

ASSOCIATION FOR LIBRARY SERVICE TO CHILDREN

LAURA INGALLS WILDER AWARD  
COMMITTEE MANUAL

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This manual attempts to outline the practices, procedures and principles to follow in the selection and presentation of the Wilder Award. While as complete as possible, it cannot be exhaustive. Therefore, it is important to use the manual as a guide and to go further for guidance as needed.

## FOREWORD

Laura Ingalls Wilder was born February 7, 1867, in a little log house in Wisconsin. Ms. Wilder's childhood was spent traveling west by covered wagon to Indian Territory in Kansas, to Grasshopper Country in Minnesota, and then to the Dakota Territory. She became an elementary school teacher, married Almanzo Wilder, and moved to Mansfield, Missouri where she lived until her death at age 90.

Ms. Wilder's daughter, Rose, grew up listening to her mother's stories of those pioneer days. She urged her mother to write them down so that other children could enjoy them. In the 1930's and 40's Ms. Wilder recorded her memories in a children's series as the "Little House" books. The honesty and detail of the books makes them interesting historical and social documents of the period. The "Little House" books have attracted interest from scholars since they represent a rare example of pioneer literature written from a child's perspective.

# **PART I: BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

## History and Purpose

The Wilder Award originated among children's librarians who

. . . had long wished to express in some significant way their deep appreciation to Mrs. Wilder. This desire grew in intensity upon the publication in 1953 of the beautiful new edition of the author's eight books with illustrations by Garth Williams. The section for work with children of the California Library Association took the lead and appointed the Committee for Laura Ingalls Wilder.

On January 22, 1953, this committee sent a report to the Children's Library Association concerning the recognition of Mrs. Wilder's place in the field of children's literature. The purpose was to determine what ideas might develop, or what steps might be taken on a nationwide basis, "so that we, who work so closely with boys and girls and their books, and are most acutely aware of the debt of gratitude owed to Laura Ingalls Wilder, may seize the opportunity before it is too late, and have no occasion in the future to regret any possible inaction and procrastination." Among the ideas proposed was the establishment of an award in her name.

A year later, in February 1954, the Executive Board of the Children's Library Association "concluded with unanimity of feeling, based on widespread expression of hope and conviction from the membership, that it was important to honor Laura Ingalls Wilder." A committee on the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award was appointed to draw up plans. (Harriet G. Long, "The Laura Ingalls Wilder Award," *Top of the News*: Jan. 1965.)

The Laura Ingalls Wilder Award was first awarded in 1954 to Laura Ingalls Wilder. It was presented every five years from 1960 to 1980, every three years from 1980-2001, and it is now given every two years.

Originally, the committee developed a slate and the ALSC membership voted on the award recipient. In 1989, the ALSC Board approved revised methods of selecting the Wilder Award so that the committee has sole responsibility for the selection of the recipient based on membership input and committee discussion. In June 1992, the ALSC Board approved that the chair and one member be elected by the membership (in the spring elections), that two remaining members be appointed by the ALSC President in the Fall. In June 1998, the ALSC Board approved upon the recommendation of the Wilder Committee, presenting the award every two years and increasing the number of committee members to five. The chair and two committee members were elected by the membership in the ALA/ALSC elections in the spring. The ALSC President appointed the remaining two members in the fall. In May 2008, the ALSC Board approved that the ALSC membership would elect the three committee members in the spring elections, every other year, and the ALSC President would appoint the chair and the one remaining committee member the following fall.

The purpose of the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award is to recognize an author or illustrator whose books, published in the United States, have over a period of years made a substantial and lasting contribution to literature for children. The recipient is presented with a medal designed by Garth Williams.

## Committee Function Statement

To select the recipient of the Wilder Award, established by ALSC to give recognition every two years to an author or illustrator whose books published in the United States have over a period of years made a substantial and lasting contribution to literature for children.

## The Committee

Three committee members are elected by the membership every other year in the ALA/ALSC elections in the spring. The ALSC President appoints the chair and one additional member in the fall prior to the start of committee term. The term is for two years. (Revised, May 2008)

## Terms

The Laura Ingalls Wilder Medal shall be awarded every two years to an author or illustrator whose books, published in the United States, have over a period of years made a substantial contribution to literature for children.

## Definitions

1. The term “author or illustrator” can mean co-authors or co-illustrators, and persons who both write and illustrate. The person may be nominated posthumously. Some portion of the nominee’s active career in books for children must have occurred in the twenty-five years prior to nomination. Citizenship or residence of the potential nominee is not to be considered.
2. “Books” means more than one book.
3. “Published in the United States” does not indicate that first publication had to be in the United States. It means that children’s books written and/or illustrated by the nominee have been published in the United States, and it is those books which are to be considered in the nomination process.
4. “Over a period of years” means that at least some of the books by the potential nominee have been available to children for at least ten years. Out-of-print books may be considered as part of the nominee’s contribution.
5. “A substantial and lasting contribution” means that the books, by their nature (and/or number), occupy an important place in literature for American children and that over the years children have read the books and that the books continue to be read by children.
6. The term “literature for children” indicates that the committee is to direct its attention only to the part of the potential nominee’s total work that is intended for children (up to and including age fourteen). It further indicates that the committee is to select on the basis of the literary or artistic merit of the books for children.

### Criteria

1. In addition to the criteria implicit in the terms and definitions, the committee may wish to consider whether:
  - a. Some or all of the books are exceptionally outstanding and leading examples of the genre to which they belong.
  - b. Some or all of the books have established trends, or have been a leading force behind new trends in children's books.
2. Other awards (such as Newbery or Caldecott) should not be considered when nominating authors or illustrators for the Wilder Award. All candidates who have made a lasting contribution are eligible.
3. The committee, in making its selection of nominees, should be aware of the author's or illustrator's entire body of work, and may base its decision for nomination on the total body of work for children, or on those portions of the total body of work which are of a substantial and lasting nature.

### Priority Group Consultant

A Priority Group Consultant from Priority Group VI (Awards) is assigned to the committee to deal with questions from the Chair and the committee regarding procedure, personnel, and the eligibility of authors.

The Priority Group Consultant works with the Chair to review annually the procedures of the committee and to make recommendations for improving the process. The recommendations range from those that can be implemented easily to those requiring action by the ALSC Board. The Priority Group Consultant also works with the Chair to resolve procedural and personnel issues as they come up and questions about the eligibility of books.

Committee members consult the Priority Group Consultant should there be unusual issues that the Chair cannot resolve, particularly issues regarding the Chair.

### ALSC Policies

#### **ALSC POLICY FOR SERVICE ON THE LAURA INGALLS WILDER MEDAL SELECTION COMMITTEE**

ALSC affirms its confidence in the integrity of members who are invited to be nominated or appointed to serve on award committees, and in the integrity of the officers or nominating committees responsible for selecting candidates. Because of the nature of the work of such committees, those who serve on them must be especially sensitive to conflict of interest situations and the appearance of impropriety. The purpose of this policy is to clarify the eligibility and responsibility of candidates asked to serve on such committees.

#### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

It is the policy of the Association for Library Service to Children, its Board of Directors and committees to insure that members in all of its activities avoid conflicts of interest and the appearance of conflicts of interest resulting from their activities as members of committees of the Association. In particular, no person should obtain or appear to obtain special advantages for themselves, their relatives, their employer or their close associates as a result of their services on a committee.

A conflict of interest occurs when an individual's personal or private interests may lead an independent observer reasonably to question whether the individual's professional actions or decisions are influenced by considerations of significant personal or private interest, financial or otherwise.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Committee members need to maintain a high degree of confidentiality regarding the committee's discussions, both oral and written. All committee members need to feel free to speak frankly in a closed session, knowing that their comments will not be repeated outside that room, and that they preserve the right to speak for themselves outside of that closed session.

Committee members are urged to discuss individuals under consideration with others throughout the year to obtain a variety of critical opinions. However, it is important to remember that, in these discussions, committee members may express only their own opinions, and may not quote the opinions of other committee members or indicate in any way which individuals are under consideration.

## **GUIDELINES FOR AWARD COMMITTEES**

The Association for Library Service to Children grants a number of awards and it is very important that conflicts of interest and the appearance of conflicts of interest be especially avoided and that confidentiality be maintained in the process of determining who should receive the awards. It is a privilege to serve on an award committee and with that privilege come specific responsibilities to assist the Association for Library Service to Children in preventing conflicts of interest and the appearance of conflicts of interest in the award process. Each person who is nominated or appointed to serve on an award committee is expected to consider carefully whether any of his or her personal or professional interests, obligations, activities, or associations could reasonably lead to even the appearance of a conflict of interest, or breach of confidentiality, and to discuss any such potential conflicts with the ALSC Executive Director prior to accepting the nomination or appointment. Situations that arise after a committee member has begun to serve should be directed to the ALSC President, Committee Chair, Priority Group Consultant, and Executive Director. The final decision rests with the Executive Committee.

Those who accept a nomination or appointment to an award committee, should adhere to the following guidelines:

- 1) Members who have written and/or illustrated children's books are eligible to serve, and will not be eligible to receive the Wilder Medal during their terms of service on the committee.
- 2) Members should not accept appointment or nomination to an award committee if they have a close family relationship (parent, spouse/partner, son/daughter) or a personal

relationship with an author or illustrator which could reasonably be seen by an independent observer to cause a conflict of interest.

3) Members of award committees should not reveal or publicize any confidential information learned through service on the committee; nor should they make such confidential information available to non-committee-members.

4) Members of award committees who run or participate in social networking web sites or software, including blogs, wikis, electronic discussion lists, and the like, should not engage in any discussions about their ALSC award committee work, or about the status of eligible individuals in relationship to these awards during their term of committee service.

5) Members may not serve concurrently on the ALSC Board and the Wilder Committee.

6) From time to time, the Association for Library Service to Children may take other action or establish such other guidelines as may be necessary in the Association's sole discretion to protect the integrity of the award process. Questions from prospective committee members and candidates should be directed to the Executive Director; situations that arise after a committee member has begun to serve should be directed to the ALSC President, Committee Chair, Priority Group Consultant, and Executive Director. The final decision rests with the Executive Committee.

#### **MEETING ATTENDANCE AND ACCESS TO MATERIALS**

1) Persons elected or appointed to the Wilder Committee should be able to attend all required discussion and decision meetings scheduled for the Annual and Midwinter meetings of ALA and follow procedures established by the committee.

2) Persons elected or appointed to the Wilder Committee should have ready access to a comprehensive collection of children's books, whether through a local library collection or on interlibrary loan, so that they can easily obtain the complete bodies of work of authors and illustrators under consideration. Neither ALA nor the committee chair can be expected to provide copies of books for committee members to examine.

Although these requirements may limit membership on a committee, wise selection requires complete participation of all members of the committee.

#### **FREQUENCY OF SERVICE ON THE WILDER COMMITTEE**

Members may serve more than once on the Wilder Selection Committee, consistent with ALSC Bylaws, Article VIII, Section 4.

**Violation of any of the above guidelines may result in dismissal from the award committee and may preclude service from future award committees.**

Do you understand and agree to adhere to the guidelines for service on the award committee as outlined herein and agree to adhere to such other guidelines as the Association for Library Service to Children may hand down from time to time?

Yes     No

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

date

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please fill out and return the attached checklist.

*Policy revised, October 2007*

## Checklist for Prospective Wilder Committee Members

Please respond to the following questions. A “yes” answer does not necessarily preclude service on the Wilder Committee. These questions are intended to alert prospective committee members to situations that may or may not pose a problem; the answers will enable the Executive Committee to assess individual situations.

**Are you an author and/or illustrator of at least one published book for children?**

Yes  No

**Do you have a close relative (i.e. parent, spouse/partner, son/daughter) who is an author or illustrator who may be eligible?**

Yes  No

**Do you have a personal relationship with an author or illustrator who may be eligible which could reasonably be seen by an independent observer to cause a conflict of interest?**

Yes  No

**Do you run or regularly participate in a social networking web site or software, including blogs, wikis, or electronic discussion lists?**  Yes  No

**If you answered yes, please provide the web url:**

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**Do you expect to have difficulty attending all required meetings in person at Annual and Midwinter conference?**  Yes  No

**Do you expect to have difficulty accessing a comprehensive collection of children's books?**  Yes  No

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
date

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

If you answered “yes” to any of the questions, please contact the Executive Director in the ALSC Office before you accept a nomination or appointment to discuss your specific situation. Failure to disclose such activities will lead to immediate dismissal from the committee.

*October 2007*

## RELATIONSHIPS WITH PUBLISHERS

It is important to remember that members of an award committee should not solicit free, personal copies of books from publishers. Members accept the appointment to a committee with the understanding that they have access to books. However, committee members may accept *unsolicited* books from a publisher. Nor should committee members solicit distributors for favors, invitations, etc. However, if members receive such, they should use their own judgment in accepting. Distributors must understand that acceptance of such invitations, favors, and unsolicited books in no way influences the committee members' actions or the final choice made by the committee.

## ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

The Wilder Committee adheres to the "Guidelines for Electronic Communication for ALSC Committees."

Adopted by ALSC Board on January 18, 2000

### 1. Access issues.

A considerable amount of routine committee communication can be handled electronically if all members have convenient access to email. Before and/or during the Midwinter meeting, committee chairs should gather the following information:

- Preferred email addresses of all members.
- Software information: i.e., word processing programs in use, capability for "attachments," etc.
- How often members check their email.

If one or more members do NOT have convenient access to email, it will be necessary to use alternate means of communication so that no one member is excluded from full participation in committee business.

### 2. Protocols.

2.1. All committee business should be clearly identifiable on the subject line; i.e., cat.com. conference or massmedia.2000 program.

2.2. If messages require a response, the sender should indicate a response deadline. All members should acknowledge receipt of the message to the sender, whether or not they have a substantive response.

2.3. If the message requests discussion of an issue, each respondent should reply to all members of the committee.

2.4. Committee members are expected to participate in electronic discussions, just as they would participate in discussions at conference meetings.

2.5. The chair should copy the priority consultant on all relevant correspondence.

### 3. Record-keeping

3.1. Routine correspondence between conferences does not need to be saved. The chair should keep a record of any decisions made, however, and report to ALSC headquarters with the appropriate conference report.

3.2. Where appropriate, committees may establish an electronic archive for their records.

### 4. Privacy and confidentiality issues.

4.1. Committees with "sensitive" business such as awards, should be aware of the increased possibility of inadvertent leaks with electronic communications media. Committee members should decide what kinds of information it is safe to transmit electronically and limit their communications accordingly.

4.2. Personal information about individuals (addresses, phone numbers, etc.) should not be posted on websites unless they are protected from general public access by secure passwords.

### 5. Use of electronic discussion lists.

5.1. Committees are encouraged to use the ALSC electronic discussion list to communicate with membership at large about their activities and to generate discussion about relevant issues. Agendas should be posted 4 weeks in advance of conference.

5.2. Committees with the capability of establishing electronic discussion lists may choose to conduct their committee business through a dedicated discussion list.

5.3. The ALSC electronic discussion list should not be used for the transmittal of routine information intended for members of a particular committee.

### 6. Virtual committees.

6.1. ALSC may determine that some committees can conduct their business entirely online and designate these as virtual committees.

6.2. All members of virtual committees must have convenient access to email.

6.3. It is recommended that the chair of virtual committees attend midwinter and annual conference in order to participate in the division leadership meeting and to conduct other business.

6.4. It is particularly important that all members of virtual committees participate fully in electronic discussion of committee business.

6.5. In order to facilitate input from members at large about committee business, virtual committees should be sure to announce their electronic agendas on the ALSC discussion list well in advance of decision deadlines and solicit comments from the membership.

## 7. Virtual participation on traditional committees.

7.1. The ALSA vice-president/president-elect, president, or a committee chair may determine that one or more members of an appropriate committee may be designated virtual members. Virtual members participate in all business of the committee but are not required to attend conference meetings.

7.2. It is recommended that no more and 25 % of any committee be virtual members.

7.3. Care should be taken that virtual committee members are allowed participate in all business of the committee, including discussions and voting. It is recommended that each virtual member be paired with a buddy who attends conferences and takes responsibility for ensuring the virtual member's inclusion. In some cases, it may be necessary to arrange electronic or telephone communication during conference in order to gather input or votes from the virtual member.

## **PART II: COMMITTEE WORK**

## Welcome

Serving on the Wilder Committee is a rare professional experience. Once the committee is complete, it is recommended that the Chair send a letter of welcome to the membership. The letter might include an outline of the years' work and up-coming issues. It is usually accompanied by relevant enclosures (e.g., the years' calendar, the roster, guidelines for book discussion, etc).

## Calendar

It is the responsibility of the Chair to establish and distribute a calendar of the years' work as soon as possible. It is the responsibility of committee members to meet all deadlines to assure that the selection process is orderly and timely.

## Attendance at Meetings

Committee members are expected to attend all of the meetings at both Midwinter Meetings during the two years of service on the committee. The committee may need to meet at least twice during each conference. Attendance is required at the Annual Conference during year one of the committee term, but not the Annual Conference during year two at which the award is presented. (See the list below.)

Note ALA Policy 4.4 and 4.5 – No member shall serve concurrently in more than three separate positions, and committee members are expected to attend all meetings (Midwinter and/or Annual conference).

At the Midwinter meeting at which the selection is announced, the committee members will also want to be present on the Monday morning when the committee chairs telephone the award winner or editors prior to the official press conference. Committee members should remain after the press conference for photographs. Consider these special events when scheduling travel plans.

*Election (Spring)*

*Appointments (Fall)*

*Midwinter Meeting (Winter) - Preceding start of term*

Optional attendance. Incoming chair invited to attend Division Leadership.  
No Wilder Committee meeting.

*Annual Conference (Summer)- Year One*

Committee Chair attends Division Leadership  
No Wilder Committee meeting.

*Midwinter Meeting (Winter) –Year One*

*Organizational meeting*

Attendance required. Closed meeting.

*Annual Conference (Summer) – Year Two*  
*Review slate of contenders and begin discussing their work.*  
Attendance required. Closed meeting.

*Midwinter Meeting (Winter) – Year Two*  
*Selection of winners*  
Attendance required. Closed meeting.  
Committee term officially ends at the adjournment of Midwinter.

*Annual Conference (Summer) – Committee term has concluded*  
No meeting  
*Presentation of the award*  
Attendance not required, except for chair.

There may be times when, under unusual circumstances, the committee does not meet in person at conferences. (Such meetings can only be held in accordance with rules laid down by the ALSC Board.) At such times the committee may meet together – but not separately – via teleconferencing or videoconferencing. That being the case, all members must make themselves available at the appropriate time for such meetings.

### Schedule of Events

The following is a suggested schedule of events that will take place over the course of a 2-year term:

#### **I. Before the Start of Term**

##### **a. Fall – After the Election of Chair and Two Members**

- i. The President appoints additional committee members. Committee members learn of their appointment in the fall preceding the year in which their term begins. The incoming chair should send a letter of welcome to each committee member at the time of appointment. Committee members should solicit nominations from the membership, etc. during this time period.

##### **b. Midwinter**

- i. This is an optional meeting for the chair since the term begins at the conclusion of Midwinter. However, if the chair is attending Midwinter, he/she should plan to attend ALSC Division Leadership on Saturday morning if at all possible. The incoming chair will meet with your Priority Group Consultant and the current award chair.

## II. Term Begins (at Close of Midwinter)

### a. Spring

- i. The Chair should solicit nominations from the membership through the ALSC newsletter, *Children and Libraries*, the *Journal of the Association for Library Service to Children*, the ALSC website, the ALSC listserv, a press release to appropriate journals, when talking or corresponding with ALSC members, & at the ALSC membership meeting.

### b. Annual Conference

- i. The committee chair attends the ALSC Division Leadership Meeting on Saturday.
- ii. In the past the committee has not met, the chair may choose to hold an informal meeting for those members who are attending conference so that introductions can be made.

### c. Fall

- i. The Chair should continue to solicit nominations from the membership.

### d. Midwinter

- i. Meet at Midwinter to organize the work of the committee, and to collect nominations from the committee. The agenda includes:
  1. Review of the Laura Ingalls Wilder manual
  2. Discussion about voting procedures for selecting nominees and for choosing the winner
  3. Review of the list of nominees submitted to the Chair and to committee members.
  4. Shape a short list of nominees (This list is final. No nominations are accepted after this Midwinter meeting.)
  5. Make committee assignments, which may include a presentation at the summer conference of the qualifications of a specific nominee. This presentation may include biographical information, a listing of awards and honors, bibliography of books for children and a discussion about the nominee's substantial and lasting contribution to children's literature.
  6. These are suggestions for procedures and may be used at the discretion of the committee.

### e. Spring

- i. The committee must read from the entire body of works of those nominated, and be prepared to participate in a review of the works for the required meeting at annual conference. Reviewing a list of titles is not enough. The works of nominees must be reread and reevaluated.

**f. Annual Conference**

- i. The agenda should include:
  - 1. A review and discussion of the works of each nominee
  - 2. A conscious effort to shape the nominee list to a workable number for the following Midwinter meeting (a voting procedure will be established by the committee).

**g. Fall**

- i. The committee must continue reading from the body of works of those authors and illustrators on the final list.

**h. Midwinter (Selection) Meeting**

- i. The Wilder winner is selected.
- ii. The committee Chair will be supplied with the proper forms used to submit the pertinent information on the recipient to the ALA Public Information Office (PIO). Once the winner has been selected, the committee assists the Chair with the drafting of the press release. On the morning of the official press conference, the committee should arrive early at the ALA Press Office to be present when the committee Chair makes the phone calls to the awardees. The committee should plan to attend the press conference.

**III. Term ends at close of Midwinter Selection Meeting**

**a. Spring**

- i. Chair prepares and submits award presentation remarks to the ALSC office.

**b. Annual Conference (Award Presentation)**

- i. Chair presents medal at the Newbery/Caldecott/Wilder Banquet, held at the Annual Conference.

### Access to Materials

The Wilder Committee members are responsible for obtaining copies of books by authors nominated for the award.

### Communication

Electronic communication facilitates the distribution of information from the Chair to committee members, and the regular discussion of procedural issues. The Committee adheres to the “Guidelines for Electronic Communication for ALSC Committees,” as adapted by the ALSC Board and as posted on the ALSC web page at [http://www.ala.org/alsc/guide\\_electroniccomm.html](http://www.ala.org/alsc/guide_electroniccomm.html), and on page nine of this manual.

Committee members are not free to communicate with each other about committee work without going through the Chair. All e-mail from committee members is directed to the Chair unless the Chair invites open discussion on a matter of concern. The Chair will establish ground rules for electronic communication by the committee at the beginning of his/her term. At times, the Chair may invite open discussion on a matter of concern. The Chair facilitates such open discussion.

As a practical matter, e-mail is not used for substantive discussion. It is not a substitute for face-to-face discussion of authors.

Since the committee’s electronic communication is generally confidential, there are several ways to better insure confidentiality. For e-mail, include the word “confidential” on the subject line or as part of the transmission options. For FAX communication, include the word “confidential” on a cover sheet.

### Suggested Voting Procedures

Under the direction of the chair, the committee may discuss and agree upon any of the following procedures for shaping the list:

- a. Consensus: general agreement or opinion
- b. Oral vote (for example, use a vote of three to keep a nominee on the discussion list when shaping the final list of names)
- c. Secret written ballot for final selection
- d. Any combination of voting strategies

There must be a final vote. One name from the final list must have four or more votes from the committee to be declared the winner. Voting and elimination of final nominees will continue until one nominee has four votes.

The winner must be a committee decision with strong support from each member.

## Preparation

Committee members are urged to prepare for the year's work in many ways:

- Review the terms, criteria, and definitions governing the award.
- Take part in book discussions. Book selection meetings, workshops, classes, and professional associations provide opportunities for such discussion.
- Read books written and/or illustrated by previous award winners and look toward defining and refining a critical viewpoint.
- Write critical analyses of authors or illustrators based on the award terms, criteria, and definitions.
- Read articles about the Wilder award.

## Diversity and ALSC Media Award Evaluation

Inclusiveness is a core value of ALSC. It is the responsibility of each ALSC media award and notables committee to reflect this value in their approach to their work. ALSC award and notables lists provide librarians, teachers and parents with information about books and other media our association holds in the highest regard. Everyone benefits, children most of all, when the titles recognized within and across ALSC awards and best-of-the-year lists authentically reflect the diversity found in our nation and the wider world.

Each year there will be overlap among individual committees in terms of titles being considered for recognition. The Caldecott, Notables, and Pura Belpré committees, for example, inevitably end up considering some of the same books. It is the responsibility of each committee to consider a work based upon how it meets the criteria of their specific award rather than speculating whether a particular title will receive another award. If a title is recognized by multiple committees, it does not diminish the work of any of those committees; rather, it draws greater attention to a particular work's excellence.

As individuals serving on committees evaluate materials according to the criteria outlined for their specific charge, they should strive to be aware of how their own perspectives and experiences shape their responses to materials. Every committee member brings unique strengths to the table, but every committee member also brings gaps in knowledge and understanding, and biases. Committee members are strongly encouraged to be open to listening and learning as well as sharing as they consider materials representing diverse experiences both familiar and unfamiliar to them.

## Eligibility

It is important to verify that

1. the books by nominated authors and illustrators have been published in the United States
2. that some of the books have been available for at least ten years prior to the nomination
3. that a portion of the nominee's active career in books for children must have occurred in the twenty-five years prior to the nomination.

## Note-Taking

From the outset, committee members need to develop some convenient system for taking notes about each book that is read. Some prefer a file card system; others keep a binder with notes, sometimes organized with tabs.

No matter what system is used, the notes themselves need to speak to the Wilder Award criteria. Succinct and specific notes clarify thinking and aid in the Midwinter Selection Meeting discussion. In addition, some committee members keep complete bibliographic information on each book, a short summary, and a critical statement, noting both strengths and weaknesses based on the award criteria. As the year's work begins, the Chair sometimes asks committee members to share ideas on taking notes with the whole committee.

It is recommended that notes be taken on each author and illustrator that is considered. Notes about authors and illustrators not thought to be serious contenders may shorten as the year progresses. It is important to remember that a book not impressive on first reading may prove more interesting later on. Re-reading is frequently required. Notes record first impressions and measure changes in thinking.

Committee members do not usually bring a personal copy of every author's or illustrator's book under consideration to the Midwinter Selection Meeting. Therefore, notes need to include references to specific page numbers and/or quoted passages to justify specific points to be made during discussion.

Many committee members collect professional reviews of titles under consideration. Although reviews are not to be quoted during discussion, they raise questions and clarify opinion.

## Suggestion Process

The Chair solicits suggestions of eligible authors and illustrators from committee members at the first Midwinter meeting. Committee members are asked to suggest authors and illustrators deemed to be strong contenders based on the award criteria.

The suggestion process serves several important functions. Of course, it encourages committee members to identify strong contenders. It also alerts committee members as to which authors and illustrators merit consideration by the group. Then too, the suggestion process helps committee members begin to weigh relative strengths and weaknesses of authors and illustrators based on the award criteria.

Suggestion deadlines are listed on the calendar established at the beginning of the year. Suggestions may be submitted to the Chair by e-mail to meet designated deadlines. The Chair needs to receive notification should a committee member have no suggestions to add. Suggestions sent by U.S. mail or FAX must be **received** by the designated deadlines.

Serious consideration is to be given to all suggested authors and illustrators including those with minimal support. Sometimes support grows after comparison to other authors and illustrators under consideration.

Committee members are urged to suggest all strong authors and illustrators for consideration, and they are also urged not to overload the suggestion list. Overloading the list undermines its function to focus attention on strong contenders. Committee members need to consider each author and illustrator with regard to the award criteria and suggest only those authors and illustrators deemed to be strong contenders.

There are no set parameters as to the number of suggestions a committee member may make. Some members suggest more authors and illustrators than others. In the suggestion process, it is important for committee members to move forward only those authors and illustrators deemed strong enough to merit careful consideration by the whole committee.

In summary, it is the responsibility of committee members to make suggestions by the designated deadlines and to consider carefully all suggested authors and illustrators.

### Participation of ALSC Membership

ALSC members-at-large are encouraged to participate in the selection process by submitting authors and illustrators for consideration to the Chair.

It is the responsibility of the Chair to call for authors and illustrators to consider through the ALSC listserv, on the ALSC Website, in the *ALSCConnect* Newsletter, and in *Children and Libraries: The Journal of the Association for Library Service to Children* (if there is an edition at the appropriate time of the year). In addition, the Chair may call for authors and illustrators to consider on other listservs having to do with children's literature. On an individual basis, committee members also may call for authors and illustrators to consider from members-at-large.

Authors and illustrators submitted for consideration by members-at-large are forwarded to the Chair. The Chair distributes this information to committee members in a timely manner.

The Chair and other committee members promote interest in the award in a number of ways. They:

- Encourage ALSC members-at-large to submit authors and illustrators for consideration prior to Year One Midwinter meeting.
- Encourage and/or organize mock Wilder Award book discussions. (Results are welcome by the committee).
- Talk about the award within the children's book community, at schools, and at state and local library conferences.
- Encourage discussion of eligible authors and illustrators on appropriate listservs before selection and of the winners after selection.
- Interest local news media in covering the award.

### Committee Participation

The selection process depends on the full participation of committee members. Therefore, it is important for all committee members to identify, obtain, read and consider works by eligible authors and illustrators; meet designated suggestion deadlines; communicate with the Chair as needed; participate in electronic discussions as needed; and contribute to discussion at required meetings.

ALSC is grateful for the full participation of committee members. In recognition of their commitment, the Chair sends two letters of appreciation to the employers/supervisors of committee members—one at the outset and one at the conclusion of committee service.

In addition, committee members sometimes notify employers/supervisors about their work on the Wilder Committee independently. Also, they often notify local newspapers, professional organizations, and/or their own alumni organizations of their work. The resulting notice underscores individual participation as well as the work of ALSC and ALA.

At the Annual Conference, the committee usually reviews and discusses the works of each nominee. At the Midwinter Selection meeting, full discussion of authors and illustrators under consideration is central to the selection process. For these discussions, committee members are asked to adhere to helpful guidelines:

- Speak loudly and clearly.
- Speak to the group as a whole. Refrain from private conversations during the meetings.
- Speak briefly and to the point. That is, speak only to the terms, criteria and definitions of the Wilder Award.
- Listen openly to other committee members.
- Respond thoughtfully to what others have to say.
- Make comparisons but only in relationship to other eligible authors and illustrators.

#### Confidentiality of Discussion and Selection

There is a need to maintain a degree of confidentiality regarding the committee discussions, oral or written, e-mail or fax. Do not forward e-mail to anyone outside of the committee. Our reason is to ensure the privacy rights of others.

Please remember, then, that the following items are not for public discussion at any time--prior to, during, or following the selection of the award:

1. Reasons (other than your own) given by individual committee members for supporting or removing an author or illustrator from consideration.
2. Specific authors or illustrators under consideration.
3. Details of the votes, if the committee votes on the nominees.

The committee's reasons for selection of the recipient will be announced by the Chair (or a designate) at the press conference, in press releases, and in the announcement articles. Responsibility for confidentiality continues after the award is announced in terms of personal conversations, speeches, talks to groups, etc. during the months and years to follow.



## **PART III: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

## Introduction

The Wilder Committee is responsible for selecting the award winner. The Wilder Committee Manual describes the policies, practices, and procedures that guide the selection process. It describes the roles and responsibilities of committee members and of the Chair as well.

The Chair, the Priority Group Consultant, ALSC (staff, membership, award and Notable Children's Books Committee chairs, the ALSC Board, and the ALSC President), and the ALA Public Information Office have specific roles and responsibilities. The checklists below with those roles and responsibilities are comprehensive but not exhaustive.

## Committee Chair Responsibilities

The Chair is a voting member of the committee with all the rights and responsibilities of other members.

The Chair's responsibilities include setting the tone for discussion. This can be done by accepting all pertinent statements, providing firm leadership in moving discussion away from tangents and back to criteria-based discussion, and providing opportunity for *all* members of the committee to contribute to the discussion.

In addition, the Chair will

- arrange meeting schedule for Midwinter Meetings with conference arrangements, requesting a room for a closed meeting (by September 30)
- establish calendar and mailing procedures for the committee and send committee roster to all members (November).
- conduct all meetings of the committee (Midwinter/Annual).
- answer all correspondence promptly and send copies of all correspondence to the ALSC President, ALSC office, and the Priority Group Consultant (all year).
- arrange the summer committee meetings at Annual Conference with ALA Conference Arrangements (October).
- notify awardee (Midwinter).
- prepare announcement of award (Midwinter).
- prepare committee reports before and after Midwinter Meetings and Annual Conferences (January/June)
- write letters of appreciation to members' supervisors following the selection of the awardee (January/February, sample in materials from previous chair)
- write introduction speech for Wilder Award (Spring)
- send all committee files to ALSC office (February).
- maintain communication with ALSC office and Priority Group Consultant (all year).
- inform Priority Group Consultant of committee members who are especially good or those who are weak.
- review Wilder manual and make suggestions for improvement to Priority Group Consultant

### Priority Group Consultant Responsibilities

The priority group consultant will

- assist the committee and Chair with procedural and personnel problems when needed.
- serve as first point of contact for committee Chair.

### ALSC Staff Responsibilities

The ALSC staff

- sends letters of invitation to new committee members at President's instructions, (November).
- distributes manuals to new committee members (December)
- arranges for meeting rooms for both the Annual Conference and Midwinter Meeting, after the Chair confirms the meeting time with ALSC office liaison.
- provides Chair with telephone assistance for notifying the awardee.
- with the ALSC President and ALA's Public Information Office (PIO) arranges announcement of the awardee (Midwinter).
- with PIO ensures availability of press release (Midwinter).
- assists PIO with publicity (Midwinter).
- handles all ALSC office correspondence related to the award.
- arranges for engraving of medal.
- provides Chair with copies of former introduction speeches, deadline for presentation speeches, and information on banquet procedures.
- brings medal to Annual Conference for presentation.

### ALSC Membership Role

On an ongoing basis, ALSC membership will

- submit nominations for consideration prior to the committee's Year One Midwinter meeting.
- promote community interest about the award; distribute information about the award
- promote and participate in mock Wilder award discussion

### ALSC Board Responsibilities

Members of the Board will

- regularly, or on request, review and reaffirm the committees charge, criteria, procedures, etc.
- deal with conflict of interest of committee members if necessary.

### ALSC President Responsibilities

The President will

- appoint two committee members.
- make appointments to fill committee vacancies if necessary.

- deal with conflict of interest of committee members if necessary.
- preside at press conference and awards ceremony.

### Public Information Office (PIO) Responsibilities

#### The Public Information Office

- provides guidelines for preparation of press release information; explanation of why books are truly distinguished and biographical information on winning author
- designates format and deadlines for submission of information/books needed to prepare press release
- prepares information for press release in print and for ALSC web page based on information submitted by committee
- briefs Chair on arrangements for notifying winners and for the press conference
- provides time, equipment and space for Chair to make call to phone winners before the press conference (preferably a speaker phone to allow committee participation)
- arranges for press conference.

## **PART IV: APPENDIX**

**Laura Ingalls Wilder Award**

*Sample Employer/Supervisor Information*

Please supply the employer/supervisor information so a letter can be sent to your employer/supervisor regarding your participation on the Wilder Award Committee. You may list as many names as you like.

---

Your name

---

Supervisor's Name

Supervisor's Title

Name of Institution

Mailing Address

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Supervisor's Name

Supervisor's Title

Name of Institution

Mailing Address

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## **Laura Ingalls Wilder Award**

### *Sample Letter to Employer/ Supervisor #1*

April 1, 200X

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Please accept our congratulations and gratitude for your support of \_\_\_\_\_ during her/his term on the Association for Library Service to Children's Laura Ingalls Wilder Award Committee.

Well over 5000 trade books are published for children each year, and many are informational books. In accepting an appointment, each committee member has made a professional commitment to be involved in an intense and time-consuming process: Reading, evaluating, discussing, and ultimately selecting the year's most distinguished informational books. Needless to say, already well-practiced reviewing and evaluative skills will be further honed and heightened.

In June our committee will meet during the ALA Annual Conference in XXX. We will meet to make our selections in January 200X in XXX. The award presentation will be at the ALSC Newbery, Caldecott, Wilder Banquet in XXX in June 200X.

Thank you again for your support during this selection process.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair, 200X Laura Ingalls Wilder Award Committee

**Laura Ingalls Wilder Award**

*Sample Letter to Employer Supervisor #2*

March 1, 200X

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Please accept our congratulations and gratitude for your support of \_\_\_\_\_ during her/his term on the 200X Laura Ingalls Wilder Award Committee. As you probably know, the award is administered by the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association.

For your information, the winners, announced in January, are as follows:

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Well over 5000 trade books are published for children each year, and many are informational books. It is an enormous professional commitment to be involved in the intense and time-consuming selection process: Reading, evaluating, discussing, and selecting the year's most distinguished in informational books.

The Wilder Committee met in June at the ALA Annual Conference in XXX. We met in XXX in January to make our selections. The awards will be presented at the ALSC Newbery, Caldecott, Wilder Banquet in XXX in June 200X.

On behalf of ALSC I thank you for your support during this exciting Wilder Award. \_\_\_\_\_ was instrumental in launching the award and setting the highest standards in terms of process and informational books.

Thank you again for your support of \_\_\_\_\_ and the 200X Wilder Award.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair, 200X Laura Ingalls Wilder Award Committee

## Laura Ingalls Wilder Award

### *Sample Note-Taking Form*

---

Author:

Title:

Publisher:

Illustrator:

---

I suggested:    Yes    No

I nominated:    Yes    No

---

Reviews:        BCCB        Booklist        Horn Book        PW        SLJ        Other

---

Subject/Summary

---

Quality of writing (excellent, engaging, and distinctive use of language)

Quality of illustration (excellent, engaging, and distinctive visual material)

Organization (appropriate scope and sequence)

Documentation (appropriate citations to allow verification of facts)

Clarity (delineation of fact and theory)

Accuracy (author authority; current, etc)

Stimulating presentation of facts, concepts, and ideas

Style of presentation (text, visual material, and book design appropriate for subject and intended audience)

Features (index, table of contents, bibliography, glossary, graphics, author note, etc)

Child audience (respect for children's understanding, abilities, and appreciation up to and including age fourteen)

---

Strengths

---

Weaknesses

---

Comments

**Laura Ingalls Wilder Award**

*Sample Nomination Ballot*

Nomination Ballot (three nominations due XX, 200X)

I recommend to the committee for consideration for the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award the following three authors (not in preferential order):

**Author:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Author:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Author:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
name

\_\_\_\_\_  
date

On another page, please write your justification statements—your reasons for nominating these books with regard to the award criteria. Be sure to add your name and the date to that page. Please single-space for easier reproduction by other committee members.

Nominations and justification statements are due on XXXX, 200X. (Delivery deadline for e-mail, U.S. Mail, and FAX as well).

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_/ FAX number: \_\_\_\_\_.

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_.

**Laura Ingalls Wilder Award**

*Sample Selection Ballot*

**SELECTION BALLOT**

Ballot, Number \_\_\_\_\_

First Choice: \_\_\_\_\_

Second Choice: \_\_\_\_\_

Third Choice: \_\_\_\_\_

**Laura Ingalls Wilder Award**

*Sample Voting Tally Sheet*

Author/Title	1 <sup>st</sup> place 4 points (# votes times # points)	2 <sup>nd</sup> place 3 points (# votes times # points)	3 <sup>rd</sup> place 2 points (# votes times # points)	total

## **Laura Ingalls Wilder Award**

*Sample Press Release*

NEWS

For Immediate Release  
January 2001

Contact: Laura Schulte-Cooper  
312-280-2165

### *Milton Meltzer wins Laura Ingalls Wilder Award*

Milton Meltzer, best-known for his works of historical non-fiction, is the 2001 Laura Ingalls Wilder Award winner. Meltzer is the author of *Brother, "Can you Spare a Dime?: The Great Depression 1929-1933;" "Ten Queens: Portraits of Women in Power;"* and *"In Their Own Words: A History of the American Negro 1865-1916."*

"Meltzer's substantial and lasting contribution to American literature for children spans five decades and continues to be a model for informational writing today," said Wilder Award committee chair Pat Scales, who also is the director of library services at South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities in Greenville. "Over the years, children have read his books and expanded their knowledge of social issues and historical events."

The Wilder Award honors an author or illustrator whose books, published in the United States, have made, over a period of years, a substantial and lasting contribution to literature for children.

The award was announced January 15 during the American Library Association (ALA) Midwinter Meeting in Washington, D.C. The award is administered by the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), a division of the ALA, and is named for its first recipient in 1954.

Meltzer was born May 8, 1915, in Worcester, Mass., and he now lives in New York City. He was an American Book Award finalist in 1981 for *"All Times, All Peoples: A World History of Slavery."* Meltzer also won the 1976 Boston Globe-Horn Book Nonfiction Honor Book for *"Never to Forget: The Jews of the Holocaust;"* and again in 1983 for *"The Jewish Americans: A History in Their Own Words, 1650-1950."*

"I try to make readers understand that history isn't only what happens to us," Meltzer said. "History is what we make happen. Each of us. All of us."

The author's work covers a wide range of subjects, each of which is meticulously

researched and presented in a lively style that makes his books stand out in the genre of nonfiction. "Meltzer's commitment to his art form, and his respect for his readers empowers young people to think creatively and critically and take an active role in a socially challenging world," Scales said.

Other members of the committee are: Jane Botham, Milwaukee; Marlene Lee, Broward County Library, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.; and, Susan Veltfort, King County Library System, Issaquah, Wash.

More information about the Wilder Award can be found at [www.ala.org/alsc/wilder.html](http://www.ala.org/alsc/wilder.html).

## Laura Ingalls Wilder Award

### *Sample Congratulations Letter to Winner*

January 31, 2001

Milton Meltzer  
Apartment 9G  
263 West End Avenue  
New York, New York 10023

Dear Mr. Meltzer:

Congratulations upon being selected as the 2001 Laura Ingalls Wilder Medal winner! The next few months will be busy ones as we prepare for the Newbery/Caldecott/Wilder banquet where the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) will present the Wilder Medal to you. The banquet will be held on Sunday, June 17, 2001 during the Annual Conference of the American Library Association (ALA) in San Francisco.

The script of your acceptance speech will be published in the summer issue of the Journal of Youth Services in Libraries (JOYS), the official journal of ALSC and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), divisions of ALA. The Horn Book magazine also publishes the text of the speech in its July issue. We work with Horn Book's editor to be sure we print the exact same speech and to coordinate our production schedules. In order to meet our deadlines, you will need to submit your manuscript (double spaced and on a disk) to me by April 1.

The manuscript will, of course, be considered confidential prior to the awards banquet. For your information I have enclosed copies of acceptance speeches from earlier winners of the Wilder Medal. The speeches are unique, but generally range in length between 5 and 10 minutes.

Since 1976, the Newbery, Caldecott and Wilder speeches have been recorded by Weston Woods/Scholastic prior to the banquet. The cassette tapes are then distributed as a gift to all banquet attendees. Copies of the tape are generally available after the conference from the ALSC office at a nominal cost. The banquet guests are always pleased to receive the tape as a memento of a special evening. I understand that a representative of Weston Woods will contact you to arrange for the taping.

Milton Meltzer  
Page 2  
January 31, 2001

As of this date, the site for the celebration in San Francisco has not been determined; however, the evening's activities usually follow a preset schedule. Prior to the banquet, a brief reception for the Medalists, Honor Book authors and illustrators, Newbery, Caldecott, and Wilder committee members and the ALSC and ALA board members will be held from 6:15 p.m. to 6:45 p.m.

The banquet will begin at 7:00 p.m., the awards will be presented from 8:30 to 10:00 p.m. and a post-dinner reception for all attendees will take place from 10:00-11:30 p.m. This is just the outline for the evening's events. Before the Annual Conference, you will receive complete details from the ALSC President, Virginia Walter, who presides as the evening's host.

If you have any questions about the arrangements for publishing or recording the speech, or the banquet and presentation itself, please feel free to contact me. Again, congratulations!

Sincerely,

Stephanie Anton  
Interim Executive Director

Enclosures

Cc: Virginia Walter, ALSC President  
Pat R. Scales, Chair, 2001 Wilder Committee  
Theresa Borzumato, Random House Children's Group  
Roger Sutton, Horn Book  
Cari Best, Weston Woods/Scholastic  
Paul Gagne, Weston Woods/Scholastic

## LAURA INGALLS WILDER AWARD WINNERS

Presented to an author or an illustrator whose books are published in the United States and have, over a period of years, made a substantial and lasting contribution to literature for children. First awarded in 1954. Given every five years between 1960 and 1980, and now given every two years.

1954	Laura Ingalls Wilder
1960	Clara Ingram Judson
1965	Ruth Sawyer
1970	E. B. White
1975	Beverly Cleary
1980	Theodore S. Geisel (Dr. Seuss)
1983	Maurice B. Sendak
1986	Jean Fritz
1989	Elizabeth George Speare
1992	Marcia Brown
1995	Virginia Hamilton
1998	Russell Freedman
2001	Milton Meltzer
2003	Eric Carle
2005	Laurence Yep
2007	James Marshall