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Media Release

May 28, 2008

For immediate release

LOCAL WRITER FINALIST FOR NATIONAL AWARD

WATER VALLEY - Patricia L. Atchison of Water Valley, has been shortlisted in a national writing competition for her children's picture book *Little Blue Penguin*.

Atchison, a local area author finds inspiration for her stories about nature while viewing wildlife in their natural habitats. When not writing, she operates Atchison Literature Inc., a publishing, web, graphics and printing business.

Little Blue Penguin (Wood Lily Publishers, October 2007) is the first picture book from award-winning author, Atchison. Written several years ago, the story is based on an event where Atchison's daughter lost her stuffed little blue penguin while on an outing at a park. Once revisited, the story changed when Atchison introduced a colour theme into the character's world. A question page at the end of the book allows for interaction between reader and listener, providing an educational aspect.

The winner will be announced on June 11 at a black-tie Awards Gala at World Vision's headquarters in Mississauga, Ontario, to which the public is invited. The Gala is the premier event honouring the work of Canadian writers who are Christian. The 30 award categories include the best non-fiction books, novels, articles, columns, poems, scripts and song lyrics written by Canadian citizens or permanent residents who affirm The Apostles' Creed. In all, there were 225 entries from writers in eight provinces.

"I am incredibly excited to be shortlisted for this award," Atchison said. "It is awesome reading *Little Blue Penguin* to a group of wide-eyed youngsters and to see their faces light up as the story progresses. They enjoy the colourful interaction *Little Blue Penguin* brings to their world."

This year's contestants include some of Canada's best-known Christian writers, including Jean Vanier (founder of L'Arche), Lorna Dueck (TV host of *Listen Up*), James Houston, Mark Buchanan, Bruxy Cavey, Jim Cantelon, John Redekop, Grace Fox and Linda Hall. William P. Young, a missionary kid born in Grande Prairie, Alberta who now lives in Oregon, is shortlisted in the contemporary novel category for his book, *The Shack*. When no Christian or mainstream publisher would publish his manuscript, Young's friends formed a publishing company and released the novel in May 2007. It is now a bestseller with more than 500,000 books in print.

The Awards Gala will be hosted by Herbie Kuhn, popular speaker and in-house announcer for the Toronto Raptors basketball team. The Gala will include a reception, book signings, and the formal launch of *Hot Apple Cider*, an anthology featuring 30 Canadian authors who are Christian.

The Leslie K. Tarr Award for career achievement, sponsored by Tyndale University College and Seminary, will be presented to Connie Brummel Crook of Peterborough, Ont. Crook is the author of 12 award-winning books about Canadian history that are used in public school classrooms and libraries across Canada. Her young adult novels and children's picture books have portrayed such Canadian heroines as Laura Secord and Nellie McClung.



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Previous Tarr Award recipients include Governor General's Award winners poet Margaret Avison and novelist Rudy Wiebe.

"The whole purpose of our writing contests and Awards Gala is to showcase examples of excellence, and to increase public awareness of the variety and quality of writing by Canadians who are Christian," commented Wendy Elaine Nelles, co-founder of The Word Guild, the association that sponsors the contest.

The Word Guild's membership consists of more than 325 writers and editors across Canada who write from a Christian perspective and publish work in a variety of genres.

To see the complete shortlist of finalists, or to obtain more information about the Gala or The Word Guild, visit www.thewordguild.com or telephone 519-886-4196.

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Little Blue Penguin is Available at these Alberta bookstores:

Chapters - Calgary area, Bentleys Books - Cochrane, Buddy's Bookshoppe - Rocky Mountain House, Kerry Wood Nature Centre - Red Deer, Ponoka Book Store - Ponoka, and online at www.woodlilybooks.com.

About Wood Lily Publishers:

Wood Lily Publishers is a Water Valley, Alberta publisher specializing in children's and young adult fiction.