publishers and/or designers, the following pages celebrate the high standard of excellence Canadian publishers demand of, and receive from, the designers they commission. A high proportion of the producers involved (platemakers, printers, binders) are also Canadian but because of technical and/or economic reasons, some production has always been done elsewhere, as noted in the individual citations below.

This is not the first year that books considered by this panel to be excellent in their physical appropriateness and aesthetic appeal have also been considered by others to represent the best of Canadian writing. As it happens, the British Columbia Book Prizes were awarded the evening of the second day of Alcuin judging this year and several of the books recognized here for their design were nominees or winners for their intellectual content as well. Even if they do not always go hand in hand, excellent content and excellent presentation deserve each other. Submissions were judged in the categories most recently revised by the Society's Design Awards Committee in 1989. These categories will be adjusted in future competitions to divide fiction and nonfiction in the over-large "prose" category and to disperse the "How-To (etc.)" group among other groups as appropriate. The person submitting is invited to check one of the categories on the entry form accompanying each book but either the Society's Committee or the judges may reassign it.

Each book is judged as a whole on the suitability and harmony of all aspects of its materials and design in relation to the book's intellectual content and intended audience. First, second, and third prizes are available in each category, with ties permitted. A book cited for Honourable Mention exhibits some exceptionally noteworthy feature(s), for example a striking and appropriate cover, which brought it, in the eyes of the judges, above the mass even if as a whole it fails to sustain comparison with prize-winners in the category.



# Prose

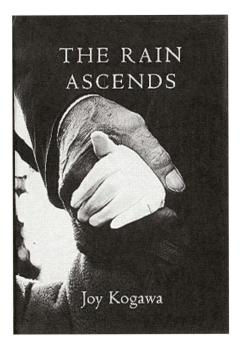
This is typically the largest category of submissions. This year's large group is not unusual in the problems posed for judging. A great many, it can simply be said, are "nice" books: of generally good design and in general easily readable. What makes a few stand out from the others, particularly when so high a proportion of these books are unillustrated? Usually two things: (1) care with the many details of excellent typesetting (including size and visual "weight", linelength in relation to the page size, wordand line-spacing, and (2) consistency in the treatment of *all* the design features (not just the obvious ones) including cover, dustwrapper, endpapers, paperstock weight and colour, preliminary pages, chapter openings, running heads, any ornamentation, and page-numbering, all in keeping with the spirit of the content. The book does not have to look spectacular to get the ultimate recognition. Indeed, it is the comforting feeling of sombre (given its topic) unity without offsetting blemish that makes this year's first-prize winner such a delight.

The six prizes and mentions this year all go to different publishers, designers, and printers. The typography is the strongest feature of both the second-prize winner and *Exotica*, the latter a particularly rare achievement in the setting of a screenplay with its dialogue, description of the action, settings, scene changes, etc.

*The Mystic Leeway* has a very sensible balance, in an oblong format, of text and illustrations, the latter sharing a margin with index references.

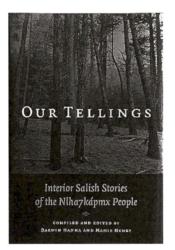
*Edward Poitras* is a trilingual exhibition catalogue; for that reason it has more text than catalogues in the "picture-book" category. Its best feature is its embossed French-flap cover and sequence into a good text block; the trilingual picture captions are less successful.

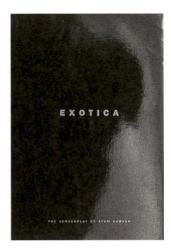
The decision to integrate illustrations with chapter openings is an excellent distinguishing feature of *Letter from Vienna*.



# 1ST PRIZE

*The Rain Ascends* [by] Joy Kogawa. Toronto: Knopf Canada. ISBN 0-394-28121-7 (217pp., hbk) \$28.95. Designer: Concrete Design Communications, Inc. Printer: R.R. Donnelley, U.S.A.





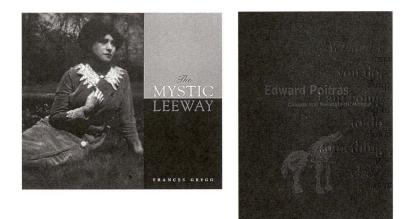
### 2ND PRIZE

Our Tellings: Interior Salish Stories of the Nlha7kápmx People, compiled and edited by Darwin Hanna and Mamie Henry. Vancouver: UBC Press. ISBN 0-7748-0525-0 (217pp., hbk) \$45.95. Designer: George Vaitkunas Printer: D.W. Friesen & Sons

# 3RD PRIZE (tie)

*Exotica* [the screenplay by] Atom Egoyan. Toronto: Coach House Press. ISBN 0-88910-475-1 (158pp., pbk) \$18.95. Cover designer: Pippa White; Text designer: Greg Van Alstyne Printer: Kromar Printing

é.



## 3RD PRIZE (tie)

*The Mystic Leeway* [by] Frances Gregg; edited by Ben Jones; with an account of Frances Gregg by Oliver Marlow Wilkinson. Carleton Women's Experience Series, vol.6. Ottawa: Carleton University Press. ISBN 0-88629-250-6 (194pp., pbk) [also available as hbk, ISBN 0-88629-253-0]. Designer: Carrie Coulton Graphic Design Printer: Love Printing

### HONOURABLE MENTION

Edward Poitras: Canada XLVI Biennale di Venezia [by] Gerald McMaster. Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization/Musée canadien des civilisations. ISBN 0-660-50753-6 (I63pp., pbk). Designer: Timmings & Debay Printer: HB Technolith



# HONOURABLE MENTION

Letter from Vienna: A Daughter Uncovers Her Family's Jewish Past [by] Claudia Cornwall; foreword by Raul Hilberg. Vancouver; Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre. ISBN 1-55054-115-3 (242pp., hbk) \$26.95. Designer: Linda Gustafson/Counterpunch Printer: Best Gagné Book Manufacturers Inc.

### GENERALTRADE BOOKS

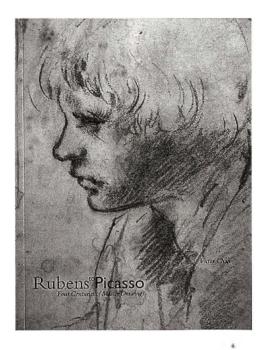
# Adult Picture and Photography Books

Treating illustrations is particularly difficult when their originals are of differing technical quality, their sizes and shapes differ, and varying amounts of text and caption must accompany and closely serve them.

Exhibition catalogues have long set the standard but this year, only the firstprize winner is a catalogue. Although he had nothing to do with its production personally, this year's "new" judge (see below) absented himself from comment on this category until the other three judges unanimously (and very quickly) singled out the catalogue published by his academic department at the University of Alberta as an ideal fulfilment of the challenge. The two-colour printing permitted a beautiful, if simple, differentiation of headings and commentary. Although it is not technically an exhibition catalogue, the second prizewinner's sponsorship by Toronto's new Bata Shoe Museum must have allowed the publisher to deploy the resources needed for a lavishly beautiful production. The same designer (also acknowledged in the previous category) and publisher are responsible for a splendid biography for third prize.

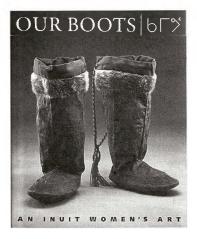
The honourable mention for the book about Glenn Gould is clearly for its thoughtfully juxtaposed and excellently reproduced photographs.

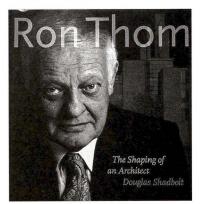
Unifying the work of so many photographers is a challenge well met by the designer of *People Who Make a Difference*.



# 1ST PRIZE

Rubens to Picasso: Four Centuries of Master Drawings: An Exhibition curated by Victor Chan. Edmonton: Department of Art and Design, University of Alberta. ISBN 0-88864-281-4 (159pp., pbk). Designer: Susan Colberg Printer: Quality Color Press GENERAL TRADE BOOKS Adult Picture and Photography Books



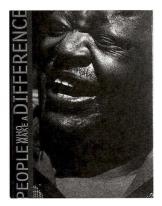


# 2ND PRIZE

*Our Boots: An Inuit Women's Art* [by] Jill Oakes and Rick Riewe. Vancouver; Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre. ISBN 1-55054-195-1 (224pp., hbk). Designer: George Vaitkunas Printer: C&C Offset Printing Co., Hong Kong

# 3RD PRIZE

Ron Thom: The Shaping of an Architect [by] Douglas Shadbolt; with photographs by John Flanders. Vancouver; Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre. ISBN 1-55054-412-8 (165pp., hbk) \$50.00. Designer: George Vaitkunas Printer: D.W. Friesen & Sons





### HONOURABLE MENTION

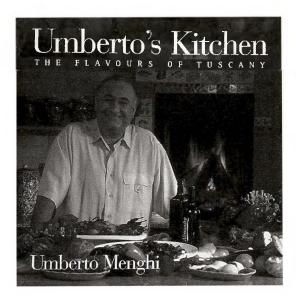
People Who Make a Difference; Des gens peu ordinaires [edited by Irene Carroll & Jackie Kaiser]. Toronto: Viking (Penguin Books Canada). ISBN 0-670-86475-7 (216pp., hbk) \$50.00. Designer: Concrete Design Communications, Inc. Printer: Paramount Book Art Inc., China

### HONOURABLE MENTION

Glenn Gould; Some Portraits of the Artist as a Young Man; story and photographs by Jock Carroll. Toronto: Stoddart. ISBN 0-7737-2904-6 (96pp., hbk) \$40.00. Designer: Gillian Stead Printer: The Book Art, Hong Kong

# How-To-, Cook-, Craft- and Hobby Books

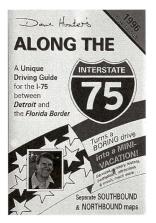
Once again, only one book in this small category stood out; once again, it is a well composed coffee-table-type cookbook: a picture book as much as a recipe book. Its Italian theme shines from every page and several thoughtful design features would call it to attention in other categories as well. The book accorded honourable mention describes itself as "a unique driving guide for the Interstate-75 between Detroit and the Florida border." It is only the inventive maps which distinguish it but these are remarkable. In the easy-to-open spiral binding of this guidebook, they seem ideal for consultation in a moving vehicle, even by the driver who can get much useful information in the quickest glance without risking an accident.



### 1ST PRIZE

Umberto's Kitchen: The Flavours of Tuscany [by] Umberto Menghi. Vancouver; Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre. ISBN 1-55054-422-5 (172pp., hbk) \$35.00. Designer: DesignGeist Printer: C&C Offset Printing Co., Hong Kong

# GENERAL TRADE BOOKS How-To-, Cook-, Craft- and Hobby Books



### HONOURABLE MENTION

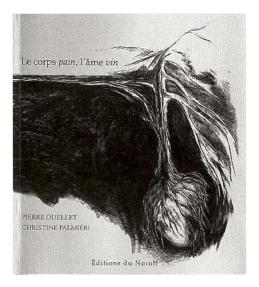
Dave Hunter's Along the 1-75, 1996 Edition. Mississauga: Mile Oak Publishing Inc. ISBN 0-9696376-5-9 (186pp., wire-wound pbk). Designer: Dave Hunter Printer: Webcom Ltd. (cover: Gerrie-Young Printing)

# Poetry

Poetry in hardback has been a rarity for some time; this year not one was submitted, not even an anthology! But the first prize goes to a book which deserves full casing. In a way it is not comparable with the others because of its skilful and complex incorporation of art with poetry, both presented in a visually compelling way.

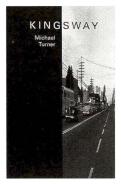
The flow of the long old (and sometimes ugly) Vancouver-to-New-Westminster street is remarkably conveyed in the layout of the second prize winner.

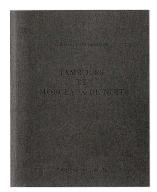
The "feel" of the classic slim book of a few poems comes through only in the book awarded honourable mention this year, which continues the tradition well. Poetry requires close copy editing with detailed attention to text, line breaks, etc. but it is clear that sensitivity to traditional typesetting is no longer a qualification of those editors. The product of the word processors on which most poetry must now be set for economic reasons goes straight to the printer without any refinement of spacing and the neglect shows badly in a very large proportion of the items in this category. They were immediately dismissed from further consideration.



### 1ST PRIZE

*Le corps pain, l'âme vin*; [poèmes par] Pierre Ouellet; [illustrations par] Christine Palmiéri. Montreal: Éditions du Noroît. ISBN 2-89018-319-X ([41 leaves, a few printed on two sides and 2 folded, interspersed with 16 leaves of illus. on different stock], pbk). Designers: Christine Palmiéri, Pierre Ouellet, and Claude Prud-Homme Printer: Imprimeries d'Éditions Marquis Ltée





### 2ND PRIZE

Kingsway [by] Michael Turner. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press. 18BN 1-55152-028-1 (64pp., pbk). Designer: Dean Allen Printer: Kromar Printing

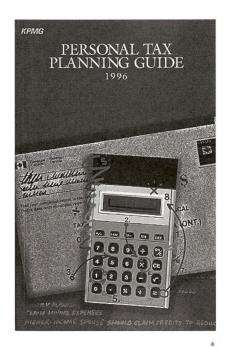
### HONOURABLE MENTION

*Tambours et morceaux de nuit*[par] Gabriel-Pierre Ouellette. Montréal: Éditions du Noroît. ISBN2-890I8-325-4 (66pp., pbk). Designer: Claude Prud-Homme Printer: Imprimeries d'Éditions Marquis Ltée

### TEXT AND REFERENCE BOOKS

That two tax-planning books should show up in this list surprised the judges too! But these represent just the kind of complex text which needs a sense of design to make them usable even by accountants. The Carswell design staff has clearly taken up a challenge with the resources to reform the visual presentation of this type of material. First prize goes to the briefer publication so excellently designed for the the lay public to remove at least a few of the horrors of the topic but the clear, if more sobre, presentation the thousand pages of GST data warrants honourable mention. Second prize goes to an anthology crammed with text but designed in a pleasantly open style with an admirable choice of type for both text and headings to relieve the monotony of page after page of prose and poetry.

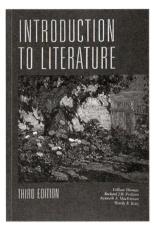
Flora of the Russian Arctic is similarly well laid out for the amount of material it contains with division headers, indentations, and paragraphing aiding the searcher for a piece of information in it. Only the maps, reproduced from their Russian source, are less visually helpful.

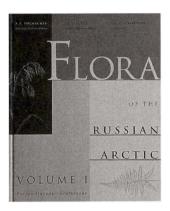


# **IST PRIZE**

*Personal Tax Planning Guide 1996*, prepared by KPMG; co-editors, S. Brian Fisher, Paul B. Hickey.5th edition. Scarborough: Carswell. ISBN 0-459-57448-5; ISSN 0838-6064 (312pp., pbk). Designer: крмg/Carswell Printer: Webcom Ltd.

# TEXT AND REFERENCE BOOKS



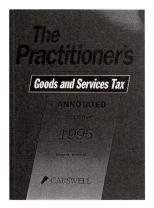


### 2ND PRIZE

Introduction to Literature, 3rd edition [edited by] Gillian Thomas [et al.]. Toronto; Montreal: Harcourt Brace Canada. ISBN 0-7747-3260-1 (650pp., pbk) \$34.95. Designer: The Brookview Group Ind. Printer: Best Book Manufacturers, Inc.

### 3RD PRIZE

Flora of the Russian Arctic: A Critical Review of the Vascular Plants Occurring in the Arctic Region of the Former Soviet Union [by] O.V. Rebristaya [et al.]; A.I. Tolmachev, Russian edition editor; J.G. Packer, English edition editor; G.C.D. Griffiths, translator. Volume 1. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press. ISBN 0-88864-269-5 (330pp., hbk). Designer: Alan Brownoff Printer: Best Book manufacturers, Inc.



# HONOURABLE MENTION

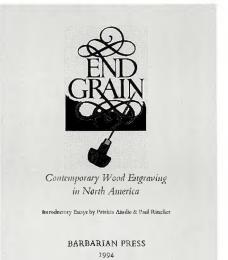
The Practitioner's Goods and Services Tax Annotated, 5th edition; editor, David M. Sherman. Scarborough: Carswell. ISBN 0-459-57467-1; ISSN 1197-8031 (xxxvii, 695 + 228 + 98pp., pbk). Designer: Carswell Printer: Quebecor Ltd. e.

### LIMITED EDITIONS

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 cut in the "engraving" technique (that is, on the end grain). The printing therefore required over fifty thousand separate acceptable impressions from blocks of varying ages and conditions, not to mention the sections of essays and biographical information. The results are startlingly even, deep and rich. How many pulls were rejected? Only the printer knows! On each leaf of Margaret Lock's unusual assemblage of accordion-fold leaves with tryptich cover there is a sixline 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 artistically contrasting 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.



### 1ST PRIZE

End Grain: Contemporary Wood Engraving in North America; introductory essays by Patricia Ainslie & Paul Ritscher. Mission, B.C.: Barbarian Press, 1994 [i.e. 1995]. ISBN 0-920971-10-5 (unpaginated, quarter cloth, \$350.00) [also available in leather, ISBN 0-920971-11-3, \$600.00] 430 copies. Designers: Jan and Crispin Elsted Printer: Jan Elsted





### 2ND PRIZE

Poem about Nothing [by] William of Poitiers. Kingston: Lock's Press. (8 leaves accordion folded, sewn to a tryptich hbk cover; 80 copies). Designer and printer: Margaret Lock

### 3RD PRIZE

Wee Folk Drawn from Life [by] Charles van Sandwyk. North Vancouver: Charles van Sandwyk. (12 leaves of engravings + 14 guard-sheets, hbk; 40 copies). Designer and printer: Charles van Sandwyk

### JUVENILE BOOKS

First prize goes to a picture book with more than the usual proportion of text. In addition to excellent illustration layout and reproduction, it shows no such failings in the text. That means that someone 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 southwest 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 twodimensionally drawn clothes and other details produces a most unusual lively quality.

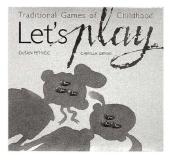
*Bears, Bears, Bears* is in a somewhat different class: it is a book of photographs and extensive prose, for older children even perhaps adults. Placing so much information clearly in a three-column format in so inexpensive a book is a design challenge very well met here. Finally, *Poopinis* integration of illustration and other ornamental features and a well set text demands attention.

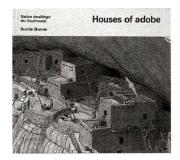
This year, as often in the past, a majority of the children's books acknowledged here are printed abroad. Increasingly common deficiency in the proper setting of text type is noted in the commentary on poetry above. These are even more noticeable, and more significantly detrimental, in the setting of 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 struggle to read text which simply does 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.



### 1ST PRIZE

Bone Button Borscht; written by Aubrey Davis; illustrated by Dusan Petričić. Toronto: Kids Can Press. ISBN 1-55074-224-8 (32pp., hbk) \$14.95. Designer: Dusan Petričić and Marie Bartholomew Printer: Wing King Tong, Hong Kong



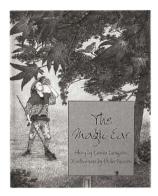


### 2ND PRIZE

Let's Play: Traditional Games of Childhood; illustrated by Dusan Petričič; written by Camilla Gryski. Toronto: Kids Can Press. ISBN 1-55074-256-6 (47pp., hbk) \$16.95. Designer: Dusan Petričič and Marie Bartholomew Printer: Wing King Tong, Hong Kong

## 3RD PRIZE (tie)

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



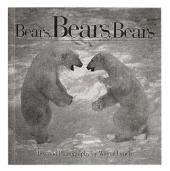


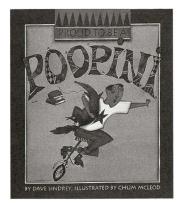
## 3RD PRIZE (tie)

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

### HONOURABLE MENTION

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 [also published (but not submitted) in the French-language edition]: L'heure des poules ISBN 0-590-24440-x (hbk, \$6.99).





### HONOURABLE MENTION

Bears, Bears, Bears, text and photography by Wayne Lynch. Willowdale: Firefly Books. ISBN 1-895565-69-3 (63pp., pbk) \$9.95 [also available as hbk, ISBN 1-895565-72-3]. Designer: Linda J. Menyes, Q Kumquat Designs Printer: Metropole Litho Inc.

### HONOURABLE MENTION

Proud to Be a Poopini,

by Dave Sindrey; illustrated by Chum McLeod. Toronto: Napoleon Publishing. 18BN 0-929141-38-5 (32pp., pbk) \$10.95. Designer: Maxine Cowan, Cowan Design Printer: Love Printing The ALCUIN AWARDS

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The difficulty of pricing books to sell in a small market after paying for authorship, illustration, editing, etc. means that publishers willing to concern themselves also with fine design and good production values should be singled out for a courage which the philistine might call foolhardiness. Good design is not necessarily lavishly expensive, but it does require the thoughtful application of a trained eye, something which is becoming less and less evident particularly in type composition. The fault lies not merely in the computerization of this process, which is now almost universal, but with the choice of program and the operator. A simple wordprocessing program is almost incapable of producing aesthetically excellent output yet small firms appear often to resort to a typist's camera-ready copy, perhaps not realizing that a difference ever existed between the typewriter and hand-set type with respect to those qualities which make a page a joy to read. Desktoppublishing software, too, is only as good as the sophistication of the operator. If choice of typeface, word- and linespacing, line-length, margins, etc. are all left to the program's default settings, the homogenized result is likely to be less than ideal for a particular text, page size, match with illustrations, expected audience, etc. To pay more attention to the eye-catching factors of illustration, colour, layout, and covers is not bad; to neglect the reason a high proportion of all books exist for (the text) is.

The Society's requests for submissions to this competition go to every known Canadian publisher and as many designers and design companies as are known to its Awards Committee to work on books. The judges would always like to see more submissions; some fine Canadian design is surely being missed in these awards.

### JUDGES

Peter Bartl Professor, Department of Art and Design, University of Alberta

Roberto Dosil Praxis, 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. The competition began fourteen years ago and had as its clear purpose the support and encouragement of good book design in Canada.

The categories for submission were adopted from the American Institute of Graphic Arts competition: Prose, Poetry, Adult Picture and Photography Books, How-To, Cook-, Craft-, and Hobby Books, Text and Reference Books, Juvenile Books and Limited Editions. The judges for the competition and the Society's Design Awards Committee have recently decided to divide the prose category into separate categories for fiction and non-fiction, and in addition have decided to eliminate the How-To category and include these types of books into other categories.

In January of each year, the Society's Awards Committee sends letters to as many English- and French-language publishers and book designers in Canada as it can identify, some 500 last year. These invite submission by the end of March of publications of the previous calendar year. In April, the judges convene for two days to review submissions and recommend awards. First, second, and third prizes and Honourable Mentions are available in each category listed above. Award certificates are presented in person at the Society's Annual General Meeting in May or sent by mail shortly thereafter. The winning books are donated to the Special Collections Division of the library at Simon

Fraser University where they are available to the entire university community, but are especially useful to the instructors and students in the publishing programme as examples of excellent Canadian book design. An article listing and describing the winners of the competition has been published in the Society's quarterly publication, *Amphora*, but this year we are producing our first ever catalogue of the winning entries.

The judges have varied over the years but in latter years have primarily been Dr. Ronald Hagler of the School of Library, Archival and Information Studies at the University of British Columbia, Roberto Dosil of Praxis Design, and Dennis Nagy of Studio Allsorts. Guest judges have been Jan Elsted of Barbarian Press and Peter Bartl of the Department of Art and Design at the University of Alberta.

May the competition continue and flourish into the new millennium and beyond! The Alcuin Society was founded in 1965 by G.A. Spencer for booklovers worldwide and to promote a wider appreciation of what goes into finely-wrought books.

The name "Alcuin" was chosen to honour the memory of Alcuin of York (735 to 804 a.d.). Alcuin was a man who cared not only about books but handwriting too, which he rescued from the proliferation of bastard styles of the period. As, in effect, Charlemagne's "Minister of Culture", Alcuin selected the most pleasing and certainly the most legible script of his day, and gave it official blessing. Known as the "Caroline Minuscule", it ultimately led to our modern lower-case alphabet. engages in a wide range of activities, many in collaboration with the Canadian Centre for Studies in Publishing at Simon Fraser University: lectures, workshops, exhibitions, and competitions. Annual design awards are made by a panel of judges for the best in Canadian book design. Amphora, the Society's quarterly journal, covers a wide range of topics related to the book arts: collecting, typography, type design, type-setting, calligraphy, papermaking, ornamentation, illustration, printing and binding. The Society's latest concern is with the effect of electronic media on books, reading and culture generally.

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# THE ALCUIN SOCIETY

po box 3216 vancouver, bc v6b 3x8



