



Banff Mountain Book Festival 2006 Book Competition Winners

November 1 – 3

Grand Prize

The Wall

Jeff Long, Simon & Schuster

"The lean, vivid, sometimes hallucinatory prose of Long's big-wall thriller grabs readers by the harness from the opening scene and draws them relentlessly into the mind of an aging rock rat trying to out-climb a mysterious past," says competition jury member David Leach, a Victoria, B.C.-based adventure writer and professor. Long was a guest speaker at the Book Festival.

Phyllis and Don Munday Award, sponsored by the Alberta Sections of the Alpine Club of Canada: \$2000

Best Book – Mountain Literature

The Climbing Essays

Jim Perrin, Neil Wilson Publishing Ltd

"Climbing has given Perrin his life," says jury member Audrey Salkeld, a U.K.-based journalist and mountaineering historian. "And practice has polished his natural gift in conveying these irreconcilables onto paper." Perrin was a recipient of the 2006 Paul D Fleck Fellowship in the Arts from The Banff Centre.

Jon Whyte Award for Mountain Literature, sponsored by the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, Banff: \$1000

Best Book – Mountain Image

World Climbing: Images from the Edge

Simon Carter, Onsight Photography

"Carter consistently dodges the clichés of climbing photography and captures with unsettling intimacy moments of truth and beauty on the great walls of the world," jury member David Leach says. Carter was a guest speaker at the Book Festival.

Sponsored by Rocky Mountain Books, Calgary: \$500

Best Book – Mountain Exposition

Burbage, Millstone and Beyond

David Simmonite, editor; **Niall Grimes**, series editor, BMC

An accessible but detailed mix of history, first-ascent lore, lists of bouldering problems, maps, and photography.

Jury member Audrey Salkeld says the book "seems to have learned all the lessons of what constitutes a good and easily accessible guide."

Sponsored by GORE-TEX® products: \$500

Best Book — Adventure Travel

Eating Stone

Ellen Meloy, Pantheon Books

"I can't think of more lyrical, more quirky, or more meditative writing about wilderness and loss than *Eating Stone*," says jury member David Stevenson, a writing professor at Western Illinois University and review editor of the *American Alpine Journal*.

Sponsored by Batstar Adventure Tours, Port Alberni, B.C.: \$500

Best Book — Mountaineering History

Mount Everest: The Reconnaissance 1935 — The Forgotten Adventure

Tony Astill, Tony Astill

A complex account of the fifth recorded attempt to summit Everest, the book follows alpinists Eric Shipton, Dan Bryant, and Tensing Norgay as they explore 26 Himalayan peaks, map the Everest North Face, and discover the body of previous summit attempter Maurice Wilson. "Astill is to be commended for giving us such a luxurious and nostalgic work," Salkeld says.

James Monroe Thorington Award for the Best Work of Mountaineering History, sponsored by UIAA: \$500

Special Jury Mention

Strange and Dangerous Dreams: The Fine Line Between Adventure and Madness

Geoff Powter, The Mountaineers Books

Powter retells the rise and fall of a rogue's gallery of misadventurers—some still infamous, others long forgotten—with the casual aplomb of a barstool raconteur. As their tales come to life, though, the author complicates our vision of these outdoor obsessives with psychological insights into their characters and the very nature of adventure.

Canadian Rockies Award

Powder Pioneers: Ski Stories from the Canadian Rockies and Columbia Mountains

Chic Scott, Rocky Mountain Books

Local writer and historian is one of the foremost chroniclers of the history and character of the Rocky Mountains. The Canadian Rockies award is chosen by a local committee.

Scott was awarded the Summit of Excellence Award by Mountain Culture at The Banff Centre in 2000.

Sponsored by Deuter and selected by a local committee: Deuter Pack

For immediate release

November 2, 2006

Jeff Long's thriller *The Wall* wins Grand Prize in 2006 Banff Mountain Book Festival competition

A literary thriller expertly set in the world of big-wall climbing, Jeff Long's seventh novel, *The Wall*, has been awarded the \$2,000 Grand Prize in the 2006 Banff Mountain Book Festival competition. The story of two old friends who return to Yosemite's El Capitan to revisit old memories, Long's cliff-hanging novel takes a supernatural turn before reaching its shattering finale.

"The lean, vivid, sometimes hallucinatory prose of Long's big-wall thriller grabs readers by the harness from the opening scene and draws them relentlessly into the mind of an aging rock rat trying to out-climb a mysterious past," says competition jury member David Leach, a Victoria, B.C.-based adventure writer and professor.

The Wall, Simon & Schuster (USA, 2006) was among 29 finalists chosen in seven categories.

Eight books won prizes at today's awards ceremony. Best Book on Adventure Travel was awarded posthumously to Ellen Meloy for her book *Eating Stone*, Pantheon (USA, 2005), which chronicles Meloy's year spent studying the rare desert bighorn sheep, and is a testament to her deep love of the deserts of the southwestern United States. "I can't think of more lyrical, more quirky, or more meditative writing about wilderness and loss than *Eating Stone*," says jury member David Stevenson, a writing professor at Western Illinois University and review editor of the *American Alpine Journal*.

Jim Perrin takes home the prize for Best Book — Mountain Literature for his recent collection *The Climbing Essays*, Neil Wilson Publishing (UK, 2006). One of The Banff Centre's 2006 Fleck Fellows, Perrin has collected the best of his 40 years of writing about climbing and the outdoors. "Climbing has given Perrin his life," says jury member Audrey Salkeld, a U.K.-based journalist and mountaineering historian. "And practice has polished his natural gift in conveying these irreconcilables onto paper."

Simon Carter's spectacular visual chronicle of the climbing world was awarded the prize for Best Book — Mountain Image. *World Climbing: Images from the Edge*, Onsight Photography (Australia 2005) captures the suspense and exhilaration of the athletes who challenge the world's toughest climbs. "Carter consistently dodges the clichés of climbing photography and captures with unsettling intimacy moments of truth and beauty on the great walls of the world," Leach says.

The jury chose an expert and exhaustive guidebook to England's Peak District for the award for Best Book — Mountain Exposition. *Millstone, Burbage and Beyond*, BMC (UK, 2006), edited by David Simmonite, series editor Niall Grimes, is an accessible but detailed mix of history, first-ascent lore, lists of bouldering problems, maps, and photography. Salkeld says the book "seems to have learned all the lessons of what constitutes a good and easily accessible guide."

The James Monroe Thorington Award for Best Book on Mountaineering History went to Tony Astill's self-published 2005 book *Mount Everest: The Reconnaissance 1935 — The Forgotten Adventure*. A complex account of the fifth recorded attempt to summit Everest, the book follows alpinists Eric Shipton, Dan Bryant, and Tensing Norgay as they explore 26 Himalayan peaks, map the Everest North Face, and discover the body of previous summit attempter Maurice Wilson. "Astill is to be commended for giving us such a luxurious and nostalgic work," Salkeld says.

Canmore, Alberta-based author and alpinist Geoff Powter was awarded a special jury mention for his investigation into the psychology of risk. *Strange and Dangerous Dreams: The Fine Line Between Adventure and Madness*, The Mountaineers Books (USA, 2006), examines the nebulous boundary between an adventurous soul and an unsound mind through 11 tales of troubled expeditions.

Local writer and historian Chic Scott takes home the Canadian Rockies Award, which is selected by a local committee. Written by one of the foremost chroniclers of the history and character of the Rocky Mountains, Scott's new book is *Powder Pioneers: Ski Stories from the Canadian Rockies and Columbia Mountains*, Rocky Mountain Books (Canada, 2005).

The Banff Mountain Book Awards are generously sponsored by the Alberta Sections of the Alpine Club of Canada, the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, Rocky Mountain Books, GORE-TEX, Batstar Adventure Tours, Deuter, and the Union Internationale des Associations d'Alpinisme (UIAA).

The Banff Mountain Book Festival is the largest mountain book festival in the world. Each year, the festival brings the spirit of outdoor adventure and the tradition of mountain literature to Banff, featuring guest speakers, readings, seminars, an international book competition, a book fair, and book signings and launches. This year, the 13th annual Festival (November 1 to 3) welcomed authors, athletes, artists and photographers including Andy Kirkpatrick, Leo Houlding, Greg Mortenson, Kathryn Bridge, John Beatty, John Vaillant, Florian Schulz, Geoff Powter, Jeff Long, Børge Ousland, Losang Rabgey, Clint Willis, and Simon Carter.