



Paper Trail and *Mechanimals* Win Victoria Book Prizes

Date: Wednesday, October 15, 2008

For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC – At an awards gala earlier this evening, two Greater Victoria authors were recognized for their literary achievements. Arleen Paré, author of *Paper Trail*, was named the 2008 winner of the 5th Annual City of Victoria Butler Book Prize; and Chris Tougas, author and illustrator of *Mechanimals*, was named the winner of the Inaugural Bolen Book Prize.

Acting Mayor Dean Fortin and event sponsor Brian H. Butler, presented Paré with a \$5,000 cheque for her award winning fiction novel published by NeWest Press, for the best book published in the preceding year in the categories of poetry, non-fiction, fiction and biography.

This was the first year the Victoria Book Prize Society partnered with Bolen Books to establish the Bolen Books Children's Book Prize, to recognize children and youth literary works. Mel Bolen, owner of Bolen Books, presented Tougas with a \$5,000 cheque for his children's book, published by Orca Book Publishers of Victoria.

Paper Trail, written halfway between poetry and prose, questions the rat race work ethic many of us adhere to, more often out of necessity than choice. The story is about Frances, a manager for a large corporation, who appears to be very successful but whose peace of mind is unravelling as she becomes overwhelmed by the destructive bureaucratic nature of the work world she lives in. Through the thoughts and deeds of Frances and her alter-ego, Paré demonstrates the stress and loneliness of modern society, and the profound impact this can have on a person's sanity.

This is Paré's first novel, which was also nominated for a Dorothy Livesay BC Book Prize for Poetry in the spring. Paré has published works in several publications, including *Geist*, *CV II* and *This Side of the West* and co-edited *Portfolio Mileiu 2004*.

Mechanimals is about a farmer whose neighbours think it's all over for him when he loses all his animals in a tornado except a heap of scrap metal and machine parts. His plans are big, and when his neighbours dismiss them with the words, "When pigs fly," they grow bigger still. The farmer sets to work to turn that scrap metal into some rather surprising creatures. *Mechanimals* helps us believe in our dreams despite what our neighbours may say.

Tougas is a writer-illustrator with nine children's books to his name. Interestingly, he had two books in the competition – the other entitled *Art's Supplies*, by the same publisher. For the last 10 years, Tougas has worked as both a concept developer and character designer for film, television and new media companies such as Disney, Warner Brothers, Universal, Sesame Shop, Nelvana as well as many Canadian companies.

The gala was held at the Union Club of British Columbia and featured readings by the six finalists, offering guests the opportunity to meet the writers and have their books autographed. The two other finalists for the City of Victoria Butler Book Prize included JoAnn Dionne and Mark Zuehlke. Polly Horvath and Kit Pearson were the two other finalists for the Inaugural Bolen Book Prize. For the second year, the gala was emceed by John Gould, a past Giller Prize nominee and current University of Victoria writing instructor.

Founded in 2004, the City of Victoria Butler Book Prize is a partnership between the City of Victoria and Brian Butler of Butler Brothers Supplies and is sponsored by the Greater Victoria Public Library, the Magnolia Hotel and Spa and the Union Club of British Columbia. The Victoria Book Prize Society establishes the policy and criteria for the prizes, appoints the juries and administers the competition.

- 30 -

For More Information:

Katie Josephson
Manager, Corporate Communications
250.361.0210

Mary Virtue
President
Victoria Book Prize Society
250.386.5933