



## AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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Chicago - The three leading U.S. awards for children's literature will be announced here on Thursday, January 23rd, at a press conference during the American Library Association's Midwinter Meeting.

The awards include the annual Newbery Medal, given for the most distinguished book for children published in 1974; the Caldecott Medal, given for the year's most outstanding picture book for children; and the Wilder Medal, given only once every five years to the author or illustrator whose books have made a substantial and lasting contribution to literature for children over a period of years.

All awards are given by the Children's Services Division (CSD) of the American Library Association.

The books and authors honored by the Newbery and Caldecott Medals are selected from all children's books published in 1974. Twenty three members of the Children's Services Division, meeting in closed sessions, will make the final selections. These prestigious ALA medals have created perennial best sellers. In fact, all winners of the Newbery and Caldecott awards are still in print.

The Wilder Medal winner was selected in December by ballot of Children's Services Division members from three nominees. The nominees were selected by a six person committee of CSD members that solicited nominations from librarians across the

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nation for the preceding two years. The committee will count the ballots at Midwinter and announce the winner.

The John Newbery Medal, given by the ALA each year since 1922, was proposed by Frederic G. Melcher, a distinguished American publisher, in 1921. Since that time the Melcher family has sponsored the award.

John Newbery, for whom the award is named, was a noted bookseller in London during the 18th century.

The award is "given annually to the author of the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children, the award being made to cover books whose publication in book form falls in the calendar year last elapsed. The award is restricted to authors who are citizens or residents of the United States. There are no limitations as to the character of the book considered except that it be original work. It need not be written solely for children."

The purpose of the award is to encourage original and creative work in the field of books for children.

The first book to receive a Newbery Medal was Hendrik Van Loon's The Story of Mankind.

Other authors who have received Newbery medals over the years include William Armstrong in 1970 for Sounder, and Scott O'Dell for The Island of the Blue Dolphins in 1961.

In 1974, the award was given to Paula Fox for The Slave Dancer.

The Randolph J. Caldecott Medal, has been given each year by the Children's Services Division of ALA, since 1938, to honor the artist who created the most distinguished picture book for children.

This award was also suggested and sponsored by Mr. Melcher.

The text of these books considered for the Caldecott Medal need not be the work of the artist but must be worthy of the book. There is no limitation of age level of the books to be considered although it is recognized that most picture books are intended for young children. The award is made for a picture book in which the pictures rather than the text are the heart of the book.

Robert McCloskey was awarded a Caldecott Medal in 1942 for Make Way for Ducklings. Ludwig Bemelman for Madeline's Rescue in 1954, and Maurice Sendak for Where the Wild Things Are, in 1964.

The 1974 winner of the Caldecott Medal was Margot Zemach for Duffy and the Devil.

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NEWS

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The Laura Ingalls Wilder Medal is given by the Children's Services Division once every five years to honor the body of an author's work for children.

The award was established in 1954 and is named for one of the country's best loved writers for children.

At the present time, Mrs. Wilder's series of books, the first of which was Little House on the Prairie, is appearing as a television series under the same name.

Previous winners of the Wilder Medal were:

- 1970: E. B. White
- 1965: Ruth Sawyer
- 1960: Clara Ingram Judson
- 1954: Laura Ingalls Wilder

The Children's Services Division of the American Library Association includes some 5,000 librarians throughout the United States who work primarily with children and children's books in public, school and institutional libraries.

The goals of this division include the improvement and extension of library services to children. It is responsible for evaluation and selection of book and non book materials for the improvement of library services to children from preschool through 8th grade. CSD also seeks to stimulate distinguished writing and publishing for children.

CSD publishes a regular journal for the profession called Top of the News.